

PRINCIPLE

BREAKFAST IS PERSUASIVE

Providing a direct service that benefits your community can speak louder than any rhetorical argument. Living out the values of self-reliance can empower the community to engage in deeper organizing.

CONTRIBUTED BY

Beautiful Trouble

Beautiful Trouble is a globally dispersed group of activists whose mission is to make nonviolent revolution irresistible by providing strategic tools and trainings to inspire movements for a more just, healthy, and equitable world.

Rather than try to win people over to your idea by direct argument, it's often more effective to offer a direct service (say, free breakfast or garbage clean-up) that has an immediate, concrete benefit for your intended audience but also has embedded within it the deeper idea (community self-reliance, the right to public services, etc.) that you're trying to win them over to.

In the 1960s the Black Panther Party served free hot breakfasts to young children in African-American neighborhoods. By fulfilling an immediate need, they were not only creating a context for further organizing, but also enacting the values of community self-reliance and empowerment. Breakfast, it turned out, was quite persuasive.

In Jordan, to take another example, many urban areas are not served by municipal water systems, so people buy millions of one-time-use plastic bottles which often end up as trash in the neighborhood streets. Instead of moralizing about the need for recycling, young environmentalists in the community built vertical gardens out of the discarded plastic bottles. People were so inspired, they implemented it on their own in more than 40 other sites. The action spoke by example. By providing a direct and easy-to-implement solution at the exact site of the problem, organizers attracted people from all walks of life to do the same, triggering a paradigm shift in how people think about the issue.

Next time your community is facing a tough problem, instead of trying to win people over by abstract rational argument, enact a living example of your solution to win them over instead.

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Beautiful Solutions
Beautiful Solutions Gallery, 2014
<http://beautifulsolutions.info>

RELATED TOOLS

Stories

- Boxing Gender Oppression
- Conflict Kitchen
- Gezi Park iftar
- Pimp My . . . Carroça!
- Public Art Nanny Hotline
- Replacing Cops with Mimes
- Streets Into Gardens

Tactics

- Distributed action
- Eviction blockade
- Guerrilla marketing
- Visibility action

Principles

- Be the change you want to see in the world
- Create many points of entry
- Focus on basic needs
- Kill them with kindness
- Know your community
- Shame the authorities by doing their job
- Show, don't tell
- Solidarity, not aid
- The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative

Theories

The Black Panther's Free Breakfast For School Children

Radical practices of collective care, 2013

<http://radicalcollectivecare.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-blackpanthers-freebreakfast-for.html>

The Black Panthers: Revolutionaries, Free Breakfast Pioneers

Andrea King Collier, National Geographic, 2015

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/the-black-panthers-revolutionaries-free-breakfast-pioneers>

- Action logic
- Comunalidad (communality)
- Decolonization
- Environmental justice
- Prefigurative politics
- The commons
- The social cure
- The tactics of everyday life

Methodologies

- Art of Hosting

TAGS

Action design, Community building, Direct action, Environment, Food, Movement building