

County of Santa Cruz - Lunchable Results Presents:



More Than Money!

Using Resource Mobilization Theory to
Build Resilient Community Organizations

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The Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living

A decentralized nonhierarchical community network that builds solidarity with and creates safer spaces for communities facing coercive forces, through creative culture, compassion, and collaboration



Sponsored Projects:

- SC Welcoming Network
- Tenant Sanctuary
- The Bike Church/Biciglesia
- SubRosa Community Space
- The Fabrica
- Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
- California Field School
- The Bitter Cotyledons
- Hard Core Compost (Tenant)

- The Hub is a 501(c)3 nonprofit located in the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe, currently known as Santa Cruz, CA.
- Started in 1994, we have been around for 32 years as a collaborative network of projects supporting skill-sharing, appropriate re/use of resources, and interconnected, creative communities.
- The Hub is a decentralized nonhierarchical community network that builds solidarity with and creates safer spaces for communities facing coercive forces, through creative culture, compassion, and collaboration.
- We do not operate any of our own programs, but serve as the fiscal sponsor for 8 projects.
- Each project, including our own administration operates as collectives without a hierarchy.
- For scale, collectively, our revenue in 2025 was \$771k.
- In recent years, we have been moving away from what was a looser connection across projects and working on building our capacity to carry out our mission and develop what we call our “Hubness” through a Hub Longevity workgroup.
- It was through this Hub longevity work that we came across Resource Mobilization Theory and began sharing it with our projects as a framework for capacity building (essentially investing in our own organization to help us carry out our mission better).

Resource Mobilization Theory - Context

The Core Concept:

- Good causes and shared grievances alone *does not* create change
- Systematic control and activation of resources *does*

Context:

- The theory shifted focus away from *why* people are angry and toward *how* they successfully organize
- Analyzed social organizing, most notably the Civil Rights Movement
- Observed that the Montgomery bus boycotts did not spontaneously happen, but relied on activating pre-existing resources like church networks, organized carpools, and strategic funding

Grievance Is Constant; Resources Are the Variable: Discontent, hardship, and moral outrage exist at all times, but rarely spark a movement. Success depended on the ability to systematically aggregate, control, and deploy resources to convert passive outrage into collective action.

Reliance on Pre-Existing Infrastructure: Successful mobilizations rarely started from scratch. They relied on established institutional networks such as churches, colleges, unions, and civic groups which provided meeting spaces, communication channels and more.

The Power of Social-Organizational Coordination: Major actions required complex logistical organization rather than spontaneous enthusiasm. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott, they created an elaborate, highly coordinated alternative transportation network with dispatch centers, designated pickup stations, and volunteer carpool fleets.

Conscience Constituents and External Patronage: Movements achieved long-term viability by securing resources from individuals and institutions outside the directly aggrieved group (e.g., philanthropic foundations, northern donors, sympathetic media, and national legal networks) who provided funding, legal defense, and institutional access.

Professionalization and Social Movement Organizations (SMOs): Enduring movements developed formal organizational structures with dedicated staff, defined roles, and

strategic division of labor to sustain campaigns.

Repurposing Cultural Capital: Organizers successfully harnessed existing cultural traditions—such as spirituals, religious rhetoric, and community rituals—to unite participants, lower the barrier to entry, and frame their political goals in ways that resonated broadly with the public.

Where Are These Sociologists Today?

- [Mayer N. Zald](#) served as a highly influential sociology professor at the University of Michigan and passed away in 2012
- [John D. McCarthy](#) is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Pennsylvania State University, where he continues to research modern protests
- [Bob Edwards](#) is a Professor of Sociology at East Carolina University, focusing on social movement organizations and community resilience

The Five Types of Resources

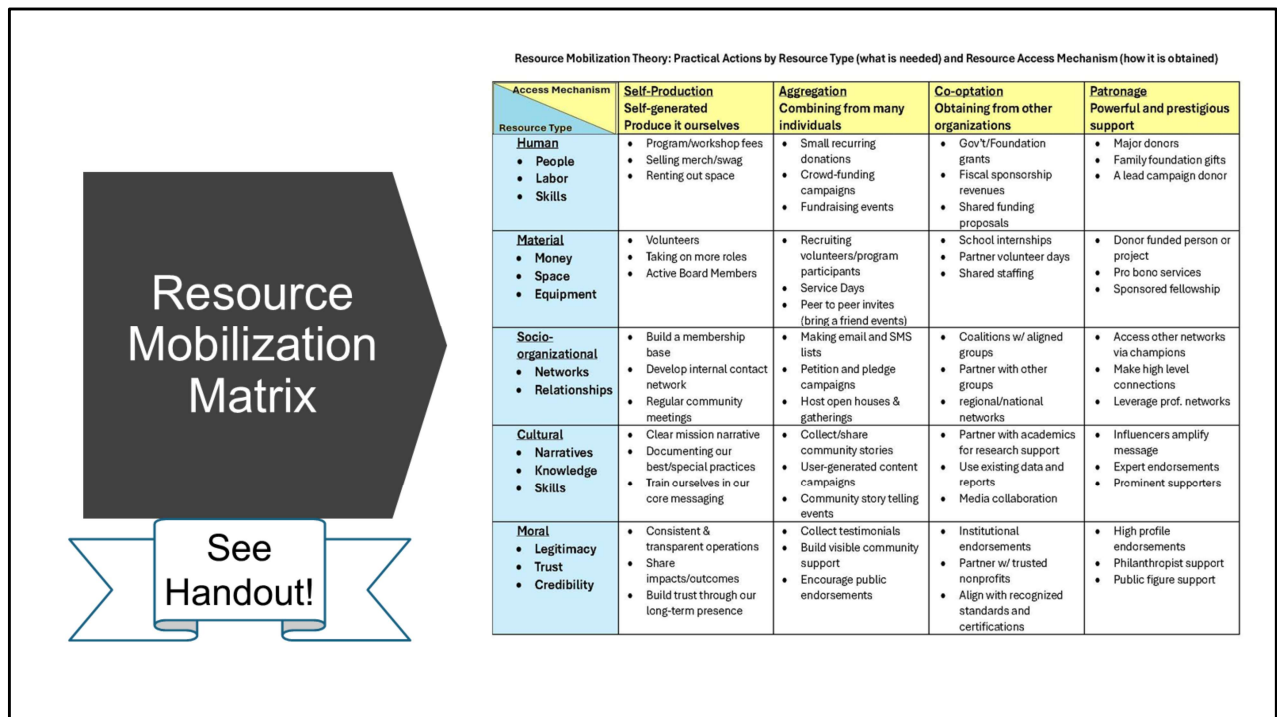


- **Human** - People power, volunteer time, labor, and expertise
- **Material** - Tangible assets like funding, physical space, and tools
- **Cultural** - Shared values, specialized knowledge, and skills
- **Socio-Cultural** - Networks, community associations, and coalitions
- **Moral** - Legitimacy, integrity, and public support

Four Ways to Access Resources

- **Self-Production:** Creating resources internally through the skills, labor, and agency of your staff, volunteers, and core participants
- **Aggregation:** Pooling small, individual contributions into a significant, collective asset
- **Co-optation / Appropriation:** Strategically tapping into or borrowing existing resources built by other networks, coalitions, or institutions
- **Patronage:** Securing concentrated resources directly from an external sponsor, benefactor, or institutional funder

- **Self-Production:** Creating resources internally through the skills, labor, and agency of your staff, volunteers, and core participants (*e.g., generating in-house training materials or original advocacy strategies*)
- **Aggregation:** Pooling small, individual contributions into a significant, collective asset (*e.g., crowdfunding campaigns, large volunteer workdays, or petition drives*)
- **Co-optation / Appropriation:** Strategically tapping into or borrowing existing resources built by other networks, coalitions, or institutions (*e.g., sharing a partner's meeting space or leveraging established contact lists*)
- **Patronage:** Securing concentrated resources directly from an external sponsor, benefactor, or institutional funder (*e.g., traditional foundation grants, government budget allocations, or major gifts*)



Explain the matrix, show some examples

Mapping the Landscape: Introduce the RMT Matrix as a visual tool to plot your organization's current assets across the 5 resource types.

Finding Leverage Points: Show how to use the matrix to identify vulnerabilities (where you are over-reliant on one resource) and uncover untapped opportunities aligned with your culture.

Discussion

1. Current Strengths: What are some practical areas on the matrix that your organization already does well?

2. Vulnerabilities & Gaps: Where is your organization potentially over-reliant on a single resource or access strategy?

3. Untapped Opportunities: What are some underutilized practical resources that might be interesting for building your organization's capacity?

4. Unaligned Approaches: Do you see any practical approaches that might not align with the values of your organization?

Thank you!

Please visit: The [Community of Practice](#) website

If you would like to contribute resources, facilitate a Lunchable Results session, or would like to learn more about the program, please reach out to us at vision@santacruzcountyca.gov.