

# **THE MOVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

Abstracted from Moyer, Bill. *The Practical Strategist: Movement Action Plan (MAP) strategic theories for Evaluating, Planning and Conducting Social Movements*. Social Movement Empowerment Project, San Francisco, 1990.

## **About Bill Moyer**

Bill Moyer (1933- 2002) was an activist engaged in movements for civil rights, peace and the environment for close to 40 years. Initially trained as an engineer, Bill was introduced to the philosophy and practice of non-violence by Quaker friends, completed a degree in social work and became involved in campaigns for civil rights and housing integration, working closely with Martin Luther King and the other leaders of the Southern Christian Leader's Conference during the summer of 1966.

Over the next decade, Bill would be involved in SCLC's Poor People's Campaign in Washington (1968), nonviolent blockades of arms shipments to Bangladesh (1971) and to Vietnam (1972), support for the AIM Indians occupying a trading post in Wounded Knee (1973) and a nuclear power plant blockade at Seabrook, New Hampshire (1977).

It was during the non-violent blockade of the Seabrook nuclear plant, which involved the participation of more than 1000 individuals, that Moyer recognised the need for social change activists to understand the dynamics behind movement success, and in particular, to address the contradiction that activists often perceive the normal signs of campaign progress as signs of failure.

The Movement Action Plan (MAP) is one of the tools developed by Bill to achieve this end, and has been used to train hundreds of activists, most notably in Australia, Canada and across Europe.

Bill Moyer died in October 2002. His last book (*DOING DEMOCRACY*, published by New Society Publishers earlier that year) summarises his theory of social change.

A full obituary for Bill can be found at the Resource Centre of Non-Violence website: <http://www.rcnv.org>

# **ADOPTING A REALISTIC BELIEF IN MOVEMENT SUCCESS**

History tells us that social movements have played a key role in bringing about significant social change. However, social activists often believe that their movement is failing, even when their campaigns are moving through the normal stages to success.

## **Believing in movement failure**

**Activists often point to the following “logical reasons” as evidence of failure:**

- *Nothing has changed*
- *Powerholders are too powerful and don't listen*
- *The movement is reactive instead of pro-active*
- *We jump from issue to issue*
- *Experts, media and poweholders say thatwe are failing*
- *The movement isn't as big as it used to be*
- *There have been successes, but these were brought about by outside forces*
- *The movement hasn't achieved its long term goals*
- *The movement hasn't achived “real” victories*

## **Culture of failure**

All groups have a “culture”, a set of assumptions as expressed by beliefs, values, ideology and behaviour. Social movement culture often includes a sense of powerlessness, despair and failure. Some of the key symptoms are this “culture of failure” are:

- *Focusing on tactics isolated from strategy*
- *Analysis emphasises the problem at the expense of success*
- *Over-emphasizing protest at the expense of positive alternatives*
- *Emphasizing guilt rather than conscience as a motivator*
- *Nostalgia for past movements*

## **Aversion to access**

Particularly devastating symptoms of the “culture of failure” are behaviours and attitudes which seem to reflect an aversion to success:

- *Judging the movement has failed because it has not won yet*
- *Changing movement goals faster then they can possibly be achieved, and then discounting the achievement of old discarded goals as failures*
- *Displaying animosity towards success*
- *Emotional adherence to powerlessness*

# Why activists should stop believing in movement failure

Activists need to stop believing they are powerless and that they are failing because it is often untrue, and it creates a self-fulfilling prophecy.

## The “logical reasons” for movement failure are false

- *Nothing has changed: powerholders haven't changed their minds and unethical policies and practices continue*

Social change takes time. Status quo interests are deeply ingrained and are initially supported by a majority of the population. Powerholders will be the *last* to change their minds; their actions are not a reliable indication of how far advanced a movement is on the path to success.

- *Powerholders are too powerful and don't listen*

That is their role. Appearing to ignore dissent – regardless of the reality – is a deliberate strategy to stifle change. Official powerholders are actually hyper-sensitive to public opinion, and will change policies when their power is threatened. The correct primary target of social movements, therefore, is not official powerholders, but the citizenry.

- *The movement is reactive instead of pro-active*

The struggle between social movements and powerholders is like a chess match, in which both sides keep reacting to events and the moves of the other in order to win the confidence of the public. Activists often see only their side, when they should be examining the interplay.

- *We jump from issue to issue*

Every major social problem has many sub-issues, and new ones are always developing. Therefore, educating and mobilising the community on a changing and expanding range of issues is a necessary part of our role. The real question is not whether or not we are focusing on too many issues, but whether or not we are advancing along the path to success.

- *Experts, media and powerholders say they we are failing*

Again, where these reflect the status quo, it is part of their role. Activists need to be capable of making their own independent and objective judgement of their effectiveness.

- *The movement isn't as big as it used to be*

A crucial stage in the path to movement success between that characterised by protest, heightened media attention and unrest, and the adoption of movement goals by powerholders, is typically characterised by a “low-key” period where local activity receives little attention while the struggle continues through mainstream political channels. Evaluation of movement success needs to take account of the “normal” movement stages in order to distinguish appropriate troughs in activity from real movement weaknesses.

- *There have been successes, but these were brought about by outside forces*  
Most positive events that are related to social movement issues are connected in some way to the movement, but because movements neither recognise their own successes, they allow the powerholders to claim them for themselves.

- *The movement hasn't achieved its long term goals*  
Again, social movements take many years and need to be evaluated by how well they are progressing along the normal path to success, not by whether they have achieved their ultimate goal.

- *The movement hasn't achieved "real" victories*  
Political scientists say that the most important step in social change is putting an issue on the social and political agenda and keeping it there. Yet movements rarely count this as a significant accomplishment. And as movements achieve short-term goals, they are seen as ploys by the government to undercut the movement. But the achievement of these goals is a consequence of powerholders being forced to adopt new policies that weaken their position and are more difficult for them to carry out.

### **Belief in movement failure creates a self-fulfilling prophecy**

The three forms of belief in movement failure – logical reasons, culture of failure and aversion to success – create a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure and produce the following unhealthy movement conditions:

- *Discouragement, despair and movement dissipation*  
Movement participants and leaders who believe their movement is failing become increasingly discouraged, hopeless, despairing and burned out. This leads to a high drop out rate and lower levels of energy to carry out projects.

- *Reduction in recruitment of new members*  
The depressed state of the movement discourages new people from joining. No-one wants to join a group which is negative and in a state of collective depression.

- *Getting stuck in "protest" mode*  
When activists believe they cannot achieve change, they can get stuck in the role of the protestor or dissident, without balancing this role with strategies and programs for positive change and alternatives.

- *Attitudes of anger, hostility and frustration lead to activities that turn the public against the movement*  
When activists believe that their movement is having no effect, frustration and anger at injustice can spill over into acts of desperation, without realising that such activities hurt the movement by alienating the public.

- *Inability to acknowledge and take credit for success*  
Failing to take credit for success deprives activists of a major resource for energy, enthusiasm and hope. It also allows powerholders to claim movement-created changes for themselves, furthering the perception that the movement is powerless and that powerholders control everything.

## Adopting a realistic belief in movement success

### How do you know that your movement is not succeeding?

Because beliefs and attitudes have a tremendous self-fulfilling impact, activists have a responsibility to carefully consider the possibility that they are powerful and that their movement is succeeding. To replace the unrealistic belief in movement failure with a realistic belief in movement success, activists need to adopt a model of movement success. They need to give up the “advantages” of feeling powerless, and to consciously incorporate personal and political maturity as important aspects of their movement work.

### Adopt a model of movement success

Using a model of the process of movement success better enables activists to:

- analyse and evaluate a movement
- Identify where the movement is in the developmental process of creating social change
- Identify past movement progress and specify successes
- Identify the progress of the struggle between the movement and the powerholders
- Set short-term goals, strategies, tactics and programs that are appropriate and that are needed to advance the movement to its next stage
- Become empowered by understanding their movement and being more in charge of the process. This will also reduce discouragement, burnout, drop-out and harmful acts of desperation.

### Give up the “advantages” of powerlessness and failure

In his work with social change groups, Bill Moyer found that activists were often very clear about the advantages and usefulness of their own victim behaviour – of believing that they are powerless – and of their fear of success:

- “Powerlessness allows us to be unaccountable and not responsible for our actions.”
- “In success, there is a fear of corruption and co-optation – becoming like the establishment.”
- “Underdogs have moral superiority. The more oppressed we are, the more we can appeal to underdog feelings of moral superiority and support.”
- “Being powerless allows us to avoid changing ourselves or our organisation. We can maintain our old identity and be where we are most comfortable psychologically.”

### Strive for personal and political maturity

Effective activism requires personal maturity. The change from belief in movement failure to adopting a realistic model of movement success requires us to make a major emotional and cultural leap on four levels:

- *Intellectual.* Activists need to change the way that they interpret the information they already have, so they can decide for themselves if the movement is failing or progressing.
- *Emotional.* Activists need to make the emotional adjustments and changes required for them to redefine themselves as powerful and successful. They need to give up the psychological “advantages” of inferiority and be willing to become successful citizen-activists in a movement that is creating real social change.

- *Spiritual.* Awareness and active exploration of the deeper dimensions of being human give us strength, appreciation of the potential that resides within all of us, and a greater understanding of the challenge that true change represents to the individual and society.

- *Culture.* Changes not only need to be made at the level of individual activists, but the movement's culture also. Movement successes, for example, should be recognised and celebrated, rather than denied or condemned, in movement circles.

# **STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE M.A.P.**

## **1 Social movements are proven to be powerful**

Social movements have been a powerful means for ordinary people to participate directly in creating positive social change, particularly when formal channels for democratic political participation do not work. They are more numerous and powerful than ever. Much acclaim is given to the social movements of the 1960s, but those of the 1970s and 80s were bigger and more numerous.

The crisis of bigger dangers and bigger problems will provide the impetus for bigger social movements and further opportunities for change.

## **2 Movements are at the centre of society**

Most social movements are not exceptional, rare, protest events on society's fringe, but are at the centre of society's "historicity", the on-going process of society evolving and redefining itself. Social movements are deeply grounded in the fundamental values of justice, democracy, civil liberties and freedom. They oppose vested interests that use public offices and corporate institutions in ways that violate these principles.

*Implications:* Social movements, therefore, must consciously articulate society's central values and sensibilities. They will be successful only to the extent that they can convince the great majority of people that the movement, and not the powerholders, truly represent society's values and sensibilities.

## **3 The real issue is social justice versus vested interest**

In their attempts to promote democracy, justice, peace, ecological sustainability and the general social welfare, social movements must oppose the excessive power and interests of elite powerholders. The consequence of such opposition is, inevitably, conflict with the political and economic and corporate powerholders.

*Implication:* Movement activists must neither become discouraged nor believe their movement is losing when powerholders do not change their minds or policies. Even though a social movement may be supported by a majority who opposes current policies and conditions, powerholders will fight until it becomes in their interest to change.

## **4 The grand strategy is to promote participatory democracy**

The grand strategy of social movements is to promote participatory democracy through people power, in which an ever increasing majority of ordinary citizens is alerted, won over and becomes involved in addressing critical social problems and achieving progressive change.

Political power rests ultimately with the general population. The official powerholders in any society can only rule as long as they have the consent of the people. Ultimately, the general population will only give this consent as long as those who govern are seen to be upholding the public trust and basic morals, values and the interests of the whole society.

## **5 The target constituency is the ordinary citizen**

The primary target constituency of social movements is ordinary citizens, not the powerholders. Social change movements are only as powerful as the power of their grassroots support. The chief task of activists, therefore, is to focus on and win over the public, not to change the minds and the policies of official powerholders.

*Implication:* The formal powerholders will not change their policies until there is overwhelming pressure from the general population. Ignoring this reality is a chief source of activists' feelings of powerlessness and movement failure.

## **6 Success is a long-term process, not an event**

The process of putting a social problem on society's agenda, winning a large majority and subsequently achieving long-range movement goals occurs over many years. This lengthy process includes reaching many sub-goals along the way.

*Implication:* Activists should evaluate their movement by how well it is moving along the road of success, not by whether it has achieved its long-term goals. And activists should develop strategies and tactics that advance their movement along the next segment of the road, instead of trying to achieve the long-range goals directly.

## **7 Social movements must be non-violent**

Following Ghandi and King, the ideology and method of non-violence provides social movements with the optimum opportunity to win over and involve the general citizenry in people power.

Non-violence:

- *allows the broadest cross-section of society to participate*
- *is based on and appeals to timeless national, cultural, human and religious values*
- *is less threatening to ordinary citizens*
- *forces the means to be consistent with the ends – they are the ends in the making*
- *has the capacity to reduce the effectiveness of police and state violence*
- *makes it difficult for agent provocateurs to disrupt or discredit movements*



# **THE PROCESS OF MOVEMENT SUCCESS**

Social movements promote a long-term process of social change in which the whole population is first alerted to and educated about a problem. A converted and growing majority of public opposition then creates the political and social conditions that force new public policies.

In social movements, people act their way into thinking. They learn that the problem is greater than the original symptom with which they were concerned. They rapidly discover that there are many connected problems and larger structural causes that must be addressed, that powerholders do not change their minds when they get the facts from the movement, and that they will fight against even majority public opinion to preserve their privilege and status quo.

Success is neither an event or a policy decision, but a long, complex, evolutionary process. Activists need to know what the normal road of success looks like and be able to plan, evaluate and conduct their movement so that it progresses along that road.

## **The grand strategy: participatory democracy**

A **grand strategy** is the broadest conception of the process by the different parts and programs of the movement fit together into one big map for going from here to there. A mutual understanding of the grand strategy provides activists with a common basis to evaluate the past and set the course for the future. Without it, the broad range of activists and groups within a movement do not have a consistent basis for organising and evaluating their efforts or reinforcing each other, leading to inefficiencies and unnecessary dissidence as groups go off in contradictory directions.

The grand strategy of social movements is to promote social governance through participatory democracy.

### **The grand strategy process**

- Social movement direct action activities are often focused squarely at the powerholders and their policies.
- The real purpose is not to directly force the powerholders to immediately change their minds, but to put a public spotlight on the problem in order to alert, educate, win over, inspire and involve the general public in advocating social change.
- The power of the mainstream general public creates a new social culture and political and economic conditions and makes powerful demands on the powerholders and mainstream institutions to change their policies.
- Simultaneously, some of the general public are also inspired to join movement organisations and activities.

### **Three organising principles for winning over and involving the general public**

**1** The movement's chief target constituency must be the general population of ordinary citizens, not the powerholders.

**2** Social movements must be consciously grounded in society's central values and sensibilities.

**3** Social movements must guard internally against tendencies of some activists and organisations to self-define as being on society's fringes. This appearance of

attacking all of society's widely-held values, traditions, symbols and sensibilities unnecessarily alienates the general population.

## The eight stages of successful social movements

The "Eight stages of successful social movements" is a practical strategy and action planning model describing eight stages that successful movements progress through over many years. For each stage, it gives the role of the movement, powerholders and the public and movement goals appropriate to that stage [the full text also describes movement pitfalls and the crises which tend to drive the movement from one stage to another].

The eight stages are grouped into five broad phases of hidden problem, increasing tension, take-off, waging the movement and success:

### Hidden problem

*Stage 1: Normal times.* Problem exists, but is not on social or political agenda.

**Movement** uses official channels, demonstrations are small and rare. **Powerholders** chief goal is to keep issue off social and political agenda. **Public** is unaware of the problem and supports powerholders. Only 10-15% public support change.

Movement goals: Build organisations, vision and strategy. Document problems and powerholders roles. Become informed.

### Increasing tension

*Stage 2: Prove failure of official institutions.* New wave of grassroots opposition begins. **Movement** uses official system to prove it violates widely-held values.

**Powerholders** chief goal is to keep issue off social and political agenda and maintain routine bureaucratic functioning to stifle opposition. **Public** still unaware of issue and supports status quo. 15-20% of the public support change.

Movement goals: Prove and document the failure of official institutions and powerholders to uphold public trust and values. Begin legal cases to establish legal and moral basis for opposition. Build opposition organisations, leadership, expertise.

*Stage 3: Ripening conditions.* Tensions build. Rising grassroots discontent with conditions, institutions, powerholders and 'professional opposition organisations' (ie large lobby groups). Upsetting events occur, including ones which "personify" the problem. Perceived or real worsening conditions. **Movement:** grassroots groups grow in number and size. Small non-violent actions begin. Parts of progressive community won over, pre-existing networks join new cause. **Powerholders** still favour existing policies and control official decision-making channels. **Public** still unaware of problems and support powerholders. 20-30% oppose official policies.

Movement goals: Educate/win over progressive community. Prepare grassroots for new movement. More local non-violent actions.

### Take-off

*Stage 4: Take-off.* TRIGGER EVENT puts spotlight on problem that violates widely-held values, sparking public attention and upset. Massive non-violent actions and a new grassroots-based social movement. Issue is on society's agenda of hotly contested issues in a crisis atmosphere. **Movement** enacts or responds to trigger event, holds large rallies and demonstrations and many non-violent actions. A 'new movement organisation' is created. Characterised by informal organisational style,

energy and hope for fast change. Professional Opposition Organisations sometimes oppose 'rebel' activities. **Powerholders** shocked by new opposition and publicity, fail to keep issue off social agenda, reassert official line and attempt to discredit opposition. **Public** becomes highly aware of problem. 40-60% oppose official policies.

Movement goals: Put issue on social agenda. Create a new grassroots movement. Alert, educate and win public opinion. Legitimise movement by emphasising and upholding widely-held societal values.

### **Waging the movement**

*Stage 5: Perception of failure.* **Movement:** numbers down at demonstrations, less media, long-range goals not met. Unrealistic hopes of quick success are unmet. Many activists despair, burn out and drop out. 'Negative rebel' and 'naive citizen' activities gain prominence in movement. **Powerholders** and media claim that movement has failed, discredit movement by highlighting and encouraging 'negative rebel' activities, sometimes through agent provocateurs. **Public** alienated by negative rebels. Risk of 'ghetto-isation'; movement becoming a subcultural sect that is isolated and ineffective.

Movement goals: Recognise movement progress and success. Counter negative rebel tendencies. Recognise that movement is in stage six and pursue goals appropriate to that stage.

*Stage 6: Majority Public Opinion:* **Movement** transforms from protest in crisis to long-term struggle with powerholders to win public majority to oppose official policies and consider positive alternatives. Movement broadens analysis, forms coalitions. Many new groups involved in large-scale education and involvement. Official channels used with some success. Non-violent actions at key times and places. Many sub-goals and movements develop. Promote alternatives, including paradigm shift. **Powerholders** try to discredit and disrupt movement and create public fear of alternatives. Promote bogus reforms and create crises to scare public. Powerholders begin to split. 60-75% of the **public** oppose official policies, but many fear alternatives. However, support for alternatives is increasing. Backlash can occur and counter-movements may form.

Movement goals: Keep issues on social agenda. Win over and involve majority of the public. Activists become committed to the long haul.

## **Success**

*Stage 7: Achieving alternatives.* The struggle shifts from opposing official policies to choosing alternatives. More costly for powerholders to continue old policies than adopt new ones. More “re-trigger” events occur. **Movement** counters powerholders bogus alternatives. Broad-based opposition demands change. Non-violent action, where appropriate. Some **powerholders** change and central, intransigent powerholders become increasingly isolated. Central powerholders try last gambits, then have to change policies, have them defeated by vote or lose office. **Public** majority demands for change are bigger than its fears of the alternatives. Majority no longer believe powerholders justifications of old policies and demonisation of alternatives.

**Movement goals:** Movement achieves major goal. Other major goals achieved within framework of paradigm shift. Recognise movement’s success. Create on-going empowered activists and organisations to achieve other goals.

*Stage eight: Continuation.* **Movement** takes on ‘reform’ role to protect and extend successes. The movement attempts to minimise losses due to backlash, and circles back to the sub-goals and issues that emerged in earlier stages. The long term focus is to achieve a paradigm shift. **Powerholders** adapt to new policies and conditions, claim the movement’s and successes as their own and try to rollback movement successes by not carrying out agreements or continuing old policies in secret. **Public** adopts new consensus and status quo. New public beliefs and expectations are carried over to future situations.

**Movement goals:** Retain and extend successes. Continue the struggle by promoting other issues and a paradigm shift. Recognise and celebrate success. Build on-going grassroots organisations and power bases.

## **Strategic interaction: movement vs powerholders**

The process of movement success involves an evolving interaction of strategies and counter strategies between the movement and the powerholders. As the movement wins over an increasing percentage of public opinion, the powerholders are forced to react by adopting new strategies, policies, programs and justifications. The movement then counters this by creating public opposition to the new powerholder strategies. This process continues for the life of the movement.

Success is neither a big-bang event or a never-ending series of isolated events in which the movement continually tries to play “catch-up”. The process is one in which both the movement and the powerholders are constantly reacting to each other to achieve the political and social conditions needed to achieve their own goals.

## **Indicators of success**

The process of success is difficult for many activists to recognise because progress is not self-evident, and the problem and policies continue long after the movement takes off. The following are ten indicators of movement success in the strategic struggle between the movement and powerholders. Movements that have achieved these ten successes are in a mature M.A.P. stage six, Majority stage:

**1 The issue is put on the social and political agendas – and kept there.** Some political scientists contend that putting an issue in society’s public spotlight and on the political agenda takes the movement 75% of the way toward success. With the

problem in the spotlight, time is on the movement's side, with people being alerted to, educated on and involved in an issue. Because the powerholders position tends to deteriorate under public scrutiny, their first line of defence is to keep the issue out of the public spotlight.

**2 The movement wins a majority of public opinion – on the problem.** The public opinion polls show that a majority opposes current policies but don't yet support the movement's alternative.

**3 The powerholders change their strategy.** The powerholders adopt new policies as old ones become discredited and opposed by a public majority, while maintaining their purposes and goals.

**4 The movement counters each new powerholder strategy.** The movement must build a majority public opinion in opposition to each powerholder strategy. At any given time, the powerholders have a number of different strategies that are all opposed by the movement, ie the movement has sub-goals and movements focusing on each of the powerholders strategies.

**5 Many of the powerholders' new strategies are more difficult for them to achieve, thereby weakening their ability to continue their policies in the long run.** As the movement and public opinion oppose their old strategies, the powerholders are forced to adopt new, higher-risk strategies that weaken their position and are more difficult to achieve. This is because most new powerholder strategies and policies are more obvious violations of the values and sensibilities of the public and are more easily exposed by the movement.

**6 Expansion of the issue and goals.** Movements start with a specific problem that people see as particularly offensive to their sensibilities and begin acting against it. As activists get involved with this problem, however, they learn on many others, some even bigger and more devastating than the first.

**7 The movement wins "hard" public opinion against current policies.** From years of education and debate, and of experiencing the series of powerholders new, bogus strategies, both activists and the general citizenry develop a stronger and more informed opposition to powerholder policies.

**8 Successful promotion of solutions.** By the end of the take-off stage, the movement needs to promote alternative solutions. To regain public support, the powerholders create demons by emphasising the dangers of alternatives. They also promote bogus processes that appear to be seeking effective alternatives.

**9 The movement wins majority of public opinion – on the alternatives.** After the public is won over on the problem, it must then be won over on the solution. The movement must help the public overcome these fears by adopting a new paradigm, a change of heart, a new way of being. In the later stages, the public spotlight and majority opinion focus on the support of alternatives.

**10 The powerholders are now often forced to oppose solutions that they had originally "officially" favoured and which the movement and public now support.** By stage seven, the powerholders are put in the increasingly difficult position of having to oppose what the public recognises as reasonable solutions to the problem.

## Paradigm shift

Social movements need to promote social change, not just minor reforms, by advocating a paradigm shift – a change in society’s world view. If a movement has a faulty world view, it will promote faulty alternatives and have a faulty end result.

At the start of a new movement, the **existing paradigm** is advocated by the powerholders and is believed by the general public. It limits the way the problem is understood as well as confining the possible alternatives to minor reforms that perpetuate the status quo.

To promote change, social movements need to (1) identify the larger paradigm surrounding their issue (2) show how the problem is a logical outcome of this paradigm (3) identify an alternative paradigm within which the problem can be solved and which fits widely-held societal values, and then (4) promote alternatives and solutions defined within the new paradigm.

Movements must advocate **social change reforms** as opposed to **reformist reforms**. Social change reforms are solutions that are consistent with the process of achieving a new paradigm, whereas reformist reforms remain within the original paradigm. (The powerholders strategy is to maintain the status quo by eventually “compromising” and agreeing to reforms that are within the existing paradigm.) Conversely, a mistake made by some activists is to advocate “revolutionary” idealistic alternatives without having any practical strategy, tactics and means to achieve them.

## Winning the public in three ways

Social movements must win the majority of the public in three different ways: (1) awareness of the problem (2) opposition to present conditions and policies (3) support for alternatives.

The accompanying graph depicts the process of winning over these three types of public opinion.

**1** All three graphs start at around 10-20%, increasing slowly until a trigger event generates mass publicity and discussion. When the issue is thrust onto the social agenda, **awareness of the problem** rises rapidly.

**2** Over the next few years, **public opposition** to existing policies rises more rapidly. But this proves to be “soft” opinion, subject to challenge by powerholders counter-strategies to scare, confuse and win back public support. Even as “hard” opinion grows, many activists become disillusioned because the movement has not achieved its goal. They don’t realise that the movement must go through another cycle of winning the public on alternatives before it can achieve its goal.

**3** As the movement progresses to stage seven, the movements chief focus is on winning **support for alternatives**. The movement needs to engage the public’s desire for change while lowering its fear of appropriate alternatives.

Many activists lose heart at this time because they don’t recognise this process as success, often rejecting it because it is not happening in the manner they had envisioned. The reality of success rarely arrives in the idealised version.