GOOD PRACTICE
Community Mobilisation Against Extremist Programmes and Candidates

North Carolina is a very conservative US Southern state, which had always supported the Republican Party. As a counter response, North Carolina, unsurprisingly, has a history of strong civil rights movements, notably the famous Greensboro civil rights actions.

For the first time in history, in 2001, North Carolina voted for the Democratic candidate Barak Obama, which came as a huge surprise to all analysts, and in particular to the Republican party establishment. Despite an important block of core supporters that had always voted conservative to improve their restrictive rules in North Carolina, the 2007 election revealed that there was indeed a scattered majority of people who were hoping for more progressive policies and attitudes.

This further reinvigorated a civil rights movement to shift gears and seek to forge a broad alliance that would bring again this majority together under a more structured agenda. The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) North Carolina chapter took a leading role in this effort over the last 7 years. They started their campaign and community mobilising approach on a fairly similar level, by asking every excluded community and discriminated group who are their adversaries. For African-Americans: the adversary are conservative Republicans; Feminists and their adversaries. For Latinos and Hispanics: conservative Republicans; Muslim communities; conservative Republicans; Lesbians and Hispanics: conservative Republicans; the definition of electoral districts: conservative Republicans; etc.

It appeared very clearly that, despite different expectations for every group, there was one common adversary preventing the aspirations of each and every group to take off. Identifying this common adversary served as a useful basis to start a dialogue between the different groups, and from there onwards to start developing a common agenda around work, education, social justice and opportunities for everybody.

This long and painful exercise of community building with the view to mobilise voters in a progressive direction has begun to bear fruits through an increased understanding between the different communities and greater sense of solidarity around common or community specific causes. This mobilisation has started to be translated into votes around common expectations.


Understanding common problems in different contexts enables activists to develop creative actions on all levels: regional, national, international. But this is not enough. The different groups have to work together and organise their mobilisation in a structured way, according to a well-defined agenda, which was the case in this period of time.

As a result, the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP was able to mobilise a broad base of people and groups, from different communities and backgrounds, around common problems. They were able to organise a series of meetings and discussions, which served as a useful basis to start a dialogue between the different groups, and from there onwards to start developing a common agenda around work, education, social justice and opportunities for everybody.

In May 2014, a new EU Parliament will be chosen. By you.
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The elections come amidst a crisis that strikes Europe hard. Across the continent people lose jobs, lose income, lose hope. These are the circumstances some political parties and movements are taking advantage of. Seemingly easy solutions are promised by these parties, like: leave the EU, cancel international agreements that cost money, close the borders, etc.

Easy scapegoats are found to blame: migrants, minorities, refugees, Muslims, Jews. According to these parties, those are the groups to be blamed for anything that goes wrong in our societies.

Some of these parties previously reformed from cooperating with each other. The Dutch PVV, for example, did not want to be associated with the French Front National because of its far-right image. Now, with the EP elections in sight, PVV and Front National formed an alliance for the EP elections. What binds them is extreme nationalism, an anti-EU agenda, and anti-migration/migrant policy. Their goal is to win as much influence in the EP as possible. More far-right parties may join them. Together they cover the whole range of intolerance and hate: against migrants, Muslims, Jews, people of African descent, gays and lesbians.

We believe in the freedom of expression. It is one of the fundamental rights of our democracies. But we do not believe this fundamental freedom can be used to strip others from their fundamental rights and freedoms, like the right to be treated equal or the freedom of religion. Nor should it be used to harm people because of their race, ethnicity, or religion. We oppose the spread of hate and racism dividing our societies.

We cannot accept that some parties treat some people as lesser participants in our society because of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant characteristic that could be perceived as “different.” And we do not believe in division between groups of society which previously what these parties seek. Instead, we believe in an inclusive European society in which everyone is able to enjoy full equality/quality of outcomes and participate actively without barriers. By shaping an environment where everybody can contribute with his or her respective diverse skills and talents, we can achieve a more vibrant, innovative, and successful Europe.

Once every five years you can make a choice for a new European Parliament. It is your democratic, fundamental right to vote.

Whatever your choice is, we think basic fundamental rights should be respected. We think that parties that do not respect these values do not deserve our votes, your vote.

Your vote can divide. Your vote can unite.
You choose!

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So-called solutions and scapegoats are used to gain power and influence, to win votes, and in the end to win seats in the European Parliament (EP).

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UNITED for Intercultural Action
European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of Migrants and Refugees

Since 1992 financial support was received from various sponsors such as: European Commission (General Budget/ Socrates/ Grundtvig/Youth in Action Programme/DG Grundtvig and Leonardo Programmes of the European Union

UNITED is supported by

European Cultural Foundation, Stiftung West-Östliche Begegnung, Aktionsbündnis Gegen Gewalt, Rechtsextremismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit Brandenburg, Home Office
Your vote can make the difference!

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Green Group, Socialist Group, and GUE/NGL Group in the European Parliament
Employment Social Affairs/TACIS IBPP, Council of Europe (European Youth Foundation/European Youth Centres), OSCE-ODIHR, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, World Council of Churches

Since 1992 financial support was received from various sponsors such as: European Commission (General Budget/Socrates/Grundtvig/Youth in Action Programme/DG more than 550 organisations from 48 European countries, many prominent individuals, private supporters and long-term volunteers from Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service and the EVS,

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Greenbrown civil rights actions: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenbrook_North_CarolinaCivil_rights_momentum
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: http://naacpnc.org

It is up to you. You decide, you choose.

Your vote can unite, your vote can divide.

EU ELECTIONS

May 2014

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ENAR stands up against racism and discrimination and advocates for equality and solidarity for all. We work with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe.

Equal@Work initiative brings together employers, anti-racist civil society, and other relevant stakeholders to share best practices and info@enar-eu.org • www.enar-eu.org

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ENAR – European Network Against Racism

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