What does 'grassroots' mean, anyway?



Grassroots means coming from, led by, and accountable to the people most impacted by a problem.

In the case of our ecological crisis, those most impacted are frontline communities or those bearing the brunt of the impacts from extractive industries and most directly affected by climate chaos, often Indigenous Peoples, women, peasant farmers, and youth.

Grassroots organizing has been a central strategy of almost every major social and economic transformation in world history. It builds people power and creates change across geographies and sectors.







Grassroots is distinct from 'grasstops' organizations in terms of the roles they play, how they are governed, and to whom they are accountable.

There is overlap with movement-support organizations, but grasstops often have a bigger mic and less accountability (e.g., local political figures).



Structure: Grassroots groups can have formal or informal structures (e.g., they may be legally registered or be housed within another organization). Their structures are often dynamic and change to meet current realities and contexts.



Reach: Grassroots groups can be local, national, regional, and international; and they can work within movements or outside of them. At whatever scale, grassroots groups are accountable to communities.



Size: Grassroots can mean small, volunteer-run groups or larger organizations with more developed infrastructure, paid staff, and centralized or decentralized leadership. **EXAMPLES**



with myriad, sophisticated strategies on systems change and power.

REFORM THE SYSTEM

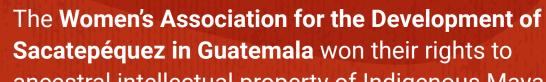
Grassroots groups rally public support to



elect public officials A staff member of the **Peasant Committee of the Highlands**

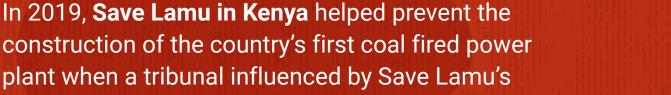
in Guatemala was elected to congress, with a deep history and ties with the Indigenous movement, in 2016.

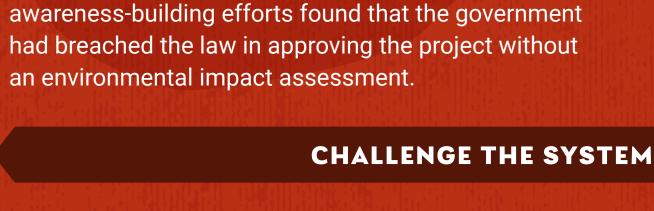
Grassroots groups write and pass



legislation and policy

ancestral intellectual property of Indigenous Mayan weaving designs and clothing. Grassroots groups advocate for and secure human





rights and environmental protections







In Malaysia, logging and the construction of mega-dams are increasing, ignoring "Free, Prior, and Informed Consent" laws protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. After winning a landmark victory in

continue to map violations to ensure protections. The National Federation of Peasant, Artisan, Indigenous,

the courts to punish violators, grassroots groups

Sahabat Alam Malaysia and the Borneo Project

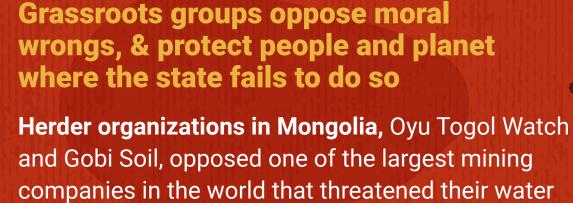


Native and Wage-earning Women of Peru organizes actions

outside national congress and secures commitments from



land, waterways, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.



REIMAGINE THE SYSTEM

and traditional herding grounds - and won.



excludes, or threatens community well-being. The Landless Workers Movement in Brazil has reclaimed land the size of Massachusetts on which they sustainably produce healthy food for dispossessed peoples.

Grassroots groups create or uplift alternative economic and/or governance structures to manage human & ecological communities

The Wet'suwet'en Nation in Canada maintains sovereignty over their territory, upholding traditional relationship and care of lands and water.





outside the state

outsized impact on confronting the root causes of the climate crisis and social inequities, and building sustainable futures.