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FIGHTING FOR THE ARTS: Funding Cuts Target TAFE Arts Courses

By Miriam Amery-Gale

“Adelaide College of the Arts is the jewel in the crown of South Australia’s TAFE system.” (Pat Forward, Federal TAFE Secretary, AEU).

The Australian TAFE Sector is in crisis. The quality and very survival of this once thriving vocational college, is now under threat due to severe funding cuts and corporate restructure. Around the country TAFE students are witnessing the effects of these cuts. In Victoria the government already reduced funding to TAFEs by more than \$300 million. We now face the same threats to TAFE in South Australia. Already campuses have been closed via ‘merging’ or ‘amalgamation’. Courses that are not considered ‘necessary’, or necessary to the economy are the target of further cuts - courses such as the Arts.

Around one thousand TAFE workers have lost their jobs in the ‘restructure’. The restructuring was arranged through a state government committee, chaired by none other than Business SA CEO Peter Vaughan, who spearheaded the neoliberalisation of TAFE. TAFE has been incorporated and is now merely another competitor in the market with dozens of hole-in-the-wall private Registered Training Organisations.

I study at the Adelaide College of the Arts at Light Square, which has been the target of TAFE cuts to such an extent that the library was closed. When I asked my fellow students at AC Arts how funding cuts have affected them, the majority had grievances about the recent loss of the AC Arts library. Some complained of cuts directed towards their courses specifically, and the quality of the education they were receiving, while others had personal financial concerns and were upset that the government has decided to reduce the government funding allowed for the arts under the Skills for All funding scheme.

Like many other students at AC Arts, I have witnessed the effects of funding cuts. One of my Sculpture classes is so large it has to be split into two. There are not enough facilities and equipment to teach the whole class the same processes at the same time. While one half of the class is doing woodwork, the other is doing welding. One teacher is expected to instruct and supervise both these groups of students at once. On top of that, he is expected to assist another third year class who are working on their own individual research projects. You can imagine how in a sculpture studio, with power tools and other dangerous equipment, this over-stretching of staff resources could be a health and safety risk.

Tatiana, a student in the Bachelor of Visual Art and Design said “Skills for All would suggest that this funding would al-

low one and all to have access to education regardless of economic status. Saying that the Arts would not be covered is discrimination – it will make TAFE inaccessible, unfair and not an option for many.”

Already in 2014 there have been further changes to the institution. Adelaide College of the Arts now has an affiliation with Flinders University, which means that certain courses allow students to gain dual accreditation with both TAFE SA and Flinders University. There is a rumour that Adelaide College of the Arts will soon no longer be a part of TAFE SA at all, but in fact merge with Flinders University completely. None of these plans have been openly disclosed to students, leaving them confused about what this will mean for them. It is also making students angry because of the lack of transparency and creating a growing sense of no confidence in TAFE as an institution.

AC Arts is unique, as it is the only TAFE institution in South Australia to offer courses at Degree level. The college produces highly skilled graduates who find employment in a variety of different areas. The nature of studio studies means that you spend long hours collaborating on practical projects and assisting each other in the creative process.

Remy, a recent graduate from the Diploma of Costume for Performance shared with me the benefits she gained from her course: “TAFE’s given me the skills to be able to run my own business and without it I wouldn’t know half as much as I do now. It’s the best costume course in Australia and I’m glad I did it.”

TAFE has a proud history of making education accessible for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or students who are affected by other forms of disadvantage such as physical or mental disabilities, or learning difficulties. AC Arts enables otherwise marginalised individuals to not only participate, but to excel. AC Arts makes it possible for a range of different people to experience an affordable arts education in a safe, friendly learning environment. The devaluing of the TAFE system is leading to cost-cutting in essential student services and amenities - such as disability access or libraries.

I myself suffer from a mental illness, and have found the environment at AC Arts incredibly supportive and accommodating of my individual needs. Other students have similar challenges or hardships, an anonymous student in the Bachelor of Visual Art and Design said “[I have been] long term unemployed (over 10 years) due to a disability. TAFE has enabled me to begin retraining and given me some hope for a brighter future.”

TAFE is also a pathway to study at university, and one 3rd Year Bachelor of Visual Art and Design student I spoke to told me that his goal is to become a high school art teacher. After completing his degree at AC Arts he plans on going on to complete a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education. This is a clear example of how an education in the creative arts at TAFE can be used as a stepping-stone to further education and ultimately to a successful career. Getting a TAFE education gives you not only the skills, but also the desire to give back to society.

The students in the Costume department have been especially affected by TAFE cuts. The Diploma of Costume for Performance has been restructured and what was once a three-year course has now been condensed into just two years. According to the current 2nd year Costume students, there were 17 or so students in their group last year, and now there are only 5 of them. This is a direct result of funding cuts because students are expected to do the same amount of work in a shorter space of time. Because many of our full-time students also have part-time jobs, and for many, the pressure is just too much and they drop out. Smaller departments such as Costume are particularly susceptible to cuts because if these courses lose enrolment numbers and resources, prospective students are discouraged to commence study in that area. I get the feeling that this exactly what the government wants. If courses die they will not have to fund them anymore.

In 2013 the Costume students had a battle with TAFE about the location of their course, which they managed to fight successfully. TAFE wanted to move the Costume students to the campus where the Fashion students are and turn the costume studio into a computer space. To move the Costume department out of the AC Arts building, however, would have been completely inefficient and counter productive, because, for example, in first and second year students in the Costume course have to work on productions with the actors and dancers who are located in the AC Arts building.

Education is now run like a business. The success of an institution is being measured by the quantity of students passing through its doors rather than by the quality of the education being provided. The fact that TAFE has become a Statutory Corporation and no longer a Government Agency, with a board of directors rather than a Chief Executive and Minister, shows just how much of a business TAFE has become. TAFE makes decisions based on commercial viability and business strategy. In the future if courses are not commercially sustainable, they will not be offered anymore. This business model runs in direct conflict with TAFE’s real purpose and the reasons why it began in the first place.

TAFE is supposed to provide affordable, high quality vocational education to all Australians, regardless of their personal economic status. TAFE should also serve to build the community and give people of all ages the opportunity to get an education, and offer a second chance to those who have been marginalised and previously excluded or unable to get an education. In addition, TAFE should nurture all vocations, including the arts and acknowledge the intrinsic value these vocations offer to society. The pressure to run TAFE like a business is felt not only by the administration staff, but also by the lecturers, which then has a flow on effect to the students.

AC Arts students are passionate about their education and are not willing to put up with unwanted and ill-warranted changes without a fight. Bottom-line thinking, which dominates the distribution of funding to the TAFE education sector, does not gel with quality training in the creative arts and certainly does not sit well with the students.

Studying at AC Arts has been extremely rewarding for me personally because it has allowed me to further my education in the Visual Arts, despite an ongoing and often fluctuating struggle with an anxiety disorder. I consider the staff and students at AC Arts to be my second family, and the building to be my home away from home. Without AC Arts I don't know where I'd be. TAFE has given me hope for the future and helped me appreciate the present. I know from talking with other students that it's not just myself who feels this way. To put it simply, we love AC Arts and would hate to see such a quality TAFE Arts institution disappear, like others have already around the country. The recent closure of the Hornsby TAFE Art School in Northern Sydney is a warning of what could happen to TAFE Arts education in South Australia if we don't take care of Adelaide College of the Arts and fight the TAFE cuts.

When Winston Churchill was asked to cut arts funding in favour of the war effort, he simply replied "then what are we fighting for?" What we are fighting for is the right to a quality education in whatever vocation we choose and the right to a brighter future.



Editors' Note

This issue has shaped up to be a fantastic combination of local and global praxis, that is, the unity of theory and practice.

In the last week the Coalition government has made media statements about both the privatisation of public universities as well as a tabling a new deal with Cambodia as a new place to lock-up the refugees who seek refuge with us. In March we followed through on our principles of self-organisation at the National Day of Action for Education, calling for an impromptu march to Adelaide Uni from parliament, and holding a General Assembly with around 150 students. It was so successful another was held a week later, which organised a fantastic action against a lecture being given by Education Minister Christopher Pyne.

At the Palm Sunday march for Refugees, a friend of our group organised for an assembly or open air organising meeting at the end - forgoing personal participation in the actual march. This too was a success, and I look forward to seeing where such practice takes us in future.

The Coalition government is intensifying its attacks on the working class. Refugees, students, pensioners, unemployed, disabled, low-wage workers and union members are all making headlines as hampering productivity or dragging down the budget. Meanwhile the federal government has found \$24 billion somewhere in their 'budget black hole' to buy and operate a swag of F-35 fighter jets from the USA.

Rising unemployment due to closure of big industries is being blamed, in the right-wing press, on uncompetitive wages. Little could be further from the truth, as throughout China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh and India, wages have been on the up-and-up with the continued work of militant working class struggle. Bangladeshi garment workers for instance struck and won a 77% pay rise in recent months, and the docks in Hong Kong were rocked by strikes. As we finalised editing, I learnt of a 60,000 strong strike gripping a manufacturing district in China which produces for a range of big sports brands, and sympathy strikes in other districts. Take heart that the closure of industries, rising unemployment, cuts to education, health and welfare, and attacks on wages and workplace conditions are not the end - but only the opportunity for a new beginning.

Severe economic crisis and capital flight in Argentina in 2001 led to occupations and establishment of worker-run manufacturing, distribution and retail. Who's to say the same cannot be done with the closing Holden or Ford plants, or our TAFE system?

In love and solidarity,
Gabriel and Alasdair, editors.

“For Your Protection”: Personal Experience Leads to Disappointment

By a Survivor - "Broken Doll" 2014

The police are supposed to be our protectors, finding lost children, reducing crime within the community and taking action to keep everyone safe. Or so we have been told. If we are meant to feel safe around these “protectors” why is it that they oppress us, why are there rapists still on the streets and how did a man who is known to have murdered a cat end up having so much influence in the Australian Greens Party, despite this offence having been reported to the police?

This cat killer has not only murdered one, but two (and possibly more) cats now and has been known to have violent outbursts, including assaulting another patron at a nightclub without provocation. Though photographic evidence of the cat slaying was provided, police showed apathy about the murder of my friend’s cat and even accepted it as appropriate. Should this man offend again, they may be partially responsible for it. Such disappointments from the law and from those who are following orders have let others down, especially in regards to assault.

Every time someone is raped, it is never the survivors fault regardless of what they were wearing, the victim’s relationship to their rapist, or whether they are to blame for the rapist losing control over their urges. Hell, people should have the ability to walk around naked without the fear of being raped (owning our sexuality and having a positive body image scares society). If these criminals are still out there, unpunished because these “protectors” have bullied survivors out of making allegations, it is on their conscience, not those of the survivors.

Rape culture is the norm in this society, with the constant rape jokes, songs about rape culture and the mentality that the survivors are almost always at fault. Sadly, such insight has been accepted by the police and by the law. They encourage victim blaming and even normalise it. From personal experiences with the police, should they observe any sign of guilt/self-blame from a rape survivor, they will literally tear them to shreds about it. They will ask you all types of invasive, rude, insensitive questions, I was once asked by the police if I was certain I was raped because it was committed by someone I cared about at the time. When I first tried to report my attacker, I showed reluctance and froze up, realising I could cost him his life for reporting him and was unaware of his mental state at the time (he was intoxicated) so felt guilt. The police came to the conclusion that my hesitance must have meant I was lying, so they asked me to leave and to stop wasting their time.

Now, I beat myself up every day for not reporting it when I did, at the time I thought I deserved it and thought he was drunk. After seeing my rapist last year I came to the conclusion that he definitely meant to cause me harm and that the attack was not an accident. I suppose if the cops had sat me down, spoke to me with more kindness and compassion maybe I would have taken a rapist off the street and prevented further attacks, but no. As a result of my rape, I now experience chronic RR PTSD, guilt, lack of trust and inability to have sexual relationships with others; but my attacker didn't kill me, and I am a stronger person for it. I have since managed to be emotionally (but non-sexually) polyamorous in relationships and generally have a heart that belongs to a number of people, this is something my rapist or the cops never took from me.

Last year, I tried to report the attack (triggered by seeing my attacker again after all of those years and seeing him smirk at me, in a way that made me think I was in danger) but was unsuccessful. Unfortunately, though I was able to name my rapist, there was no solid evidence that I was raped at the time (this was years ago) so my report was treated as a false rape allegation. Now that my family has been informed of my attack, although I left out details and had to lie to them (for example telling them I wasn't too badly hurt, that my attacker was a stranger, and that I don't remember much about it), I fear I will have to go to the police again; but I have made it clear to them that I have forgiven my rapist and that I am ok.

I harbour a lot of anger and hatred towards myself for having to lie to those I love, yet I know I am not alone in my personal experiences. If rape wasn't normalised and accepted in this society and if the police had a form of sensitivity training, perhaps there would be a better outcome for all involved? I strongly advise any rape victims to seek counselling at Yarrow Place. This free service is the glimmer of hope for any rape survivor.

Has the law lost the meaning of consent? If a victim knew their partner, *trusted* their partner and *loved* their partner prior to the event does this really trivialise the assault? Such guardians should undertake some sensitivity training, maybe a victim knew their attacker and is fearful and reluctant, not making the whole thing up? Maybe rather than punishing survivors who are brave enough to report their experiences, action should be taken to investigate (and prosecute if necessary) such crimes.

My attacker is still out there, walking the streets, he may not be out to get me but he remembers me as his “Broken Doll”. Even if I don't see him in person, he is in my dreams, on the face of anyone who manages to trigger me, as a threatening hallucination or in my night terrors. Now I recognise we have a new fear, those who protect us only oppress us.

There is hope, if survivors share their stories, are met with compassion and caution, then maybe the world will be safer. If survivors are encouraged to heal themselves, and have a support network (that isn't the police) this is good news for a survivor.

I offer myself as someone who can support any survivor through the trauma, for the identity of the writer, please contact to the editors who will contact me. I am no experienced counsellor, but I understand what you need, and most importantly what you deserve. One thing a rape survivor does not need is to endure the trauma alone, and sure as hell not to feel obliged to make reports when you know you are going to be met by hostile police, as suggested, to seek support (and intervention) through Yarrow Place is a better strategy.

Our police need to lift their game.....

Yarrow Place website: <<http://www.yarrowplace.sa.gov.au/>>

Address: Level 2

55 King William Rd

North Adelaide 5006

Phone: (08) 8226 8777 or **Toll Free** in SA: 1800-817-421

After Hours and Emergency: (08) 8226 8787



Frequently Asked Questions of Anarchism

An excerpt from 'An Anarchist FAQ' (<http://www.infoshop.org/AnAnarchistFAQ>).

Won't an anarchist society be vulnerable to the power hungry?

A common objection to anarchism is that an anarchist society will be vulnerable to be taken over by thugs or those who seek power. A similar argument is that a group without a leadership structure becomes open to charismatic leaders so anarchy would just lead to tyranny. Anarchists are not impressed with the argument that anarchy would be unable to stop thugs seizing power. It ignores the fact that we live in a society where the power-hungry already hold power. As an argument against anarchism it fails and is, in fact, an argument against capitalist and statist societies. Moreover, it also ignores the fact that people in an anarchist society would have gained their freedom by overthrowing every existing and would-be thug who had or desired power over others. They would have defended that freedom against those who desired to re-impose it. They would have organised themselves to manage their own affairs and, therefore, to abolish all hierarchical power.

And we are to believe that these people, after struggling to become free, would quietly let a new set of thugs impose themselves? A free society would use direct action to resist the would-be ruler just as it had used direct action to free itself from existing rulers. An anarchist society would be organised in a way which would facilitate this direct action as it would be based on networks of solidarity and mutual aid. An injury to one is an injury to all and a would-be ruler would face a whole liberated society acting against him or her. Faced with the direct action of the population (which would express itself in non-co-operation, strikes, demonstrations, occupations, insurrections and so on) a would-be power seeker would find it difficult to impose themselves. Unlike those accustomed to rulership in existing society, an anarchist people would be a society of rebels and so difficult to dominate and conquer.

Anarchists point to the example of the rise of Fascism in Italy, Spain and Germany to prove their point. In areas with strong anarchist movements the fascists were resisted most strongly. While in Germany Hitler took power with little opposition, in Italy and Spain the fascists had to fight long and hard to gain power. The anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist organisations fought the fascists tooth and nail, with some success before betrayal by the Republicans and Marxists. From this historical experience anarchists argue that an anarchist society would quickly and easily defeat would-be thugs as people would be used to practising direct action and self-management and would have no desire to stop practising them.

Everybody in an anarchist society irrespective of what they do, or who they are or what type of work they perform is entitled to share in society's wealth. Whether a community survives or prospers depends on the combined efforts of the people in that community. Ethical behaviour would become the norm in an anarchist community; those people who act ethically would be rewarded by the standing they achieve in the community and by others being more than happy to work with and aid them. People who cut corners, try to exercise power over others, refuse to co-operate as equals or otherwise act in an unethical manner would lose their standing in an anarchist society. Their neighbours and work mates would refuse to co-operate with them (or reduce co-operation to a minimum) and take other forms of non-violent direct action to point out that certain forms of activity was inappropriate. They would discuss the issue with the unethical person and try to convince them of the errors of their way.

In a society where the necessities are guaranteed, people would tend to act ethically because ethical behaviour raises an individual's profile and standing within such a community. Capitalism and ethical behaviour are mutually exclusive concepts; anarchism encourages and rewards ethical behaviour.

One last point. Some people seem to think that anarchism is about the powerful being appealed to, to not oppress and dominate others. Far from it. Anarchism is about the oppressed and exploited refusing to let others dominate them. It is not an appeal to the "better side" of the boss or would-be boss; it is about the solidarity and direct action of those subject to a boss getting rid of the boss -- whether the boss agrees to it or not, or whether they are a 'good boss'. Once this is clearly understood the idea that an anarchist society is vulnerable to the power-hungry is clearly nonsense -- anarchy is based on resisting power and so is, by its very nature, more resistant to would-be rulers than a hierarchical one.



Headless Chook Education

By John Rice

John Rice is an English-as-a-Second-Language lecturer at TAFE. This speech was delivered at the National Day of Action against the Abbott government's planned cuts to education.

Hi everyone,

I'd like to talk about the broader context and agenda to this austerity drive on education – these education cutbacks part of a wider neoliberal project to create headless chooks – you know why they want headless chooks? They lay eggs, but don't think.

The aim is to restore capitalist profits through skill-based productivity increases – but they don't want workers to question the system too closely.

The problem for the ruling 1% is that capitalist rates of profit ARE falling – and have been for the last 40 years – from the late 60s and early 70s – this is the root cause of the GFC (Global Financial Crisis), the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the stagnation of Japan and Europe.

The neoliberal project of privatization, casualisation and union busting born in the 1970s as a response to this slow-down has failed to turn this crisis around.

So – a key strategy is to create a highly skilled, but narrow, technical system of training to increase productivity and competitiveness –but not broad education – to manufacture a skilled workforce without the social criticality that we saw proliferate in the 60s and into the 70s. This “problem” was the direct outcome of the broad participation of the working class in free tertiary education in the 50s, 60s and 70s in US, Europe, and Australia at different times.

How to do this? It's a two-pronged approach:

1. Privatize and commodify the public good of education – this fits neatly into the neoliberal notion of profit-driven production for the free market, but also, and perhaps more importantly: it steadily cuts out the working class from the higher education process, so only those with a material interest in the system – the upper and upper-middle classes – tend to get educated.

This is a deliberate political strategy to disempower the working classes and shut them out from the knowledge economy because of the potential for social explosiveness.

2. The second prong – what I want to focus on – what we are not out here for directly today, but what is essential to bear in mind – the key other half of our struggle, is this: the ruling class need to redefine what is actually learnt in schools so as to produce socially and politically docile workers. Do it in primary and secondary school – like the tobacco companies, and religions – and get them young!! Abbott's recent appointments of neoliberal culture warriors to review the Australian school curriculum should be seen as a grave threat in this regard.

This is being done in 2 key areas: History and Literacy.

History: Ken Wiltshire – Professor of Public Administration at the University of Queensland Business School. Why has a Business School Professor, with no background in history, been charged with reviewing the national history curriculum?

His agenda is to turn the curriculum away from its current thematic approach of exploring Indigenous issues, Environmental Awareness, and Orientation to Asia. Instead, the focus will be on the ANZAC legend, Simpson and his donkey, European achievements, and “Australian values”- away with the multiple perspectives of “postmodernist relativism” – the singular nationalist narrative will be tightly sculpted for dishing out to all children.

Australia is spending more than any European country on this year's WW1 centenary - \$325m – twice the amount spent by the UK, and 20 times NZ's: we have a warmongering government producing a war-mongering culture, and which is the enemy of education. The result: technocratic workers who don't question the Judeo-Christian, Eurocentric narrative of the white nationalist improvement achieved by Australian capital over 220 years.

As George Orwell once remarked:
He who controls the past controls the present.
He who controls the present controls the future.

The other curriculum area is Literacy – the effects here are even more powerful: this affects the shaping of how young minds think about their present condition.

Kevin Donnelly, head of the Education Standards Institute – a Melbourne-based 'think-tank' – has recently been named reviewer of the national English curriculum – my professional area. Here are some of his key ideas and quotations:

- *Donnelly worked for Phillip Morris tobacco to design a program delivered in schools
- *"Multiculturalism is based on the mistaken belief that all cultures are of equal worth"
- *speaks often of the "damaging aspects of the feminist agenda"
- *only heterosexuals have the right to teach sex education
- *the AEU (Australian Education Union) curriculum policy is "anti-family, pro-gay and lesbian, and applauds the black armband view of history".
- *English is the language we all speak, and it's more important to spend more time on this than teaching Asian Languages.

So – this individual is in charge of the review of how we teach reading and writing – let's remember that the use of language shapes how we think.

What does he want to do, exactly? He is explicitly opposed to "critical literacy" - let's read this as "critical thinking". He favors phonics – sounding out letters – what us teachers call "barking at print". He says us teachers don't do this; it's a straw man – of course we do. What he wants to eradicate by stressing phonics is the higher order "socially critical" forms of literacy.... because this stuff is dangerous for the "headless chicken project".

To teach people how to criticize and question established ideas, or any ideas, how to dig into terms like "civilized", "Australian values", "family values", "settlement" vs "invasion", to explore gender bias, implicit racism, to explore how rulers create permission in populations to rule – how they manufacture consent – this is anathema to them.

Focus at the low level of reading – at letter decoding, and repetitive, teacher-centered drilling and reproduction of knowledge, rather than active engagement and construction of knowledge – and you have chickens that will run in whatever direction you wish, making them ideal for productivity-based increases in surplus value extraction.

So I would ask all teachers and students here today who are concerned about these cuts to explore this other side of this struggle for yourselves – please get familiar with the key players and arguments. It's a critical aspect of the fight that you are engaged in, and is inseparable from it; we must see both prongs of the attack – the financial and the ideological – for what they are.

It's ultimately a response by capital to falling rates of profit – if we understand it in these class terms, we will be able to fight it more effectively, and in the process as we learn to do this, we'll be engaged in the best form of education you can get – the expansion of social, historical and political awareness through engagement, through struggle for a more enlightened world.

Maybe, in the process, a majority of us will realize that we need to work right outside the square and eliminate the profit-based system that is failing to do what it claims, and failing our ecosystem as well.

In that way, we'll be able, one day, to put the head back on the chook.



Aushalten, Durchhalten, und mau halten: Endure, Persevere and Be Quiet.

By Gabriel Evangelista – Adelaide University Nursing Student

Once upon a time nurses trained in hospitals. Around the Second World War a student-nurse would make '11 shillings and two' a week - whatever that means, they paid a tiny rent on a room in the Nurses Home, Indigenous people were barred from superior training at major urban public hospitals, and nurses (like most women workers) were sacked when they got married and issued a little certificate from the Commonwealth to that effect, confining them to domestic labour as wives and mothers. If you were over 21 and unmarried when you started your training, you were assumed to be morally impure, and issued a black uniform and the title 'Black Crow'.

Nursing was controlled by 'strange, irate, grey haired 60 year old virgins with big stupid hats', according to an ex-nurse I met, who were known as 'Matrons'. Their insistence on perfectly tucked beds and starched uniforms made Obsessive Compulsives seem messy, and was probably evidence of decades of sexual repression.

A period of social change beginning in the late 1950s and continuing until the 1970s swept most of this aside. The second wave of feminism forced changes to allow women to continue working if they got married, and the Aboriginal rights movement swept aside segregation. Matrons disappeared and were replaced by a nurse managerial hierarchy. Training moved from the hospitals to technical colleges in the 1970s, and the bizarre ritualistic training began to give way to an actual education system.

This transition led to two problems: the disappearance of wages for student-nurses, and the disappearance of provided housing. The housing may be a negligible aspect, as Nurses Homes were merely another aspect of social control, expressed in Florence Nightingale's nurse education doctrine, in order to preserve their 'moral purity'. They had single bedrooms, were surveilled by Matrons, had a nine o'clock curfew and strictly no boys allowed. I hear this led to the River Torrens being a popular destination for sneaky RAH (Royal Adelaide Hospital) student nurses and their boyfriends. In the 1990s the Colleges of Advanced Education were absorbed by universities. Flinders University absorbed the Sturt Campus, and had the first Bachelor of Nursing in SA. I started Nursing at Flinders in 2012; this marked 3 years since the Rudd Government had lifted the cap on University seats to soften unemployment post-GFC (Global Financial Crisis). Nursing enrolments around the country have sky-rocketed in both universities, TAFEs and private diploma-level training providers, propelled by university and government departmental research saying that we need a lot more nurses. Our classes were packed: 30 students per class was standard, and if it wasn't for Fire Safety legislation I have no doubt they would have been larger.

Flinders School of Nursing began looking for ways to accommodate the influx. In 2013 they slashed tutorial times by a quarter, from 2 to 1.5 hours, and abolished all live lectures, replacing them with 'pre-recorded' lectures from past years to be viewed online. I transferred this year to Adelaide University, where we had a lab class with the entire year level - 160 students packed into a big lab in the School of Medicine with two teachers. In a two hour class, contact time between student and teachers equates to less than 1 minute per student. This class has become known as the 'mandatory Monday waste-of-time'. Plenty of people just sign their name off the roll and sneak out unnoticed early to do more useful things, like breathe fresh air, and go home.

Flinders also joined UniSA, La Trobe, Victoria University and others as a Nursing course which does not teach CPR, manual handling and First Aid skills. Students at these universities are required to get this training at private providers in their own time and paid for with their own money. If you don't do this training, you don't get to do your Clinical Placements, and you fail. Clinical Placements are in chronic shortage. ClinEdSA (Clinical Education SA) struggles to get us all placements, and some students are forced to go without. As students we are told not to take too many sick days from our placements, as we won't be able to get make-up days, and we will be made to repeat. Clinical Placements run across mid-year holidays and mid-semester breaks. They run into summer holidays in some instances. To compound it all, unlike previous generations of nursing students, the last few generations have not been paid for the hours of placement each student must do to complete their course. Over a 3-year course, each student must complete roughly 1,400 hours of unpaid placement. This equates to hundreds-of-thousands of hours of free labour each year nationally for the chronically under-funded health sector, acting as a Band-Aid to cover the cuts imposed by successive state and federal governments, at the same time as impoverishing thousands of students.

Textbooks are a joke, too. At Adelaide the bill is over \$1000 for the year, and there is only one copy of each in the library, forcing students to buy books instead of borrowing them. Flinders is much better in terms of the number and availability of library books and having books available in-class. These course issues raise a number of new barriers facing students with disabilities, no spare time and no money. It lends enormous privilege in the course to students from well-off families who can afford to buy them the books, given that exams and assignments are based off them. Youth Allowance is inaccessible to plenty of students, and unliveable if you do get it, driving students toward full-time work.

To top it off, state governments nation-wide have been axing Graduate Nursing Positions, an extra year of paid on-the-job training, mentoring and professional development. In QLD the figures are down to 10% of students doing a Graduate year of study. In SA this is down to about 40%. Graduate Nurses are struggling to find work, as despite documented shortages of nurses, public health departments are cutting beds, short-staffing wards, axing graduate programs and just not creating any more jobs.

In March 2013 a group of Nursing students from Flinders and Adelaide Universities joined together on the steps of parliament during the National Union of Students' Day of Action for better education funding, and carried a banner asking for a doubling of graduate jobs and increased funding for public health. Student Nurses need to unite and organise if we are to win ourselves a future. The State Government, the Nursing schools and bodies like ANMEC (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Education) or the College of Nursing, are not going to push on our behalf for things to improve; in our own interest, and that of the community, it is our responsibility to do it ourselves.



OPEN LETTER TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

By SIMPla (Stop Income Management in Playford)

This Open Letter was tabled in the Senate on Wednesday March 26th 2014.

We the undersigned call for the suspension of the federal government's compulsory income management, expanded to Playford and four other sites as part of programs that began in July last year.

We believe compulsory income management is humiliating, unfair, and unlikely to improve quality of life for recipients or their children.

We note the lack of solid evidence that this policy achieves its goals, and fear this approach will be counterproductive. We also note the expensive cost of the scheme, which we consider wasteful when more effective, less-heavy handed options are under-funded.

We believe the existing guardianship laws are far more democratic, effective, and flexible mechanisms for dealing with welfare recipients with severe mental health issues.

Compulsory income management in Playford will affect welfare recipients deemed "vulnerable" by Centrelink or referred by state government agencies like Housing and Families SA.

Recipients will be forced to have 50-70% of their payments "quarantined" onto the BasicsCard, which can only be spent on "essentials". Recipients volunteering for the scheme receive bonuses but must spend at least three months on the system.

This policy is an expensive, radical experiment. It breaks with the established tradition that welfare recipients have the right to control their payments. We believe the burden of proof falls on the federal government — to clearly demonstrate this approach will improve the health and financial situations of recipients. This has not happened.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library's paper on income management last year concluded that there is "an absence of adequate data relating to the effectiveness or otherwise of income management".

Given the government's stated commitment to "evidence-based policy", it is particularly disappointing that compulsory income management is being expanded beyond the NT when there is no compelling, objective evidence the policy achieves its goals.

We note the Menzies School of Health's 2010 study of spending patterns of NT income management recipients, which reported that apart from the impacts of government stimulus payments, there have been no significant changes to consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, and soft drink, nor to fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Equality and Rights Alliance's 2011 report into income management surveyed 180 NT women on the system. It found 85% had not changed what they purchased; 79% wanted to leave the scheme; and 74% felt discriminated against. It is claimed that compulsory income management helps welfare recipients become more financially responsible. It is unclear how reducing recipients' control over their payments will achieve this goal. We are concerned this measure will entrench dependency and discourage recipients from developing financial management skills.

We note the Western Australian Council of Social Service's 2009 evaluation of child-protection income management in WA, which identified low rates of referral and take-up of financial management courses (20% among child-protection income management clients). 55% of surveyed financial counsellors thought compulsory income management negatively impacted upon the financial capabilities of clients.

We fear compulsory income management will have long-term mental health impacts. Consultations by the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association in 2008 revealed widespread feelings of humiliation and shame among NT recipients.

We also note international research indicating heavy-handed policies like forced income management tend to further stress disadvantaged families, potentially increasing family breakdown.

We note the considerable cost of this policy, estimated at \$4,600 per recipient annually in Playford and the four other sites. By comparison, employment agencies are provided with only \$500 per long-term unemployed worker to address barriers to employment. The NT scheme has cost more than \$500 million over five years.

We are concerned that criteria for determining "vulnerability" are vague and subjective. The Commonwealth Ombudsman's 2012 report on this topic found only 14% of decisions to place recipients on this category in the NT surveyed were "supported by the relevant evidence and met policy objectives". Aboriginals have been over-represented in this category in the NT, forming 95% of recipients. We fear something similar in Playford, where there exists a significant Aboriginal community.

We consider problematic the 'financial hardship' trigger for 'vulnerability'. Financial hardship is widespread among welfare recipients. Not because of widespread incompetence or irresponsibility but because of inadequate welfare payments, expensive rental markets, lack of public housing, and cost-of-living pressures.

We regard the financial hardship trigger as a kind of double jeopardy, punishing recipients twice. First, forcing recipients to survive on below-poverty-line payments. Second, deeming them to suffer financial hardship because of low payments, thus forcing them onto income management.

We fear compulsory income management will have negative consequences for those requiring emergency assistance, like domestic violence victims. The Australian Law Reform Commission's paper on this topic expressed concerns about victims being less likely to reveal their circumstances to Centrelink, and thus being unable to access emergency services like Crisis Payments, for fear of being placed onto income management.

We are concerned that the Playford community has not been properly consulted about this policy: neither when its federal representative, the member for Wakefield, Nick Champion MP, wrote to prime minister Kevin Rudd in 2010 recommending Playford as a site for the expansion of compulsory income management; nor during the months before the scheme began operating in July last year.

We call for the federal government's compulsory income management to be replaced with more addiction programs, financial counselling, and other support services that have been under-funded.

We call for the more cost-effective and less heavy-handed Centrepay system to be further promoted.

We call for welfare payments to be increased to liveable levels, which will dramatically improve quality of life for struggling families and individuals.

We call for an alternative policy vision that respects the competence, dignity, and rights of recipients and targets the real causes of disadvantage.

Authorised by Stop Income Management in Playford. For further information about the campaign against compulsory income management, or to endorse the open letter, email: simpla.playford@gmail.com.

ENDORISING ORGANISATIONS:

Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council / Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement / Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless Persons / Adelaide Refugee Action Group / Angle Park Grannies Group / Anti-Poverty Network SA / Australian Arab Council / Australian Education Union SA / Catholic Religious Australia SA / Community Services Departmental Committee, Public Service Association of NSW / Construction, Forestry, Mining, and Energy Union SA / Economic Reform Australia / The F Collective- Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of SA / Green Left Weekly / Independent Community-Wide Homelessness Administrators Group / Josephite SA Reconciliation Circle / Jumbunna House of Indigenous Learning, University of Technology / Maritime Union of SA / National Council of Single Mothers and their Children / National Union of Workers SA / Ngoppon Together Inc. Reconciliation Group / People's Health Movement / Positive Life SA / Prisoners Advocacy / Public Health Association of Australia SA (Political Economy and Public Health Special Interest Group) / Red Flag / The Romero Community / SA Unions / Shelter SA / Single Parents Action Group SA / South Australian Aboriginal Coalition for Social Justice / South Australian Coalition of Domestic Violence Services / South Australian Council of Social Service / South Australian Feminist Collective / South Australian Network of Drug and Alcohol Services / Spark Resource Centre / Spirit of Eureka / St Vincent de Paul National Council / Stop Income Management, Not in Bankstown, Not Anywhere campaign group / Stop the Intervention Collective Sydney / Uniting Communities / Welfare Rights Centre SA / Women's Electoral League / Women's Equity Think Tank / Women's International League for Peace and Freedom / Women Everywhere Advocating Violence Elimination / Youth Affairs Council of SA

Philippines: Solidarity With Victims of Typhoon Haiyan

This article is taken from a pamphlet produced by Brisbane Solidarity Network- blackflag.co.nr

More than a month after super typhoon Yolanda, also known as Haiyan, pummelled the Visayas, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported on Thursday morning that the death toll has slightly increased to 5,982 from 5,959 reported Wednesday. The number of people injured and missing remained at 27,022 and 1,779, respectively.

Affected cities: 57; affected provinces: 44. Number of people/families affected: 12.191 million people/ 2.582 million families number of people displaced: 3.98 million people/ 869,742 families
In evacuation centres: 21,669 families/ 93,814 people.

The number of damaged houses decreased to 1.192 million, nearly half of which were totally destroyed. To date, power outage is still being experienced in some provinces and municipalities of Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and Eastern Visayas.

Based on the latest inspection of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), a total of 1,959 transmission facilities have been damaged.

Government's Response caused more devastation to the people.

The Philippine archipelago is in the frontline of calamity brought by storms. It is a common knowledge impossible to miss especially by the government which is supposed to be the authority in terms of preparation and rehabilitation. Huge number of dead people scattered in Leyte is attributable to incapacity of the government to install preparatory mechanism to lessen casualties, the Philippine government did not learn to our past experience of havoc due to storm surges.

Reports in relation to looting and violence in Tacloban city and other municipalities are effects of dirty politics, neglect and corruption. The inability of the government to provide systematic and effective respond made people behaved violently; shortage of food is not an issue. The global attention is on the Philippines for the past few weeks; donations and support in terms of cash, in kinds and in services are overwhelming. Ships fully loaded of goods are lined-up in ports of Cebu and Manila; billions of funds are pouring in through government and corporate accounts (media); despite of these, victims are scrambling to get food. The feeling of scarcity and food insecurity forced people to behave violently.

This calamity is one of the most devastating witnessed by global community, the spirit of solidarity is heart-warming and very effective in terms of recovery and rehabilitation, but the government's corrupt practices undermined this solidarity; two weeks after the horrifying event, the people in Leyte remained hungry, homeless and seeking medical support; useless and hazardous materials are everywhere. Prices of basic commodities increased almost double such as food and medicine; lack of power supply is a lucrative business that exploits the victims. Local business offered high rate of charging services to the people for their emergency lights and mobile phones.

Generally, it is the government's inability to respond swiftly and appropriately makes the situation much more devastating.

Yolanda's Aftermath and Autonomous Initiative

In this context, Mobile Anarchist School decided to act and conducted direct action; we set an action that could elude government's corrupt influence. We gathered support from Local Autonomous Network (LAN), independent collectives and groups and international network.

Power is crucial in terms of rehabilitation and recovery process, so we focus our effort in consolidating resources to complete a 150 watts solar set-up to provide free charging services to community to power up emergency lights, flashlights and mobile phones. After a week of soliciting support, we procured 160 watts solar panel, 10 ampere solar control charger, 500 watts inverter and 12 volts/50 ampere starter battery.

Manila was minimally affected by the typhoon, but the rest of the Visayas Islands and the other places were badly and destructively hit. Some of our comrades who have relatives in the affected communities were really worried because up until now there is no communication and electricity. That's why we decided to make an strategic solidarity effort with the area of Tacloban City. This is what we have in mind and hopefully people in Australia will be interested with this.

We will be based on our meetings with some individuals here in Manila, particularly the Mobile Anarchist School. The typhoon was really destructive in all aspects; thousands of affected communities had a lot of needs in terms of foods, water, clothes/blankets, medicine, electricity/communication etc. We see that there's already a lot of aid concerning to provide foods, water, clothes and medicine, but an immediate solution to provide electricity for communication and alternative media purposes was partially neglected, that's why our strategic plan of solidarity with this kind of natural calamities is to provide a free internet and free charging of mobile phones with the help of a solar power equipment.

The aftermath of different calamities, not only this Typhoon Haiyan, is always the loss of electrical power and communication for our love ones. This kind of problem always needs to be addressed. Our plan is to travel and set up a booth first in Tacloban City area and put up a 120watts solar panel with batteries, solar charger and inverter that will cost of 17,500 pesos (roughly A\$450). So if our international friends and comrades can raise funds for this equipment, we can be in solidarity with the victims of this Typhoon Haiyan. The Philippines are always directly affected by different natural calamities. Solar power equipment can always be used after there is a calamity.

At this moment, based on the information that we got, the electricity in the affected area will be back after 6 months. That's why we think that the more solar power equipment that's used, the more people will be directly benefited. Just let us know if you are interested with this kind of solidarity direct action, we are now working on it.

As we travelled, we witnessed the extensive damage in many municipalities in Leyte; Yolanda's onslaught starts right after we crossed San Juanico, a bridge connecting Samar and Leyte. The situation in Tacloban is relatively peaceful, the people are trying to collect and salvage remaining useful materials to rebuild their homes at the back draft of heavily devastated city. We could not find any regular trip so we rented an expensive jeep going to Municipality of San Miguel.

We could not find any regular trip so we rented an expensive jeep going to Municipality of San Miguel. We reached Barangay Libtong, San Miguel on the 21st of November at four in the afternoon.



Ways forward

The incompetence and corruption in the government proved to be more devastating than the super typhoon itself, we call on the people, collectives, private sectors and autonomous network to act directly. Avoid government process because goods and supplies will just end up in storage facilities accessible only to authorities. There are plenty of reports with regard to anomalies, we actually witnessed how the authority control the basic goods for their own purposes. Thousands of sacks of rice and goods are being kept by the authorities and distributing only very limited supplies to the families who could not access basic commodities.

In our part, we would like to expand our set-up of solar power unit equip with 300 watts solar panel, 30 ampere solar control charger, 2500 inverter and two units of 3SM maintenance and deep cycle batteries to accommodate more units of mobile phones and flashlights. We will organize a Solar Guerrilla Autonomous Response Team that will immediately react in every calamity and power black-out situation. In the first week of December we are planning to organize a camp that will provide relief, medical missions and stress debriefing activities, the extent of operations will depend on the support and participation from immediate and extended Network.

Any queries or donation related to this initiative please contact:
aschool@riseup.net OR **etnikobandido@yahoo.com.ph**

Visit the Etniko Bandido Infoshop at <http://ebinfoshop.surestepintegral.com/>

Donations can be sent to

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MEDIA RELEASE: 700 PERCENT INCREASE IN NUMBER OF INCOME MANAGEMENT CLIENTS IN PLAYFORD

The number of Income Management clients in the City of Playford in northern Adelaide has increased almost 700 per cent over the second half of 2013, according to data from the Department of Social Services. As of December 27th, 495 people were on Income Management. The May 23rd figure for Playford, seven months earlier, was 71 people.

Pas Forgione, Spokesperson for SIMPla (Stop Income Management in Playford) said, 'This is an enormous blow-out in the number of Income Management clients, the vast majority of whom have been pushed onto the program without their consent. 403 clients, or 81 percent of all clients in Playford, are forced participants.'

'Most of the massive increase is due to the introduction last July of new youth triggers for Income Management, mainly affecting young people on the Unreasonable To Live At Home rate of Youth Allowance.'

Simon Schrapel, Chief Executive of Uniting Communities said, 'The rapid rise in Playford residents being forced on to Compulsory Income Management should sound a warning for the whole community - the basic right to be in control of how you spend your own money is being eroded and it will only foster a greater level of welfare dependency which is one of the things the scheme was supposedly designed to reduce.'

Forgione said, 'Income Management is a failed policy. It is a counterproductive measure that does not build the capacities of at-risk clients or improve their health and well-being. In fact, there is evidence that the humiliation and stigma it inflicts on clients could be harmful over the long-term.'

'According to estimates by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, total spending nationwide for Income Management from 2005-2006 to 2014-2015 will reach \$1 billion. The per person cost of Income Management in Playford has been estimated at \$4,600 per annum.'

Inga Baker, local resident and SIMPla member said, 'Hundreds of people receiving Centrelink payments are being forced onto the BasicsCard without justification. Why are we being treated differently? Why are people in the Playford region being treated like second-class citizens? What did we do wrong? This policy is a heavy-handed approach that limits the spending options of the participants and takes away the right to control personal finances.'

An Open Letter calling for the policy to be scrapped, which has been endorsed by over 40 state and national organisations representing diverse sections of the community, will be tabled this week in the Senate by Senator Sarah Hanson-Young of the Greens.

Forgione said, 'There is a broad range of organisations that have joined our campaign and made public their opposition to this failed policy. Supporting organisations include Aboriginal NGOs, faith-based groups, multicultural groups, domestic violence services, trade unions, and welfare agencies.'

Cheryl Axleby, Chief Executive of the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, said, 'We need to ensure individuals living in poverty are not punished for their circumstances and are treated with dignity and respect, that they are not looked down upon by our society.'

Forgione said, 'We are all calling for Income Management to be terminated, with savings put into services that build the skills of vulnerable clients and have a track-record of success, and for Centrelink payments to be lifted to more liveable levels.'

Further Information: SIMPla (Stop Income Management in Playford) Spokesperson, Pas Forgione - on 08 8231 6982/0411 587 663 or at simpla.playford@gmail.com.

“What’s next?” A Method for Post Rally/March Movement Building

By Sam Shetler

Facilitating rallies and marches into broad based movements should be the goal of every activist who engages with them. Think of the last rally/march you attended. It’s coming towards an end. The lights dim on the speakers. The listeners’ hands are full of flyers; cramped from signing petitions; bankrupt from badges bought; and all coordinated with times for info sessions and organising meetings post rally.

“What’s next?”

The possibilities are endless, especially in the social domain. One possibility, logically and logistically, follows though:

“It’s your turn,” the activist could say. The listener becomes the speaker, here and now.

“How can I ‘make easy’ joining this movement for you?” or “What can you teach me?” the activist should ask. The activist becomes the listener and facilitates (to ‘make easy’).

“What’s next?”

“Well, my name is... I think what is being done to refugees is unjust and that collective action against corporations who profit from mandatory detention can help. Our ‘concrete’ ideas for action against Transfield and Serco, that we all agreed on, over the last hour is a practical way forward.”

That’s a summarised testimony from a general assembly held after Palm Sunday on the 13th of April 2014. It involved a broad cross-section of 30 people ranging from refugees to lecturers; from mothers to artists; from high school students to activists.

What’s next?

Resources used:

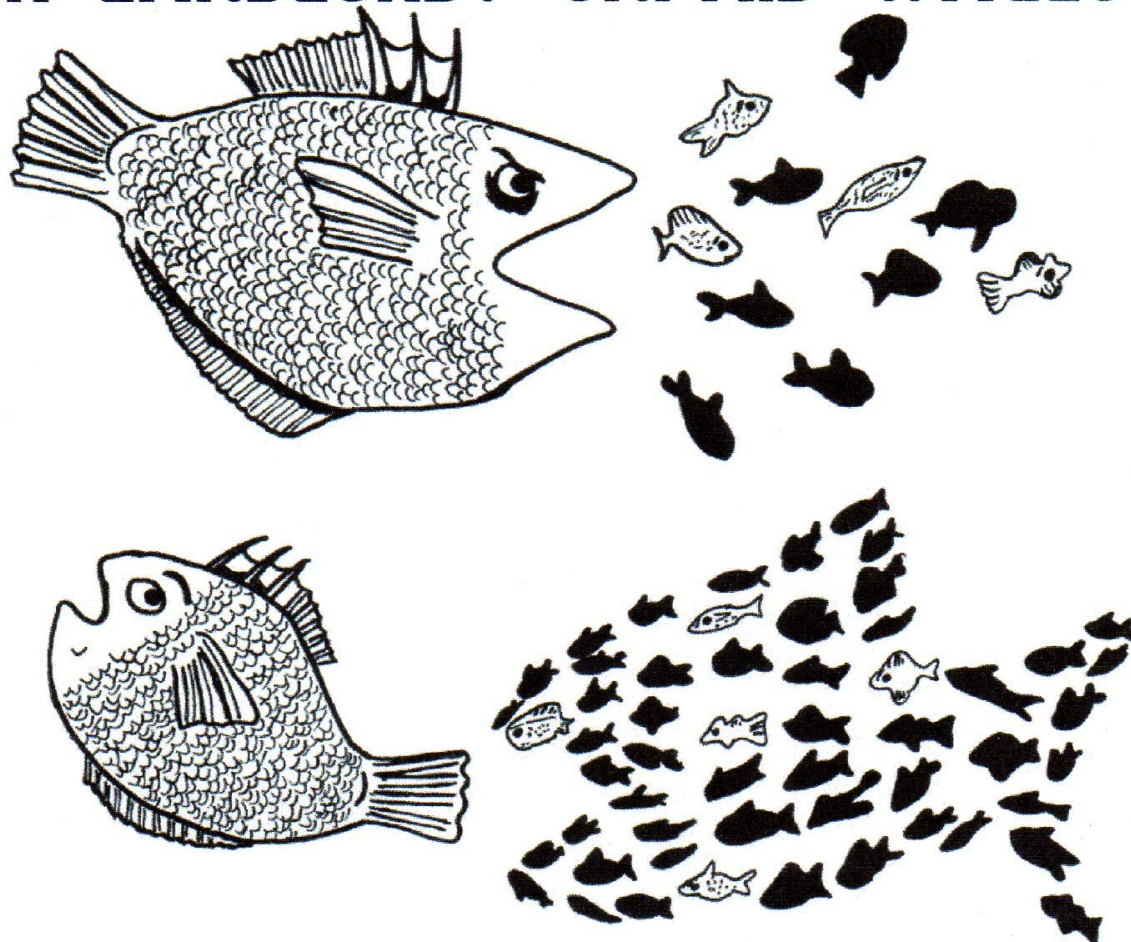
- 30 lightweight seats (crates in this case)
- 2 signs (blank backs of recycled placards)
- 1 megaphone (borrowed from Adelaide University Student Representative Council)
- 1 pen and paper

Method:

1. Skip the initially rally and march
2. Setup the seats and signs at the end of the march.
3. Check the megaphone is up loud and announce that “In 5 minutes there will be discussion and organising to continue the struggle.”
4. Announce a reminder at 1 or 2 minutes before.
5. Have a skilled facilitator who is removed from discussion and focuses on enhancing the participants voices by summarising what they’ve said; looking for connections and patterns in the variety of ideas; keeping everyone on track to practical “concrete” actions to go forth with; and encouraging introductions to tie social bonds.
6. Keep minutes (shorthand, but capturing the main ideas and concerns).
7. Pass around an email list.
8. Follow up by emailing the minutes to show what great ideas collectives can come up with and to increase the chance of continued discussion always leading to the action happening.
9. Meet again to plan the action (skip if you’ve already had ample planning).
10. Act! (followed by reflection, planning and then acting again, hopefully.)

“What’s next?” or “What can I do?” are all too familiar at the end of a rally or march. Ongoing evidence collection and reflection around activist practise is beneficial to all: How do we ‘know’ our audience? Are we acting on tradition or best practise? How effective are we being? This testimony and method could contribute towards a reflective evidence based practice for activists.

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