



Tools for Change

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

About Us

A project of Earthroots, Greenpeace Canada, OPIRG Toronto, OPIRG York and the Student Association of George Brown College, the Tools for Change program provides Torontonians with the skills they need to become more engaged and effective at social change.

We currently organize 20-25 workshops a year. Our complete list of current and past workshops can be found at:

<http://toolsforchange.net/complete-list-of-workshops/>

Sample Workshop Topics

- Media skills
- Social media for social change
- How to facilitate a meeting
- Conflict resolution
- Community organizing
- Campaign planning
- Organizing rallies and marches
- Financial management
- Grassroots fundraising
- And more...

History

Tools for Change was founded in 2010. Staff at Earthroots, OPIRG Toronto, and Greenpeace all saw the value of training their volunteers, members, and staff on crucial social change skills. This is because we could see that the practical skills we needed our members to possess were not being taught elsewhere. These skills are certainly not being taught at colleges, universities, or high schools. We met and decided that it would be best to collaborate and launch a joint public training program. By pooling staff time and resources, we believed we could more cheaply give our members (and the broader community) access to a training program that would be far more comprehensive than any program we each could have managed on our own. Our prediction provide true and we've been collaborating to manage this training coalition ever since.



Why is Tools For Change Important?

The lack of skilled staff and volunteers is a key reason why mission-driven groups, including student groups, struggle to meet their goals.

We meet this largely unmet need to provide training and empowerment opportunities to activists, including student activists. Every campus has a percentage of people who are interested in engaging in social change, but these people don't know where to go to acquire the skills they need. The individual that engages in social change is a rare one. Let's make the most of each person's passion by giving them opportunities to learn the skills to be effective.

Who Are Our Trainers?

Tools for Change recruits experienced Toronto-based activists hailing from different social movements to lead workshops. Trainers include staff at the Ontario Federation of Labour, Ryerson University, George Brown College, Greenpeace, and more.

A list of trainers is online: <http://www.toolsforchange.net/trainers/>

Who Attends?

Since 2010 attendance at Tools for Change workshops has increased from 16 participants to 25 participants (on average) per workshop. 500 people will attend this year's workshops.

Our attendance records show that participants are active in different social movements, including students, food justice, anti-poverty, workers' right, women's rights, immigrant rights, and more.

In addition, over 50,000 people have visited our resource-heavy website.



Who Governs Tools For Change?

Tools for Change is managed and governed by a coordinating committee of 13 people:

- Yogi Acharya is the volunteer and programming coordinator at OPIRG Toronto.
- Victoria Barnett is the Volunteer and Programming coordinator at OPIRG York. She is also a graphic and web designer, social media enthusiast and trainer!
- Jessica Bell is the executive director of TTCriders, a co-founder of Tools for Change, and a lecturer in advocacy and government relations at Ryerson University.
- Natalie Caine is an organizer for Greenpeace Canada, and co-founder of Rhythms of Resistance Toronto.
- Rachele Clemente is the Provincial Board rep for OPIRG York and an experienced community organizer who has worked with a multitude of other organizers in and around Toronto.
- Lindsay Hart is the administration and finance coordinator at OPIRG Toronto.
- Anjali Helferty is the former sustainable campuses coordinator at the Sierra Youth Coalition and worked in the US at the Energy Action Coalition. She is completing her PhD at OISE/University of Toronto.
- Demetria Jackson is the Coordinator for Tools for Change. She is also a life coach, yoga teacher, and care-based activist.
- Sharmeen Khan is a long time media activist, editor at CALM, and bookkeeper at 3903.
- Michelle Pettis is the Community Action Centre Coordinator with the Student Association at George Brown College.
- Laura Severinac is a Programs Organizer for Greenpeace Canada. If you come across Laura, she will most likely be sharing delicious food while plotting and scheming for a better world.
- David Sone is a campaigner at Earthroots, and a long-time supporter of the Grassy Narrows First Nation and the KI First Nation.
- Brook Thorndycraft teaches in the Community Worker Program at George Brown College and facilitates workshops on conflict resolution, sexual health, and other topics.



CHOOSING WORKSHOP TOPICS

How do we choose our workshop topics? To best meet the education needs of Toronto's social movement groups, Tools for Change's workshop topics are chosen through a public online survey distributed to over 900 past participants and local organization allies, including local unions. The survey asks people to identify and rank what workshops topics they want Tools for Change to host. Tools for Change organizes the most popular workshop choices.

Testimonials

What do our participants think about our workshops? Workshop participants fill in an online evaluation survey about the workshop. Participant responses have been overwhelmingly positive. When asked if participants would recommend the workshop to a friend, 98% of respondents have said "yes". Testimonials from past participants are online: <http://www.toolsforchange.net/testimonials/>

Becoming a Member

Organizations that join the coordinating committee commit to joining for a year from August 1st to July 31st.

Committee members contribute approximately \$2000 to \$5000 a year to the program. In addition, committee members also attend meetings (we have between six to eight meetings a year) and organize three to five workshops at times that suit them. This typically amounts to about 100 or so hours of contribution a year.



6 Reasons To Join Tools For Change

1. You will be able to join and help improve one of just a few education programs in Canada geared towards empowering people to take political action for positive change.

2. Your members can attend for free.

3. Providing capacity building and training opportunities to your constituency is expensive and time-consuming. We all save staff time and money when we pool our resources and manage a joint training program that all our members can enjoy. This is the reason why Greenpeace, OPIRG Toronto, and Earthroots decided to collaborate on this program in the first place.

4. Coordinating committee members help determine workshop topics, which means you can help shape the training program to suit your needs.

5. Your support will enable Tools for Change to improve and expand. Specifically, Tools for Change seeks to:

- Expand the number of workshops it offers each year;
- Make our workshops more accessible by setting up a fund to pay for accessibility needs, such as hiring an ASL interpreter when requested;
- Allow us to offer a few longer two-day workshops so the more experienced activists in our community can get more advanced training, and
- Increase the number of resources on our popular website at www.toolsforchange.net so it becomes the one-stop resource hub for activists across Canada.

6. Tools for Change is a popular program. Aligning yourself with the program helps you build a base of support among your own constituency. It also helps you build alliances with other attendees, trainers and other social movement groups.



Summary of Annual Expenses

EXPENSE	COST	SUMMARY
Part Time Coordinator	\$10,400	The coordinator is paid \$20 an hour for 10 hours of work a week, plus 4% expenses for vacation pay, etc.
Trainer Costs	\$4,000	Trainers are paid \$250 to host a workshop.
Accessibility Fund	\$500	Tools for Change will set aside \$500 to pay for services to expand the accessibility of our workshops on an as-needed basis.
Transportation	\$300	We give tokens to participants who can't afford to travel to the workshop.
Printing, copying and design	\$500	Printing costs for promotional and workshop materials.
Website Management, Upgrades, and more	\$500	Pays for plugin purchases, domain hosting, and service fees for our electronic payment systems.

What Our Participants Are Saying...

“The Tools for Change training provides the kind of activist training [that is] so needed. A lot of young people have the enthusiasm and the interest but there are few places to learn the skills needed to effectively organize. Activist education and training is one of the most important priorities today for social and environmental justice.”

— **Judy Rebick**, Former Sam Ginden Chair, Ryerson University

“The skills, support and insights I’ve gained from the Tools for Change workshops are making me a better activist, allowing me to meet activists with diverse priorities and increasing my long-term resolve to work for justice and peace.”

— **Michelle Wagley**, Workshop Participant



Ready to join?

APPLY NOW AT

WWW.TOOLSFORCHANGE.NET