**The KNOWLEDGE FACTORY: Build the Legitimacy You Need Behind Your Voice**

*Information is POWER—when it’s extracted, packaged and deployed strategically!*

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**Legitimate in the Grassroots; Not legitimate, irrelevant, not scientifically valid or accurate in the Mainstream**

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**legitimacy (noun) - the state of conforming to recognized and accepted rules and standards.** *(Merriam-Webster, 2006)*

“Legitimate information” typically assumes that it’s been deemed genuinely “objective” and “unbiased” from Western scientific perspective, and only those who are formally trained in the Western scientific research methods are deemed credible enough to produce worthy information in dominant society. When communities speak Truth to powers-that-be, their opponents challenge their credibility, because community knowledge isn’t produced in that way — after all, it’s often felt first-hand and analyzed in the context of their historical experiences of oppression and struggle — and that’s enough to discredit community voices in policy decision-making. But on the other hand, unlike policy-makers, community folks may trust their elders and community leaders, rather than outside researchers with advanced university degrees claiming to be ‘experts.’

**Conclusion:** Your information needs to carry legitimacy with your specific target audience, not every player out there, for it to be an effective political ammunition to achieve your goal. So, be strategic and effective with what you know. Let your information flow through the Knowledge Factory, to produce powerful “information ammunition” for the People!

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**GRASSROOTS INFORMATION**

- Community Experiences of Oppression
- Traditional Knowledge

**MAINSTREAM INFORMATION**

- Police Report
- Census

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**What’s YOUR Source of Information? Where on the Spectrum does it fall?**

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**HOW /WHERE DO THE INFO LIVE?**

- Living in Memory, in the Hearts and Minds of the People in the Community
- Can exist in form of Testimony

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**ASSIGNED CHARACTERISTICS**

- Not accepted by mainstream standards
- Often does not exist in hard copy (intangible) - so it has shelf-life equivalent to a person's life

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**STRATEGIC VALUE**

- Even Your Staunchest Opponent cannot Discredit your Information to convince the mainstream audience.
- Acts as powerful shield from attacks by opponents for officials in government/management

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**How does the Type of your info affect its legitimacy?**

- Research paper
- Publications
- Government- or thinktank-issued analyses
- Recommendations to government agencies by “expert” scientists

- Expensive production in the ‘product’
- Long shelf-life
- Affiliation/association of prestigious institution(s) and recognized ‘experts’
- Uses words people rarely use

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Jan 2008
Applying the Info in the Public Domain

- The Arts (community street theater, spoken word, etc.)
- Human interest coverage in the Sunday paper
- Community event—provide forum for grassroots voice to get out

- Participatory research methods (e.g. Community surveys)

- Factsheets designed to educate community, breaking down gov. data
  - Translating docs
  - Putting out analyses & other educational materials

- Info is cooked & ready to serve as “legitimate”

WHERE'S YOUR STAR?
'Convert & package' the information strategically; make it understandable and ‘legitimate’ for your specific audience!

Advancing base-building, build membership capacity; create space for grassroots voice in public domain; put human face on the issue

Turn community knowledge into information that carries “legitimacy” in the world in which decision-makers operate

Identify your audience - then package your information accordingly!

Use as is for decision-makers and their key allies and other mediating agents to use

Deploy your 'information ammunition' to achieve intended outcome!

Make Grassroots level Impact!
Make Policy level Impact!!

Outcome!

Outcome!

Be intentional about which Factory Pipeline the information should travel through—so that when it comes out the other end, it’s an ammunition fit to do the job you intended!