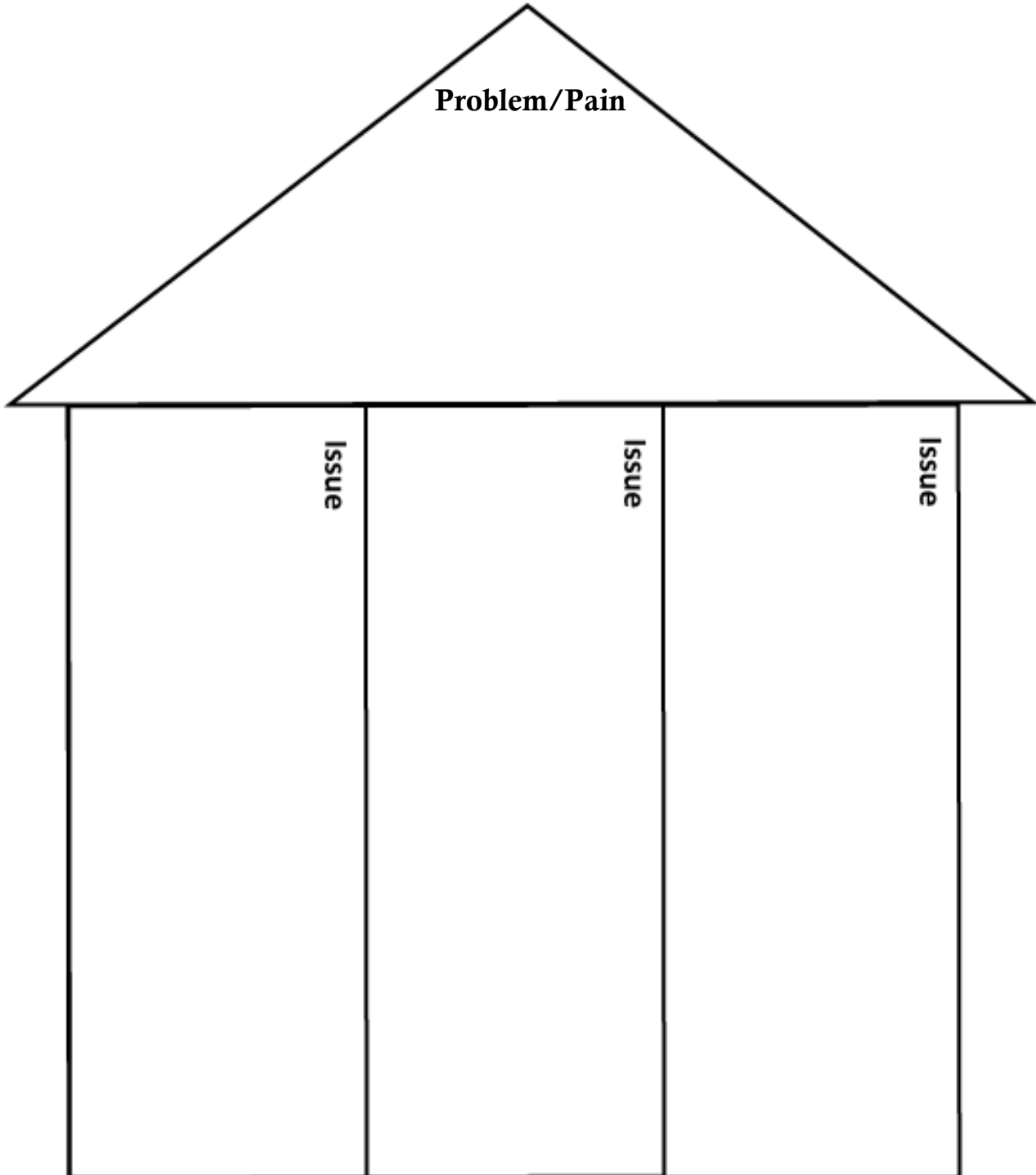


Problems vs. Issues:

Problems are statements of the world as it is. **“There is no respect for educators in this building.”**

Issues are a diagnosis of the problem that almost indicates what the solution is. **“There are no recognized structures in this building that allow educators to be part of decision making.”**

Take some time to first brainstorm the pain and/or problems our people are feeling. Then work to identify the issues within that problem that are causing the pain. Asking, “why do you think this is the way it is?” can move you into an analysis of issues that make up the problem.





A GOOD ORGANIZING ISSUE

- **Is widely felt.** How common is the problem? How many workers face this situation? Many people must feel that this is a real problem and agree with the solution you're pursuing.
- **Is deeply felt.** Is this an issue that people feel strongly enough about to actually do something? It's not enough that many people agree, if none are really hot under the collar.
- **Is winnable.** It's hard to know for sure whether you *will* win, but it's possible to have a good idea whether you *can*. Your group should match your demand to the power you've already got.

To win, you'll need to make it harder for the decision-maker to keep saying no than to say yes. The more pressure you can bring to bear, the more issues will become winnable.

- **Builds the union and builds leaders.** Consider how this fight will build your capacity for future fights. Will the issue attract leaders or groups who haven't been very involved? Will it build solidarity between groups? Will it give you the chance to try an action that's one step beyond what you've done before? Will the solution lay the groundwork for future improvements?

Each fight should build off the last. It often happens that we don't win the concrete gain wanted, but we do come out smarter and better organized—which makes it more likely we can win next time.

- **Has a connection to students and the public.** If the issue affects students, parents and community, it grows your potential group of activists and the potential support.



Issue Criteria Check List:

Score each Issue from 1 to 3 (1 = No, 2 = Unsure, 3 = Yes) on the specific criteria then total your scores and compare with your team.

Will the Issue...	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3
1. Result in a real improvement in people's lives?			
2. Give people a sense of their own power?			
3. Alter the relations of power?			
4. Be worthwhile?			
5. Be winnable?			
6. Be widely felt?			
7. Be deeply felt?			
8. Be easy to understand?			
9. Have a clear target?			
10. Have a clear timeframe that works for you?			
11. Be non-divisive?			
12. Build leadership?			
13. Set your organization up for the next campaign?			
14. Increase membership?			
15. Be consistent with your values and vision?			
16.			
TOTALS			

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