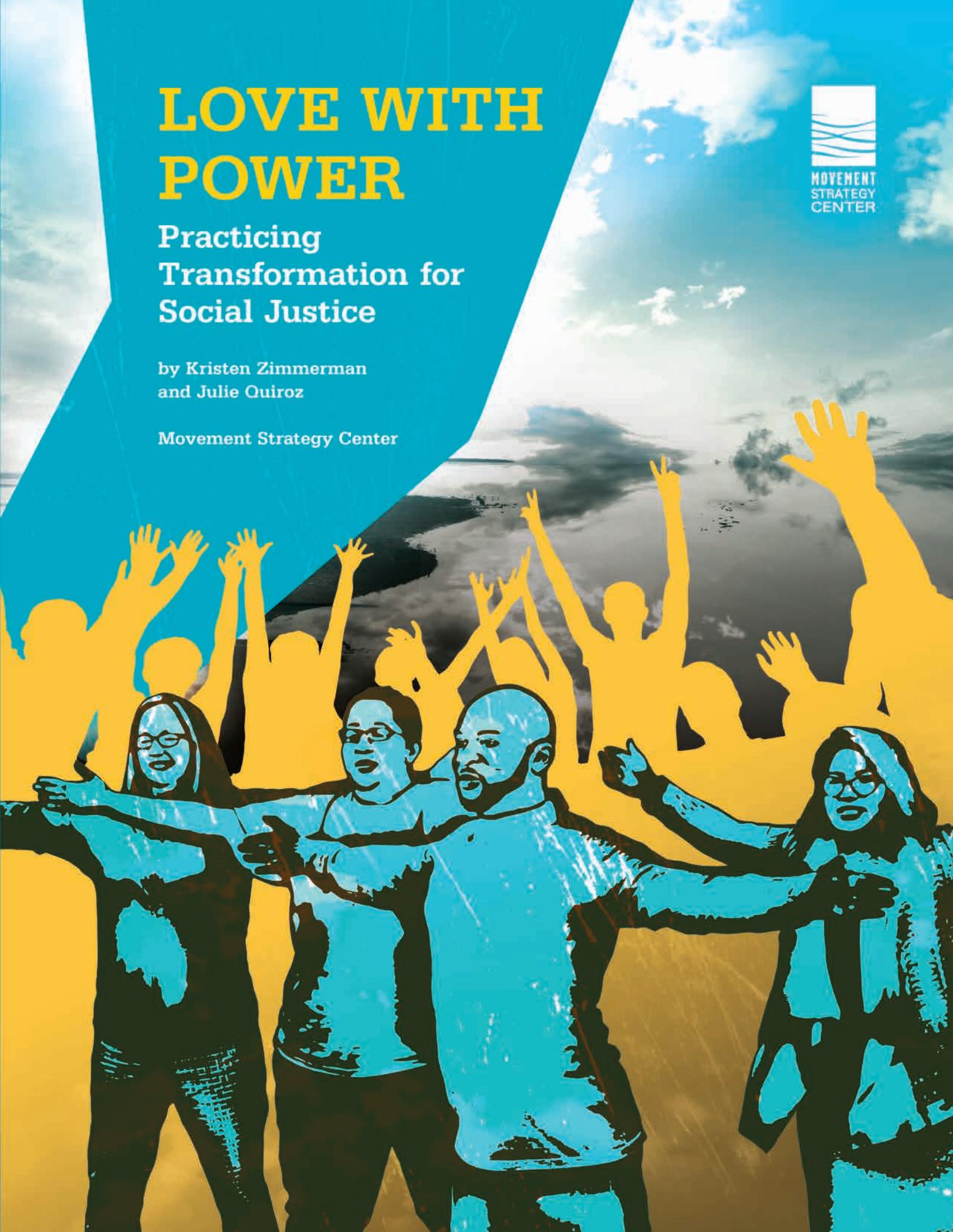


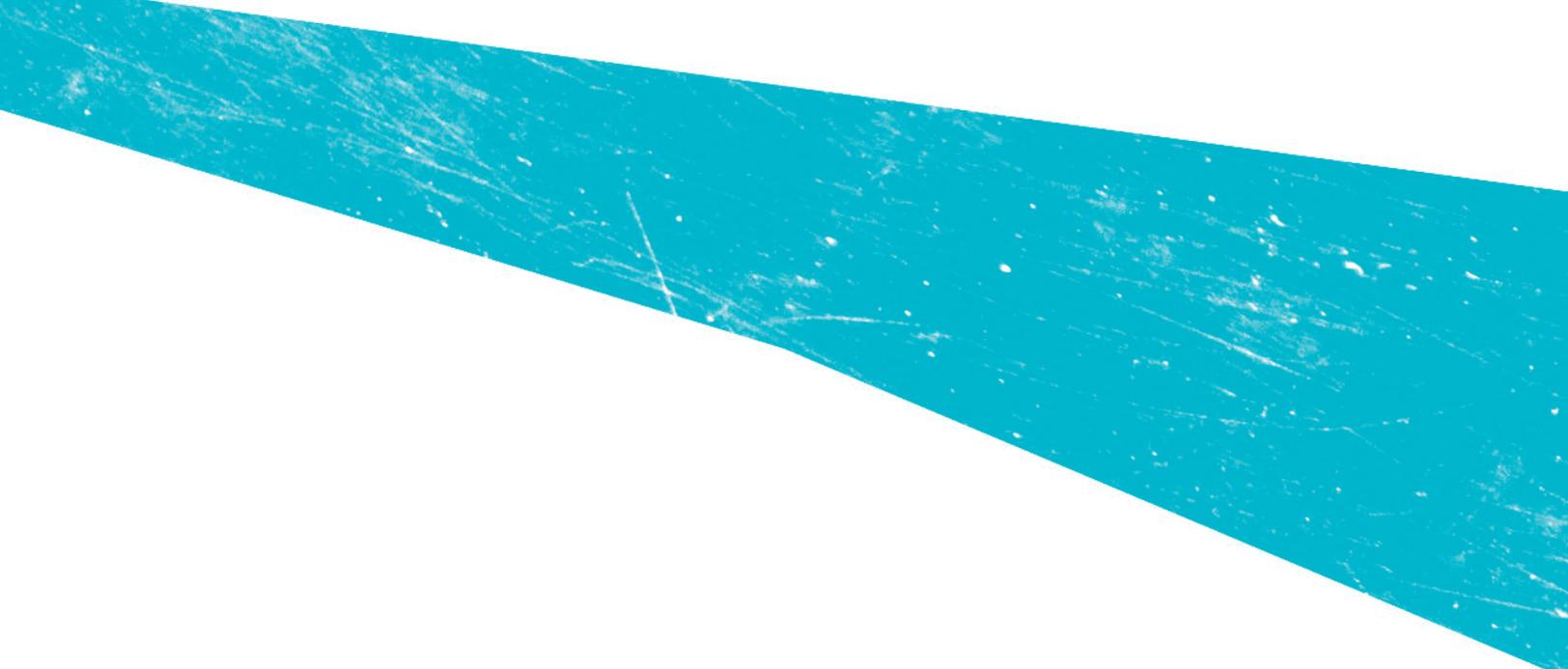
LOVE WITH POWER

Practicing
Transformation for
Social Justice

by Kristen Zimmerman
and Julie Quiroz

Movement Strategy Center





©2016 by the Movement Strategy Center
Printed in the U.S.A. ~ May 2016

All rights reserved. Parts of this report may be quoted or used as long as the authors and the Movement Strategy Center are duly recognized. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial purpose without prior permission.

To download any of our publications, visit www.movementstrategy.org or contact:

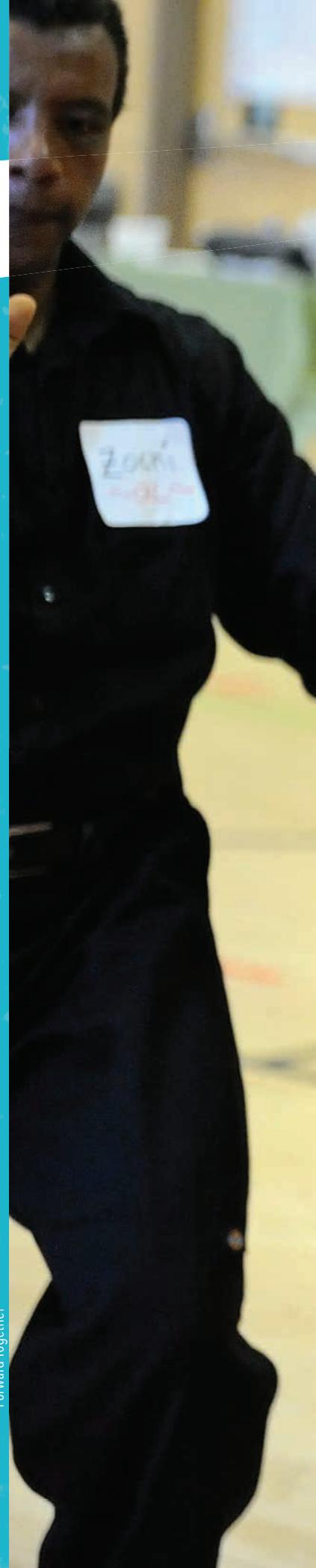
Movement Strategy Center
436 14th Street, Suite 500
Oakland, CA 94612
info@movementstrategy.org

Love With Power: **Practicing Transformation for Social Justice**

By Kristen Zimmerman and Julie Quiroz
Movement Strategy Center

Contents

1	"WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?"
6	A REVOLUTION OF VALUES
10	Practicing Transformation: The Highest Social Justice Priority
17	Collective Transformation Today
23	POWERFUL LOVE: STORIES OF TRANSFORMATIVE MOVEMENTS
25	Forward Together: Breaking Through with Bold Vision
39	Movement Generation: Cultivating Home
52	National Domestic Workers Alliance: Leading with Love
66	OUR Walmart: Caring Communities, Courageous Action
80	THE WAY FORWARD: PRACTICE TO IMPACT
88	APPENDICES
88	Methodology and Scope
90	Love with Power Resources
93	Featured Organizations by Story
94	Attributions and Appreciations





“Who The Hell Are You?”

“Collective transformative practice is not some hippy dippy thing. It’s about how we are together and how we are successful as movements. This is how #BlackLivesMatters thinks about transformative practice: It’s about transformative relationship building. It’s about practice as ritual.”

—Alicia Garza #BlackLivesMatter and National Domestic Workers Alliance

In early October 2014, Alicia Garza arrived in Ferguson, Missouri. Less than two months after Ferguson Police officer, Darren Wilson, shot and killed unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown, the community of Ferguson was under siege. In the wake of Brown’s death, grief and rage enveloped the city like dense smoke. Centuries of pain from racism, alive and embedded in schools, jobs, neighborhoods, and endless police harassment, rose to the surface. Police and white city officials responded to community protests with brutal force. National and international media descended on Ferguson, turning the spotlight on every corner of residents’ lives. As national organizations arrived—often removed from local relationships and experiences—residents reeled. The chaos of the moment and the trauma of witnessing and experiencing police assaults and murders left them not only angry, but disoriented and mistrustful.

With the backing of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, Garza traveled to Ferguson to support the organizing on the ground, collect the stories of women on the front lines, and participate in the #BlackLivesMatter Freedom Ride. Garza hoped to engage Black communities in “building a movement to transform our nation.”

One year earlier, Garza and two other women, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, had conceived “BlackLivesMatter” as a vision and response to Trayvon Martin’s murder by George Zimmerman in Florida. At the heart of #BlackLivesMatter was a message about humanity and human rights, shining a light on one question: what are all the things that stand in the way of humanity and valuing Black lives, all Black lives, in this country? Black Lives Matter was clear: police violence is both a crucial focus, and just the tip of the iceberg. In a communication from Ferguson, Garza wrote:

Every 28 hours, a black woman in this country loses her child to police or vigilante violence. When a child is killed by police or vigilantes, we all fall short in upholding the values that connect us all—care, love, respect and dignity. In a democracy that protects all of us, no child should have less of a chance at a future because of the color of their skin.

Opposite page: Black Lives Matter vigil at McGill University in Montreal, November 25, 2014. Creative commons License, Gerry Lauzon.



XX BLACK LIVES

MATTER



Millions March New York City, December 13, 2014. Creative commons license, B.C. Lorio.

Garza, Cullors and Tometi had deepened their personal and political relationships with each other for over a decade. During that time, they cultivated transformative practices, including building a practice community together through Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity, and applied these practices to organizing. They honed their vision for a changed world. When the outrage at Michael Brown's death erupted, they were able to move into the moment, ready or not, with new ideas and the sense that they wanted to support family—in the biggest sense of the word.

Garza spent her first few days in Ferguson listening and getting to know people. She wondered how local organizing could be strengthened in this excruciating time, particularly given the deep suspicion of outsiders, like her. Bringing the skills and politics she had developed in her 15 years of organizing, Garza knew that focusing on building authentic relationships and shifting people's way of being together could transform everything else.

My personal practice helped to ground me and reciprocate compassion, love, understanding even when I was faced with "Who the hell are you?"

Seeking to bring out the best in themselves and others, the #BlackLivesMatter team began to weave questions that people could connect to from the heart, asking, "Why does this movement matter to you? What does 'black lives matter' mean to you? What is your biggest hope for this movement?"

My work in Ferguson training organizers was about cultivating a practice of taking care of each other. When someone got a job they had been waiting for we celebrated. When someone else couldn't be with us because her mother was dying we made sure to call her and share the love and let her know her spirit was still there with us. When someone was fired from his fast food job for talking about organizing, we all came together, giving him love and telling him how brave and courageous he was. He came in upset but left feeling held.

These practices helped Garza build authentic relationships with the local organizing team relatively quickly. They were then able to return to the community and engage community members with that same spirit.

We went door to door simply trying to connect with people, finding what they need and where we share purpose and vision.

While they only spent two weeks together, Garza and the community of organizers she worked with found a rhythm, established practices that grounded their work in purpose, and built deep relationship with each other.

At the end of each day together we would come back and share food and experiences. Then we'd end with a chant or a song or a prayer. These rituals are really important. They ground us in our bodies and remind us how we got to this place. They remind us that all our ancestors did some kind of ritual. We were only together for two weeks in Ferguson but the people I connected with are still family.

The story from Ferguson is complex and still unfolding. It is a story of Black communities rising up to say “no” to the daily inhumanity of structural racism. It is the story of Black communities seeking to build from purpose and love. It is a story of movement builders nurturing transformative practices within social justice, then, stepping up and into a movement moment. The future depends on building these moments of high quality presence, clarity, insight, and heart-felt love. “Together,” says Garza, “we are organizing to build a new democracy and a society that values and protects ALL of our work and, ALL of our families, and embraces who we truly are as a nation.”

Black Lives Matter vigil at McGill University in Montreal, November 25, 2014. Creative Commons License, Gerry Lauzon.





Questions for our Movements

Alicia Garza's story from Ferguson raises important questions, including:

- How can we develop the collective strength and insight needed to transform a culture and an economy built on racism and domination?
- How can we cultivate our readiness to engage with extraordinary challenges—even when we don't feel ready?
- What aspects of our social movements will continue to serve us, and what do we need to leave behind?
- How can we respond to a world of injustice and violence with the love and power we are just beginning to imagine?
- How can we embody the world we want and need right now?

A Revolution of Values

Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

As Alicia Garza’s story from Ferguson reminds us, we, humanity, need a movement, a really big movement. A movement big and bold enough to get us out of the mess we have gotten ourselves into, and one that will get us to a better place. A movement that can transform the world and each one of us in it. A movement through which we shift from a world based on domination and extraction to a life-affirming world based on regeneration and interconnection.

Over the past decade, Movement Strategy Center has been asking the big, yet simple questions echoing across social justice movements: What is the change we most need and want in the world? Who do we need to be to make that change? And how do we get there, all of us, together? On this journey, we are learning from and experimenting alongside many incredible people who

are charting the way forward. We are excited to see that the contours of where we need to go—and who we need to be to find our path—are beginning to emerge.

The transformation we need in the world requires a revolution of values: one that includes systems and political leadership but that stretches beyond to shift the very DNA of our culture and the people encoded within it. This is a revolution that can be actualized and sustained because it leads from the power of love to fundamentally change individuals and groups, communities and systems. It’s a revolution that does not divide or conquer but instead, as Taoist strategist Sun Tzu writes in the *Art of War*, *keeps everything under the universe whole*.³⁸

Born in 2013 after the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, #BlackLivesMatter became a unifying demand of Ferguson and beyond, growing into a powerful force that is transforming the whole of our cultural and political makeup. Rooted in deep love, this network of organizers is helping the U.S. wake up, face our demons and address the way racism has shaped this country, while holding a fierce conviction that another world is possible. They are one chapter in a long arc of spiritual warriors and freedom fighters. As a movement, they are inspiring us to reimagine and create a new story of the future.

38. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 2005).



Forward Together

The elements of our society invested in white supremacy are deeply threatened by a new story of the future. As we write this, our nation is writhing with the consequences of our collective failure to dismantle the structures of racism, misogyny, xenophobia, and other forms of malignant power embedded in our economic, political and social life. In the terrifying rhetoric of the Right and the rise of a racist authoritarian demagogue, we see raw, unapologetic hate now dominating the political mainstream. Now unleashed, this dangerous force has an energy of its own. It is, in King's words, a power that is reckless and abusive.

In the face of this increasingly visible and violent force, we, as individuals and movements, must find not only strength and courage, but a depth of love powerful enough to disarm this ugliness *and* magnetic enough to inspire people far beyond our existing networks and relationships to act. This moment demands a depth, from inside each of us outward, that no policy agenda, organizing campaign, or political strategy alone has the power to do.

Fortunately, a new generation of change-makers is rising to meet this moment in deeply innovative and transformative ways. Groups like #BlackLivesMatter, Movement Generation, National Domestic Workers Alliance, OUR Walmart, and Forward Together are choosing love and taking risks to do their work

differently. They are going beyond incremental, change-based strategies, to embrace exponential, transformative strategies. They are discovering what it means to be a transformative movement in this moment.

When movements are transformative, they radically shift the way we think, the way we relate to one another, and even the way we perceive change. They fundamentally alter the way our society and our communities are structured, the way we live with one another, and even who we are. When movements embody our deepest human values they bring out the best in us, spark our imagination, inspire us, and embolden us to take big leaps forward together. Today, humanity and the planet need a movement of power and love that can catalyze and sustain the massive, integrated change we need right now.

There are many signs that “another world is not only possible, she’s on the way and, on a quiet day, if you listen very carefully you can hear her breathe.”³⁹ At the heart of this movement—and the world it is bringing—are individuals and groups that have experienced deep change in themselves and have brought the power of intentional practice to catalyze this change. It is in their breath, in our collective breath, that we can hear if we listen.

When tackling humanity’s biggest problems — slavery, apartheid, colonization — only social movements, mass movements, have had the courage, inspiration, power and practices to change the world and each of us in it. Social movements are about big, collective impact and a quality of change not possible through other means. Social movements provide a scale in numbers, a scale of ambition, and a scale in our capacity to love and to redefine and harness power.

39. Arundhati Roy, *Capitalism: a Ghost Story* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014).



Practicing Transformation: The Highest Social Justice Priority

Fifteen years ago, Movement Strategy Center set out to learn how to build movements that fundamentally transform society. Like most people in social justice we started out relying on a familiar set of recognized tools. At the time, talk about sustainability in organizing felt new and words like “love” and “interdependence” were not always welcomed in social justice conversations outside of faith-based organizing.

But much was changing. As we continued to work with and learn from many groups and individuals, we began to notice practices and approaches that did not fit the usual models and definitions of secular organizing.⁴⁰ Moreover, these practices and approaches were having profound impacts.

Practices and approaches centering love and interdependence were emerging in many places, even at the 20,000-person US Social Forum in 2010.⁴¹ Art, mind-body practices, creative practices, and healing were formally incorporated into this major gathering.⁴² The decision to place transformation at the center of the Forum reflected what could be seen throughout social justice organizing. Thanks to the many people who worked to bring about this shift, space began to open for nurturing the values that motivate us.⁴³

People are aware that they cannot continue in the same old way but are immobilized because they cannot imagine an alternative. We need a vision that recognizes that we are at one of the great turning points in human history when the survival of our planet and the restoration of our humanity require a great sea change in our ecological, economic, political, and spiritual values.

—Grace Lee Boggs

40. K. Zimmerman, N. Pathikonda, B. Salgado, T. James, *Out of the Spiritual Closet: Organizers transforming the practice of Social Justice* (Oakland, CA: Movement Strategy Center, 2010).

41. The Forum integrated transformative approaches in a number of ways including, (1) a dedicated track and physical space that highlighted the innovative work of movement groups who were incorporating transformative practice into their social change strategies; (2) a Healing Justice practice space and People’s Movement Assembly that highlighted and helped to integrate the role of healers and healing in social transformation; (3) a strong integration of art and creativity through spaces like the Creativity Lab, which allowed people to make art together for the Forum’s public actions; and perhaps most critically, (4) the Forum’s leadership, who held the vision for how all the strands fit together.

42. “Defining Transformation for Social Change PMA Resolution adopted at US Social Forum 2010” (US Social Forum, June 25, 2010): <http://hiddenleaf.electricense.net/wpcontent/uploads/2010/06/TransformationPMA.pdf>.

43. Harmony Goldberg, Ai-Jen Poo, “Organizing with Love,” (Organizing Upgrade, June 16, 2010): <http://transform.transformativchange.org/2010/06/ai-jenpoo/>; Mark Engler, “Ai-Jen Poo: Organizing Labor—With Love,” *Yes! Magazine* (July 29, 2011): <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/the-yes-breakthrough-15/ai-jen-poo-organizing-labor-with-love>.

As a result of the Social Forum and gatherings throughout the country, more and more people began to believe that the changes we need are bigger than the movements we have built, and that the transformation needed will require a quality and quantity of response that we are just starting to see. Looking ahead

National Domestic Workers Alliance



we were beginning to understand that we, individually and collectively, would need to be different as people to make this kind of change.

Many groups and individuals have turned to a transformative practice or path because we have had a glimpse of its impact on other groups and have recognized the central role transformation was playing in their work. People in social justice are exploring practices that engage the body and spirit as well as the mind because these practices can shift deeply engrained habits and allow us to cultivate new ways of being. People are turning to transfor-

mative practice, anchored in and guided by vision of the world, movement, community and people we want and need to be. Over time, through intentional and repeated action and reflection, people can discover, cultivate, and embody new ways of being and thinking that advance and evolve our vision as a movement, enhancing even the most mundane parts of our work.

Making Movement Pivots

Drawing on MSC's own accomplishments and lessons, the stories our partners and allies have shared, and observations of the broader patterns in and across social movements, we have identified five shifts that are beginning to occur in social change movements and that collective transformative practice can catalyze. MSC offers "Movement Pivots" as a way to name and feel these shifts.

Embedded in these pivots are the qualities needed for creating the transformative movements and world we need: interdependence, a proactive stance, leadership for the whole, synergy, alignment, and creativity. Transformative approaches give us a way to practice these qualities immediately; they begin to embody the future right now.

MSC believes that nurturing these qualities on a large scale is the highest priority for social justice today. They are the qualities that we need as social change agents, but also the qualities we need to flourish in a transformed world. By embedding transformative practice into all social justice work, we believe we can shift from our current movements into the movements we truly need to transform our world.

The present moment is magical because awareness and momentum for true social and ecological transformation is growing. Social justice movements have the opportunity to shape this transformation and lead us all to become bolder, more alive, more loving and more impactful. To make this transition we need to develop the courage to embrace a beautiful, bold, inspiring vision and align that vision with sharp strategy. Individual and collective practice helps us keep our faith that another world is possible and develop the focus needed to embody and manifest that world in the present.

Now is the time—time that we see that love is a more powerful force than anger. Time that changing ourselves individually and collectively will change the world. Time to step into leadership for the whole and breathe life into the values on which a just, dignifying, beautiful and life-affirming world can be built. Time to believe that our audacious vision is possible and that we are the ones to build it with everyone.

Sons and Brothers Alliance



MOVEMENT PIVOTS

PRACTICES

How we can get there

HABITS

Where we are stuck

Isolation

We are fragmented by issues and geographically isolated.

Defensive and Narrow Stance

We are reactive and fighting to maintain or create small reforms.

Marginalization

Our strategic sense of what is possible and needed is limited by our experience with structural and internalized marginalization.

Competition

We are unaligned and often in conflict.

Control

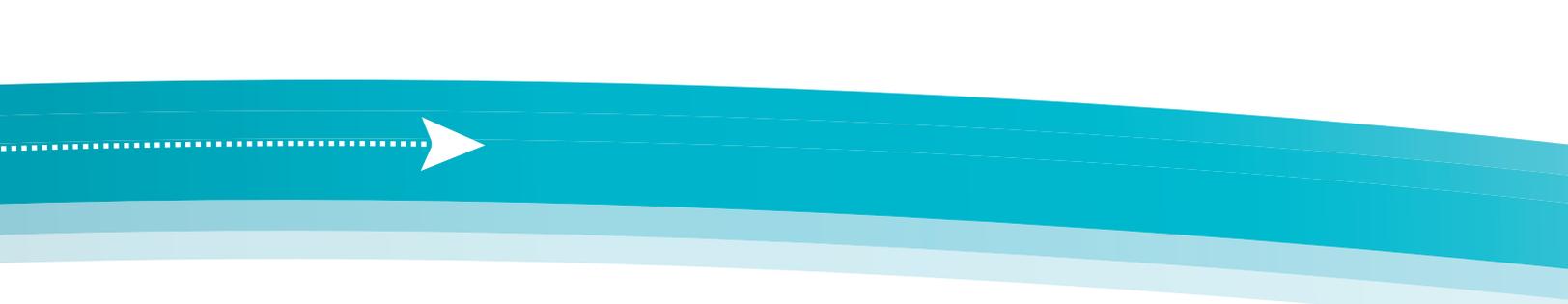
We Pressure ourselves to “know” and “succeed,” which prevents us from thinking and acting creatively.

Lead with Bold Vision

We practice keeping an eye on the horizon, envisioning what is truly needed, and reimagining what is politically possible.

Build the Bigger We

We practice creating shared purpose through love, connection, and finding a “third way” that is not limited by “either/or.”



Hold Broad Awareness

We practice expanding our awareness of the subtle and complex connections, interactions, and forces in and across our movement ecosystems and society.

Ground in People, Community, and History

We practice building authentic relationships, seeing what is unique and what is shared in our experiences, and developing the wisdom to inform our leadership.

Trust and Innovate

We practice openness to possibility through fierce inquiry, healthy debate, trying new approaches, taking risks, learning from mistakes, laughing, dancing, and playing.

HORIZON

Where we can go

.....

Interdependence

We act as a whole that depends on and rejoices in the strengths of each part.

Proactive and Open Stance

We lead with purpose, values and possibility. We are open, agile, flexible and ready for opportunities to create bold transformational change.

Leadership for the Whole

We lead and care for the whole of society by centralizing the wisdom, leadership, and strategies of communities most impacted by a problem.

Synergy and Alignment

We move together from vision and core values, with diverse strategies and functions for big collective impact.

Creativity

We generate unexpected fresh ideas and action that inspire and work for the good of all.

Practicing Transformation in Movement Strategy Center

Five years ago, Movement Strategy Center decided to explore forms of transformative practice that could ground our work and help us to develop a transformative approach to movement building and social change.

After trying out several practices—and finding use, beauty, and limitation in each—we chose the one that most resonated with MSC staff, as well as with our organizational role and strategy. While individual members of the staff continued their own personal practices or began new ones, we, as an organization, adopted 60-40 Stance as the primary transformative practice to learn and practice together. 60-40 Stance is a method developed by Norma Wong to integrate and apply principles of Zen and martial arts training

to everyday life. Through physical movement we gained insight into the *physics* of movement building and how this could impact our strategy. Specifically, the practice helped us cultivate our collective awareness, stance, energy, and rhythm in ways that made us more strategic and better movement builders. We integrated the physical practice of 60-40 Stance into our internal meetings and used the philosophy of 60-40 Stance to re-organize our work. Over time we used both to shape and influence our external engagements.

Through our on-going collective practice, MSC has experienced a profound and palpable increase in our group alignment, strength, momentum, interconnectedness, and organic capacity to build and sustain movement relationships. Our shared practice has changed each of us as people and helped us form the bonds of community. We have deepened our understanding of how each individual staff member's personal practices and core strengths contribute to the group's capacity

for grounding and insight. As a strategic team we have a much clearer sense of our own big horizon and where we want to go. We also have a deepened capacity to let go and trust others. We find we can take bigger risks and leaps together because we've developed group synergy that comes with practice. And, we now have experience with stepping into something new, and unknown, together with courage and trust.

The impact of MSC's ongoing collective transformative practice has been exponential. It has made us more effective as movement builders, more strategic as partners, and more centered as individuals and a group, but ultimately it's about much more than this. It has helped us reconsider our purpose in the world and what it means to be strategic, by uncovering the dimension that is really about our shared humanity and how we serve that.



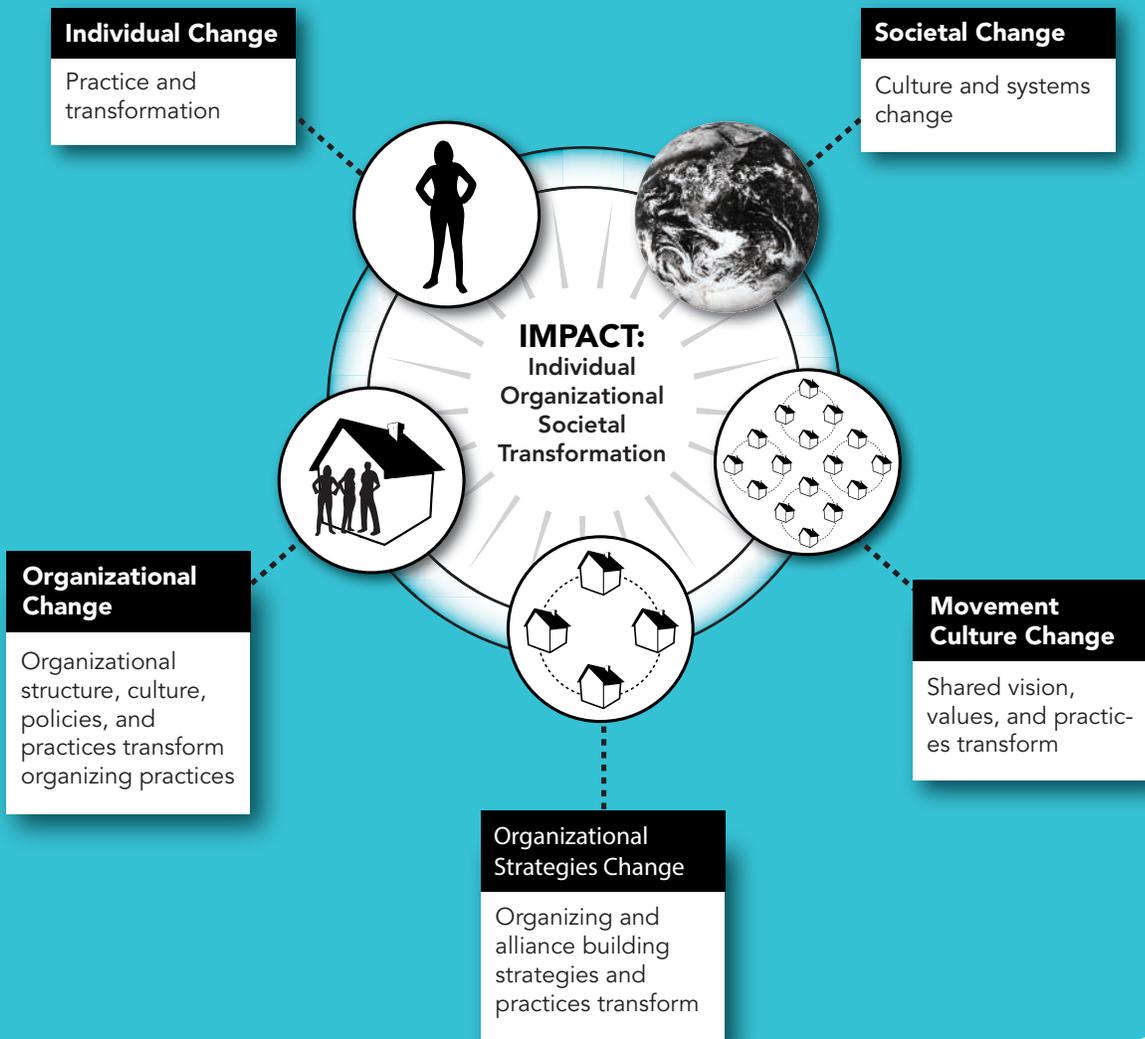
Movement Strategy Center

Transformative Movement Building:

Transformative Movement Building is a holistic and comprehensive approach to transforming the world that is guided by our deepest values, vision and purpose. Transformative movement building supports internal and external change simultaneously and integrates many levels of change—individual to interpersonal to institutional and systemic. This approach includes each of us individually, our relationships, and the ways we live to “be the change” in everyday life.

In “Out of the Spiritual Closet” (2009), MSC identified five interconnected levels of change in transformative movement building that support and catalyze each other:

- Individual change
- Supports and catalyzes organizational and community level change
- Supports and changes movement building and organizing practice
- Catalyzes greater social impact and systems change
- Culminates in deep cultural change



Collective Transformation Today

The learning edge of social justice organizing has surfaced new questions: What does a collective approach to transformation look like? What is the role of collective transformative practice within that? How can collective practice be understood as part of creating a culture where oppression and exploitation cannot take root? In the words of Claudia Horowitz, founder of Stone Circles,

This generation of activists, this era, is trying to define our own approaches. It's a different kind of movement building than what was happening in the 60s, 70s, 80s, or 90s. We are living in an era where there is more inner work happening . . . The work that has been going on personally has reached a critical mass. I don't know if we have reached a tipping point – but we are getting there... What is common is a recognition of possibility, hunger and interest in transformation at the group level.

MSC defines collective transformative practice as the intentional and continuously repeated action undertaken as a group to cultivate new ways of being and thinking *in that group and beyond it*. Collective transformative practice must be rooted in our individual and collective vision of a transformed world, the values at the core to that world, and our part in creating it by becoming it. For some of us this is about

Our transformation is rooted in all of us transforming together.

—Cara Page

Forward Together





Forward Together

continuing and strengthening a way of life that has been passed down to us by our elders and ancestors; for others of us, it is about cultivating something that feels very new.

Collective transformative practice helps groups cultivate a new level of conscious awareness and increases the alignment and synergy among people in a group. It encourages people in a group to discover and unleash their core strengths, build transformative relationships, and generate resonance with others. Collective practice enables social justice groups to more fully accomplish their missions by increasing their capacity to set a bold horizon, stay on purpose, communicate across difference, catalyze breakthroughs, and stay grounded in difficult conversations and moments. Social justice groups that integrate transformative practice often experience an expansion and acceleration of their impact.

Individual and organizational change cannot be seen separately. They are intertwined. Our organizational culture and model has been deeply informed by our individual political and human development and our shared practice.

—Patty Berne, *Sins Invalid*

Collective transformative practice catalyzes and focuses our awareness of how change happens—often by accelerating change that is happening within individuals and the group—helping them “go somewhere” together. It shapes and transforms the collective body and all the elements within it. This is something that is clearly seen and experienced through music. When musicians become a jazz ensemble or an orchestra, they practice together. To experience themselves and be experienced as *one*, rather than individual musicians, depends on and offers more than individual practice alone. The sound they are trying to produce shapes how and what they need to practice. And, the experience of people listening and people performing is qualitatively different, as a result. If you talk to any musician, playing and performing in a powerful, well-practiced group is a transformative, often transcendent, experience.

A Word about “Practice”

Practice takes us beyond the conceptual into the experiential to access our full ways of knowing; what we gain from direct experience that cannot be grasped otherwise.

—angel Kyoto williams

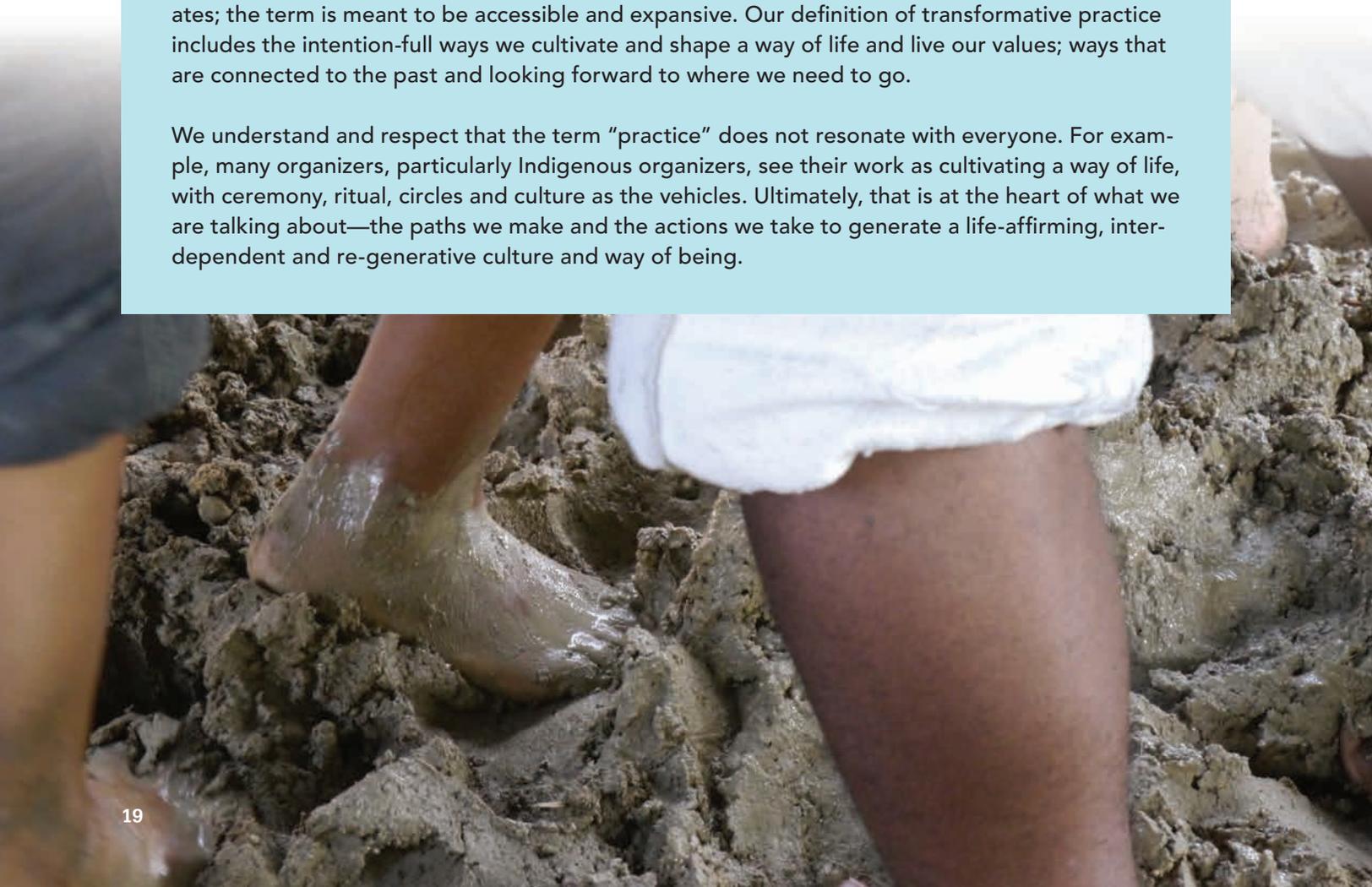
Love With Power focuses on practice, the day-by-day, step-by-step action, that individuals or groups take on to intentionally learn and shift. In transformative movement building, practice helps us change ourselves in order to change groups, systems and culture. It is a crucial part of an overall commitment and approach to social transformation.

Musicians and scientists, artists and athletes, doctors and healers all know the fundamental value and magic of practice and what it means to be a practitioner of something. The magic of practice is that incremental progress grows exponentially. As one practices, giant leaps can occur through seemingly repetitive small steps.

In this report we have chosen to use the phrase “collective transformative practice” to describe the ways that groups have taken intentional and continuously repeated action to cultivate new ways of being and thinking *in that group and beyond it*.

We use the term transformative practice to convey what transformation involves and generates; the term is meant to be accessible and expansive. Our definition of transformative practice includes the intention-full ways we cultivate and shape a way of life and live our values; ways that are connected to the past and looking forward to where we need to go.

We understand and respect that the term “practice” does not resonate with everyone. For example, many organizers, particularly Indigenous organizers, see their work as cultivating a way of life, with ceremony, ritual, circles and culture as the vehicles. Ultimately, that is at the heart of what we are talking about—the paths we make and the actions we take to generate a life-affirming, interdependent and re-generative culture and way of being.



What **collective** transformative practices are today's social movements using?

Practices are simple things you can do with yourself or others that keep a process alive. They keep one engaged in internal and collective process. They are people engaging in a shared identity and a collective.

—Oona Chatterjee

- What makes these *practices* are that they are repeated actions done with intention and continuously over time.
- What makes these *collective* is that a group of people do these practices together.

For a further listing and discussion of transformative practices, see *Transformative Practices for Social Change: Lessons from the Field* (May 2009), The Seasons Fund for Social Transformation, available at www.hiddenleaf.org.

The Historical Legacy of Transformative Practice

History is not the past. It is the stories we tell about the past. How we tell these stories—triumphantly or self-critically, metaphysically or dialectally—has a lot to do with whether we cut short or advance our evolution as human beings.

—Grace Lee Boggs

When a wave of change sweeps over society, where does it start and what determines its direction and outcome? As Gandhi began his march to the sea or Rosa Parks made her stand on the bus, what were all the threads, in their lives and others', that led to that moment? When Mandela sat with his former captors, negotiating the terms for a new government, what prevented the nation from falling into civil war? What set these great changes in motion? What prevented chaos from taking over? How did each of these movements reach critical mass—the point of no turning back—in society?

While the precise beginnings are likely synchronistic and multiple the paths and the practices of these movements were undeniably transformative. Guided by visions that were audacious, filled with wisdom and love, these movements were informed by the reality of the time, yet had radically departed from it. Their goals were often dismissed as unrealistic, delusional, or, as in the cases of slavery, abolition and apartheid, against the very laws of nature. The distances they attempted to travel were vast and reflected a clarity of vision and values that transcended prevailing social norms.

The degree to which a movement shapes society often hinges on the real-time practices of that movement—the way the people in that movement individually and collectively embody the core values and new culture at the heart of the movement.

Many wise leaders have discussed and modeled the power of *practice*—the intention-full ways we cultivate and shape a way of life—in transformation. Mahatma Gandhi, Cesar Chavez, Grace Lee Boggs, Aung San Suu Kyi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Rosa Parks are some of the most referenced leaders who embody and integrate political movements with spiritual traditions.

In order to create a new reality externally, they first cultivated and manifested it in themselves; they embodied being something new, right away,



Afia Walking Tree opening "Beyond Ferguson: Calling in the Strength and Healing of Our Ancestors", a community healing ritual at East Bay Meditation Center. (Human Element Photography)



People's Climate March, New York City September 21, 2014. Photo by Kate Evans for Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

individually and alongside others. The dance between the internal and external, individual and collective, past, present and future, created fertile ground for transformation to occur, and for it to happen on a grand scale. Both Gandhi and Chavez had rich spiritual practices that included meditation and fasting. King and Parks drew on the power of prayer, reflection, and the cultivation of beloved community. All of them made little or no separation between their cultural practice, spiritual practice, and movement practice.

But what was happening with all the other participants in these movements? Was it just the transformation of the most visible leaders that made a difference or was a change occurring more broadly? What happens when the people in a movement—not just its leaders—experience transformation in their own lives and bring that into their movement building?

The social histories we tell often ignore the complex and nuanced elements that made these movements so transformative. The cost of this omission is great, skewing our understanding of how deep change happens. On the most elemental level, if we don't know our own transformative history we cannot access or leverage the tools and wisdom it offers. We are stuck recreating the wheel, rather than building vehicles for change.

Now is a time of great transition and change. Around the globe we see unprecedented climate disruption, and upheaval across economic, political and cultural systems. We see people—entire populations—facing this great, unknowable landscape and seeking paths to a future they can believe in.

Powerful Love: Stories from Transformative Movements





**Forward Together: Breaking
Through With Bold Vision**

It's 7 pm, Election Night, November, 2016, and Strong Families New Mexico and Respect ABQ Women coalition just accomplished the unthinkable. After less than 12 weeks of organizing they defeated a massively funded Operation Rescue-backed measure to significantly restrict abortion in the city of Albuquerque, NM. Albuquerque voters not only said no, they said no by a whopping 10 percentage points.³⁸

By all measures, this win was a remarkable upset in a socially conservative “purple” state. On the heels of successful state abortion restrictions sweeping the country, the measure seemed destined for passage. Early polls showed likely voters favored the ban by a wide margin. The Right funneled money into the measure as part of a national fight against reproductive rights and expected little opposition.

For Strong Families New Mexico and Respect ABQ Women, making the case to voters in fewer than 12 weeks felt nearly impossible. No one even imagined defeating the measure by a landslide.

Adriann Barboa, Director of Strong Families New Mexico and a 16th generation New Mexican, believes the win reflects the coalition’s commitment to leading a deeply New Mexican campaign, as well as an unprecedented coming together of people of color-led groups with other state-wide advocacy organizations.³⁹ Barboa is proud of how the campaign authentically reflected Albuquerque values and culture, centering women of color leadership and communities of color. The campaign message emphasized women and families making decisions for themselves. In Barboa’s words, “We are parents, tias, ninos, brothers and sisters. We are neighbors, friends, people of faith—we are New Mexican families.”

Barboa believes these diverse groups were able to align quickly with clarity and strength largely because of a transformative movement building effort led by Young Women United with the support of Forward Together, the home organization of Strong Families New Mexico. In 2011 Forward Together and Young Women United facilitated a series of day-long retreats that engaged everyone in the mind-body practice of Forward Stance. Young Women United intentionally invited groups that had not necessarily

Collective Practice: Forward Stance

Forward Stance is a mind-body practice that helps activists step fully into leadership, build powerful organizations and align movements. Forward Stance cultivates four core elements in groups: Stance, Awareness, Energy and Rhythm. Forward Stance was created because the visionary and innovative work of building a strong and vibrant Reproductive Justice Movement requires people and institutions to move physically (not just “in our heads”) to change the way the world works.

“When we first started practicing Forward Stance it helped us make a bold leap. We knew we were saying YES to a bold vision but we did not know how we would get there. There was no easy or clear path. We used Forward Stance to step into power and move with who was ready.”

— Eveline Shen, Forward Together Executive Director

38. <http://rhrealitycheck.org/tag/new-mexico-20-week-abortion-ban-2013/>

39. The Steering Committee included Young Women United, Forward Together, ACLU of New Mexico, New Mexico NOW, New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and Planned Parenthood of New Mexico.



worked together, including grassroots people of color-led groups and large statewide advocacy organizations. Together the groups named and practiced removing barriers that historically kept them apart and created a strategic vision rooted in shared values. They practiced moving together in different formations – such as a wedge, a circle, and others – to see which would be the most powerful form for the coalition to take when they faced legislators. They also used physical practice to experiment with different people leading under different circumstances and then used the insights they gained in their strategy development. From there, the new coalition flexed its political muscle and began to win changes at the local and state levels.

Forward Together’s contribution to these retreats and what they achieved reflect the long history of Forward Stance practice within the organization, as well as the wisdom Forward Together gained from its own history of organizational crisis.

First Steps: Confronting Crisis

Eveline Shen was a young organizer when she first joined Forward Together (then called Asian Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health). Just out of college, she wanted to work with a social justice organization that empowered young women of color and created a culture where its staff and members could thrive, something “different from what happens in so much of the world.” Eveline saw this possibility in Forward Together.

When Eveline came to Forward Together, the organization was going through a period of rapid expansion and change. Internally they were making a programmatic shift from research to organizing, navigating offices in two different regions of California and expanding their staff.

Externally, the organization was waging multiple battles for their communities. They were working to defeat the first of three parental notification ballot initiatives in California⁴⁰ pressuring Bay Area school districts to provide comprehensive sex education,⁴¹ and working alongside environmental justice groups to remove a medical waste incinerator in East Oakland.⁴²

Like so many organizations struggling to manage exponential growth while fighting for change on multiple fronts, the staff and board felt extremely challenged. Internal conflict and physical and mental exhaustion were tearing their relationships apart and crippling their ability to have impact in the world.

At one point when the morale was extremely low, the staff made a clear and conscious decision to find another way to do the work. Supporting each other they looked for underlying reasons for the crisis. “We did everything possible to figure out how we got into this mess and what we could do to get out,” says Eveline.

The organization decided to use talking circles to explore how the conflict was impacting them. They also sought out coaching in non-violent communication. They interviewed a dozen of the organization’s women of color leaders about their experiences and held six focus groups with young women of color to understand the bigger patterns at play in the organization. They discovered that the conflicts they were experiencing were pervasive, and that very few had the tools or resources to address disagreements effectively. They also learned about relational aggression and how girls and women are socialized to deal with conflict indirectly – by forming cliques, bullying, lacking trust, and gossiping.

40. <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/ABORTION-Early-returns-reject-Prop-85-which-2485118.php>

41. <http://forwardtogether.org/youth-organizing/youth-organizing-campaigns>

42. https://noharm.org/sites/default/files/lib/downloads/waste/CA_Closes_Last_Incinerator.pdf



About Forward Together and Strong Families

Strong Families is a home for the four out of five people in the United States who do not live behind the proverbial picket fence – whose lives fall outside the outdated notion that a family consists of a mom at home and a dad at work. While that life has never been the reality for most of our families, too many of the policies that affect us are based on this fantasy. From a lack of affordable childcare and afterschool programs, to immigration policy and marriage equality, the way we make policy and allocate resources needs to catch up to the way we live.

Forward Together, the organization behind Strong Families, is a multi-racial organization that works with community leaders and organizations to transform culture and policy to catalyze social change. Our mission is to ensure that women, youth and families have the power and resources they need to reach their full potential. By developing strong leaders, building networks across communities, and implementing innovative campaigns, we are making our mission a reality.





The organization concluded that the culture of progressive activism and conventional nonprofits pushes activists to sacrifice their health, their families and their well-being. They also realized that many activists operate within a polarizing culture of “you are either with us or you are against us; we are the victims and they are the oppressors.” Says Shen, “Too often we transfer this language and approach to addressing disagreements with each other and we demonize our allies.”

Seeing the problems clearly, the staff was determined to shift these deeply held habits and embody a new way of making change. They would need to radically depart from a defensive/reactive stance towards an offensive/proactive one.

Creating Another Way: **Forward Stance**

Shen and others in the core team knew the solutions they were seeking would not come from standard organizational development practitioners. They needed some out of the box doers and thinkers who could help them figure out a new path. They decided to reach up and out for support.

When Eveline heard about Norma Wong, a Zen priest, former state senator and political strategist from Hawaii – she was immediately intrigued and met with her.

“I still remember our first conversation where she talked about leadership and how to hold yourself when you are in conflict,” Eveline said. “It was a match for what we were looking for.”

Bringing in surprising props such as water bottles, spoons, and bamboo swords, Norma used interpersonal mind-body practice to help each person awaken to how they related to conflict. For example, in a simulated sword battle, each person was asked to face a trainer who was advancing towards them and their job was to hold their ground in an open and centered way. Dana Ginn Paredes remembers,

When it was my turn...my body started shaking uncontrollably. Norma said to me. ‘That is how you are in conflict right now. You can try to out argue and out debate the other side, but this is how you are. Now that you know that, you have choices.’



Forward Stance

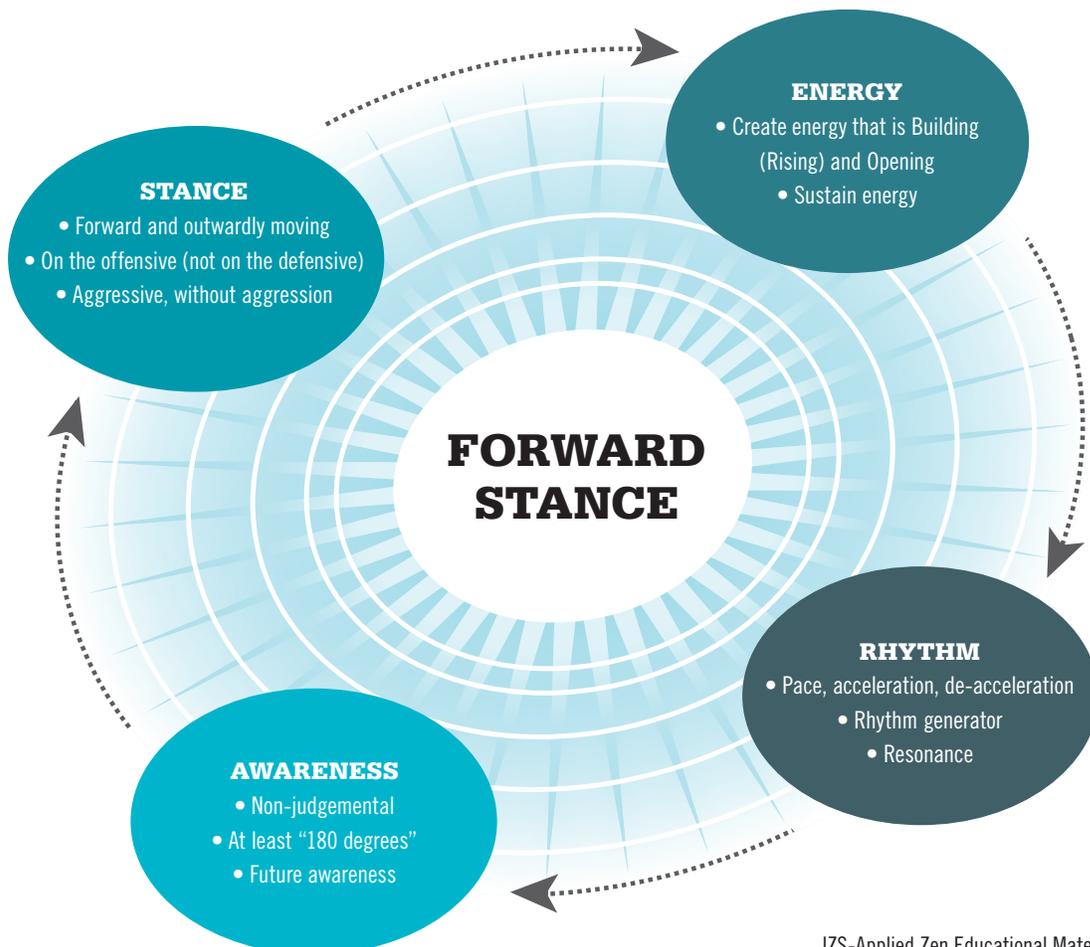
The visionary and innovative work of building strong, vibrant Social Movements require us to physically move people, move institutions, and change the way the world works. Too often we are “in our heads,” focusing on conceptual ideas and frameworks while ignoring the physics of social change work. Forward Stance provides us with a powerful way to learn and gain new insight through physical movement and by reconnecting our bodies with our minds. Forward Stance cultivates four key elements through practice: Stance, Energy, Rhythm and Awareness.

Stance is how we move through the world. When we are standing or sitting in a forward stance we are in a state of readiness and are able to take action.

Energy gives life to stance. The energy of a forward stance is deep, strong, and rising and can be sustained over time and through challenging circumstances.

Rhythm is the pace of our actions. Individuals, organizations and the world around us have an inherent rhythm and pace. In a forward stance we have an awareness of rhythm and we are intentional about our pace.

Awareness is a clear, broad sense of what is happening around us. The awareness of a forward stance provides context and ability to see what is actually happening around us.



IZS-Applied Zen Educational Material, 2008



Over time, as the organization emerged from crisis and developed core strength, the staff continued to work with Norma. They experienced how this mind-body technology helped them act and see with clarity even amidst chaos. It also helped them come together in strength.

After two years of applying this mind-body technology towards organizing and movement building, the staff gave it a name: Forward Stance. Amanda Wake, former youth organizing director for Forward Together and Strong Families, reflected:

Forward stance has shown me the power I have inside of me. Whenever I feel doubt or scared or unsure I use Forward Stance to connect to my breath and broaden my awareness. It reminds me I can trust my gut.

Over time they found that the practice helped each person have agency within the whole and that it helped the whole be stronger than its parts.

Internal Impact: **Forward Together**

"Sometimes the work calls you to do more than you thought you could do. I am grateful for Forward Stance and how it helps you stay grounded and balanced even amidst chaos."

— Alicia Walters

Before the crisis, Forward Together had been a local organizing group working primarily with Asian women and girls on reproductive health and justice in Oakland, California. As the organization grew stronger, Eveline and her staff released a "New Visions" paper to share their vision for a powerful reproductive justice movement.⁴³ "The paper immediately resonated with a lot of people," says Eveline. "We suddenly found ourselves in a national leadership position." They made a deliberate decision to utilize their strengths and expand their work with a national reach.

Over the next five years, as they transformed themselves they called on Forward Stance to help them step powerfully into their new position and apply a highly strategic lens to their work. They integrated Forward Stance practice deeply across the organization including weekly sessions before each staff meeting and before quarterly strategic organizational discussions. By practicing Forward Stance together, they were able to sharpen their awareness of opportunities, identify new ways to position themselves, and clarify where they needed to focus.

They were also better able to face new challenges when they arose. "For example, during the recession some of our allies got the message from funders to "hunker down" until the economy got better," says

43. <http://forwardtogether.org/assets/docs/ACRJ-A-New-Vision.pdf>





Shen. “We created an exercise to physically simulate the impact of the recession and find strategies to move through the downturn. Some of us represented the attacks our communities were experiencing while others were leaders moving through those attacks. By physically experimenting with these conditions we realized that the organizations that “hunkered down” were swallowed by the recession, while those who moved together and kept growing their work emerged stronger.”



When they launched a national alliance to strengthen the reproductive justice movement they relied on Forward Stance and other mind-body techniques to help members understand the “physics of movement building” on a visceral level. In physical practice, using a form of tai ji and other physical movement, they experimented with knowing when to move, how to pace themselves, and how to galvanize allies towards a unifying direction.

In 2010, ten reproductive justice leaders from across the country met at the First Unitarian Church in Oakland for a two and a half day convening organized by Forward Together. For three years, these leaders had been practicing Forward Stance and other mind-body practices to move, act and breath together and to get aligned and clear on how to unify their work for greater impact. Through these practices they experienced fully embodying their power as a multi-racial, cross-sector movement and they sharpened their shared values and purpose.



“We used Forward Stance to identify the central theme that unites all of our struggles,” explains Shen. “And then that ‘aha’ moment struck: Family was the common value, it was what we advocate for across movements. Whether women, LGBTQ or people of color, if we have a strong family, each member can thrive. A strong family can address so many lines of oppression and so many issues.” This also gave groups working on the local, state and national levels insight into how their respective strategies and issue-area foci were complementary towards a long-term vision.



External Impact: Strong Families

Emboldened, Forward Together began to imagine a 10-year strategy to regain the family frame from the right and change the way people think, feel, act and support families in the United States. Strong Families was born as a way to connect and build movement with everyday people - beyond the limitations of one sector or issue. Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Forward Together's Policy Director says:

The Right has defined family as their turf, and it's not their turf, it's our turf. We take care of our families, of each other's families. When we cede the ground of family we cede a whole lot about who we are. We need to proactively talk about and act for our families in ways that bring us together.

It was this bold new commitment that ultimately led Forward Together to take a deep look at the impact of mass incarceration and state violence on families as well as other big, crosscutting issues. In 2015 in partnership with Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Research Action Design and 20 other organizations, they launched a community-engaged research project *Who Pays* to uncover the deep and complex costs of incarceration on families, especially the women holding those families together. (See side story for more detail). Forward Stance practice enabled this research team to stay grounded and breathe

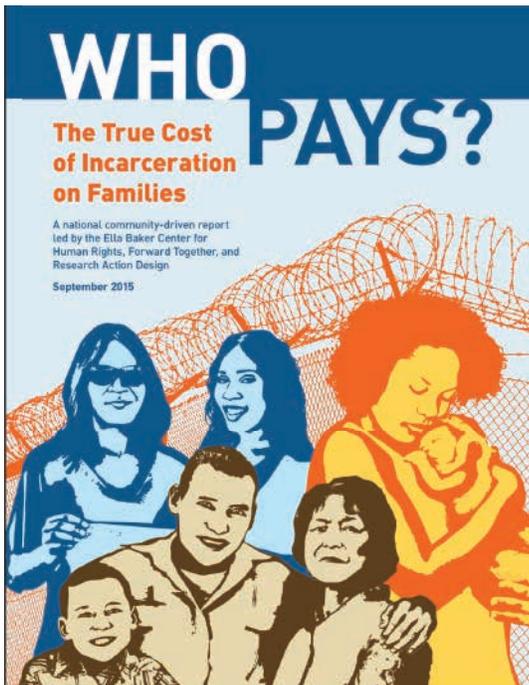
together when surrounded by thousands of stories of trauma that also tapped into trauma within the team. By having practices to breathe and move through this intensity they were able to emerge stronger together, as leaders who could tell a new, untold story about the cost of incarceration on generations of families.

As a project and a report, *Who Pays*⁴⁴ broke new ground⁴⁵ says Alicia Walters, Forward Together:

Our report was the first time we had seen families in a headline about incarceration. Journalists and editors glommed onto the family angle. It signaled to me that we are ready to talk about the most fundamental aspects of our social fabric. And we are talking about it in a way that everyone can relate to. Its not just compelling, it's moving.

44. <http://whopaysreport.org/executive-summary>

45. Burden of mass incarceration falls on families, report says. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/9/15/families-torn-apart-by-criminal-justice-system.html>



Who Pays? The True Cost of Incarceration on Families

In March 2014, Forward Together, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and Research Action Design launched *Who Pays*, a collaborative participatory research project with 20 community-based organizations across the country. The project proved that the costs of locking up millions of people are much deeper than we think and that locking up individuals also breaks apart their families and communities, saddles them with overwhelming debt, and leads to mental and physical ailments.

Trained community researchers went directly into communities in 14 states, to probe the financial costs faced when a family member goes to jail or prison, the effects on physical and mental health, and the challenges and barriers encountered by all when an individual returns home.

One of Forward Together's goals for the project was to expand the gender awareness of organizations traditionally

working with and from the perspective of men dealing with incarceration. The research team conducted over 1,000 hour-long surveys and 34 focus groups and captured the experiences of families impacted by incarceration. By the time they gathered in Oakland to analyze their data, the researchers had listened to thousands of hours of stories about the hardships of incarceration. Looking at those stories, trying to quantify the devastation, sent the room into a spiral of despair. These weren't random stories; these were the lived experiences of the researchers in the room, some of who had recently gotten out of prison, others whose families were suffering on both sides of the bars.

In such an environment, when one's trauma is activated, there is little capacity to hear another's perspective. And yet, it was exactly this capacity the researchers needed to achieve their shared purpose. Alicia Walters says "This is where Forward Stance practice is so critical." Walters and other Forward Together staff led sessions to help people breathe and get in touch with what was going on inside themselves. "So often, we cope by distancing ourselves; becoming disembodied because being present feels too overwhelming. In doing so, we lose touch with our own experience and can have a hard time relating to others – the very thing that's crucial for building movements that encompass multiple experiences." By creating space to acknowledge and breathe through the pain folks realized they were not alone and created space for all the truths in the room. The truths of women who suffered financially, emotionally, and physically on the outside while their loved ones languished behind bars became evident. The truths of children left without parents, and mothers without children, bubbled to the surface.

By the end of the project, the same individuals who had focused solely on the experiences of men were leading with the stories of women and trans people. Says Walters "I truly believe that this happened because we began with breathing together, seeing each other, and truly hearing each other's stories."

For the full report and more information on *Who Pays* go to: whopaysreport.org.

To Shen focusing their efforts on mass incarceration was a clear choice:

It is about transforming the culture that dictates whose families are deserving or not, whose families are locked up and whose are honored. It is about seeing our interconnectedness and fully embracing that what happens to my neighbor also impacts me.

Walters and Shen are excited about the new policy initiatives that have already been catalyzed by the report. In California a series of legislative hearings in 2016 will look at all aspects of incarceration from visitation, to housing, to custody and how intersecting policies keep families down. In tandem they will work to advance proactive solutions that support the economic, physical, and community health of families.

Beyond the *Who Pays* project, Strong Families has generated a tremendous amount of success in a very short amount of time. “The message is clearly speaking to peoples’ hearts,” reflects Shen, “In less than six years, we have over 150 organizations who have signed on. Strong Families is now the largest national cross-sector strategic initiative focusing on gender, sexuality and racial equality and we are shifting the political landscape.”

One of the most vibrant examples of this is Forward Together’s work in New Mexico. In just a few years Strong Families New Mexico has aligned state progressives in a powerful proactive stance that is advancing an agenda that unites diverse sectors.





Building upon the 2013 victory in Albuquerque, Strong Families New Mexico began to move proactive policies at the 2015 legislative session by bringing an unprecedented coalition of youth, environmental, LGBT, reproductive justice, education and immigrant rights groups “to increase the minimum wage, protect drivers license access for undocumented immigrants, promote LGBTQ rights, protect access to abortion and work to end gender-based violence” under the unifying vision of strengthening New Mexican families.⁴⁶

It was this strong network of relationships that enabled Strong Families New Mexico to take on the issue of police and state violence in 2015 following the murder of James Boyd outside of Albuquerque.⁴⁷ Albuquerque has the highest rate of police homicides in the country. Strong Families New Mexico joined with the MLK Foundation and the ACLU, to call for a federal investigation by the Department of Justice.⁴⁸ They used the investigation to bring a family and community lens to the question of state violence and engaged many community members and organizations. Now they are launching a youth community action research project to develop recommendations following the investigation. Barboa credits Forward Stance practice with their ability to act clearly and quickly by “staying grounded in the middle of chaos and see when there were opportunities to act coming our way.”

New Mexico is just one hub of the growing national movement working to change how we think, feel, and act in support of all families. “I am so thankful for each and every person who helped to build this movement,” says Shen. “Together, we are developing a culture of working across issue, geography and constituency. We are making Strong Families a home for everyone who believes in a better world for all families.”

46. <http://strongfamiliesmovement.org/new-mexico>

47. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/8/18/albuquerque-police-to-stand-trial-for-murder.html>

48. <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/01/12/3610670/albuquerque-police-officers-actually-charged-with-murder-for-on-duty-shooting>

Movement Generation: Cultivating Home



The night before returning to Oakland, Quinton Sankofa sat with new friends under the stars, soaking in the serenity of Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. For the past week they had been immersed in Permaculture for the People, an intensive course organized by Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project in 2015. Surrounded by the beauty of rural northern California, the activists practiced linking the theory and concepts of permaculture with justice. In the morning Sankofa and the other organizers would return to Oakland for the second half of the training and begin hands-on projects to apply their new knowledge and skills in community-controlled settings. The organizers would also create site-specific maps for six to twelve month projects to start when they returned home.

Sitting under the night sky, the friends worried what would happen when they transitioned back to the urban environment. “We were 28 mostly urban folks who had bonded deeply and built community away from home. Oakland is so busy; we feared we would lose community in the transition,” said Sankofa. Without explicitly naming it, they resolved to carry the energy, commitment and relationships they had cultivated back to Oakland.

Permaculture for the People, and the practitioners and communities it cultivates, is a cornerstone of Movement Generation. Movement Generation began teaching permaculture and complementary “earth skills” to organizers of color as a strategy to foster deep resilience and traditional ecological knowledge in communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis. It was also a way for organizers to cultivate new relationships to land, labor and local economies.

Lots of organizers understand the commodification of land as a fundamental problem. What is missing is the understanding of how to have a relationship with land. Permaculture is the cutting edge of a 10 thousand year old tradition. It teaches us we are part of the living world and living systems. This traditional knowledge can help us adapt to crisis and move through it.

— Quinton Sankofa, Movement Generation Staff Collective Member and Earth Skills Program Coordinator

Collective Practice: Cultivating Home

In the practice of Cultivating Home, individuals in a group intentionally cultivate their personal and collective relationship to place and people for a robust, dynamic and healthy ecosystem.

“We are cultivating the midwives of the transition. At every level, these midwives are helping our peoples birth a new world we know is possible and that we long for.”

— Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan, Movement Generation Staff Collective Member



Movement Generation has grown and developed like an ecosystem over the years – intentionally nurturing diversity, relationships and the practice of Cultivating Home. The physical space, people, strategy, and programs reflect this commitment. Located in the middle of a sprawling garden that spans the yards of two homes, the Movement Generation office exudes a buzz of symbiotic activity that extends beyond its walls and into the natural environment. Organizers often sit at tables in the garden strategizing while three generations of family members live in the adjacent houses. The people here consider Movement Generation to be more than an organization or a job: it is their life’s work and their extended family.

In this garden it is easy to forget the crisis at hand. Earlier this year the California drought and other extreme weather prompted the *New York Times* to ask: Is our illusion of endless growth and endless supply finally coming head to head with natural limits?³⁸ As the nation was finally waking up from its collective denial about climate disruption and its economic roots, Movement Generation was nurturing a space for organizers to tackle questions like: What does a future with a drastically changing ecology look like? How do we restore our right relationship to place and build the muscles of sharing and interdependence? How do we strengthen community resilience in the face of changes we cannot anticipate? What would a just transition look and feel like? What movement strategies do we need to navigate this transition together?

38. California Drought Tests History of Endless Growth. www.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/us/california-drought-tests-history-of-endless-growth.html?_r=0



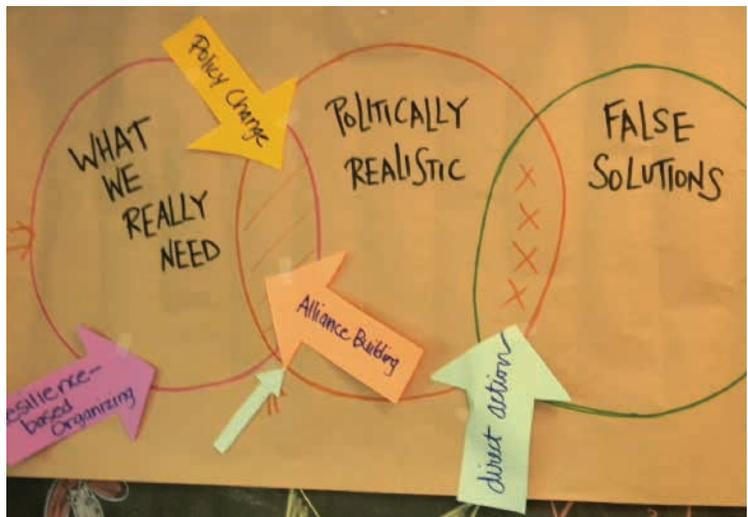
First Steps: Confronting Crisis with Hope

Movement Generation started as a gathering of activists who were ready to face big ecological questions and the accompanying unknown territory. The group initially came together for a one-time retreat and soon discovered a shared bigger purpose.

Most of these activists were racial and economic justice organizers with only a basic grasp of climate change and how it would impact poor communities of color. “We had to confront that the scale of the crisis was unfolding at a rate and in ways that we hadn’t really grasped,” says Mateo Nube, Movement Generation Staff Collective Member.

The experience pushed us all to face the full picture and to show up fully. Our message was we need YOU to be part of this. Asking people to show up fully and wholly in strategy spaces is part of the healing we all need to take on. These intensive retreats later became a core element of our larger strategy.

—Carla Maria Pérez, Movement Generation Staff Collective Member



The first retreat, at the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, blended the latest science with visioning, story circles with analysis, ceremony with strategy, and helped to develop a strong core of people committed to working together. Although the science was clear and devastating, the practices enabled the group to generate a powerful vision and connection with each other. They were able to look at the reality of ecological disruption clearly while still imagining a just transition for the future.

Ecological disruption impacts everyone in extreme and unknowable ways, and it hits the poor and communities of color the hardest. Is it also an opportunity to transform our culture and economy to be just and generative for everyone?

Finding New Ways: Towards a Living, Loving Economy

Focusing on the poor and communities of color, the group began to explore what a just transition looks like and what is needed to catalyze it.

We had to ask ourselves: what does it mean that we are always playing within political boundaries that actually maintains an extractive economy? We don't just want things to be a 'little less horrible' for people. Our communities need vibrant local, living, loving economies. What do we actually need—culturally and materially—to make this transition? If we can assert what we really need, we can also begin to shift the political terrain and advance solutions that restore dignity and power to communities.

—Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan, Movement Generation Staff Collective Member

To Movement Generation it is clear that the climate crisis is actually an economic crisis, caused by economies that depend on extraction, domination and endless growth. What is needed is an entirely new experience and understanding of economy that is grounded in the word's original roots – the management of home. Says Gopal Dayaneni, Transformation requires that we build new social and economic systems that model living systems.”

Movement Generation developed a Just Transition vision to focus energy away from an extractive economy and towards creating interconnected local, living, linked, loving economies on a large scale.

For us, transformation means remaking the relationships of home at every level. Home is where we live. It's our bodies, our households, the place we wake up in every day. Remaking our relationships to home means becoming grassroots ecologists who are learning how our actions impact the ecosystem we live in, including all of the people, and then making new choices.

—Gopal Dayaneni

In order to catalyze transition they needed an “embodied politic” and a practice of Cultivating Home themselves. As a community Movement Generation experimented with ways of working and organizing that reflected their vision and commitments. They began to develop an intersecting web of strategies and

projects to support organizers to lead a Just Transition with open eyes, a sharp lens and a commitment to action. They committed to developing a web of relationships that would take root and resonate outwards in unpredictable and magical ways. Through these experiments the practice of Cultivating Home emerged, taking multiple shapes and forms.



The Meaning of Home

ECO means HOME: ‘Eco’ comes from the greek word ‘oikos’ meaning ‘home’

ECO SYSTEM = HOME + SYSTEM

Ecosystem means all the relationships in a home – from microorganisms, plants, animals and people, to water soil and air.

ECO LOGY = HOME + KNOWLEDGE

Ecology means knowing, reading and understanding home – and by definition, the relationships of home.

ECO NOMY = HOME+ MANAGEMENT

Economy means management of home – how we organize our relationships in a place, ideally, to take care of the place and each other.

“Management of Home” can be good or bad, depending on what you do and to what ends. The purpose of our economy could be turning land, life and labor into the property for a few, or returning land, life and labor into a balanced web of relationships.

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE = HOME + JUSTICE

Ecological justice is the state of balance between human communities and healthy ecosystems based on thriving, mutually beneficial relationships and participatory self-governance.



About Movement Generation

“Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project inspires and engages in transformative action towards the liberation and restoration of land, labor and culture. We are rooted in vibrant social movements led by low-income communities and communities of color committed to a Just Transition away from profit and pollution and towards healthy, resilient and life-affirming local economies.

Since our launch in 2007, we have engaged over 250 organizations and thousands of community leaders, activists and organizers through intensive retreats, political education, hands-on skills workshops, peer exchange, campaign

development, alliance-building, and strategic support. In the last 12 months alone, we reached over 4,700 people through workshops, retreats, strategy sessions, and speaking events.

Our mission is to help build a vibrant and proactive movement for ecological justice in the United States. We define ecological justice as the state of balance between human communities and healthy ecosystems based on thriving, mutually beneficial relationships and participatory governance. We promote a holistic approach to solving the ‘eco-crisis’ (the crisis of home), as it has economic, ecological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal manifestations.”



Internal Transformation: Planting the Seeds for a Land Based Movement

The earth is a whole system made up of multiple systems. A certain number of fractals change and it changes everything up.
—Gopal Dayaneni

As Movement Generation’s commitment intensified they were confronted by a crisis of another kind: many of them were coming to the work as “wounded warriors” carrying unresolved, challenging, even traumatic, experiences. This personal, generational and historic trauma often created patterns of behavior and thinking that prevented them and their movements from actualizing big goals and visions. If they wanted to do anything about the ecological crisis, they needed to shift the movement habits that kept them guarded and fragmented, towards practices that could rebuild the fabric of community and their relationship to land. This was true inside the core group anchoring Movement Generation but also for their allies and the movement at large.

Permaculture for the People, and its companion earth skills trainings, emerged as one of the powerful vehicles that Movement Generation uses to help people Cultivate Home, heal wounds and generate real solutions. The two week intensive brings together leaders of color from communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Together they build and explore practical land-based skills through a design process that reflects natural patterns and mutually beneficial relationships.

My ancestors had an adversarial and often tumultuous relationship with the land because they were enslaved. Through this work I can come as a free person and reconnect to land in a way that is healing and beneficial. It’s helping me break down barriers.
—Quinton Sankofa

At Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Sankofa and other organizers in Permaculture for the People learned to connect the ideas and skills of permaculture, like rainwater catchment or harvesting, compost and building with cobb, with justice principles. Returning to the Bay Area they went deep into hands-on application, building a rainwater system, a compost bin and a cobb oven in community-controlled land spaces like Full Harvest Farm and The Urban Tilth Garden at Richmond High. “The first day we were back in Oakland we did a project on animal husbandry at Full Harvest Farm and harvested a duck together. That was a key moment. We had to confront life, and how we relate to life, together.” After working in the community all day, the teams devoted their evenings to designing maps for specific community land projects they would lead over the next six to twelve months in partnership with Urban Tilth, Full Harvest Farm, PODER, and Acta Non-Verba. The hand drawn maps included specific elements to meet ecological and community needs. “There was a buzz at the end of day as people shared their maps.” At night, in the dormitory, they easefully found roles to support each other as a community.



Organizers began to shift from seeing their projects as primarily solving problems to seeing design as a way to systematize and cultivate diversity, resilience, and relationship within their communities. By alternating cycles of Permaculture for the People courses, where activists “go deep”, with earth skills training, that teach a specific skill in a specific setting, Movement Generation has been “planting the seeds for a land-based movement.” This network of frontline organizers now has experience with alternative ways to generate value in their communities and cultivate home in the deepest sense.

Creating alternatives in an urban environment is radical and important work. If we are not generating our own alternatives while resisting the system then we are falling into a trap of spending our lives just resisting and fighting.
—Antonio, Permaculture for the People participant

This has direct implications for organizing:

We like to think about the political home we are cultivating as a rhizome.³⁹ It has a strong, networked infrastructure and a bold purpose that people relate to. In this organism, each person can pop up and implement the things that make sense to them. This opens up new ways to organize, vision and help our movements come to scale. It supports us to transform our organizations, our neighborhoods, our economies.
—Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan

Our organizing has to take on an ecological approach and see diversity as our best defense. The purpose of White supremacy is to destroy diversity. But to survive and thrive within the ecosystems we are part of, diversity is a must.
—Quinton Sankofa

39. Rhizome networks can regenerate themselves by sending up new shoots from a network of roots. The poplar is an example of a tree that propagates using rhizomes. The Pando colony of quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) in Utah is a famous rhizomatous tree that has been living for about 80,000 years. The rhizome of a poplar colony is the key to its longevity: foragers, insects, fungus, and forest fires may destroy the tree aboveground but the underground rhizome is somewhat protected against these threats.





Photo by Brooke Anderson

Within the leadership collective of Movement Generation the principles of cultivating home, while practiced differently, helped the team shed ideas, ideologies and projects in order to focus on something much larger.

In Movement Generation, we come from very different political traditions. Centering our work around big questions shifted our relationships and enabled us to push past our edges and make bolder leaps.

— Gopal Dayaneni

This means Movement Generation functions more like a networked ecosystem than a traditional nonprofit organization, with each person and project bringing unique personality, gifts, strengths, and relationships to the whole.

Our basic principle is that this work is integrated into all parts of ourselves and vice versa. We are close friends and family and care for each other in that way. This integration has ultimately enabled us to be more innovative in our thinking and our actions.

—Ellen Choy

The commitment to wholeness embedded in Cultivating Home has led Movement Generation to develop movement strategies that build on and strengthen the core, then reverberate out, connecting and integrating social justice issues.

External Impact: **Leading a Just Transition**

Our work is 60 percent intentional strategy, 40 percent organic opportunity.
—Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan

Over the last two years, grounded in their practice of Cultivating Home, Movement Generation focused on investing in community resilience and resilience-based organizing. Movement Generation also steadily focused on building movement leadership and campaigns that can take the vision of just transition to scale within different sectors of society. Along with Permaculture for the People and earth skills training, Movement Generation’s just transition retreats, writing workshops and cultural productions support organizers and cultural workers to build local community resilience. Intensive Justice and Ecology Retreats continue to strengthen and deepen a cross-sector movement network. Collaborations with grassroots groups in the Indigenous Environmental Network, Grassroots Global Justice, and Right to the City gave birth to the Climate Justice Alliance and generated a translocal organizing approach to build power and scale in new ways. All of this is to support people taking leadership for a just transition in their own communities as parents or engineers, fast food workers or healers, artists, faith leaders or teachers.

One specific example of this is their growing partnership with workers and the labor movement.

Movement Generation knows this moment at its root is not a climate crisis, it’s an economic crisis. We focus on the economic roots of climate crisis and a belief that ecological resilience will come from supporting worker power.

—Brooke Anderson, Movement Generation Staff Collective member and Climate Workers Director

Photo by Brooke Anderson





Photo by Dominique Lafaysse

Climate Workers, an independent, worker-led movement for climate justice, began two years ago as Movement Generation identified and engaged rank and file workers and labor leaders ready to work within labor to lead a just transition. Many of them had friends or family who had become sick from environmental conditions. By steadily training labor movement leaders through Movement Generation's intensive retreats, Climate Workers is developing the relationships and strategies to position workers on the forefront of just transitions. This local-to-state approach may also be fostering a new ecological constituency and culture in labor.

Historically, there has been a labor movement agreement that members only speak on issues in their own sector. If you are a nurse, you are not allowed to speak about the chemical industry or the regulation of chemicals; you leave that to chemical workers. But climate disruption is a different ball of wax. We are at a moment when workers across the movement need to unite and be part of a larger strategy. And building relationships and the leadership of workers across sectors is key to a just transition.

—Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan

In 2012 Movement Generation supported Alameda County recycling workers to expand compost services from single to multi-family buildings. Skeptics downplayed the expansion with racist assumptions that low-income communities “don’t care” about composting. Recycling workers, from the same low-income communities, proved the skeptics wrong as they went door to door to connect with local residents making the program a success and emerging as “climate heroes.”⁴⁰

In another campaign, Climate Workers connected striking fast food workers with organizers working to preserve urban farmland from development; this supported workers in an industry of the “old economy” with those creating alternatives to that industry. As the fast food workers went on strike the urban farmers made 200 burritos sourced from their land to feed them. Later that day the fast food workers helped to boycott and blockade the grocery chain behind the development.⁴¹

In December 2014, Climate Workers took its boldest step towards supporting a movement for climate justice within organized labor by organizing a tour of the Central Valley for union leaders to see the impacts of fracking on farm-worker communities. As a result of the tour, union members began to step out and oppose fracking⁴². In February 2015, eight thousand people marched in Oakland for real climate leadership in California, building on the momentum of the global People’s Climate Marches . In collaboration with 35 key labor organizations, Movement Generation organized a climate workers’ contingent that was the largest contingent in the march. The march shifted the trajectory of fracking in California. Movement Generation believes these actions are building new labor alliances that are ready to proactively seek a just transition rather than false solutions. As local unions endorse action, national and state labor organizations will need to take action as well.

Through a web of strategies, Movement Generation is defining what it means to Cultivate Home at the root of a just transition and they are generating a tangible and powerful community that embodies this transition. It is this element —of actually creating a new world while transforming the old—that is so powerful. It is what might make the impossible possible.

40. Oakland Council Backs Higher Wages for Recycling Workers and Pushes for Bulk-Waste Pickup for Apartment Dwellers <http://www.eastbayexpress.com/SevenDays/archives/2014/03/21/oakland-council-backs-higher-wages-for-recycling-workers-and-pushes-for-bulk-waste-pickup-for-apartment-dwellers>

41. Fight for \$15 and Defend the Gill Tract! <http://movementgeneration.org/fight-for-15-and-defend-the-gill-tract>

42. See #WhatTheFrack video series.



National Domestic Workers Alliance: Leading with Love

Hannia, Yashna, Samantha and Anna arrived elated and exhausted to McPherson Square in Washington, DC to greet Pope Francis on his historic 2015 visit to the United States. The four women walked 100 miles through forests, farmland and urban streets with 96 other women, mostly immigrants and many of them domestic workers. The 8-day journey began at an immigrant detention center in York, Pennsylvania, where some of the women's family members are detained. Inspired by the Pope's words on migration and economic justice, they made the long walk to amplify and emanate his message of compassion, care, and global cooperation in welcoming migrants.

**Collective Practice:
Generative Somatics**

Somatics is a holistic way to change hearts, minds and actions. As a transformational methodology grounded in practice, Somatics supports individuals and collectives to embody what we care about and to act together skillfully. It helps leaders become more impactful and whole, and helps organizations to act from shared visions and values. Somatics works through the body and engages our thinking, emotions, relationships, vision and actions.

All photos in this section courtesy of National Domestic Workers Alliance.



Pope Francis' visit to the United States was a watershed moment for many believers and non-believers. With the global migration crisis unfolding in Europe, he called on everyone to act from the highest level of connection and care with each other and the planet.

His vision is of universal love, where no one must live in the shadows, and everyone has dignity. We hope his message rings clearly through the halls of power and inspires our leaders to take bold action on immigration.

—Ai-Jen Poo, Executive Director, NDWA and Co-Director of Caring Across Generations³⁸

Each of the 100 women had their own story and reason for walking. Hannia, a member of La Colectiva de Mujeres, a domestic workers' cooperative in San Francisco, is an undocumented immigrant with stage 5 kidney cancer. She, like the others, walked for a future that ensures the human dignity and justice for all people, "a future where we are stronger together." Hannia walked with the conviction that "...

When the women come together our struggle is unstoppable and our power is great. We are the ones who keep our families together."

The pilgrimage itself made national and international headlines, but the foundational role that transformative practice played in the journey is far less known.³⁹ Every morning of the pilgrimage the women gathered together to do two Somatics practices, centering and rowing. In centering, the women stood together silently, feeling their connection to their own dignity, to each other, to history and to their purpose. "I came in with a lot of righteous anger," recalls Samantha, a member leader of the National Domestic Worker Alliance (NDWA). "That anger was taking a real toll on my body. I realized that anger wasn't the only way to organize. Centering really helped me to put the purpose of the pilgrimage at my center, and to feel the leaders, movements and history at our backs."



38. Poo, Ai-Jen. Why I'm Walking 100 Miles to See Pope Francis. Time Magazine. September 15, 2015. <http://time.com/4035349/why-im-walking-100-miles-to-see-pope>

39. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/women-pilgrimage-pope-immigration_56029f72e4b0fde8b0d074b8

Similarly, rowing practice helped them to take this purpose find a group rhythm and sense of shared direction.

We were coming in with very different paces that could have been in conflict. Some of us wanted to walk quickly and others needed to move more slowly. Some of us needed to this be a high energy and spirited march, and others wanted a reflective pilgrimage. Through the somatic practice of rowing, and coming into rhythm and movement together, we were able to align within our differences. This had a huge impact on the pilgrimage.

—Yashna Maya Padamsee, NDWA Events Manager and gs student

Mornings also included women leading others in their own practices, such as martial arts, yoga, and song. “We got to see everyone shine. Without those morning practices, the march might not even have functioned,” says Ann Duncan, Campaign Organizer, NDWA and We Belong Together.

Each afternoon of the pilgrimage the women took part in a 30-minute silent walking meditation focusing inwardly on a theme, such as sisterhood or migration. After the meditation, women were invited to seek out someone they had not connected with before, to walk together and share thoughts and insights. These practices became crucial to the experience as well as the political impact of the journey.

When the women arrived in McPherson Square in Washington, DC, the sun was setting, and Sweet Honey and the Rock greeted them with song. In their hearts and bodies these 100 women felt that they arrived at a new moment in history, one that required courage, vision and deep connection.⁴⁰ The act of walking and practicing together had coalesced them into a powerful force. They felt ready for anything.

40. <http://www.grassrootsdc.org/2015/09/pilgrimage-to-the-pope-for-immigrant-rights-arrives-in-d-c/>



First Steps: The Launch of NDWA

For some of the women, this journey began in June 2007, when more than 50 domestic workers came together in at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, GA. These women who all lived and worked in the U.S., were immigrants from Bangladesh, Haiti, Barbados, El Salvador, Mexico and other countries around the globe. Echoing the Forum's theme, "Another World is Possible," they engaged in spirited exchange over several days to understand each other's organizing models, analyze campaign victories and challenges, and tell the epic story of domestic work in the United States. They laughed, cried, and built lasting relationships. On the fourth and final day of the Forum, they voted to form the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA).



For years domestic worker organizing in the U.S. had been gaining momentum. As more and more women entered the United States as part of the late 20th century wave of economic migrants, many entered domestic work as one of the few occupations available to them in the U.S. Local organizations began to form as a way to support, connect and build power among these workers. The founding of NDWA represented both a culmination of this moment and a new beginning for small local organizations to come together to find common ground and direction. It was the beginning of a more collaborative, more powerful, and more interdependent national movement for the rights and dignity of nannies, housecleaners and home attendants of seniors and people with disabilities.

One of those local organizations, Domestic Workers United in New York, was on its way to winning a nationally groundbreaking campaign for the New York Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. The legislation was the first of its kind and was already generating energy and momentum for change around the country. Organizers in California were mounting a similar campaign and other states were considering it. According to Ai-Jen Poo, "We were reaching critical mass and on the verge of many breakthroughs. We realized we needed space and voice to make this breakthrough become a national movement." Other local movement leaders saw NDWA as a vehicle to amplify their voice and power, build momentum, and learn from one another. The time was ripe for NDWA.

Finding a New Way: Leading with Love

Early on, the founding leaders of NDWA decided to step back and begin imagining themselves as part of something bigger and brighter. Ai-jen reflected, "When we'd ask, 'what do you care about?' the women members would say, 'I care about my own family and the one I am working for.'" Members' experiences revealed the limitations of traditional labor organizing models where workers and employers were always set up on opposite sides. In order to honor the complex nature of members' concerns and relationships, NDWA decided to lean with the love and intimacy that is part of many domestic workers' relationships with their employers.

About the National Domestic Workers Alliance

(NDWA) is the nation's leading voice for dignity and fairness for the millions of domestic workers in the United States, most of whom are women.

Founded in 2007, NDWA works for the respect, recognition, and inclusion in labor protections for domestic workers. The national alliance is powered by 48 affiliate organizations—plus first local chapter in Atlanta—of over 20,000 nannies, housekeepers, and caregivers for the elderly in 36 cities and 16 states. Domestic workers care for the things we value the most: our families and our homes. They

care for our children, provide essential support for seniors and people with disabilities to live with dignity at home, and perform the home care work that makes all other work possible. They are skilled and caring professionals, but for many years, they have labored in the shadows, and their work has not been valued. These workers deserve respect, dignity and basic labor protections.

Domestic work is the work that makes all other work possible. Together, NDWA believes we can win the protections and recognition that this vital American workforce needs.



With a great sense of possibility NDWA set out to organize for care, not against an enemy. Instead of saying “Here’s what is wrong; join us!” NDWA said “This is what we want. This is what is possible. Join us!” To do this the movement would need a network of strong leaders from across the country sharing an ambitious vision for impact, principles and practices, and deep connections. They also would need to move forward, not wait, even as they developed the qualities required for the mission.



In 2011, NDWA simultaneously launched a national campaign, Caring Across Generations; and SOL (Strategy - Organizing - Leadership), a national leadership development and capacity building program for worker leaders and organizers across the country. NDWA reached out to generative somatics and Social Justice Leadership⁴¹ to develop SOL.

SOL was launched as an intensive pilot program that included five, 4-day sessions and 70 member leaders and organizers. It is now an annual 16-day program that has become central to NDWA’s strategy.

The story of SOL is inseparable from the big audacious experiment of building a national movement grounded in the leadership of domestic workers. This experiment starts from a place of abundance, from what’s actually needed, and from a need to fundamentally change the values in our economy and democracy.

—Ai-Jen Poo

Following the victory of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in New York, NDWA identified **three core elements** of a transformative campaign: leadership development that recognizes trauma and facilitates healing, campaign capacity, and transformative organizing skills. SOL nurtures the qualities and competencies needed to lead transformative campaigns and build a generative movement culture. Through SOL, NDWA hoped leaders would go beyond *understanding* skills to *embodying* them. generative somatics (gs) offers a pragmatic and actionable approach to do just that.

41. Social Justice Leadership has since closed.

Internal Transformation: Moving Together as a Collective Force

“Who are we together and can we be a ‘we’?” was a potent but often unspoken question for NDWA staff and member organizers. Coming from different organizations, it was easy and natural for NDWA members to be focused on the specific goals and campaigns of their groups. A core experiment at the heart of SOL was how to build an alliance that embodied NDWA’s vision and put their values into collective practice.

The first retreat focused on building a felt sense of shared vision and aligning the group around what was possible if they worked together. “We used very little language about the enemy or opposition, we focused on vision, possibility and what people care about as the ground,” recalls Staci Haines, generative somatics founder and trainer. Jill Shenker, NDWA International Organizing Director & Field Assistant, describes the somatic activity at end of the first retreat:

We stood together in a beautiful field in one long line, extending our arms and vision towards the future of our movement. We took steps forward for 1 year down the line, then 5 years and 10 years. At 20 years we named the things we could see, like domestic worker rights passed in every single state.

About generative somatics

generative somatics envisions a movement guided by cultivated wisdom, love and rigor.

The mission of generative somatics is to grow a transformative social and environmental justice movement — one that integrates personal and social transformation, creates compelling alternatives to the status quo and embodies the creativity and life affirming actions we need to forward systemic change.

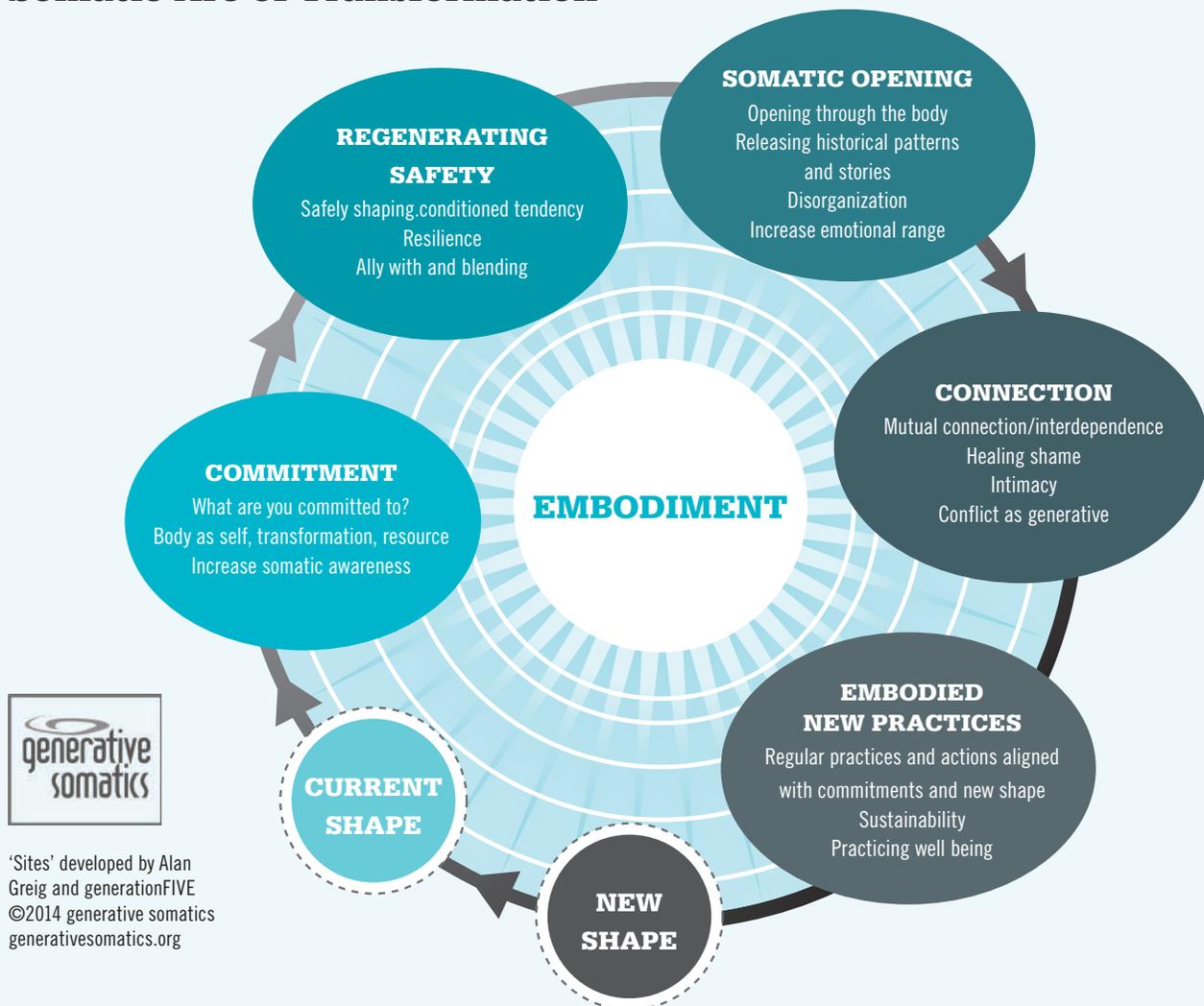


After this practice Jill felt she could see and hear that “people got it” and were ready to move together as a collective force.

Early on in SOL, participants were introduced to the Somatic practice of Jo. The Jo is a wooden staff used in the martial art, Aikido. SOL participants used the Jo practice to connect with their vision, power and capacity to make impact. Spenta Kandawalla, generative somatics Program Director & Lead Teacher, vividly remembers:

The room would bubble up when it was time to practice Jo. Everyone brought their attention, focus, and hearts to the 31 movements of the form. They practiced using their Jo as an extension of their power, as an extension of their longings, and as a way to coordinate their actions in themselves and with each other. Watching 70, primarily immigrant women, wield their power boldly and with accountability was incredibly inspiring.

Somatic Arc of Transformation





Later on, SOL focused on transformative campaigns and the contradictions that often come up for organizers as they face difficult decisions and the need to take quick strategic action in rapidly changing conditions. Staci Haines described the Somatic practice that SOL participants used to explore new ways to relate to contradictions and divisive perspectives:

One group of organizers stood in the middle with two other groups standing on either side of them giving voice to the two “poles” of the contradiction. In the first round the group in the center just focused on letting themselves react to the contradiction, being pulled, swayed and disheartened, noticing what reactions came up.

In the second round they engaged in “centering” by becoming present, open and connected to each other, their vision and what matters to them. They were still aware of the contradiction, but they practiced expanding to get bigger than the contradiction in order to hold the complexity somatically.

In round after round we would see trust break down when they went to the reactive place. They stopped liking each other and felt polarized. But, when the member leaders Somatically “centered” and expanded themselves, the polarization dropped and they went from being two sides to one circle. From that place they could see how very different negotiation and strategy and relationships are possible.





In the last SOL retreat, immediately after the 2012 Presidential elections, participants had a live opportunity to practice holding the contradictions present in the divergent positions that their organizations were considering taking on immigration reform. Identifying specific choices and polarizations that might arise in the 6-month period that lay ahead, the Somatic practice at SOL allowed participants to develop a nuanced sense of current conditions and opportunities, as well as the capacity to disagree without breaking relationships. As noted by Raquel Lavina, a SOL Trainer:

You could feel a huge leap in their ability to deal with difference in a deep and nuanced way... the group had a grounded political and strategic debates. When faced with significant differences, rather than go for false unity or stop working together, they were able to regroup in their shared long-term vision. At one point when two groups could not agree on a tactic, they decided not to work together in the short-term but devised ways to stay connected so as not to disrupt long-term movement building.

It was also essential for NDWA to explore individual and collective trauma. Most SOL participants have experienced intimate violence, child abuse as well as the traumatic impact of immigration and oppression. The same is true throughout the communities they are organizing and among women workers at large. An entire SOL session was solely focused on healing trauma, and the relevance of this for leadership, organizing and strategy. By integrating Somatic healing processes within SOL, the organizers created space to name those experiences and to actively work with them. One NDWA member, Araceli Hernandez of Casa Latina, describes the result.



I could see faces transforming when we talked about our own stories. I began to see the other organizers as people who have physical lives and their own problems. I also saw liberation around their minds and bodies as we did this work together.

Finding trust and resilience in each other, the group felt better prepared for collective action and overcoming divisions within movement work. "A really radical practice for the movement is extending trust and committing to rebuild it if it's broken", asserts Raquel Lavina. "So many of us want to trust each other's values, methods and politics before taking action together, and then we split over disagreements. Oppression relies on us being divided, so it is radical if we extended trust from the beginning and use collective action and practice to build and rebuild trust with each other over time."

If you want to do work that is focused and with a big vision you need to work on yourself and your own limitations. I now feel a sense of liberation, more complete and energetic in my job as an organizer. I believe more in allies, collaboration, and community. My vision and my energy are open.

—Araceli Hernandez

Through SOL, NDWA is able to build a culture and campaigns around a core set of values and practices: values and practices that were deeply embedded in the 2015 pilgrimage. Members experience the power of embodied leadership and transformative practice that is rooted in sharp strategic direction, a commitment to healing trauma, and political education and analysis. In fall of 2015, SOL grew to include a National 4-day Orientation Program that introduces new affiliates to the vision, politics, transformative practice and organizing approach of NDWA. The training team is now made up of NDWA national staff, gs teachers and worker leaders. Building work leadership is central to SOL's purpose, NDWA and gs are now offering the third year-long SOL Program to the next group of member leaders and organizers. Members who have gone through the orientation program are able to apply to be part of the longer series.

External Impact: **Toward a Caring Economy**

The 100 women 100 mile march to meet Pope Francis in Washington DC was just one sign that the work of the NDWA has developed tremendous momentum. The success of NDWA has been extraordinary. From the front page of the New York Times to the Sun Magazine they have ignited national concern for the issue of care and have used it to bring an unexpected wide range of people and organizations into meaningful connection with each other.

In just eight years, NDWA became a tremendous force in national politics and culture. It grew from 13 affiliates in 5 states, to 50 affiliates in 18 states. Through media, culture and policy campaigns, NDWA fundamentally shifted the conversation about domestic workers, labor, immigration, women's issues, and aging. NDWA caught the attention of the Obama Administration, won major campaigns at the State level, and amplified the voices of domestic workers in public dialogue locally, nationally and internationally.

Strategies for a Caring Economy

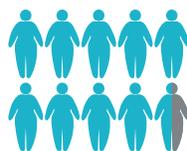
Win protections



23% of domestic workers are paid below the state minimum wage.

We work to build lasting change with laws that protect the workforce.

Uplift women



95% of domestic workers are women.

We foster their vision and leadership to become the needed voices for change.

Ensure fairness



46% of domestic workers are immigrants.

We build game-changing campaigns to win equality for immigrants, women and their families.

In June 2011, NDWA and its partners won C189 Convention for Decent Work for Domestic Workers at the International Labor Organization, now ratified by 15 countries; and in 2013 NDWA helped to launch the International Domestic Workers Federation with domestic worker organizations in 43 countries. In September 2013, with support from the White House, the U.S. Department of Labor released new regulations to include millions of home care workers in the Fair Labor Standards Act, ending 75 years of exclusion from minimum wage and overtime protections. In July 2015, Connecticut passed its own Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, becoming the sixth State in the country — after California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Oregon and New York (with a similar bill pending in Illinois) — to guarantee basic labor protections to the domestic workers *who make all other work possible*.

Perhaps most profoundly, NDWA has demonstrated the power of care by making connections between communities so often divided against each other.

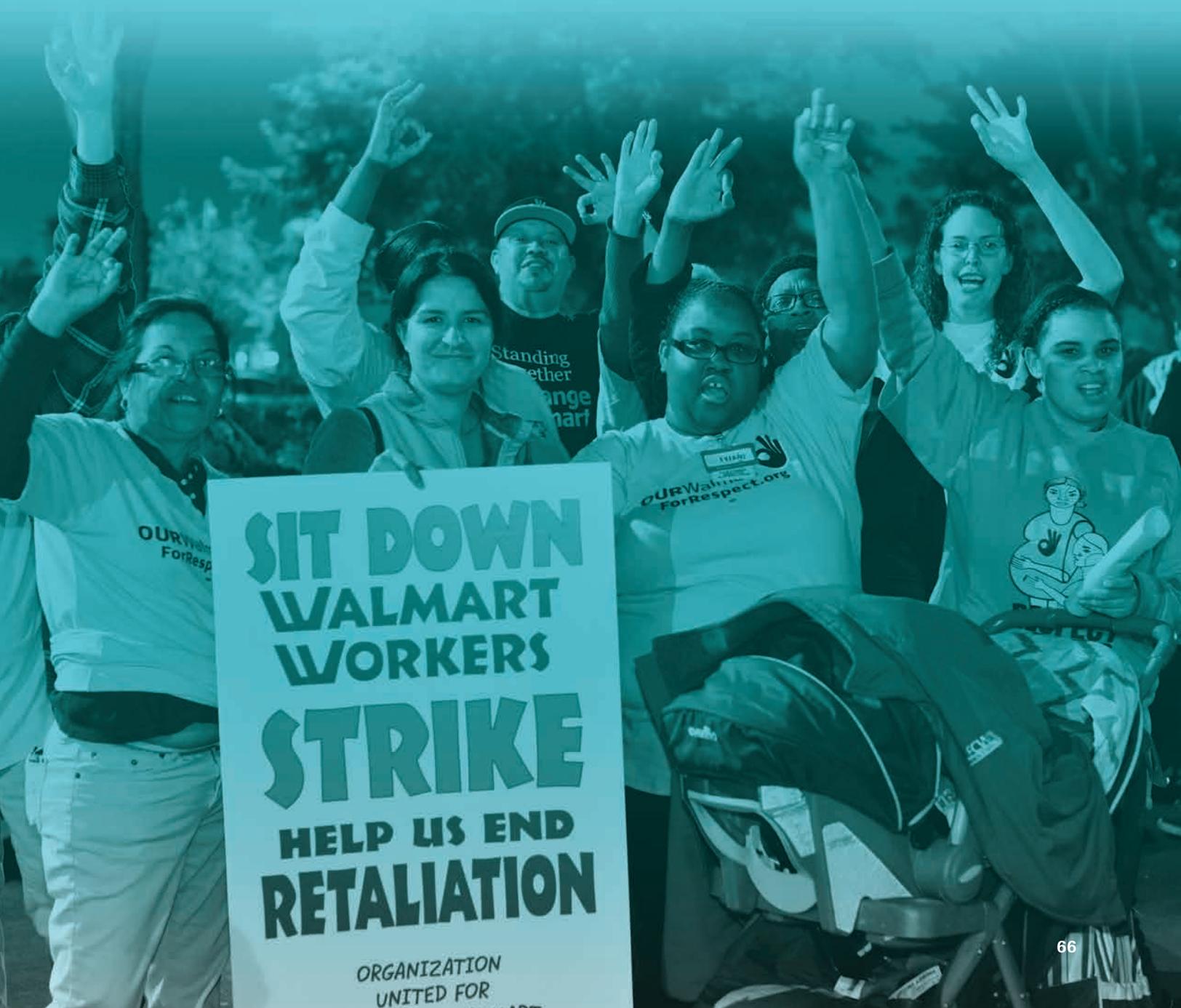
Long after the recent 100 mile Pilgrimage, the vibration of the women's footsteps, and the transformation that took place along the way, will be felt far and wide. Beyond the media visibility and the knowledge that the Pope himself read their letter, NDWA sees new walks springing up in communities across the country

creating space for more and more women to be part of this growing movement. "A woman who might not feel comfortable coming to a meeting will come to walk," says Yashna, "These new walks will take place on the 11th day of each month, honoring our country's 11 million undocumented immigrants.

Through transformative organizing, NDWA is charting a path to a world where love and dignity are the values we live by — and are built into the very core of our economy and society.



OUR Walmart: **Caring Communities, Courageous Action**



Black Friday, November 2015: On one the most notorious shopping days the year, Denise Barlage³⁸, Tyfani Faulkner, Jasmine Dixon and other current and former Walmart workers were completing the 15th day of a 15-day fast.³⁹ Despite living on liquids for two weeks, those who fasted for the full 15 days were surprisingly clear-minded and energized. This came through in their message: “While many Walmart workers can barely put food on the table this Thanksgiving, Walmart’s profits continue to grow.” By joining the “Fast for 15” they were making their private stories of hunger public and acting to secure a living wage and stable working conditions for Walmart workers around the country. The action was part of “\$15 and Full Time,” a core campaign of The Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart), the worker-run organization dedicated to transforming the lives of past and present Walmart workers. Barlage, Faulkner and other fasters took part in actions that touched all 50 states; many near the homes of Walmart fortune heirs.

Over the last few years Walmart has become the epicenter for Black Friday demonstrations and the symbol of a corporate culture that is fueling extreme economic disparity in the United States and around the world. Walmart is the largest employer in the world. The Waltons who control Walmart rank among the richest families in the world.⁴⁰ By contrast, many Walmart associates are among the working poor, employed but unable to sustain themselves without public assistance. Walmart’s business model depends on extracting cheap labor and blocking all labor organizing.⁴¹ Through OUR Walmart’s Fast for 15, former and current employees fasted for the 15-days leading up to Black Friday to shine a light on conditions that leave many Walmart associates unable to buy enough food to feed their families. “There are days when employees choose between paying for lunch or gas to get home,” says Barlage.

The size of Walmart and the role it plays in setting the terms of engagement for other retailers make it a crucial and daunting focus for organizing.⁴² While workers struggle to survive in a place that depends

Collective Practice:
**Building Communities of
Empathy and Care**

Through the practice of building a community of empathy and care, people come together in small circles and establish a foundation of mutual care, trust and support that permeates everything they do. At the core of this practice are “small circles” through which workers provide each other with personal support and support at work, as well as the foundation to innovate and change their conditions.

Care and action support each other. They create a foundation of trust that gives people the courage to take great risk and then create change at great scale.

— Andrea Dehlendorf, Co-Director, OUR Walmart

38. Facebook. OUR Walmart OHIO. “Meet Denise Barlage.” https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1593481367536219&id=1423872897830401

39. CNN Money: <http://money.cnn.com/2015/11/12/news/walmart-black-friday-protesters-fast/>

40. Forbes Magazine. Billionaires List. <http://www.forbes.com/billionaires/list/#version:realtime>

41. Walmart: the high price of low price. Brave New Films. http://www.bravenewfilms.org/about_walmart

42. Dear Walmart – the Film. http://www.dearwalmart.com/the_film

About OUR Walmart

"We, the hourly Associates, are the life-blood of Walmart. Our company is stronger because of the values we embrace – a strong work ethic, compassion for one another and honesty. Yet we are not treated with the respect we deserve. The fundamental desire to be shown respect is what led us to join together as OUR Walmart – an organization of, by and for Walmart Associates. We are one Organization United for Respect at Walmart.

OUR Walmart is an independent group of like-minded Associates as we work together to fix what is broken in our stores and shape our own destinies. OUR Walmart works to ensure that every Associate, regardless of his or her title, age, race, or sex, is respected at Walmart. We join together to offer strength and support in addressing the challenges that arise in our stores and our company everyday.

We envision a future in which our company treats us, the Associates of Walmart, with respect and dignity. We envision a world where we succeed in our careers, our company succeeds in business, our customers receive great service and value, and Walmart and Associates share all of these goals."



on extracting their labor, Walmart uses aggressive strategies to control workers. Many workers like Barlage are harassed or fired for organizing within their stores. The company has been known to shutter whole departments and even entire stores where unions make inroads.⁴³ Just a few weeks before the Black Friday demonstrations, Bloomberg Businessweek released a scathing report on how the corporation hired Lockheed Martin and coordinated with the FBI to conduct surveillance of Walmart workers and allies involved in OUR Walmart. As Dehlendorf says "It all paints a portrait of a deeply distrustful, even paranoid, company that has long been at war with its employees over wages, hours, work conditions, and unionizing."⁴⁴

Conditions like this could easily make OUR Walmart members fearful. Instead, they choose to challenge the corporation's culture by creating their own, one that nurtures workers and generates enough creative space to go beyond surviving to envision great change. By building an alternate culture from within, one where workers experience care, respect and dignity, OUR Walmart members cultivate courage and plant seeds for transformation.

43. Mother Jones Magazine online: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/02/our-walmart-black-friday-union>

44. Bloomberg Businessweek. How Walmart Keeps and Eye on its Massive Workforce. <http://www.bloomberg.com/features/2015-walmart-union-surveillance/>



First Steps: A Declaration for Respect

OUR Walmart began in June 2011 when a group of 100 Walmart workers from across the country gathered in Bentonville, AR to draft and share their “Declaration for Respect” with Walmart⁴⁵. Each of the workers faced fear to speak out: fear of being fired, fear of going further into poverty. The Declaration reflected their stories of low pay, the instability of constantly changing shifts and their need for healthcare. The Declaration asked Walmart to “listen to us” and “have respect for the individual.” The concerns about Walmart were not just about “having to choose between paying the bills or having enough to eat,” they were being “discouraged and mistreated.”⁴⁶ The statement defined a bold direction and what OUR Walmart was for: Respect, Dignity and Care.

From this first group of 100, OUR Walmart began organizing through a process of deep listening. As Marianne Manilov, Director of the Engage Network and consultant to Our Walmart says, “We wanted to see how people were already supporting each other. We looked for informal places where people had a depth of trust and connection. In the effort to change Walmart it was the networks of private Facebook groups, support phone calls and people who really stood together in difficult times, like not having enough money for groceries at the end of the week, where we saw great potential.”

The small circles, formed organically and informally by workers, dealt with specific issues faced in the stores. It was the small circles - communities of empathy and care – that became central to OUR Walmart’s organizing model. By nurturing and centering human relationships, OUR Walmart began to develop an approach to change that enabled workers to experience deep trust, their own creativity, and the support to take action with others just like them. This was a powerful counterforce to what workers experienced every day, one that pointed to a new leadership model and method of organizing.



45. OUR Walmart. The Declaration. <http://forrespect.org/the-declaration/>

46. Why we are standing up: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caV-m1wq6Vc>

Finding a New Way: **Communities of Empathy and Care**

When I try to describe the day-to-day practice of people who are suffering and how they stand with each other, I say that most of all it is done with love. And real love, deep love, changes everything.

— Marianne Manilov, Director, Engage Network

Small circles begin with a worker reaching out to others for mutual support, whether it's coworkers at a particular store, a veteran connecting across stores to other veterans, or someone wanting space to talk about LGBT issues with their peers. OUR Walmart supports people interested in forming small circles by providing training on how to engage and facilitate a group. The small groups determine their own focus and structure. Some groups meet regularly and others are more informal; some groups start in person and add in online networking later while others start online and then become in-person gatherings.

For example, says Dehlendorf, OUR Walmart's innovative online-to-field model was built in collaboration with an OUR Walmart member, Dawn Littman, who spent countless hours communicating with current and former Walmart employees through Facebook. "I noticed Dawn was building a circle of workers who were





supporting each other in a private Facebook group called Treasures. Every day they supported each other, shared what was going on in their lives, honored each other as important.” In the past, Dehlendorf says she would have appreciated members’ online outreach and relationship building, but not thought to shift the organizing model and structure to leverage it.

“People in extreme poverty and people on public assistance are often invisible in our society and are devalued on the job by Walmart,” observes Dehlendorf. “This group provided connection and support to a huge community. From there we began

to look at scaling a program in ways that allowed people to find communities of support that matter to them.” Members of OUR Walmart have formed LGBT groups, veterans groups, and regional groups. “It’s such a large network of groups,” says Dehlendorf, “that we can barely count them all.”

Internal Transformation: **Leadership from the Ground Up**

I would never have talked about love and family the way I do now. OUR Walmart has totally changed how I approach movement building.

— Andrea Dehlendorf

As OUR Walmart began using the newer technology of the internet to spread the older technology of the small circle, its network grew and deepened tremendously. The combined technologies enabled the network to connect with Walmart’s 4,000 stores in the US and to workers around the world. Grounded in small circles, their online-to-field approach began changing Walmart’s employment practices, generating an unprecedented wave of national attention and support, and influencing the way people think about low-wage workers. It also transformed the organization internally. As the practice of small circles gained momentum, OUR Walmart recognized how the deep threads of relationship formed between workers also created the potential for bolder collective action.

Dehlendorf shares a story: at a national convening of OUR Walmart leaders, an OUR Walmart member fell sick and went to the hospital, only to be discharged. When the other members found out they went to the hospital with her, staying up all night taking shifts watching over their friend. The next morning the OUR Walmart leaders decided she needed to go back to the hospital where she was finally diagnosed with a stroke. The exhausted leaders went from the hospital back to the national meeting where a session on building communities of empathy and care had already been planned. With tears in their eyes, the members talked about saving the woman’s life.

“It was clear to all of us that this value of love was deeply rooted,” says Dehlendorf. For Manilov, the moment demonstrated a transformation within OUR Walmart. “There was a shift in the fabric of the leadership.”



OUR Walmart encourages leaders to invest time building love, connection, and support among members in need. Their leadership is defined through “being there for each other.” Dehlendorf explains that this model allows innovation and leadership to grow from the ground up. “OUR Walmart focuses on people leading in whatever ways they lead, not just people taking specific actions like signing a petition or going to a march. A distributive network like this builds on existing relationships and pushes power to the edges rather than trying to centralize it.”

Over the last four years, several of the small circles have transformed their depth of connection and purpose into action and campaigns. One powerful example of this evolution is “Respect the Bump” which started in 2013.

When Los Angeles-based Walmart Associate Girshreila Green became pregnant, she was afraid that if she told her manager she would lose her job or put her baby’s health at risk. She started talking to other women on Facebook who shared her fear. In the process she connected with a woman in Texas who had almost lost her baby because her manager refused to accept her doctor’s note that said she couldn’t do heavy lifting; a woman in Maryland whose manager had required her to take an early leave of absence, forcing her

to scramble to pay the bills; and a woman in Chicago who had miscarried in a Walmart bathroom. Across the country, she heard the same stories: women who were afraid to say they were pregnant for fear of being forced to take leave or lose their jobs. Many worked in harsh conditions to support their families, risking their health and the health of their unborn babies. These women formed an OUR Walmart group called “Respect the Bump.”⁴⁷

Respect the Bump started as a small circle of pregnant mothers who were denied accommodations with their pregnancies,” explains Dehlendorf. “They came together initially to share their pain and ended up creating significant change.” Respect the Bump workers began to hold meetings and events to call attention to how Walmart treated pregnant women and single mothers. From there they launched a campaign to call for a change in Walmart’s pregnancy policies. The *Washington Post* profiled Respect the Bump members. The Obama Administration invited members to the White House and members worked with national women’s organizations to put forward a proposal for policy change and a shareholder resolution at Walmart’s annual meeting. Due to this pressure Walmart shifted their policy to allow women with high-risk pregnancies to receive accommodations. Respect the Bump now helps women to enforce the new policy with managers locally and seeks to create a policy for all pregnant women. A national network of women’s groups and legal groups now joins them in this effort.

47. OUR Walmart, Respect the Bump: <http://forrespect.org/respect-the-bump>



This leadership and action model, rooted in an intentional commitment to love and caretaking, is a transformative element of OUR Walmart. “Love and caretaking have always been part of movement and organization building, but they weren’t always recognized or cultivated with collective intention.”

In traditional organization building we’d say, “That leader is great at GOTV” and maybe give them an award. But we wouldn’t understand what made them great at GOTV or looked at the group around this leader. Always there are the unseen empathy and care leaders—people cooking for everyone, taking care of people’s children, helping people when they were sick. When you interview people and ask them why they turned out, some will come because of the action but many will say its because they felt seen, heard, or ‘part of a family.’ Building an organization is about strategy and action, of course. But I also think building a movement requires this kind of commitment to love and care. Dr. King called this the Beloved Community. But how often have you truly felt loved in that way? That is actually what is happening in OUR Walmart.
— Marianne Manilov

Manilov recalls a simple exercise from the OUR Walmart team leadership workshops. In the exercise a piece of paper is placed on the back of each worker and everyone is invited to walk up and write words that describe the leadership qualities of the worker. Then each worker listens as their special qualities are read



out to the group. Months after one of the leadership workshops, an OUR Walmart leader called Manilov to tell her how she continued to carry her piece of paper with her and tried to live up to what people saw in her.

Recognizing the transformative role of empathy, care and trust, organizers in OUR Walmart are now able to nurture strategies that really work and replicate them.

External Impact: Work that is Valued, Respected and Secure

In just four years OUR Walmart has grown into a fierce and functioning association inside one of the largest most exploitive companies in the world. The network now permeates all of Walmart's stores and has tens of thousands of active supporters. At its core is a culture of resilience and community rooted in the values of respect, care and love. Combining the power of this network with the power of this culture, Walmart workers have begun to change this giant from the inside out.

OUR Walmart members have called for and won increased hours, regular shifts, and respect from their managers. They have formed a network of protection for any worker who speaks out and is threatened with less hours or termination. Whether that worker is gay, pregnant or trying to go to school at night, OUR Walmart leaders help each other navigate Walmart policies.

In 2012, striking workers, customers and supporters first initiated the annual Black Friday protests across the country. Since 2012 the annual protests have swelled to tens of thousands of participants and now dominate local and national media on the busiest shopping day of the year. In just one year the number of Black Friday actions grew to 1,500 with over 100 arrests, establishing Black Friday as a nationally recognized day of resistance. By 2015 over 1,400 people, including hundreds of Walmart workers, actively took part in the all-liquid fast for 1 to 15 days.⁴⁸

In 2013, when Walmart fired a group of OUR Walmart leaders who were speaking out nationally, the OUR Walmart network escalated protests and filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board. In January



48. Common Dreams Newswire, OUR Walmart Press Release: <http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2015/11/18/our-walmart-fasters-bring-protest-clinton-hq-today>



of 2014, the National Labor Relations Board found merit in a vast group of legal charges, deciding that Walmart had illegally retaliated against workers who were going on strike.

In early 2015 OUR Walmart won \$1 billion in wage increases for 500,000 workers.⁴⁹ The win was significant, but the workers did not believe it was enough. OUR Walmart leveraged the momentum, trust and relationships they had built to call for "\$15 and Full Time" for all workers. These wins would be so far reaching and significant that Yahoo Health declared they would make America – as a country – a healthier place.⁵⁰ Workers across 2,600 stores signed petitions and went on strike in order to secure a living wage of \$15 an hour and stable, predictable working conditions for associates. Building to the 2015 Black Friday protests, OUR Walmart transformed itself into an independent worker-led organization.⁵¹ They established online help for workers and used crowdsourcing as a powerful way to protest working conditions at stores.

OUR Walmart leaders are creating a new collective culture of resilience that permeates and impacts the corporation and everything around it. This culture has also enhanced the organization's ability to make

49. Daily Kos: <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/11/24/1454050/--Building-Bridges-Walmart-Workers-Black-Friday-Fast-for-15-and-Full-Time>

50. Yahoo Health. Why Raising Wages at Walmart Would Make America Healthier: <https://www.yahoo.com/health/why-raising-wages-at-walmart-makes-america-213011563.html>

51. In These Times. OUR Walmart Relaunches Its Campaign To Beat the World Retail Giant. <http://inthesetimes.com/working/entry/18424/our-walmart-ufcw>

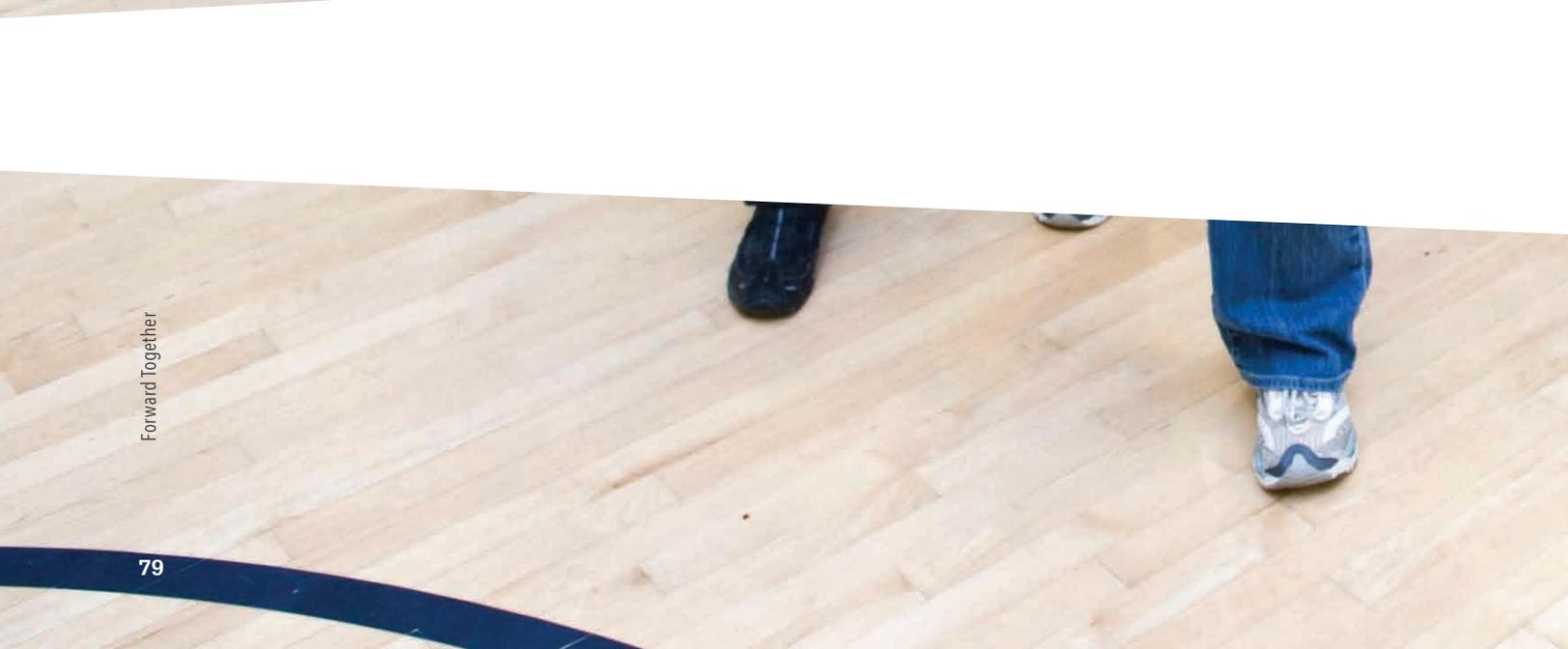
adjustments and take risks in rapidly changing conditions. OUR Walmart has also built new relationships and partnerships, expanding to 20 formal partners, including the Restaurant Opportunities Center, the National Domestic Workers Alliance, Demos, the Sierra Club and many others.

“Past efforts to challenge Walmart’s low road employment model succeeded in moving public opinion and slowing Walmart’s expansion into urban centers,” explains Dehlendorf. “Building on this success, OUR Walmart worked to more deeply support the people most impacted - the 1.25 million Walmart workers who have been able to build a network of leaders that is powerful.”

“To go to scale, networks need to ground transformative practices and values in the relationships, leadership, and work that is already happening,” says Dehlendorf. “We can train some leadership deeply but we will never be able to afford a transformational workshop for 1.25 million people,” Dehlendorf says. “So we really have to look at what are people already doing and how we can support them.”

Manilov agrees: “Start with 10 people and ask them, what are the ways you feel seen and heard and cared for? In this space of love and empathy,” concludes Manilov, “you will build a strong enough network to create real change.”







The Way Forward: Practice to Impact



In this time there is also a calling, an invitation, a possibility beyond what we can presently see.

We have the capacity to answer this call. We have the capacity to bring forth a future that is kicking to be born. We have the capacity to be that future, to be the power and strength of our vision, our purpose, and our relationships.

The stories in *Love with Power* are not about superheroes. They are about committed people who are daring to lead with love, to break the rules, to throw out the map, to try things that feel right even before they can articulate what they are. People are choosing to face harm with open eyes and hearts, and then go beyond it to generate vision and paths to a new, generative future.

A revolution in values is underway.

The specific stories in *Love with Power* are a window into a much larger story – the story of movements rising to meet this moment with deep courage and love. Change-makers across movements are charting a way forward that is driven by purpose, sustained by practice, and exponential in impact. They are catalyzing a revolution in values and being.

It was a time when the unthinkable became the thinkable and the impossible really happened.

—Arundhati Roy,
The God of Small Things



Top: Forward Together. Bottom: National Domestic Workers Alliance



In the #BlackLivesMatter story, the founders share how values of *love* and *liberation* animate their work. Living these values has enabled them to make bold leaps and have exponential impact. It shapes their purpose, strategies and actions. Organizers like those at National Domestic Workers Alliance, Movement Generation and Forward Together are recognizing that the underlying values of domination and extraction define the problems we face. In contrast, a unifying set of values gives shape to the solutions they are pursuing. These organizers are embracing the human superpowers of love, imagination, connection and courage to break through fear, doubt and delusion. Looking across *Love with Power*, core values that define this moment are: *inclusion*, where many govern for all, and all participate in meaningful ways; *radical connection* with each other and the earth; *regeneration*, rejecting extraction and accumulation to create economies, cultures and communities that can sustain us over time; *courageous commitment*, taking big leaps for our vision, and *creative and synergistic action*, supporting many people to take different actions towards the purpose. In the *Love with Power* stories we see:

- **People are seeking to embody values that will lead us to a hopeful future.**

These stories illustrate how movements have evolved to recognize that our ways of being must evolve for social transformation, that we must walk the talk of inclusion, radical connection regeneration, courageous commitment, and creative and synergistic action, supporting diverse actions towards a shared purpose. We are coming to understand that culture is made of our spoken and unspoken, conscious and unconscious ways of being together. Shifting our ways of being—or even becoming conscious about habitual ways of being that do not serve us—is an essential part of social transformation, or even lasting change. Collective practices are the most accessible way to shift culture in groups small and large.

- **The key to our transformative capacity is practice: setting a simple intention from our heart and then honoring it through everyday actions.**

Neither practice nor intention alone leads to transformation. Intention, which can include our vision, purpose and desires, linked with practice, through discipline to cultivate something within us, is the key to our transformative capacity. For example, when organizers in Forward Together recognized they needed a radically new relationship to conflict in order to accomplish their mission, they courageously set off on a path to do just that. With this intention, they maintained a formal Forward Stance practice that in turn shaped their day-to-day actions. Over time, their practice not only shifted their relationship to conflict – it opened up an entirely new vision of what was possible and who they could be. National Domestic Workers Alliance recognized the core value of mutual care was fundamental in their vision and view of the world. Regular, committed generative somatics practice helped them deepen their ability to lead with care, love and relationship even when under pressure. As they practiced leading with love and care, they shifted their entire organizing strategy, leadership development model, and definition of who was part of their movement.

National Domestic Workers Alliance



- **Bold movement leaders are transcending either/or binaries to make the world whole.**

Our future is calling us to be bold, to break down binaries that ultimately limit our awareness, thinking and potential. For example, organizers in Climate Workers are bringing together fast food workers with urban farmers to reimagine work and our food systems. They are also creating the channels for labor organizers to transcend traditional union agreements which prevent members from speaking out on issues outside of their sector. Climate Workers is giving them a platform to speak out as labor about environmental concerns that impact their communities and families. National Domestic Workers Alliance is helping those in need of care, those seeking care, and care providers to come together around shared core values. Together they are advocating for a new economy rooted in care that will benefit everyone. Forward Together is helping families who have incarcerated loved ones find their own voice in the debate about incarceration, without feeling like they are taking attention away from those who are incarcerated.



Photo by LightBrigading / Creative Commons.

- **Leading from Love with Power, change-makers are helping us face harm, heal trauma and generate powerful, life-affirming possibilities.**

The leaders in *Love with Power* recognize that addressing and healing current and historical trauma is a central feature of transformative movement building. Transformative paths give us the courage to face harm and generate paths that heal, open new possibilities, and ultimately make the world whole. For example, National Domestic Workers Alliance and generative somatics acknowledge trauma and create space for healing in their leadership development, organizing and social change strategies. Building from their collaboration on *Who Pays*, Ella Baker Center, Forward Together and their partners are re-framing reparations as a path for collective healing and transformative change. This path reframes “reparations for now” as reinvestment in communities that have been most harmed by legacies of slavery, colonialism, and racism. By diverting funds from institutions and practices that cause harm to strategies that can heal and regenerate, “reparations for now” looks to the past in order to generate the future we all want and need.

- **People are taking collective responsibility to bring forth a new culture; change-makers are cultivating new ways of being, and the possibilities and strategies they unlock, in many different ways.**

Ten years ago, a focus on culture-shift in movement strategy would have been surprising. Even at Movement Strategy Center we often kept “strategy” development separate from developing our “ways of being.” Once we experienced the deep connection between them we saw the essential link between strategy and our evolution as people is to the future of the world. Embedded in this cultural shift is a commitment to healing and action – and doing what we need to collectively do to move beyond surviving to living and thriving.

As seen in the *Love with Power* story series, there is no “one way” to cultivate a new way of being with a group. Diversity is the key to resilience in living systems, and it is the key to robust movements and social change. The diversity of paths, starting points, and experiences in transformative movements are strengthening us and paradoxically enabling us to move faster, together. Movements that support and nurture a diversity of approaches generate “many paths up the mountain” – giving us a better collective shot at realizing our vision and purpose, intact. They also generate leader-full movement ecosystems that are by definition healthier and more robust.

- **Profound breakthroughs are happening.**

Movement leaders are nurturing love, liberation, interdependence, and regeneration to reimagine our culture, economies, communities, and our relationship to the web of life. From this visioning, a web of radical solutions is emerging. As an example, the work of the National Domestic Workers Alliance is helping us imagine and reorganize our economy around care and mutuality. Organizers at Movement Generation are helping us expand and deepen our definition of home and develop local, living, loving, linked economies rooted in our relationship to land and each other. OUR Walmart is elevating the importance of relationship, community, respect and dignity in the largest employer in the world. Forward Together is helping change policies, systems and cultural narratives about family in ways that reflect, honor, and celebrate the broad expanse of human experience.

Practice for Social Transformation: Mind, Body, Spirit

Transformative practice allows us to create strategies that bring forth transformations we cannot yet envision, for which we may not even have language or experience. Practice is a consistent, accessible way to make exponential change that would otherwise seem impossible. By engaging the mind, body and spirit, transformative practice helps us access our whole selves and make breakthroughs in our expectations, capacity, and impact.

- **Transformative practice is guided by vision and purpose.** What do we envision? Why do we want exponential change? What is worth this kind of disruption? Who do we need to be to make that change? A group's vision and purpose fundamentally ground and direct their transformative practice. The dynamic relationship between purpose and vision are what give practice-based strategies their power.
- **Organizers are using transformative practice to disrupt deeply ingrained habits that sabotage our work, and transform them into new ways of being and big strategic leaps.** Transformation can be catalyzed by disruptive social, natural or political events, but it's not necessarily the transformation we want. Disruption is only an opportunity if we have the vision, discipline and practice to move energy in the direction of our vision. Deep practice allows us to catalyze, direct and shape transformation in alignment with our purpose.
- **Practice enables us to make personal, collective, and structural change simultaneously.** Our experiences span many layers - personal, collective, and structural. These layers of experience are never separate, they are interwoven and impact each other. Practice-based strategies enable organizers to make shifts across all of these levels.
- **The discipline of practice is a key part of a transformative path.** Organizers in *Love with Power* are using the discipline of practice to move towards their purpose. Their discipline is motivated by commitment, joy, play, faith and experimentation.
- **Through practice we redefine and deepen impact.** Both how we think about impact and how impact happens, matters. Through bold experimentation the organizers in *Love with Power* are expanding and deepening our understanding of impact and what it looks like to make our visions a reality. Beyond material change, they are paying attention to changes in people, systems, communities, and even the social, political, and ecological "weather."

4 Elements of Transformative Movement Building

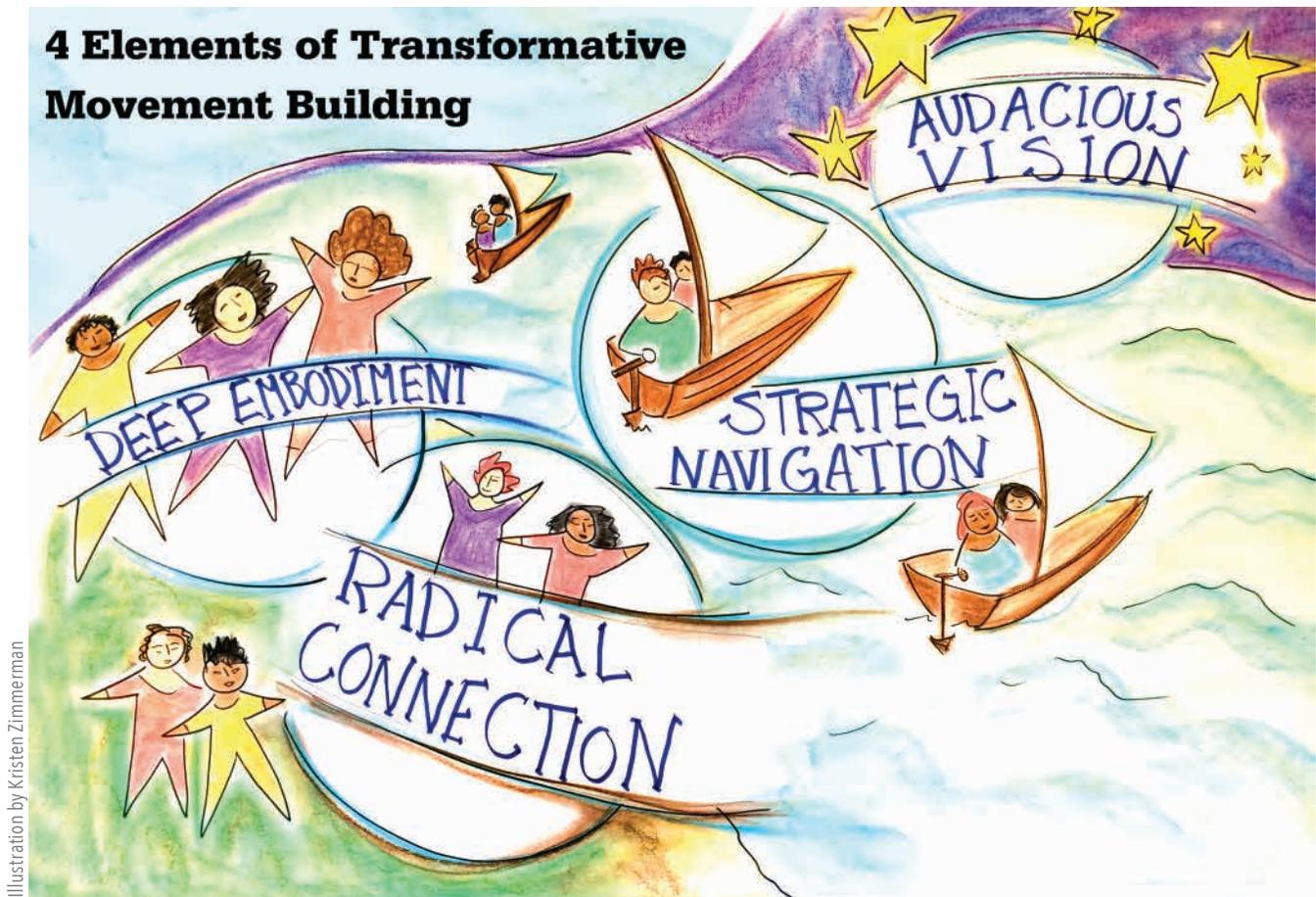


Illustration by Kristen Zimmerman

A New Way: **Four Elements of Transformative Movements**

As this vibrant network of change-makers rises up to embrace the unknown with courage, love and innovation, we are seeing a new theory and practice of social transformation emerge. This new way is grounded in the current moment and the particular challenges and opportunities we face.

Like many kindred movement makers, Movement Strategy Center believes incremental change strategies are growing increasingly impotent. Because the scale and nature of the problems we face are exponential, our change strategies need to be as well. Transformative strategies generate exponential change.

Building from and with this new wave of innovation, Movement Strategy Center defines four elements at the core of Transformational Movement Building:

1. **Leading with Audacious Vision & Bold Purpose.**

Transformative movement builders are leading with an audacious vision of the world we actually need. These are not utopic visions, they are rooted in wisdom of the past, awareness of the present and our best hopes for the future. Transformative movement builders ground themselves in this vision, as well as a deep understanding of the purpose that guides them.

2. Deep Embodiment.

Beyond simply *believing* that another world is possible, transformative movement builders are *generating and experiencing* this new world here and now by practicing and embodying a new set of values. They are committing to cultivating this new way of being and culture with joy, humor, humility and discipline. They recognize that the secret is to *be the future now*.

3. Radical Connection and Community.

Transformative movements recognize that everything gets done through relationships and nothing gets done without them. At their heart, movements are about people, and cultures are about people and our relationships to each other and to the earth. Through deep listening, breakthrough conversations, and cultivating radical connections, movements are making leaps previously unthinkable.

4. Strategic Navigation.

With audacious vision, deep embodiment, and radical connection, transformative movement makers are navigating strategically and adaptively through rapidly changing environments, towards an emergent future. They use transformative strategies to generate non-linear, synergistic, and highly networked action. They align different approaches into collective strategies that leverage everyone's strengths. They help us make big leaps towards a new society even as we dismantle the old systems that no longer serve us.

The movements of today, like those in *Love with Power*, are calling us to make a courageous commitment to love, generative power, and our undeniable interdependence. Leading with bold vision and purpose, they are moving beyond the question of “*what do we need to do?*” to “*who do we need to be to bring forth the transformation we seek?*” In this way, movements are learning the art of time travel -- starting at the end of the story, they are accelerating change by embodying and manifesting the values they seek in the world right here and now. They are not asking people to believe another world is possible, they are asking us to generate and experience it through transformative practice and strategy.

This movement of movements is unified in the recognition that we are whole people, our communities are whole, and because the issues and problems are interconnected our systemic solutions and movements must be as well. It recognizes that for society to change we need our movements to mirror and prefigure that transformation with as much—or greater—depth. Through deep collective practice, movement makers are transforming themselves, their movements, their strategies and their relationships so they can be this change. They are identifying the unconscious habits and patterns of behavior that limit our communities' ability to recognize our full power and potential. And they are developing new practices and strategies to do what was previously impossible. Fundamentally, it is helping us to accelerate our big transition from a world where the few live at the expense of the many, to a world where the many govern for the benefit of all.

They are calling us to Love with Power.



National Domestic Workers Alliance

Methodology and Scope

Love with Power is a truly participatory research project. We, as writer-researchers, are actively part of the transformative movement building community that we are documenting, and we are actively helping to shape the new movement theory and practice emerging from this community. The writing of this paper has shaped Movement Strategy Center's trajectory as an organization and the experiences of the MSC leadership team has shaped the thinking reflected in this report.

This report is the second in a series looking at how leaders and organizations are transforming the social justice movement by integrating transformative and spiritual practice. The first paper in this series (*Out of the Spiritual Closet*) focused on the experiences of movement leaders and their reflections on the role of spiritual practice in their own transformation and movement work. *Love with Power* expands on the first paper by looking at the experiences of movement organizations integrating personal, movement, and social transformation through practice, strategy and action.

Love with Power is based on interviews, observations, and community dialogues conducted with a broad community of movement makers over a five-year period between 2010 and 2015. It also draws on Movement Strategy's fifteen-year experiment of blending transformative practice, organizational development, and movement strategy, as well as research conducted for the paper *Out of the Spiritual Closet* between 2007-2009.

In this process we conducted formal interviews with over 80 change-makers based in social movement organizations working for racial, gender and economic justice in communities of color. We used "snowball sampling" to identify the pool of interviewees. Some of the people we interviewed were part of informal movement groups or networks rather than formal organizations. Most, but not all, of the organizers interviewed for this paper describe their organizations as having an intentional transformative practice, and themselves as having their own personal transformative practice.

The people we interviewed fall into two main groups. The first were organizers in social movement organizations. These leaders work with youth, immigrants, queer and transgendered people, women, low-income workers and people of color. They work on many different issues from gentrification to reproductive justice, and all are strongly grounded in racial justice work. They range in age from mid-twenties to mid-sixties, with most between 28-40 years old encompassing diverse racial backgrounds, classes, genders and sexualities.

The second group of interviewees were teachers, trainers and consultants in methods for bringing mind-body-spirit integration, healing, culture change, and personal-collective transformation to social justice organizations and individuals. People in this second group represent organizations such as generative somatics (Oakland, CA), stone circles (Mebane, NC), Rockwood Leadership Institute (Berkeley, CA), the

Center for Transformative Change (Berkeley, CA), Institute for Zen Studies (Honolulu, HI), and others. For the full list of interviewees, see Love with Power Attributions in the appendices.

This report is not exhaustive. We know that even with our best intentions, not every perspective can be represented here. Our primary audience for this paper is social movement organizations (regardless of engagement in faith or spiritual practice) and other change-makers who are dedicated to finding new ways to transform our society.

MSC is committed to the continued exploration of transformative practice through the *Love with Power* series. Future reports may look at how change-makers are integrating transformative practice with strategy to change larger scale systems and culture.

Love with Power Resources

The following is a sample of articles and resources that are being written about transformative movement building and transformative social change right now. It is by no means exhaustive. We hope you will use this as a starting point for exploration and that you will share other gems on Movement Strategy Center's Facebook page.

Sample Readings on Transformative Movement Building

Are You An Evolutionary? Curtis Ogden. Interaction Institute for Social Change. 2015.
<http://interactioninstitute.org>

Building Community Safety: Practical Steps Towards Liberatory Transformation. By Ejeris Dixon, Truthout. August 2015.
www.truth-out.org

Defining Transformation for Social Change: People's Movement Assembly Resolution adopted at the US Social Forum 2010

Embodiment as Actionable Change. Staci Haines. The Embodied Life. Strozzi Institute. 2016.
<https://theembodiedlife.wordpress.com>

framing deep change: essays on transformative social change edited by Center for Transformative Change.
<http://transform.transformativechange.org>

From Grievance to Governance: 8 Features of Transformative Campaigns. Jodeen Olguin-Taylor. Lets Talk: at the Heart of Movement Building. 2016. <http://letstalkmovementbuilding.org>

From Moment to Movement: Learning From Ferguson October. By Julie Quiroz. Lets Talk: At the Heart of Movement Building. 2016. <http://letstalkmovementbuilding.org>

Love While Challenging Racist Behavior. Ana Pérez. Interaction Institute for Social Change. 2016.
<http://interactioninstitute.org>

Love with Power: Practicing Transformation for Social Justice by Kristen Zimmerman and Julie Quiroz (Movement Strategy Center)

Micropolitics and Collective Liberation: Mind/Body Practice and Left Social Movements. James K. Rowe. New Political Science: Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 206-225.

The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-first Century. Grace Lee Boggs. May 2012. University of California Press.

Out of the Spiritual Closet: Organizers Transforming the Practice of Social Justice by Kristen Zimmerman, Neelam Pathikonda, Brenda Salgado, and Taj James (Movement Strategy Center)

Opening the Question of Race to the Question of Belonging. John A. Powell. 2015. On Being.

Organizing with Love by Ai-Jen Poo. www.organizingupgrade.com.

Redefining Resilience: Principles, Practices and Pathways by MG. Movement Generation. Pathways to Resilience E Book. <http://pathways-2-resilience.org/ebook>

Protest to Power: Why Movements Matter & How They Work. A talk on the four elements of transformative movements by Taj James at the Ford Foundation. 2016. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ye00UGYF5QI

The Resilient World We're Building Now. Interview by Robert K. Ross with Patrisse Cullors. On Being. 2016.

Science Fiction and Social Justice: Giving Up on Utopias. Adrienne Maree Brown. Transformation. August 2015. <https://www.opendemocracy.net>

Spectrum of Transformation by Social Justice Leadership.

The Spirituality of Resilience. Hebah H. Farrag. 2016. On Being.

Somatics and Social Justice: Toward Personal and Political Transformation by Generative Somatics and Social Justice Leadership.

Spread Mass Love Introduction. Video by Marlin and Piper. 2016. Youtube.

Transforming Lives, Transforming Movement Building: Lessons from the National Domestic Workers Alliance Strategy – Organizing – Leadership (SOL) Initiative by Jennifer Ito, Rachel Rosner, Vanessa Carter, and Manuel Pastor

Transformative Leadership Employs Spirituality for Social Change by Michael Edwards. 2009. Chronicle of Philanthropy.

The Transformative Power of Practice by Ng'ethe Maina and Staci Haines

Tree of Contemplative Practices by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

Truth and Reinvestment: Why We Need Reparations for Right Now. By Zachary Norris, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. 2016. <https://medium.com/@ellabakercenter>.

We didn't start a movement. We started a network. Patrisse Cullors. 2017. <https://medium.com/@patrissemariacullorsbrignac>

What Is Transformation? by Robert Gass (Social Transformation Project)

The Wheel and the Web. Taj James. What we are Learning Series No. 5. November 2013. Movement Strategy Center.

Wikipedia entry for Transformative Social Change established at the US Social Forum 2010.

Zen and the Art of Social Movement Maintenance by James K. Rowe. <http://wagingnonviolence.org>

Additional Resources

Beyond the organizations in Love with Power, there are many brilliant change makers who are transforming the way we practice social justice. Here are a few websites that can connect you with other resources.

Center for Transformative Change and **Transform Magazine** has articles and resources on transformative social change. <http://transform.transformativechange.org>

Hidden Leaf Foundation. In addition to funding transformative social change, the Hidden Leaf Foundation website has an extensive resource and reading list on transformative Social Change. <http://hiddenleaf.org/about-field>

Move to End Violence, a project of the NoVo Foundation, has writing and resources on transformative practice, movement building, forward stance, self-care and strategic thinking. www.movetoendviolence.org/resources.

Social Transformation Project's website includes a library of practical tools and information for driving transformative change. <http://stproject.org/resources>

Organizing Upgrade is a forum for innovative progressive and left organizers to engage in dialogue about big-picture political strategy. www.organizingupgrade.com

#SpreadMassLOVE in the era of mass incarceration is a project catalyzed by Piper Anderson and Marlon Peterson. They created Mass Love in a search for the antidote to the dehumanizing affects of mass criminalization and incarceration of Black people. <http://spreadmasslove.com/>

Transformation: Where Love Meets Social Justice is a web-based magazine with stories about people who are combining personal and social change in order to re-imagine their societies. Transformation provides a forum for change makers to explore how to put principles of love, equality and social justice into practice while challenging today's predominant ethics of competition, growth and power. www.opendemocracy.net/transformation

Yes! Magazine reframes the biggest problems of our time in terms of their solutions. Online and in print, we outline a path forward with in-depth analysis, tools for citizen engagement, and stories about real people working for a better world. www.yesmagazine.org/about



Featured Organizations by Story

Who the Hell are You?

- Black Lives Matter. <http://blacklivesmatter.com>
- BOLD. <http://boldorganizing.org>

Bold Vision

- Forward Together. <http://forwardtogether.org>
- Strong Families Movement. <http://strongfamiliesmovement.org>

Cultivating Home

- Movement Generation: Justice and Ecology Project. <http://movementgeneration.org>
- Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. <http://oaec.org>

Leading With Love

- National Domestic Workers Alliance. www.domesticworkers.org
- generative somatics. www.generativesomatics.org

Caring Communities, Courageous Action

- OUR Walmart. <http://forrespect.org>
- Engage Network. <http://engagenet.org>

The Way Forward: Practice to Impact

- Movement Strategy Center. www.movementstrategy.org

Attributes and Appreciations

We'd like to thank the following people who provided invaluable research and editorial support to the project: Tara Brown, Mimi Ho, Staci Haines, Taj James, Brinda Maira, Arif Mamdani, Jovida Ross, Brenda Salgado, Anasa Troutman, angel Kyodo williams, Lily Wong, and Norma Wong.

Heartfelt thanks to Brooke Anderson, Adriann Barboa, Patricia Berne, Xochitl Bervera, Adrienne Marie Brown, Denise Brown, Tara Brown, Puananni Burgess, Shash Yázhí Charley, Oona Chatterjee, Pamela Chiang, Ellen Choy, Stosh Cotler, Gopal Dayaneni, Andrea Delendorf, Danielle Feris, Juana Flores, Alicia Garza, Robert Gass, Sarah Ghiorse, Shawn Ginwright, Staci Haines, Araceli Hernandez, Claudia Horwitz, Invincible, Maria Jimenéz, Jerretta Johnson, Spenta Kandawalla, Stacy Kono, Jidan Koon, Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Raquel Lavina, Andrea Lee, Nicole Lee, Chris Lymbertos, Arif Mamdani, Marianne Manilov, Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan, Michelle Miller, Leroy Moore, Tufara Muhammad, Mateo Nube, Yashna Maya Padamsee, Cara Page, Mark Kawika Patterson, Dana Gin Peredes, Carla Maria Pérez, Ai-jen Poo, Brenda Salgado, Kathy Sanchez, Quinton Sankofa, Aaron Sanger, Rinku Sen, Aparna Shaw, Eveline Shen, Jill Shenker, Zak Sinclair, Clay Smith, Alta Starr, Linda Stout, Jerry Tello, Nick Tilsen, Jodie Tonita, Anasa Troutman, Karen Muki Villanueva, Mariana Viturro, Amanda Wake, Alicia Walters, angel Kyodo Williams, Akaya Windwood, Norma Wong and many, many others who through interviews, dialogue and example have shaped the thinking in this report and are paving the new way.

Authors: Kristen Zimmerman and Julie Quiroz

Copyeditors: Adrienne Bloch, Rachel Burrows and Melissa Saavedra

Design: Micah Bazant, micahbazant.com

Project Director: Kristen Zimmerman

Funded by: Hidden Leaf Foundation

