



TRANSFORMING LIVES, TRANSFORMING MOVEMENT BUILDING

Lessons from the National Domestic Workers Alliance
Strategy - Organizing - Leadership (SOL) Initiative



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TRANSFORMING LIVES, TRANSFORMING MOVEMENT BUILDING: Lessons from the National Domestic Workers Alliance Strategy - Organizing - Leadership (SOL) Initiative

Jennifer Ito, Rachel Rosner, Vanessa Carter, and Manuel Pastor
USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity

Contributors:

Jill Shenker and Mariana Viturro, National Domestic Workers Alliance
Staci Haines and Spenta Kandawalla, generative somatics
Raquel Lavina, Social Justice Leadership

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– Jennifer Ito, Rachel Rosner, Vanessa Carter, and Manuel Pastor

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity



Established in 2007, USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) conducts research and facilitates discussions on issues of environmental justice, regional inclusion, and social movement building. PERE conducts high-quality research in our focus areas that is relevant to public policy concerns and that reaches to those directly affected communities that most need to be engaged in the discussion. In general, we seek and support direct collaborations with community-based organizations in research and other activities, trying to forge a new model of how university and community can work together for the common good. PERE has developed an arc of research looking at today's social movements in a way that combines academic and on-the-ground theories and knowledge.

National Domestic Workers Alliance



Founded in 2007, the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) works for the respect, recognition, and inclusion in labor protections for domestic workers. The national alliance is powered by 44 affiliate organizations – plus our first local chapter in Atlanta – of over 10,000 nannies, housekeepers, and caregivers for the elderly in 26 cities and 18 states. NDWA is winning improved working conditions while building a powerful movement rooted in the human rights and dignity of domestic workers, immigrants, women, and their families by: working with a broad range of groups and individuals to change how we value care, women, families, and our communities; developing women of color leaders and investing in grassroots organizations to realize their potential; and building powerful state, regional, and national campaigns for concrete change.

generative somatics



generative somatics (gs) works with individuals, organizations and alliances to bring a pragmatic and practice-able transformative methodology to movements for systemic change. The somatic methodology is over 40 years old and has been brought specifically into movement settings with a political focus over the last 10 years. gs forwards the interdependence of personal, community, and social transformation, and brings a trauma and healing analysis to strengthen movement strategy and work. gs integrates transformative approaches with organizing and movement building by working closely with various movement partners including Social Justice Leadership, NDWA, Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity, Racial Justice Action Center, Ashland Youth Center, and more.

Social Justice Leadership



Social Justice Leadership (SJL) trained grassroots organizations and leaders using a transformative organizing approach for a decade. SJL started with a series of Leadership Semesters to explore the effect of personal development and political education as a way to increase organizational capacity and effectiveness. This led to an intensive program for new organizers and grew to include year-long programs in multiple cities supporting individuals, organizations, alliances, and movement-building efforts. In Spring 2013, SJL closed; however, its efforts continue through projects like the Economic Justice Alliance of Michigan, a worker benefit alliance; Racial Justice Action Center, a multi-racial organizing and training center in Georgia; and Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity, which supports the rebuilding of Black organizing infrastructure through training and networking. Former SJL staff members continue to work with NDWA on the SOL program.

FOREWORD

The world is changing. Since the 1980s, we have witnessed a steady rise of paid domestic work in nearly all post-industrial societies. Most observers agree that globalization, rising income inequality, and new opportunities for women in the workforce have led to this employment growth. Increasingly, mothers of young children have entered the labor force, yet in countries such as the United States, where there is limited support for public childcare, many families seek private solutions for childcare. Additionally, most of the developed nations have growing concentrations of elderly people in need of care and assistance. Who is doing all this work? In the United States, and around the globe in nations as diverse as Italy, Hong Kong, Spain and Canada, it is increasingly immigrant women who are doing the cleaning and caring work for others.

This is an occupation where workers – almost always women, and usually women of color and immigrant women – are cleaning and caring for others. It involves a myriad of duties performed in a home setting. The job typically includes cleaning, caring, bathing, washing, putting to bed, cooking, feeding, and coaxing, and it might also include tasks that the domestic worker never agreed to do in the first place, such as staying late with little notice and sometimes without extra pay, applying eye drops to a sick dog, soothing a child's nightmares while the parents sleep in peace, and washing and waxing a car. This is an exhausting list and yet it is not exhaustive, as by nature, domestic work is a non-standardized job.

Domestic work is physically and emotionally draining work. It takes body and soul to do it. This is especially true when the job involves caring for children, the elderly or the disabled, as the work then requires practicing attachment, affiliation, listening and talking, and using patience and a personal touch.

With a few exceptions, paid domestic work in the United States has always been reserved for poor women, immigrant women and for women of color (Romero 1992). Historically, we have seen women of color doing the cleaning and caring work for other racially and class privileged women, leading to a division of reproductive labor (Nakano Glenn 1992). In recent decades with migrant women circulating the globe, this has created an international division of reproductive labor (Parreñas 2001), one which in practice has often resulted in transnational motherhood, whereby immigrant domestic workers are caring for other people's children while their own children remain in their nations of origin (Hondagneu Sotelo and Avila 1997). This creates a type of global "care deficit" in the migrant domestic workers' families and countries of origin (Hochschild 2003).

For various reasons, domestic workers remain vulnerable for abuse and exploitation. The work occurs in private settings, behind closed doors. Because it is commonly viewed as "women's work," it is often not viewed as employment. Contracts are usually verbal, informal and established between employers who retain benefits and privileges of class, race and citizenship, while domestic workers are racialized immigrant women who often lack the same privileges that would place them on equal footing.

Some employers have taken advantage of their domestic workers, and domestic workers have been excluded from many of the minimum wage and overtime protections offered other U.S. workers by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Consequently, many domestic workers work long hours and struggle to eke out a living to support themselves and their own families. The vast majority of them work without access to health care or paid sick days and vacation.

Domestic workers want the same thing as most people: respect and dignity, fair pay, and job terms and benefits similar to those found in other jobs in our society. In the 1990s, vibrant efforts for mobilizing domestic workers to achieve these goals popped up in cities around the nation. These collective efforts took many forms, including associations, community-worker centers and cooperatives. New inroads were made into improving the job and remedying abuses, but these social groups generally remained fragmented and confined to one city.

This scenario changed in 2007 when the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) was founded, and today NDWA includes affiliates in 44 affiliates in 18 states. NDWA seeks to win improved working conditions for domestic workers while building a powerful movement of domestic workers rooted in human rights and dignity. Already, there have been major policy wins, with the New York Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, the California Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, the Hawaii Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, the Massachusetts Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, and the 2011 International Labor Organization Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. All of these wins have been possible by the tireless organizing of a cadre of talented organizers and domestic workers themselves.

Legislation must be part of the solution, but this still leaves the question: How to build and sustain the movement of organizing for domestic worker rights? How to replenish and renew reservoirs of creative energy, and inspire new models for future organizing? Organizing and mobilizing for rights is hard work in the best of circumstances. One must keep going in face of discouraging defeats and setbacks, and learn to overcome burn-out. As we have seen that both body and emotions are called to duty on the job, engaging in the mobilization efforts while actually living through the trials and tribulations of domestic work presents special challenges.

As this report details, the Strategy - Organizing - Leadership (SOL) Initiative offers domestic worker organizers and leaders new tools to promote both personal and social transformation. It recognizes that domestic workers are human beings whose job involves tending to the needs of others, often to the detriment of caring for themselves. When they become involved in additional campaigns mobilizing for labor rights, this adds more stress. By developing and practicing the concept of "transformative organizing," the SOL initiative addresses the human needs of organizers. It seeks to nurture both the movement and the individual organizers, recognizing the interdependence between the two.

"The personal is political" became a lasting mantra of second wave feminism, and now the SOL initiative revives that insight with new innovative practices and methods for nurturing social movements.

Now, "the political is personal," and new innovations include gathering together in retreats to practice embodied transformation, mindfulness "centering," and recognizing and addressing

the fact that many domestic worker organizers have experienced trauma and must develop healing and caring responses.

It also includes creative deployment of technology, relying on conference calls to maintain continuity and development of peer group solidarity. The tactics and methods are many, but the basic idea is a powerful one: transformative healing can help strengthen movement impact and a transformative movement can help support personal and community healing.

Cleaning and caring for others in domestic settings is an important job, one that is vital to our families, cities and nations. It takes body and soul to do the work and to push for improvements in the occupation. New organizing models recognize this and seek to nurture social movements by restoring body and soul of domestic worker organizers and leaders. Just as migrant women have moved across continents to do this important work, the SOL organizing model may prove successful enough to migrate across to other social movements, providing the renewal and revitalization for other organizers and leaders to thrive through transformative organizing.

- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo
Professor of Sociology
Associate Director, Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII)
University of Southern California

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TRANSFORMATIONS AND CO-CREATION	11
INTRODUCTION	19
SOL: A TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE	25
SOL'S APPROACH: CORE CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS OF TRANSFORMATION	31
SOL'S IMPACT: METRICS OF TRANSFORMATION	41
LESSONS FROM SOL: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES	53
IMPLICATIONS FOR MOVEMENT BUILDING TODAY	61
CONCLUSION	67
REFERENCES	69
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS	70
APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS	71
APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF METHODS	73
APPENDIX D: QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENTS	74

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Transformations and Co-Creation

DOMESTIC WORKER ORGANIZING TODAY

Today's millions of domestic workers in the U.S. play a critical role in our society. Whether caring for our children, providing home health care for our elderly, or keeping our homes clean for our families, they "make all other work possible," in the words of Ai-jen Poo, Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA). And with the demographic growth of the elderly and disabled, domestic workers will only become more essential to our society.

Yet, despite the importance and intimacy of their work to those who hire them, domestic workers have been largely invisible to society, undervalued in the labor market, and excluded from basic workplace standards and protections. But all that is starting to change.

In July 2010, the New York State Legislature passed the first ever Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights legally recognizing domestic workers. In June 2011, the International Labour Organization adopted the First Convention for Decent Work for Domestic Workers aimed at improving conditions for tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide. In July 2013, Hawaii became the second state to pass the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights. In September 2013, the California governor signed the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights approving overtime pay. Also in September 2013, the new Department of Labor regulations extending minimum wage and overtime protections for the almost two million home care workers were passed. In June 2014, Massachusetts became the fourth state in four years to pass a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.

These victories are no coincidence. Behind each of these victories is a group of domestic workers who are organizing to win respect, recognition, and inclusion in labor protections and who are networked nationally through the National Domestic Workers Alliance.



Established in 2007, NDWA was founded by 13 organizations as a way to scale up the power and influence of locally-organized domestic workers for state, national, and international impact. The Alliance has since grown to 44 affiliate organizations across 18 states. It has launched several national campaigns, including We Belong Together, Beyond Survival, and Caring Across Generations, which has grown to over 200 coalitional partners dedicated to transforming the care system and encouraging our society to value the contribution of our elderly, people with disabilities, and the workers who care for them.

“SOL has helped me feel stronger and more secure in my leadership...The learning is practical and hands-on...We are coming away not only with concrete tools to use in our organizing work (spreadsheets, documents etc.) but also with a very specific set of personal and interpersonal tools (somatic work, interpersonal skills and relationships) that will help us over the long term.”

- Year 1 report and renewal application

DEVELOPING NEW LEADERSHIP

In order to seize the opportunities created by these policy victories and strategic partnerships, NDWA recognized a need to train grassroots leadership more quickly than before. And not only new and more leadership was needed but a different kind of leadership. The political moment called for leaders who could inspire workers, weigh in strategically on policy campaigns, and represent domestic worker interests in multi-issue, multi-constituency coalitions. And the movement moment called for leaders who could usher in a new culture of organizing that could re-envision, reinvigorate, and refresh the domestic worker organizing sector for the long-term movements for social justice.

Too often the prevailing culture of organizing seeks social transformation at the expense of personal well-being and sustainability, especially of organizers and leaders. In response, in 2011 NDWA launched a two-year, transformative leadership and organizing training, Strategy – Organizing – Leadership (SOL) Initiative, in collaboration with trainers from Social Justice Leadership (SJL) and generative somatics (gs). The primary training format was a series of five four-day, intensive retreats. Both domestic worker-leaders and organizers from established and emerging organizations from across the country were invited to apply for the program. In the end, a cohort of about 60 (almost all) women participated.

The overall goal of SOL was to provide participants with the transformative leadership capacities and organizing skills to push the scale and power of local and national domestic worker organizing in a way that would be grounded in vision, strategy, healthy and generative relationship building, and sustainability. It sought to link the leadership skills and competencies to social and personal transformation. And it was not only about change at the societal and individual levels but at the family, community, and institutional levels as well.

In the planning of SOL, the three organizational partners shared questions about both the theory and practice of transformational change: Is it possible to address deep, personal transformation in a way that strengthens their commitment, resilience, and skills to build and sustain powerful

grassroots organizations? Is it possible to take a cohort of domestic workers and organizers through a two-year process and change how they show up in their own lives, in their organizations, and in the Alliance?

Recognizing that SOL represented an important learning opportunity and one worth documenting for the field, NDWA commissioned USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) to play an evaluative role at the retreats. Our purpose was less about evaluating the programmatic aspects of SOL and more about capturing transformational changes among the participants and the cohort that are likely to result in much greater shifts in the domestic workers' movement in five, ten, and twenty years from now.

ROADMAP TO THE REPORT

We begin the report by describing the SOL program – its design and the participants – and the key questions posed for this assessment. We then define the core concepts and framework that underlie the curriculum. The second half of the report is devoted to lifting up a new set of metrics for capturing indicators of transformational leadership. Based on the findings, we discuss valuable lessons for the program and conclude with implications for movement building.

This analysis is based on a review of the literature on domestic worker organizing and on intersectionality; on quantitative and qualitative data we collected through surveys, small group discussions, interviews, and observations; and on documents related to SOL provided by NDWA. Using a mixed-method approach, we coded all the data and culled the results for common themes.

Perhaps more important to note, the analysis in this report is the result of an iterative, co-creative process between PERE, NDWA, SJL, and gs – the sort of process we have called for when recommending a new model of assessment. We thus offer this report as a collective effort in a learning process about a dynamic and evolving model of transformative leadership development, transformative organizing, and transformative movement building.

AN APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATION

First, at the core of SOL was a theory of the Process of Transformation and the interdependence and interconnectedness of change on the individual, organizational, community, movement, and society levels. And the process of change at all levels was about overcoming the old and becoming the new; noticing automatic reactions and moving towards intention. For domestic workers, in general, that meant shedding tendencies towards appeasement and smoothing over conflict while shaping the “fight” within that make them such a powerful base for



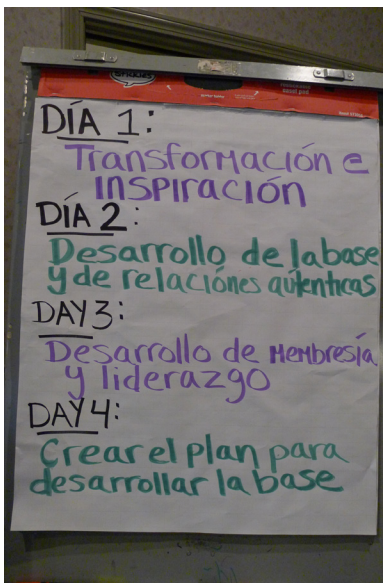
change. For the trainers, that meant recognizing and addressing the unconscious habits (developed in the survival of difficult social and work conditions) that are counter-productive in the fight and vision for labor rights and social justice.

Secondly, SOL offered a tailored set of Practices to overcome those unconscious habits and to build new skills, new tendencies, and new “muscle memory” that lead to more choices and possibilities for change. This is based on a belief that people have developed responses to traumatic experiences that, again, are not always helpful in the fight for justice. Through a politicized somatics methodology, SOL supported the process of transformation by increasing self-awareness and supporting people in the move towards embodying new ways of being and acting that align with vision and values.

Practices, such as centering and Jo Kata (a practice with a wooden staff from a traditional Japanese martial art), helped build skills to be centered in the midst of conflict, focused on being present, open, and connected to self and others, and grounded in one’s commitment and vision. Over time, the facilitators noticed a greater capacity among the cohort to handle conflict in productive ways rather than avoiding the situation, defaulting to appeasing each other, or holding resentments.

Thirdly, power building was a core component of SOL. NDWA’s core strategies are building a base of domestic workers, moving them to take action through strategic campaigns, and building a powerful movement for social and economic justice. Therefore, SOL was designed to develop an orientation towards assessing, building, and leveraging power.

The retreats provided a space to develop real-world and real-time campaign strategies from state-level Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights campaigns to Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Strategic discussions, paired with somatic practices, opened up a transformative space for people to approach difficult decisions, such as compromising organizational goals in the interest of the entire coalition, with a stronger orientation around NDWA’s long-term, power-building goals.



INDICATORS OF TRANSFORMATION

The success of leadership development programs is usually measured by the number of leaders who attend a training or retreat. Or how many new members they bring into the organization. Or how many give public testimony in support of a piece of legislation.

What we lift up in this report are those less frequently captured but observable measures of transformation among the participants and the cohort as a whole. And we focus on the changes that are in service to the longer-term goals of ushering in a new culture and approach to organizing, campaigns, alliance building, and movement building.

The first set of metrics is captured under the term **“Centered in Commitment.”** Participants walked away with a greater commitment to purpose and vision and acquired methods for staying focused on that commitment under difficult circumstances. People reported that modeling how to be centered amidst constant change, tensions, and conflicts in organizing helped their organizations and also helped other people learn how to be centered. And that carried over to the Alliance culture as well.

A second set of metrics falls under **“Clarity in Assessment and Action,”** which reflects NDWA’s notion that a transformative approach to organizing requires attention to and skills in managing complex and dynamic situations at all levels – self, community, and societal. This metric relates to conflict, and also captures skills and abilities such as: assessing conditions, developing campaign strategies, and making strategic choices and decisions. It taught participants how to assess, strategize, and make choices from a personal and collective state of being centered in commitment to purpose, process of transformation, and building power.

A third set of metrics involves **“Healing from Trauma.”** Facilitators intentionally planned a session on this topic for the second year of the initiative when they anticipated better collective readiness to deal with trauma and the impact of oppression. For the most part, the shared healing experience in Retreat #4 contributed to greater personal and collective resilience, dignity for oneself and others, and trust and connections with oneself and others – and was truly the transformative turning point of SOL.

The fourth metric recognizes that SOL was grounded in **“Interconnectedness and Interdependence.”** This involved the core tenet of interdependence, a notion that the success, dignity, and survival of one (individual, community, or society) are linked to the success, dignity, and survival of all. It also meant working at the intersections and interdependence of issues and identities and developing individuals’ and the group’s ability to hold multiple perspectives and differences respectfully.

One of the greatest indicators of transformation was the readiness among the cohort to move forward together around immigration reform. There is a historical fragmentation within the immigrant rights movement from the last few attempts of organizing for immigration reform during a time of increased immigrant criminalization and repression. In Retreat #5, the groups had aligned on the assessment that there was an opportunity for immigration reform and that it was time to move forward together – reflecting a bolder vision, and the ability to extend and build trust among groups despite their experiences in past campaigns.

A fifth category of **“Caring for Self and Others”** is an important one. For care workers to be told and taught to care for oneself within the context of fighting for justice for all was truly transformative. “Caring for Self and Others” captures indicators that range from realizing that

“This [training on trauma] is exactly what we need. We need to heal trauma, to be open to other women coming with trauma, to help them heal and to have more security and more connection to the community. It makes us better organizers with respect and dignity.”

– Participant, Retreat #4



having personal boundaries is consistent with social justice values of care, love, and dignity to realizing that gaining a deeper connection with themselves allowed them to gain deeper connections with others. For many women, SOL helped to transform relationships with children, parents, and husbands/partners in a way that made them more available, both emotionally and physically, to the work of organizing and developing their own and other people's leadership.

Lastly, "**Resilience in the Midst of Change and Conflict**" captures many of the changes we observed as a result of SOL teaching and modeling ways to act under pressure and how not to shy away from conflict or move too quickly to appeasement. Participants gained a new way of looking at conflict, navigating contradictions, and seeing it as an opening to generate change – while keeping dignity intact in the process and coming out as a more powerful collective force. Many organizations concluded SOL with more openness to working through challenges with other organizations rather than simply walking away, ignoring, or being destructive or polarizing – a capacity that will pay off in the long-term. Given the need to build collective power to succeed, these capacities are essential.

Transformation is not a haphazard process; it is deliberate and intentional. SOL, as an experiment, demonstrated that there is a systematic way to teach and lead a cohort through a transformative process that increases the competence and relationships in a group toward contributing to a stronger, more strategic, more resilient social justice movement.

LESSONS FOR THE FIELD

First, SOL catered to the constituency. SOL was targeted and tailored to the grassroots leadership (and organizers) who all identify with and participate in a national alliance. At the most basic level, this meant investing in supports such as interpretation, child care, and stipends for domestic workers to be able to participate fully. At a deeper level, it meant an opportunity to explore in-depth the specific conditioned tendencies of domestic workers and tailoring the curriculum accordingly.

Second, SOL was aligned with action. Putting skills and plans into action – through waging state Bill of Rights campaigns and organizing care congresses as part of the national Caring Across Generations campaign – was a powerful means to reinforce learnings in a way that was both timely and relevant. Participants reported applying what they learned in the retreats to step up, speak out, and take on direct roles in the Bill of Rights campaigns, for example. And organizations reported a new energy and dynamism among worker leaders that came from focusing on their power and purpose while checking progress on their organizing plans developed during the retreats.

Third, SOL faced trauma. Trauma and healing work are relevant to any group, but it was particularly imperative for this cohort given the experiences of most domestic workers and those they are organizing. SOL was respectful of the individual realities of trauma and healing but connected them to an understanding of the impact of oppressive conditions and how to address these more powerfully through the organizing work.

Fourth, the SOL facilitation team modeled transformation. The coming together of NDWA, gs, and SJL to co-create SOL reflected a blending of capacities – a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts. Each had its own distinct self-interest in the success of the program, thus there was a high level of investment from each collaborating organization. Working together took trust and humility. Each was an expert and had to realize the expertise that others brought in order to come together to co-create the most effective program. For SOL, the team of facilitators developed their own collective transformational practice, and they practiced together.

Lastly, the SOL team made adjustments along the way. They started with ambitious goals – and with too much information to cover for each retreat, organizers had to make intentional choices to narrow the scope while keeping the outcomes in sight. We lift this up because sometimes focusing on less accomplishes more – and flexibility and adaptability are crucial in innovation and experimentation.

LOOKING FORWARD

We offer three sets of recommendations for: strengthening the domestic worker movement, building the field of transformative movement building, and funding the field of transformative movement building. Specific recommendations include: building organizing capacity among under-represented workers (such as black domestic workers), refreshing theories of transformation, strengthening the scaffolding to support transformative work, and transforming philanthropy itself.

SOL was equally about achieving rights and resilience, developing as individuals and as a cohort, and strengthening organizations and the movement. SOL was as much about the soul of those organizing as it was about the strategy for change. While this was a holistic and elegant theory of change, it presented a conundrum for measuring impact.

We try to address impact in this report – and not simply because that was part of our contract but because we recognize the importance of sharing learnings with the field. While we were focused on the hard analytical and political skills we saw participants gaining, we were reminded that social movements not only need to shift policy and power, but they also need to change hearts and minds. None of that happens without a



broader vision, a deeper sense of connection, and a theory and practice that take spirit seriously.

The crisis of inequality we face in the United States is not just about the damage to our shared economic potential – it is also about the signal we send that some people can simply be left behind. The crisis of record deportations we confront is not just about enforcement gone awry – it is also about the sense that separating some families is just fine. The crisis of political polarization we see is not just about the stalling of legislation in Washington – it is about a sentiment that sorting and separating is fine because the other is way too “other.”

Repairing the U.S. economy and polity will require repairing the nation’s soul. This, after all, was the promise of the civil rights movements – not just that we would strike down barriers but that the nation would, in the words of Martin Luther King, “...rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed.” The SOL program was ambitious, but it is part of a much larger effort to connect people across generations and geographies, across sectors and social class, to find what sometimes seems so elusive these days: a more perfect union both in ourselves *and* in our world.



INTRODUCTION

A CRITICAL TIME

Domestic workers play a critical role in our society. Whether caring for our children, providing home health care for our elderly, or keeping our homes clean for our families, the millions of domestic workers in the U.S. “make all other work possible,” in the words of Ai-jen Poo, Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA). With the demographic projections suggesting growth in the population of those who are elderly or disabled, domestic workers will only become more essential.

Despite the importance and intimacy of their work to those who hire them, domestic workers have been largely invisible to society, undervalued in the labor market, and excluded from basic workplace standards and protections – and even traditional workplace organizing. Key labor laws that guarantee workers’ rights, such as the National Labor Relations Act, exclude domestic work (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1996). As a result, domestic workers are not likely to earn a living wage and often work without access to health care, paid sick days, or paid time off. Moreover, collective bargaining and other strategies used by formal sector workers are not applicable to the informal economy. Employers are decentralized; often domestic workers live in isolation behind closed doors; and live-in domestic workers face the loss of housing in addition to their jobs if they dispute exploitative conditions.

Domestic work has historically been the province of marginalized women, women of color, and immigrant women (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1996). Domestic work entails a variety of labor arrangements including “live-in” work, “live-out” work, and “job work.” “Live-in” or “live-out” domestics can be employed as nannies and/or housekeepers, while women engaged in “job work” clean multiple households and are paid by the job. In addition, many of these women experience the double day of work. After caring for a family for wages, they return home and care for their own families.

In June 2007, domestic workers and organizers from across the country came together for three days of sharing and strategizing at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia. By the end, 13 grassroots organizations agreed to form the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA). It was the first national organization of domestic workers since Dorothy Bolden founded the National Domestic Union in Atlanta in 1968. NDWA was established as a way to coordinate and to scale up the power and voice of locally-organized domestic workers in order



to win respect, recognition, and inclusion in labor protections for the millions of domestic workers in the U.S.

In its early years, NDWA focused on building relationships among its members to share experiences and best practices. It also focused on strengthening the local work by conducting joint trainings, increasing communication, and providing technical assistance. It was also active in strategic dialogues with other national grassroots alliances as it was establishing a national presence – and figuring out the all-important yet often-undervalued internal structures and processes that could support and sustain its growth. (For a brief description of these alliance-building spaces, called the Inter-Alliance Dialogue, see Pastor, Ito, and Ortiz 2010.)

By 2011, NDWA had grown rapidly in terms of its membership but also in terms of its external impact. As a number of worker centers and organizing projects focusing on issues of domestic workers emerged in major cities across the U.S., Alliance membership more than doubled to 33 organizations in 17 cities and 11 states. Member organizations ranged from worker centers to cooperatives to community organizing groups, and membership ranged from nannies to homecare workers to housekeepers. While most of the workers were women, they came from a diversity of backgrounds and ethnicities.

In its infancy (and because of the longer history of organizing by some of its founding members), NDWA could lay claim to a number of historic victories. These victories were important because they, in part, helped to prove NDWA's own theory around the need and value of a national vehicle for change. They were also important to demonstrate success to funders, which was particularly important for a movement led by and comprised of predominantly women of color, who have been generally less visible or recognized as movement leaders.



In 2010, domestic workers in New York State won the nation's first Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, establishing standards for the industry – the culmination of a six-year campaign. Armed with the inspiration and lessons from New York, coalitions led by domestic workers had launched similar campaigns in other states, including California. After a multi-year campaign, the California coalition celebrated the adoption of the nation's third Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights in September 2013 – Hawaii had become the second state when it passed a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights in July 2013.

In 2014, the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights was passed in Massachusetts. And in partnership with the AFL-CIO and the International Domestic Worker Federation (formerly known as the International Domestic Worker Network), NDWA won passage of C189, Convention for Decent Work for Domestic Workers, by the International Labour Organization recognizing the rights of domestic workers globally – a success that

could not have been won without the consolidation of domestic workers' power through a national alliance.

In addition to the state-based and international campaigns, NDWA members were involved in a national-scale participatory survey research project to document and assess – and raise awareness about – the employment conditions of domestic workers across the country. The project, conducted in collaboration with the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois, Chicago and with Oakland-based DataCenter, culminated in the 2012 report *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work* (Burnham and Theodore 2012). The project provided not only concrete evidence for why reforms and labor protections are needed but also offered an organizing and leadership development opportunity for the organizers and workers who conducted the surveys.

And in 2011, NDWA joined with SEIU and Jobs with Justice (a national network of long-term partnerships between labor, people of faith, community organizations, and student activists) to launch the Caring Across Generations campaign. Founded as NDWA's first national campaign, it has since expanded to a coalition of over 200 organizations and is aimed at transforming the care system and at encouraging our society to value the contribution of our elderly, people with disabilities, and the workers who care for them. Early campaign activities included organizing regional "Care Congresses" to bring together domestic workers, direct care consumers, and key partners and to lay the foundation for building consensus around policy solutions and strategies.

In order to seize the opportunities created by these policy victories and strategic partnerships, NDWA recognized the need to strengthen the overall ecology of organizations and projects focusing on domestic worker issues – and, in particular, organizing and movement-building capacity. As an organizer once stated, "An alliance is not going to make weak organizations stronger" (Pastor et al., 2010, p. 35). And in the case of NDWA, many of its member organizations were new, under-staffed (if they had staff at all), and just getting started with organizing a base of workers. So to be an equal and influential voice whether in legislative campaigns or in cross-sector coalitions, whether in state capitals or in the nation's capital, there was a clear need for more and stronger leadership among domestic workers and their organizations.

A NEW APPROACH

And so in 2011, with support from the Ford Foundation, Bend the Arc (formerly known as Jewish Funds for Justice), Hidden Leaf Foundation, and others, NDWA launched a targeted two-year, capacity-building program to supplement its ongoing capacity-building and technical assistance work.



To get to the next level of effectiveness and impact, NDWA employed a three-part strategy that consisted of 1) Strategy – Organizing – Leadership (SOL) Initiative, an intensive organizer and leadership development training and the focus of this report; 2) a re-granting program that gave \$40,000, two-year grants to member organizations participating in the SOL program; and 3) technical assistance, primarily in areas of fundraising and communications, to support organizations' involvement in the national-level work.



NDWA initiated SOL out of a need to ramp up leadership more quickly than before and to build up local, grassroots leadership to play more national leadership roles. NDWA wanted not only more – and not only new leadership but a different kind of leadership. It saw a political moment that called for leaders who could organize and inspire others, weigh in strategically on policy campaigns, and represent domestic worker interests in multi-issue, multi-constituency alliances and coalitions. And it saw a movement moment that called for leaders who could usher in a new culture of organizing that could re-envision, reinvigorate, and refresh domestic worker organizing movement for the next 30 years – and in doing so bring new vigor to the U.S. labor movement as well. NDWA saw the opportunity to develop a cohort of leaders who could take bold steps forward, move constructively through conflicts towards transformative change, and address trauma and other barriers to social change – while also building healthy organizations and forwarding values of love and dignity to sustain the work and become more powerful.

A NEW PARTNERSHIP

To develop and implement a training program that would meet both the political and movement moments, NDWA partnered with training organizations Social Justice Leadership (SJL) and generative somatics (gs). While NDWA, and its more established founding organizations, had experience in leading organizer and leadership development trainings, it had less experience with this particular approach to transformation now being called for. Building on and weaving together each organization's curriculum and expertise, NDWA, SJL, and gs collaboratively developed and implemented SOL.

Who were the other partners? gs, rooted in a transformative change theory, views personal, community, and systemic change as interdependent and interwoven. It brings a pragmatic and practice-able methodology for embodied leadership, building powerful groups for collective action, and healing trauma. This methodology is politicized somatics, and gs brings this to movements for social and environmental justice. Somatics, as defined by gs, is "a path, methodology, a theory, by which we can embody transformation, individually and collectively.

Embodied transformation is foundational change that shows in our actions, ways of being, relating, and perceiving.” For gs, SOL was an opportunity to bring its methodology and approach to the domestic worker, a constituency with which gs had not previously worked.

Founded in 2003 (and closed in Spring of 2013), SJL trained grassroots organizations and leaders using a “transformative organizing” approach for a decade. Its transformative organizing approach is aimed at creating deep change at multiple levels simultaneously: “how we are as people, how we relate to each other, and how we structure society” (Social Justice Leadership 2010). SJL initiated several programs designed to increase the effectiveness and impact of social justice leaders, organizations, and alliances and partnered with gs on the majority of its programs. Its programs included the New York Transformative Organizing Institute, the Florida Transformative Organizing Initiative, and Transformative Leadership Program for Funders and Donors. Despite the organization’s closure, much of its work continues as independent projects, including SOL. Several leaders and staff within NDWA had participated in SJL’s organizing training in New York, and SOL represented an opportunity to build, deepen, and expand on that relationship.

...AND A NEW REPORT

Recognizing that this was a major shift in training, and one worth documenting for the field as well as for those funding the experiment, NDWA commissioned USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) to draw out the experiences, impacts, and lessons from SOL. Having an outside party play an evaluative role also meant that the training team could fully focus on the coordination, development, and implementation of SOL.

That is not to say that the partners did not themselves evaluate the program. In fact, the team debriefed every step along the way by sharing observations at the end of each day, regrouping after each retreat to assess what worked and what could be improved, and making intentional decisions based on their collective assessment. While PERE administered evaluations based on each retreat’s objectives, our primary contribution in the process – and certainly in this report – was less about evaluating the programmatic aspects of SOL and more about keeping an eye on the broader impacts and lessons for movement building. Our interest and expertise in this topic emerges from a growing body of work: Since 2009, PERE has helped document and translate today’s social movements to a broader audience, which includes foundations.

In the seminal piece *Making Change: How Social Movements Work – and How to Support Them* (2009), we identified the characteristics



of social movements and capacities for social movement building. Since then, we have applied this foundational framework to alliance building, youth leadership, integrated voter engagement, and to understanding a 20-year arc of movement building in Los Angeles (Pastor, Ito, et al. 2010; Pastor and Ortiz 2009; Pastor, Perera, and Wander 2013; Pastor and Prichard 2011; Pastor, Ortiz, et al. 2010).

We also developed an evaluative framework that relies on a more comprehensive set of metrics for movement building, which culminated in the report *Transactions - Transformations - Translations: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements* (2011). Known affectionately in-house as "T3," our focus on transformative assessment has drawn significant interest from the field. We saw the opportunity to document SOL as an opportunity to help capture the innovation for the field as well as to further develop and test specific tools and metrics.



What we have attempted to do in this report is to capture the innovation of SOL, to share the observable and immediate markers of transformation, and to synthesize lessons learned and implications for the movement building field.

In an era of evidence-based programming and grant-making, demonstrating the impact of SOL to the movement-building field and its philanthropic supporters is increasingly necessary and important. We hope that our attempts to translate this effort can be useful given the historic openings for the recognition of domestic workers, the rapid uptake of domestic worker organizing efforts nationwide, the growth of organizing of low-wage and contingent workers, the development of more national alliances, and the need for stronger, broad-based, grassroots movements.

We begin the report by describing the SOL program – its design and the participants – and the key questions we posed for the assessment. To understand the program more fully, we define the core concepts and framework that underlie the curriculum. The second half of the report is devoted to lifting up a new set of metrics for capturing impacts and the women's experiences. Based on the findings, we discuss valuable lessons for the program and conclude with implications for movement building.

SOL: A TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

THE GOALS

The overall goal of the SOL Initiative was to provide domestic worker-leaders and organizers with the transformative leadership capacities and organizing skills to push the scale and power of local and national domestic worker organizing in a way that would be grounded in vision, strategy, healthy and generative relationship building, and sustainability.

The specific objectives were:

- » To provide organizer training and transformative leadership development for key leaders of NDWA member organizations, connecting personal, organizational, and societal transformation;
- » To build the base-building capacity, strength, and sustainability of NDWA member organizations in order to collectively expand domestic worker organizing to a larger scale and impact at the state, national, and international levels;
- » To deepen trust and relationships amongst staff and leaders across organizations within the Alliance to promote communication, collaboration, and cross-sharing; and to strengthen the Alliance's movement-level leadership; and
- » To practice a model of organizing with the potential to deepen, strengthen, and transform the culture of our organizing, and to enable it to affect changes not only in local conditions and policies, but eventually in the structure of society.

Reflecting the theory of transformation underlying the training (which we discuss in more detail in the following section), SOL was designed to result in outcomes at four inter-related and inter-dependent levels: individual, organizational, alliance, and movement. The theory was that these changes are integral and intertwined with achieving the end-game outcome of overall societal change.

The following is a brief summary of the outcomes that were articulated at the beginning of SOL (we return to these later in the report when we discuss the impacts):

- » At the individual level, it was anticipated that by the end of the initiative, participants would have a strong foundation for continued growth and sustainability. This included possessing personal



centering, clarity of purpose and vision, greater self- confidence and awareness, as well as improvement in organizing skills.

- » At the organizational level, it was anticipated that participating organizations would gain strategy and sustainability to increase the impact of their organizing. This included having systems and processes for leadership and organizational development.
- » At the alliance level, it was anticipated that there would be greater trust, stronger relationships, and deeper political alignment amongst staff and leaders across organizations. This included SOL participants being able to provide increased leadership for the Alliance.
- » At the movement level, it was anticipated that participants would gain skills and commitment to strengthen and to play leadership roles in the broader social justice movement. This included having deeper and stronger organizing, a new culture of organizing, and an understanding of the domestic worker movement within a broader context.

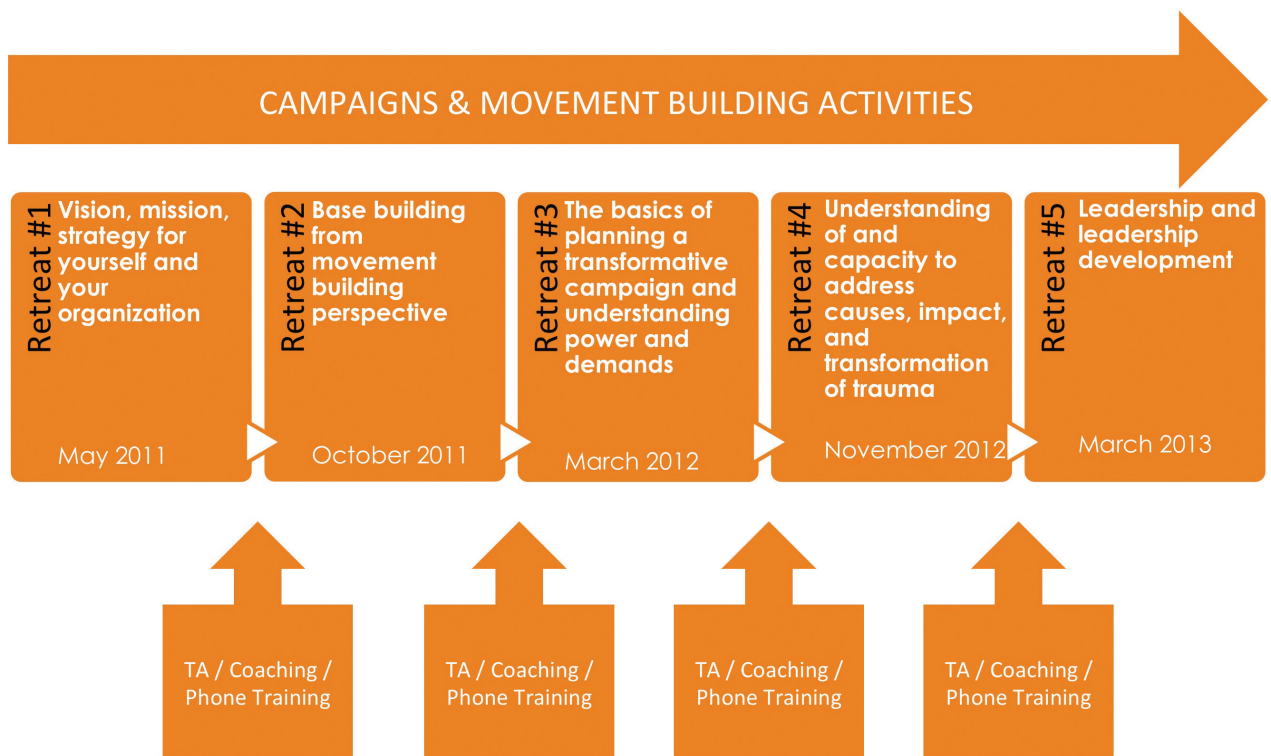


Figure 1: SOL Design

THE DESIGN

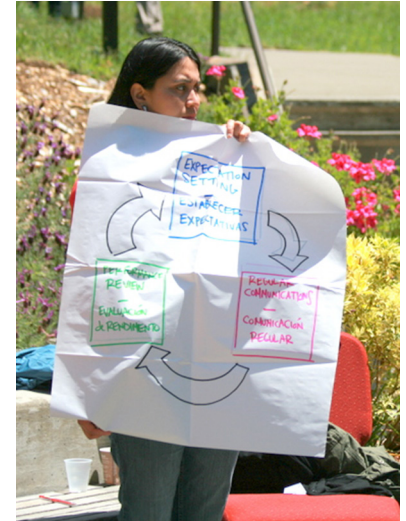
The SOL Initiative was comprised of five four-day retreats, supervisor calls, coaching calls, small group calls, and phone trainings. As mentioned earlier, SOL was just one aspect of NDWA's overall capacity-building program that included a re-granting process, technical assistance, and an internship program for more established organizations. And over the two years, NDWA was also engaged in various campaigns at the local, state, and national levels. Nonetheless, the cornerstone of the initiative was the series of in-person retreats. (See the program design illustrated in Figure 1.)

Each of the five four-day retreats had a particular focus, and each built off learnings in the previous one:

- » Retreat #1, held in May 2011, was foundational for building vision and building the case for transformation; it focused on *personal and organizational vision, mission, and organizing* as a strategy for social change;
- » Retreat #2, held in October 2011, honed in on *base-building skills* in the context of transformative organizing and movement building;
- » Retreat #3, held in March 2012, centered on *understanding power and demands for developing transformative campaigns*;
- » Retreat #4, held in November 2012, focused on *healing the impact of trauma and oppression* and the relevance of such healing to organizing, leadership, and transformative change as it impacts individuals, organizations, movements, communities, and society;
- » Retreat #5, held in March 2013, focused on *deepening the political and embodied leadership skills* gained through SOL, reflecting on what had changed in participants, their organizations and the alliance over the previous two years and casting ahead to consider the future.

The elements of each retreat included:

- » Opening practices, usually an hour-long somatics practice, to develop embodied skills including centering; being present and open in the moment; developing authentic connection to each other; deepening commitments to and alignment around the Alliance's vision and goals; building the skill to live based on purpose, of each individual, of the group, and of the Alliance;
- » Presentations on organizing history, theory, and skills (e.g. campaign strategy, and the third wave feminism);
- » Application and discussion of theory, practice, and skills presented;



- » Somatic practices which are focused on working through the body to transform default reactions and emotion and to “embody” concepts and action to get to a new level of understanding and to be able to take new actions, even under difficult situations;
- » Attention to logistics ensuring beautiful retreat locations, comfortable accommodations, healthy food, childcare, and interpretation; and,
- » Cultural and social evening activities to facilitate social bonding and relationship building.

The intent was that by weaving together these elements, the retreats would create the space, experience, and skills to deepen participants’ understanding and adoption of new skills, competencies, and connections in a way that integrated thinking and analysis, emotion and mood, and action and purpose.

Base-building skills and somatic practices were integrated to enliven theoretical concepts – to embody theories. How to conduct one-on-one meetings in organizing was taught in a way that included centering, how to approach other people with respect and dignity, and how to share and listen deeply to their concerns. This offered a different way to connect with a potential member: an approach to recruiting new members to the organization who could connect more deeply at a values-based level rather than solely around more shallow and immediate self-interests. This also offered a different way to hold oneself and others with dignity; a way to hold onto one’s purpose in the face of rejection; a way to feel disappointment while also being able to take further action; and a way for women to not lose themselves in other peoples’ lives and stories – some of the many reasons why organizers get discouraged.



THE PARTICIPANTS

A total of 25 organizations from 11 different states participated in SOL. Of those, 10 were considered “Pathbreaker” organizations, or established groups, with a long history of organizing domestic workers. The remaining 15 “Sunrise” organizations were nascent and in the early stages of organizing domestic workers. For the list of organizations that began SOL, see Appendix A.

Both the Sunrise and Pathbreaker groups came to SOL with a commitment to the domestic workers movement, even though their histories differ. Some had their roots as worker/labor centers, serving as a space for workers to come together. Others had their roots as immigrant centers, supporting newly arriving immigrants as they integrate into their communities. Others were founded to build community power through organizing.

Some of the organizations specialized by type of domestic work, e.g. housecleaners. One was rooted in domestic violence recovery expanding to organizing. Others tended to be formed around specific ethnic/racial identities. Each brought a different perspective to the work of the Alliance.

There were about 60 individuals who participated in SOL. Though there was one male participant, for ease we refer to the participants as “women.” There was one transgender woman participant. The women ranged in age from 20 to 84 years old with the majority being between 30 and 60. The younger women were more likely to be born in the U.S. and college-educated, while the older women were more likely to be immigrants. About two-thirds of the women were Latina, about one-fifth South and Southeast Asian, two African American, two Afro-Latina, and a few white women (varying slightly by retreat). At every SOL retreat, a total of five different languages – English, Spanish, Tagalog, Portuguese, and Nepalese – were being spoken with simultaneous interpretation available.

The domestic workers were employed primarily as housecleaners or nannies, with some also providing care to the elderly. Some domestic worker-leaders were hired as staff in participating organizations over the course of the program. For example, Antonia Peña transitioned onto staff as a full-time domestic worker organizer at Casa de Maryland after being a leader for several years then becoming an intern through SOL.

Attrition over the two years was low. Three (12%) organizations closed their doors, and thus dropped out of the program. Over the two years, 17 participants left and seven new people joined for a net loss of 10. This is remarkable given the vulnerable social conditions of the women’s lives. Reasons for leaving included participants exiting the member organization, migrating back to their home country, or having difficulty traveling or meeting other expectations of the training.

... AND THE KEY QUESTIONS

SOL was an opportunity to take an in-depth look at a transformative approach to movement building. Entering into this initiative, key questions about SOL as a model were:

1. Does the transformational leadership development approach impact the participants?
2. Does the program affect the ability of member organizations to organize a base of workers, develop leaders, build alliances, and wage policy campaigns?



3. Would SOL build deeper ties between organizations and to NDWA?
4. Would participation in SOL yield broader changes in organizational and Alliance culture?



To answer these questions, we collected daily reflections, administered end-of-retreat written evaluations, facilitated small group discussions, conducted one-on-one and group interviews, interviewed the facilitation team, and noted our own observations at retreats. We also had access to SOL applications that each organization submitted to NDWA, re-granting reports which were collected halfway through the program, and final program reports. All data was compiled and transcribed. Using a mixed-method approach, including use of the analytical software Dedoose, we coded all the data and culled the results for themes. For a summary of our data sources and methods, please see Appendix C.

We analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data to find trends in the outcomes and metrics. A major challenge was collecting comparable data from the participating organizations. For example, from the re-granting report narratives, we began compiling a database with membership and leadership numbers to quantify the percent growth; however, some did not include a baseline number, some were inconsistent in distinguishing between contacts, members, and leaders, and few reported their goals for the upcoming year.

For those organizations that provided numbers, the increase was exponential in many cases. In some cases, the percent increase was high because the organization was just starting (thus was starting with low numbers). In other cases, the increase was related to campaign organizing and mobilization. And in many cases, the increase was due to the added capacity built through SOL. In the future, being able to capture and assess the increase in membership and leadership more systematically will help draw out the importance of the transactional as well as transformative changes – and the interplay between the two.

On the transformational side, we analyzed the data for evidence of how the participants developed over the course of the program and how their development impacted the organizations they represented and the broader domestic workers movement. But before we share our key findings, in the next section, we define some of the fundamental concepts and definition of terms that are critical to understanding the unique approach of SOL.

SOL'S APPROACH: CORE CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

To understand the SOL Initiative, its impact, and its implications for movement building today, one must start with an understanding of its theory and methods for transformation. The terms “transformative organizing,” “transformative leadership development,” and “transformative social change” have many different operating definitions in the field. In this section, we focus on three core concepts of SOL that emerged from a blending of the social change theories and practices of the three SOL partner organizations, NDWA, SJL, and gs: transformative processes, transformative practices, and transformative power building. See Appendix B for a glossary of terms.

PROCESSES

At the core of SOL’s transformative approach to change was the interdependence and interconnectedness of change on the individual, organizational, community, movement, and society levels. The program offered clear ideas, processes, and practices to grow and transform in a sustainable way.

Levels of Transformation

A core tenet of SOL was the linking of broader societal and systemic transformation to individual and inter-personal transformation. It was grounded in the belief that in order to change the conditions in which we live, we also need to change ourselves and our relationships – within our organizations, community, and movement.

“Systemic” transformation means that groups of people have been able to bring about change in the economic, political, and social systems and norms that allow for justice, environmental sustainability, and interdependence. Personal or “individual” transformation means that the person (or group) changes in ways that allow them to grow, develop, and move toward a vision over time, even amidst changing and dynamic conditions and pressures; develop critical and relevant political analysis that allows for grounded strategy and taking collective action; and build relationships that are powerful and grounded in authentic connection and trust.

The central framework for SOL was the “Process” (or “Arc”) of Transformation, which is, simply stated, a process of altering the old to become the new. The path has many

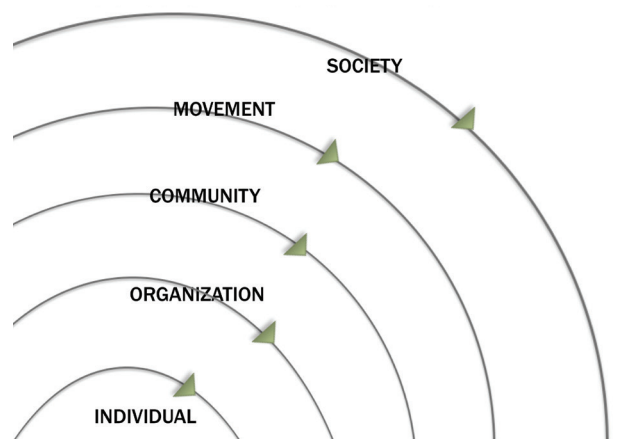


Figure 2. Levels of Transformation

aspects, which are somewhat distinct depending on whether the focus is on leadership development, group culture and alignment, or transformative campaign development. At all levels, there are three core concepts in an intentional process for change: current shape, intentional shape, and openings. In other words, who you are now, who you want to become, and what needs to open within you or in the campaign in order to get where you want to go.

Shapes

The Process of Transformation begins with a deep assessment of what is called the “current shape.” This is what is currently embodied (consciously and unconsciously) in leaders, organizers, an organization, or alliance – one’s unconscious habits or reactions.

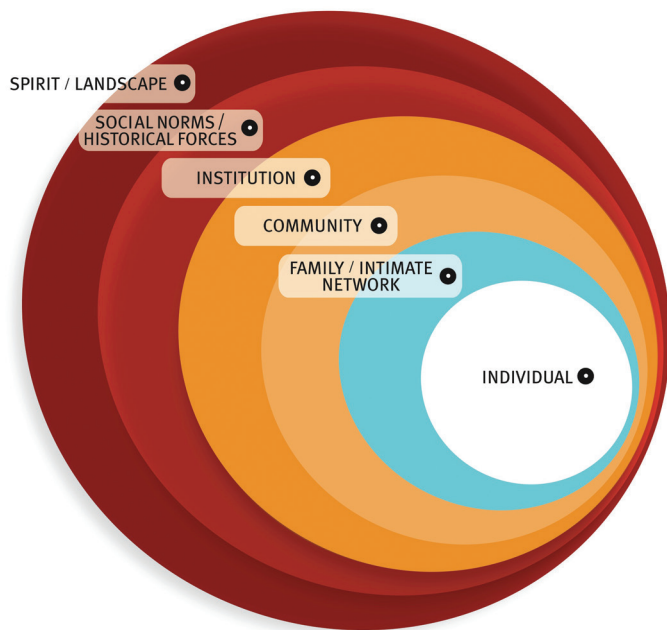


Figure 3. Sites of Change
(developed by Alan Greig and generationFIVE)

The terms “shape” and “collective shape” are used to acknowledge and work with the conscious and unconscious ways of being and acting, of beliefs and world views, and the ways in which people, groups, and communities relate to one another. There are multiple forces that “shape us” and have us embody these world views and ways of relating and acting. Experiences within our families and intimate networks, communities, social norms, the broader economic and political systems we live in, our material conditions and the landscapes in which we find ourselves, all shape us.

Why is this vital to social change? In short, it is to create more choices and possibilities for change, from personal to societal. It affects our ability to successfully organize, build movement, and deal with conflict and love. According to the designers of SOL, how people are shaped – what they embody, individually and collectively – both limits and supports their thinking, feeling,

relating, and ability to act. Unawareness of one’s shape tends to lead to actions and reactions based in habits which is limiting – whereas knowledge of and responsibility for one’s shape tends to lead to more intentional actions, which create more possibilities for change.

In the initial phase of “current shape,” a vision for “intentional shape” is also formed. This new shape is what one is striving to reach. The vision and commitments are at multiple levels: Who does the leader want to become? What qualities does she want to strengthen or change? What actions does she want to be able to take that she is unable to take now? Is there a commitment or need for healing? What aspects of the organizational culture or alliance culture need to be strengthened

or changed given the broader goals? What is the win this campaign is aimed at and how does that fit within the broader vision of systemic transformation? What society do we want to build? Individuals as well as the group (organization or alliance) hold both personal and movement visions and commitments. Not to be mistaken as goals, these are the visions we long for that fundamentally shift who - and how - we are. They serve as rudders or guides for transformation and action.

Opening

The third concept within the Process of Transformation is an “Opening” between the current and intentional shapes. The Opening is inevitable - and, at its best, is designed and purposefully created so as to allow for transformation. The opening phase requires something very different from the assessment of the current shape or even the practice toward the new shape. There is a certain level of chaos to it because what-is-known, the current shape, is coming undone and is transforming into something substantially different, unfamiliar, or unknown.

During this phase, most people and groups have the impulse to move back to the known (or current shape) because the known can be comfortable even if it is not aligned with the vision and commitment. Navigating the opening phase is essential for transformation. Thus recognizing and navigating the opening phase takes particular skill on the part of organizers and movement facilitators. Without this opening phase, intended changes would be built on top of old deeply-rooted shapes and patterns thus creating potential for some change but not full transformation, which is change so deep that a reversal to the “old shape” is not possible. When a person fully embodies a new shape, s/he can take new actions. And, she can take new actions even under pressure, which otherwise could cause her to revert to old habits and default reactions.

What the SOL team refined over the course of the two years was a linking of this theory of shape and change with a process of individual and organizational transformation. It was a framework that approached leadership development, institutional evolution, organizing, and campaign strategy, in a way that understood people and systems as an integrated whole.

PRACTICES

A central component of SOL was practice, defined as the act of doing something so that it becomes a repeated and repeatable behavior. SOL

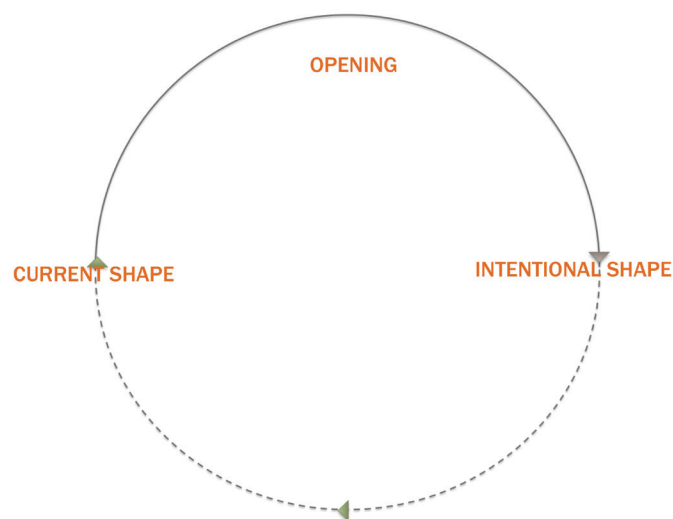


Figure 4. Process of Transformation

provided the space to try out new practices in a trusted environment. Practice is critical to the process of building new skills and competencies (like new muscle memory), such as having boundaries to take care of ourselves and others, speaking what we care about to others, building trust amidst conflict, allying well with each other, and having centered accountability. Embodied practice supports the building of a “new shape.” To understand the importance of practice, one must also understand somatics and a somatics approach to transformation.

“Somática me ha ayudado a tener unas actitudes más amplias y positivas en los retos que se presentan cada día en la organización.”

- Participante, Retiro #2

“Somatics has given me broader and more positive attitudes with the challenges the organization is presented with each day.”

- Participant, Retreat #2

Somatics

While the somatics methodology has existed for over 40 years, it has been brought specifically to movement building and with a political focus over the last 10 years. As defined by generative somatics, somatics is a “path, a methodology, a change theory, by which we can embody transformation, individually and collectively.” Somatics asks, “What political, social, and economic systems do we need in order to have work and masses of people embody cooperation, inter-dependence, and sustainability?” It sees the process of transformation as an “embodied” process, thus, thinking alone will not allow for new actions, or sustained change, particularly under pressure.

What does “embodiment” mean practically? It means that people (and groups) adapt to, and are shaped by, their personal and community experiences and conditions. These adaptations develop both resiliency and survival strategies that drive our actions, beliefs, emotions, and how we relate – which may or may not be aligned with our values and vision. And these adaptations can become embodied, meaning that they become embedded in our deep neuronal pathways, nervous system, and muscles. They become part of our psychological and social identity.

Thus when traumatic experiences and social conditions become embodied and influence our habits, beliefs, emotions, and culture, change cannot occur through new insights alone. Consider how one working for a better and more just world may have suffered in a way that creates tendencies towards hyper-vigilance, distrust, appeasement, or aggression, hardly the characteristics one wants in a better world. A somatics approach works holistically through the body, thinking, emotions, relations, and commitments to access and transform survival reactions, orientations, and experiences while building and embodying new choices and competencies.

Why does it matter for social change? People have inadvertently embodied the systems of oppression and trauma that they are trying to change. Somatics supports individual and collective transformation by moving people towards embodying new ways of being and acting that align with vision and values. SOL was designed to support the process towards an aligned embodiment for systemic transformation.

For more on somatics, see *What is a Politicized Somatics?* (generative somatics 2012).

Conditioned Tendency

Central to understanding the importance of somatics is the concept of Conditioned Tendency (CT). The CT is one's automatic habits and reactions. These can be automatic thoughts running through our minds, automatic emotions and moods, automatic belief systems or judgments on people or situations, and automatic behaviors and ways of relating. All people have conditioned tendencies that have been learned through living and adapting to their lives, experiences, and social conditions.

Three important aspects of CT to understand for movement building are: 1) They are embodied, an automatic reaction, and outside of our conscious control (we cannot understand or think our way out of them); 2) They are either useful or not useful anymore; and 3) Both individuals and groups can have conditioned tendencies.

Often times, CTs are learned early in life or through repeated experiences. CTs are always operating, and they happen whether or not they fit our current commitments, situation, or relationships. We are deeply "wired" as humans to take care of our dignity, belonging, and safety – our very sense of survival. As individuals and groups we adapt to try to do this. This is not just a psychological process – rather, it is a psychological, biological, relational, social, and spiritual process. That is why transforming the conditioned tendencies that do not always work anymore requires a holistic process, opening, and new sets of practices.

The last and maybe most important aspect of noticing conditioned tendencies for movement-building work is that groups also have conditioned tendencies. Because we have a good understanding of the impact of social conditions, oppression, or privilege, we can see how whole groups embody certain CTs or ways to navigate connection, safety, and dignity. An understanding of embodiment and CTs can inform the work needed to strengthen collective resilience and tendencies that are useful, as well as transform conditioned tendencies that no longer further our organizing, campaigns, and movement building.

Trauma and Healing

Conditioned tendencies, which are often automatic survival strategies, come from traumatic experiences, which can overwhelm people and break down their sense of safety, connection, and dignity. While automatic defenses against trauma – fight, flight, freeze, appease, or disassociate – can serve as a protective and survival mechanism,



they can also become disruptive and counterproductive to one's ability to connect and cooperate with others, build personal and collective power, and lead and be led.

Deep, automatic responses can linger long after a traumatic experience. It is a survival strategy in order to be "ready" the next time. These embodied survival reactions can then permeate our behavior. Ways in which these can get in the way of the work towards movement building and social change include: aggression/fight ("I will be safer if I attack"); appeasement ("I will be safer if I let them have their way"); flight ("I am outta here"); isolation ("I am safer alone"); freeze ("It is dangerous to take action"); I don't matter ("I will hide because only you matter... disappearing is safer"); or you don't matter ("only I matter, you are not as important...controlling is safer").



Understanding and healing from trauma require a look toward both individual experiences of trauma as well as the social context to understand, heal, and transform. Trauma on the individual can come from domestic violence, neglect, sexual abuse, workplace abuse, or deportation. Trauma often affects one's ability to establish close and intimate relationships or cause depression and anxiety. At the societal level, trauma can come from racism, sexism, colonialism, and the long histories of labor exploitation – and these, of course, often set the stage for individual trauma and can play out by splitting organizations and turning communities against each other.

Systemic trauma, or repeated assault or exclusion of groups of people, can impact an individual or an entire community across generations. And the community survival strategies can become embodied in cultural practices. Because trauma impacts people holistically – in the mind, body, spirit, relationships, and community, transforming trauma also needs to happen holistically.

Building resilience, or the ability to holistically renew oneself during and after traumatizing experiences, allows the person or group to come back to center and refocus on the "intentional shape," or commitment. It allows for an individual or collective sense of safety, connection, and dignity, together. And it takes practice to build such resilience.

Specific practices were introduced and repeated throughout SOL. These included somatic practices called centering, walking, two-step, hand-on-chest, grab-center-face, and Jo Kata (a practice with a wooden staff from Aikido, a traditional Japanese martial art), to name a few. The somatics practices help build skills to be centered in the midst of conflict, focused on being present, open and connected to self and others, able to connect and have centered boundaries, and grounded in one's commitment and vision.

Practices also aimed at supporting participants and the collective group

to “embody” new shapes and competencies – and at getting to deeper levels of understanding of the theories, concepts, and skills introduced through SOL. For more on practice, see Maina and Haines 2011.

POWER BUILDING

The third core concept of SOL was an emphasis on building power – building a base of domestic workers and moving them to take strategic action. The initiative was designed to develop an orientation towards assessing, building, and leveraging power among participants, their organizations, the Alliance, and broader movement. It defined power as the “ability to mobilize people and resources and gain influence to claim victories.” And it was this focus on power that was designed to allow the individual healing and transformation to fuel systemic change and vice versa.

Organizing

The primary strategy for building power that was integrated into SOL was organizing and base building from a movement building perspective. This means building a membership base, developing leadership, building alliances, and waging campaigns in a way that can build power and forward values of justice not only for individual organizations but for the domestic workers movement – and the broader social justice movement.

The elements of “Transformative Organizing” are: building a base of people and organizations to increase power, changing conditions, building interdependence, and developing leadership. The essence of building an authentic base is connecting with people and moving them to connect with a purpose of fighting for social justice – the work that happens through one-on-one conversations, leadership development, and deep political education.

It also requires bold but realistic plans, structures for membership and involvement, and strategies for retaining and developing members and leaders. For more see, Social Justice Leadership (2010).

Campaigns

SOL was designed to develop leadership and capacity to make intentional changes at all levels – individual, community, organization, movement, and societal. Campaigns can serve as vehicles through which organizations can create intentional changes at the community and societal levels and in the process, build power, organize people, develop leaders, and strengthen their organization – thereby moving towards intentional shape at all levels.

“We sometimes compare great campaigns to great love affairs because they create the container for many layers of transformation to take place – structural and relational, individual and institutional.”

– Ai-jen Poo, NDWA

A “Transformative Campaign” is defined as an organized plan to leverage collective power to win demands that transform current conditions towards a long-term vision. And the more power that is built, the more capacity one has to transform larger and larger structures and systems. The leadership that campaigns require at the individual level involves confidence, stepping into leadership and action, deep patience and compromise, and sharp real-time assessment and analysis of the external context, including potential opportunities, allies, and threats. It requires being able to center, assess, and make proactive choices as conditions inevitably change. And it requires practicing and orienting toward the social values we seek.

“To win local change and the national Caring Across Generations campaign, we need 2.5 million domestic workers and others to fight on the side of the public interest.”
- NDWA

Movement Building

Building a broad movement for social and economic justice is a key component of NDWA's theory of social change. And so in its approach to building organizing plans, campaign strategies, and leadership development programs, it aims to identify short-term goals and broader, long-term movement goals – all of which are based in love, dignity, and valuing of all human lives.

In identifying both short- and long-term goals, it recognizes that workers can win policy changes and recognition through a campaign, but at some point the campaign ends. What remains – the organized people, the organizational and institutional relationships and trust, the leadership developed – is what will ensure the momentum to sustain wins, achieve greater wins, build more power, and continue to transform people, communities, and political and economic systems.

NDWA's vision for the domestic workers movement and what it hoped to strengthen through SOL are: a larger grassroots membership base, advanced leadership for roles in the local to international movements in the field of domestic work and beyond, more power to influence decision makers, as well as deeper and longer-term relationships, and greater sustainability.

And it is about building powerful movements grounded in a vision of well-being, respect, and dignity for all; committed to building up others and not just one – oneself, one's organization, or one's community; and makes concrete changes that reflect the world we want to see.

...AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

All the above may seem like general theory, so it is better understood in its specific applications to domestic workers. Early in SOL, for example, the facilitation team assessed the collective embodiment as having a shape of appeasement with a strong undercurrent of resistance. One of the collective CTs was to appease or smooth over conflict, yet to not let

it go. The tendency to not resolve conflict (or use it in a way that could have been important for the group to deal with pro-actively) became important to address for the group and for NDWA's purpose – from building a powerful culture to successful organizing and campaigns.

Given the social conditions and work that most of the leaders navigated – immigration, loss of family, domestic work across often extreme class difference, underpayment and lack of labor rights, mostly female, high rate of sexual assault, acknowledgment, connection and pay often for meeting other's needs – appeasement was an understandable and strategic shape for the group, in general. To the extent they fight back, they risk getting abused physically or sexually or losing their job or pay. Appeasing others – making nice and showing up like you are supposed to – was a learned behavior that was associated with safety and receiving at least some form of acknowledgement.

While this assessment did not mean that every individual appeared as her central CT, it meant that in looking at the whole group, generally participants showed up not only very willing, but too willing – appeasing. It mattered to them to “do right” by the trainers, to be “good,” to be liked, to do what was handed to them. It also meant there was a tendency to avoid conflict and struggle with each other and to smooth over political differences or oppressive dynamics that might arise within the cohort.

Given the commitment of these leaders to organize for labor rights, gender justice, and immigration reform, appeasement is not always the most useful CT. This is not to say that a CT of “fight” is the better CT to have; a “fight” response creates its own problems when it is an automatic reaction rather than a strategic decision. But appeasement is not always a shape that can support SOL participants in achieving their collective vision and goals. It is not always a shape from which one can organize mass power and make bold demands. And it is not always a shape aligned with the goals of care, love, and dignity in all their work.

This meant providing somatic interventions – along with motivating political education and organizing skills – to build power, strength, dignity alongside mutual love and care. The SOL facilitation team focused on building the collective ability to “re-center” in commitment, in body/mind/emotion, in relationships, in vision. From a “centered” place, the collective group could then have choices rather than reactions and could learn other responses to conflict and pressures they face.

Throughout SOL, the specific practices used included the Jo Kata, grab-center-face, centered accountability, extension/collective extension, centering in contradiction, and allying with another. Practices such as learning hand-on-heart helped them learn how to stay in oneself while listening to another. All of these practices, in addition to the



work on healing trauma and the impact of oppression, supported a strong shift in the collective body. They also affected the ways individuals were participating in NDWA over the two years and becoming more empowered.

Over time, the facilitators noticed a greater capacity to embrace openings, demonstrating how as a collective they could take on conflict in productive ways rather than avoiding the situation, defaulting to appeasing each other, or holding resentments. As one facilitator commented after Retreat #5:

*There's a greater willingness to take advantage of openings.
And there's a feeling that we can create openings, too.*

Many retreat practices were designed to strengthen these skills, and sometimes the richest learning opportunities happened when least expected. When a participant made a racist comment at one of the retreats, there were a range of reactions – the most prominent being an attempt to smooth over the comment. The facilitators realized that it was an unplanned opening to recognize it as a hurtful comment that is not uncommon to encounter in the course of organizing and pivoted to transform it into an opportunity to talk about structural racism and to build towards greater cross-racial solidarity.



SOL'S IMPACT: METRICS OF TRANSFORMATION

At the heart of organizing is developing leaders among the membership base. Building the skills and competencies of leaders to increase their involvement, influence, and identity within an organization or movement is key to organizing. It can mean enhancing leaders' political analysis to make strategic decisions about campaigns and alliances. It can mean building their confidence to communicate and inspire others to take action. It can mean equipping them with the lists, maps, and scripts to knock on doors and recruit others.

A gifted leader's competence and qualities may not be only the more traditional ones often associated with leadership. For example, a leader can be a visionary and highly visible within a community, a confident campaign planner or strategist, and able to motivate people. These are valuable capacities, however less visible ones are equally important such as, listening and communicating well, patience and courage, a willingness to change and take action. A leader brings a range of developed capacities, acts from their group's shared vision, and demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing their goals.

Too often the prevailing culture of organizing seeks social transformation at the expense of personal well-being and sustainability, especially of organizers and leaders. SOL sought to cultivate a new way by linking the skills and competencies to social and personal transformation. And it was not only about change at the societal and individual levels but at the family, community, and institutional levels as well. SOL was equally about achieving rights and resilience, developing as individuals and as a cohort, and strengthening organizations and the movement. And while it was a holistic and elegant theory of change, it presented a conundrum for measuring impact.

The question that prompted this project and report was: *Can you take a cohort of domestic workers and domestic worker organizers through the two-year SOL initiative and see observable markers of transformation? And the answer is: yes. But how exactly did SOL's approach impact the participants, the cohort, the Alliance, and the movement? And how can these markers of transformation be "seen" by the participants themselves and by others beyond the trained facilitators?*

The success of leadership development programs is usually measured by the number of leaders who attend a training or retreat. Or how many new members they bring into the organization. Or how many give public testimony in support of a piece of legislation. While these easily counted transactions are important indicators of success, what

"Some frictions between women [in our domestic worker organization] are softening, and they are starting to work together. They respect each other instead of attacking each other. There is more openness to one another."
- Participant, Retreat #3



is less quantifiable – though can be very notable – is the change in “shape,” skills, emotional capacity, and culture that individual participants, the cohort, and the Alliance take on in the process of transformation.

What we lift up in this section are the less frequently captured measures of transformation. In other words, we report on the characteristics of the “new intentional shape” that we observed, and we look at those characteristics at the intersection of individual, collective, organizational, Alliance, and movement. We report on what we were able to capture through our own observations, participant surveys and interviews, organizational reports, and in small group discussions with participants and facilitators. And we attempt to distill them in a simple, actionable, memorable (in our case, that means alliterative) way.

A few caveats before we continue: While we discuss an extensive list of metrics, it is by no means an exhaustive list. In fact, there is a whole set of more traditional, transactional metrics that we did not include yet that are important. Such metrics, which are primarily at the organizational level, include the percent increase in the number of leaders, the number of members, the number of organizations with a base-building plan, and participation in NDWA national campaigns.

Although we gathered data around the change in number of leaders and members before and after SOL, we did not include them for a few reasons. The primary reason was that given the nascent Alliance and the varied capacities among affiliates, we found variation in how organizations define and count leaders and members. It was too early in the evolution of the Alliance to draw comparisons and conclusions across organizations for this report – and maybe too early to steer the various participants towards forced uniformity in data collection. In Appendix D, we discuss in greater detail the quantitative self-assessment data, and we will return to a discussion of these issues in the section, “Implications for Movement Building Today.”

This is the authors’ attempt to translate metrics of transformation to an audience not trained or exposed to transformative organizing or leadership approaches. Therefore, our terms may differ from how it would be articulated by the trainers and facilitators. We did our best to stay authentic to the essence of the theory and practice and incorporated the writing and thinking from the SOL partners as much as possible. But we see this as a contribution to what must be an iterative, co-creative process among trained facilitators, organizers, evaluators, funders, and others.

CENTERED IN COMMITMENT

A goal of SOL was to provide domestic worker organizers and worker-leaders with a solid foundation for transformative growth and sustainability.

Part of this meant that participants would gain **clarity** of and **commitment to purpose, vision, and values** – of self, of organization, of the Alliance, and of the movement. And it was also about gaining **a new orientation to change** – the paradigm of the Process of Transformation – and having participants fully understand and **embrace the integration of personal, community, and systemic transformation**. The most advanced would gain an **aligned embodiment**, that is, their values and actions would be aligned with their commitments.

We heard in interviews and at the later retreats, people reporting back that modeling how to be centered amidst conflict and tension in organizing helped their organizations and helped other people learn how to be centered as well. Centering was a consistent somatic practice and orientation of building a present and non-reactive state connected to one's purpose and the collective mission.

SOL resulted in considerable personal and leadership growth in terms of **self-confidence, self-awareness, and working from a vision**. A number of women reported being “less explosive” and less reactive – both with family and with the organization – and **working from their center to navigate difficult circumstances**. As early as Retreat #2, participants interviewed reported on being much more centered and focused among family, being the first ring of transformation outside of self. For example, a participant observed about herself at Retreat #2:

I used to be more explosive. Now I have grown. I see more where I came from. I don't take things personally.

The somatic practices seemed to quicken the uptake in understanding of theoretical concepts and tools. Throughout the initiative, the somatic practices were the most commonly and consistently cited highlight and take-away that participants gained from the retreats.

For NDWA, it was also important that participants gain an **understanding of power** and a **vision of scale**. For some of the emerging domestic worker organizing efforts, it required a **paradigm shift** to think of all members as active agents of change and as potential leaders. As one organization reported in the Year 1 progress report and renewal application:

Our work becomes tiresome and lonely but remembering that we have sisters in other cities doing the exact same thing somewhere is a grounding force in our work.

The peer-to-peer space provided through the SOL retreats was invaluable for many. Getting to know and sharing experiences with others was also reinvigorating in giving them inspiration for a vision.

“This most fundamental connection rejuvenates us and reminds us that we are not alone when we are dispatched back home to continue our local fights. Our work becomes tiresome and lonely but remembering that we have sisters in other cities doing the exact same thing somewhere is a grounding force in our work.”

–Year 1 report and renewal application

CLARITY IN ASSESSMENT AND ACTION

NDWA's transformative approach to organizing requires attention to and skills in managing complex and dynamic situations at all levels – self, community, and societal. And it requires an **ability to assess** conditions that are constantly shifting, **develop a strategy** that moves towards demands *and* builds long-term power, and make choices to **pivot or make decisions** in negotiations during campaigns. It also requires **confidence** and **comfort with stepping into leadership and action** as well as **deep patience and commitment** – as winning takes longer than anticipated or desired.

SOL focused on building these skills, but different from other campaign trainings, it taught participants how to assess, strategize, and make choices from a personal and collective state of being centered in purpose, engaged in a process of transformation, and committed to building long-term power. This was important, as we shall see, because even within the Alliance, different policy provisions were needed for different types of domestic workers, and a victory for the whole might involve putting some specific interests to one side for the short-term.

How were these skills developed? With each SOL retreat, we noted significant breakthroughs – among individual participants and the collective – and eventually saw how what seemed like abstract teaching began to have deeper real-world implications on NDWA's state and national campaigns.

At Retreat #2, for example, participants went through an experiential exercise (Tax Dollars and Public Interest) where competing demands impact decisions made by policy makers about how public funding is used. They were asked to divide up a limited amount of resources and debate how those resources should be distributed. This gave rise to a lot of debate, illustrating the trade-offs and tough decisions policy makers and communities face. Through this process, participants were **able to see how oppositional the other side** is thus the necessity of building power to pressure policy makers and win demands for domestic workers – a sophisticated and critical skill.



Then at Retreat #3, SOL facilitators led participants through processes to gain experience being in the midst of conflicting interests in a more centered and connected way. This time, the group worked through the New York Bill of Rights campaign and the moments when difficult decisions needed to be made during negotiations with legislators.

For example, during the California Bill of Rights campaign, in order for the Bill to move forward, the Coalition had to let some provisions drop. One provision addressed the specific concerns of one of the organization's constituency. In the end, the organization let go of the

portion of the bill that addressed the specific concerns of its members and accepted this compromise in the interest of the four-year campaign as a whole, trusting that in the long-term its workers would benefit from the Alliance and the victory.

Being able to assess a situation or an individual more objectively in its historical context helped the women to trust their judgment. SOL cultivated the capacity to hold contradictions with more complexity. Many women spoke of how they were challenged in this way in their organizational work, and that thanks to SOL they were better skilled at addressing thorny situations when they returned home.

HEALING FROM TRAUMA

A pivotal point or “opening” in the SOL initiative was Retreat #4 and its focus on healing and trauma. Facilitators intentionally planned this session for the second year of the initiative when they anticipated better collective readiness and trust to deal with deeply personal traumas. The shared healing experience contributed to greater **personal and collective resilience, dignity for self and others, and trust and connections with self and others**. And, indeed, it was this significant opening during SOL that created the opportunity for the deeply transformational impacts described in the prior section on “Caring for Self.” This session also illuminated that the vast majority of domestic workers has had experiences of trauma, intimate violence, and/or state violence and oppression. Integrating an understanding of trauma, its impact and healing, is vital for successful organizing and campaigns.

A tendency of survivors of trauma and abuse is to shut down one’s feelings, to become numb, and to retreat and disconnect from others. SOL facilitators paid close attention to “default tendencies” and were intentional about providing a safe place for individual and collective healing by having trainers help people move through deeply personal and painful experiences towards **resilience and healing and deeper connection with others**.

At the beginning of each day, participants stood in a circle and centered themselves. They were asked to pay attention to their bodies and to where they were relaxed and where there was tension. The women then walked through the room in a centered way, meeting others, engaging life’s demands, and sometimes stopping to share deeply about themselves. Such morning practices became the backbone of SOL practices, creating centeredness and connection to buoy the movement building and trauma work to come.

Participants first focused on their resilience before getting too far into their trauma. They were also given a framework to understand their survival strategies of fight, flight, freeze, appease, or dissociate.

“This [training on trauma] is exactly what we need. We need to heal trauma, to be open to other women coming with trauma, to help them heal and to have more security and more connection to the community. It makes us better organizers with respect and dignity.”

- Participant, Retreat #4

It was only after that careful preparation that they went to small groups to share their stories and feel their trauma. Later in the day, there was a space to **experience the trauma in one's body** with the close attention and support of another participant. In an evaluation of Retreat #4, one participant wrote:

Paired healing practices were great because it opens up the space for anyone to be a healer or to help someone through their own process of healing.

"Being conscious that everyone is in some point of a healing process opens a space of compassion, of using the healing and the organizing as mutually beneficial."

- Participant, Retreat #4

Most of the other evaluations appreciated the space and also the **orientation of security and regeneration**. While the experiences were deep and difficult in many ways, the facilitation team kept it in the context of building resilience. Articulating one's own hurts and witnessing others **increases self-awareness, empathy, and connection**. Sharing the experience at the retreat showed how the "hurts" are universal, in communities, systems, as well as on an individual level.

Some women saw major turnarounds: One woman who had been abused did not want anyone to touch her during the somatic practices at Retreat #1. By the end of SOL, she was in the process of healing – and **overcoming fear of connectivity and physical touch**.

Retreat #4 created a powerful opening for the group's collective transformation. It shifted the dynamics of the group – those who had been quieter participated more; **boundaries between women started dissolving**. Previously, participants would, by default, gather with others in their organization. By the end, there were **deep connections made among women across organizations**. The SOL participants showed up more powerfully and more aligned in Retreat #5. They were clearer on their purpose, taking new positive actions in their lives, and were more fully aligned with the Alliance. One participant shared in an interview after SOL ended:

The biggest gift was the day of graduation – the sense of joy and strength we shared at the same time.

This orientation towards resilience and how to build it in oneself and in each other as well as understanding the wide-spread impact of trauma and oppression informs leadership development, organizing, and approaches to the collective work.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND INTERDEPENDENCE

NDWA is committed to developing grassroots leaders who come from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. Any organizing and capacity building must attend to differences in race, gender, class, worker type, and national status. SOL was grounded in the core tenet of interdependence meaning how the success, dignity, and survival

of one (individual, community, or society) are linked to the success, dignity, and survival of all. It also means that we cannot act alone, and all our actions impact others.

Working at the intersections and interdependence of issues and identities is critically linked to an organizing approach that is more expansive than a traditional organizing model based primarily on narrow self-interest. And it not only requires attentiveness to language (each retreat was simultaneously translated in four languages) but also to the cultural nuances of translation and to the need to lift up differences. With this competence, participants felt more embraced, respected, and supported in their growth to become stronger leaders.

On the first day of Retreat #3, for example, a new participant made an offensive comment about people of African descent to which both black and non-black people in the room reacted strongly. The comment triggered different responses – attempts to smooth over the conflict, to call out the woman who made the comment, and to apologize to the black women in the room. It served as an opening to model to the group how to handle a racist comment. It was immediately addressed by the facilitators and the group proceeded to work through the “opening” to build a collective understanding and analysis of racism and to build stronger identity and cohesion across race.

Integrated into Retreat #4 was a political education component on third wave feminism to help move the understanding of trauma beyond a personal experience and place it within a societal and historical context. Participants were able to see the connection between the women’s suffrage movement, equal pay for equal work, reproductive rights, and ending violence against women. They were able to see individual trauma in the context of the perpetuation of oppression and history of resistance.

Alliance staff walked participants through the challenges of being an organization with multiple immigration statuses, nationalities, languages, race/ethnicities, and religions. They emphasized how racism in this country works to divide our communities and movements when it is by engaging diversity that long-term trust and cohesion will be built.

With the coming together of organizations and individuals, **establishing common ground** was foundational for the group – and an important indicator of success for this type of alliance. This metric indicates not only how many came together but **how strongly they came together**. This goal is about broader movement building which begins with internal relationship building, connecting, and **openness/expansion in thinking about what is possible**.

During SOL, one such opportunity emerged towards the end of the program – Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR). Because of previous experiences in waging campaigns for CIR, the dynamics are complex,

“SOL has helped me feel stronger and more secure in my leadership...The learning is practical and hands-on...We are coming away not only with concrete tools to use in our organizing work (spreadsheets, documents etc.) but also with a very specific set of personal and interpersonal tools (somatic work, interpersonal skills and relationships) that will help us over the long term.”
 - Year 1 report and renewal application

“Building these relationships has created a strong sense of solidarity...and allowed us to build our dignity through mutual respect. We continue to collaborate with other support groups and colleagues. We have grown and shared many things within our alliances with other organizations. Through our alliances we have gathered more testimonies, are able to achieve larger victories, organize fundraising events, have gotten access to new events and important trainings, and have contributed to movement building.”

– Final Program Report

affecting NDWA membership greatly and in different ways. These differences have the potential to be divisive within the Alliance.

The final retreat occurred in January 2013, when issues relating to people of color had a huge impact on the elections. At that moment it seemed that Comprehensive Immigration Reform was possible. While an exciting prospect, the organizers knew that change on a national scale also brought opportunities for divisions in the movement. Participants were given realistic scenarios about the possible outcomes of immigration reform from concessions to an Executive Order. With each of the scenarios, they centered on their long-term vision and commitment, and debated what to do. Despite differences about the actions each would take in the short term – differences that usually result in breakdowns between organizations – each acknowledged the importance of taking advantage of an opening for the movement and not breaking relationships for the long term.

It is shifts such as this that demonstrate how the group’s ability to hold multiple perspectives and differences respectfully will benefit the Alliance and the broader movement in the long term.

CARING FOR SELF AND OTHERS

For care workers to be told and taught to care for oneself within the context of fighting for justice for all was transformational. It opened up a new worldview that **being responsive to one’s needs and wants**, thereby making direct requests of people, often asking more than normal, was not only okay, but actually better not only for the person but for the sustainability of the movement. SOL demonstrated a caring for self that meant that **having personal boundaries** – and standing up for oneself – could be consistent with the social justice values of care, love, and dignity. Caring for self within this context also meant that by gaining a deeper connection with themselves, participants could gain **a deeper connection with others**.

By the last retreat, there were clear indications that the women were shedding old habits of appeasement and **taking actions** that they never would have taken before SOL. They reported more **openness to new possibilities**, more **hopefulness for the future**, and **more capacity (time, energy, and heart) to be part of the domestic workers movement**. And the realization and practice of caring for oneself resulted in feelings of **confidence, empowerment, and compassion** which, in turn, resulted in **improved conditions at multiple levels** – personal, familial, and organizational.

One participant described her personal and professional transformation: Never able to find the time for self-care, since the start of SOL she returned to her passion of Aztec dancing and thanks to seeking

out other changes is no longer pre-diabetic. Before she never thought of herself, now she sees how much more secure she is and that she can be a model for members and her children. Once a nervous public speaker, she now enjoys it and is an emphatic spokesperson for domestic workers' rights:

I was a domestic worker who was treated badly. We needed a [Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights] law, there's nothing to support us and no benefits... We are hidden, now we can be seen, we need to be seen... My daughter is also involved, we can provide an example for young people.

For many women, SOL helped to **transform relationships with immediate family** – children, parents, and husbands, especially – in a way that made them more available (emotionally and physically) to the work of organizing. At the final retreat, one worker shared how she never told her husband that she was attending domestic worker organizing meetings. She kept it hidden from him and as a result missed a lot of meetings which were held in the evenings when she would have to prepare dinner. As a result of SOL:

Now I say, "fix your own dinner." I've lost 15 pounds. I stand up for myself. I feel so good. I'm clear about what I want.

For one organizer, somatics helped her be present and connect with her daughter when she was home from college. This same organizer used somatics as a hook to bring together domestic workers. She started meetings with centering practices, which provided a brief reprieve from the world for these women who rarely got to focus on themselves during the week. This was true for most of the women we interviewed. They found that centering themselves before doing one-on-ones and meetings was a powerful tool and improved their organizing.

RESILIENCE AMIDST CHANGE AND CONFLICT

As noted earlier, a prominent conditioned tendency of the group was to appease, with some defiance. There was concern that the ability to work through conflict would be underdeveloped within the Alliance because the default to "do right" by the trainers and to smooth over challenges would hamper the ability to work through conflict. The hope was not to forget differences that would arise in the cohort and to grapple with potential conflict or connect with people beyond their differences.



Too often there are divisions, territorialism, historical differences, ego, and competition that break apart organizations and movements – and so conflict is seen as a problem and barrier to working together. By contrast, SOL taught and modeled a way to hold conflict as generative (not shying away from conflict or moving too quickly to appeasement) towards intended change and provide options for moving forward. Conflict could result in more relationships and greater trust, if navigated skillfully. According to one of the facilitators:

How do we get beyond the contradictions and learn how to work in a way that opens us up rather than shuts us down? Tactical skills building is not enough; we need transformative processes where people are actually in the live experience of transforming.

Developing a **more productive orientation towards conflict** included concrete practices through which participants learned to **hold contradicting viewpoints while keeping vision**, and how to **re-center and build more connection through conflict**, rather than polarizing. In this way, it taught a new way of looking at conflict and seeing it as an opening to generate change, while **keeping dignity intact in the process and coming out collectively more powerful**.

And organizers involved in the California Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights campaign learned this and came to terms with it during the course of SOL. The California Coalition had encountered a few decisive moments about strategy during the campaign where there was a heightened level of polarization. At the time, they lacked some of the practices and tools to engage in strategy discussions in a non-reactive way. Many organizations concluded SOL with more openness to working through challenges with other organizations, to figuring it out – rather than simply walking away, ignoring, or being destructive – a capacity that will continue to strengthen the Alliance in the long term.



Another key indicator of transformation was the interpersonal skills development – manifested by **generative communication, conflict resolution, and motivational skills**, as practiced in the contradiction and assessment practices throughout the program. Participants learned to offer and ask for assessments of their leadership based on their commitments. They learned to assess difficult situations in real time to identify centered resolutions. They learned how to respond rather than have a knee-jerk reaction during conflict which is helpful in moving through tension rather than being hindered by it.

How did this practice make its way into life outside the retreat? One participant believed that one of her staff was not meeting expectations, and it was hurting the organization. The participant, a director, had been hesitant to address it because she did not want the staff-in-question to think poorly of her. Through SOL, she realized how her

behavior of appeasement was actually getting in the way of the work to be done for the organization to advance its mission.

As a result, she raised the conflict with the staff person and ended up letting her go, making room for the organization to work with a new, enthusiastic leader. When describing this action she said, "The goal is really to have a strong organization and to find people who want to transform themselves, who want to transform the organization – and that's really what we want to create." SOL strengthened her ability to handle conflict so that the organization could continue towards its mission. In the words of another organizer at Retreat #3:

[SOL] me ayuda centrar en que voy a hacer, cuales son mis metas. Y cuando hay un conflicto en la organización, decir: no es conmigo y yo estoy centrada en lo que sé que voy a lograr... Sí, duele pero yo creo que uno aprende a respirar profundo y volver otra vez a tus metas.

SOL helped me to be centered in what I am going to do, my goals. And when there is conflict in the organization, to say: it is not about me, and I am centered in what I am going to get... Yes, it hurts but I believe that one learns to breathe deeply and come back again to one's goals.

The program offered many opportunities to practice moving away from appeasement through centered accountability, taking responsibility, and asking for it from others. Some examples include the Jo Kata martial art practice that allowed women to stand firm, physically and emotionally, practicing both personal and collective coordination and power. The grab/grab-center-face practice had the participants bring a current situation to a partner, be with that situation with the other, (even as they might be triggered or "grabbed" by it), and stand together to re-center and face the situation. Confronting these tensions, choosing to be with them in a confident and open way, and then inviting their compañeras to join them in their decision or position – are all essential leadership skills for collaboration.

By the end, the collective body had more "length" (e.g. **stood in their dignity/stood their ground**) and **more strength**, with **deeper commitments to the Alliance** and **a greater capacity to face difficult situations** by standing in the middle of more contradiction without being reactive. These skills are expansive: they **increase one's ability to hold more perspectives, widen strategies, ally with each other, lift each other up, and fight for each other.**

The collective shape was not only a felt experience, it was made visible through a somatic practice where groups of women were asked to make shapes, together, to represent the cohesion, structure, and responsiveness of the alliance to outside stimulus. At Retreat #3,



the women made a shape and practiced how to respond together to outside conditions. While they did well at this point, there was difficulty figuring out how individuals related to the group. By the last retreat, the women were making shapes that were powerful, well-constructed, responsive and imaginative. These shapes embodied the participants' shared vision.

A FOCUS ON: DONAJI LONA

Donaji Lona talks enthusiastically about her upcoming internship with generative somatics, a natural continuation of her leadership development from SOL. Now she is part of the one-year teacher training program for organizers, facilitators, and healers preparing her to be a part of a cadre of trainers for movement builders.

SOL has been a key part of her ongoing leadership journey. Based in the San Francisco Bay area, she has worked as a reproductive health promoter and had a background in domestic work. Nine years ago she became a member of People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER), and five years later transitioned to be a staff organizer. Donaji was also part of the early conversations about the formation of NDWA.

NDWA invited three POWER leaders to participate in SOL. Donaji described that after the program she felt strengthened by the relationships and tools she developed. Whether it was organizing workers or speaking publically, she found SOL to be valuable in her development as an organizer.

"SOL was a transformational experience for me. We learned how to integrate somatics into our day to day organizing. I was excited about it because I was practicing personally and I found it very useful. They shared tools that we can use. Now we are finding how to integrate it to transform the movement. As a movement we have differences and we can get stuck. The tools we learned help us to be more open and connected."

She goes on to explain how being an organizer is a healing process for her, since it gives her the opportunity and the tools to heal. She recognizes that many of the members are dealing with similar issues: "When I am doing one-on-ones I hear painful stories, and when I am doing outreach too. I can find the link with them...It is practical, you don't need anything to do it and you can do it anytime."

As a mother, she was able to bring her son along with her to the trainings and found it to be a critical component of the program: "A lot of us are mothers, single mothers. Honestly, women want to learn but get left behind because they can't accommodate their kids. At the end of the day, the kids are part of the movement."

Being part of the SOL cohort has meant a lot to Donaji, she added about the lasting impacts of SOL: "Que es algo bonito de experimentar, pero se queda en nosotros / That [SOL] is very nice to experience, but it also stays with us."

(Source: Interview upon the conclusion of SOL.)

LESSONS FROM SOL: SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

The SOL Initiative took a cohort of 60 domestic worker-leaders and organizers through a two-year transformational experience that had immediate and visible impacts on the participants. We were able to document ways in which it contributed to them evolving into more confident organizers, more motivated to share transformational practices with new leaders, and more strategic in their approach to legislative campaigns. Through the shared experience of the series of retreats, we also noted much deeper and more trusting relationships among individuals across organizations. All this is laying a strong foundation upon which to build a new culture for the domestic workers movement – one that is grounded in vision, strategy, healthy and generative relationship building, and sustainability.

Underlying the success of SOL was a collective belief among all three facilitating partner organizations that there is a systematic way to lead a cohort of people through a transformative process. Transformation is not a haphazard process; rather, it is deliberate and intentional. And SOL, as an experiment, demonstrated that there is a systematic way to teach and lead a cohort through a transformative process that will contribute to a stronger, more strategic, more resilient social justice movement.

What are the key lessons to lift up that contributed to the successes? And what are the challenges that were encountered on the way?

CATERING TO THE CONSTITUENCY

SOL was targeted and tailored to the grassroots leadership (and organizers) rather than to the organizational executive leadership. It is more common for gs, SJL, Rockwood Leadership Institute and other transformative leadership programs to train full-time staff and staff at the upper-management levels. This was a particularly unique space in that it was comprised of domestic workers and organizers, many of whom came up through the grassroots leadership.

NDWA's deep knowledge of the domestic worker organizing field was central to SOL's success. While this may seem obvious, it is worth lifting up because it required a significant investment of time and resources, an extension of trust in the other training partners, and constant attention to both the appropriateness of the curriculum as well as the readiness of the cohort. NDWA staff played a critical role in anchoring and centering the program in the Alliance's vision, values, and goals, and catering to the specific conditions of its leadership

"Sixty working class women doing somatics bodywork is amazing – it is different from the places and spaces where folks have so much more access to healing, and different than most other experiences I've had. I am so amazed at how much we have to offer each other."

- SOL Facilitator, Retreat #5

“Las llamadas de SOL son muy importantes porque ayudan a compartir experiencias de otras compañeras, las ideas, los ejemplos diferentes o conflictos similares. También ayudan a fortalecer personalmente y aumentar los ánimos, y eso fortalece a la organización y la membrecía en general. Son importantísimas estos proyectos para alcanzar metas de desarrollo de liderazgo.”

– Respuesta de una encuesta electrónica, Antes de Retiro #3

base. It was not about bringing in outside trainers to deliver the content but rather about committing to a co-creative and collaborative process.

At a basic level, it meant providing simultaneous translation in several languages so it was possible for non-English speakers to participate. The mechanics of translating in-and-of-itself were important investments, but so was the attention to making sure that the trainers were effectively conveying the concepts and were culturally competent (more on that in the section on recommendations).

It also meant re-granting to participating organizations to cover travel, childcare, and worker stipends to take days off work to attend retreats. The grants also provided resources to the organizations to provide paid internships to the worker-leaders so that they would have the opportunity to apply what they were learning through SOL. Intern supervisors were able to connect through peer-to-peer calls, which were consistently ranked as the most useful support offered between retreats.

In addition to financial costs, it also meant recognizing the emotional costs of leaving behind one’s family (thus providing caregivers to allow parents to bring young children along) or of traveling without documentation (thus providing advice and guidance on air travel). That NDWA recognized the full set of costs to attend retreats did not go unnoticed by the participants. They appreciated the care and the commitment that went into the planning and implementation of SOL.

Most importantly, it meant recognizing the conditioned tendencies of domestic workers, knowing what tendencies are useful for the social justice agenda (and which are not), and tailoring the curriculum accordingly. It also meant creating “safe” situations for domestic workers to practice pushing back, and ensuring that they knew when not to push back – like when saying “no” to an employer could lead to being fired.

The body work integrated through SJL and gs’ methodologies was essential for domestic workers. The somatic practices did indeed seem to quicken the uptake in understanding of theoretical concepts and tools and create conditions for breakthroughs to occur. While having a corporal element is likely important for any learner, domestic workers are engaged in so much physical work that the body movement and practices were especially helpful in forming new muscle memory.

Furthermore, SOL reframed the notion of self-care, which was particularly important for the domestic worker community and for community organizing more broadly. Often, self-care is associated with taking time to get massages, seek therapy, go shopping, or leave movement work altogether. In contrast, SOL’s approach to self-care was about possessing the concrete skills of setting limits and boundaries, of being able to trust oneself thus to trust others, and of having more ways to respond to pressures than automatic reactions. Self-care

in this context was about living in the new possibilities for oneself, community, and movements.

SOL also encouraged the development of deep relationships across organizations that carry over into Alliance meetings outside the SOL retreats. The culture fostered at SOL and the type of leadership SOL participants demonstrated – not only as leaders of their affiliate organization but of NDWA – carried into the National Congresses and helped to set the tone for the national meeting. Beyond peer relationships, trust was built with Alliance staff as well. Investments at the worker-leader and organizer levels are critical to giving roots to a new movement-building culture that NDWA seeks.

ALIGNING WITH ACTION

Part of SOL's success was that it was part of NDWA's multi-pronged strategy thus was interwoven with other work and campaigns – a participatory research project, Caring Across Generations, Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights campaigns, and the fight for immigration reform. Based on retreat interviews, this connection to action and application is what helped reinforce learnings, solidify inter-personal connections, and increase NDWA's impact.

The retreats provided a space to develop real-world, real-time campaign strategies. For example, the retreat on transformative campaigns incorporated small group work for people to either develop campaign demands for those not in an immediate fight or to discuss current work for those in an active campaign. The California Bill of Rights negotiation process was the case study for making complex decisions in movement building as was the New York Bill of Rights campaign. Having the space to think, learn, and plan strategically was critical to deepening understanding of – and commitment to – the Alliance's vision and goals. They were able to use the time to set goals, plan ways of achieving them, and learn from each other – so that the groups in California were learning from the groups in New York. And, the somatic practices opened up a transformative space for people to approach difficult decisions, such as compromising organizational goals in the interest of the entire coalition, with a stronger orientation around NDWA's long-term goals and direction.

In terms of the relationship between local organizations and the national campaign, we expected to find resistance from local leaders and organizers, who we assumed were already overtaxed and stretched for capacity. Our initial supposition proved wrong: When asked, participants suggested that the national work inspired the local work. One group that was going through a major organizational transition found its members fundraising pro-actively to travel to the National Congress because there was such a strong interest. This demonstrates

"The SOL calls were very important because they helped us share experiences with other compañeras, the ideas, the strategies and different examples or similar conflicts. Also it helped strengthen me personally and lifted up my spirits, and this strengthened the organization and the membership in general. These projects are so important for achieving leadership development goals."
 – Online survey response, Pre-Retreat #3

the level of commitment to the domestic worker movement and how it can transcend organizations.

Yet, there are real challenges to organizing on all levels. Leaders expressed being pulled in many directions. They learned about maintaining self (organizationally) within a national alliance – important as organizations often fear losing their interests when amalgamated with others. Building a culture of trust, being less reactive (i.e., strategic, centered, and generative), and working from vision helped provide tools to dispel those fears.

Connecting with each other across the country made tangible the reality that the organizing is not just on the shoulders of one person or one organization. Moving clearly and with alignment at the local, state (e.g. Bill of Rights campaigns) and national levels (e.g. immigration and Caring Across campaigns) allowed for a higher level of unity, cohesion, and learning.

Leadership development works best when it is not only practiced in a bucolic retreat center; it must have immediate applications in the field. And we found that it can have real world and direct impacts on legislative campaigns and movement building when the cohort is part of the same long-term alliance and striving towards the same long-term goals.

In this sense, it was critical that SOL was not structured as a standalone, capacity-building program, but rather included built-in supports and other events and directly fed into campaign activities between the retreats. NDWA coordinated its retreats and Congresses with related public events like a fundraiser in Los Angeles and a protest in Washington, D.C. Putting skills and plans into action was a powerful means of applying the learning – and in a way that gave it a sense of both immediacy and relevance.

“We gave organizers a space to really personally reflect and get some support. I always have this image of tightening the weave of the fiber of the alliance – through the deepening of the relationships – the allying, the healing circles – was all really effective.”
– SOL Facilitator, Retreat #4

FACING TRAUMA

What proved to be the transformational turning point of SOL was the session on trauma. Trauma and healing work are relevant to any group, but it had special meaning for this group given the experiences of most domestic workers and those they are organizing. The respectful approach to the individual realities of trauma and healing was critical – and it was equally critical to connect it to the impact of oppressive conditions and how to more powerfully address these through the organizing work.

The better organizers and leaders can get at understanding the individual and collective impact of oppression and violence, bring a trauma and healing analysis and a studied and practiced approach to healing, the better are the possibilities for getting to the shared purpose of systemic change. Individual leaders needed support and healing from their own multiple experiences of trauma, from the experiences brought

to them by the folks they were organizing, and from the challenges present within their organizations. SOL demonstrated the importance of addressing trauma and healing in organizing and building collective resilience and action as part of healing.

There are some inherent risks to opening up to trauma, even in a safe environment with experienced trainers. For example, sharing personal stories with co-workers, supervisors, and volunteers can counter the established roles and relationships and must be handled carefully and with a foundation of trust.

Another potential challenge is leaving with raw emotions that are not resolved enough to go forward with resilience. Ideally, SOL would have had enough trainers to follow-up individually with each participant. After all, it is not unusual for people dealing with their trauma to “get worse before they get better.” With 60 participants, follow-up with every participant was not possible, but the facilitators made themselves available for check-ins during the retreat to deal one-on-one with those surfacing intense emotions.

SOL responsibly and directly addressed the role of trauma and healing in the participants’ lives and communities. They carefully lifted up the importance of healing to build resilience as the first step towards building real and lasting transformative change. Key to addressing trauma successfully was assessing the readiness of the collective group. They allowed enough time for participants to have established trust and relationships and created spaces to debrief at the next session. Intentionally setting this up ensured that people remained connected to others to counter tendencies to retreat inward and isolate oneself. By carefully developing the curricula and following the energy of the group, SOL created an opening to transformation by addressing trauma.

MODELING TRANSFORMATION

Like movements, transforming organizations takes time to manifest, requiring a longer-term view and a unique mix of capacities. Some organizations become entrenched in their strategies and practices making it hard to institute change. Their boards and programs may operate in an old organizing paradigm that is less connected or visionary.

The SOL facilitation team modeled how deep collaboration can contribute to transforming an organization. The coming together of NDWA, gs, and SJL to co-create SOL reflected a blending of capacities – a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts. All three entered into the project with a deep commitment to the women and to the possibility of what they could do together. They also entered into the project

“It’s more than people learning differently. It’s the integration that opens up new possibilities.”

– SOL Facilitator, Retreat # 5

with goals to further develop and advance their own organizations. The fact each had its own distinct self-interest in the success of the program meant that there was a high level of investment from each collaborating organization.

There was significant and labor-intensive preparation for each retreat that required a commitment to working through the curricula to integrate the skills of the different partners. During the retreats themselves, it also meant sharing the facilitation across their teams so that each trainer was improving on new practices. Finally, there was ongoing communication between the partners – debriefs, check-ins, and even evaluation – as they progressed from each retreat to the next.

Working together took trust and humility. Each was an expert and had to realize the expertise that others brought in order to come together and to work collaboratively. According to one of the facilitation team members during a debrief of Retreat #5: “The extension of trust made it easy to have such a permeable agenda.” The facilitators were able to be responsive to the group almost seamlessly. At one point we observed that it was not apparent which facilitator worked with which organization. This demonstrated not only the capacity the facilitation team members gained outside their areas of expertise, it also showed the level of cohesion amongst the team.

“There is a strong collective commitment among the facilitation team and that’s what we’re asking of the participants. We were willing to struggle and push more because we saw it working with the women. The facilitation team kept taking more risks because it was working.”

- SOL Facilitator, Retreat #5

The interconnectedness and interdependence, modeled in the three organizations made SOL work – and stood as an example to be emulated. And the groups continued to do work together. In fact, some former SJL staff are completing gs’ full teacher training in somatics, and some NDWA staff and members are taking the gs somatics and trauma training. The team intended to develop a deeper cultural translation of somatics into Spanish given the two years of simultaneous interpretation in SOL. They also planned to work on curricula overviews and short video pieces of various practices that the local member organizations could use with membership to spread SOL further. NDWA SOL became an amazing place of innovation and integration of transformative movement work.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

The SOL designers had ambitious goals – and with too much information to cover for each retreat, organizers had to make intentional choices to narrow the scope while keeping the outcomes in sight. We lift this up because sometimes focusing on less accomplishes more – and flexibility and adaptability are crucial in innovation and experimentation.

One example was to de-prioritize an early notion of connecting emerging organizations to more established groups. The original idea was to have a more formal mentoring piece between the organizers and

leaders. While this happened informally, it was not made central to the program design. There were times when the more experienced leaders had their own breakouts, but there were not separate training tracks or goals. Overall there was less differentiation between the two groups than expected.

Other adjustments were around the organizing outcomes. The program supported the participants to develop organizing and campaign plans and they reported that this benefited their organizations. Based on the reports provided during the two years, there was a range of experience in terms of the resulting membership numbers. Some of the groups started with a small base and most had small or mostly volunteer staff. As a result, it was not realistic to expect the organizing goals they talked about at the start. The rate of growth was great for some of the smaller groups like Atlanta that started with one domestic organizer:

My interest in joining this movement was sparked, but I never imagined that less than two years later, I would be leading a delegation of ten members from Atlanta to Washington D.C. to participate in the NDWA 5th Anniversary Congress.

There were several issues at hand with the organizing goals. First, from a data collection standpoint, at the time it was hard to get a handle on the number of organized workers as there was not a standardized method across the Alliance for counting membership. In addition, our sense was that it will take some time for the organizing to radiate from one or two participants to infuse their entire organization.

There were some immediate results reported about changes in organizations relating to improved interpersonal relationships, greater ability to engage workers, and more confidence to advance the work. We saw this first cohort as a baseline to start, the foundation for future growth.

In between the retreats, participants were asked to work on plans, join in on somatics coaching calls, and participate in peer groups. As it turned out, this happened to varying degrees. Overall, attendance was a challenge, primarily due to busy work schedules.

For those who participated, they found their peers as a helpful sounding board for the day-to-day challenges of organizing, and those who were on the somatics calls also appreciated the extra assistance. In particular, the supervisors' group talked regularly and benefited from learning from each other but also from sustaining their relationships.

Adjustments focused on meeting the needs of the participants through less structured support. Future programs should factor in more time from NDWA as the hub for the organizations, since it serves as an important connective resource between retreats.

Organizational Self-Interests in Co-Leading SOL

NDWA

To build domestic worker leadership, organizing, and movement capacity.

gs

To explore and deepen the integration of somatics, leadership development, organizing, and movement building and to do so through bringing somatics to low-income women of color and non-English speaking participants.

SJL

To learn how a transformative organizing training with a national cohort connected through a common alliance and purpose differs from a local cohort of social change leaders connected through geography.

A FOCUS ON: JERRETTA JOHNSON

Jerretta Johnson, a domestic worker organizer, came to the Alliance hoping to form a mostly African American affiliate in Atlanta, Georgia. The group was new at the start of the SOL program and depended largely on NDWA and 9to5 National Association of Working Women to support her, and eventually her supervisor, as the only domestic worker organizer in the region. Jerretta was first inspired when she attended the 2010 US Social Forum in Detroit, where she was introduced to NDWA: "I was blown away by the stories, leadership and organizing of so many domestic workers from around the country. As a former homecare worker myself who had experienced the isolation and difficulty of the work, I immediately felt drawn to the other women in the room."

The Atlanta group began by participating in the National Survey Project where they interviewed 150 workers. She explains how the research survey opened up conversations and showed the strong need for organizing. Atlanta proved to be a difficult place to reach workers and it took some time. In her words: "In the beginning it was slow. But, I kept at it, holding meetings even when only a few would attend. Now, after seeing some of the same workers many times, they have realized we aren't going anywhere. They are beginning now to trust that we are passionate about educating, empowering, and organizing."

She found that the SOL gave her the space to learn strategies and have a cohort she could turn to on the monthly calls. At the second retreat she expressed how SOL helped her by having these connections and tools to persevere. The somatic practices helped her to stay centered and as a result she was "more in tune with her focus and purpose." And she was able to translate her learning into practice. Bringing this information and experience back home boosted her ability to grow the new affiliate.

At the third retreat she said: "I was hearing other people in other organizations, how they do things, and what they achieved, and I bring that back. That's good...I can bring it back to the members that we have, and tell them about their success, you know? And what is possible in Atlanta... Just to know that, that you can be part of something that the people will engage in and let them know that we are building a legacy here, we can spark the interest."

Within the Alliance she grew into her leadership by establishing the Atlanta chapter and being a voice for the national movement. She spoke at the 5th Anniversary celebration in Washington DC, a formal event that honored the movement, and was elected by the SOL cohort to speak at the closing ceremony of SOL. What began as an idea in Atlanta for a domestic workers affiliate has developed into one of the bright spots of the movement. It has not been an easy road, but Jerretta thanks the SOL program for providing both practical tools and inspiration to move forward.

(Source: Watch Out Atlanta - Here We Come! November 2012 Newsletter, Interviews at Retreat #2 and Retreat #3.)

IMPLICATIONS FOR MOVEMENT BUILDING TODAY

What does the SOL model teach us about social movement building and social change? First, that there is a systematic way to facilitate a group of people through a transformative experience that will bind them together, while also developing the deep personal skills needed to build their organizations and movements.

Both the political moment and the movement moment call for a new type of leadership. At a time of divisions – increasing inequality, a seeming generation gap between elderly baby boomers and a growing young population of color, and a government that is fragmented and polarized – we need leaders who can transcend the separation to find greater cohesion. We need leadership that is personally resilient, focused on the long term, understands interdependence, and has the capacity to hold these complexities. And SOL has demonstrated that, with a strong commitment, a new kind of leader is possible.

Transformation has become a lens or framework for many leadership, organizing, and movement-building efforts. There is a growing recognition that burnout, self-sacrifice, and reactive organizing is not good for sustaining a movement – nor is it effective in bringing about social change. Leaders recognize the need to work differently, to work toward a positive vision, and to sustain the work over the long haul. Using transformative practices that integrate the political with the personal and with organizational and systems change is at the forefront of movement building.

STRENGTHENING THE DOMESTIC WORKER MOVEMENT

Fund Transformative Organizing

We cannot emphasize enough that in order to sustain domestic worker organizations and programs, funding is needed for organizing, in general, and for transformative organizing, in particular. NDWA had received funding that allowed them to re-grant to its affiliate organizations. The re-granting process not only provided resources to cover the time required to fully participate in a program of this nature and duration, it also created strong feedback loops and support to the affiliate organizations – and should be continued.

"I have noticed the changes in the communication, relationship dynamics among the members of my organization since we began engaging in the somatic practices and an intentional leadership development plan. The members are more enthusiastic and participating in activities and ready to learn more and work for the Caring Across Generations campaign."
- Online survey response,
Pre-Retreat #3

The SOL initiative had centralized funding through NDWA by which it gained a better assessment of its members (in the applications), heard about untold successes (in the mid-term re-granting process), and assessed final outcomes (in the final reports). Having these re-grants increased capacity, and it also builds-in more accountability, communication, and structure for connecting within the Alliance.

Following SOL, NDWA applied for and was awarded funds to continue their training through the “Get BIG” (BIG or Base-building Innovation Group) program. This two-year funding stream is intended to further increase the capacity of affiliated organizations and continue the work to have impact up to the state and national levels. Medium-term blocks of leadership development funding like this create opportunities for more substantial work.

NDWA is made up of primarily immigrant women – and would be further strengthened by building the capacity among under-represented groups, including U.S.-born and African-American women, whose history and experience is different. In our report *All Together Now? African Americans, Immigrants, and the Future of California* (Pastor, De Lara, and Scoggins 2011), we have discussed the need to build up the most marginalized constituencies so that their participation does not suffer from tokenization – real or perceived. Understanding and honoring ethnic and racial differences among domestic workers without individualizing the analysis is much more difficult to do when there is limited participation by some groups.

Programs such as the Black Workers’ Center and BOLD, spaces explicitly devoted to African-American organizers and activists, are critical for the overall social justice movement. NDWA and the domestic worker movement are not different in this respect. Throughout the program, the facilitators paid attention to the African-American perspective whose experience is closely related to the immigrant workers in many ways but is also particular. In recognition, NDWA started its first chapter in Atlanta to invest in organizing an African-American base of domestic workers and is launching a national project to build a Black base. Framing NDWA as a working class, women of color-led, movement keeps it inclusive to all the affiliates and their members.

Build Common Language and Definitions among Affiliates

As researchers, we try to rigorously define concepts and data to build the strongest of cases. In practice, we understand that there is often a process to land on and agree upon shared definitions. We have heard from the field that when working in coalition, identifying and using a “common language” actually helps build greater cohesion and reduce confusion. Included in this language are shared metrics that can be co-created to demonstrate what matters to the movements (Pastor, Ito, and Rosner 2011).

*“We’re here for
collective capacity
– not just leadership
development.”
– SOL Facilitator, Retreat #5*

Therefore, while leaders and members may have different approaches about how they account for their strategies and outcomes, it will be important to be able to aggregate up to a set of shared terms and metrics. Common language can create more accountability and help to understand the scale and impacts of movements and their power.

In today's networked world, so much organizing occurs across organizations, making it difficult sometimes to see what their joint efforts add up to. Movements are getting more sophisticated in the ways they connect – their common language and outcomes need to align with that transformation.

BUILDING THE FIELD OF TRANSFORMATIVE MOVEMENT BUILDING

Refresh Theories of Change

Theories of change (TOC) are frameworks that make sense of and show the desired results of the work (of an organization, network, movement) if they are successful. SOL was a place for testing and sharpening NDWA's theory of change – and actually shifting it into a theory of transformation that made the connection between personal change and sustainability and building strong organizations, alliances, and movements.

While the SOL experience was important in many ways, it taught us an essential lesson: the importance of having space to try, test, and transform organizational TOCs. When grants are due, TOCs are often required upfront. But more aptly, TOCs change and evolve with time and with use; this is the heart of praxis – of taking something out of theory and seeing how it works on the ground. Funders need to allow for space to refresh, and not just when the next grant is due.

Furthermore, SOL was a place to build shared practices that reflect these TOCs. The learning and alignment of vision and values, the alignment of skills and relationships to a TOC, the transformation that brings a TOC alive – this is accomplished through embodiment of a TOC. A group with shared distinctions, purpose, and embodied practices can move a TOC powerfully forward.

Strengthen the Scaffolding

An area that will require some thought and resources is how to train leaders in programs like SOL to take the content back to their local organizations. The SOL facilitators entered this work with considerable expertise – their combined experience adding up to many decades in their fields. On the flip side, some of the women participating in SOL were just recently brought into organizing and no participant



we encountered had prior experience with somatics before participating in SOL. And yet even during the program, the participants were applying and sharing what they had learned with their colleagues and members. How can that skill gap be bridged beyond the SOL training period?

The demand for training-the-trainers was there and most immediately for how to most effectively take somatics back to participating groups. Women were moved by the “centering” and other more basic somatic practices and brought them back to their organizations, with or without the blessing of the SOL facilitators. Somatics became a hook for the organizer in Atlanta who acknowledged that women in general, and these domestic workers in particular, rarely get a concentrated, quiet moment. Time for themselves is so rare that starting a meeting of domestic workers with somatics gave them a space to refresh.

There are many other areas of training that would benefit the affiliates, like political education and healing from trauma, to name just a few. Translating this sensitive and extensive body of work for broader use in the field would require reworking the materials to meet the trainers’ skill level and varying needs of the trainees. Needless to say, not everyone is ready to lead others through their healing; therefore, understanding those boundaries will be essential and might be saved for a professional trainer.



Train-the-trainer translation involves both literally finding the most accurate and accessible language and operationally creating tools and guides for sharing the material in an organic way. Figuring out how to train the trainers would be a way to fill another gap identified by NDWA affiliates: advanced leadership development.

It is not only members and staff that need to be trained or more informed – there are also allies who are less familiar with the model who could be educated about SOL’s transformative approach. Evaluators, funders, researchers, and others may be supportive, but may not fully get the theory of change and how it manifests.

For example, our evaluation team was effectively embedded into the retreats so that we, too, could learn from the inside out what a training of this kind creates. Sharing these practices is an exciting prospect; it will also require time and energy to create the space and materials to share it carefully.

FUNDING THE FIELD OF TRANSFORMATIVE MOVEMENT BUILDING

Transform Philanthropy

Funders are one of the allies who are also seeking to be more informed about emerging practices in the field. Equally important to getting a sense of the nuts and bolts of the model is understanding that it requires taking risks, learning from missteps, co-creating metrics and taking a longer-term view for systemic change.

Appealing to and educating other funders is necessary to mobilize the resources needed to sustain this work. Already a small group of funders has been near to the SOL experience, drawn by a shared interest in transformative approaches to change. As with other innovative models, funders who “get it” may be the best messengers for getting other funders on board.

The central message here is that domestic workers and organizers of domestic workers deserve the sort of self-care that funders often provide themselves while on a conference retreat in a spa-style location. They, too, need to be refreshed spiritually and emotionally to take on the difficult work ahead – and programming that bridges the personal and the political is worth supporting even if the goal is strictly limited to building the movement.

Fund Evaluation as Learning

Key to showing that programs like SOL are uniquely important to the field of movement building is tracking impact. As the field evolves, there is demand for new metrics – to which we point to in our report *Transactions, Transformations, Translations: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements* (Pastor, Ito, et al. 2011). In our report, we argue that transformative indicators matter as much as transactional indicators – that is, both how many people show up to SOL matters, but so does their increased capacity as leaders.

As transformational indicators need to be developed in context, transactional indicators still need to be studiously tracked. Accurately capturing the impact of SOL has a high pay-off; however, it also has its expenses: acquiring database software and tailoring it to the Alliance groups, training staff to use it, agreeing on metrics, and ensuring that it is used regularly. Setting up these systems in collaboration with funders and evaluators at the out start is vital to proving impact – as is the energy and resources needed for curriculum development.



Co-create Metrics of Accountability



Finally, we urge funders to engage in a dialogue about transformative metrics as they work with grantees in defining desired outcomes. Too often evaluations serve as reports to impress funders, rather than taking a learning approach for improving campaigns and strategies. In many ways, funders have driven evaluation to focus more on the quantitative measures, missing critical results and learning.

Ideally, all metrics would be co-created, bubbling up from the learnings in the field to be then organized into an evaluative framework. To do this will require a very different relationship between funders and their grantees – modeled more on the sort of horizontal relationships SOL tried to build among the organizers and less on the traditional vertical relationships that often characterize the world of philanthropy.

Fortunately, we see more and more of the goal-sharing, relationship-building, and collaborative approach emerging from foundation leaders and program officers. They recognize that the social movement builders forging a new path are not the instruments of an external plan, but social agents trying to construct a new and more just reality. They are showing that another world is possible – and many foundation officials are showing that another sort of philanthropy is possible as well.

CONCLUSION

Social movements are based on visions, frames, and values rather than just policy. The resulting emphasis on ideas and narrative helps to explain the predicament that a group is trying to correct, often in the sort of broad terms that create the space for allies to find their “best selves” by standing in solidarity. A reliance on frames – conversational constructs that help to set the terms of the debate – allows individuals of multiple ideologies to stay in the game. And a sense of urgency, that is, a notion that we need to correct these problems now, helps to create vibrancy for moving forward.

- Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz (2009)

The quote above emerged from the first report in our arc of research on social movements – and we still stand by it. Movements are, indeed, more about vision and values than interests and policies, more about narrative and frames than messages and advertisements, more about connections and alliances than about issues and individuals.

But our assessment of SOL has reminded us of an important addendum to that analysis: Movements are also fundamentally about people. On the one hand, they are almost always about breaking down barriers so that individuals can realize their full potential free of discrimination or economic want. But on the other, they are driven by people. And if we organize in a way in which the work crushes rather than replenishes the spirit, we are deviating from our goals and limiting our effectiveness.

SOL, in short, was about the soul of the movement and not just the strategy of the movement. In an era of growing inequality, everyday workers feel not just financially strapped but often without hope. In a time of anxiety about immigrants, record deportations not only damage our economy, they signal that some families are expected to live under the constant threat of separation. In a season of political polarization and stalemate, policy making breaks down but so does our polity and sense of oneness.

Social movements are the connective tissue that brings the scale necessary for making real and long-lasting change – and they are the way that we become connected as well. Consider the movements led by Gandhi, Mandela, King, and Chavez: They enacted sweeping reforms, but they also made sure that the “other” – the Indian suffering from colonial rule, the Black South African chafing under apartheid, the African-American oppressed by Jim Crow, the farmworker paid miserly wages – was seen as full human being entitled to rights and responsibilities. And for each of these examples,



power was shifted to those less advantaged – and their nations were transformed as well.

This is the approach being taken by those organizing domestic workers. They realize that policy advocacy alone is not sufficient, nor are politicians with smart ideas. They need to lift up the voice of those at the bottom of the social hierarchy and make the crucial connections to the broader society. The Caring Across Generations campaign, for example, highlights the difficult conditions affecting care workers. But it also highlights the cost we all pay for not addressing the basic needs of everyday workers, the elderly and disabled, and offers an alternative vision where people can work *and* age with dignity.

This sort of approach requires a different sort of training. NDWA and its SOL partners have a vision for what our society could look like, as well as a real concern for those organizing for change. This is not just reactive politics, it is building a new nation and that means starting at home, in the very bodies and souls of the individuals pressing for change. Indeed, it is the soulfulness of SOL that sets it apart and sustains the women and the work of NDWA.

SOL was a potent space for learning and modeling a culture of interdependence within the Alliance and the domestic worker movement. The program created a unique opportunity to connect workers and organizers spread across the U.S. And the impact was palpable. At the last retreat, women danced confidently down the aisle – surrounded by the caring support of their compañeras – to receive their certificate of completion. This celebration embodied the competence and solidarity they grew into over the previous two years.



Of course, it is not just how people feel or felt. We have emphasized throughout this report that values, practices, and culture are made up of both “hard” and “soft” skills, and that in a transformative approach, the distinction between the two merge. Skilled organizing requires a “centered” individual who understands her own trauma and healing and a hard-headed analysis of the current and historical context, experience with leading from a grounded place, and the ability to engage in nuanced assessments and negotiations.

As programs like SOL build a cadre of grassroots leaders who can lead with skill and love, we can imagine a nation driven from the grassroots, living up to its potential to be a nation with real freedoms, real opportunities, and real connections. As NDWA puts it, to be a nation where all workers are treated with dignity and respect – and where these values become part of the public consciousness and are embodied in how we live and work together. We are far from there, but with programs like SOL, we are headed in the right direction.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Adhikaar
Woodside, NY

Atlanta NDWA Chapter
Atlanta, GA

Brazilian Immigrant Center
Bridgeport, CT; Allston, MA

Brazilian Women's Group / Vida Verde Co-Op
Allston, MA

CASA de Maryland
Silver Spring, MD

CASA Latina
Seattle, WA

Centro Humanitario
Denver, CO

Cidadão Global
Long Island City, NY

Coalition for Humane Immigrant
Rights of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA

Damayan Migrant Workers Association
New York, NY

Domestic Workers United
New York, NY

Filipino Advocates for Justice
Oakland, CA

Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
Miami, FL

Fe y Justicia Worker Center
Houston, TX

Graton Day Labor Center
Graton, CA

IDEPSCA
Los Angeles, CA

Colectiva de Mujeres Tejiendo Sueños y Luchando
Chicago, IL

Latino Union of Chicago
Chicago, IL

MataHari: Eye of the Day
Boston, MA

Mujeres Unidas y Activas
San Francisco, CA; Oakland, CA

People Organized to Win Employment Rights
San Francisco, CA

Pilipino Workers Center
Los Angeles, CA

San Diego Day Laborers Association
Vista, CA

Southwest Workers' Union
San Antonio, TX

UNITY Housecleaners Cooperative
Hempstead, NY

Washtenaw Worker's Center
Ann Arbor, MI

Women's Collective of San Francisco
San Francisco, CA

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Centering: A practice that focuses on being present, open and connected to self and others. It cultivates the ability to remain grounded in one's commitment and vision, and to connect with others while still having centered boundaries. Centering can be applied to everyday life and to other somatic practices including: the two-step, hand-on-chest, grab-center-face, and Jo Kata (a practice with a wooden staff from Aikido, a traditional Japanese martial art), to name a few.

Conditioned Tendency (CT): One's automatic habits and reactions including: automatic thoughts running through our minds, automatic emotions and moods, automatic belief systems or judgments on people or situations, and automatic behaviors and ways of relating. Three important aspects of CT to understand for movement building are: 1) They are embodied, an automatic reaction, and outside of our conscious control (we cannot understand or think our way out of them); 2) They are either useful or not useful anymore; and 3) They apply to both individuals and groups.

Embodiment: People (and groups) adapt to, and are shaped by, their personal and community experiences and conditions. These adaptations can become embodied, meaning that they become embedded in our tissues and in our deep neuronal and nervous system pathways and become part of our identity and behavior.

Personal or "individual" transformation: Changes that allow people to develop and move toward a vision over time, even amidst dynamic conditions and pressures. Transformation requires developing a critical and relevant personal and political analysis that allows for grounded strategy and taking individual and collective action.

Power: In the context of SOL power was defined as "the ability to mobilize people and resources and gain influence to claim victories." The focus on power allows for individual healing and transformation to fuel systemic change.

"Process" (or "Arc") of Transformation: Simply stated, a process of altering the old to become the new: from a current shape, to an intentional shape, with openings as opportunities for transformation along the path (see below for these definitions).

Current shape: Individual or collective ways of being and acting (consciously and unconsciously), their beliefs and world views, and the ways in which people, groups, and communities relate to one another.

Intentional shape: The new shape that one is striving to reach, including vision and commitments at multiple levels.

Opening: Moving from what-is-known, the current shape, to transforming into something substantially different, the intentional shape. Navigating the opening phase is essential for transformation because without it the intended changes would be built on top of old deeply-rooted shapes thus creating potential for some change but not full transformation.

Somatics: “A path, a methodology, a change theory, by which we can embody transformation, individually and collectively,” as defined by generative somatics. A somatics approach works holistically through the body, thinking, emotions, relations, and commitments.

Transformative organizing: Applies a systemic analysis that is grounded in the values of interdependence and interconnectedness. The elements of transformative organizing are: building a base of people and organizations to increase power, changing conditions, building interdependence, and developing leadership. It requires building relationships that are powerful and grounded in authentic connection and trust.

Transformative campaign: An organized plan to leverage collective power to win demands that transform current conditions towards a long-term vision.

Systemic transformation: Linking of broader societal and systemic transformation to individual and interpersonal transformation for changing the economic, political and social systems and norms that allow for justice, environmental sustainability, and interdependence.

Trauma: Trauma results from distressing emotional experiences that can stay with us through our embodied survival strategies or defenses to be “ready” the next time. Closely related to conditioned tendencies, automatic defenses against trauma – fight, flight, freeze, appease, or disassociate – can serve as a protective and survival mechanism, and they can also become disruptive and counterproductive. At the societal level, trauma can come from racism, sexism, colonialism, and the long histories of labor exploitation – and these, of course, often set the stage for individual trauma and can play out by splitting organizations and turning communities against each other.

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF METHODS

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Reviewed documents provided by NDWA, including:

- » Planning documents and funding proposals
- » SOL applications, Year 1 program report and renewal application, and final program report submitted to NDWA by participating organizations
- » Curriculum, facilitation outlines, and hand-outs
- » Notes from orientation calls, phone trainings, small group calls
- » Notes from facilitators' debrief and evaluation calls

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Conducted in-depth interviews, including:

- » In-person, one-on-one and small group interviews with all participating organizations (some multiple times) at Retreats #2, #3, and #4
- » Phone interviews with NDWA staff

WRITTEN SURVEYS

Collected written feedback, including:

- » End-of-the-day reflections, retreat evaluations, online survey

FOCUS GROUPS / GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Co-facilitated discussion and feedback, including:

- » Small group discussions among participants at Retreats #2, #4, #5
- » Debrief session with facilitators after Retreat #5

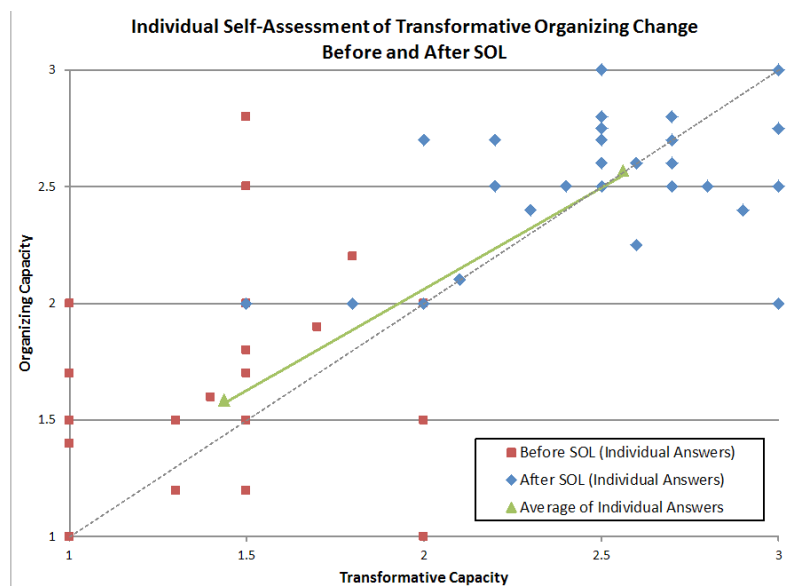
OBSERVATIONS

Observed Retreats #2 through #5.

APPENDIX D: QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENTS

During the retreats, we collected data to measure the impact that SOL had on individuals' and organizations' abilities to build and move a base of domestic workers (organizing capacities) and their abilities to integrate transformative practices in their organizations (transformative capacities). To quantify changes in capacity and for analytical purposes, we developed a tool for measuring impact along two axes: growth in organizing capacities (y-axis) and growth in transformative capacities (x-axis).

We created a spectrum to assess where individuals and organizations were at different points of the program (see results in the graph below). For organizing capacities (y-axis), the ranking scale was defined as: 1, for early stages of organizing domestic workers; 2, for developing organizing capacity; and 3, for well-developed domestic worker organizing capacity. For transformative capacities (x-axis), the ranking scale was similar: 1, for being new to transformative practices and culture; 2, for some integration of transformative practices; and 3, for well-developed transformative capacity.



At the final retreat, the women ranked their own organizing and transformative capacities on a scale of 1 to 3. The graph shows the individual self-assessment data: the red dots are where the women reported where they were on the spectrum at the start of SOL, the blue dots where they ended. The green line is the average of all the women. Collectively, the women began with greater organizing than transformative capacity and reported slightly larger increases in transformative capacity than in organizing capacity.

In addition to the self-assessments, we reviewed and coded a total of 70 different documents – 41 “reports” and 29 different interviews – to gain quantitative indications of how the SOL participants developed transactional and transformational skills over the course of the program and how these skills became embedded into the organizations they represent. However, we were unable to collect the same data from each organization along the same time intervals, and there were variations in the understanding of the definitions of organizational size and capacity. The inconsistency of the data made it impossible to draw conclusive findings, but it does give a sense of where the organizations were at during the SOL experience. As a result, we consider this data to be more of a baseline assessment that could be used to measure progress in the future.



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