

# Navigating Change Toward an Equitable, Democratic Future

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*Over the last two years, 200 civic engagement and democracy organizations explored many pathways for nurturing new organizational structures and leadership transitions, bridging conflicts and differences, and aligning management and operations with values. Many of the alternatives were rooted in the traditions and innovations of BIPOC-led organizations and communities. There was no one “right” way; rather, each organization developed its own way forward based on the interplay of evolving external contexts with the specific identities and histories within the organization. Collectively, their changes represent a paradigm shift in the social justice sector toward equitable, democratic structures and cultures. The common theme across all of these changes was the importance of trust in the workplace. Trust enables people to be flexible, open, and vulnerable as they collectively experiment and iterate new ways of working together.*

*This article shares highlights, lessons learned, and lived experiences of the 600 people who participated in the Navigating Change initiative, which was a partnership of Aurora Commons, Change Elemental, and the Ford Foundation's Civic Engagement and Government U.S. program. We explore how BIPOC leaders are navigating identity and power to shift organizational culture, strategy, and leadership structures. We share new approaches to bridging differences and, particularly, how to balance tending to individual awareness and care, generative conflict across an organization, and systems change work in the community. Finally, we discuss how leaders are exploring liberating alternatives to ways of operating and managing that have not worked for years, if ever.*



## A Paradigm Shift for Social Justice

Many social justice organizations are embedded in oppressive systems at the same time they are holding the work of shifting communities towards equity, power building, and liberation. This can cause burnout and antipathy, particularly impacting the field's ability to recruit and mobilize staff and volunteers this election cycle. There are many conditions giving rise to this tension—nearly a decade of rollbacks to hard-won policies, continued scarcity of resources, the deep rage and grief that comes from the global rise in violence, genocide, and climate catastrophe, and the ongoing and enduring impacts of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and more. The work of trying to dismantle these systems while living in them particularly contributes to the burnout and isolation that leaders of color are experiencing.

**As ecofeminist, intersectional, and racial justice practitioners, we know many groups are innovating new approaches as well as cultivating ideas drawn from remembered technologies to navigate this moment with vision and purpose.** These groups, many of which are led by BIPOC, queer, and immigrant leaders, offer practical solutions that lay a foundation for the social justice sector to come together, build power, and win over the long term. Collectively, **these solutions constitute a paradigm shift in the social justice sector toward building liberatory, equitable, and democratic structures and cultures that align vision with practice.** The transformation comes from the growing recognition that our ways of working, and the nonprofit sector's requirements about how we organize ourselves, are, at worst, reflecting and perpetuating the systems we aim to dismantle, and, at best, not getting us where we need to go quickly enough.

Over the last two years, through the *Navigating Change* initiative (see box), we've had the opportunity to work with many groups who are bringing about the changes necessary to align visions of liberation with practice. These groups are catalyzing leadership transitions grounded in racial justice and shared power. They are evolving their operations and management to center on sustainability, equity, and dignity while navigating conflicts across identities and organizations. And they are reimagining their visions and designing the political ideologies, strategies, and conditions needed to achieve them. **What is emerging are equitable, democratic organizations and movement formations that are multi-gendered, multi-racial, intergenerational, and leaderful.**

The *Navigating Change* initiative was developed by Aurora Commons and Change Elemental in partnership with the Ford Foundation's Civic Engagement and Government U.S. program. The initiative convened nearly 200 civic engagement and democracy organizations in co-created learning spaces, including a series of webinars, discussion groups, cohort groups, and a robust resource library. The civic engagement and democracy leaders, organizers, and administrators who participated identified the learning areas they hoped to explore through a variety of conversations to inform program design. As a result, the initiative focused on amplifying the ways groups were already shifting how they lead, operate, and build power in alignment with their shared vision for liberated futures. Our design and facilitation approach to this work was grounded in deep racial equity with both an intersectional lens that included gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, and other identities as well as an ecofeminist lens that integrated human, other-than-human kin, and the planet.



As social justice organizations focus on the need to simultaneously pursue immediate wins that change the material conditions of people, other-than-human kin, and the planet, they are also working to seed the learning, experimentation, and relationships necessary to build power to shift interwoven global and movement crises for the long haul. **In this way, groups are deepening the trust, care, and capacity to transform themselves and the systems they operate in so that they can embody, now, the equitable, democratic future they are fighting for.**

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The *Navigating Change* initiative opened two years ago to create mutual learning spaces for civic engagement and democracy organizations, spaces these groups named as necessary for power building in the short and long term. The initiative was intentionally designed to spark peer interactions and learning that support organizational transformation and the ripples of change made possible through partnership. At a time much like today—with the pandemic, racial justice uprisings, rising authoritarianism, and field-wide ruptures—these groups wanted to build relationships, learn, and share what was working to evolve vision, values, and practice to advance an equitable democracy.

The initiative developed a strong virtual learning community within and across organizations, nourishing leaders as they implemented equitable, democratic change. This learning community was driven by staff at all levels from civic engagement groups, and focused on the common challenges and opportunities groups were facing: nurturing new organizational structures and leadership transitions, bridging conflicts and differences, and aligning management and operations with values. Bolstered by the connection and support from peers and consultants, who worked as sounding boards and co-conspirators in their evolving journeys, leaders explored and experimented with organizational changes to model the future we want to see in the world. **The community learned that, while there is not a singular pathway, solution, or promising practice, there are many alternatives and options for advancing equitable and democratic organizations and movements—some quite particular and others adaptable and adoptable throughout the field.**

Now, *Navigating Change* comes to a close by centering voices from this learning community. Below, we share learnings and observations shaped and named throughout *Navigating Change*. We also highlight the media projects of eleven Content Fellows,<sup>1</sup> who share their particular experiences and lessons learned with navigating changes they believe are necessary for equitable, democratic organizations who are embodying the future they'd like to see, including:

- nurturing organizational structures for co-governance and shared power and catalyzing leadership transitions to create the conditions that support executives of color to advance their visions and thrive
- bridging conflicts within and across organizations, including differences that surface across race, gender, class, and generation

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<sup>1</sup> In 2023, Aurora Commons and Change Elemental awarded Content Fellowships to eleven participants in the *Navigating Change* initiative. The purpose of the Fellowships was to highlight the voices of people who were navigating organizational change toward equity and democracy. Each Content Fellow created a media project to share their research and experience related to the themes of leadership, conflict, and operations and management. Many of the projects touched on multiple themes and encompassed a creative spectrum that included essays, webinars, tools, zines, and poetry.



- aligning operations and management with values to enact shared decision-making, compensate teams equitably, ensure workplace well-being, and strengthen cultures and connections rooted in trust and liberation

We are grateful to the nearly 200 organizations and 600 people who led, co-created, and participated in the learning spaces, and we are honored to share their collective stories of building the many bridges and flotillas that can navigate the rising seas of this syndemic moment and help bring what has been imagined into being.

## Nurturing New Organizational Structures and Leadership Transitions

**“Be mindful to not be led by your container. Instead, lead toward purpose.”**

- Norma Wong (cited by Ananda Valenzuela during “Shift: how to change organizational structures, culture, and decision-making” webinar, June 2022)

### Why this theme?

Many Navigating Change leaders described experiences such as those described in Building Movement Project’s report “[Trading Glass Ceilings for Glass Cliffs](#)”—executives of color were facing burnout and overwhelm as they faced competing expectations around sharing leadership and decision-making power, transforming their organizations, and addressing external crises. Given these stark realities, leaders in *Navigating Change* focused on shifting to leadership structures and practices, as well as organizational culture and practices, that better support leaders of color to transition, thrive, and advance their vision in new roles. Through shared learning spaces and relationship building, the initiative supported leaders to grapple with how to step into power, honor their own well-being and approaches to leadership, and authentically respond to staff and board expectations. In the best cases, leaders shared how they, with partnership and support, were able to align their organizations around a leadership structure and culture that could help build power for an equitable democratic future.

### What did we learn?

“Given the importance of organizational structures [to] communicate to the outside world and to members of the organization what you value,”<sup>2</sup> we (the facilitators) never assumed that an ideal leadership structure would emerge (nor was one deemed reasonable or possible). The idea that a “best” practice, structure, model, or the like, was promptly dispelled and wittingly replaced with the learning that alignment with, and desire to, practice democratic governance and shared power within our organizations, does not demand a particular structure. Power-over, scarcity, inequity, stagnancy, oppression, lack of transparency, and related organizational issues can persist in hierarchy AND within collaboratives, cooperatives, collectives, entirely flat structures, and unions. We learned that what we are actually “solving for” is an opportunity to rethink our relationships to power. **It requires breaking out of flat hierarchical binaries to prefigure decision-making tools, principles, and processes aligned with shared values and culture that facilitate power-sharing and flow across groups.**

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<sup>2</sup> From [Reflecting on Competing Ones](#), by Fabienne Doucet, Ph.D. (January 2024).



Similarly, while we shared and digested numerous relevant and helpful frameworks, tools, checklists, assessments, and draft plans designed to assist with preparation, planning, and governance before, during, and after leadership transitions, we ultimately learned there was no “right” way to transition leadership. Instead, what was needed for “successful” succession was also what was needed for sustainability, stability, and equity. **Tending to organizational culture and values proved to be the most important priority during leadership transitions.** People at different levels of positional power—complicated by intersectional identities such as race/ethnicity, gender, organizational tenure, and age—have different mental models of what a “good transition” or “well-led or -managed” organization should be. Organizations surfaced and addressed these differing perspectives or tensions among boards, staff, and executive leadership to ensure collective success. This process empowered organizations to collectively clarify their strengths, challenges, and strategic direction, as well as their channels for communication and decision-making, and in so doing, brought people into greater alignment.

Tending to culture, values, and differing perspectives was all the more essential when supporting BIPOC leaders’ ascension to executive leadership. These leaders shared their struggles with organizational norms and expectations for leadership that were racialized and gendered. **Organizational change became a negotiation among multiple identities and histories with different concepts of power and approaches to leadership.** Again, no one “way” emerged: the only “way” was through. Leaders drew upon creativity, innovation, deep listening, strategy, political maneuvering, persistence, and all the gifts of their ancestors to find pathways forward. In community, we shared stories, approaches, practices, and resources that supported BIPOC leaders to shift organizational strategy and culture, work with their boards and staff, fundraise, and live into their whole, authentic leaderful beings, stances, and values.

## What are insights from the Content Fellows?

Many *Navigating Change* Content Fellows contributed to this idea that leadership structure, culture, and transitions can be different for each equitable, democratic organization.<sup>3</sup> For example, in [Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast: A Recipe for Building Strong Organizational Culture, Seasoned to Taste](#), Alexis Anderson-Reed, Chief Executive Officer of State Voices, focuses on the elements of leadership and culture that need to be customized for each collective configuration. Her story is based on the transformation of State Voices over the last five years to a majority women-of-color-led network that centers BIPOC political power. Maria Ibarra-Frayre, Deputy Director, We the People Michigan, explores this theme in a poignant poem, [The Risk of Winning](#). Ibarra-Frayre writes about the experience of being an immigrant woman coming into leadership positions and reconciling sentiments about her power and identity. She shares:

*“Organizing is about solving problems  
By inventing solutions.  
Some conventional, some not.  
And being Deputy Director was no different.*

*Except I was different.”*

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<sup>3</sup> See “Offerings from the Navigating Change Content Fellows” at the end of this article for links to unique and insightful reflections from other Content Fellows on new organizational structures and leadership transitions.



# Bridging Conflicts and Differences

**“The work is to be in right relationship with one another. Transformation requires structure, skill, and relationship.”**

- Elliot Altomare and Tiommi Lockett, “Conflict Resolution for the Movement” session, July 2023

## Why this theme?

By 2022, there were several articles and public conversations about the level of conflict roiling the social justice field, coalitions, and organizations.<sup>4</sup> People were focused on trying to understand what was happening and what could be done about it. Within *Navigating Change*, there was recognition and experience with the ways that the concomitance of capitalism and white supremacy was, to put it nicely, forcing far less than constructive, trusting relationships. As a result, the *Navigating Change* community wanted space to talk about the ruptures and their fears and to strengthen their ability to bridge conflict. The cross-organizational nature of the initiative not only supported them to try out new approaches to bridging conflict but also deepened their relationships and ability to bring those approaches to organizational and cross-organizational work.

## What did we learn?

Seemingly, in the short span of the *Navigating Change* initiative, **many leaders moved from (a) struggling to understand why generational, identity-based, and other conflicts were wreaking havoc to (b) deepening awareness that many organizational challenges were rooted in concomitant oppressive systems to (c) developing systems, structures, processes, relationships, and practices for generative conflict.** They developed many solutions within very different contexts: staff, board, membership organizations, multi-entity organizations, networks, coalitions, etc. While here, too, there was no set of easy answers, leaders explored a myriad of structures to hold generative dialogue that can catalyze liberating alternative systems, practices, and processes.

Leaders learned about specific processes and containers that help groups as they **balance three competing priorities that show up during conflicts: (1) a focus on individual awareness and self-care, (2) a focus on generative conflict<sup>5</sup> at the organizational or network level, and (3) a focus on advancing systems change in the community.** The tension in balancing these three priorities relates to how groups hold the needs of the individual, the organization, and the communities they serve. It goes without saying that for many organizations there aren't enough hours in the day to give direct care to their various constituents. Rather than trying to do it all, organizations talked about how to be intentional about how much they tended to each priority,

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<sup>4</sup> See [Building Resilient Organizations: Toward Joy and Durable Power in a Time of Crisis](#) by Maurice Mitchell (November 29, 2022) and [Elephant in the Zoom: Meltdowns Have Brought Progressive Advocacy Groups to a Standstill at a Critical Moment in World History](#) by Ryan Grim (June 13, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> For more on generative conflict and how to nurture it in organizations, see [Calling In & Up](#) by Trish Adobea Tchume & Aida Cuadrado Bozzo with Viveka Chen, Zuri Tau & Holiday Simmons (October 2020).



and when. As one example, two *Navigating Change* partners shared how they used [In It Together](#),<sup>6</sup> a framework for conflict transformation, designed to address interpersonal harm, and how they turned their experience into a systemic approach for conflict resolution in their organization.

Leaders also discussed the skills and resources needed **to identify the conversations that people need to have and to show up for and stay in those conversations**. Staying in a relationship rather than walking away from difficult conversations allows for shared understandings, new ways of communicating, shifts in power and relational dynamics, and increased trust. For instance, one organization talked about working for reproductive and gender justice in the community by facilitating an intergenerational conversation about pronouns among community members and having the courage as younger people to call in elders to rethink assumptions about gender. This dialogue led to people being more intentional about pronouns, building trust and mutual respect across generations.

Most importantly, leaders in the initiative shared stories about **healing-centered approaches to building and maintaining relationships in the context of generational differences, disability and gender justice, and labor-management negotiations**. As one example, a disability justice organization shared different perspectives on the challenges of confronting racism, misogyny, and ableism that were turning staff and volunteers against each other. As another example, many *Navigating Change* partners talked about how to undergo unionization and collective bargaining in ways that aligned with values and that addressed tensions between the sometimes necessary staff-management separation and staff desire for more shared discussion and decision-making.

## What are insights from the Content Fellows?

*Navigating Change* Content Fellows explored how to bridge conflicts among individuals, organizations, and communities on the ground. Akosua Meyers, Development Director, Center for Law and Social Policy, in [Trust as a Valued Commodity at Work and in Movements](#), calls on social and economic justice organizations to invest in trust as a value that is essential to bridging conflict. Meanwhile, Sara Suzuki and Stephanie Guirand, in [Making Sense of the Alternative Highway](#), identify the internal organizational and programmatic factors to overcome when things fall apart so that we can build effective and lasting public safety alternatives.

## Aligning Management & Operations with Values

**“What our organizations and social movements do is just as important as how we do it.”** - Loan Tran, “Bridging Generations” opening session, February 2022

### Why this theme?

*Navigating Change* began during a global pandemic when many had begun exploring remote work and virtual collaboration. Organizations were asking the questions “How do we exist in this

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<sup>6</sup> [In It Together: A Framework for Conflict Transformation in Movement-Building Groups](#), Dragonfly Partners with Mariame Kaba and Interrupting Criminalization.



new world?” and “How do we develop a collective space that meets the needs and well-being of individuals and complies with legal, budgetary, or other constraints?” *Navigating Change* partners were at the forefront of trying different ways of operating, learning quickly, and then adjusting based on people’s needs and emerging organizational priorities. In the context of the pandemic, these leaders found opportunities to explore liberating alternatives to ways of operating that hadn’t worked for years, if ever. The mutual learning spaces gave them new ideas and encouragement to experiment and iterate.

## What did we learn?

Whether amidst a creative space designed to boldly re-imagine organizational structures in service of equitable, democratic, and sustainable futures, or a tactical session exploring how organizations can align human resources, finance, administration, and compliance practices and systems with liberation, leaders sought to envision and even conjure structures that many have yet to experience. Grounded in values of love, regeneration, and interdependence, our performative imaginations held space with practical approaches to bring these visions to life.

**Each organization created its own constellation of practical, values-aligned, operational approaches based on their unique context and priorities.** Each constellation has components related to culture and team, being remote or in-person, and managing people. For example:

Constellation Components	Organization A	Organization B
<b>Culture and Team</b>	Self-care benefits 4-day work week Facilitative leadership	Team-building retreats Flexible work schedules Sociocracy
<b>Remote, In-person, or Hybrid Work Requirement</b>	Fully remote Secure technologies	Shift remote to hybrid Evolving COVID protocols
<b>Management and Operations</b>	Equitable compensation structure Peer coaching Integrated DEI and strategic plan	Increased salary caps

Organizations discerned how to **strengthen organizational culture and team connection** (which needed intentional focus given that staff had not met in person for a long time or, for many new staff, at all). In *Navigating Change*’s learning spaces, leaders discussed how they are changing internal processes, strengthening communications, and building teams. They rethought how power and decision-making are shared, including hierarchies that flow well with clear shared strategies, self-managed teams that are intentional about ways to get advice from people impacted by decisions, and sociocratic and collaborative ways to organize. Leaders also experimented with work-life balance solutions (e.g., shorter work weeks and collective care to avoid burnout).

Groups further shared strategies for operations and management in different scenarios: **hybrid, fully in-person, and fully remote**. At the time, it was a huge effort to continually redesign





management and operations as the balance of hybridity changed. *Navigating Change* partners shared protocols and policies for developing safe and accessible hybrid spaces. They swapped stories about developing collective agreements with staff and managing expectations as organizations adjusted their hybrid expectations. They also reflected on the importance of being more attentive to team building and working together across different learning and personality styles in a hybrid work environment.

Finally, the *Navigating Change* community explored **evolving approaches to managing people**, including how organizations recruit, onboard, and retain staff as well as addressing unionization and equitable compensation. Leaders shared many of their own practices and tools—approaches to operationalizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; staff development plans; feedback and reflection tools; organizational strategy and restructuring for growth; values-aligned operations; participatory finances/budgeting; compliance to mission; and so much more.

## What are insights from the Content Fellows?

The *Navigating Change* Content Fellows provided a tasty sampling of a much larger cornucopia of policies, practices, and processes that organizations are pursuing to transform management and operations. For instance, in [Reflecting on the Competing Ones](#), Fabienne Doucet, Ph.D., Executive Director, NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, shares the ways she and other new BIPOC executive directors are charting new pathways for shifting organizational culture, fundraising, and managing boards. Another Fellow, Kelly Siegel-Stechler, Senior Researcher, *CIRCLE @ Tufts University*, created an educational zine, [Bringing Our Authentic Selves to Work](#), that walks one through various queer family styles and alternative relationships, and how organizations can equitably support employees with queer families. It is a beautiful introduction to queer-platonic relationships, ethical non-monogamy, ace sexuality, and considerations for queer-friendly workplaces.

## Moving Forward with Interwoven Trust

Throughout the *Navigating Change* initiative, we have been continuously struck by the many reflections of intricate differences inherent to each person and organization. While people may have similar experiences with the ongoing global crises, popular culture, economic trends, etc., our external context shows up in our workplace culture and our bodies uniquely. Each organization is further distinct in its history, location, and current set of staff and constituents. The unique characteristics of each organization and the people inside of it mean that any tool, resource, or approach for becoming a more equitable and democratic organization needs to be customized, adapted, and refined to version 2.0, 3.0, and beyond. **Although organizations are complex and unique, in reflecting on what the *Navigating Change* community shared over the last two years, and particularly the media projects by the Content Fellows, one vital common thread has emerged: the importance of trust in the workplace.**

During the pandemic, it became clear that trust was imperative for survival. It was apparent in people's agreements with each other, explicit or otherwise. Many people formed bubbles with folks whose decision-making they could trust, who they felt would prioritize safety for themselves and their bubble as much as possible. Those who had to be outside bubbles, essential workers, and others, did not have the opportunity to create or conjure trust with those they were forced to



be with. At the time people had to prioritize care for themselves and their communities, and trust and the breach of trust became a matter of life and death. This focus on who you could trust trickled into peoples' work lives. Workers had to ask themselves again: "What does trust look like here? How do we define it? How do we practice trust and collective care?"

Trust is created by consistency, predictability, and the feeling that you can rely on something or someone. As one person explained, a small animal gains trust in a human friend through consistent care that demonstrates that they can rely on their friend to be concerned for their needs. It is care—not control—that builds trust. **When stripped of oppression and supremacy, this same intentional and reliable caring is the basis for trust among humans.**

**Trust works as an antidote to individualism, supporting people to recognize and show up for the larger "we."** In this way, trust dismantles the isolation that enables power-over dynamics, racialized patriarchal climate capitalism, and other forms of supremacy. When people grow trust, they naturally prioritize relationships, learning to be in reciprocal relationships with a myriad of spaces, peoples, and circumstances, which is necessary for working within and across organizations to build power. Trust nourishes the ability to give grace when things go wrong, as well as the courage to speak, knowing that you will be listened to. Trust also supports people to leverage tools for navigating conflict and disagreement when it inevitably pops up. This type of trust extends beyond the interpersonal; it is embedded in organizational structures, leadership, culture, and ways of managing and operating.

*Navigating Change* Fellows also returned to these questions about what trust looks like and how it informs their ability to advance the change they want to see. Akousa Meyers, Development Director, The Center for Law and Social Policy, in her essay [Trust as a Valued Commodity at Work and in Movements](#), explores trust as a core value in the workplace. She breaks down how one can build trust with people, even in the face of harm and reconciliation. Antonia Genao, Director of Operations, Make The Road New York, in [Connecting to Values and Mission](#), shares a process she led to help her team refocus on the personal values that brought them to the organization and explore how these connect to their day-to-day work and the organization's strategy. Aligning around these values as a team was a way to engender and embody trust to support truth-telling, conflict resolution, and relationship-building.

These writings are not an anomaly. We began the *Navigating Change* initiative amid a transformative moment in history and now there is a new and continually harmful era of American politics and social health. As a workforce, we are striving to advance and embody our liberatory visions today while simultaneously, social justice organizations are redefining how we work together. **How do people imagine and create a new future together while living it today? Trust is foundational to people openly, vulnerably, and flexibly exploring a plethora of options rather than fixating on one "right" way.**

We invite you to read all of the works of the *Navigating Change* Content Fellows for more insights on being and becoming equitable, democratic organizations. Try out some of these practices, share your own, and create new ones that will support you to lean into the reflection, imagination, and prefiguring needed to advance your vision for the future.

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## Offerings from the Navigating Change Content Fellows

The Content Fellows shared rich learnings that weave across the three learning areas discussed above. While individual pieces may include references to multiple learning areas, we have organized them by their leading theme.

### Nurturing New Organizational Structures and Leadership Transitions

**Jennifer Epps-Addison, former President and Co-Executive Director of the Center for Popular Democracy and CPD Action, currently at Synergy Power Consulting** - Over three podcast episodes, Jennifer leads rich and insightful conversations with other movement leaders about their experiences and wisdom on leadership in times of transition and crisis.

**Yahya Alazrak, Resource Generation** - "[Resource Generation: A Case Study in Collaborate Governance](#)," tells the story of their personal journey from organizer to ED alongside the story of an organization moving from a traditional structure to one of decentralized leadership and democracy.

**Alexis Anderson-Reed, State Voices** - In "[Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast: A Recipe for Building Strong Organizational Culture, Seasoned to Taste](#)," Alexis shares ten lessons from State Voices' journey over the last 5 years—from traditional toxic nonprofit politics to a majority-women-of-color-led network with over 1,200 partners centering BIPOC political power in theory and practice.

**Maria Ibarra-Frayre, We the People Michigan** - "[The Risk of Winning](#)" is a poem showcasing the determination and courage—as well as the frustrations and risk—of Maria Ibarra-Frayre growing into her power from organizer to Deputy Director.

**Ashley Marshall, Forward Justice** - "[Co-leading Is an Act of Rebellion](#)" (forthcoming) begins to unravel the complexity of integrating multifaceted identities into co-leadership models. Inspired by bell hook's critique of the imperialist white supremacist heteropatriarchy, Ashley's research explores the praxis of co-leadership, examining the relationships, values, and strategies co-leaders employ, and how the model itself subverts the dominant culture.

### Bridging Conflicts and Differences

**Akosua Meyers, Center for Law and Social Policy** - "[Trust as a Valued Commodity at Work and in Movements](#)" shares her experience and calls on others in social and economic justice organizations to invest in building trust as a core value.

**Sara Suzuki, CIRCLE @ Tufts University, & Stephanie Guirand, Ph.D. Candidate at Goldsmiths, University of London, in the Sociology Department** - This collaborative blog post "[Making Sense of the Alternative Highway](#)," focuses on why alternative public safety programs and



experiments fall apart— and how we can prevent them from doing so. They outline the elements necessary for abolitionist organizations to build effective and lasting public safety programs, highlighting the importance of alternatives documenting, sharing, and learning from the past and one another.

## Aligning Operations and Management with Values

**Fabienne Doucet, Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools** - “[Reflecting on the Completing Ones](#)” is a summary of Dr. Doucet’s learnings, collected wisdom, and resources for new EDs and fellow BIPOC leaders navigating transition.

**Kelly Siegel-Stechler, CIRCLE @ Tufts University** - “[Bringing Our Authentic Selves to Work](#)” is an illustrated call for expansive workplace policies that include and celebrate the diverse and vibrant forms that queer relationships can take.

**Antonia Genao, Make The Road New York** - In “[Connecting to Values and Mission](#),” Antonia Genao shares concrete tools—in the form of four meeting agendas—to help staff connect to organizational mission, values, and strategy. As a new leader of Operations at MRNY, Antonia created and used this tool to support her team to stay grounded in the work and each other during a time of significant organizational change.

