



THEORY of CHANGE

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The extractive economy stifles political imagination and represses visions for change, obstructing our efforts to build a just future.

FOCUS OF CHANGE

Power-building groups that prioritize frontline communities at the intersection of pollution, poverty, and racism.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

1. We apply a Narrative Power Analysis to all of our work. We identify and challenge the set of values, beliefs, and stories that uphold an unequal and unjust status quo. We identify and uplift the set of values, beliefs, and stories to build a just future. We start with strategy built upon a narrative power analysis, and engage tactics from there.
2. We cultivate aligned partners positioned in key battles that shift public discourse towards justice and expand what is deemed politically possible.
3. We train and convene spaces for a network of individuals and groups positioned in key battles to develop and practice story-based strategy.
4. We co-create and facilitate shared narratives, a set of unifying and diverse stories, memes, and visuals that are echoed across individuals, groups, alliances, and movements.
5. We design and spark bold strategy and actions that integrate the strengths of organizing, communications, and culture together.
6. We experiment in our own work, continually innovating projects to engage, challenge, and shift public discourse.
7. We wield imagination as a weapon and tool for justice -- using the regenerative power of creativity and play to develop sharper strategy and expand our collective capacity to take risks.

ANTICIPATED CHANGES

1. Narrative acts as a connective tissue for movement-building—more individuals and groups consider who else has a shared narrative with their work and increasingly see their work connected to others’.
2. Imagination, creative play, and story-based strategy are seen as a necessary parts of effective movement strategy.
3. There is a critical mass of story-based strategists embedded in movement groups who apply Narrative Power Analysis to co-create narratives and memes, and propagate a culture of risk-taking and bold interventions.
4. There is a deeper movement infrastructure of frontline-centered groups, expert messengers, and influencers echoing a set of unifying stories, memes, and visuals across multiple platforms.
5. More power-building groups who prioritize frontline communities are shifting the debate and winning campaigns and real change on the ground using bold story-based strategy interventions.
6. Our shared narratives and sets of unifying stories, memes, and visuals are helping shape and breaking into the political and cultural discourse, galvanizing broader bases of support.
7. The Just Transition framework is solidly rooted in justice and effectively disrupts control myths, exposing false promises and putting forward root cause remedies.

VALUES & GUIDING PRACTICES

TRANSFORMATION

We pursue and maintain equitable relationships beyond transaction. We build each other’s capacity to be our best selves, organizations, and movements.

REGENERATION

We design content and experiences that are re-energizing and promote sustainability, healing, and inspiration.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS

We coordinate with and build up a movement ecosystem of groups, not just our one organization. We take an ecological systems approach to all of our work.

INTEGRITY

We hold ourselves accountable to living our values through ongoing practices. We take responsibility and learn from both our successes and failures.

IMAGINATION

We prioritize space and time to flex our imaginations and envision the world we want.

COLLECTIVE-LIBERATION

We work to dismantle oppression and restructure power relationships at the internal, interpersonal, organizational, and systemic levels.

JUST TRANSITION STANCE

After centuries of extracting natural, labor, and cultural resources, the profit-driven extractive economy is severely undermining the life support systems of the planet. Transition is inevitable. Justice is not.

Our work is situated within the Just Transition framework. Just Transition is a framework for a fair and sustainable systems shift from an old extractive economy to a new regenerative economy that is fair and just.

We must build visionary economy for life in which:

- Everyone has meaningful work and the ability to take care of themselves and their community (beyond solely jobs and production),
- Everyone has access to clear air, clean water, and a stable climate,
- Vibrant and diverse cultures are self-determined, valued, and unexploited, and
- Deep democracy thrives in which workers and communities affected by decisions are making them. Nothing about us without us.



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ASSUMPTIONS

EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY

The current extractive economy exploits resources on a massive scale, creating devastating pollution, poverty, and racism. Economy at its root means “management of home.” Beyond finance, jobs, and production, economy is the combination of systems that determine the purpose and power relationships between people/society, natural resources, and human labor.

MOVEMENT BUILDING

Social movements, led by the frontline people who are most directly affected, are the engines of true social progress. Social movements have a huge storytelling component (uniting, inspiring, and empowering) and are in many ways a shared story.

POLITICAL IMAGINATION

Government, corporations, and ruling elite are using increasingly sophisticated forms of propaganda and manipulative narratives to influence public behavior, manufacture consent, and limit political imagination - our collective vision of what is possible. In order to win we must exercise political imagination and stretch the terms of what is deemed “politically realistic” in the present moment.

ROLE OF NARRATIVE

Humans process information and make meaning through narrative. In order to shift the dominant culture and change structural power relationships, we need to change the stories that normalize unjust power structures, make fundamental change imaginable, and build the capacity to narrate the changes underway. While narrative alone cannot win us real change, it is crucial to create the conditions to win.

CAPACITY-BUILDING: POWER FROM THE BOTTOM-UP

Bottom-up participatory framing is a source of transformational power. Developing capacity within and with movement groups versus solely acting as capacity for them will produce the infrastructure needed to truly harness the combined power of organizing, communications, and culture to develop and implement bold narrative strategies.