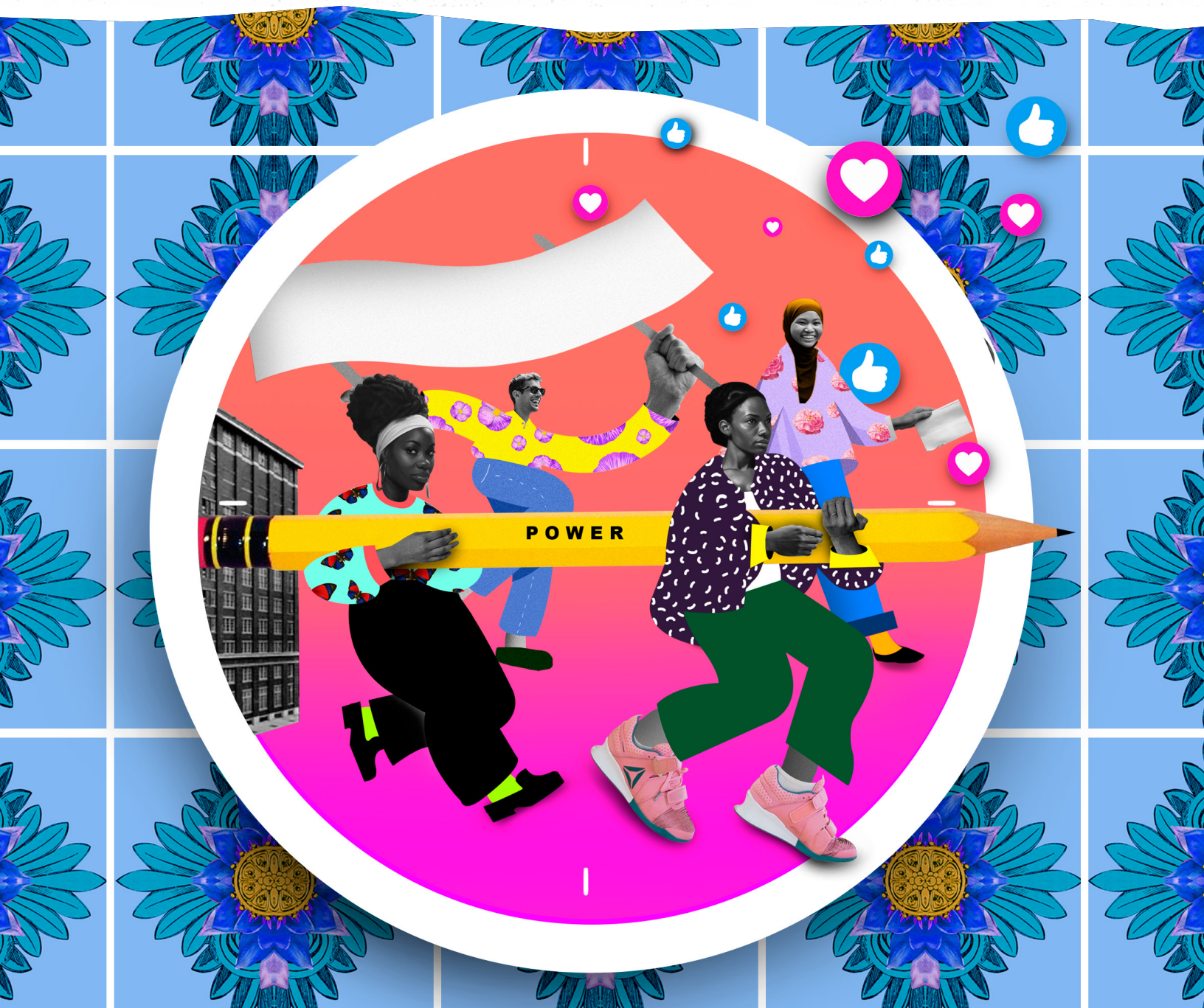# 2

NAMING THE MOMENT

> **Communities and organisations are waging a struggle between two opposing worldviews: one based on depredation and dispossession, the other based on respect for the web of life, mutual care, equality, and social justice.**
>
> *- Aura Lolita Chávez and Marusia López Cruz[1]*

The first step in understanding power dynamics is to name the moment.[2] Building on Chapter 1: Getting Started, we situate ourselves and our change work in history.

- What is happening now – looking at the big picture – and how did we get here?
- What is creating upheaval, violence, and inequity in our contexts?
- How do these forces fit within larger global trends?
- How did we get here?
- Where do we see the possibilities for organising, resistance, and transformation?
- What gives us hope and keeps us going?

This chapter guides an initial analysis of the contexts and larger trends – the major global-to-local patterns and reconfigurations shaping the current moment – and explores the historical roots and lessons of struggles.

Our histories of struggle are often glossed over or hidden by the official versions that we learn in school. The recovery of our own histories of resistance and transformation is crucial for power-building and connects us with the ideas and people who fought for justice before us.

Trends are global, but distinct histories and cultures shape the local contexts and specific problems exacerbated by those trends. Gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and location shape our different contexts and how we experience them. Our analysis integrates the personal, political, cultural, and organisational dimensions of power and change, and this helps us plan and organise strategically.

This chapter is divided into four themes. Each theme offers one or more activities.

Theme 1: Between Crisis and Mobilisation
How is the context changing? How are people responding to upheaval and a deepening sense of inequity, injustice, and inaction? We analyse how crises shape situations, for example through increased attacks on dissent and activists. We name the signs of resistance and transformation that challenge the status quo and generate a sense of hope and possibility. We notice how these patterns interconnect and impact people differently.

Theme 2: Global Patterns, Systemic Shifts
What are the global trends driving the challenges we face as well as the possibilities for change? We take a deeper look into the systemic shifts underway, naming and categorising the sweeping forces impacting our lives beyond our national context. We come to understand these forces as disputes about what and who matters, and about the present and the future.

Theme 3: Learning from History

How did we get here? What are the roots of current structural crises and people's mobilisations? Creating a timeline of key events over the last decades, we trace the historic roots of crises and upheaval and reconstruct stories of how our ancestors fought for justice. We explore the zigzag push and pull of different forces seeking to rebalance, resist, or gain power.

Theme 4: Cracks Where the Light Comes In

Even when we are overwhelmed by what we are up against, there are still possibilities – no matter how small – to connect and build solidarity for a different future. As people mobilise to end the injustice and reshape broken systems across the world, we reflect about where change is happening and what sustains our hope and energy.

We stand on the shoulders of our ancestors but rarely pause to learn from their efforts to confront and change power. Much of that history is not easily accessible and relies on our collective memories and stories.

Theme 1:
Between Crisis and Mobilisation

We share many problems across borders – including violence and corruption – but every context is unique. There is no 'one size fits all'. Examining the context is a critical first step to understanding and building power. Here, we share observations and feelings about what's happening in the current context. We draw from lived experience and knowledge as a starting point for a deeper analysis. When we reflect together, we are able to bring differences and disagreements to the surface and create a more nuanced sense of what is happening and how it affects people differently. As we discuss our change strategies, we identify common challenges and opportunities to make change happen.

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

- Desmond Tutu

ACTIVITY 1:

The current situation

This activity offers two different options for beginning to identify what's happening in our context and how we feel about it. These initial observations will provide the basis for scanning global trends, reflecting on history, and analysing power later in the Guide.

Step 1: What's changing?
Plenary: Give an overview of the themes in this chapter. Explain that this first activity is an opportunity for people to share experiences and impressions of what is changing around them. Choose either to engage in reflection or body mapping and then go on to Step 2.

Individually: Jot down a few phrases (or draw a picture) to capture your experiences and feelings.
- Name three ways your context is changing.
- How has this affected your life, your work, and your sense of the future?
- Name two signs of promising or positive change in your context.

In pairs: Go for a walk or sit together. Take turns sharing your thoughts for five minutes each, and then discuss:
- What changes – positive and negative – do you have in common? What are some differences?

- In what ways are your feelings and experiences – at work, at home, and your sense of the future similar or different?
- What are your key reflections about how the current moment impacts activism and social justice strategies?

Alternatively, involve the group in body mapping.

Materials: flipchart paper, sticky notes or cards of different colours, markers

Plenary: Ask: How does the current moment affect us? What is the impact on our hearts, minds, and bodies?

Form groups of three or four people. Give each group two sheets of flip chart paper taped together lengthwise (to be nearly the size of a person) and markers. If the group is of mixed genders or sexualities, consider dividing into similar groups.

Given the amount of violence people – and especially women – experience in their bodies, use the advice in Chapter 1: Getting Started for creating a safe and courageous space.

In small groups:
- Draw the outline of a human body.
- Where does the current context affect you and your work, negatively and positively? Take turns pointing to four or five places on the body map that illustrate the challenges and possibilities that you experience.
- Do at least two rounds, choosing and marking places on the body map with both negative and positive examples. What impact do you experience in your heart, mind, and/or body?
- On coloured sticky notes or squares of paper, write a key word for the kinds of challenges or possibilities you've seen and felt, a key word for the body part it impacted, and words that describe how you felt.

Step 2: A snapshot
Plenary: Invite each pair to share the highlights from their exchange and conversation or give each group three or four minutes to present the highlights of their body map.

Open a general conversation about what is shifting, and our experiences, feelings, and their impact. Ask:
- What are some of the changes you observed and experienced?
- How are these changes impacting your sense of the future and your wellbeing? Or if you followed option B, How are these changes affecting your hearts, minds, and bodies?
- What is the impact on our families, friends, movements, and communities?
- What is the impact on our work as organisers and change makers?
- What possibilities and opportunities do you see for activism and social change strategies?

Note key points on a flip chart. This process helps pinpoint key issues and emerging change efforts. Crises reveal the flaws and fissures in political and economic systems, but they also create new pathways and possibilities for systemic and structural change.

Step 3: How do these changes affect people differently?
Plenary: Refer to the key points on the flip chart from Step 2. Discuss how these shifts impact people differently, because gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, class, and location shape who is affected and how. Share this short video: Power and Protection: The Challenge of Defending Rights in Hostile Contexts (4 minutes)

Small groups: In groups of four to seven, discuss these questions. One person per group notes the main points in brief on cards. Give all groups the same colour card per question.
- What actors and forces – both positive and negative – are contributing to the changing context?
- How do these challenges and possibilities for change impact and involve different individuals, communities, groups, and organisations differently? Who is most adversely affected? Who is targeted?

Plenary: Use the 'popcorn' method, where groups build on each other's points. One group starts by sharing their top three insights. They place their cards on the wall, table, or floor. Then another group shares similar or different answers. Invite people to cluster the cards by colour and/or theme. Then summarise and discuss, cluster by cluster. Quote people in the room where possible and ask questions to emphasise key points.
- How are different activists and organisations – women, indigenous peoples, LGBTQI+, labour organisers – affected differently?
- What is the role of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and location in explaining the similarities and differences?
- Together, write short phrases or labels to define each of the clusters and how they are affected or involved. Organise the clusters in a way that represents the connections between issues, forces, and actors.

Body maps in action
Read about the early stages of organising with grassroots women leaders affected by HIV/AIDS in Malawi as they searched for a common mobilising agenda for women across many cities and villages. Body maps revealed something that had not emerged in any previous process or discussion. Once the women recognised that they shared the same shame and discovered the root causes, this issue became a potent energizing demand for quality medicines and healthcare and ultimately galvanised an 8,500-strong nationwide movement.

Mary Tembo, Feminist Movement Building, Salima, Malawi© 2022, JASS

Global Race to SAVE Lives March, Malawi © 2012

"

Our bodies, like our territories, are in dispute.

- María Guadalupe García, Mamá Maquín, Guatemala[3]

Theme 2:
Global Patterns, Systemic Shifts

The concrete changes we are experiencing are shaped by global patterns that have been underway for many decades. These patterns are 'trends', and understanding and anticipating future trends has become all the rage in the corporate world for obvious reasons. From the business sector to civil society, analysts try to map different scenarios into the future and navigate uncertainty. However, our political orientation in this Guide differs from some of the more expert-driven, technical methods of analysing trends. We rely instead on our own reading of history and theory, our analysis, observations, experience, stories, and reflections, as well as the facts and information we gather. To understand the present moment, we examine the past, tracking earlier crises, power dynamics, and related struggles for social justice. From there, we map where these trends may lead. Terms included below – What we're up against – help us name these trends and see how they are interconnected and historically rooted.

> **"**
>
> **The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born**
>
> *- Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks*

ACTIVITY 2:
Trends analysis

What does 'trend' mean to us? Which trends stand out?

Materials: Flip chart paper, markers, handout: *What we're up against*

Plenary: What do we mean by a 'trend'? Invite responses and discussion. Explain that trends are not only the events and changes we experience in our daily lives and work but also larger patterns – social, economic, political, technological, cultural – that reveal a correlation of forces at play. When the specific and the general are somehow connected, this is a trend.

Identifying global trends may seem abstract, but it helps connect our local and specific situation to a broader range of forces. To begin, ask what new realities or recent incidents may indicate larger shifts and trends. For example:
° The denial and violent rejection of election outcomes, such as the January 6th assault on the US Capitol in Washington, DC in 2020 or the violent protests following Bolsonaro's election loss in Brazil in 2022–23
° The growing dependence on digital technology for access to information, services, and connection – a lifeline for some but excluding others who lack access while increasing our vulnerability to disinformation and surveillance
° Increased attacks on environmental defenders and journalists as conflicts escalate over natural resources and territory

- Renewed political conversation and mobilisation about racial justice and the legacy of colonialism, as well as backlash against these discussions
- The rising political visibility of women and their rights, for example in Iran and around abortion rights in the US, as well as sustained political backlash and internal conflict, particularly related to the rights of trans women
- The growing numbers of people displaced by extreme weather and climate crisis
- The extreme consolidation of wealth at the expense of everyone else's stability and basic needs

In pairs: Scan the news on your cell phone, magazines, or newspapers to identify and share headlines from news sources or announcements by governments or influential institutions such as the World Bank.

Plenary: Share headlines and discuss:
- Do these headlines make sense in relation to your own lives?
- Are similar events, challenges, or changes happening in other countries too?
- What shifts – political, legal, social, cultural, demographic, climatic, technological – are changing day-to-day life and the near future?
- Consider political, economic, legal, social, cultural, demographic, climactic, and technological changes happening in your context: what's new and different?

The same trend can be both positive and negative. Digital technology, for example, connects us and enables us to expose abuses of power and share ideas globally. At the same time, it makes us vulnerable to surveillance, misinformation, and the mining of our private information.

Small groups: Using flip charts and markers, identify the five key trends affecting your context. Draw and label a graphic to show:
- the five trends your group identified
- the relative influence and potency of each trend (indicated by size on your graphic) in your context
- the connections and overlaps between these trends
- two elements that characterize each trend in your context and globally
- Draw or show three examples to explain the activity.

Plenary: Post the groups' graphics on the wall. For a few minutes, everyone views them. Then each group has a turn to explain two of the trends they identified.

Synthesis: If possible, enlist a resource person to share their insights. Alternatively, share background articles or videos related to the context or geographic region.
- Some critical trends
- Authoritarianism, dictatorships, coups, and political extremism
- Xenophobia, racism, othering
- Religious nationalism and fundamentalism
- Ethno-nationalism
- Militarism
- Extractivism and resource grabs
- Climate change and extreme weather
- Backlash and misogyny, anti-feminism, anti-gender
- Corporate capture of the state
- Neoliberalism
- NGO-ization

- Racism and colonialism within organisations
- Rising economic inequity, insecurity, consolidation of wealth
- Repressions and attacks on activists, defenders, civil society, and democracy

Plenary: For each of the main trends that groups identified, invite concrete examples and experiences. Together, clarify the definition, dynamics, and impact of that trend.

- How do we understand or experience the trend in our context?
- How are the trends connected to one another? What historic roots do they share?
- Where can we see examples of communities and movements resisting these trends or offering alternatives and change?

Discuss how people are pushing back against and organising to change the consolidation of power and wealth. For example, as corporations and billionaires concentrate more wealth and wield more political influence, workers are organising, striking, and, in some countries, gaining power in their industries and, importantly, the political process. The push and pull between different interests in highly unequal systems and societies drives the work of movements and other change makers.

Ask: what do these trends mean for the ways we organise ourselves to mobilise and change power?

Crackdown and closing space

Converging forces shaping the context
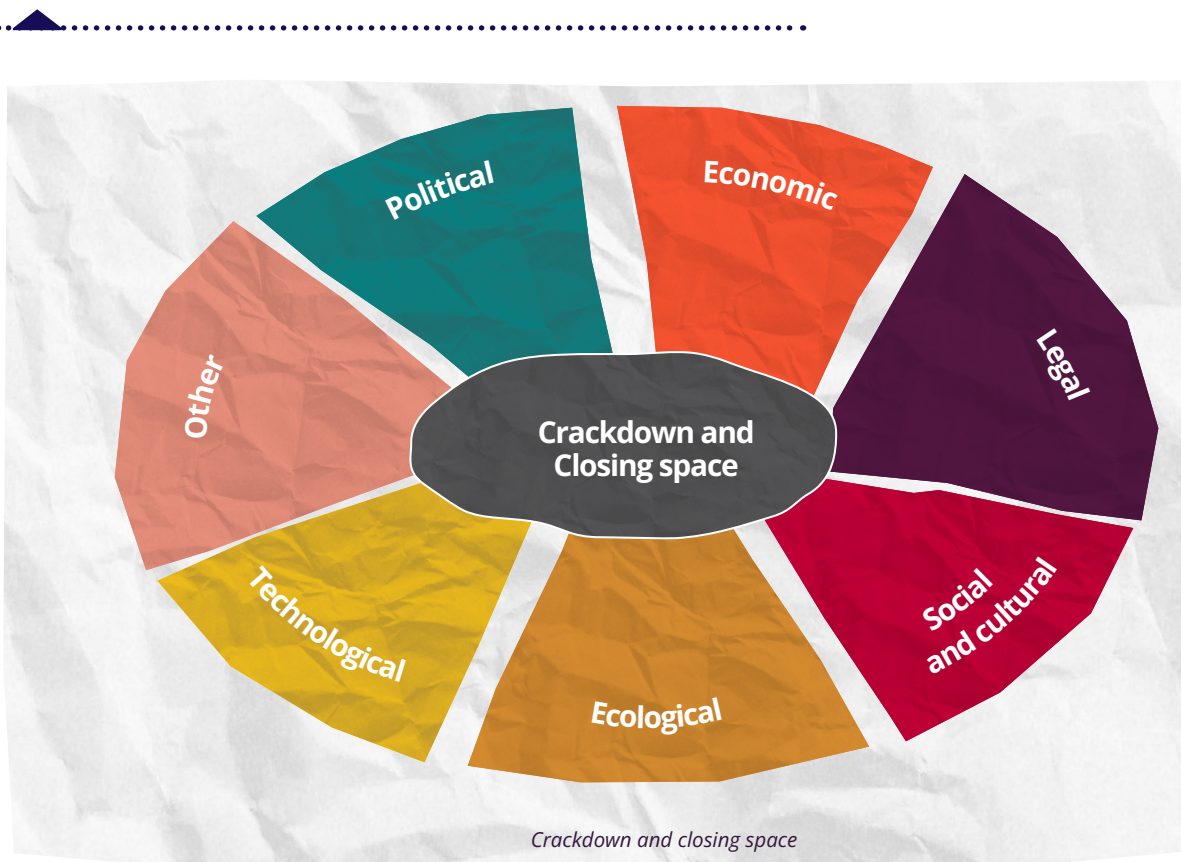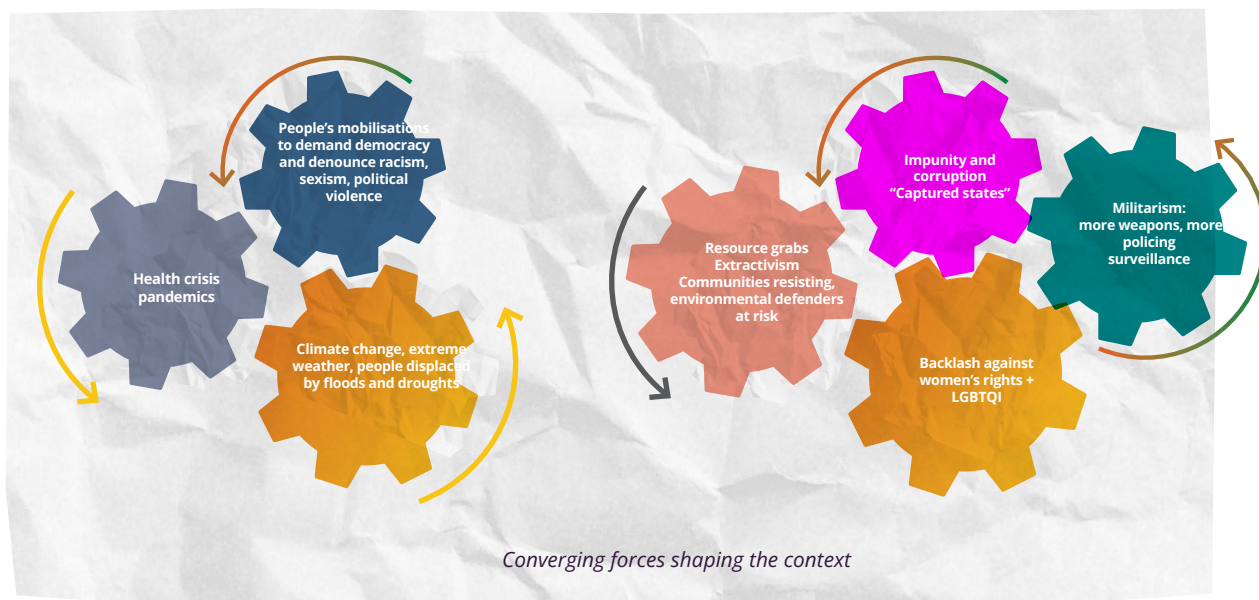
What we're up against

Activists, journalists, and change makers around the world name and describe these as some of the greatest threats to a just and sustainable future. These definitions combine elements from different contexts and readings.

Authoritarianism: Leaders who come to power through elections – including Orban in Hungary, Trump in the US, Duterte in the Philippines – restructure institutions to concentrate power and decision-making within a small elite and pass draconian laws. Often centring a 'strong man' ruler, authoritarian governments seek to:
° neutralise the legislatures and media
° rely on the police, military, and surveillance to control information and dissent
° use fear and social division to polarise populations and undermine institutions in order to legitimise taking control
° promise to restore an idealised past and traditions
° use racist, xenophobic, anti-feminist, and homophobic narratives
° put women 'back in their place'
° demonise immigrants
° align with religious fundamentalist theocrats and cultural conservatives to promote the 'traditional family'
° limit access to abortion and birth control
° attack LGBTQ+ people as 'abnormal'

Extractivism: "Extractivism is a nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth, one purely of taking. It is the opposite of stewardship, which involves taking but also taking care that regeneration and future life continue."[4] —Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything (2014)

Extractivism usually:
° relies on collusion or complicity – often corrupt – between government, international financial institutions, corporations, and elites
° mobilises security, police, and armies to quell resistance, silence opposition, and detain defenders and rights organisers

° extracts natural resources and lowers wages and standards to produce goods and products at a maximum profit
° devalues women's labour and caregiving as essential ingredients of unequal and exploitative economies

Neoliberalism: A set of policy prescriptions, promoted by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and the G8 countries since the 1980s, established the dominant free-market ideology of the late 20th century. These policies include:
° deregulation
° liberalisation of trade
° privatisation of public services
° elimination of subsidies to support local industry and agriculture
° weakening environmental, labour, and other standards

Neoliberalism asserts that private companies and finance with minimal or no government intervention will facilitate economic globalisation and growth. But, in practice, it has led to:
° unchecked corporate power in increased collusion with governments and influence over policy
° obscenely low wages and poor labour standards
° the privatisation and dismantling of social safety nets
° hyper-exploitation of natural resources
° extreme economic inequity

Militarism: Governments increasingly rely on the police, security forces, and the use or threat of violence to resolve social conflict, address crime, and exert public control. They espouse a narrow notion of 'security' that centres control of people:
° the surveillance, policing, and silencing of dissent
  attacks on communities, journalists, human rights defenders, and their organisations
  control over populations through fear and intimidation.

As a growing sector of the global economy, and central to US foreign policy, the production and sale of weapons and security technology both for domestic and international conflicts are driving militarism. Investment in the weapons industry and military institutions involves:
° a shift in resources from public services (such as mental health, pandemic preparedness, climate crisis mitigation) to expanding the military and security sector, in collusion with sometimes corrupt and autocratic politicians
° unregulated global business subsidised by public funding, with exorbitant profits, vested interests, and minimal regulation
° a reduction in public safety and an increase in political repression

Surveillance: Governments, large corporations, and organised crime monitor people's activities and communication and use this information to manipulate, control, restrict, or profit from behaviour. Expanded powers of surveillance – using information and communication technology 'justified' by the threat of terrorism – have spawned 'surveillance capitalism' by large technology corporations with unparalleled access to data and capacities for tracking people.

Inequity and inequality: Economic and social disparities are created and reinforced by unfair advantages that some have over others. Inequality and inequity are structural, meaning that unfair access to resources and opportunities – such as health care, education, employment, and housing –

is built into the social, economic, legal, and political system. Globally, the gap between rich and poor has been growing for decades, further exacerbated by structural oppression based on location and identity (gender, race, ethnicity, class, caste, sexuality, age, ability).

Precarity: Tied mainly to the dismantling and rising costs of basic social services and support and the impact of extreme weather driven by climate change, this refers to the lack of secure or predictable means of survival. Millions of people lack income, employment, land, crops, and housing, leaving them highly vulnerable to destitution. Many workers face precarity due to low wages, long hours, poor working conditions, and the absence of secure contracts or benefits such as health care and child care, or sick or maternity leave.

Crisis of democracy: The validity and strength of democracy as a form of government is being challenged across the world, including inside the US and Europe. Democracy is "a system of decision-making, and governance is exercised directly or indirectly by the people, through a system of legislative, judicial, and executive checks and balances on power."[5] Democratic governance relies on a degree of participation, and this is eroded when elections are manipulated through misinformation, electoral fraud, voter suppression, and violence. Meanwhile, large corporations and other 'non-state actors' co-opt elected leaders through campaign contributions, corruption, bribery, and slander. Behind the pretense of democracy, autocratic governments consolidate executive power, reduce oversight, and strengthen 'security'.

Political and religious extremism: Around the globe, powerful political and religious organisations use religious doctrine to control the public agenda, institutionalise religion in the structures of the state, and consolidate power. Fundamentalist and theocratic groups span many religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and localised religious traditions such as the ethno-religious Kenyan Mungiki movement and Nepali shamanism. Theocratic and religious political power has grown in recent years with coordinated attacks on 'gender ideology' (meaning LGBTQI and women's rights) claiming they are a greater threat to families and society "than communism and Nazism."[6]

Backlash: Refers to the attempts by powerful actors to reverse political, social, economic, and environmental justice gains by dismantling rights and policies that protect more people and the planet. For example, conservative, right-wing, and religious extremists (among others) claim to 'protect the family' by reversing new gender and sexual rights and controlling women's bodies and reproduction. The far-right and fundamentalists are well-organised in many governments and policy processes, including within the UN, and work in alignment with the Catholic Church, evangelical Christians, and the Islamic Brotherhood, for example.

See more definitions in JASS' *Movement-Builder's Dictionary*.

What are we up against?[5]

'Golpe' implies both a coup and hitting or beating. Honduras © 2018, Lisa VeneKlasen

The future is contested

The trends shaping crises and upheaval are, fundamentally, conflicts and contestations over what and who matters, power, resources, and our futures. In the face of multiple crises, people are organising to contest the very foundations of power, mobilising to challenge the political and economic systems that destroy lives and the planet. Even the roles of governments, citizens, and corporations are in question, with different interests and actors pushing to influence or control public agendas, perspectives, and decision-making. What is the nature of this contestation, and what does it mean for our power analysis and strategies?

The future is a territory we must defend."

- Andrea Ixchiu[7]

In 2005, the women's movement concluded that we have five disputed territories: body, land, nature, memory, and history. In a 2014 meeting with indigenous compañeras, we added another: worldview. Today, I say that there is another disputed territory: the state. If we do not struggle for it, they will continue to make decisions against the common good. I contend that the struggle, the confrontation of power—which means our powers against theirs, collective power against individual power, power that wants to build against power that wants to destroy—that is the dispute. So, I assert that there are seven territories in dispute: body, land, nature, memory, history, worldview, and the state. We have a lot to do."

- Sandra Morán, member of Guatemalan congress

Territories in dispute

Plenary: Introduce the theme of conflict and contestation as a central dynamic in a time of upheaval. Share the quote from Sandra Moran and read it aloud to introduce the activity.

Small groups: Divide into seven thematic groups. Each group takes a different 'territory in dispute': body, land, nature, memory, history, worldview, the state. Discuss:
From your experience and analysis, identify three or four ways in which this 'territory' is in dispute.
- How would you characterise the different sides of the dispute?
- How does this dispute play out concretely in your context? Who and what are on different sides of the dispute? What are their differing interests and agendas?
- What core ideas and beliefs are in conflict?

Plenary: Invite each group to share reflections. Then explore the interconnections between these 'territories' in terms of actors involved and the clash of ideas they represent. What do these conflicts suggest for our strategies?

"

The government is waging three wars: a war on drugs – 30,000 deaths mostly from slum areas; a war against communist insurgency – used to attack indigenous communities and their land; and a war on women.

- Filipino Activist

Theme 3:
Learning from History

Retracing our history is critical to understanding power, struggle, and the lessons of our ancestors. Invite people to think about whose voice, story, experience, and contributions are visible in education systems and national discourse – and whose are invisible. In Chile and Guatemala, for example, processes of recovering historical and collective memory disrupted the narratives of violent dictatorships and affirmed stories of resistance that continue to guide the path today.

"

You can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been."

- Maya Angelou[8]

"From Silence to Memory" exhibit: 2005 discovery of documented surveillance, torture and detention during Guatmala's civil war. Photo © 2018, Lisa VeneKlasen

Constructing a timeline

Materials: Blank timeline on flip chart paper along a large wall
Use one or two flip chart pages per decade, each section labelled with years, depending on how far
back you want to go: 1960–69, 1970–79, 1980–89, 1990–99, 2000–2009, 2010–2019, 2020–present

Sticky notes or cards in five different colours, markers

This participatory historical timeline reveals trends of power and conflict, and of struggle, resistance,
and transformation. You need to prepare. The group brings their own knowledge and responses
to the process, but you should know about the period and setting. Much of the history of struggles
for social justice has been hidden. To fill important gaps, invite an older activist or a historian to
provide information. Alternatively, show a video, share a reading, or discuss timelines constructed in
previous workshops.

Step 1: Pivotal moments
Plenary: To understand the roots of current trends, we will construct a visual timeline of key events
that shaped the last 60 to 100 years. (To include the history of colonialism, go back further.)

Small groups: Divide into small groups that are intergenerational to share knowledge across age
groups. Each group reflects on these questions for the era or decade that they are focusing on.
- What were the important moments or events of social, political, or economic change – positive
  and negative?
- At what moments did people organise to challenge dominant powers? What were they
  challenging, and what did they want?
- What were the most important breakthroughs and gains for social movements?
- Where did social movements lose ground or face repression?
All groups use the same colour cards to note and post on the timeline:

key social, political, and economic turning points (one colour)
challenges and responses led by social movements and civil society (a different colour)

Step 2: Conflict and resistance
Plenary: Groups post their stickies on the timeline. Each group in turn describes what was happening
in their section of the timeline. They focus on one or two particularly important moments,
highlighting the relationship between the events and the responses by a social movement or civil
society.

Small groups: In the same groups, go deeper – discuss one or more of these questions:
- What do you see in the timeline about how change happens from decade to decade?
- What can we learn about the battles over who and what matters, and who controls access?
- What can we learn from examining history through the lens of factors including class, gender,
  sexuality, race, and ethnicity?
- What can we learn about the use of violence and threat of violence to block and silence social
  justice voices?
- What can we learn for our own ways of organising and change strategies?

Step 3: The struggle over ideas and beliefs

Plenary: Now, focus on the role of ideas and beliefs. What ideas and beliefs were challenged? What new ideas were put forward?

Small groups: On stickies or cards, note key phrases and words.
- With what ideas and beliefs did those in power legitimize their actions and undermine people's demands and agendas?
- What ideas and beliefs animated resistance, social change, and liberation struggles? (For example, trade unionism and cooperatives shaped the 1960s in Kenya.)
- How were these ideas promoted and amplified?

Plenary: Groups post their notes on the timeline and explain each briefly. Engage the group in a deeper conversation about the power of ideas and beliefs, both for dominant interests and for those seeking to make change.
- What can we learn from our timeline about how ideas and beliefs define public narratives?
- At what point/s do you see the most successful use of ideas and beliefs? How do these ideas and beliefs shape struggles today?

Close the timeline process with a brief summary of insights about the zigzag of history. Note how change generates conflict and backlash by dominant interests. List insights about strategy and movement organising to use later (see Chapter 6: Power and Strategy). Keep the timelines for power analysis in Chapter 3: Making Sense of Power.

Step 4: Drawing inspiration and lessons from history

Plenary: We can learn a great deal from the brutal struggles of our histories, but we can also be inspired by the courage, creativity, and examples of our ancestors.

Individually: Think back over the timeline discussions, and then write your answers to these questions on different colour cards.
- What inspiration can we draw from the timeline?
- What lessons emerge about the push and pull of power and change?

Plenary: Participants take turns to post their cards on the timeline, each announcing what inspiration they have drawn from the past. When everyone has posted their cards, identify common threads and contrasts in perspective or interpretation. Cluster the sticky notes (if this helps) to identify common sources of inspiration.

Reflecting on the lessons, draw out the push and pull over time between dominant interests and those fighting for social justice.
- How did those who came before us organise to build common ground?
- How did they change hearts and minds?
- How did they defend themselves?
- Where did they fall short?

Timelines

In this example from Kenya, participants divided the last 80 years into decades. For each decade, a group named the key moments, turning points, and contributions of social movements and civil society. On the top line, the group noted key moments over the course of the 1960s in their country:

° Lancaster constitutional process, 'self-rule', oath taking, disbanding opposition, political assassinations/ disappearances, shift to metrics, famine, land acquisitions by the president and cronies, poor people's 'resettlement crises'

In red underneath, they noted responses and organising over the decade:
° trade unionism, elite/academic flight, ethnicization of politics, political consciousness through art (Ngugi wa Thiongo), formation of cooperatives.
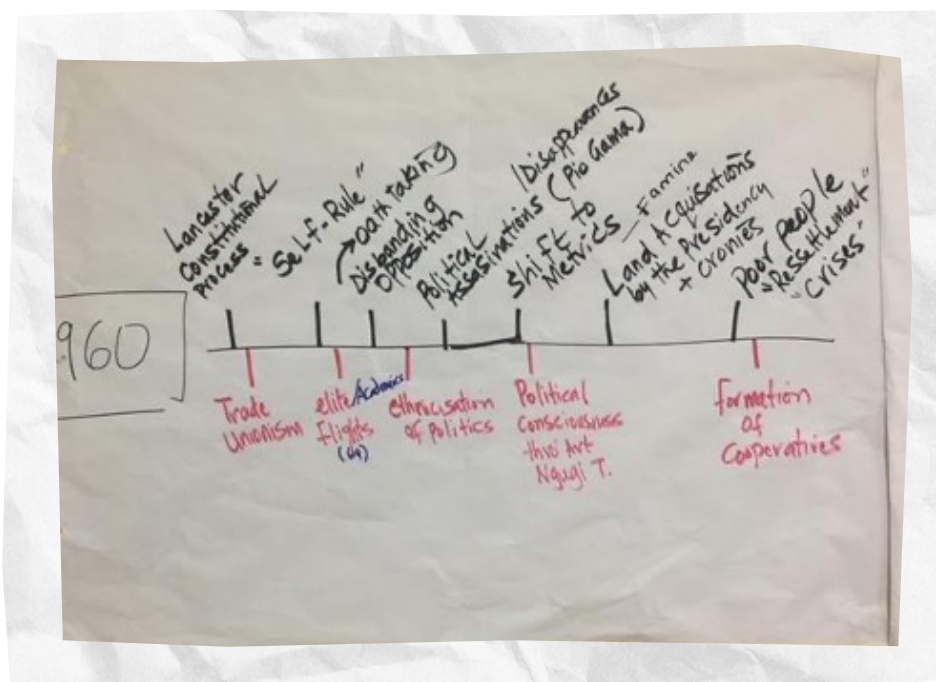
A timeline from a process in Kenya

"

The grandmothers have a lot of wisdom, but they often depart with this knowledge.

- Miriam Pixtún, La Puya Resistance-Guatemala[9]

Mural of Ancestors
A moving and inspirational process involves naming and telling the story or sharing a quote from an ancestor upon whose shoulders we stand.

Mural of Ancestors from a JASS-Sinergia Ń oj process with rural and indigenous communicators
© 2010, Daysi Flores

Theme 4:
Cracks Where the Light Comes In

Times of upheaval also create unimagined possibilities for transformation. We ask ourselves: where are the cracks where the light comes in? Crises may make us rethink the fundamental assumptions that guide our political and strategic choices. The climate crisis, for example, has fuelled a profound existential battle for the future of the planet and the human species. Worldwide, increased numbers of people are calling capitalism itself into question. This opens up space for logics and systems, particularly coming from indigenous peoples, that emphasise interdependence and balance between humans and nature.

Where are we at this moment in history, and how does that orient our change strategies? To

ACTIVITY 5:

What time is it on the clock of the world?

provoke activists into awareness, Grace Lee Boggs, a prominent US civil rights activist, would ask: "What time is it on the clock of the world?"[10]

Materiales:
"*Message from the Future II: Years of Repair*"
"*Janelle Monáe – Turntables*"
Laptops, tablets, cameras, and other digital devices (if you have good wifi)
Notes or cards of different colours and markers for each participant
Letter-size paper of different colours, and coloured pencils, crayons or markers, tape

Step 1: What gives you hope and energy in difficult times?
At least a day before this session, ask each person to bring a song, music video, poem, or image that makes them feel hopeful. Alternatively, give the group 10 minutes to search online to find a favourite song, poem, or image. Another option is to invite people to create their own expressions of hope and inspiration, with a partner or a small group, or individually. They could make (for example) a short video, music video, collage, drawing, song, poem, dance, photograph, theatre piece, or mask.

Plenary: If possible, move to a different space or rearrange the room to shift the energy. Ask: What gives you hope about the future? It could be an idea, an image, a symbol, a song, a vision of how the world could be, or a feeling of what it means to be liberated, empowered, or free from fear and violence.

People create, find, or show their own source of hope. After each person shares their inspiration, ask everyone else in the group to say one word or a short phrase to express how this makes them feel. We can take inspiration from past and current struggles to shape our ideas for the future.

> **"** What we are witnessing now is the opening up of imaginations, where people are beginning to think more expansively about what the solutions could be.
>
> *- Opal Tometti, co-founder of US Black Lives Matter movement[11]*

ACTIVITY 6:

Make another world possible

Materials: Hand out copies of Ideas for the future, share the link, and/or copy headings from the spread on a flip chart.

Plenary: Before or during the session, invite everyone to read the list of Ideas for the future. Point out that many future-oriented ideas exist, such as proposals for more just, sustainable, and democratic ways of solving problems and organising our lives. Some ideas that have been 'cooking' for a long time are being recovered. Ask:
- What ideas inspired our struggles in the past?
- What ideas are re-emerging, gaining ground, or evolving in our context today?

In pairs: Choose one idea from the list or from your own context or experience of resistance and struggle. You could do some quick research on the internet. With your partner, discuss the questions and prepare a short presentation in words and/or graphics on flip chart paper.
- What idea or proposition has given you or your movement inspiration, hope, and strength?
- Where, when, and how has this idea been active in the past?
- What lies behind this idea: how does it propose to do things differently? What problems does it seek to solve? What alternative does it propose?
- In what ways is this idea present today? How does it provide inspiration or possibilities for change?

Plenary: Pairs take turns to present highlights from their research and discussions. Then, compare the presentations: what commonalities or differences emerge? Together, discuss:
- In what ways do our current activism and movement strategies draw on these ideas?
- Could we use them to focus or strengthen our strategies?
- How can we bring these ideas to life in the ways that we organise and lead?

Ideas for the future

Movement history reveals where new ways of thinking, big ideas, and propositions for reorganising our world to upend power and confront injustice took root. Some of these became a driving force

behind struggles for power like anti-colonialism, liberation, socialism, and communism, while others were also critical to changing how people organised themselves economically and politically, like cooperativism, trade unionism, etc. This is a list of ideas and propositions that are under construction, emerging, or being renewed – that are shaping discourse, narratives, and how we organise ourselves for the future.

Many 'big ideas' and propositions listed here are not new. Take **feminism:** this ever-evolving paradigm, political agenda, and set of practices have been around, morphing, and embattled for over 300 years. Take **cosmovision:** an indigenous worldview that has survived centuries of struggle in the Americas. Like **internationalism**, a proposition that in the 1950s, '60s and '70s helped shape liberation struggles in the Global South, the Non-Aligned Movement as an alternative structure for global arrangements, and even the practices of popular education (Paolo Freire) and Black consciousness (Steve Biko).

Even though they have been around for a long time, these Big Ideas are undergoing a refresh by new generations as new crises unfold. Many have their origins in the Global South. Some newer concepts, such as Just Transitions and Regenerative Economics, are inspired and shaped by other ideological propositions and attempt to land in a policy framework or set of solutions shaped more in the Global North.

Buen vivir
Loosely translated into English as 'good living' or 'living well' (but not as welfare), buen vivir is a worldview shaped by indigenous belief systems in the Americas and critiques of global capitalism and international development. Its defining characteristics are harmony between human beings and nature and a sense of collective development based on reciprocity and mutual support. Property ownership is absent, because humans are never owners of the earth and its resources, only stewards. Buen vivir is one of the many sources for the thinking of regenerative economies. [*Oliver Balch, Buen VIvir*]

Commons
A concept which, while its name originated in Roman law, can be found in pre-industrial and indigenous practices and laws all over the world in which particular resources were understood to be shared and managed by the community, belonging neither to the state nor private owners. The Commons include both tangible and intangible goods – communal lands, fishing and hunting access, parks, air and space, water and waterways, traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and the Internet – to which all members of a society have or should have access. Commons embody the efforts of multiple individuals and inputs: no single individual or entity can claim private ownership of common resources, such as government-funded scientific research or intellectual property. But the current stage of capitalism, in a major offensive against the public commons, privatises land and resources. The extractive industries – including mining, fossil fuel, timber, palm oil and other kinds of mass crop production – appropriate and deplete public and indigenous lands. Today, activists are reinventing and reclaiming the commons to democratise access to vital resources and protect them for current and future generations [*JASS Feminist Movement Builder's Dictionary*]

Solidarity economy
An alternative to the market economy consisting of economic enterprises undertaken not for profit but for collective benefit. In many economic crises, women and neighbourhoods band together to produce necessities or coordinate small enterprises such as shops, gardens, neighborhood kitchens,

and childcare or financial cooperatives. The solidarity economy promotes organisation and a culture of shared decision-making. It can help women and poor people access basic economic and social rights such as food, credit, and education, as well as reduce women's burden of unpaid labour in the care economy by sharing tasks that usually fall to individual women in a single household. [*JASS Feminist Movement Builder's Dictionary*]

Regenerative economies

A direct response and counter proposal to an extractive economic model that destroys and depletes ecosystems and drives climate crisis. Regenerative economy – also called a circular economy – is inspired by the ideas of Kate Raworth about "donut economics". To be regenerative, the products and materials are used and re-used for as long as possible so that natural systems are regenerated. A regenerative economy does not just retain resources; it creates new resources while maintaining a dynamic balance to the sustained benefit of people, planet, and profit. It is holistic by nature and enhances the individual and collective characteristics of the natural environment, the built environment, and the social environment.

An example of regeneration, "restoring forests … would capture 37% of our greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a good chance of staying below two degrees by 2030. Recreating living soils also helps to capture carbon, regenerate biodiversity, and improve yields. Reintroducing wolves into certain regions helps to regulate species that eat vegetation and thus improves carbon transformation through photosynthesis." [Circulab]

Five principles of *regenerative economies*:
° sobriety, not abundance
° no more extraction
° local, interactive, and aimed at improving resilience
° cooperation, less competition
° develop life and evolution

Regenerative agriculture

As a philosophy and approach to land management, regenerative agriculture asks us to think about *how all aspects of agriculture are connected through a web* – a network of entities who grow, enhance, exchange, distribute, and consume goods and services – instead of a linear supply chain. In refocusing the ways we farm and ranch to better nourish people and the earth, specific practices vary from grower to grower and from region to region. There's no strict rule book, but the holistic principles behind the dynamic system of regenerative agriculture aim to restore soil and ecosystem health, address inequity, and leave our land, waters, and climate in better shape for future generations. (National Resources Defence Council, NDRC)

Feminisms

An ideology, an analytical framework, and a practice, feminism is undergoing another renewal, breaking from the neoliberal feminism prevalent in the Global North in recent decades. Feminisms today reclaim and intersect with radical traditions and liberation struggles. They are shaped by many convergences and the influences of indigenous and rural women, queer activism, women workers, Black and Brown liberation struggles and land defenders. While still encompassing women's rights and equality, today's feminist practices and ideologies seek to expose, uproot, and transform power; end violence in the intimate, private, and public spheres; revalue care and bodies; protect the earth on which we depend and ensure basic needs, autonomy and social inclusion. Feminists are

organised differently in various regions of the world, drawing on distinct histories of struggle. Today, feminist leadership and practice can be seen across many movements and organisations, as well as within institutions and classrooms, workplaces and cultural spaces – even as there is pushback and backlash – around the world.

Food sovereignty

Originally coined in 1996 by La Via Campesina, a global movement of farmers founded in Brazil, the term describes a vision of a better food future defined as the right of Peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. Adapted by many agricultural, environmental, and food activists, as well as farmers and indigenous movements, food sovereignty puts producers and democracy at the centre of our food systems. It recognises food as a right and a public good, not as a commodity. It identifies sustainability as essential and promotes the use of agroecology. It also recognises the various layers of discrimination that combine to place an even heavier burden on, for example, women, indigenous people, youth, and LGBTQI+ farmers. Food sovereignty requires bringing all voices to the table, and sharing land, seeds, water, credit, and other resources equitably.

Just Transition + Just Feminist Transition

A vision-led, unifying, and place-based set of principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy. This means approaching production and consumption cycles holistically and waste-free. The transition itself must be just and equitable, redressing past harms and creating new relationships of power for the future through reparations. If the process of transition is not just, the outcome will never be. Just Transition describes both where we are going and how we get there. [Just Transition Alliance]

Decolonial Feminist Green New Deal

A strategy not only to promote the necessary interconnection between the main structural challenges of our times but also to emphasise the structural demands of justice. The Decolonial Feminist Green New Deal challenges:
° colonial financial extractivism based in a white supremacist North–South division of labour, with the corresponding depletion of wealth and resources as irreparable damage is done to ecosystems' integrity
° a sexual division of labour, in which women subsidise the entire economy by means of unpaid domestic and care work and the precarity in which they are placed, both in informal and formal employment
° existing economic, trade, and financial dynamics, under the umbrella of a call for a UN Economic Reconstruction and Systemic Reform Summit
° This movement seeks a New Global Economic Architecture that works for the People and Planet. (Bhumika Muchal)

Healing Justice

A framework that recognises the impact of trauma and violence on individuals and communities and names collective processes that can help heal and transform these forces. In a system and society that actively targets Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies with violence, oppression, and terror, it is critical to build movements that fight for and achieve justice for all people. This justice includes healing, well-being, and not only surviving but thriving. Resiliency and healing are strategic – we need everyone in our movements to have access to healing from trauma and violence, as it strengthens all of us and all of our movements." (Melina Laboucan-Massimo and other)

Energy Justice and Democracy
Emerging from the global climate justice movement, particularly activists from the Global South, is a framework to decentralise and involve communities directly in managing energy production and distribution to address fairness and equity within the current extractive energy system and incorporate aspects of 'deep democracy', cooperation, and regeneration that feature in the just transition frame. Energy justice considers: 1) energy burden, which refers to the expense of energy expenditures relative to overall household income; 2) energy insecurity, which refers to the hardships households face when meeting basic household needs; 3) energy poverty, which refers to a lack of access to energy itself; and 4) energy democracy, the notion that communities should have agency in shaping their energy future with particular attention to gender, racial, economic, and social justice, using energy as a catalyst for their development and wellbeing. (Just Energy for All, United Methodist Women and others.)

1 Lopez Cruz, Marusia and Aura Lolita Chavez, *Collective Protection to Defend Territory; Defense of Territory to Protect Life*.
2 Barndt, Deborah, *Naming the Moment: Political Analysis for Action: A Manual for Community Groups*. The Free Library. 1990 Canadian Dimension Publication, Ltd. 18 Apr. 2023
3 Klein, Naomi, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.
4 Klein, Naomi, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014
5 From: Power Building: A Shared Analysis of Navigating Crises, Northstar Network, Social Transformation Project, January 2021
6 https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/gender-ideology-fiction-could-do-real-harm
7 Andrea is an indigenous communicator/activist from Guatemala. Reference from the newsletter by Skylight Films written by Pamela Yates.
8 Popular attribution.
9 JASS Mesoamerica Workshop on Extractives, 2017
10 https://leftturn.org/grace-lee-boggs-visionary-organizing/
11 Chotiner, Isaac, "A Black Lives Matter Co-Founder Explains Why this Time is Different," *New Yorker*, June 3, 2020 https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/a-black-lives-matter-co-founder-explains-why-this-time-is-different. Opal Image By Web Summit – Photo by Stephen McCarthy/Web Summit via Sportsfile
12 Fairchild, Denise and Al Weinrub, Editors, Energy Democracy: Advancing Equity in *Clean Energy Solutions*, Island Press, Washington, 2017.