

THE PEOPLES MOVEMENT ASSEMBLY ORGANIZING KIT



This is a kit for organizers and facilitators.

It explains how the Peoples Movement Assembly is an important process for growing strong social movements. It outlines how an assembly works, provides an overview of facilitation, and includes sample tools used at assemblies.

A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

We can build a better world.

Working together, we can create a world that respects the human rights of every human, nurtures creativity and health, promotes unity, solidarity and peace, and uses resources in a way that protects the earth and affirms life.

At this historical moment, there is a growing sense of overwhelming crisis.

We recognize that the money and other resources that have been swallowed up by militarization must be redirected to solve human needs - to protect the basic human needs of food, shelter, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom from harm, and protection of Mother Earth, which nurtures and sustains all life.

We believe that we can create a new economic system.

We can build an economic system that is not based on individual, corporate, or private ownership and does not exploit people, the planet, natural resources, or living beings, but instead is based on principles of collectivity and sustains our communities. We must move aside old systems that have failed and create new ones that serve and are accountable to all peoples and all living beings.

We must link arms with our sisters and brothers globally.

We must commit to a willingness to work together to seek understanding, to coordinate action, and to move forward collectively with a sense of urgency to create a more just world. We acknowledge the need to break down barriers. We must integrate our national struggles for the human rights to dignity, welfare, freedom, and justice.

Each one of us has to dig deeper to understand each other's culture and history.

We must build respectful relationships across difference. Our struggles and our goals are all connected to each other. Our fronts of struggle and our goals are all on the same continuum. We have the desire and energy to create something different that sustains us. As a people, we must rely on each other. We can realize our dreams to treat each other as equals and to build alliances across our commonalities and differences.

We affirm self-determination and self-reliance.

We believe that we can build our collective power through participation in popular political education and organizing collective action. We can each realize the power that resides within each one of us and build collective power by participating in the fronts of struggle recognized through the Peoples Movement Assemblies. Let us unite and create a better world for all future living generations.

A better world is possible! Another US is near...



National Peoples Movement Assembly affirming this statement
USSF Detroit, June 2010

This statement represents the work of a Synthesis Assembly to craft a Social Movement Agenda based on the work of over 50 assemblies held at the US Social Forum in 2010.

A Synthesis Commission made up of leaders from various movements (*Marian Kramer, Rose Brewer, Suzanne Pharr, Manuel Pino, and Jacqui Patterson, facilitation by Dana Wright*) wrote and read this declaration at the National Peoples Movement Assembly.

GROWING STRONG MOVEMENTS

PEOPLES MOVEMENT ASSEMBLIES are community gatherings designed for groups to develop collective political agreements and positions. People make action plans in order to work together across issues on local, regional, and national fronts.

WHAT OUR MOVEMENTS NEED

WHAT WE DO AT AN ASSEMBLY

HOW ASSEMBLIES BUILD STRONG MOVEMENTS

We need to strengthen our collective understanding of the current political moment.

We need to analyze strategic opportunities to organize interventions and actions to dismantle social and economic systems that are failing us.

1 ANALYZE the current political moment

New insights are articulated that expand the breadth of our understandings and connections



South Atlanta Peoples Movement Assembly, June 2009

We need to come together to develop solutions and design the world that we want.

We need to envision opportunities for strategic collaboration between our social and political movements.

2 VISION the future we want

Strategic directions are identified, established, clarified, and/or affirmed.



Ecological Justice Peoples Movement Assembly USSF Detroit, June 2010

We need to find solutions to systemic problems, which we have greater capacity to do by working together.

We need to develop and commit to coordinated strategies and plans for action.

3 COMMIT TO ACTIONS towards that future

Cross sector organizing is intensified. Political alliances and organizational relationships are formed. National actions are launched.



Action against Incinerator (result of 2 Peoples Movement Assemblies) USSF Detroit, June 2010

WHEN TO USE A PEOPLES MOVEMENT ASSEMBLY?

To increase participation and involvement from diverse people

To develop leadership within our movements

To take action in response to a specific problem or set of problems

To build social movement power and construct plans for governance

Assemblies are an important part of a long-term ongoing organizing strategy. We organize before, during, and after an assembly.

FROM MOVEMENT HISTORY

Social Movement Assemblies integrated into WSF as mechanism to create collective plans for action.

2001

First World Social Forum, Porto Alegre

another world is possible

WSF provides open space for global social movements.

2003

Global Day of Action to Stop the War on Iraq

A direct call to action from WSF assembly. Millions of people mobilized.

2006

Southeast & Border Social Forums

Social Movement Assemblies held at Border Social Forum.

2007

First US Social Forum, Atlanta

Assembly process introduced to US movements. Freedom Caravans, "Peoples Movement Assemblies on Wheels", travelled to USSF from across US.

2010

Peoples Movement Assemblies Before, During, & After USSF



40+ assemblies across US before USSF. 6,000+ people participated in 50+ assemblies at USSF.

2011
Peoples Movement Assemblies continue across US

in Detroit, San Antonio, Portland, Atlanta, Montgomery, New Orleans...

Peoples Movement Assembly Working group established to build process as organizing strategy

TO THE CURRENT POLITICAL MOMENT

Social movement history provides important insight for our communities to understand the current political moment. If we understand the characteristics of this new moment, we will continue to move forward effectively.

Our movements need new plans of action.

Current social, economic, and political systems are designed to fail our communities. The fast-track transfer of public wealth into private institutions reveals the corruption of the governing systems. We need an autonomous, independent social movement with its own social and economic agenda.

Social movements are strained. Social movements exist in the US, yet are often disjointed and working separately. We need to build stronger collaborative social movements by deepening our understandings of our common goals and seeking to integrate across issues and regions. This integration is facilitated through convergence.

One strategy is not sufficient. Attacks on our communities are part of larger national strategies to dismantle all public infrastructure that nurtures social and economic self-determination. We need multiple strategies to engage more people and increase our collective potential to respond, fight back, and win.

Reforms are not enough; we need to develop long-term vision and strategy. We need to envision alternatives and create new structures to develop the world that we want. We need to develop strategic plans that create short- and medium-term results and lead to long-term systemic social change.

Leadership must be held by people who live and experience injustice. Our movements need to continue to be led by people who are affected by social control, racism, and economic displacement. This guiding principle and practice strengthens the effectiveness and integration of our movements.

ASSEMBLIES MOBILIZE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE

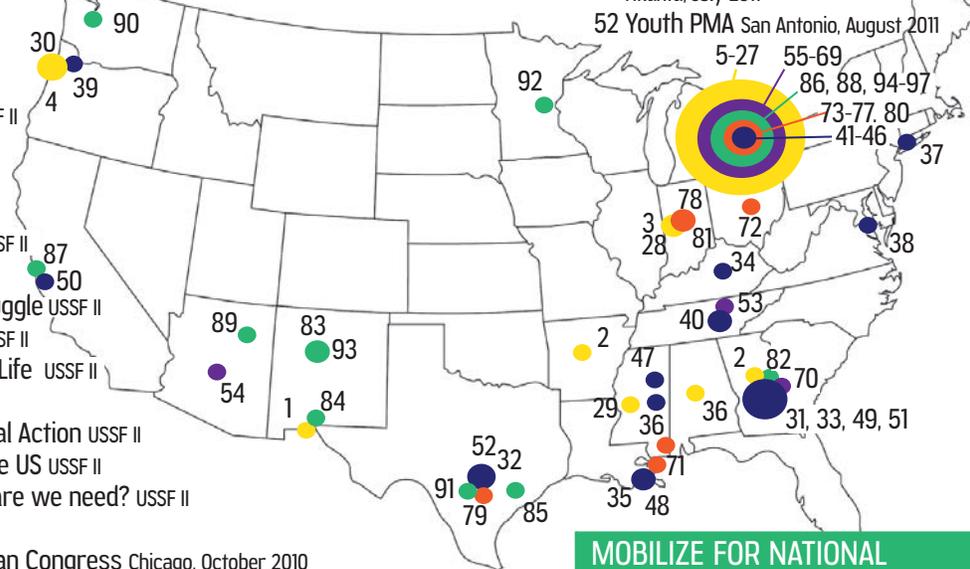
Assemblies are complex and do not fit easily into categories. We offer this map to demonstrate the breadth and depth of assemblies, that we are aware of, held over the last three years. *More than 50 assemblies happened at the USSF II in Detroit, June 22-26 2010.*

CLARIFY & STRENGTHEN POLITICAL POSITIONS & STRATEGIES

1. Border Movement Assembly @ Border Social Forum Ciudad Juarez, October 2006
2. SE Regional PMA of Trans-Identified Folks Spring 2010
3. Chicago Student Congressional Summit PMA April 2010
4. Lincoln HS PMA June 2010
5. Advancing a Gender Justice Vision & Action Plan USSF II
6. Assembly of Anti-Zionist Jews USSF II
7. Building Unity & Organization in the Black Liberation Movement USSF II
8. Callin All Street Youth PMA USSF II
9. Detroit Utilities PMA USSF II
10. Education for Emancipation & Transformation PMA USSF II
11. End to Corporate Rule, Legalize Democracy, Move to Amend the Constitution USSF II
12. Immigrant Rights from Below Movement Assembly USSF II
13. Indigenous PMA USSF II
14. International Solidarity & Responsibility on ALBA PMA USSF II
15. Justice in Palestine PMA USSF II
16. Plant Occupations & Organizing Strategies USSF II
17. Poverty Summit USSF II
18. Organizing to Dismantle School to Prison Pipeline PMA USSF II
19. Queer / Trans PMA USSF II
20. Rebuilding Solidarity with Puerto Rico's Anti-Colonial Struggle USSF II
21. Support of Democratic Trade Unionism in Mexico PMA USSF II
22. Take Back the Land Movement: PMA to Free this Land & Life USSF II
23. Tar Sands PMA USSF II
24. The Faith Community: From Internal Reflection to External Action USSF II
25. The Way Forward: Strategy, Tactics, & Seeding BDS in the US USSF II
26. What the Health Happened? How do we get the healthcare we need? USSF II
27. PMA to Confront Prisons USSF II
28. Palestinian Movement Assembly @ 2nd Popular Palestinian Congress Chicago, October 2010
29. Formerly Incarcerated People PMA Montgomery, March 2011
30. Latin@ PMA Portland, July 2011

STRENGTHEN LOCAL, REGIONAL, & CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

31. National PMA @ USSF I Atlanta, June 2007
32. Border Movement Assembly South by SW San Antonio, 2008
33. Juneteenth Membership Gathering PMA June 2009
34. Kentucky Social Forum & PMA July 2009
35. Pick up Your Peace Youth PMA New Orleans, March 2010
36. Selma, Alabama PMA March 2010
37. LGBTQ of Color PMA NYC May 2010
38. Greater DC PMA May 2010
39. Portland PMA May 2010
40. Local Organizing Collective 2 PMAs Knoxville, May & June 2010
41. Asian Pacific Islanders in Detroit PMA USSF II
42. Food Sovereignty PMA USSF II
43. Northwest PMA USSF II
44. Up South / Down South Assembly USSF II
45. Urban Congress USSF II
46. Working for Peace & Justice in Michigan USSF II
47. SE Youth PMA SHROC Birmingham, December 2010
48. Pick up Your Peace II Youth PMA New Orleans, March 2011
49. Healthy Lifestyles Youth PMA Atlanta, April 2011
50. East Bay PMA June 2011
51. Atlanta Youth Education Justice PMA Atlanta, July 2011
52. Youth PMA San Antonio, August 2011



MOBILIZE FOR NATIONAL ACTIONS & CONVERGENCES (USSF, WSF, demonstrations, etc.)

82. Poor Peoples Movement Assembly & Caravan Global Day of Action Atlanta, January 2009
83. National Planning Committee PMA Albuquerque, January 2010
84. El Paso Border PMA February 2010
85. Houston PMA February 2010
86. Detroit 313 PMA March 2010
87. Mission PMA San Francisco, March 2010
88. Detroit PMA II May 2010
89. Phoenix National Day of Action on SB 1070 PMA May 29 2010
90. South Sound PMA May 2010
91. Border / San Antonio PMA June 2010
92. Twin Cities PMA June 2010
93. Albuquerque NM PMA June 2010
94. Atenco Prisoners / Otra Campana / Zapatista PMA USSF II
95. Building a Movement to Combat Increased US Militarization USSF II
96. Juvenile Justice PMA USSF II
97. Prioritizing Africa & African Diaspora Agenda Detroit to Dakar USSF II

DEVELOP CROSS-MOVEMENT PLATFORMS & FRAMEWORKS

53. Solidarity Economy PMA March 2010
54. Migrant Justice - LGBTTS PMA Tucson, June 2010
55. Defining Transformation for Social Change USSF II
56. Echo Justice: Building Movement through Building Meaning USSF II
57. Ecological Justice PMA USSF II
58. Emerging Strategies to [Re]Claim the Commons USSF II
59. Excluded Workers Congress USSF II
60. Forming a National Alliance on Racial Justice & Human Rights USSF II
61. Funders' Assembly USSF II
62. Health, Healing Justice, & Liberation PMA USSF II
63. Inter-Alliance Dialogue Convention USSF II
64. Rebuilding the Anti-War / Peace Movement to End Wars & Occupation USSF II
65. Stimulating Grassroots Activism on a Massive Scale USSF II
66. Supporting Sex Workers' Safety & Rights USSF II
67. US Techie Congress USSF II
68. World Court on Poverty in the US: Disappeared in America USSF II
69. Youth Movement to Create a National Student Bill of Rights for Education Justice USSF II
70. Law as a Weapon of War PMA Atlanta, May 2011

DESIGN PEOPLE'S PLANS OF ACTION

71. Gulf Coast Climate Justice PMAs New Orleans & Biloxi, April & May 2010
72. PMA for Comprehensive Immigration Reform Columbus OH, May 2010
73. Building Solidarity with Grassroots in Haiti USSF II
74. How to Claim the Right to Housing PMA USSF II
75. Imagining & Building a People's Based Solidarity Economy USSF II
76. Preparing the Youth in Today's Agriculture: Without Us, Who Eats? USSF II
77. Detroit "Rightsizing" PMA November 2010
78. Assembly to End Poverty Chicago, December 2010
79. Texas-wide Migrant Justice PMA San Antonio December 2010
80. Alternative to Detroit Works Project PMA April 2011
81. Regional Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions PMAs Chicago, Montreal, West Coast 2011

WHAT TO DO BEFORE AN ASSEMBLY

3-9 months before assembly

A lot of organizing happens before the assembly begins. A strong collaborative team and engaged anchor organization(s) are important.

□ Create an organizing committee.

- Determine the focus and goals for the assembly.
 - *What key issues are being experienced that need to be organized around?*
- Develop a clear and common understanding of the purpose of the assembly and build trust with each other.
- Gather skilled and experienced facilitators to conduct the meeting and design the agenda with others who are invited into the process.
- Collectively think through the current political moment and how it impacts local issues. Discuss potential opportunities for movement building that might come out of the assembly.
- Determine the length and location of the PMA
 - *A PMA can be 3 hours, a full day, or a few days of gathering together.*
 - *Allocate enough time in the small groups for resolutions to be generated.*
 - *Be sure that the location is accessible (transportation, physical space, signage, room setup, language, dietary considerations, etc.) and has space for childcare.*
- Create a clear agenda with coherent flow. Create opportunities for those involved to understand, be engaged, and feel a sense of ownership in the process.
- Plan the documentation strategies.
 - *Think through how the content of the assembly and plans of action will be captured (video, audio, notetaking, etc.).*



-1 month before assembly

□ Provide training for small group facilitators (see page 9).

Ongoing

□ Invite people to the assembly.

- Communicate broadly about this opportunity for convergence with people, groups, and networks impacted and working on the issues .
- Talk with as many of the people coming as possible about what they can expect from the assembly.

Keep in mind:
The assembly process is stronger when a diversity of genders, ethnicities, cultures, generations, and physical capacities participate.

WHAT TO DO DURING AN ASSEMBLY

Be aware of power dynamics around race, class, gender, age, sexuality, different abilities, etc.

OPENING (Lead Facilitators, Cultural Leaders)

- Give an inclusive welcome, establish guidelines, provide an overview of the order of events, and explain the assembly process.
- Cultural activities can be used to convene the assembly (ritual practices, spoken word, song, dance, drama, etc.).

SET THE CONTEXT (Lead Facilitators, Speakers)

- Set the historical, political, cultural, and movement context.
- Outline the question(s) addressed and the root causes of the problems.
- Draw from other local or global examples of convergence and assemblies that have been integral to successful social movements.

SMALL AND LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION (Small Group Facilitators)

- Collect contact information
- Guide the groups to name the primary issues, determine the strategic short-term actions and solutions, and craft future visions.
- Keep emphasis on collective action to achieve visions.

PRESENT THE RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION (Lead Facilitators)

- Make commitments to next steps to bring about change.
- Focus on developing actions to solve problems.

ROLES AT A PMA

Lead Organizers: Play critical role in facilitation, communication, and coordination



Spiritual / Cultural Leaders: Convene, bless space, and set tone



Small Group Facilitators: Support small group discussions



Notetakers / Videographers: Document assembly and ensure documentation is given to organizers

Speakers: Provide historical, political, and social contexts



Synthesis: Actively track, categorize, and synthesize the content and discussions to produce representative statements and plans of action

Resolution Working Groups (if applicable): Finalize writing of resolutions after assembly



*** Individuals can play multiple roles!**

WHAT TO DO AFTER AN ASSEMBLY

The time after the assembly is the next phase of organizing.

■ Synthesize

- Gather together the documentation of the assembly (resolutions for action, notes, video, etc.) and create a synthesis of what happened at the assembly.
- Categorize the information and produce representative statements and plans of action that can be easily understood by people who did and people who did not attend the assembly.
- Make this synthesis readily available to all who attended the assembly and to organizers of other assemblies.

■ Follow-up

- Contact all of the organizers and facilitators of the small groups to debrief the assembly and the action steps.
- Organize large or small meetings or speak with people individually to think through these questions and others that are relevant to the assembly: *What resulted from the assembly? What were challenges? What next steps need to be taken?*

■ Share documentation

- Gather the documentation from the small groups and from the notetakers / videographers.
- Create short videos and written documentation of the event.
- Post audio, video, and print documentation on the Peoples Movement Assembly website and consider creating a website for the assembly.

■ Coordinate action plans

- Contact those who participated in the assembly to ensure they continue their involvement.
- Activate people and organizations committed to involvement in action steps.
- Ensure that there are clear ways for others who did not attend to be a part of implementing the plan and developing next action steps.

■ Evaluate

- Look over the feedback from the organizers and facilitators and from the participant evaluations.
- Think through the challenges that were faced and the accomplishments that happened. Keep in mind the goal of building social movement power and constructing plans for governance. Evaluate the assembly and determine the next steps in the organizing process.

Keep in mind: Maintain momentum by ensuring that participants have clear ways to continue to be actively involved.

FACILITATORS PREP

The facilitators play an important role before, during, and after the assembly.

BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FACILITATION?

Think about the goals of the different parts of the agenda and decide what kind of facilitation to use for each section.

CONTENT DRIVEN: Focus on content when the goal of facilitation is to share knowledge, ideas, and skills.

PROCESS DRIVEN: Focus on process when the goal of facilitation is to build relationships and teams.

DECISION DRIVEN: Focus on decisions when the goal of facilitation is to determine coordinated actions and common platforms.

** All three approaches can be used at different times throughout the assembly.*

2 WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL GUIDELINES USED TO MOVE THE ASSEMBLY PROCESS FORWARD?

Think about the people who will be coming to the assembly and the organizations they are associated with. Do they have guidelines by which they operate?

For example:

- We will prioritize the voices and experiences of people most affected.
- We will be aware of time and space that we are, or are not, taking up.
- We will recognize that oppression exists and not allow it in our space.
- We will assume that multiple strategies exist and are appropriate.

3 WHAT IS YOUR INDIVIDUAL STYLE & TECHNIQUE?

Develop your style and technique to suit the needs of participants and to reflect your political principles.

DURING THE ASSEMBLY

- Pass around sign-in sheets at the beginning of the small group discussions.
- Assist the group to stay focused on the goals.
- Ensure that people develop clear and specific plans of action and follow-up strategies.
- Recognize that issues being discussed are overwhelming and concentrate on how the actions can contribute to movement building.



Rebuilding a Solidarity Movement with Puerto Rico's Anti-Colonial Struggle Assembly, USSF Detroit June 2010

AFTER THE ASSEMBLY

- Be sure that any notes and documentation are gathered and centralized.
- Think through the impact of the assembly on evolving understandings of the political context, the relationship between issues, and next steps that are possible and effective.
- Take action. Follow-up on the plans for action from the small groups and the commitments made during the assembly by contacting the small group facilitators and other leaders to determine if further support is needed.

Strategize how to accommodate diverse experiences & learning styles.

Keep in mind: Facilitation is not neutral.

This sample agenda is designed for a city-wide Peoples Movement Assembly, where the focus is on a variety of interrelated issues (e.g. Education Transformation, Media Justice, Environment as a Human Right, Food Sovereignty, Neighborhood Stability, Health and Healing Justice). Peoples Movement Assemblies can be organized around a single issue (e.g. Education Justice), strategies (e.g. legislative, direct action, community building, etc.), or a region (i.e. the US Southwest). A condensed version of this agenda can be given to assembly participants.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR FACILITATORS (9am-3pm)

PRE-ASSEMBLY PREPARATION

- Communicate broadly about the assembly with people, groups, communities, and networks impacted and working on the issues.
- Identify and prepare multiple small group facilitators.
- Communicate with note-takers and videographers re: expectations, time to arrive and depart, permission forms, ways the documentation material will be used, other guidelines, etc.
- Ensure that all roles have been filled (support at meals, translators, childcare, clean up, etc.).
- Arrange delivery of food that accommodates diverse dietary requirements.
- Bring materials: markers, large paper, permission forms for recording, info packages.
- Put signs up around the room (location of restrooms, childcare, etc.).

AT THE ASSEMBLY

8:15-9:00 Registration

- Welcome people as they enter, gather contact information, and provide information package (includes agenda, information about assembly and issues, and evaluation).
- If applicable, explain that the event will be recorded, provide permission forms, and have a way that people can clearly indicate that they do not want to be recorded.
- If applicable, explain that translation is available in specified areas.

AGENDA ITEM	GOAL	EXAMPLE ACTIVITY
Large Group: Welcome and Introductions		
9:00-9:15 Welcome	Set the tone of the assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lead Facilitators offer a general welcome, go over logistical information (location of restrooms, translation, and childcare, event is being recorded, etc.), and describe the process. * Spiritual and/or Cultural Leader opens the assembly. * Lead Facilitators introduce the anchor organizations and outline the vision and goals of the assembly.
9:15-9:30 Introductions, Vision, and Goals	Identify who is present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lead Facilitators ask participants to form small groups and introduce themselves through conversation or an activity (<i>e.g. what is your name? what do you appreciate about your city? And what are the changes you see necessary in your city?</i>)
9:30-9:45 Guidelines	Agree on how to work together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lead Facilitators explain the guidelines and ask if there are others to be added.
9:45-10:15 Political Context and Analysis	Set the historical / political / cultural / movement context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Guest Speakers outline history of issues, current context, and analysis of what brought us to this moment. It can be helpful to use a visual diagram to relate the issues to systems of oppression.
10:15-10:45 Issues for Discussion	Large group determines issues to focus on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lead Facilitators introduce the issues that will be discussed * Lead Facilitators lead activity for large group to (1) ask clarifying questions about the issues and (2) suggest other issues for discussion.
10:45-11:00 Break		

Small Groups Discussions: Ask participants to break into small groups (count off or have participants self-select groups), 1-2 facilitators to each group.

11:00-11:15 Introductions	Identify who is present	* Participants of small groups introduce themselves and their relationship to the issue.
11:15-11:45 Context and Strategic Visions	Determine what we are up against, what we have, and what we will build	* Facilitators guide small groups to describe the problem and its causes (<i>what are we up against?</i>), our assets (<i>what do we have?</i>), and our strategic visions (<i>what do we build?</i>). See template below. It can be helpful for the group to come up with a brief statement.
11:45- 12:30 Actions and Commitments for Movement Building	Determine actions to interrupt, intervene, and dismantle oppositional forces	* Facilitators guide small groups to determine commitments to action. The goal is for groups to come up with specific actions that they will take, in which others (i.e. all attending the assembly, other members of our communities, etc.) could be involved.

12:30-1:15 **Lunch**

Large Group Commitments: Ask participants to return to the large group.

1:15-1:45 Commitments for Movement Building	Small groups share proposals and actions with larger group	* Lead Facilitators ask small groups to briefly present their statement about current context and their commitments to action. This can be done different ways, depending on groups' size (e.g. each group reports out to larger group OR a representative of each group is at a station and participants choose the stations they will visit).
1:45-2:15 Agreements and Affirmations	Close with sense of accomplishment & begin next steps with clear political direction	* Depending on size of group, Lead Facilitators lead group to synthesize commonalities between issues and strategies OR call for development of Synthesis Committee to do so after the assembly. Ask questions such as, <i>What are commonalities between the different problems and causes? What are commonalities of strategies? How can we support action steps and connect to existing work?</i>
2:15-2:45 Closing	Complete process	* Lead Facilitators present the next steps and ask which anchor groups will carry this forward. * Spiritual and/or Cultural Leaders offers closing.
2:45-3:00 Evaluation	Gather feedback	* Lead Facilitators explain the evaluation and ask participants to complete the (written and/or oral) evaluations.

POST-ASSEMBLY WRAP-UP

- Clean-up and gather the evaluations, documentation material, and contact information.
- Debrief the assembly with organizers and facilitators and compile and send documentation to participants.
- If applicable, Synthesis Committee meets after the assembly to develop synthesis of commonalities between issues and strategies.

Template: Context, Strategic Vision, and Commitments to Actions

This template can be used in the small groups to guide the discussion towards commitments to action.

Sites of Transformation	What are we up against? (Forces against us)	What do we have? (Assets, alliances, movements)	What do we build? (Our strategic visions)
<i>e.g. Education Transformation</i>			

Commitments to Action

Based on what we're up against _____ / And given what we have _____ / We will build _____ /
And these are our action steps:

Peoples Movement Assembly to Confront Prisons

A Peoples Movement Assembly for organizations involved in anti-prison and prisoner support work to identify points of unity, plan shared actions, and emphasize strategic areas of collaboration and resistance to racist and political repression.

THURSDAY JUNE 24, 2010 @ USSF DETROIT

130 PARTICIPANTS

Because these conditions exist,

The United States is a prison empire, founded on the legacy of slavery, which uses racist mass incarceration, widespread criminalization, torture, and the targeting of political dissidents to try to solve its fundamental economic and social problems. It locks up more people than any other country on the planet.

The prison system is a central node in an apparatus of state repression; it destroys our communities and weakens our resistance and movements for justice.

Repression is a tool used to maintain state power, and the prison population represents the most oppressed sectors of society: people of color, the poor, First Nations communities, immigrant communities, working class women, queer and transgender people, and radical organizers from many communities.

And because these opportunities are possible...

Diverse anti-prison organizations that are part of a shared movement against repression in all its forms are actively organizing through:

- **Fighting** for the full civil and human rights of currently and formerly incarcerated people.
- **Eliminating** the stigmas that inhibit currently and formerly incarcerated people and their loved ones from speaking out.
- **Supporting** the leadership and leadership development of currently and formerly incarcerated people.
- **Organizing** for the immediate release of all political prisoners and prisoners of war.
- **Demanding** the immediate end to the death penalty, life without parole, solitary confinement, mandatory minimums, the incarceration of youth in adult facilities, behavior modification/communication management units, all forms of torture, the war on drugs, and the criminalization of youth, immigrants, and gender nonconforming people.
- **Promoting** physical, mental, and emotional health and healing inside and outside of prisons.
- **Opposing** all new jails, prisons, juvenile, or immigrant detention facilities and supporting methods to immediately reduce the current prison population, including sentencing and parole reform and eliminating prisons for profit.
- **Challenging** the institutions that prop up the prison, including the police, military, ICE, governmental legislatures, and other forms of colonial rule.
- **Creating** community-based models of restorative and transformative justice in the present.

We commit to these actions...

- **We resolve to hold coordinated local days of action** for Juvenile Justice in the week of December 6, 2010, against the prison industrial complex on International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2010, and in solidarity with other movements and days of action against criminalization and confinement.
- **We resolve to support the call by groups led by formerly incarcerated people** to hold a national strategy session, led by and for formerly incarcerated people, within two years.
- **We resolve to support reunification of families torn apart by the prison industrial complex,** including by supporting the full repeal of the federal Adoption & Safe Families Act.
- **We call for a paradigm shift in language,** so that our language reflects our objectives for full human and civil rights for all people.
- **We commit to supporting economic development opportunities for people before and after incarceration** and sustainable alternatives for communities that currently depend on prisons for their sustenance.
- **We call on organizations in all social movements to review their hiring process, their bylaws, and their internal culture** to determine if there are any barriers to full employment or inclusion of people with convictions.
- **We commit ourselves to developing communication tools** that allow us to share victories, strategies, lessons, and stories and ask allied movements to support this process.

This assembly came out of the Peoples Family Reunion at USSF I in 2007. By Feb 2 2011 (as a result of the assembly described here) anchor organizations have (1) organized days of action and (2) facilitated the first Formerly Incarcerated Peoples Movement Assembly in Montgomery, out of which three shared national strategies emerged.

The role of the assembly is usually discussed in the opening of the assembly and can be revisited in the small groups. Prepare for this by researching the struggles that are relevant to the region and issues that will be discussed at the assembly. Talk with local, regional, and national movement leaders for information and ideas.

CONVERGENCE

Bringing together many people from diverse experiences and struggles.

Convergence plays a very important role in social movements. At moments of convergence, groups have the opportunity to discuss and determine the next steps we will take together.

Some examples of convergence in recent history:

Egypt 2011

Tens of thousands converge on Tahir Square to overthrow President Mubarak's repressive 30 year regime



Global Day of Action 2003

Simultaneous global actions protest the potential of a US war in Iraq.

Brazil 2001

First World Social Forum demonstrates the possibilities of global convergence



Seattle 1999

Organizers shut down the World Trade Organization ministerial meeting



Detroit City-wide Peoples Movement Assembly
April 2011

COLLECTIVE ARTICULATION

Sharing knowledge to develop common understanding of problems & solutions

The assembly is an opportunity to clarify and strengthen political positions and strategies. Create opportunities for participants to (1) understand how issues discussed relate to broader systems of injustice, (2) recognize the interrelations between different issues, and (3) develop plans of action that lead to systemic social change. Critical questions that facilitate deeper thinking:

1. How do local issues in my community connect to larger patterns across the country?

ex. Compare the rates of incarceration of young Black men in Montgomery to rates across other cities in the US.

2. How does this issues connect to other issues experienced in my community?

ex. The BP oil disaster requires struggles for corporate accountability, environmental justice, workers' rights, immigrant justice, and community-based economies.

3. How does the plan of action lead to long-term solutions?

ex. Coordinated plans to organize for smaller classrooms will lead to a broader campaign to elevate youth to decision-makers in education systems.

CROSS MOVEMENT COLLABORATION

Collaborating amongst, between, and across social movements to affect systemic social change.

Many fronts of attack require many movement responses. Consider the following questions when planning an assembly:

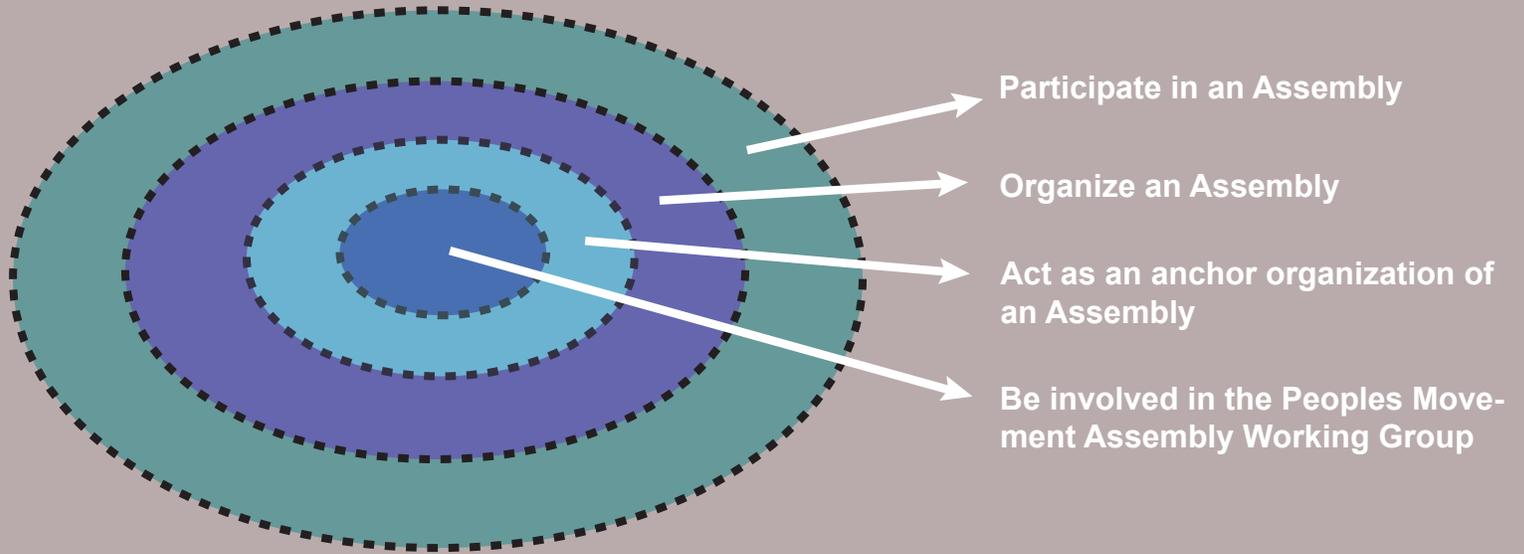
- *Where do various movements share common analysis of the big picture?*
- *What do we need to learn about different movements that can strengthen the work we are doing?*
- *Where are the specific frontlines that we can advance if we are more unified and coordinated?*



Atlanta Youth Education Justice Assembly
Atlanta, July 2011

WAYS TO BE INVOLVED

There are different ways of being involved in the Peoples Movement Assembly organizing process:



The Peoples Movement Assembly Working Group is a collaborative team of movement leaders from across the US who are facilitating the development of the assembly process. The working group provides documentation and support to anchor organizations interested in holding Peoples Movement Assemblies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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