

What We're Taking from 2020

Sustaining Ourselves and Our Movements

From housing to public health, community safety to democracy defense, 2020 was an intense and unrelenting year for organizing across every issue. Always leading with love and possibility, leaders of color across the Twin Cities mobilized our communities across issues and identities to advance bold visions for the future, while embracing and visibilizing an ethic of self-care and healing to sustain ourselves and our movements into 2021 and beyond. At our **December 2020 Actualizing Equity event**, we explored strategies and practices that we're carrying forward to ensure we never go back to a "normal" that isn't liberatory for both ourselves and our communities.

Speakers included

- » Gabriella Anaïs Deal-Márquez, Voices for Racial Justice
- » Brian Rosas, MN Youth Collective
- » Abdulrahman Wako, Union Park District Council
- » LyLy Vang Yang, Take Action MN
- » Eleonore Wesserle, Narrative Justice League / Dreams To Power

What We're Taking With Us from 2020



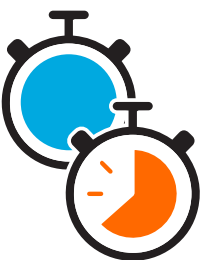
Reconnecting to our lineages, and reflecting on the strength and strategies of those who came before us who also moved through crisis

I'm really reflecting on the liberatory lineage of my family and revisiting how have our folks existed in crisis before and what are the lessons to be learned there? How has my lineage been connected to revitalization, to the land, to serve not just surviving but thriving? - *Gabriella Anaïs Deal-Márquez*



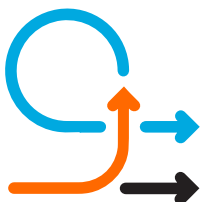
Articulating and taking action for what we truly desire and deserve

This year really challenged what I thought was possible. I never thought police abolition was a possibility and then, within this year, I saw that it could really be something that's possible, not only in my lifetime, but within the next decade. Before, when we came against the challenges of racial injustice, it felt like we would wait for our turn to be heard or seen. But this year I realized that, no, this is what my community wants to see, and we're not going to keep quiet anymore. - *Abdulrahman Wako*



Defying acceleration and urgency by slowing down and grounding in our bodies, our organizations and our communities

Norma Wong has been talking about how we are in unprecedented times of acceleration. Everything that was moving fast is moving faster. That impacts how we're experiencing this moment internally, in our physical bodies, and in community, as well. We can't take on the same amount of work as though these life changing things aren't happening around us. We have to remind ourselves to slow down enough to re-prioritize how we show up in community. - *Gabriella Anaïs Deal-Márquez*



Embracing constant change, and releasing perfectionism

This year required me to be nimble in ways that I've never experienced before, because all these pivots are the norm now. I've been thinking about how do I bring people into movement with all that is happening to us, and how do we care for each other along the way? For me, that has meant not being too precious about things and really releasing perfectionism. Times are so hard and things are so fragile, so how am I holding myself and other people in a way that is just deeply, deeply gentle? - *LyLy Vang Yang*



Finding the roles that serve and sustain our bodies — and our movements

With all the protests and actions, I felt that pressure to be everywhere all the time, even when my body was tired, when I couldn't really take anymore. I really learned that, to sustain the movement, there needs to be people coordinating rides and resources and where folks can drop off meals. There needs to be people checking in with their networks: Have you eaten? Have you scheduled that doctor's appointment? Those are parts of movement work that you can do from home. -Brian Rosas



Listening to and honoring our bodies

This year taught me that I really need to listen to and honor my body. In the world before, I really pushed myself. Like, if I had work, I was going to finish it that night. I was just constantly pushing my body to its limits, which was not healthy. In the new world that we are breathing life into, when I'm tired, I sleep. I love looking at the work of the Nap Ministry because dreams and rest are actually really important for imagining and building new worlds. -LyLy Vang Yang



Taking care of our minds

This year, I really paid attention to how information comes through my mind and changes how I feel in my body. I realized that the information I consume isn't always good for me and I need protect my mental space. I don't want to be over-reactive because that's not going to serve me in the long run. So I'm continuously regulating the information that comes to me so I can regulate my energetic state. -Abdulrahman Wako



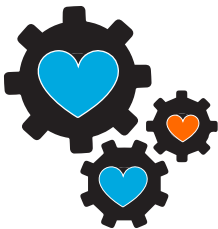
Actively and authentically engaging youth leadership

This year allowed us to really see the barriers in organizing. As we were working with 70 young people who wanted to get involved, we found that there were so many roadblocks. To build a sustainable movement, we really have to invest in these young people and their development, their leadership, and who they are as people. -Brian Rosas



Cultivating and centering community care

This year has really activated me to think abundantly and has sharpened my practice around community care. What do I have extra or enough of that I can share with other people? How can I help my neighbors understand the resources we have in our community and how they're unevenly distributed and how we fight for more even and fair distribution? Self care is essential, but, actually, at the root of what is keeping me alive is community care. -LyLy Vang Yang



Integrating care into our organizations and our organizing

At Voices, we'd been in a practice of grounding, healing and cultural strategy for a few years now, but this pandemic and the murder of George Floyd really forced us to reckon with, how do you embody healing strategy in real time? This year has made us ground collective care and community care in new ways across the board, within our organizing strategies, but also internally. We've been figuring out how do you honor care within your team as you're building the organizing? -Gabriella Anaïs Deal-Márquez

RESOURCES and additional reading

- » *reclaiming the right to fight, the right to love and everything fierce, you are mine and i am yours,* Susan Raffo
- » *Mapping our Social Change Roles in Times of Crisis,* Deepa Iyer
- » *Practicing Self Care checklist,* Norma Wong
- » *On healing justice and organizing,* Prentis Hemphill
- » *We Care For Us* digital care package, Take Action MN