



SOLIDARITY STANCES

A Resource for
Organizations and Movements
Navigating Authoritarian
Conditions

July 2025



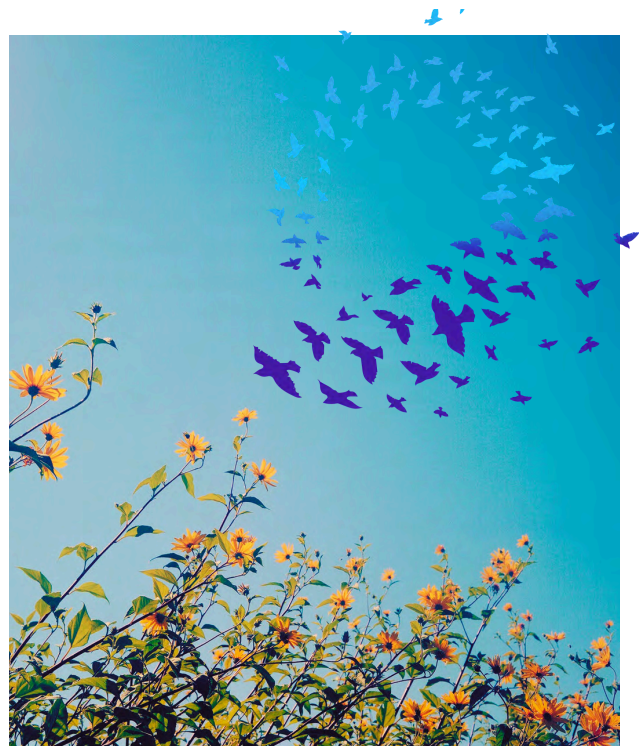
Building Movement Project
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SOLIDARITY IS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- p3** Introduction
- p5** How to use this resource
- p6** Step 1: Organizational self-assessment
- p9** Step 2: Solidarity Stances for consideration
- p15** Step 3: Evaluate and reconsider



INTRODUCTION

In today's political climate, where authoritarian threats are escalating and cutting across legal, cultural, economic and social arenas, many organizations and networks are grappling with hard questions:

- When do we speak out publicly?
- How do we express solidarity while also preserving our organizational and community safety?
- What conditions could support us in taking bolder stances and actions rooted in [transformative solidarity practices](#)?

As the harms we face are vast and intertwined, our solidarity practices must be equally expansive, discerning, coordinated, and intentional. Solidarity can become a strategy to distribute and withstand risk in these times. It can range in scope, from values-aligned narratives to collective legal challenges to financial scaffolding to strategic policy choices.

This resource, *Solidarity Stances*, offers a range of approaches that organizations and networks can use in times of heightened chaos and crisis to build deeper, more aligned forms of solidarity while also taking into consideration their unique circumstances, constraints, and possibilities.

The seven Solidarity Stances on the following pages invite us to move with intention and connection in order to



Protect one another



Disrupt authoritarian narratives and systems



Strengthen movement infrastructure



Deepen our collective capacity to come together – rather than defaulting to defensive postures or act in isolation

Under authoritarian conditions, solidarity could become even more strategic. It can become a deliberate practice of risk distribution, so that no single organization or leader becomes an isolated target. This might look like more resourced groups taking visible stands that shield grassroots partners, or coordinating public statements to make it harder for the state to attack the most vulnerable among us. Solidarity practice may also need to grow more clandestine, adaptive, and intentionally protected with infrastructure and networks. This may mean relying on encrypted communications, secure data storage, and discreet legal defense funds. It might also look like becoming more proactive, anticipating that the state will weaponize misinformation to delegitimize and diminish movements.

Together, these various forms of solidarity create an ecosystem greater than any single tactic. They resemble a constellation of fireflies in the dark – each small light flashing, pausing, then glowing again, signaling to one another across the night. Some lights are bold and bright, others pulse more faintly, some rest for a time in the shadows; but together, they form a network of connection that sustains, fortifies, and gives light, even as the landscape grows more dangerous.



Given that leaders and organizations are often operating from different levels of risk, visibility, protection, resourcing, and capacity, it is not possible for organizations to move in the same way in every instance. For example, some organizations may be positioned to take bold public stances while others work behind the scenes to shape narrative, offer legal defense, build safety networks, or tend to community grief and care. All of these contributions are necessary and vital.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

We invite you to use this resource by moving through the three steps below, and spending time with the considerations and reflection prompts provided.

You might use this exercise when a solidarity request is made or during a staff retreat or in a strategy session with partner groups. We also recommend pairing this resource with our [Solidarity Is Practice Guide](#) and [Constructing Solidarity Narratives in Challenging Times Guide](#). Together, these resources offer a layered approach to solidarity: supporting values-based action, narrative clarity, and strategic decision-making, especially when navigating repressive or high-risk conditions.

STEP 1

Assess your organization's capacity and risk tolerance for solidarity practice with the provided reflection questions.

STEP 2

Consider the Solidarity Stances (Defend, Demand, Document, Disrupt, Discuss, Design, Deepen) and potential strategies, and work through the reflection questions provided.

STEP 3

Evaluate and reconsider. As we lean into various solidarity stances, we will learn what feels right, what makes us pause, and what has changed in terms of our understanding of risk.

STEP 1

Assess your organization's capacity and risk tolerance for solidarity practice with the following reflection questions:

- ***What are our organization's biggest concerns around solidarity?*** For example, some organizations worry about losing funding, reputational harm, being targeted for investigations, or jeopardizing their nonprofit status.
- ***What could be the potential harms we face if we take a particular stance?*** For example, how might our programs, partnerships, community members, funding, and infrastructure be affected depending on the stance we take?
- ***What is our organization's capacity to manage any of these harms and absorb risk?*** For example, some organizations may be able to secure sufficient funding reserves, be able to form alternative structures, or be prepared to withstand negative public scrutiny and controversy.
- ***What programs or relationships must be protected—and where is the potential for greater risk?*** What could and should be risked in the name of solidarity? Some organizations may be ready to move more publicly than others.
- ***How aligned is our internal leadership around taking solidarity stances?*** Assessing alignment of board members, staff and advisors with solidarity stances can be a vital exercise to understand comfort and risk levels.
- ***What funding and legal constraints shape our choices?*** Some organizations that rely on federal funding for vital services or have delicate donor relationships may have different constraints than those who don't have those same considerations.
- ***Who are our closest partners?*** What do they need from us? What do we need from each other? Our partnerships might range from surface-level connections to long-term relationships built on trust. Nurturing and strengthening partnerships might support us in discerning when we might need to seek partner perspectives and consent before moving in a particular direction.



Use this space to answer the prompts on the previous page and capture any other questions or thoughts to discuss with your team or coalition members.

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SOLIDARITY IS

The seven Solidarity Stances invite us to move with intention and connection in order to

-  **Protect one another**
-  **Disrupt authoritarian narratives and systems**
-  **Strengthen movement infrastructure**
-  **Deepen our collective capacity to come together – rather than defaulting to defensive postures or act in isolation**

DEFEND



Solidarity through defense means using our organizational position and infrastructure to shield others who may be more vulnerable to threats.

DOCUMENT



Solidarity through documentation means helping to record, remember, and reveal. Whether through narrative, data, research, or art, documenting disrupts erasure and helps build collective memory and power.

DISCUSS



Solidarity through discussion means using our platform, influence, and voice to shift conversations in ways that benefit impacted communities and/or broader movements.

DEMAND



Solidarity through making demands means using our voice, platform, institutional access, and relationships to call for systemic change — not just for our own community, but in alignment with those most impacted.

DISRUPT



Solidarity through disruption means using our position to challenge systems and make it easier for those most affected to organize and take action.

DESIGN



Solidarity through design means experimenting with approaches and formations that can be adapted and shared across organizations and/or movements.

DEEPEN



Solidarity through deepening means using our position and influence to strengthen connections across the movement ecosystem.

STEP 2

Consider the following Solidarity Stances.



Solidarity through defense means using our organizational position and infrastructure to shield others who may be more vulnerable to threats. Even when we may not be the direct target of surveillance or investigation, we can still help to hold the line by standing up to threats in ways that help defend our rights, access, and institutions.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Offering physical sanctuary for targeted community members facing threats.
- Providing legal defense funds and/or access to legal counsel for targeted organizations.
- Using funds to provide a digital security audit to partner organizations.
- Translating “Know Your Rights” or mutual aid materials.
- Sharing vetted legal or safety resources – such as know your rights guides or digital security toolkits – while protecting the anonymity of the individuals or organizations that created them.
- Lending staff or infrastructure to support internal capacity needs for frontline groups.

Reflection questions:

- Where can we absorb risk to protect those who cannot?
- What protections (legal, narrative, physical) can we help create?



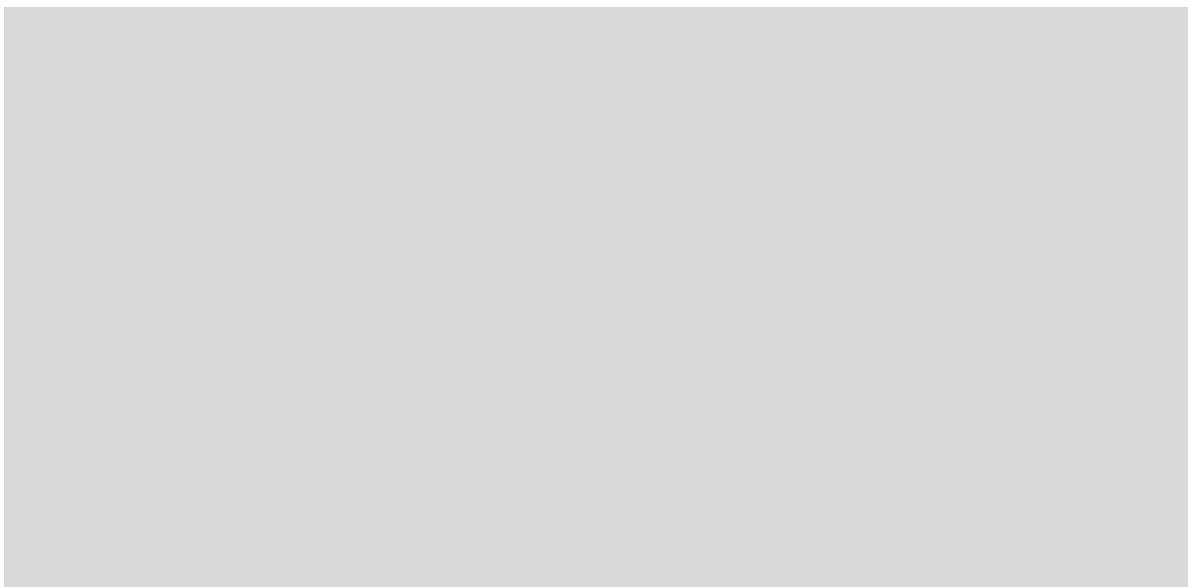
Solidarity through making demands means using our voice, platform, institutional access, and relationships to call for systemic change — not just for our own community, but in alignment with those most impacted. In this way, organizations can go beyond sharing generalized statements of support and advance clear, specific, and collective asks that reflect shared values and coordinated strategies.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Amplifying demands led by frontline partners, rather than substituting or issuing our own.
- Using our organization's access to decision-makers or media to uplift underrepresented or threatened voices.
- Compiling and sharing research or policy analysis that supports the demands of others.
- Co-organizing donor briefings, advocacy meetings, or petitions that build pressure around shared asks.
- Urging funders to increase flexible, long-term funding to frontline organizations moving these demands – especially those facing heightened political risk or criminalization.

Reflection questions:

- How are the demands we are making aligned with the people most impacted?
- How can we leverage our relationships, institutional access, and/or social capital to advance demands that others cannot safely make?





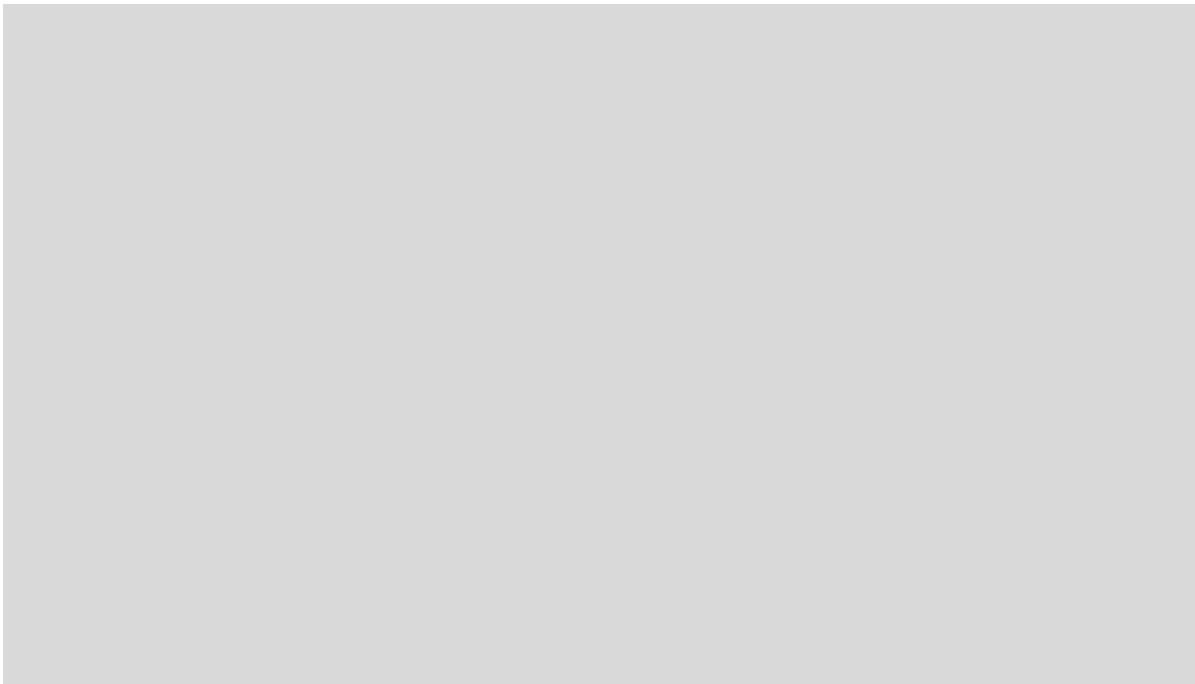
Solidarity through documentation means helping to record, remember, and reveal. Whether through narrative, data, research, or art, documenting is a way to disrupt erasure and help build collective memory and power.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Recording stories of harm or resistance with consent and care.
- Creating (after receiving permission from directly affected groups or individuals) visuals or social media assets that make others' stories more visible and accessible.
- Archiving materials that movements may need later, especially given the climate of censorship.
- Tracking policy shifts or organizing wins for future learning and mobilization.

Reflection questions:

- What stories, data, and/or strategies do we need to document now before they're erased?
- What would it look like to archive our learnings for future movements?
- How might our documentation support movement, media, or legal defense strategies?





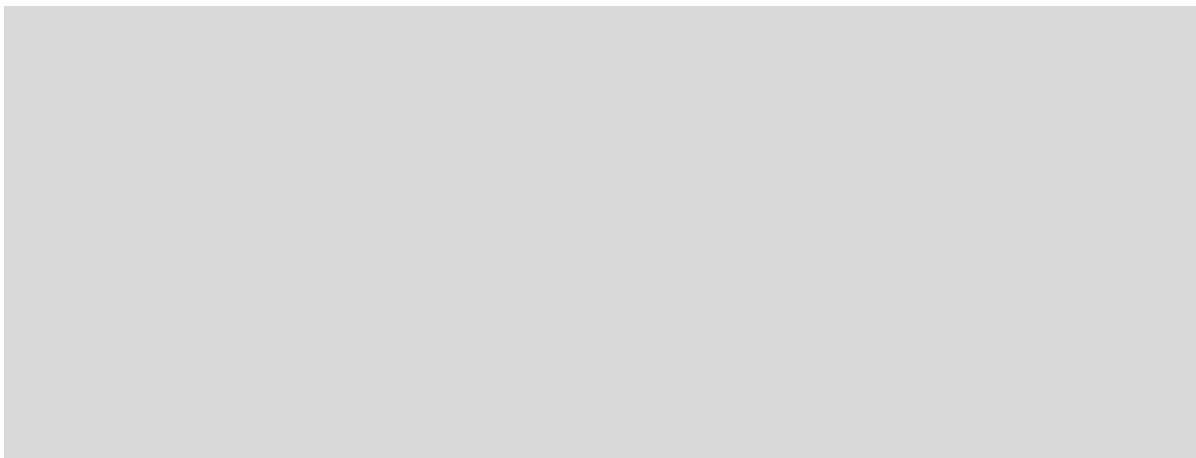
Solidarity through disruption means using our position to challenge systems and making it easier for those most affected to organize and take action. Some organizations may have more legal protections, a larger public platform, or stronger institutional relationships that allow for more disruptive tactics – and can absorb the consequences of taking such actions. When we use collective disruption as a solidarity strategy, it is important that we have permission from the most vulnerable and directly affected groups in our networks.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Initiating, joining, or supporting actions such as walkouts, sit-ins, digital disruptions, or coordinated protests that obstruct the operations of institutions causing harm – like detention centers, exploitative corporations, or legislative bodies advancing violent policies.
- Refusing funding, partnerships, or engagement with platforms that compromise or otherwise give in to authoritarian narratives and tactics – and being publicly clear about why we are taking this position.
- Using our platform to disrupt dominant and harmful narratives in the media or public discourse.
- Organizing visible direct actions that shift public conversation and create openings for organizing and advocacy.

Reflection questions:

- What are we willing and prepared to interrupt or risk so we are aligned with our values, especially in challenging times?
- What do we learn when we reflect on our own organizational, sector-wide, or philanthropic habits when it comes to exercising solidarity or protecting the status quo?





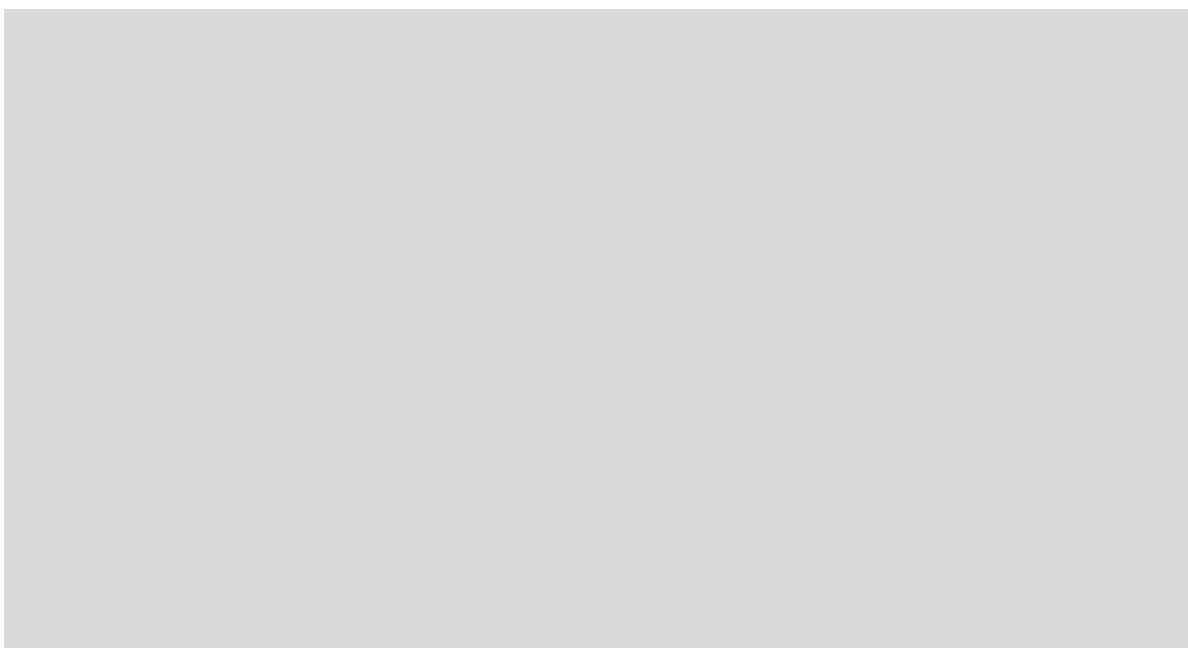
Solidarity through discussion means using our platform, influence, and voice to shift conversations in ways that benefit impacted communities and/or broader movements. We may have media access, cultural influence, or communication skills that can influence and reshape public understanding.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Hosting political education sessions or internal dialogues on complex strategies.
- Practicing generative conflict or accountability processes within our team or network to hone our positions and values.
- Inviting others into learning and co-creating actions and strategies, rather than shaming them into agreement.
- Making space to process grief, complexity, and contradiction, as well as our shifting political landscapes.

Reflection questions:

- How can our communication work expand what feels politically possible, rather than just criticizing what exists?
- What conversations are we uniquely positioned to have because of our audience, relationships, and institutional access? What conversations have we been avoiding that should be addressed in order to work with integrity and shared direction?





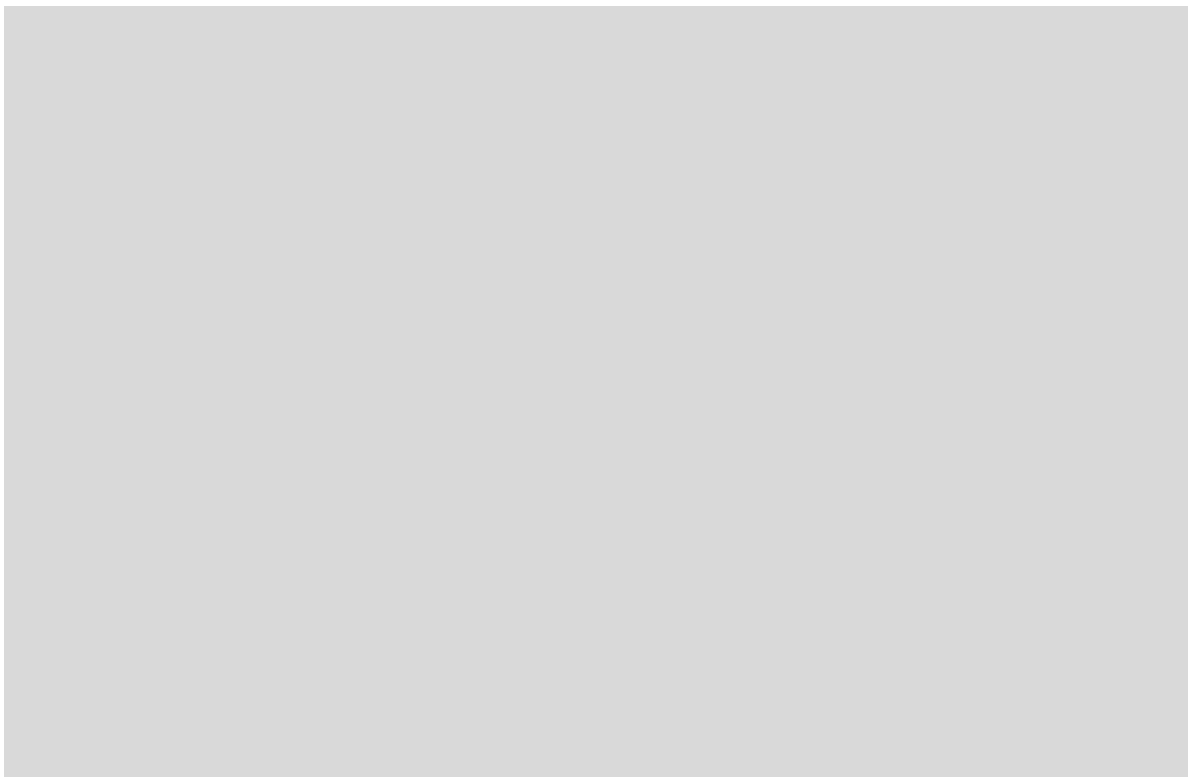
Solidarity through design means experimenting with approaches and formations that can be adapted and shared across organizations and/or movements. Our organization might have the capacity to pilot projects, do creative thinking, or test strategies that others can't risk trying first.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Co-creating new safety, healing, or governance models in collaboration with impacted communities.
- Designing trainings, toolkits, or digital platforms that support movement growth and absorption.
- Offering creative infrastructure—like grant-writing, tech tools, or art—to support shared visions and capacity.
- Prototyping local experiments that can be scaled or shared.

Reflection questions:

- What experiments could we try that challenge our own organizational assumptions about how change and solidarity happen?
- How might we open-source and share our experimental work so others can use and/or adapt it?





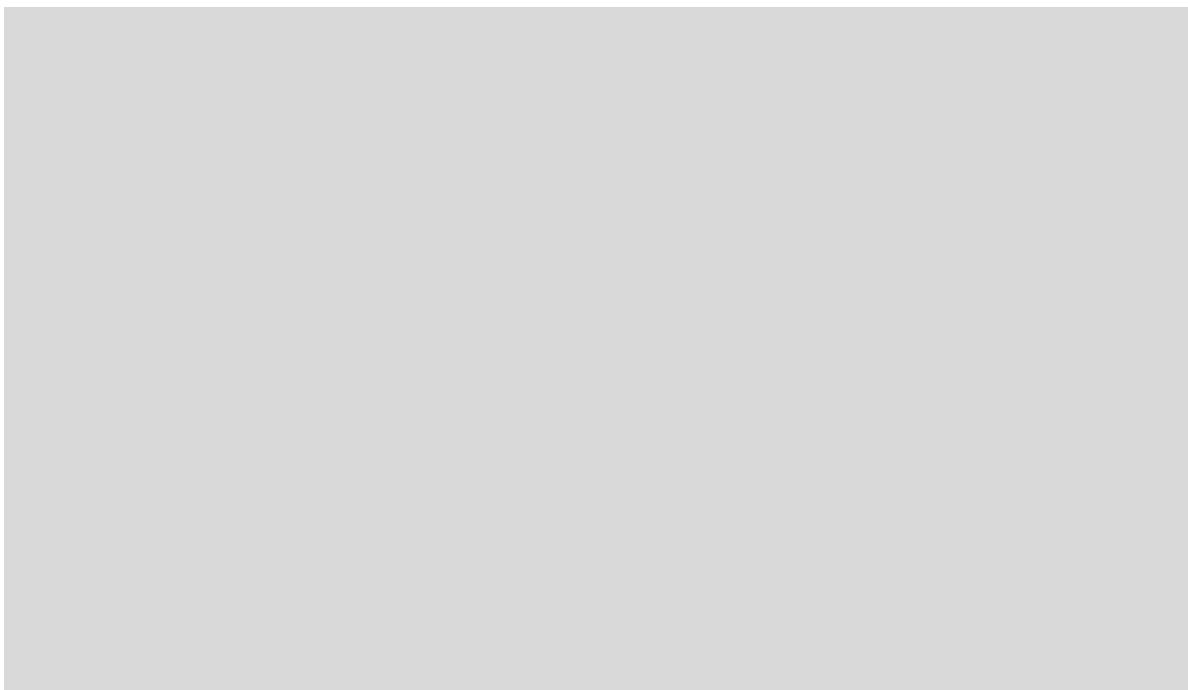
Solidarity through deepening means using our position and influence to strengthen connections across the movement ecosystem. We may have convening capacity, facilitation infrastructure, trusted relationships, or bridge-building skills that can enhance collective learning, coordination, and strategy.

Solidarity strategies might include:

- Offering political education, coaching, or healing spaces and tools.
- Holding internal/coalition-wide alignment processes, values, or strategy recalibrations.
- Connecting organizations with complementary strengths and needs.
- Providing network scaffolding and infrastructure during rapid response moments.
- Building long-term relationships across differences, outside of immediate campaigns or crises.

Reflection questions:

- What relationships and connections can we help facilitate that don't currently exist?
- What skills, resources, or knowledge can we help leaders and/or organizations share with each other rather than centralizing in our organization and/or movement?

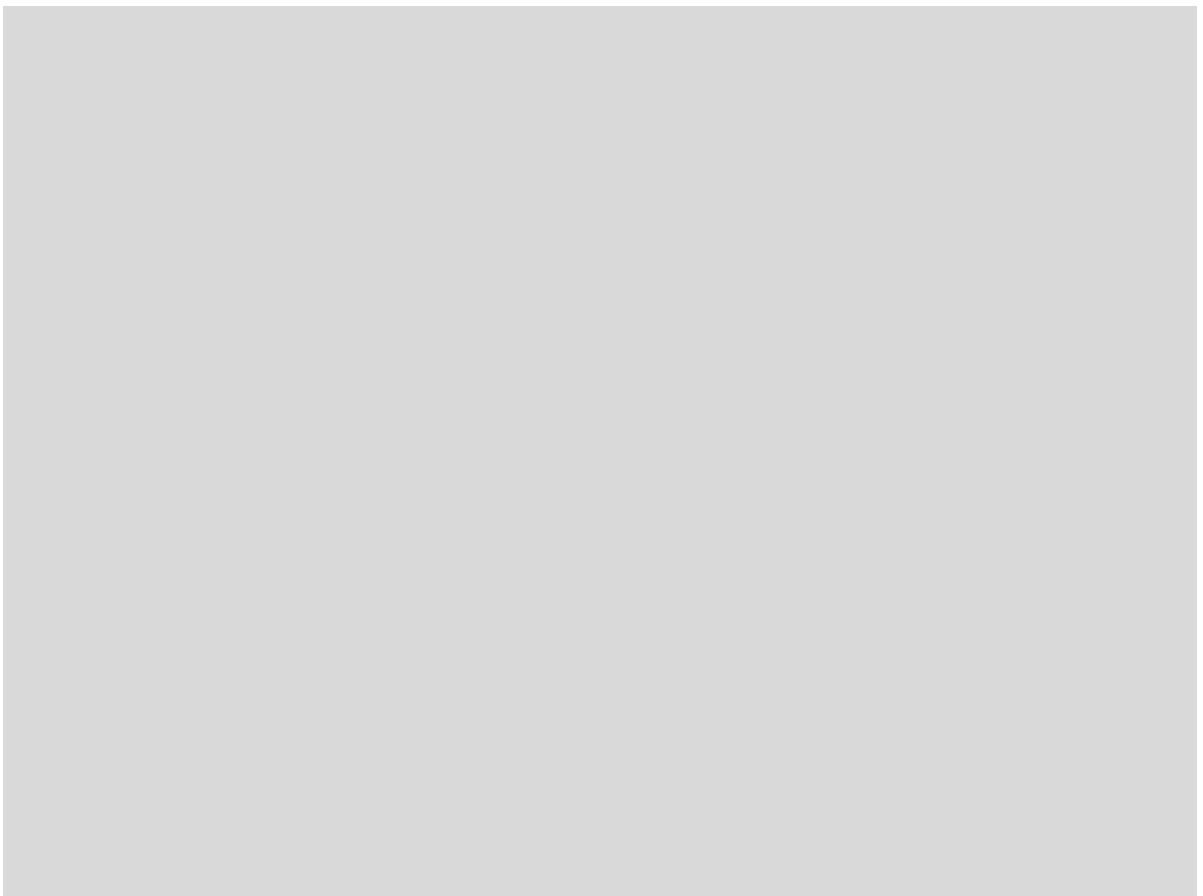


STEP 3

Evaluate and reconsider.

Solidarity is an iterative practice, one that becomes more effective, sustainable, and transformative when it happens time and again. As we lean into various solidarity stances, we will learn what feels right, what makes us pause, and what has changed in terms of our understanding of risk.

Beyond this single moment, what is our capacity for sustained engagement? Do we have the time, people, and infrastructure to not only take a stance, but also follow through with integrity, accountability, and care? As we gain more wisdom, our solidarity stances might shift. There are countless moments where solidarity can be practiced, and choosing one choice or action now does not mean that we won't have another decision point in the future. Being in close conversation with our partners can help us understand where possibilities emerge to find safety through solidarity.



About Building Movement Project and Solidarity Is

The [Building Movement Project](#) supports and pushes the nonprofit sector to tackle the most significant social issues of our times by developing research, creating tools and training materials, providing guidance, and facilitating networks for social change.

An initiative of the Building Movement Project, [Solidarity Is](#) generates tools, trainings, and narratives to facilitate transformative solidarity practices for movement building organizations and activists who are invested in meaningful social change.

We offer workshops to organizations, coalitions, and networks that are committed to social change, solidarity, and movement building, and are looking for language, resources, tools, and frameworks to strengthen their practices.

We hope the considerations and resources in this document are a useful offering. If you have questions about this document, or if you're interested in partnering with us for a workshop or training, please reach out to us at SolidarityIs@buildingmovement.org. You can also follow us at [@BuildingMovementProject](#) on Instagram for tips and ideas.



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