Will Work to End Systemic Oppression

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Challenges within Poverty

- Domestic Violence
- Decreased Resources
- Hunger
- Homelessness
- Medical Needs
- Mental Health Concerns
- Physical Isolation
- Teen Birthrate
- Depression
- Joblessness
- Physical Isolation
- Transitory
- Children at Risk
- Utility Needs
- Education Compromises
- Youth at Risk
- Dangerous Housing

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What is Oppression?

Iris Marion Young- *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990)

1. Exploitation
2. Marginalization
3. Powerlessness
4. Cultural Imperialism
5. Violence

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Oppression: Exploitation

Exploitation is a steady process of the transfer of the results of the labor of one social group to the benefit of another.

- Income/Wealth Inequality
- Suppression of Wages and Wage Theft
- Abandonment of the Workforce
  - Offshoring
  - Health Care/Benefits Reduction
  - Automation
  - De-unionizing
- Predatory Economic Practices

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Oppression: Marginalization

Marginalization is the expulsion of entire groups of people from participation in social life and thus potentially subjecting them to material depravation and extermination.

• Indigenous Groups
• LGBTQ Communities
  – Transpersons
  – Youth
• Homeless
  – Veterans
• Elderly
• Undocumented Immigrants

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Oppression: Powerlessness

Powerlessness is the lack of authority, the lack of power to make one’s own decisions, the lack of capacity to participate in the decisions that affect the conditions of one’s life.

• Felons/Incarcerated persons
• Children
• Workforce/Organizational Staff
• Population of the United States vis á vis the democratic process
  – Citizens United
• Sex workers and the sex trafficked

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Oppression: Cultural Imperialism

Cultural Imperialism is the experience of having one’s cultural practices and perspectives rendered invisible while simultaneously experiencing one’s group as stereotyped and marked out as Other.

- Immigrants
- People of Middle Eastern heritage
- Indigenous Groups
- Black Women and Black Men

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Oppression: Violence

Violence is random, unprovoked attacks on people or property with no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person.

- Law Enforcement
- Hate Crimes
- Women
- Transpersons
- Sex Workers

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Oppression

Small Group Discussion:
What form of oppression is most prevalent for the clients and communities with which you work?

How so?

(Exploitation, Marginalization, Cultural Imperialism, Powerlessness, Violence)

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De jure Oppression

Oppression that results from the construction of laws, policies, and formal practices.

Characteristics:
• Highly visible
• Manifest in established institutions
• Structurally reinforced and maintained

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De jure Oppression

De jure oppression is difficult to end and prevent because:

• Laws, policies, and practices can be deeply insulated by procedural and structural hurdles
• Substantial social movement/pressure is required
• Change is dependent on the application of resources, human capital, and timing
• Changing laws, policies, and practices does not require a change in values
• New laws, policies, and practices can be passed at any moment and rarely are social movements prepared to respond fast enough
• Complacency of the people

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De jure Oppression

Workshop Discussion:
What are examples of de jure oppression that we see happening in Arizona or in the United States right now?
Tackling de Jure Oppression

How do we as nonprofits become more engaged in tackling de jure oppression?

• Wide scale political activism
  – Voter registration and mobilization
  – Lobbying/Writing legislation
  – 501(c)(4)
  – Advocacy trainings/Activism trainings

• News creation
  – Op-eds, journalism, social media
  – We need to consider an alternate news source

• Challenge corporate practices
  – Encourage boycotts and divestments
  – Shed the light on oppression

• Change our internal practices that cause oppression
  – Wage structures, benefits
  – Organizational policies

• Education to Action
  – For the community
  – For our clients

• Support partners that are already doing this work
  – ACLU
  – Unions
  – Promise Arizona, Lucha, Puente, ACAA, Native Voices, Hero, etc.

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Tackling de Jure Oppression

Small Group Discussion:
What new steps can your organization take to further your efforts to end de jure oppression?

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De facto Oppression

Oppression that results from social practices, social beliefs, and behaviors.

Characteristics:

• Highly invisible
• Manifest through customs, attitudes, social positioning, power, and hierarchy
• Socially reinforced and maintained
De facto Oppression

De facto oppression is difficult to end and prevent because:

- Out of sight, out of mind
- The end of de facto oppression is thought to be directly linked to the end of de jure oppression
- Change is personal, connected to one’s position, and requires application over time
- Changing laws, policies, and practices only works if those changes are personally owned and socially enforced
- Change is dependent of changing one’s value system
- People tend to be socially isolated in their experiences
- Complacency of the people

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De facto Oppression

Workshop Discussion:
What are examples of de facto oppression that we see happening in Arizona or in the United States right now?
Tackling de facto Oppression

How do we as nonprofits become more engaged in tackling de facto oppression?

• Examine our value systems as individuals and as organizations
  – Do our value systems reflect our commitment to ending oppression?
  – Hierarchies

• Education for Liberation
  – For the community, for our clients, for ourselves
  – Spaces for dialogue

• Challenge corporate funding and foundation funding
  – Divorce our organizations from funders that we know are causing oppression
  – Push funders to include funding for tackling oppression

• Name and demand that de facto oppression be included in all strategies
  – Racism, Neoliberalism, Militarism
  – Organizationally specific focus oppressions

• Cross-oppression mobilization
  – Who can we partner with who is working on connected forms of oppression?

• Community-based accountability practices
  – Prioritize our responsibility to our communities over our funders
  – Community governance committees
  – Regular check-in with community members
  – Community ownership

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Tackling de facto Oppression

Small Group Discussion:
What new steps can your organization take to further your efforts to end de facto oppression?
Preparing for the Paradigm Shift

• Significant paradigm adjustment
• This is a long-term process.
• We must educate ourselves, check our values, and act.
• We are going to have to streamline, cutback, and reorganize.
• We will have to seriously examine and change our own connections to oppression.
• We need to be reframing the conversation through conferences, community forums, and organizational gatherings.
• We need to support one another.
• We need new partnerships with the communities, with universities, with government, and with businesses.

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The End

• Questions
• Social Justice Collective
• Workshops
• ACAA membership: jgustavson@azcaa.org