

12:00pm-1:30pm: Intersectionality: A brainstorm session on “fusion organizing”: how to connect the dots and foster collaboration between the anti-war movement and the movements for ecological, economic, racial, and social justice. Facilitator: [Greta Zarro](#). **In Butterfield Park.**

Meeting Notes:

Introduction to Intersectionality, by Greta Zarro:

- The notion of intersectionality, or fusion organizing, is about finding cross-connections between issues to build grassroots power as a unified mass movement.
- In many ways, the war system is at the heart, the nexus, of the social and ecological ills that we’re facing as a species and planet.
- War erodes civil liberties, destroys the environment, perpetuates xenophobia and racism, and drains our economy of badly needed funding.
- And while our society remains based on a war economy, government military spending actually increases economic inequality.
- It diverts public funds into privatized industries, concentrating the wealth in a small number of hands, from which a portion of it can be used to pay off elected officials, to perpetuate the cycle.
- War, and ongoing preparations for war, tie up trillions of dollars that could be reallocated to social and ecological initiatives, such as health care, education, clean water, infrastructure improvements, the just transition to renewable energy, providing livable wages, and more.
- So if we want to make progress on any of the “progressive” issues that we as activists are advocating for, the elephant in the room is the war system.
- I think there can be tendency in the “movement” to stay within our issue silos – whether our passion is opposing fracking or advocating for health care or opposing war.
- But by staying in these silos, we impede progress as a unified mass movement.
- Because what we’re really talking about when we advocate for any of these issues is a restructuring of society, a paradigmatic shift away from corporate capitalism and empire-building.
- A reorientation of government spending and priorities, which are currently focused on maintaining global economic and political hegemony, at the expense of the safety, human rights, and civil liberties of people abroad and at home, and to the detriment of the environment.
- This year, the 50th anniversary of MLK’s assassination, we did witness a breaking down of the activism silos with the renewal of the Poor People’s Campaign.
- I think the Poor People’s Campaign signals a hopeful directional change in the movement towards fusion organizing, or intersectional activism.

- We saw, with the 40 days of action this spring, all kinds of groups – from national environmental organizations to LGBT groups to social justice organizations and unions – coming together around MLK’s 3 evils – militarism, poverty, and racism.
- What these cross-connections help to establish is that fact that war is not an issue to be opposed on a case-by-case basis – such as those who mobilized in opposition to the war in Iraq, but then ceased efforts as the issue was no longer trending.
- Rather, what MLK’s framework of the 3 evils makes clear is my point about how war is the nexus of social and ecological ills.
- Key to World BEYOND War’s work is this holistic opposition to the institution of war at large – not only all current wars and violent conflicts, but the industry of war itself, the ongoing preparations for war that feed the profitability of the system (arms manufacturing, weapons stockpiling, expansion of military bases).

Group Discussion - Ideas Shared:

- Terminology: group discussed the accessibility of the term “intersectionality” and the need for an alternative term that is more accessible, less intellectual, more widely understood. Suggestions included: “fusion organizing,” “moral fusion,” working “in solidarity,” “collaboration.”
- Can we use the collaboration of the indigenous and environmental communities as a model to follow for the anti-war movement?
- Importance of the connections between war and environment
- Is capitalism the core issue to rally around?
- Calling in vs. calling out: forgiving mistakes and addressing challenges in a way that makes people feel accepted, not ostracized for mistakes
- How to address generational gaps and how language/terminology changes and develops over time (e.g. terminology used in the past may not be widely accepted in activist circles today)
- Discussion of use of gender pronouns when doing introductions to acknowledge fluidity of gender and create a safe space
- “Meet people where they’re at” - listening to people’s concerns and needs and tapping into their motivations, be empathetic.
- Discussion of how peace activists in the peace/antiwar movement seem generally informed not only about issues of war and militarism, but also other issues in the activist movement at large, such as environmental, economic, gender, and racial issues. There is a need to broaden outside perceptions of the antiwar/pro-peace movement to illustrate the multi-issue importance of war abolition, and to characterize the peace movement in a broader framework beyond pacifism/nonviolence. War abolition movement is also about environmental, economic, racial, and social justice.
- Does the mass media discourage intersectionality/fusion organizing? Does it want to keep activists “in their silos” to weaken the movement?
- Discussion of the women’s marches/women’s movement as being intersectional/multi-faceted. But did the women’s movement have clear policy goals, or was the message broad but vague? Poor People’s Campaign as multifaceted but also clearly focused on specific policy goals.

- How do we build solidarity across issues/movements, without appearing to co-opt other people's movements/issues? E.g. avoiding "white knighthood": privileged white folks telling communities of color what they need to do to solve their issues.
- How to build collaborations between issues, without negating individual or group identities
- How do we build off of the strong anti-gun "March for Our Lives" movement in the U.S. and elsewhere to frame anti-gun activism as disarmament/anti-war activism?
- If all NGOs collaborated together, our movement would be a strong political force to contend with.
- How do we connect with communities who are struggling to meet their day-to-day needs (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) and who don't perceive war abolition activism as connected to their issues? How do we bridge these connections by illustrating that government military spending is the elephant in the room hindering our society's ability to meet its needs (such as healthcare, clean water, food, functioning infrastructure, education, renewable energy, livable wages and employment)? E.g. only 1.5% of global military spending could end starvation on earth.
- Messaging that illustrates the "co-benefits" of one issue on other issues (e.g. how reallocating military spending to other needs would not only reduce warfare and violence, but co-benefits could include creating more jobs and re-investing that money in other needs, like healthcare, education, renewable energy, etc.)
- Changing the narrative - poverty as a systemic problem, not the fault of individuals.
- A simple message repeated can help change the narrative.