



Southerners On New Ground

The beliefs our work is based on...

As SONG founder Mandy Carters says, “We are about *justice* not *just us*.” Our organizing always strives to expand the scale at which our justice work is liberating our communities. Understanding it takes more than one leader or one organization to do this is an important part of movement building. One of SONG’s roles is to bring LGBTQ people further into the struggle for liberation for *all* people. If we want to build a broad-based movement for justice across many different communities, we need to articulate clearly what we believe. In that spirit, we believe:

- Every person is worthy of dignity and respect.
- We are all part of one another.
- People are experts on their own lives and have the right to self-determination. It is through people’s stories that we learn the conditions needed for change, hope, resiliency, and survival.
- Community Organizing is the best way we know to Build Power for oppressed people. SONG supports organizing that builds collective power and leadership among all involved and that begins with people who are most targeted by injustice.
- Race, Class, Culture, Gender and Sexuality are intrinsically connected. Oppression is systemic and intersectional, as are its methods and the people targeted by it. Alignment and solidarity among those who experience different forms of injustice provide the possibility of broad-based social change.
- Unjust power divides and harms us. Shared power and resources are the foundation of liberation built on justice. As Gandhi said: “Every step towards liberation must have liberation in it.”
- There is no liberation, not even survival, in isolation. Our liberation depends on us coming together across lines of difference. Our hope for change is bringing people together in multi-issue, multi-cultural community organizing.
- People who are multiple identities are often asked to fragment themselves across issues of race, class, culture, gender, ability, and sexuality. We believe everyone should be able to bring their full selves to this work.
- In Les/Gay/Bi/Trans/ Organizing; people of color, women, trans people, rural people, immigrants and low-income people are often marginalized. We believe WE must be central.

- Attacks on Les/Gay/Bi/Trans people threaten the entire social change agenda, and we work to put LGBTQ issues into a rightful place. Likewise, classism, racism and ableism threaten the LGBTQ movement. We work to put all issues of justice in their rightful place.
- Rural areas and small towns are integral to building a strong movement and we work to bring appropriate resources and strategies to rural areas, as they are traditionally under-resourced.
- SONG develops spaces—of mind, body, and spirit—and practices that welcome each person’s whole self and identities, create a culture of hope, encourage the development of one’s best self, and inspire vision for the combined individual and collective good.
- Our work is about transformation to a just, fair and liberated society that meets the needs of its people. SONG chooses to organize around longing, desire, and hope before anger and fear. Sometimes we are angry and heart broken, but our work comes from a place of celebration and love for our communities.

**Have questions, need support or technical assistance on this tool?
Contact us at ignite@southernersonnewground.org or 404-549-8628**