



Southerners On New Ground

How Can We Reshape Power?

SONG believes part of our shared political education has much to do with what POWER is, its methods, and its effects. Here are some ways that SONG feels we can work to re-shape power. But, this is just a beginning list...

- Spending privilege (the strategic use of our privilege in service to our beliefs and values)
 - Middle class working in solidarity with working class people. For example, in reproductive justice rights, to fight against forced sterilization in addition to fighting for access to abortion... as an example of an issue where money equals more rights and access.
 - Middle class people fighting for equal schools, so that access to a fair and equitable education isn't connected to family income only, but to a broader access to quality education.
- Choosing where we identify our power
 - Within us we all carry more than one identity, and usually one of them carries more power. For example, most people in this country identifying as 'middle class' versus relating to the struggles of working class people, so we often end up voting against our own best self-interest by not standing in solidarity with people most affected.
- Alignment / Solidarity with Oppressed people (intersectional)
 - For example, the building and investing in Multi-lingual social justice spaces as a way to shift power
- Working across issues
 - Many of us carry multiple issues we are affected by. For example, how it's in the best interest of every person to work on health-care, because it's an issue that affects everyone. So we might come to that as someone with an African American *and* woman's perspective or as someone with a gay white man's perspective. It is the opposite of 'identity' based politics. It is the recognition that issues intersect in OUR lives, and the commitment to bridge beyond who WE are as people towards a shared imperative.
- Collective Action
 - Political education
 - Research
 - Democratic Practice
 - Art / Culture / Cultural Reclamation work
 - Community Rituals and Practices
 - Gandhian practices in our families and work relationships (Be the change we want to see in the world: that every step in liberation has to have liberation in it).
 - Organizing to confront power, to create new ways of being in community together, and organizing in response to longing, desire, and hope not just fear and anger. For example, the mobilizing of resentment post de-segregation vs. organizing that is grounded in people's hopes & longings for whole communities.

- Sharing power and resources: common needs of all democratic, participatory groups:
 - A magnet for involving people (meaningful content and activities, good relationships, full spectrum dignity and respect, hope, joy, and fun—for starters)
 - Shared values and principles
 - Shared leadership, leadership development, political education and analysis
 - Shared decision making, clarity & agreement about goals, strategies, practices
 - Skills building for everyone. Especially in 'leadership' skills that are critical for group cohesion, such as facilitation and documentation.
 - Group / individual responsibility
 - Group / individual accountability
 - Fair and smart resource use and distribution
 - Clear communication and transparency
 - Timely & Principled Conflict resolution
 - Attention to mind, body, spirit--joy, fun, desire, acknowledgement, belonging

At SONG we are striving beyond individual ways of coping for true collective and group sustainability that is created from all of the above.

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