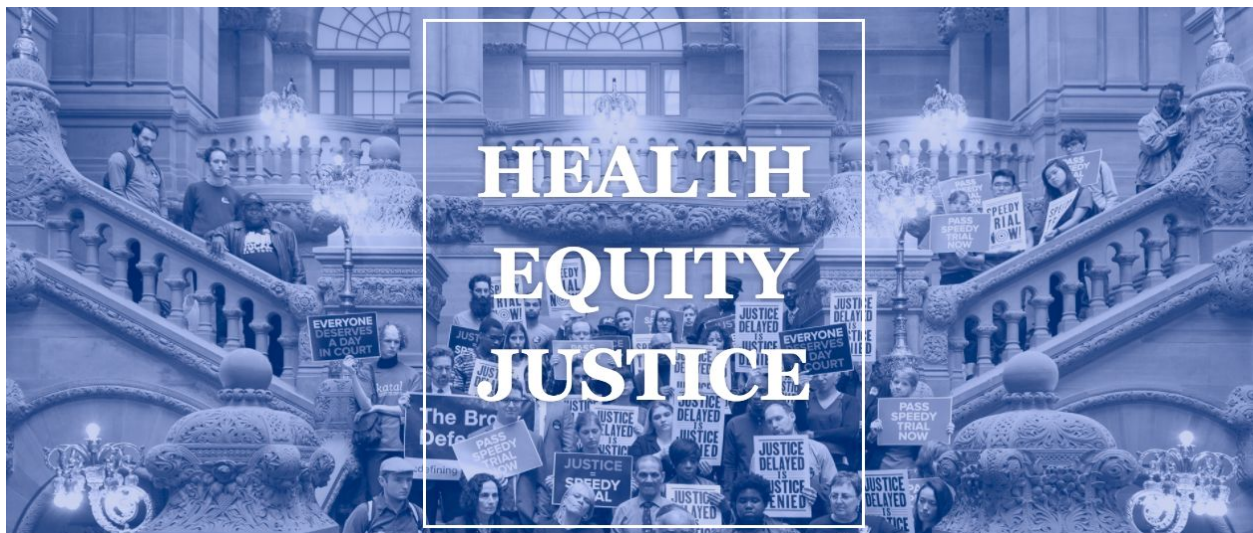


May 8, 2020

Katal Weekly Update

Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice



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Building Power During #COVID19

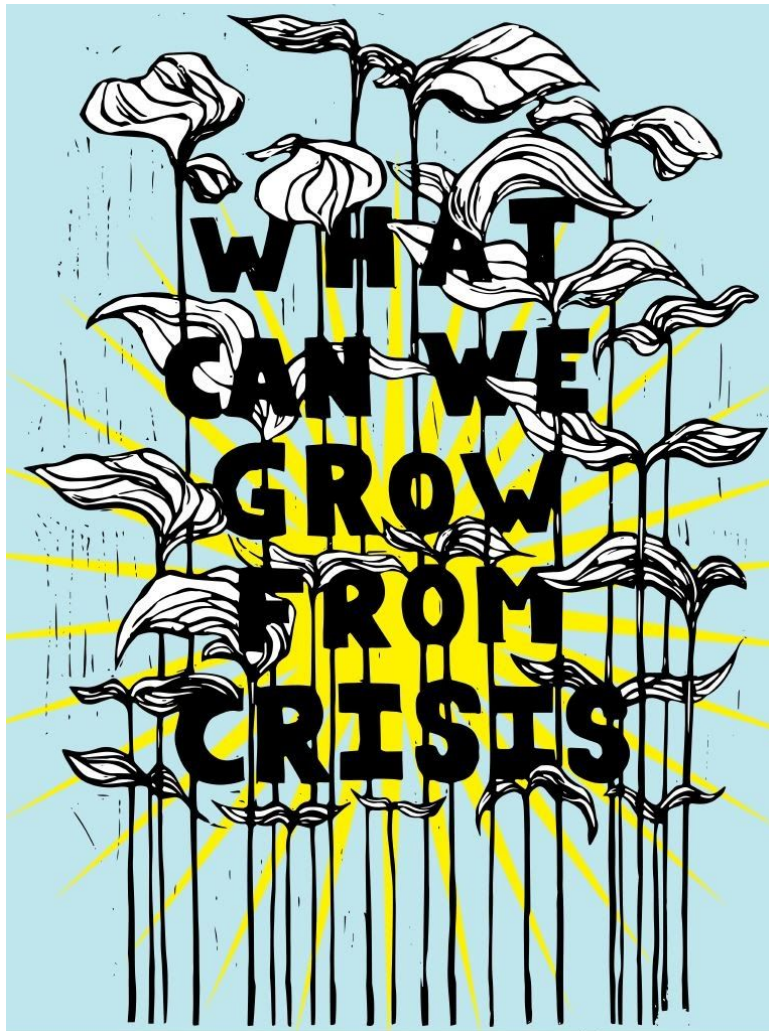


Image by Pete Railand, of [@justseeds.org](https://www.justseeds.org).

During these uncertain times, Katal has shifted our organizing from in-person relational organizing to online relational organizing. We're now all on a lot more Zoom calls. Done effectively, we can continue to build with each other even via video.

Over the last week, we've organized and/or facilitated a handful of calls that really boosted our energy and have sparked new connections and actions. Here's a quick run down:

Opportunities to Pivot

Last Friday, in collaboration with **Community Catalyst**, we hosted a timely virtual panel discussion, *Opportunities to Pivot: Advocating for Future Needs After COVID-19*, with more than 140 people registered to join. In the face of this crisis, what changes are being made that are useful, and how can we make those changes “stick”? And what is not being done that needs to be addressed? The conversation explored the shifts being made and ongoing challenges in the context of COVID-19, relating explicitly to accessing housing and healthcare (including Medication-Assisted Treatment); shifts to harm reduction practices; decarceration; shifting towards telehealth; and more. The panel was co-facilitated by Katal’s Lorenzo Jones, and Alexis Major of Community Catalyst. [Speakers](#) included: **Tracie Gardner**, Legal Action Center; **Malika Lamont**, WA State LEAD Expansion Team, VOCAL WA; **Alice Dembner**, Community Catalyst; **Sean Fogler**, PA Harm Reduction Coalition; **Shelly Moeller**, LEAD Technical Assistance; and **Devin Reaves**, PA Harm Reduction Coalition. Thanks to all the speakers and the participants!

An additional convening in the series is being explored-- stay tuned! And if you’d like more details, please contact Yonah Zeitz at yzeitz@katalcenter.org.

CT Statewide Criminal Justice Reform Call

Yesterday, we facilitated our monthly *CT Statewide Criminal Justice Reform Monthly Call*, with more than 60 people registering to join. During this timely discussion, we heard presentations from our colleagues about the work they’ve been doing during the COVID-19 crisis, including: **Kathy Flaherty**, CT Legal Rights Project; **Ben Howell and Gregg Gonsalves**, Yale School of Medicine; **John Lugo**, Unidad Latina en Acción; **Melvin Medina**, ACLU-CT; and **Anthony Luther**, Center for Rational Justice Studies. These monthly calls keep the movement connected across CT as we work to end mass incarceration. You can join us for our next CT Statewide CJ Reform Call on Thursday, June 4th, at 11 a.m. EST by registering [here](#).

#LessIsMoreNY Campaign Update

Also yesterday, with our partners **A Little Piece of Light** and **Unchained**, we hosted a #LessIsMoreNY campaign update. Over 140 people registered for the call, and presenters included Katal member **Nico C.**, who shared his experience of being on parole and being sent back to prison for 12 months for consuming alcohol. During a pandemic where hundreds of thousands of people are dying, and practicing social distancing is one of the key ways to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, it is unfathomable that lawmakers and the Governor are not taking all possible measures to release as many people as possible, including passing #LessIsMoreNY - which would further decarcerate New York. You can read the bill language and see the bill sponsors by clicking the bill links - #LessIsMoreNY Act ([S.1343C](#) –Benjamin / [A.5493B](#) –Mosley). Here’s some additional details and action items about #LessIsMoreNY:

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- **Fact sheet + Sign on Letter:** Here's our [fact sheet](#) about the bill, and our [sign-on letter](#), which includes over 100 groups and officials
 - **Join the sign on letter:** If your group would like to join the sign-on letter, please fill out this [short form](#) or email Yonah Zeitz at yzeit@katalcenter.org .
 - **Take action online:** Use this online tool to [take action now](#) by calling, emailing, and tweeting Governor Cuomo and your lawmakers to immediately pass the #LessIsMoreNY Act. You can take all three actions in about five minutes!
 - **If you are on parole, or know someone on parole, and want to get involved:** Please be in touch! kthompson@katalcenter.org.
 - **Next campaign update zoom call:** Please join us for the next Campaign Update - Thursday, 2 p.m. June 4, 2020. Register at the link below:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIVd-2grj8jE9aa46P-WqwxL7DokxTOxUZU>

Finally -- our next **New York State Criminal Justice Reform Call** is Thursday May 14, 2020, 12 - 1 p.m. If you want an update about the fight to end mass incarceration in New York, this is a great call to join. **Register [here](#).**

Please be safe out there and take care of each other. Keep practicing social distancing, wash your hands, and check in on your neighbors. If you want to get involved, learn more about our work, or just connect, please don't hesitate to reach out - we're online and on socials via [@katalcenter](#).

Katal works to strengthen the people, policies, institutions, and movements that advance health, equity, and justice for everyone. Join us: web, Twitter, Facebook! Email: info@katalcenter.org. Phone: 646.875.8822.