

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE: GENERAL TIPS

Note: the text and links provided in the Curriculum document serve to familiarize you (the facilitator) and any other teach-in organizers with the material we hope to cover in the teach-ins. Each section can be printed out and read/studied as part of the teach-in itself, but it doesn't necessarily have to be. Perhaps you know your group is already very familiar with some of the concepts presented. Or perhaps the exercises themselves provide enough information to get your group engaged and talking about the issues. It's up to you. You know your audience best! And you know the time constraints of your particular event.

First-time facilitator or need a refresher? [Here are some great guidelines](#) and tips from the Aorta collective about how to be a great facilitator and create an open and safe space for participation.

Framing: the way you “frame” each exercise you do as part of this teach-in can significantly influence the mindset and the learning of participants. So pay attention to how you set up and introduce each exercise and make sure any instructions are clear to all participants. Also note that this particular teach-in may bring up more questions than answers--and that's a good thing! Much of this material may be newer to participants and a teach-in will likely only be the beginning of the process of identifying, considering, understanding new concepts and acting on them as they pertain to system change and alternative system models.

Debrief and evaluate: After the exercises, videos, debates and/or other activities you take on as part of your teach-in, it's **important to debrief with your group** to see what people's take-aways are from the teach-in and also where you might want to **follow up** as a community. Your debrief can be as simple as a participatory re-cap or as complex as creating a visual representation of the content and learning shared during the teach-in.

For a participatory re-cap, all you need to do is set aside the time to ask all participants to reflect on what they've learned over the course of the teach-in (this can be during a coffee break, meal or just the initial 5 minutes of the debrief). Then do a “popcorn” asking participants to throw out examples of what they've learned or other ways in which the teach-in impacted them. You, the facilitator, should collect these insights or have another volunteer help you in writing up the main ideas of what gets shared. Ideally, you can take a picture of this information, or type it into a document and share with all participants after the teach-in. **This helps make sure the learning from the teach-in lasts!**

We will soon post a template for a participant evaluation form that we encourage you to use to gather information about the success of the teach-ins and help inform our collective work for system change.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE: EXERCISES FOR YOUR TEACH-IN

PART I: THE SYSTEM QUESTION ~ HOW TO FACILITATE THIS SECTION OF THE CURRICULUM

Goals of this exercise: To familiarize everyone with the idea that our political economy is a system that would have to be fundamentally altered if we want to see real changes that impact our daily lives for the better. Utilizing one main example--the prison industrial complex (PIC)--the exercise engages audiences with a tangible example of how structures and systems (socio-cultural as well as political and economic ones) created a major problem for our society and particularly for the communities most affected. The analysis helps participants move beyond analysis of the problem and start to see how lasting solutions would have to be systemic as well.

Time needed: 1-2 hours

Materials needed: copies of the questions from Step 2 for each group (on paper or written in a place all can see), a whiteboard, butcher paper, computer and projector or other place to keep notes that the whole audience can see, pens and paper for each group to take notes, a projector and internet for streaming the video.

Directions:

Introduce this exercise: We're all here today because we sense--or know--that there is something deeply wrong with the system we currently live in. It wasn't designed to meet the needs of the majority, but of a select few. It was designed to maximize GDP and project strength, but not to invest in our communities and daily well-being. To get us started in this exciting teach-in, we're going to take a little time to look at just what a system is.

- *Step 1: (5 minutes) Start by asking your whole audience what they think of when they hear the word "system" and how they think a system might work. Collect a few answers and write them up on the board for all to see, or put them on a piece of large paper on the wall for all to reflect back on throughout the duration of the teach-in.*
- *Step 2: Have participants split up into smaller groups (you can have as few or as many groups as you'd like, depending on the size of your audience and the time you allow for the exercise). Give each group a copy of the following questions and 15-20 minutes to discuss them:*
 - . Questions: 1) what issues or concerns bring each of us here today? 2) how do we think these different issues are connected? 3) how does our current political-economic system address these concerns (or not)?



- *Step 2:* have groups come back together and spend 10-15 minutes sharing answers and reflecting on the answers of different groups. Write answers where all can see them throughout the teach-in to reflect upon.
- *Step 3:* show the [Naomi Murakawa interview](#) (the first 15 minutes of the video are the interview and most relevant to this exercise. However, you may decide that the video as a whole--25 minutes long--would be very interesting to your group) and ask participants to think about how Ms. Murakawa's assertions address systemic issues as they watch.
- *Step 4:* 15-30 minute discussion post-video: first ask the group whether their answers to question 3 posed in Step 2 has changed at all since watching the video (remember, it was: How does our current political-economic system address these concerns (that brought you here today) or not?). Further questions could be: What elements of a system are mentioned in this interview? How does Ms. Murakawa suggest that different elements of our political-economic and social systems work together to produce the prison industrial complex and/or the laws and customs that make it possible? Why do you think that reforms to the PIC made to date have not changed the overall situation for the communities most affected?
- *Step 5:* Wrap up--keep what you've seen in mind as the teach-in progresses so we can think about how we might be able to change the PIC system based on what we learn.

PART II: SYSTEM CHANGE IN HISTORY ~ HOW TO FACILITATE THIS SECTION OF THE CURRICULUM

Goal of this exercise: To identify and investigate one major problem (climate change) created by a grand historical shift and to look at that problem through the eyes of one of the communities most affected by it. Also to use this information to continue to think about what changes might be necessary to “fix” this problem and/or stop it from happening again.

Time needed: 1- 1 ½ hours

Materials needed: copies of pages 10-15 of [this exercise](#) guide, copies of [this excerpt](#), whiteboard, flip chart or blackboard, markers

Directions: Introduce the exercise: Indigenous peoples have been particularly affected by the major shifts in the global political economy and have organized around climate change, among other issues. In the context of UN climate change talks, indigenous peoples have issued declarations that highlight their systemic analysis of the problem and of potential solutions. Distribute [this excerpt of the 2011 “Declaration of the Indigenous Peoples of the World to the UNFCCC COP 17 International Indigenous Peoples’ Forum on Climate Change”](#) to get your audience started considering the systemic elements of the problem indigenous peoples describe.

- Step 1: Explain to the group that we are to imagine we each represent a different indigenous group present at an upcoming Climate Change Forum. Have them read the excerpts of the 2011 Declaration saying that they are to refer back to this previous joint statement in their upcoming negotiations.
- Step 2: (20 minutes) Split the group into 4-6 smaller groups and distribute copies of the handouts from pages 10-15 of [this guide](#). Ask each group to study the background sheet for their assigned indigenous group and work together to write down, a) the primary concerns of their community relevant to the climate talks b) the factors that they believe influenced the structural changes that have affected their community in this way c) the factors that could lead to another structural change that would make it possible to maintain their traditional lifestyle to the greatest extent. d) a list of demands/requests to the international community based on the answers to part “c”
- Step 3: (15 minutes) Have each group write their “demands” on a whiteboard or large pieces of paper displayed for all to see. Cross out duplicates and circle/highlight common themes. Leave these visible for the duration of the activity. Ask the group as a whole if--from the point of view of their indigenous communities--these demands can be met without structural political-economic changes.
- Step 4: (15 minutes) Ask the whole group to identify a) opportunities/political-economic openings that would allow for these demands to be met and b) limitations/challenges that would need to be overcome for those demands to be met.
- Step 5: (10 minutes) Before moving on to the next section of the curriculum, ask the group as a whole if any of the opportunities or limitations they just named are also applicable to other demands that your campus or community might have. How about in the case of the prison industrial complex that we looked at in part 1? If any common opportunities or limitations are identified, write them on a separate piece of paper/section of the whiteboard, and keep them visible as you work through the remaining exercises.

PART III: ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMIC MODELS AND APPROACHES ~

HOW TO FACILITATE THIS SECTION OF THE CURRICULUM

Goal of this exercise: Introduce new system models to your group and begin to understand the possibilities and/or challenges they pose for systemic

Time needed: 2+ hours

Materials needed: copies of the 1-page system model summaries that you chose to use in your exercise, copies of “Principles for the Next System”, flip charts or butcher paper, markers, crayons and/or colored pencils



THE NEXT
SYSTEM

TEACH-INS

PART II: SYSTEM CHANGE IN HISTORY

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Directions:

Preparation: Put large pieces of paper on the walls or have various flip charts available. Have a bucket of markers, crayons or colored pencils at each flip chart or piece of butcher paper.

Make copies of the handout “[Useful Principles](#)” and distribute to all participants and/or make a slide or poster with the principles that all can see during the exercise. Make copies of each of the models you will be using for the exercise (depending on the size of your audience and the number of groups you want to make).

- *Step 1. Explain that the goal of this session is to envision and explore possibilities for the Next System. In order to get started, ask the whole group to think about what their ideal country looks like, how it operates, and how their communities will interact. Give your group 10 minutes to grab markers and illustrate that new system anyway they'd like--images of an ideal neighborhood, school, government, representations of what that system will provide, etc.*
- *Step 2: Split your audience up into small groups and assign each group a system model (you can pick as many as you'd like based on the size of your group and the time you have). Give them 15-20 minutes to study the model and a practical example of how that model has been at least partially implemented in society.*
- *Step 3: (30 minutes-1 hour) Ask each group to discuss how their assigned model addresses the following (you may want to print copies of this or project them onto a large screen):*
 - . The environment: Does the model address issues of sustainability, regenerative and/or resilient ecologies, and environmental stewardship? How does the model address or not address these societal needs?
 - . Place: Does the model provide for an appropriate scale for communities, is it decentralized? how does it address subsidiarity?
 - . Community: Does the model address solidarity? the values of caring and sharing? what link does it make between local and global needs?
 - . Common Good: Does the model embody economic democracy? Is it cooperative? Does it maximize well-being over growth? Does it provide for the basic needs of the community?
 - . Justice: How does the model exhibit fairness, equality, human dignity and/or diversity?

. Democracy: In which ways is the model deliberative, participatory and/or people empowered?

- Step 4: (30minutes) Bring the groups back together and have each group present a) what they think are the major advantages and disadvantages to that model b) what changes they might make to the model to make it better. The facilitator should take notes that everyone can see.
- Step 5: (30 minutes) the whole group asks questions of the other groups and debate the merits of each model presented.
- Step 6: (10 minutes) Ask each participant to reflect back on the drawing/visual representation they made at the beginning of the exercise. Does the model they examined share many characteristics with their drawing? Would they alter their drawing at all after having had this discussion?

PART IV: HOW TO CHANGE A SYSTEM ~ HOW TO FACILITATE THIS SECTION OF THE CURRICULUM

Goal of this exercise: To familiarize ourselves with the different concepts of system change and begin to relate various strategies to the outcomes we might like for our community/society.

Time needed: 45 minutes-1 hour

Materials needed: summaries of the strategies you pick (taken from the curriculum)

Directions:

Pick any three of the following strategies: reform, revolution, non-reformist reform/structural reform, interstitial transformation, symbiotic transformation and evolutionary reconstruction. Also pick one of the following issue areas: racial justice and mass incarceration, climate change and ecological destruction, inequality and access to resources.

- Step 1: Announce the issue area this session will focus on tackling
- Step 2: split the room into 3 groups and assign each group one of the strategies you chose.
- Step 3: give each group 20 minutes to craft an argument for why their strategy would be best for creating the fundamental changes needed to attack the problem you've chosen.

- *Step 4: give the groups 20 minutes to debate their positions (more or less 3-5 minutes each to state their argument, 5 minutes for questions and rebuttals, 10 minutes for responses and closings)*
- *Step 5: bring everyone back together to discuss whether their arguments were influenced by the systemic models discussion you had earlier (was your argument for the utility of your strategy based at all on the ultimate systemic model that you thought we should aim for as a society?), and what other information or biases influenced their arguments (life experience? political efficacy? morality? religion?)*

WRAP UP: We encourage you to set aside time to engage the entire audience in a reflection and wrap-up session. It can be any length of time you'd like, and the bigger your group, the more time you might need. For the wrap-up section, you can simply ask participants what they've learned, or you can take a more systematic approach:

- *Review each of the parts of the teach-in 1-4. Read aloud some of the main questions or concerns that arose, main points of consensus, new ideas and concepts. Remind the group how it arrived at each of these conclusions*
- *Ask the group to give examples of how they might personally--or in any group they belong to--use this information in the future.*
- *If your teach-in participants primarily belong to one group (a union, a student activist group, a class, etc), the group can work as a whole to identify ways to use this information to enrich their work this semester or year.*
- *Thank everyone for participating and contributing!*
- *Ask everyone to fill out the evaluation forms they received at the beginning and collect them*

