



The 4 Rs of Social Transformation

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Individuals and organizations often focus most on one of these Rs. Each R brings critical value to our movement. You've probably noticed that people working in one R are very committed to that strategy and may even think that other strategies/Rs are counter-productive. Instead of approaching difference as infighting or competition, the 4 Rs can be understood as necessary and complementary elements of social transformation.

Reform – working within the current system

The current structures in society have real impact on our daily lives and our ability to self-determine. While we work on building new structures, we must simultaneously change the structures of society that are in place now. We understand the urgent needs of people who lack healthy food, quality housing, well-paid work, safety and opportunity. This strategy tackles immediate needs and requires current social and political institutions to put resources toward addressing social problems.

Examples: human services, policy development and electoral work

Resist – working against the current system

Throughout history, we have seen that “power concedes nothing without demand.” Resistance struggles have given rise to our greatest wins. To address root causes of injustice, we are often called upon to stand against the destruction of what we hold dear. This strategy analyzes and challenges our current political and social institutions by directly confronting how they perpetuate inequity.

Examples: non-violent civil disobedience, direct action, and community organizing

Re-imagine – envisioning & communicating about a just new system

We are in a critical period of social evolution that requires new ways of being. In order to generate a just world, we must be able to imagine and communicate what society based on partnership, inclusion, and interdependence looks like. This strategy engages how we think about ourselves in relation to each other and the whole, and taps our individual and collective ability to engender new cultural norms.

Examples: the arts, creative processes, media, academia, cultural & spiritual traditions

Re-create – creating models for a just new system

The future we envision calls for the creation of new ways of doing things to take the place of the broken structures that do not serve us. This strategy enables us to experiment with new ways of constituting our society by building just institutions, forms of governance, and leadership models.

Examples: democratic schools, restorative justice processes, local economies based on cooperatives



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