SPR completed 18 interviews with members of Cohort 4 between April 15 and May 29, 2019. The interviews gathered cohort members’ insights on their MEV experiences to date, including a detailed set of questions on the Intercambio, organizational development support, cohort relationships, outcomes to date, topics for further exploration, and recommendations for Convenings 5 and 6. The semi-structured interviews, which were scheduled to last 90 minutes, were free-flowing and conversational, with some interviews lasting nearly two hours. Our team focused primarily on providing space for Movement Makers (MMs) to share what was most important to them about their MEV experience, which meant that we were sometimes unable to ask all of the questions on the interview protocol or that some topics were only minimally discussed. Thus, when this memo indicates that nine MMs (for example) felt a certain way, we do not intend for that to be interpreted to mean that the other nine felt the opposite way. Rather, it should be assumed that particular themes simply did not arise over the course of some interviews.

In this memo, we analyze many of our findings through the lens of Movement Makers’ unique identities, including their racial/ethnic identity, their positionality within their organizations, their relative age group, and the region in which they work and live. For further analysis, we would also ideally know their relationship to immigration and migration, as well as other elements of their lived experience. Due to the small size of the cohort, we will not be reporting counts in these analyses to preserve anonymity. It is also important to note that while patterns may be identified by sub-group, they do not necessarily represent the feelings of every individual within that group. Moreover, the findings presented are intended to be points for consideration, and should always be considered within context.

At the conclusion of this memo, we highlight the ways in which this cohort is similar to previous cohorts at their midpoint junctures, and also raise some questions for the MEV team to consider moving forward. For illustrative quotes that provide more texture to many of the sections in this memo, please see Appendix A.

Unique Characteristics of Cohort 4

Several factors distinguish Cohort 4 from previous cohorts, including that this cohort is made up of all women of color, that it is the first cohort to include transgender women, that a high percentage of cohort members have been in transition (personally and/or professionally), and that the broader political climate has been a constant and punishing assault on the cohort. 
members as individuals and as professionals. As illustrated in SPR’s baseline report for Cohort 4, MMs in this cohort were also far less connected to one another at the start of their cohort experience than any previous cohort, which may have influenced the development of their relationships with one another.

More specifically, at least eight MMs (nearly half of those interviewed) have gone through a professional transition over the course of their cohort experience, and several women have been pushed out of their positions in ways that were painful and traumatic. On a personal level, two cohort members have grappled with the death of loved ones and friends, and four MMs (all of whom are Directors at their organizations) have faced stress-related illnesses or injuries.

Over half (10) of cohort members we interviewed mentioned the level of trauma within the group and how that has influenced group dynamics. Some (3) cohort members also pointed specifically to the ways in which white supremacy and internalized racial oppression have played out for this cohort of people of color in the absence of whiteness.

The SPR team finished interviews with the feeling that it is necessary to capture the “stories” of Cohort 4 and situate them carefully within this broader context and political moment, and to attend to how individuals’ identities play a mediating role in their experiences of MEV. We were left with the feeling that perhaps the acknowledgement of both identity and the broader context and their effects on the cohort’s dynamics is an important part of their unique stories, particularly to the degree that it is reflective of larger tensions within the movement itself.

### Overarching Themes

- **Nearly half of MMs (8) expressed a deep sadness that their MEV experience is coming to an end.** Five MMs in particular felt that their work with MEV was just getting started and wished that the experience could be extended in some way.

- **There were mixed feelings about whether beloved community has been built within this cohort, as explained below:**
  - Four MMs said that beloved community has “absolutely” been built within the cohort, while six others felt that the cohort has made progress towards the creation of beloved community. Over half of MMs (10) spoke of the deep “sisterhood” or sense of “family” that they formed with other members of the cohort, sharing that they felt that they made lasting relationships. Six MMs expressed a sense of “awe” and love for their fellow cohort members.
  - A few MMs (4), however, indicated that they feel separated or disconnected from the group to the extent that they experience anxiety around attending convenings. These women expressed feelings of being an outsider for a variety of reasons: doing grassroots or direct service (as opposed to advocacy); their transgender identity; doing work that is not squarely within the movement to end gender-based violence; and uncertainty about
their role within MEV. Two individuals also pointed to the ways in which unresolved trauma (described below) increases anxiety and hypervigilance within the group in ways that inhibit beloved community from being built.

- **Over half of MMs (10) across all different racial/ethnic identities, viewed this cohort as unique in its level of trauma and the degree to which trauma is showing up within the convening space.** Trauma was a key theme emerging from our baseline interviews, and it continued to be a theme during this midpoint round. Two MMs said that a few cohort members who carry with them deep trauma have influenced the dynamics of the whole group. One person noted a “rawness” in the group, while another described a pattern of the “Thursday afternoon freak-out,” where accumulated tensions throughout the convenings have surfaced. One individual also noted a pattern of “Oppression Olympics” occurring.

- **There were mixed feelings among MMs about caucusing (6), with some greatly appreciating the caucus opportunities, and others indicating that it was potentially problematic.** Four MMs found the caucusing to be helpful in building beloved community and having deep and authentic conversations. One MM raised concerns that the caucusing may be leading to more disconnection among the group, and another expressed having trouble connecting to the other MMs in their specific caucus. Two MMs suggested forming caucuses around issue areas, such as working with youth, instead of or in addition to the current caucus groups.

- **A few individuals (3) perceived that the dynamics of the cohort reflect the way in which white supremacy plays out in the absence of whiteness.** This was described by MMs of all different racial/ethnic identities as impacting the way in which cohort members relate to each other, the more visible manifestation of internalized racial oppression, and the ways in which faculty hold and carry out the convening agendas (e.g. perfectionism, need for control, etc.).

### Reflections on the Intercambio

Sixteen out of the 18 MMs we interviewed participated in the Intercambio. All responses within this section refer to the reflections of those 16 individuals.

- **Half (8) of those that attended the Intercambio described it as a deeply moving and transformational experience.** These MMs described the experience as “fantastic,” “powerful,” and “amazing.” Three of these individuals also said that they felt it was exceptionally well-organized by faculty and staff.

- **Almost a third of MMs (5) highlighted language justice as a powerful part of the convening.** Several noted that this was the first time they had experienced language justice and mentioned that it was implemented “beautifully.” From this experience, MMs who identify as Indigenous and/or work with multilingual communities mentioned forming new insights about the parallels between the loss of Mayan language and the loss of Indigenous languages in the US. Two other MMs spoke of how witnessing language justice raised their awareness of how language—particularly the English
language in the US—has been used and continues to be used to exclude and marginalize non-English speakers. Finally, one MM spoke about language justice as a powerful equalizer that created a space where everyone could “genuinely learn from each other.”

- **The most common takeaway from the Intercambio, which was communicated by 15 of the 16 MMs we interviewed on this topic, was a realization of how insulated the US movement is from transnational movements to end violence.** More than half of these MMs (9) also communicated a desire for a deeper conversation about immigration and migration, particularly within the current political moment. Other themes included building solidarity and “showing up for each other” (7). MMs that identify as Indigenous, in particular, also saw a strong connection between land rights as a universal human rights issue and similarities between the impact of US colonization on Indigenous histories and experiences in both the US and across Mesoamerica.

- **Many MMs (11) expressed feeling deeply inspired by the Mesoamerican participants, with several hoping that they could stay connected.** MMs described learning so much from their Mesoamerican sisters, particularly around the political violence they experience and the importance of intergenerational work. Furthermore, MMs who participated in optional activities with the Mesoamerican women, such as dinners and social activities, reported developing stronger relationships during the Intercambio.

### Coaching

Of the 18 MMs interviewed, 17 spoke directly to the organizational development (OD) supports that MEV is providing to the cohort. The following are themes that emerged from those 17 interviews.

- **MMs who have taken advantage of OD support (10) have leaned on their coaches primarily for individual leadership support.** Three cohort members—all Directors in their organizations—did note, however, that they have received more organization-focused support from their coaches. Specifically, two of these MMs explained that their coach facilitated in-house workshops for their staff. In addition, four cohort members noted that their coach has provided emotional support during times of professional struggle, particularly around thinking through transitions out of their organizations. Two MMs in the cohort with Director titles also used their coaches to help think through self-care plans.

- **A third of MMs (6) had not yet drawn on their OD coach for support.** Three of these MMs felt that their coach was not readily available, or not a good fit for them due to the coach’s focus on organizational rather than individual development. Two of these MMs were going through a professional transition, and the coaching resources offered were not a good fit for their transitional stage. The other three MMs cited more personal reasons for not having taken advantage of their coach, including their own bandwidth to take advantage of what the coach had to offer. One MM spoke to the underutilization
of coaches among the cohort as reflecting a scarcity mindset, noting that several MMs may not believe they can or are encouraged to access coaching resources.

- **The most common recommendation for improving OD support, which was provided by six MMs, was for MEV to provide a road map or menu for how they could draw on their OD coaches.** These MMs explained that it would be useful to know at the start of their MEV experience what kinds of support they can get from their coaches. In particular, a few of the younger cohort members said that they were late to draw on their coaches, primarily because they did not know how to effectively draw on them. There was also an acknowledgement among some MMs that they did receive some information about coaching early on in their MEV engagement, but they were not able to fully take it in given their adjustment to the overall program. Furthermore, some MMs from smaller organizations noted that due to the size of their organizations, OD changes take longer to implement; therefore, expanding the intensity and/or duration of coaching is particularly salient for these smaller organizations.

- **Other suggestions for strengthening OD support included:** (1) allowing/encouraging coaches to do more on-site work at MM’s organizations (this was especially true for MMs from smaller organizations); (2) quarterly check-ins with the larger cohort to make sure the coaching experience is well-integrated; (3) allowing coaching to extend beyond the close of this cohort; and (4) making more specialized technical assistance available through a network of consultants (legal, insurance, financial, etc.).

**Workshops and OD Boosters**

Because of the overall length of interviews, we gathered relatively less information on each of the different kinds of workshops and OD boosters that were available to MMs, although nine MMs still spoke directly to their workshop experiences.

- **Among those that commented on the GIFT workshop (5), there was overall positive feedback.** Three MMs noted that they were able to send their staff to the GIFT conference, which was a useful and impactful experience for staff. Another MM described how the conference allowed her to connect with funders and learn valuable information about fundraising to which she would otherwise not have been exposed.

- **There was positive feedback from four MMs on the Liberation & Equity and Power Building workshops, particularly for those that were able to engage their larger staff.** The ability to engage staff was a huge benefit for those MMs who took advantage of it, foremost because it provided a window for staff into the MEV experience. At least one MM who had previously attended the Liberation & Equity workshop numerous times felt that she always learned something new through the experience. MMs also valued these workshop experiences because it provided a way for them to deepen cohort relationships outside the context of convenings.

- **A few individuals (3) noted that they had already completed the Rockwood 360 evaluation process and were “weary” of repeating content.** Of these three, one felt
that it would not be particularly helpful for her to do again due to the anonymity requirement associated with the tool. The two other MMs felt that they were still working through what they learned from their earlier participation and doing it a second time would not be very productive.

- One MM especially appreciated the Management Center training. Specifically, she felt that the audience was more organizationally diverse than other OD opportunities (i.e., it included organizations that provided direct services) so she could relate to this training better than the others.

Outcomes to Date

With the exception of the question about MEV’s impact on the field, MMs responded to this question from a very personal perspective. It is important to note that even MMs who described feeling disconnected from the larger group still felt that that they had grown as a result of their MEV experience.

- Half of MMs (9) said that MEV has enhanced their confidence in their own leadership. This was especially true for both MMs without Director titles in their organizations and for the younger MMs in the cohort, who felt that MEV has supported them to recognize their potential and power as leaders, step into that leadership, and realize how much they have to offer and give to their colleagues and to the field. Those MMs who have greater positional authority in their organizations (i.e., Directors) often spoke specifically about how MEV has enhanced their confidence in their leadership and encouraged them to lean more into their roles as leaders. Several MMs who identify as Black, African American, or Afro-descendant also surfaced a theme around the impact MEV has had on their courage to be bold leaders in their organizations and in the movement.

- Many MMs (7) described that MEV has provided them with new frameworks for what it means to be a leader. In particular, MMs who are Directors in their organizations said that MEV has raised important questions about what leadership is, how they want to do their work, how to show up as a leader, and the realization that they are leaders outside of their organization (i.e., their organizational roles do not define who they are as leaders).

- Half of MMs (9) said that MEV has increased their understanding of self-care (especially spaciousness and breath) and how important it is for sustaining themselves and their work. This was especially true for younger MMs, who noted the value for them of balance, spirituality, and building space for themselves; and for those who hold greater positional authority within their organizations, who were focused specifically on self-sustainability.

- Over half of MMs (10) noted that MEV has impacted the broader movement to end violence. They spoke specifically of shifts in language, collaboration across movement sectors and cohorts, the influence of MEV MMs from prior cohorts on communities and organizations, and a deeper understanding of how self-care translates into sustainability.
for the movement as a whole. Director-level MMs and younger MMs particularly emphasized the impacts they are seeing on the movement, perhaps pointing to, respectively, their unique vantage points within their organizations and their fresh experiences within the movement.

- **Some MMs (5) said that they have also seen a shift in how funders are engaging with the movement.** MMs with Director-level titles surfaced this theme in particular, noting a perceived increase in the willingness of funders to provide flexible funding and lighten the lift around reporting, which has helped broaden the pool of organizations that receive funding (to include more organizations run by women of color) and reduced their reliance on federal funding. It has allowed these organizations to do more work focused on addressing root causes and provided a space for organizations to experiment with new models and approaches. At least two MMs, however, continued to question whether philanthropy can ever truly support liberation.

**Topics for Further Exploration**

The following are topics that MMs would like to explore more deeply as a cohort in Convenings 5 and 6. These are organized from the most- to least-frequently highlighted topics.

- **The majority of MMs (11) communicated a strong desire to get to know one another’s work better.** Three MMs specifically highlighted “mapping” as a strategy for understanding each other’s work and identifying common issues around which they can mobilize. A few acknowledged that the MEV faculty have tried to support this level of exchange, but they indicated that there has still not been enough time to understand each other’s work.

- **Half of the MMs (9) expressed a need to dive deeper into issues of immigration and migration**, especially given that the Intercambio was held in Guatemala and the continued impact of family detention at the US border. In particular, several MMs who identify as Latinx named this need as a “missed opportunity,” given the current “political moment” around immigration, to deepen the cohort’s understanding of these issues and identify areas for collective action.

- **Half of the MMs (9) expressed a desire for the cohort to develop a deeper sense of solidarity as a community that can move through tension, difference, and courageous conversations together.** Across all racial/ethnic identities, MMs wanted to explore questions such as: What does it look like to show up for each other within and outside the MEV space? What commitments do MMs have to each other and to the cohort as a whole? It was acknowledged that MMs have very different life experiences and distinct relationships to violence. Working through this part of the group dynamic felt important to the MMs who raised this issue, as they felt that their ability to build together would be limited without a common understanding and respect for these differences. A few MMs said that currently there is “situational solidarity” across the cohort, but that it is not felt all the time.
Several MMs (7) wanted more support around giving and receiving feedback, particularly in their relationship with MEV faculty. This theme emerged particularly for some MMs who identify as Black, African American, or Afro-descendant, who noted feeling that the faculty may be less receptive to feedback from Black women and wondered how to bridge that tension as a community through specific strategies for providing supportive feedback to faculty. A few MMs also named that there was still an “us versus them” dynamic between the cohort and faculty, which contributed somewhat to feelings of disconnection.

A little under half of MMs (8) felt that it is essential for the group to dive deeper into anti-Blackness and how it manifests within the group. Many MMs who identify as Black, African American, or Afro-descendant specifically referenced the emergency response to the fire in Guatemala, and wondered if—based on that experience—their fellow cohort members fully understood the need for conversations around anti-Blackness and what it means to be pro-Black. Other MMs lifted up wanting to explore how they can combat anti-Blackness in their workplaces and communities, to develop a deeper and more shared understanding of anti-Blackness in the US, and to lift up the impact of naming anti-Blackness for non-Black women of color. There was a link between this conversation about anti-Blackness and the desire to explore what solidarity looks like among women of color.

Some MMs (7) felt that tensions around anti-Blackness and Indigenous invisibility have yet to be fully addressed. However, nearly all MMs who identify as Indigenous and/or Black, African American, or Afro-descendant expressed feeling committed to working through these tensions together. One MM did feel that the focus on Indigenous culture meant that Indigenous MMs are being “prioritized” over others, and that this was an important issue to address in Convening 5 given its location in Montgomery, AL.

Eight MMs spoke directly to their desire to explore what collective action could look like among the members of this cohort. While they did not identify any specific topical areas for action, there was a clear desire, particularly among Director-level MMs, to think more holistically about how each of them is a piece in the puzzle of the larger ecosystem and to find opportunities for “cross-pollination” and joint creativity. A few MMs also noted a desire to explore more regional organizing, as well as forming caucusing groups around particular issue areas.

Six MMs wanted to discuss the current political climate. In particular, younger MMs generally felt that it was critically important for the cohort to discuss immigration and migration (as noted above), this moment within the context of US history, and also to better understand how individuals and organizations can take collective action.

Economic violence came up as a key issue area for some MMs (5), particularly in its relation to the Intercambio. The Intercambio experience surfaced feelings and insights into the role of capitalism in waging violence against women and communities, particularly among younger MMs and those with less positional authority in their
organizations. Some MMs wanted to explore how or if nonprofits and foundations can work toward liberation if they are also invested in and a product of capitalism. Finally, there were questions around the role of fundraising in perpetuating economic violence, particularly in how systems of power and privilege prevent women of color-led organizations from reaching their fundraising goals.

**Recommendations for Convening 5**

- **Most MMs (13) want the opportunity to work through unresolved topics that have emerged throughout their journey together.** The most common areas that MMs wanted to work through are highlighted in the previous section, but others included electoral organizing, transphobia, trauma and healing, the prison industrial complex, and leadership sustainability.

- **Many MMs (9) had mixed feelings about having more open space at the convenings, and stressed the need for a balance of open space and structured space.** While two MMs felt that MEV spaces are “over-facilitated” and craved more open and MM-directed space, others (7) felt that the time dedicated to open space is sometimes less productive without the faculty providing scaffolding for cohort conversations and that open space conversations have sometimes taken heavy emotional tolls on individuals.

- **Some MMs (6) would like to have time to organize around shared projects or collaborations that could extend outside of the cohort space.**

**Recommendations for Convening 6**

Most MMs struggled to generate recommendations for Convening 6, in part because the purpose and structure of this meeting will be different than that of the convenings in which they have participated thus far.

- **Several MMs (7) expressed a strong desire to hear from and connect with previous cohort members.** There was a deep wish to know what previous cohort members had done after their MEV experience, particularly how they had applied their learnings from MEV to their work.

- **Four MMs felt that it was important that Cohort 4 go into Convening 6 with a clear idea of what their unique story is.** They wanted to be able to tell that story to the rest of the cohorts in a way that is compelling, while realizing that generating a shared story for this cohort may be an ambitious goal.

- **A few MMs (3) expressed trepidation and worry about having a meeting that extends beyond the cohort.** For a few this came, in part, from a worry about the sense of intimacy within the group being lost. There was also a worry that the cohort was not yet ready to share out their story. One person indicated that she did not feel that the Cohort 4 climate was a safe space for the broader MEV community. She described some
members of previous cohorts as her “family,” and that she was not ready to entrust certain members of Cohort 4 with her “family.”

- Two MMs said that they hoped that Convening 6 would feel like a celebration.

**Recommendations for Future Cohorts**

We did not explicitly ask for recommendations related to future cohorts, but a few of the MMs interviewed had very strongly-held views on this matter that they shared.

- One MM felt strongly that MEV needs to make “restitution” to the transgender cohort members by having an entirely transgender or gender non-binary cohort.
- One MM felt that if MEV has another all-woman of color cohort, it would be useful to have someone on staff who has clinical experience handling trauma.
- Finally, one MM felt that MEV should proactively plan for staffing transitions and for how to best support MMs who become “free radicals” after leaving their organizations.

**Parallels with Previous Cohorts**

SPR revisited our midpoint memos and reports for previous cohorts to better understand how this cohort is similar to or different from previous cohorts. Although this cohort is very unique, there are also similarities between where they are now and where previous cohorts were at their midpoint junctures.

- There is a strong desire to get to know one another’s work in a more concrete way, and to understand how and in what was they can collaborate. Every cohort has expressed the feeling of wanting to know one another’s organizational work better. This seems largely due to MEV’s intentional focus on individual transformation as a path to broader transformation. Across the cohorts, some MMs have gotten impatient to “do work” with one another, while others have been more trusting of the MEV process.

- There are tensions between “facilitation” and “spaciousness.” Looking at the data over the years, it appears that it is fundamentally difficult to make everyone happy when it comes to the level of facilitation at convenings. The desire for spaciousness has been a theme since Cohort 1, despite a consistent shift toward creating agendas with more spaciousness. It is clear that Cohort 4 has the most spaciousness of any cohort, and yet a few MMs still feel that it is over-facilitated. The perceptible difference with Cohort 4 is that some of this cohort’s MMs would actually like a bit more structure in convenings.

- Tensions emerge around anti-Blackness and Indigenous invisibility, and there is a desire for Black and Indigenous solidarity. As was true with Cohort 3, anti-Blackness and Indigenous invisibility have emerged as important issues for the group. It is worth nothing that Cohort 3 experienced a “breakthrough” on this tension in Convening 5.
• **Feelings of sadness and alienation are present.** The feelings of sadness and alienation communicated by this cohort are closely similar to the emotions reported by members of Cohort 2 during their midpoint interviews.

• **All cohorts have felt that the cohort has not had enough time to realize their goals and wished for more time together.**

**Additional Thoughts for MEV Team**

The SPR team concluded this round of interviews feeling privileged and honored by the opportunity to partner with MEV in this work. In processing the interviews, we surfaced the following questions for the MEV team:

• **How can this cohort make headway on addressing the question of what solidarity looks like within and across communities of color?** So much of the literature and frameworks on solidarity are focused on how white people can be allies to people of color. How and in what ways does solidarity look different within all-people of color spaces? How do trauma and gender-based violence impact the formation of cross-racial solidarity? How do MMs’ individual journeys and internalized racial oppression contribute to or inhibit solidarity? How do Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous women stand with their Black sisters against anti-Blackness? How do women of color that share a commitment to ending violence stand together to achieve that goal? How do cisgender women genuinely show up as allies for transgender women? What processes or structures support healing in a way that fosters cross-racial solidarity?

• **Several individuals used the word “cliques” to describe their perception that subgroups exist within the cohort, a theme that we noted because it did not seem to emerge in previous cohorts. What factors (structural, contextual, etc.) do faculty and staff think is contributing to the emergence of “cliques” within this cohort?** Some MMs who mentioned this theme framed this feedback in a way that made it seem like cliques in a group this large are inevitable, and not necessarily detrimental. Others, however, seemed to suggest that the groupings were somewhat exclusionary and felt isolated because of them. Are there any shifts in the curriculum or format of convenings that have contributed to the perceived emergence of “cliques”? Or can the emergence of these cliques be seen as the need for a specific type of social support in this moment within the movement?
MEV Midpoint Memo Appendix A: Key Quotes

The quotes in this section represent a broad cross-section of perspectives, but they should be interpreted as supplementary to memo, not as representative of all the data because we were not able to get transcriptions (and therefore quotes) from every MM. During one interview the recorder stopped at the beginning, thus resulting in no transcription. Also, the content of some interviews that were transcribed proved difficult to pull quotes from, because the identity of the speaker could potentially be guessed given content or context. Of the 17 interviews for which we had transcriptions, we took care to quote each MM at least twice. There are two individuals who were quoted multiple times because their interviews were particularly reflective/insightful.

Unique Characteristics of Cohort 4

Transitions/illness or physical ailments

“I was let go by my board of directors, and it was inappropriate wrongful termination. So through that process my coach has really helped me with understanding the trend that they’re seeing with women of color being pushed out by boards or out of organizations.”

“I was displaced from my employment for what I believe was a success actually of MEV in terms of helping me be aware of the subtle violence that women face in community-based programs, in the workplace, and impacted communities, and the need to not be silent but to figure out ways to address the issue.”

“I’ve had panic attacks before. I have generalized anxiety, depression and ADHD. These are things that I’ve talked about in, at MEV and frankly, I’m not the only one... There are a lot of us that are suffering either diagnosed or undiagnosed.”

Overarching Themes

Appreciation for faculty

“I think Priscilla and Monica and the faculty are so intentional, number one. So well-skilled, like even your ‘lightweight’ faculty and presenters, they are incredibly skilled people, the whole role of that with this group, and to remind us and to assure us, ‘No, you’re exactly where you need to be, you’re doing exactly what you need to be doing, and yes you’re amazing, and yes we support you.’”

“For me, watching the leadership team work, watching how they stay coordinated with each other, watching how they check in with us, watching how they check in with each other,
watching them and having them talk about their own process. They did a really deep disclosure of their own processes in our last meeting, it was very impactful to me.”

“I think the amount of care that went into taking care of every minute detail by JASS folks and the MEV folks, Priscilla and Monica and Pati and Ramelcy. Pati and Ramelcy, I can’t talk enough about because they were really doing all work in the background but all you saw was its impact. They just worked seamlessly. It was really a lovely, lovely experience that I learned so much and I brought it back.”

"Getting to sit in a circle with [faculty], and getting to sit in the workshop space with them, it's really impactful for me, getting to witness their leadership, it really means a lot to me. It's like seeing a possibility role model, and all these different ways I can show up as a leader, and getting to see their vulnerability and their modeling around vulnerability and their modeling around conflict, how to manage conflict and address it, has been really helpful to me."

**Beloved Community**

“I think that there is an attempt at beloved community, no doubt. I think that there's an attempt, but I think also people are really like, ‘What does that mean?’ I think people are wary about that because we still don't know about each other.”

“Yes, we're all women of color leaders fighting against violence, and you would think that in itself is enough to ... just meld us all together and we all are on the same page, but that's actually not true. So there's still differences. There's still some political differences. There's still issues. There's some division. There's still some disagreements. There's still ways that we think about issues of race and gender that are different. I think that tension and that rubbing of issues is overall good if we continue to lean into it and continue to engage and stay curious about those conversations.”

“It's hard because I feel like there are many voices that are bullied into silence. So I don't think at this space where our cohort is in right now, that there's actually safety for people to have courageous conversations.”

“Individually there's individual relationships that are strengthened. And then as a collective, I think, we are learning... We definitely are having hard conversations around how to show up for each other and how to support each other, and moments when we've not done that.”

“I think there has been a lot of progress, coming from a larger group of strangers, that we can pull together, that we want to be better for one another. We've shed tears, we've fought, we've also shared a lot of laughter and joy. I think we've made a lot of progress from a group of strangers.”
“I think absolutely it's being built. A sisterhood is being built... I genuinely care about the wellbeing of my cohort members... I definitely think there is a love and care that, at least for me, has been instilled, and respect for each of these people, even the ones who are not my close friends, that I'm not regularly in touch with. I do sincerely believe that I have a sincere love and respect for every one of the people that is in my cohort.”

“I think that it is harder to see how it's being built when we're together, and easier to see how it's being built when we're not. And that sounds almost counter-productive, or that sounds like the opposite of what beloved community is striving for. But I think when we're all together... we air out our frustrations. And when we're apart is when we share via the listserv our small victories, or our cries for help. And then they're responded to in a very good way, [making it] clear that there is a sense of community and a sense of support amongst one another. And I've been pleasantly surprised by that. So, I think it's happening and it's happening organically.”

**Trauma**

“I think one of the things that we may have underestimated and that the faculty are always having to sort of respond to in the moment, is just that there's a lot of trauma in our group. There's a lot of trauma responses... there's a really good amount of people triggering each other, and triggers bouncing off all over the place... It's real. We have survivors in the group, a lot of us in the group are survivors of state violence, interpersonal violence, community violence, family violence. We're survivors, and so there's a lot of shit bouncing off in a tiny space, and I'm not sure how always prepared or present or able to manage it the faculty are.”

“A lot of the women in the circle have experienced sexual violence, domestic violence. Where are the pieces to address that trauma? [It’s like] you peel back the scab on that trauma, but then you leave the women, you push them back out in the wild.”

“With all due respect, I realize that these women, many of them are in spaces they never had an opportunity to unpack some of these dynamics and some of these concerns. I'm all for it but I'm also aware that it can be exhausting.”

“Fear and pain I think gets in the way of us being in full solidarity with each other. I don't think I'm excluded from that. I think sometimes my pain and my anger makes me not want to be fully there either.”

**White Supremacy**

“When we came together, we also didn't have any white folks. Normally, whenever there is white people in spaces of POC there is always struggle around the whiteness in that space... But we have to really step into who we are in the absence of whiteness, and that became a blessing, but also hard for us. I think all of us in our spaces and in our own lives and in the larger
movement have to deal with white supremacy, but in absence of physical white supremacy we still struggle with supremacy without white folks in the space.”

**Reflections on the Intercambio**

**Moving/Transformational**

“If I feel very fortunate. I don’t think I would have ever had that experience if I was not in MEV. The way that the facilitators and MEV really took care of us. And then also setting up very intentional learning exchanges. The thing that I’ve really taken, and that has been sitting with me for the past few months has been… just how honored I feel to have been a part of it. And that this is something that I’m going to carry with me probably forever. It was really life changing.”

“From the very first day that we got there, all of our opening ceremonies by the women who were indigenous to Guatemala and Honduras was really so moving. It was unbelievable that there was so much oppression in that country. But then there was also so much power within the women themselves. For us to be able to come and they share openly and honestly, and just listening to some of the stories that the women shared, was just enough to make me really think twice about how I live, where I live, what I support, what I would not support. It was enlightening. It was heart filling, it was sad, it was exciting, it was joyful and it was beautiful.”

“Being someone who’s primary identity is an indigenous person in the United States, I can’t even describe how moved I was to be in that lens... being with the Honduran and Guatemalan cohort, the JASS cohort for that whole week and being able to sit with other indigenous women from that lens, hearing from the black women, the women who came to speak from that land, it struck me with our similarity. So it hit me straight in the ancestors, let me tell you. I had unbelievable heights of joy and I think I cried every single night because when I would hear the stories of the Mayan women and they would start telling me their story of surviving genocide, I would sit there and listen, I would think, ‘Oh my god, I know what comes next. I know what comes next. I know what comes next.’”

**Language Justice**

“It was still a very jarring experience to be, especially in a professional environment, where I am not the dominant speaker. I am not speaking the dominant language, and so having that, I don’t want to call it handicap, but having that growth and really forcing myself to be present so that I could take advantage of a bilingual space... So just, my privilege as an English speaker and how much privilege that gives me in this work and in this field compared to people who don’t speak English, because we live in a world that is dominated by English speakers.”
“I loved the language justice piece. Having the interpretation and the interpreters and the way that they acknowledged that, what they were interpreting would colonize our languages and give us the opportunity to actually speak our own languages into the room... Their colonized language is Spanish, ours is English. But it felt very true. It felt very [much] like they could have just been the next community over from mine and their generosity of spirit and story, I have so many lessons that I still feel like I'm continuously processing it.”

**Insulated Movement**

"We're really under-prepared and very insular. I already knew that before, but it really put into light fully for me, as we were in the transnational setting, how limited we are in our work. Not even in our work, in our organizations, but also in our roles. All of us really have to challenge [ourselves] so that we step out of our context.”

“What really struck me, and that I've been processing, is that people stood up and told our compañeras from JASS [what] we would be taking home. They would say things like, ‘I'm going to tell the people in the United States that this is happening to indigenous people in Guatemala. This is happening to indigenous people in Honduras and we have to do something because this is your land.’ And I did not hear a single person connect it to native people in the United States. I actually don't think anyone made that connection besides maybe MEV faculty and the other indigenous women in my cohort.”

“What's the language shifting that needs to happen to drop my work... into an international context, so that we're telling the same story as our indigenous family around the world about colonization, about environmental degradation, about attacks against women? How do we make sure that we're joining in that narrative and not having a narrative that's so US-centric, US-focused?”

**Staying Connected**

“The next thing is how do we bring women from there, here? How do we make that exchange happen so that they get to see and feel what it's like to be in America?... I think that's where it really touched my heart, because I knew that when I came back, although I was coming back to a job, I'm still coming back to a place that's really violent and that a lot of people are losing their lives and it's not just through political stuff, but just community stuff, gun violence and all the violence that happens to people in general in the United States that people are not hearing about. So that they can understand that we're not that far apart, that we are a people who need to be together in order to fight this.”

“Even when we were leaving they were like, ‘Come and visit us. My home is your home.’ I feel like there was a lot of doors that opened for future sharing.”
“Remaining in solidarity with folks in Mesoamerica, and continuing relationships. It's that relationship, the sustainable authentic relationships that I now have with folks. We're texting each other or we're chatting with each other online... And sending resources and sharing information about companies and these big corporations and what they're doing there... How do we build solidarity and resist together?”

Organizational Development Support

Individual leadership support

“So last year was a year of transition. Just having someone to hold that with me and to help me move through it was super, super helpful.”

“I really appreciated that the emphasis in the coaching is again on me and what it is that I wanted to do, because the other coaches that I've had have been about how I do my job for the organization.”

“For the calls with [my coach], I'd just vent and rage out and that was an incredibly important space for me, and I don't know what it would have looked like for our organization without that space... I think we could have been another non-profit that went up in flames and a bunch of drama, because of overextended people and overextended leadership.”

Unsure how to use their OD coach

“The only reason I'm taking OD really seriously now, because I spent a lot of time with other MEV folks that really have benefited from it, and was encouraged. We realized that we also have kind of scarcity mindset, where didn't believe or felt encouraged to really use these things. I didn't realize how big of a deal it was, or how much access I had to it.”

“I don't know that I was in a space or really ready for her coaching in the past few months because I'm in such a transition phase.”

“It was only through the cheerleading of a couple of people [who said], ‘Why don't you talk to your coach?’ I'm like, ‘Oh, I didn't know I could talk to my coach about these things.’ I've never really had a coach before, I've never really had robust OD, so I really don't know what that looks like, and what kind of support it will look like.”

Workshops

Liberation & Equity and Power Building workshops

“My team also learned a lot about themselves and how internalized oppression... was showing up for them, and things like that. It also gave them a shared understanding and knowledge of what I have been doing at MEV for the last year... So, it was just really experiential for them to
actually experience from start to finish what an MEV convening looks like from just the way that they facilitate, to their thoughtfulness around the vendors that they are employing, and how they express gratitude and live up to their values. Then, of course, the content itself.”

“I thought [the Power Building workshop] was energizing. And having the opportunity to bring my staff with me is really important... I could not have afforded to send the staff without the support. And then being able to have these boosters that were so specific in the work we do and being able to share that experience with my staff [member] was priceless and it energized her, gave her confidence and built on her work. I saw a difference in the way that she spoke about her ability, her role and what she did after that workshop.”

**Outcomes to Date**

**Confidence in leadership**

“I just feel like I've been so empowered to walk in my leadership and to share it. I love it because the coach that I have has really coached me into just standing, taking a stand for myself, taking a stand for my colleagues.”

“It's been a helpful reminder that I do have leadership skills and qualities... I've been feeling very insecure in my abilities while at [my organization], because the field is so new to me. And I have also forgotten that while I might not have a lot of experience in the field of gender justice work, I do have a lot of organizing experience... MEV has helped remind me of that. Remind me that hey, you've got this toolbox, look in, there are tools. You might need to add them for sure, and you will definitely add some in this learning process. But you're not starting from scratch. And that has been useful.”

“It's been definitely transformative for me, gave me a real space to really reflect on my leadership and what I need to do to become a stronger leader for myself. Also, just to collect my power and to serve the bigger purpose. It’s really very intentional about that and really deepening that, and taking it more seriously. I felt in many attempts that I did [in the past] it was very superficial, and MEV has been challenging me to be much deeper and grow more depth for my work and who I am.”

“I have more confidence for sure... What I've really learned is that the knowledge that I have is actually good and worth sharing. So being able to share that with some of my cohort sisters and beyond has definitely raised my confident level in that. I absolutely have more confidence in my voice.”

“I'm becoming more courageous. I'm realizing that there's some courageous discussions I need to have... Even though it's been very hard, and been very painful to have some of the conversations and interactions we've had to have at MEV... I don't regret anything that's
happened. And I feel like I’ve learned so much from that... I feel like I’m trying to be more courageous. I came back and was like, ‘Wait a minute, I have to be more courageous in the leadership of my group, in pushing us forward.’”

**New frameworks**

"I think something that’s become clear working with so many women, executive directors and women leaders... I hope that they would be doing the same, that they would be centering their dreams and their visions. It’s helped me step back... I think we all know what our dreams are but do we really stop and pause and think about, if your work is fulfilling that or working towards that? I think that’s a really rich conversation I have with myself and it’s the one that has been generated through my time with MEV."

“I always felt like I was insufficient in so many ways, and that I wasn’t a good leader... We always think that we have to be 100% everything, but for me I don't have to be everything in the context of other leaders, because there [are] other leaders and their strength is something else. We could step in and step out. That was helpful for me to see that exercise and how we offer complementary skills.”

“[MEV] really helped me think about what else more is possible for me in this work as a leader, but also in the movement by just letting go of things. Letting go of my thinking, letting go of the things I had been practicing before. That was an unexpected surprise for me. I thought a lot of my transformation was going to be through content, but it was more about spiritual stance. That was really great.”

“Figuring out that my only feelings, like my only value of my service to the movement was if I was willing to be disposable for it. So really through a lot of love and support of some of my cohort sisters and the faculty, all of them, the staff and faculty of MEV has really helped me reshape that. That has changed my entire life.”

**Self-Care**

“We talked about self care and I don’t particularly like the term, but like the idea of balancing and being able to do the work over the long haul, I think it was a really good conversation... I really enjoyed being able to think about how I have shown up and done my work better by not being so exhausted all the time. Also reflecting on my gifts outside of just being able to work around the clock but what are my gifts and my talents that actually need to be nourished and protected as well to do a great job.”

“There’s been these really cool breathing exercises that I've been able to share in spaces... Along with the Forward Stance. I never thought about it before. Overextending, pushing back way too far, and then being right in the middle, just centered, and what that actually feels like.
So I have been able to share things like that with my family and friends and my community. And it's been really helpful for me and my team as well as me and my family. So I've been able to bring stuff like that back.”

“I consistently think of a quote that Monica Dennis said when she talked about her work with Black Lives Matter and she said, ‘When I say Black Lives Matter that means mine does too.’ And on my really dark days I often think of that quote and that helps push me forward, my life matters too and my life is important here. So that has been a really important thing that has happened through the spaciousness and the relationship and the commitment of the program.”

“[MEV] has encouraged me to do a more consistent self-care practice of going once a month to get a two hour massage, and get my nails done...I feel like it has put me in a different place... it has moved the needle for me...I mean I'm all about my self-care now, everybody knows the things they're assigned to do, I have very much opted out of a lot of things and have really encouraged folks in staff to step up in their leadership around the areas.”

Broader movement

“I think that they've trained multiple cohorts that are taking home these really important lessons and then its reflected back in our work and that's built a community of folks that have a shared language and a shared way at times to think or process the work and how we show up in the work, both collective and the individual ones I think that's an important impact the MEV is having."

“I think MEV is making the movement stronger because [for] each of us as leaders within our own communities and then in our own work it's making us stronger, it's making us more confident, it's making us critically think at a macro level. And I think it's also helping us not to burn out.”

“I think NoVo and MEV specifically... has built or has the capacity to do exactly what they set out to do, which is transform the movement in these 10 years. I see the reach going out so far, where so many people, whether they've been in the program or not, are trying to utilize the practices, are referencing the work of MEV as the way forward with this movement.”

“I think especially because of the way that [MEV has] intentionally chosen to invest in leaders, but also invest in their organization through the boosters and all of that, where you can bring either your own people or friends that you want to experience some of these curricula. I definitely think it's having a very significant impact on the movement towards really pushing people to think about what intersectionality looks like. What it means to center the most
marginalized. What organizations, especially people of color led organizations, need that is more than just a check.”

“To the extent that folks can really lean into their development as leaders on an individual level... I think that MEV contributes to the movement. Then I also think that the network of leaders that are woven together as a result of MEV... I could see that they were grounded in the same vision and commitment to waging peace, and so I really appreciated that. You have folks who are leading the movement from a place of spiritual grounding as well.”

“Some of the language is starting to move into the movement, and some of the general ideas that programs should be thinking about, thinking outside of the box, thinking outside of their sort of their roof and their walls, and thinking about complete outreach and bringing people to the table and engaging in different ways in community. I do know that I'm hearing people say that more.”

“For us to understand our work in the larger context of a movement is movement impact. Certainly, I think. It's all about the story and it's all about how we understand our work. So I think that that's part of it... I see myself as honing my own analysis, and honing and sharpening what my contribution can be. And that's huge movement impact,”

**Shift in funders**

“I've been working with all the different funders locally and nationally, and I'll tell you that there's only a handful that actually have the approach to fundraising that MEV has or NoVo has... I'm pretty transparent now with funders who ask me about what they can do better and what they need, and I almost always use NoVo... as [an example] of what it truly means to be a partner in this work, and not this grantee-funder relationship where there's a clear power dynamic.”

“I am really noticing this dynamic shift of being less concerned with chasing grant dollars. We're all chasing money, don't get me wrong. We're trying to. But there's more and more effort towards philanthropy and I think it's actually an impact of the NoVo Foundation, quite frankly... When I came into the movement, everybody had an OVW grant, everybody was working on OVW. And just how restrictive and oppressive that is, those federal grants. So I'm seeing people actually being more invested into what the community's asking for and getting more creative instead of just having to rewrite their programs every two years, every five years based on what OVW new objectives are coming out.”
“What I'm seeing in philanthropy is people actually giving some grace... to people who aren't formal grant writers. So you see grants coming in to where the interview weighs actually as much as the written grant.”

“So [when we’re] calling [funders] and saying, listen we're probably not going to hit these objective numbers... They're like, we figured that was probably going to happen but we decided to take a risk because we believe in [your organization]. And that was so liberating for us... We're not going to give up. Knowing that even if we fail by Western standards, we're not going to be looked at negatively or have to return money to the foundation... because if we're really going to talk about changing and shifting and transforming the landscape, we have to try things we've never tried before so we don't know what measurable outcomes are for that.”

**Topic for Further Exploration**

**Deeper dive into immigration/migration**

“There were some frustrations from my end to think about the content in this particular political moment around immigration and around the caravans, that I felt was a really big missed opportunity, that I think should have had a little more thoughtfulness and intention, and not just kind of thrown in last minute.”

“With land struggles, with immigration, migration, and also [the] prison industrial complex. Those things are really driving women's rights and work. I think we really need to dig in more about how that impacts, undermines and underpins all of our work... I think that would also make [the convenings] a lot better because we're feeling that we're actually making some progress and even talking about it. It just feels so detached when we don't. Even if I have a great time during MEV convening during the day, what keeps me up at night is that problem.”

“I think there was a frustration of folks feeling like, here we are in a place like Guatemala, in this political moment where there is literally an exodus of thousands of people from a country like Guatemala, going into the states because of US foreign policy. Then the current government is militarizing the border as we speak because of this exodus. So, how are we not addressing that in the place that we are in?”

**More solidarity among the cohort**

“I think we need to be a little bit more grounded, meaning show a little bit more allegiance to this cohort. I worry that there's been a little bit of disconnect because of the various affinity groups.”

“We have situational solidarity. So there are definitely some moments that we are a cohesive group that believes in the solidarity of the whole and then there are a lot of times that we
believe in solidarity of certain people. And then there are times when it feels like we're just a bunch of free radicals.”

“What I’ve seen is that we’ve formed cliques and maintained those cliques. That’s not a bad thing, but we haven’t been able to fully strengthen our solidarity with each other.”

“I do still think that there is a little bit of a sense of us and them between the cohort members and the faculty. I think it’s diminishing, but it’s still there. And I don’t think it’s fair, but I also understand where it comes from... But I think it’s healthy and it’s to be expected.”

“We have not done one thing together [as a cohort] that had a cause for change attached to it... We’re connecting to all these different impacted communities, and not one time yet have we been able to say, ‘Okay, we're all [going to] show up for this one thing at this one place. And in that, we’re going to be able to bridge all these different communities that each one of us represent.’ We haven't been able to do that.”

**Working on anti-blackness**

“I would love to continue discussing... how to work on and combat anti-blackness. There and across, of course, other places in the globe.”

“I do know there was anti-blackness experience in Meso, so there needs to be a follow-up to that.”

“Anti-blackness is such an important issue and anti-immigrant is such an important issue. We need to stay focused on both of them especially with what is going on in our country.

“I feel like there's a black and indigenous conversation that would be great to see us come to some more agreement and connection and conversation around that.”

**Economic Violence**

“When we think about what is the alternative to capitalism, and think about what a grassroots feminist economy would look like... It gives us at least the tools to talk about an alternative. And I think that if we want to get at the root cause of gender-based violence, we have to understand the role that the economy plays in fueling gender-based violence.

“So, I believe economic displacement, or attacks on a woman's ability to provide for her family is an act of violence, and something that we're not talking about as much.”

“I did push back on [the facilitators of the fundraising training]. I was like, ‘Look, I understand that there is an art and science to fundraising, and I want to acknowledge that there are best practices, that there are easy tips that we can try to incorporate and things like that. But, let's also address the pink elephant in the room, which is that there are systems of power and privilege that prevent people of color-led organizations, particularly women of color-led
organizations, from reaching their fundraising goals because they want to preserve systems of power.”

**Recommendations**

**Convening 6**

“I'm really excited for [MEV] to talk about what was unique and what was different about this cohort, maybe different approaches that they took or different ideas or considerations. I think that it's a powerful dynamic.”

“I guess my concern would be, are we going to be tokenized as the ‘work cohort?’ ... How are we practicing what we've been practicing all along in terms of building deep relationships with each other, getting to know each other's work, and figuring out how we build alliances beyond MEV? Somehow we have to tuck that all into one week, and I don't know how it's going to happen.”

“I’m not sure how they’ll structure Convening 6 to have all alumni come together, but it would be great to meet each other. I’d like to learn more what’s worked for them, what are their best practices and how they can give guidance in how we collaborate with each other.”

“Do some building across different cohorts, that would be so exciting. I think deepen the alignment work, and maybe reorganize ourselves based on sectors, or different regions, or something like that. I think it would be really cool. I’m really excited about that. Also, deepen our shared practices together, support them with different tools that we learned together, and do some calibrations too.”

“I don’t trust this cohort with my [MEV] family. I get really worried because I don't trust them with my [MEV] family. And that sucks to say and that is not what I wanted. But I have a lot of anxiety about convening six.”

“I have a lot of questions about the last convening and don’t feel grounded or clear at all. And I think because it's not our cohort, there will be other people, and the dynamics are totally different. I also know that there are people in other cohorts who I have conflicts with and know I'm not politically aligned with.”