The months have flown by and we find ourselves nearing the end of another two-year cycle. Cohort 3 had their sixth and final convening in early February at Seascape in Northern California. Their first convening back in June 2015 was also held here and it felt complete to come full circle.

It is part of Move to End Violence design to have the final convening of every cycle be cross-cohort to help build beloved community and alignment among all the Movement Makers. Forty-four of our 53 Movement Makers were able to come for the week, along with 29 former and current faculty and staff, and 10 children and 10 caregivers. It was powerful to be with our community of almost 100 people standing up for liberation and an end to violence.
There was also a palpable desire to lean on each other to help chart a path forward in these troubling times. We have been reeling from the election results and making sense of the world we are in, we are trying to process the Women’s March and its potential, and we have been overwhelmed by the alarming executive orders seemingly coming daily. This convening was much-needed time to step away and reconnect with our Purpose.

It is also part of Move to End Violence design to have the final convening of each cycle be led by a cross-cohort design team, rather than faculty. Beckie Masaki, Cristy Chung, Annika Gifford, Nicole Matthews, ML Daniel, Alexis Flanagan, Patina Park, and Lynn Rosenthal put forward their best thinking and approach, curating an experience based on connection, practice, openness, and adaptability.

We intentionally practiced Storytelling to interrupt our habit of telling a single story and to practice holding simultaneous truths. Each cohort shared their stories of their experience in MEV and the contributions they have made to the movement. Cohort 1 lifted up experimentation, pivots, and visioning. Cohort 2 centered race, equity, and co-creation. Cohort 3 named liberation, land, and life.
Cohort 1 shared the story of their journey together. Pictured here: Nan Stoops and Patti Tototzintle.

Movement Makers Cristy Chung and Eesha Pandit tell the story of Cohort 2’s journey and their call for centering race in this work.
Throughout the week, there were numerous calls to better understand how we as a community are equipped to fight and resist in this political moment and the different roles we each play. Some of us focused on the immediate strategies and roles we need for alignment, while others dived deeper into the long-term worldview we are trying to birth. Both are crucial if we are going to create a world based on interdependence and connection, rather than of fear and dominance.

Another key outcome of the convening was learning more about the alumni network as a place for further engagement. “The Network” is the brainchild of Cohorts 1 and 2 to create a coordinated and collaborative space to work together, learn together, and innovate together. They are a grantee of the NoVo Foundation and separate from Move to End Violence. Now into their second year and with meaningful planning and experimentation under their belts, we expect to hear more soon about their exciting work – including an official name!

Just as important as the discussions we had together are the connections and creativity that happened outside of the programmed spaces. The daily Spirit Space for morning meditation and intention-setting, group breathing and physical practice with tai ji, cooking and breaking bread together, enjoying the beautiful (if rainy) grounds and ocean view, sending video messages to those who couldn’t be with us, dancing and singing together, late-night conversations, and more. These in-between spaces remind us that our work is just as much about “being” as “doing”.

Movement Makers, faculty, and staff explore the exhibit put together by Cohort 3 as part of the story of their journey together.
Movement Makers spend an evening together at a local university to witness the powerful work of Movement Maker Scheherazade Tillet and A Long Walk Home.
Keep an eye out for more reflections from the Movement Makers on this momentous cycle, as well as announcements about what to expect when we launch Cycle 4!