Video from the Intercambio: Highlights

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Intercambio Highlights is what I like to think of as a trailer. It’s a peek into what will blossom in the other videos. The video opens with comrades, sisters in this work, Sarah Curtiss and Wakumi Douglas singing the Women’s Warrior song. While it’s just a quick glimpse of the two, it lays the groundwork for the kind of partnership that is possible both throughout the Americas and especially in the U.S. where many nations and pueblos live. I get a similar feeling when I see images of Womxn of Color organizers connecting and building across race, geography, and language throughout the videos.
MEV Cohort 4 International Exchange - Intercambio Highlights
from Move to End Violence

in order to make the connection with historical memories of different contexts around the world
A little later, Rosalina Tuyuc, a Maya Kaqchikel human rights activist, welcomes us and each of our energies to Comalapa. Rosa Chávez, the Guatemala Program Coordinator from JASS, narrates the importance of places like Comalapa in Chimaltenango. Ros’s voice guides us through the “Paisajes de Memorias,” (or Landscapes of Memory). It reminds me of Taja Lindley’s work, “The Bag Lady Manifesta,” an installation and participatory performance ritual where Taja’s tagline is “Re-membering is the responsibility of t living.” (You can find clips from her performance here.)

And that theme continues to grow as we see glimpses of: elder Maya womxn who maintain and care for the Paisajes de Memorias memorial; Laura Zúniga Cáceres, Berta Cáceres’ daughter; comrades singing in Berta’s honor; Nikte Caal, a young activist speaking about her and her father’s work as defenders of their land; and Black womxn from across the diaspora laying hands on Dilcia Centeno, a Garifuna comrade from Honduras. Making it their responsibility to (Re)Member – Is that not what the living are doing these moments? Openly practicing and holding ritual in Maya languages less than three decades after the armed internal conflict. Remembering to remain indignant in the face of impunity. Remembering the joy and fire that a mother and comrade -now ancestor- sparked in us. Nikte, using her voice and activism to recall memories and lessons of her father who is now a political prisoner. Re-membering across cracks in our memories and forced separation that we, African descendants, are mirrors to each other. The Intercambio Highlights serves as a peek into all of the goodness we were able to experience, learn, and grapple with.

My questions to you are:

- What is possible when Black and Indigenous leaders come together across nations and borders? How might this work be done even when we don’t travel internationally?
- What is possible when African descendants are welcomed as peers into the work of Indigenous movements for land defense, self-determination, and liberation?
- What could you/your organization be doing to actualize these possibilities?
- What rituals of (re)membering are you bringing into your work practices?
Video from the Intercambio: Invitation to Solidarity

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**Invitation to Solidarity** focuses on the theme of cocreating solidarity and building collective power. No big deal, right? But in a world where even with “accessible” technology and amazing organizing, we can easily feel worlds apart from our comrades in other countries and lands, and out of touch with their daily struggles. We must remember how intentional and strategic this lack of visibility and (mis)information is. The work of solidarity is a body of work that is vulnerable. It reteaches us that for folks based in the United States, our learning does not merely come from wanting a relationship with leaders and organizers in other countries, but it comes the undressing of ourselves of our internalized ways of Western exceptionalism and isolation. It is an act of vulnerability to admit that the U.S. may not always feel like home or “ours,” but is indeed part of our responsibility because of its power and tragic influence on the global landscape.

For MEV, so much of our learning about solidarity came from following the leadership of JASS in times of crisis and when things were not so easy, co-facilitating a curriculum created by MesoAmerican feminists rooted in a MesoAmerican anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, anti-capitalist context, creating this exchange from a multilingual, Language Justice framework, and admitting when we were not doing enough to connect our movements to the United States’ extractive practices and policies transnationally. Learning came from understanding that we need to be committed to sharing with each other our analyses on racial and gender justice as informed by our different contexts and histories, and to not be afraid of grappling with issues and tensions that arise. All are things we have learned are part of our movement traditions.

Our visit to La Puya also tells the story of movement traditions. It reminds me of Bayard Rustin’s visits to India and South Africa to learn about nonviolence organizing philosophies and liberation movements. It reminds me of U.S. based BLM activists in Palestine, Angela Davis in Cuba, SNCC members in Guinea. Our traveling to build across race, borders, and language has long been part of how Freedom Movements based in the U.S. have expanded, deepened our analysis, and grown to be more intersectional, glocal, and revolutionary. And so, it feels powerful to continue that legacy.
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and to build different regions
In this video, Monica Dennis, MEV Co-Director, shares her gratitude for our visit to La Puya, where we are able to see the connections between capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and militarism as movements united against womxn and gender expansive peoples. La Puya is a seven year community-led, nonviolent blockade and movement opposing the construction of El Tambor, a U owned gold mine. It is an intergenerational commitment where Indigenous womxn’s leadership is centered and celebrated, and who elders, youth, and entire families are invited to protest for their land. You can read more about La Puya and our time at the site here.

Monica’s statement is not just about seeing the connections, but understanding that where these oppressive forces connect, that is where we will also find our accomplices in this struggle. Our visit to La Puya was an example of learning to trace that struggle – from El Tambor Mine to the engineering firm Kappes, Cassiday & Associates in Reno, NV, we could map how extractive strategies and imperialism cut through our lands, and where our support in the fight could come in stateside. As Betty del Carmen later describes that is where and how the uniting of the South & the North can happen.

My questions to you are:

- What are challenges you/your organization face internally when building solidarity with comrades and other movement spaces?
- What global liberation movements do you/your organization draw inspiration from? How do you/your organization both build on their legacy and visibilize that work?
- Where is there an opportunity for the work you/your organization do to strengthen its analysis and work to end gender based
**Video from the Intercambio: Intersections In Our Work**

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**Intersections In Our Work** is a particularly powerful and insightful video because of its focus on hearing from our comrades from JASS and MesoAmerica more generally. From drawing parallels between Womxn of Color taking up land defense and human right work, to experiencing youth play their marimbas and perform ancestral creation stories for us at the K’astajib’äl Educational Centre witnessing Joanna Wetherborn speak to Black womxn’s experiences of being the perpetual *other* and survivors of sexual violence, hearing how militarism and violence is seamlessly weaved into the orchestration and criminalization of the migration crisis. It’s not that things are said or shared in multiple languages, but it’s also the power of being able to create a container and learning space where folks do not have to filter their brilliance, analysis, and experiences through a standard English or Western frame of thinking be heard and seen as an expert.
the whole issue of militarization, that is very tied to migration, isn't it?
It is through this creation of a multilingual space and one grounded in a Language Justice framework that even deeper political connections can be made. Like when we hear from Robina Niaz, a member of MEV Cohort 4, draw connections between the land struggle in Mesoamerica being led by Indigenous womxn and the struggle of the Palestinian people, or being able to hear directly from Honduran community members sharing the realities of what it means to have their communities be emptied and witness that migration, their relocation, their deaths and loss, their trauma, and at times, their returning.

With the Spanish language specifically, MEV holds the tension of Spanish being a language used by colonizers to attempt to eradicate indigenous languages, peoples, ways of being and entire cultures, from the continent of Africa to the Americas and the Caribbean. We constantly grapple with this violent history that very much lives in our cellular memory and even our families today. And we also know there is a different kind of depth, connection, and intimacy that is shared when people are welcomed and encouraged to speak the languages they feel most comfortable in. And so, when Spanish is that language, we choose to engage in the complexity for the sake of our movement. I very much look forward to continuing to take on this work with MEV and reimagining what it can look like in the next cycle!

**My questions to you are:**

- Seeing Nikte Caal speaking and other young people organizing at La Puya, what can your organization be doing more of, to open pathways and to support the right of young people to organize?
- How do you/your organization practice making space for the leadership and expertise of community members and organizers across language/dialect, accent, and geography?
- As you saw here, breath and community movement were weaved into the way our Intercambio was held. How might breath and movement support you/your organization to do your work differently?
Video from the Intercambio: Coming Together

Coming Together “Dime con quién andas y te diré quien eres” – It’s a quote that so many of us who are from Spanish-speaking countries have heard and grown up with. While as a young person, it might have been a way for our parents to lowkey weed out o “bad” friends, Isa Noyola’s use of the saying in this video is deeply grounding. It gives me the warm and fuzzies to realize that to be the presence of such guerreras and freedom fighters also means that I and the staff at MEV are their peers in this movement and always, always holding the potential to be more like each other in the name of our liberation.
Parte I
Mujeres cruzando la línea
The video lays the foundation for the purpose of the Intercambio, focusing on who we are: more than 30 womxn from across the U and MesoAmerica. Guayanese, Lenca, Garifuna, Missippian, Nahuall Pipil, Chorti Maya, Maya Mayam, Black American, Nipmuc, those in search of their roots, those who find home in song, those whose ancestors are healers. Just in naming who we are and who our people are, we defy borders. Just by being together in circle, bringing our ancestors with us, we are in ritual. By speaking both native languages that colonization attempted to destroy and the languages forced upon us – that we were now reconfiguring into a medium that can serve our spirits and nourish our movements – We are the powerful reckoning that Sandra Moran says the Far R fears.

In the “Intersections In Our Work” video, Monica Dennis reminds us that while there are very few places that racism, anti-blackness, transphobia, homophobia, patriarchy has not touched through genocide, resource extraction, colonization, and chattel slavery, she says that it “is a short time in our cellular memory… We actually have more memory and more time being free, being connected to land, being able to call our gods, being connected to our foods… **The history of colonization is short in the expansive understanding of time.**” And so, Monica’s statement brings me back to Isa’s – Our time in MesoAmerica and being able to be an build with organizers from across the region (and really across the world) both tells about ourselves, and supports us in unlocking cellular memory for freedom that Monica reminds us of.

**My questions to you are:**

- Con quien tu andas? Who are you reaching for alongside you, in front, and behind you in this work to create a world free of violence?
- How do you see your/your organization’s work providing alimentacion (nourishment) to other “branches” of the movement to end violence against girls, womxn, and gender expansive people?
- What is your/your organization’s body of work responsible for re-membering, and who is that work accountable to?