Submission to the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council on

Canberra Becoming a Restorative City

By

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I am a retired public health academic and I am making this personal submission following a productive discussion between Dr Fiona Tito–Wheatland and a group from the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy on September 13, 2017. I wish to underline the following points.

1. I am full of admiration for the accomplishments of the movement for restorative justice in the case of criminal events here in the ACT and the move to extend the principles more widely across ACT society, including the move to declare Canberra a Restorative City. I also welcome the notion of applying restorative justice principles to those who are most disadvantaged in ACT society. The principles of restorative justice include compassion and empathy for the circumstances of both victims and offenders. In moving towards the declaration of Canberra as a Restorative City, I would argue that it will be appropriate also to join the movement around the world by a number of cities to declare themselves "Compassionate Cities". Just as networks of restorative activities are being developed, the same is happening with respect to compassionate activities and I would encourage our legislators to declare that Canberra is a Compassionate and Restorative City. https://charterforcompassion.org/problem-solving/check-list-for-a-compassionate-city-campaign

2. The timing of this development is ideal. Around the world and here in Australia and the ACT, many citizens are deeply concerned at many of the directions being taken in society and by governments which have been influenced by an ideology of selfishness, competitiveness and blame which is part and parcel of the current narrative that drives Western culture. I have been influenced by the writings of two authors David Korten in the US and George Monbiot from the UK both of whom point to the influence of societal narratives on the way human systems operate. "Change the Story: Change the Future" is the title of Korten's book. Both authors are agreed that our democratic systems are broken and toxic as a consequence of the narrative that has persisted in Western society since the 70s and has often been given the shorthand term "neoliberalism." In an important article published this week, Monbiot argues the case for a new narrative that builds on the positive attributes of humans including their altruism, their ability to cooperate, their compassion and empathy and their unparalleled sensitivity to the needs of others. http://www.monbiot.com/2017/09/11/how-do-we-get-out-of-this-mess/ In my judgement, the move to a Restorative and Compassionate City would be a magnificent initiative that could help to change the narrative that currently permeates our culture.

3. This is an opportunity for Canberra to lead the way on a **new city narrative**. The manner in which our city has already led the way on restorative justice and the firm support from our legislators for this development is a fine start to what could be a vital new direction for cities everywhere.
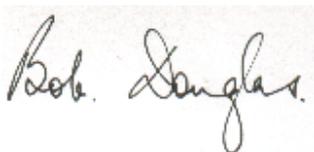
13 September 2017

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Check List for a Compassionate City Campaign

The following list includes examples of key elements that can be incorporated at all stages of a Compassionate City Campaign. While the examples are written for campaigns in the United States theycan be adapted for use nternationally.

Planning
Planning is an essential element in the success of every Compassionate City Campaign. Campaign planning includes:

- Setting short and long-term goals (6 months, 1, 2 or 3 years)
- A value proposition (Who will be served?) What value will the campaign bring to the community? What impact will it have?)
- Areas of focus (What will you be working on?: poverty, homelessness, underserved children, housing, community space, jobs, etc.)
- Timelines, with key milestones
- Staffing and volunteer requirements
- Facilities and equipment requirements
- Legal and account services requirements
- Budgets
- Evaluation (What factors suggest that the campaign will successful? How will it be measured?)
- Funding (fund-raising and revenue streams)
- A partnership strategy

Fund-Raising

Donate

Fund-raising includes sponsoring events and appeals, arranging for sponsorships, and other revenue generating activities. If the campaign is formally organized (incorporated in the state where the campaign is located) but does not have a nonprofit tax status, you can check with local non-profits to see if they will incorporate the campaign into their organization or become a fiscal sponsor for the campaign.

Web Presence

A web presence is an important component of a Compassionate Cities Campaign. Elements includes the following:

- A campaign web site (domain name, web host)
- Other social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- A blog (free services such as Blogger are available)
- An e-mail newsletter

These elements can be linked and coordinated to give the campaign an effective combined tool to communicate, inform, and involve others in the campaign.

Collateral Materials

- Posters
- Handout cards
- Brochures
- Fact sheets
- Bumper stickers
- T-shirts
- Holiday cards

The materials can be distributed via:

- Campaign partners
- Coffee shops
- Book stores
- Libraries
- Human Resource departments
- Schools
- Employee pay envelope stuffers

Partnerships

Partnerships are a central part of a Compassionate Cities Campaign. Partnerships should be established before the mayor and city council affirm the Charter for Compassion and proclaim support for a multi-year Compassionate City Campaign. This assures that the campaign will not appear as political "window dressing" and that the community is actively involved in creating a culture of compassion.

Partnership candidate examples include:

- K-12 schools
- Colleges/universities
- Businesses and corporations
- Criminal justice organizations (police, courts, detention facilities)
- Social service organizations
- Public health agencies
- Governmental agencies (local, county, state, federal)
- Parenting groups
- Healthcare providers
- Service groups (Rotary, Salvation Army, etc.)
- Arts groups
- Youth groups
- Senior groups
- Faith groups

Speakers Bureau

A speakers bureau is an effective element in a Compassionate City Campaign. Sources for speaker include:

- The campaign organization
- Partner organizations
- The Compassionate Action Network International
- Community leaders
- Youth
- Those who have ben personally touched by compassion

Compassionate Action Network International (CAN) can provide materials for your presentations. Examples of groups who could provide excellent speaking venues include all of the groups named above under Partnerships.

Education Programs

Setting up and scheduling meetings and programs for the general public and groups is another campaign element. Information about how to facilitate a meeting and some great ideas about special projects can be found in the City Compassion Reader.

Public Information

Public awareness of and support for a Compassionate City Campaign includes the following:

- Press releases

- Newspaper and magazine op-ed pieces and articles

- Radio and television interviews

- Campaign web-based information

- Videos produced b the campaign (appearing on the campaign website)

- Compassionate Action Network website, YouTube, and other outlets

- Fact sheets

- "White Papers" (essays about the campaign that can serve as background pieces for the media

- Materials (print, audio, video) from CAN

- Outreach Teams

Outreach teams can add strength and visibility to a Compassionate City Campaign. Volunteer groups can assist in areas such as:

- Youth mentoring

- Conflict resolution

- Coordination of social service assets to meet specific challenges (underserved children, integration of immigrants, homelessness, financial hardship, etc.)

- Social service activism

- Assistance to the terminally ill

- Assistance to the aged

Additional Information

The Compassionate Action Network International provides a growing body of information through our website. We may also be able to work with you to customize some of our materials to fit your local campaign.

THE COMPASSION COMMUNITY READER

Problem Solving

The City that Ended Hunger

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Urban Gardening as a Corrective for Homo Economicus

A Piazza on Every Block: How DIY Placemaking Is Transforming Communities

Building a Good Life in Community

Step-by-Step Procedure for Developing a Compassionate City Campaign

Check List for a Compassionate City Campaign

Compassion Games International

10 Steps Toward an Incredible Edible Town

Compassionate Governance Conference, Louisville, KY, April 2013

Against the Smart City

How to Develop a City of Compassion Campaign

From Housing to Health Care, 7 Co-ops That Are Changing Our Economy

Defining the Worst Type of Street Design

Land-Use Strategies to Create Socially Just, Multiracial Cities

Diébédo Francis Kéré: How to build with clay... and community

Mohamed Ali: The link between unemployment and terrorism

From Soap to Cities, Designing From Nature Could Solve Our Biggest Challenges

Food Recovery Network Redistributes Extra Campus Food to Feed Hungry

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES

Overview

Participating Communities

Community Partners

Register

Charter Tool Box

Expanded menu

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Phase 4

Spirituality and Community Building

Compassion Reader

Newsletter, Reports and Documents

Annotated Bibliography

Compassion Games

Video: First First Follower

Community Blog

What Makes a Compassionate City?

Recovering Unsold Food for the Needy

A Canadian City Once Eliminated Poverty And
Nearly Everyone Forgot About It

Foundation House Brings Affordable Housing to
Nonprofit Workers

Steve Howard: Let's go all-in on selling
sustainability

Founder of Time Banking Believes Everyone Has
Something to Contribute

The Green Economy

The Greenest City Story

Toby Eccles: Invest in social change

Tiny Houses for the Homeless: An Affordable
Solution Catches On

What Makes a Good City?

Why Social Urbanism Matters for Sharing Cities

copycat_city

Not Just a Southern Thing: The Changing
Geography of American Poverty

Portland and San Francisco Prove Cities Can Be
Sustainable

Shaping Global Partnerships for a Post-2015 World

Simple, Cheap Health Remedies Cut Child Mortality
In Ethiopia

What Happened When Some Folks In Denver Gave
Cameras To People Who Can't Get Enough To Eat

Why So Many Emerging Megacities Remain So
Poor

Seven Practical Ideas for Compassionate
Communities

Fighting hate with compassionate actions: Mayors
reflect on Charlottesville

Organizing Processes

How to Make Better Decisions Together

Standing Rock Interview

CEOs for Cities: An Organization that Wants to Help You Solve Your City's Problems

Effective Groups

Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places

Ideas for the New City--Urban Omnibus

Shamengo: Giving Voice to People Who Care

The Fourth Way

Using Emergence to Scale Social Innovation

21 Technologies That Will Decentralize the World

What is Placemaking?

The Six Pillars of Character®

Why Saul Alinsky, Author of "Rules" for Social Change, Would Probably Break Them Today

People are in the streets protesting Donald Trump. But when does protest actually work?

4 Expert Tips on Launching a Community Organization

Shareable Community Ideas

Seven Job Creation Strategies for Shareable Cities

10 Ways Our World is Becoming More Shareable

10 principles for making high-density cities better

7 Ways To Reinvent Your City, Burning Man Style

A Guy Who Used to be Homeless Shows Us Exactly What Determination Looks Like

Building the Just City

Austin to Shelter Homeless in a Tiny House Village

Can Co-Ops Curb Poverty in New York City?

Can kindness movements make a difference?

Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work

Chris Downey: Design with the Blind in Mind

Denmark Is Considered The Happiest Country. You'll Never Guess Why.

Cities try a new strategy with immigrants: embrace them

Enrique Peñalosa: Why buses represent democracy in action

Groups Plan Combined Effort to Help One Another

Healthy Neighborhoods, Healthy Kids

How Public Spaces Make Cities Work

How to Design Our Neighborhoods for Happiness

How the Commons Amplifies the Sharing Economy

If We Could All Tap Into This Quality (Which We Can), The World Would Be A Better Place

How to Share Your Office Space the Right Way

Scott Budnick serves breakfast – with a side order of respect – to the homeless

How to Start a Grocery Co-op

Techies to Hack Homelessness in San Francisco

Eight components of a "healing city"

In Cleveland, Hoop Houses Turn Empty Lots into Year Round Farms

The Happiness Initiative

Policy Ideas for Shareable Urban Housing

The Share Shelf: Feeding the Hungry, One Leftover at a Time

12 Agrihoods Taking Farm-to-Table Living Mainstream

A Simple Chart to Share With Anyone Who Complains About People On Welfare

Amsterdam is Now Europe's First Sharable City

How a New Dutch Library Smashed Attendance Records

How to Start a Repair Café

Little Free Library Movement

Los Angeles Gets Its First Urban Fruit Trail

Off-Grid Movement Gains Momentum

Poverty-Focused Innovation: How to Foster Creating an Agency for the Poor

Public Housing Works: Lessons from Vienna and Singapore

Reverse Food Truck Takes in Food to Feed the Hungry

Sharing City Seoul: A Model for the World

To Reduce Prejudice, Try Sharing Passions And Cultures

Won't Want that Sandwich? Can't sell it? Don't Throw it away, though!

Sharing as Direct Action in a New Economy

"Modified Social Benches": An Experiment in Outdoor Socializing

5 Reasons Why Coworking is Awesome

Free Coworking Growing Rapidly Fueled by Open Collaboration

Stranded in Atlanta's Food Deserts

How to Be a Good Neighbour

Supermodel Lily Cole Launches Gift Economy Platform Impossible.com

These Four Cities Are Making Youth Empowerment a Priority

Neighborly advice: What does it take to be a good neighbor?

Toni Griffin: A New Vision for Rebuilding Detroit

Top 15 New Books About Sharing, Cities and Happiness

Ways To Love Where You Live

We Gathered, We Mapped, We Shared

What Happens When Our Cities Start Talking?

Street Store: The Open Source Pop-up Clothing Swap for the Homeless

What is a Compassionate Community?

What Difference Can Compassion Make?

Community Stories

Pretending to be homeless for a night

Richardson, Texas becomes the second City in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex to Affirm the Charter for Compassion

Can compassion have economic benefits?

ABOUT US

 Charter for Compassion International provides an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships

CHARTER

Historic Moments for the Charter

Who has signed the Charter for Compassion?

Karen Armstrong's 2008 TED Prize

worldwide. Our mission is to bring to life the principles articulated in the Charter for Compassion through concrete, practical action in a myriad of sectors.

Charter for Compassion in Translation

Why become a Member of the Charter?

CHARTER PUBLICATIONS

Charter Community Tool Box

Islamophobia Guide Book

Spiritual Assets for Community Building

Medium.com/charter-for-compassion

Soundcloud.com/charterforcompassion

SUPPORT THE CHARTER

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Get involved

NEWSLETTERS

Be up to date with our latest news.

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GEORGE MONBIOT

How Do We Get Out of This Mess?

11th September 2017

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Here are my proposals for a new politics, designed for the 21st Century

By George Monbiot, adapted from Out of the Wreckage: a new politics for an age of crisis, and published in the Guardian, 9th September 2017

Is it reasonable to hope for a better world? Study the cruelty and indifference of governments, the disarray of opposition parties, the apparently inexorable slide towards climate breakdown, the renewed threat of nuclear war, and the answer appears to be no. Our problems look intractable, our leaders dangerous, while voters are cowed and baffled. Despair looks like the only rational response.

But over the past two years, I have been struck by four observations. What they reveal is that political failure is, in essence, a failure of imagination. They suggest to me that it is despair, not hope, that is irrational. I believe they light a path towards a better world.

The first observation is the least original. It is the realisation that it is not strong leaders or parties that dominate politics as much as powerful political narratives. The political history of the second half of the 20th Century could be summarised as the conflict between its two great narratives: the stories told by Keynesian social democracy and neoliberalism. First one and then the other captured the minds of people across the political spectrum. When the social democracy story dominated, even the Conservatives and Republicans adopted key elements of the programme. When neoliberalism took its place, political parties everywhere, regardless of their colour, fell under its spell. These stories overrode everything: personality, identity and party history.

This should not surprise us. Stories are the means by which we navigate the world. They allow us to interpret its complex and contradictory signals. We all possess a narrative instinct: an innate disposition to listen for an account of who we are and where we stand.

When we encounter a complex issue and try to understand it, what we look for is not consistent and reliable facts but a consistent and comprehensible story. When we ask ourselves whether something "makes sense", the "sense" we seek is not rationality, as scientists and philosophers perceive it, but narrative fidelity. Does what we are hearing reflect the way we expect humans and the world to behave? Does it hang together? Does it progress as stories should progress?

A string of facts, however well-attested, will not correct or dislodge a powerful story. The only response it is likely to provoke is indignation: people often angrily deny facts that clash with the narrative "truth" established in their minds. The only thing that can displace a story is a story. Those who tell the stories run the world.

I came to the second, more interesting, observation with the help of the writer and organiser George Marshall. It is this. Although the stories told by social democracy and neoliberalism are starkly opposed to each other, they have the same narrative structure. We could call it the Restoration Story. It goes like this:

Disorder afflicts the land, caused by powerful and nefarious forces working against the interests of humanity. The hero – who might be one person or a group of people – revolts against this disorder, fights the nefarious forces, overcomes them despite great odds and restores order.

Stories that follow this pattern can be so powerful that they sweep all before them: even our fundamental values. For example, two of the world's best-loved and most abiding narratives – *Lord of the Rings* and the *Narnia* series – invoke values that were familiar in the Middle Ages but are generally considered repulsive today. Disorder in these stories is characterised by the usurpation of rightful kings or their rightful heirs; justice and order rely on their restoration. We find ourselves cheering the resumption of autocracy, the destruction of industry and even, in the case of *Narnia*, the triumph of divine right over secular power.

If these stories reflected the values most people profess – democracy, independence, industrial "progress" – the rebels would be the heroes and the hereditary rulers the villains. We overlook the conflict with our own priorities because the stories resonate so powerfully with the narrative structure for which our minds are prepared. Facts, evidence, values, beliefs: stories conquer all.

The social democratic story explains that the world fell into disorder – characterised by the Great Depression – because of the self-seeking behaviour of an unrestrained elite. The elite's capture of both the world's wealth and the political system resulted in the impoverishment and insecurity of working people. By uniting to defend their common interests, the world's people

could throw down the power of this elite, strip it of its ill-gotten gains and pool the resulting wealth for the good of all. Order and security would be restored in the form of a protective, paternalistic state, investing in public projects for the public good, generating the wealth that would guarantee a prosperous future for everyone. The ordinary people of the land – the heroes of the story – would triumph over those who had oppressed them.

The neoliberal story explains that the world fell into disorder as a result of the collectivising tendencies of the over-mighty state, exemplified by the monstrosities of Stalinism and Nazism, but evident in all forms of state planning and all attempts to engineer social outcomes. Collectivism crushes freedom, individualism and opportunity. Heroic entrepreneurs, mobilising the redeeming power of the market, would fight this enforced conformity, freeing society from the enslavement of the state. Order would be restored in the form of free markets, delivering wealth and opportunity, guaranteeing a prosperous future for everyone. The ordinary people of the land, released by the heroes of the story (the freedom-seeking entrepreneurs) would triumph over those who had oppressed them.

Then – again with Marshall's help – I stumbled into the third observation: the narrative structure of the Restoration Story is a common element in most successful political transformations, including many religious revolutions. This led inexorably to the fourth insight: the reason why, despite its multiple and manifest failures, we appear to be stuck with neoliberalism is that we have failed to produce a new narrative with which to replace it.

You cannot take away someone's story without giving them a new one. It is not enough to challenge an old narrative, however outdated and discredited it may be. Change happens only when you replace it with another. When we develop the right story, and learn how to tell it, it will infect the minds of people across the political spectrum.

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But the best on offer from major political parties is a microwaved version of the remnants of Keynesian social democracy. There are several problems with this approach. The first is that this old story has lost most of its content and narrative force. What we now call Keynesianism has been reduced to two thin chapters: lowering interest rates when economies are sluggish and using counter-cyclical public spending (injecting public money into the economy when unemployment is high or recession threatens). Other measures, such as raising taxes when an economy grows quickly, to dampen the boom-bust cycle; the fixed exchange rate system; capital controls and a self-balancing global banking system (an International Clearing Union) – all of which John Maynard Keynes saw as essential complements to these policies – have been

discarded and forgotten.

This is partly because the troubles that beset the Keynesian model in the 1970s have not disappeared. While the oil embargo in 1973 was the immediate trigger for the lethal combination of high inflation and high unemployment ('stagflation') that Keynesian policies were almost powerless to counteract, problems with the system had been mounting for years. Falling productivity and rising cost-push inflation (wages and prices pursuing each other upwards) were already beginning to erode support for Keynesian economics. Most importantly, perhaps, the programme had buckled in response to the political demands of capital.

Strong financial regulations and controls on the movement of money began to weaken in the 1950s, as governments started to liberalise financial markets. Richard Nixon's decision in 1971 to suspend the convertibility of dollars into gold destroyed the system of fixed exchange rates on which much of the success of Keynes's policies depended. The capital controls used to prevent financiers and speculators from sucking money out of balanced, Keynesian economies collapsed. We cannot hope that the strategies deployed by global finance in the 20th Century will be unlearnt.

But perhaps the biggest problem residual Keynesianism confronts is that, when it does work, it collides headfirst with the environmental crisis. A programme that seeks to sustain employment through constant economic growth, driven by consumer demand, seems destined to exacerbate our greatest predicament.

Without a new, guiding story of their own, allowing them to look towards a better future rather than a better past, it was inevitable that parties which once sought to resist the power of the wealthy elite would lose their sense of direction. Political renewal depends on a new political story. Without a new story, that is positive and propositional, rather than reactive and oppositional, nothing changes. With such a story, everything changes.

The narrative we build has to be simple and intelligible. If it is to transform our politics, it should appeal to as many people as possible, crossing traditional political lines. It should resonate with deep needs and desires. It should explain the mess we are in and means by which we might escape it. And, because there is nothing to be gained from spreading falsehoods, it must be firmly grounded in reality.

This might sound like a tall order. But there is, I believe, a clear and compelling Restoration Story to be told that fits this description.

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Over the past few years, there has been a convergence of findings in different sciences: psychology, anthropology, neuroscience and evolutionary biology. Research in all these fields points to the same conclusion: that human beings are, in the words of an article in the journal Frontiers in Psychology, "spectacularly unusual when compared to other animals". This refers to our astonishing degree of altruism. We possess an unparalleled sensitivity to the needs of others, a unique level of concern about their welfare, and a peerless ability to create moral norms that generalise and enforce these tendencies.

We are also, among mammals, the supreme cooperators. We survived the rigours of the African savannahs, despite being weaker and slower than our predators and most of our prey, through developing a remarkable capacity for mutual aid. This urge to cooperate has been hard-wired into our brains through natural selection. Our tendencies towards altruism and cooperation are the central, crucial facts about humankind. But something has gone horribly wrong.

Our good nature has been thwarted by several forces, but perhaps the most powerful is the dominant political narrative of our times. We have been induced by politicians, economists and journalists to accept a vicious ideology of extreme competition and individualism, that pits us against each other, encourages us to fear and mistrust each other, and weakens the social bonds that make our lives worth living. The story of our competitive, self-maximising nature has been told so often and with such persuasive power that we have accepted it as an account of who we really are. It has changed our perception of ourselves. Our perceptions, in turn, change the way we behave.

With the help of this ideology, and the neoliberal narrative used to project it, we have lost our common purpose. This leads in turn to a loss of belief in ourselves as a force for change, frustrating our potential to do what humans do best: to find common ground in confronting our predicaments, and to unite to overcome them. Our atomisation has allowed intolerant and violent forces to fill the political vacuum. We are trapped in a vicious circle of alienation and reaction. The hypersocial mammal is falling apart.

But by coming together to revive community life we, the heroes of this story, can break the vicious circle. Through invoking our capacity for togetherness and belonging, we can rediscover the central facts of our humanity: our altruism and mutual aid. By reviving community, built around the places in which we live, and by anchoring ourselves, our politics and parts of our economy in the life of this community, we can restore the best aspects of our nature.

Where there is atomisation, we will create a thriving civic life. Where there is alienation, we will forge a new sense of belonging: to neighbours, neighbourhood and society. Community projects

will proliferate into a vibrant participatory culture. New social enterprises will strengthen our sense of attachment and ownership.

Where we find ourselves crushed between market and state, we will develop a new economics, that treats both people and planet with respect. We will build it around a great, neglected economic sphere: the commons. Local resources will be owned and managed by communities, ensuring that wealth is widely shared. Using common riches to fund universal benefits will supplement state provision, granting everyone security and resilience.

Where we are ignored and exploited, we will revive democracy and retrieve politics from those who have captured it. New methods and rules for elections will ensure that every vote counts and financial power can never vanquish political power. Representative democracy will be reinforced by participatory democracy, that allows us to refine our political choices. Decision-making will be returned to the smallest political units that can discharge it.

The strong, embedded cultures we develop will be robust enough to accommodate social diversity of all kinds: a diversity of people, of origins, of life experiences, of ideas and ways of living. We will no longer need to fear people who differ from ourselves; we will have the strength and confidence to reject attempts to channel hatred towards them.

Through restoring community, renewing civic life and claiming our place in the world, we build a society in which our extraordinary nature – our altruism, empathy and deep connection – is released. A kinder world stimulates and normalises our kinder values. I propose a name for this story: the Politics of Belonging.

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Some of this can begin without waiting for a change of government: one of the virtues of a politics rooted in community is that you do not need a national movement in order to begin. But other aspects of this programme depend on wider political change. This too might sound like an improbable hope – until you begin to explore some of the remarkable things that have been happening in the United States.

The Big Organising model developed by the campaign to elect Bernie Sanders as the Democratic nominee is potentially transformative. Rather than relying on big spending, big data and a big staff, it uses proliferating networks of volunteers, who train and supervise more volunteers, to carry out the tasks usually reserved for staff. While Hillary Clinton's campaign was organising money, the Sanders campaign was organising people. By the end of the nomination process, more than 100,000 people had been recruited. Between them, they ran 100,000 events and

spoke to 75 million voters.

His bid for the nomination was a giant live experiment, most of whose methods were developed on the job. Those who ran it report that by the time they stumbled across the strategy that almost won, it was too late. Had it been activated a few months earlier, the volunteer network could have abandoned all forms of targeting and contacted almost every adult in the USA. If the techniques they developed were used from the outset, they could radically alter the prospects of any campaign for a better world.

When, after reading a book by two of Sanders's organisers, I argued in a video for the Guardian that this method could be used to transform the prospects of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party, I was widely mocked. But it turned out to be true. By adopting elements of the Sanders strategy, Labour, supported by Momentum, almost won an election that was widely predicted to be a Conservative landslide. And the method that propelled this shift is still in its infancy.

I believe it could become still more powerful when combined with some of the techniques identified by former Congressional staffers in the Indivisible guide to influencing Members of Congress. These people studied the methods developed by the Tea Party movement and extracted the crucial lessons. They discovered that the key is to use local meetings with representatives to press home a single demand, film and share their responses on social media, then steadily escalate the pressure.

The Tea Party honed this technique until its requests became almost impossible to resist. The same thing can be done, though without the harassment to which that movement sometimes resorted. Supported by the Big Organising model, using its proliferating phone-bank teams and doorstep canvassing, the *Indivisible* methods could, I believe, be used to flip political outcomes in any nation that claims to be a democracy.

But none of this will generate meaningful and lasting change unless it is used to support a new, coherent political narrative.

 Those who want a kinder politics know we have, in theory at least, the numbers on our side. Most people are socially-minded, empathetic and altruistic. Most people would prefer to live in a world in which everyone is treated with respect and decency, and in which we do not squander either our own lives or the natural gifts on which we and the rest of the living world depend. But a small handful, using lies and distractions and confusion, stifle this latent desire for change.

We know that, if we can mobilise such silent majorities, there is nothing this small minority can do to stop us. But because we have failed to understand what is possible, and above all failed to

replace our tired political stories with a new, compelling narrative of transformation and restoration, we have failed to realise this potential. As we rekindle our imagination, we discover our power to act. And that is the point at which we become unstoppable.

George Monbiot's book *Out Of The Wreckage: a new politics for an age of crisis*, is published by Verso.

← The Lady Has Turned   Urge, Splurge, Purge →

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