



FROM REPORTS BY BBC UK discussing banning female genital mutilation (FGM) in Uganda to initiatives from the White House advocating for equal pay for women, the demand for change within societies nationally and internationally surrounding issues of women's rights and, by extension, reproductive justice have never been more ardent.

Former Peace Development Fund grantee **Amnesty International** states, "Access to affordable and relevant health services and to accurate, comprehensive health information are fundamental human rights. Yet, gender-based discrimination, lack of access to education, poverty, and violence against women and girls can all prevent these rights from being realized for women and girls -- challenges that are often particularly acute when it comes to sexual and reproductive health rights and safe motherhood."

Many organizations PDF supports work to radically alter the social and political standing of women within their communities. Three organizations that PDF funded this year exemplify successful, systemic change within their communities and within the lives of women who live there.



AT RISK IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Persist Health Project is a peer-led advocacy and community-centric organization based in Brooklyn, NY. Relentlessly campaigning for sex workers in Brooklyn, their robust programs fight coercion and violence suffered by people in the sex trade, while generating better spaces for safe, affirming, and affordable health care and social services.

Persist is a people's organization, representing sex workers, trafficking survivors and anyone who has traded sex for money, food, drugs or other resources. Persist saw the need for more social infrastructure among health care providers, social service providers and the courts. Staff work tirelessly to connect members with the providers best suiting their needs, while constructing a healthy community web in the process.

Persist disrupts the myth that people in the sex trade are not the primary agents of their own decision-making and need outside intervention to manage their lives. Dominant narratives and our legal system treat people in the sex trade as either victims or criminals. In reality, involvement in the sex trade cuts across many life experiences. "Our organization is driven by the notion that people in the sex trade are diverse," says Executive Director Sarah Patterson.

Members work on local campaigns, are involved in court support efforts and teach best practices workshops for healthcare professionals. By filling the gaps in health and social services for people involved in the industry, their team members are

able to advocate for, and bring relief to, many sex workers whose lives have been impacted by multiple systems of oppression and the overbearing hand of bureaucracy.

In 2014, a Persist staff and volunteer research team released a 32-page report on the health needs of people in the New York City sex trade. They questioned HIV-positive sex workers, youth aged 18-25 years old, as well as transgender men and women. The report documents how vulnerable people in the sex trade are in the health care system. It also documents the discrimination and coercion sex trade workers face. Only one participant expressed a positive experience with a health care provider.

The majority of respondents' incomes were below poverty level. Thirty-six percent of Persist's core members are single female parents. Low-income people are often most vulnerable to arrest for trading sex for economic survival. In New York City, where many aspects of the sex trade are illegal, workers have limited access to social service providers that support them as advocates and leaders.

Building leadership is crucial for the members who are disproportionately affected by poverty, racism and transphobia. Persist provides space for members to gain job skills through paid trainings. They develop their leadership and advocacy abilities through community organizing. Members

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PEACETALKS

Join us for spring events in the Pioneer Valley and at the PDF Center for Peace and Justice, with activists from PDF-funded organizations. For more information or to RSVP, email peacedevfund@gmail.com

Monday, March 28, 7 to 9 p.m.

Housing Justice or Injustice?

Meet PDF staff and grantees for a night of community building with activists from **Springfield No One Leaves**, a grassroots organization fighting for housing justice through direct action campaigns, building community solidarity, leadership development and political education. A social hour with wine and cheese will follow.

PDF Center for Peace and Justice
44 North Prospect Street, Amherst, MA

Wednesday, April 27, 7 to 9 p.m.

Social Justice Meet and Greet

A networking event for social justice organizations with children and youth-related programming. Come network and share your project with other organizers. Co-sponsored by the **Rosenberg Fund for Children** and **Friends of Children**.

Suite 160, Eastworks
116 Pleasant Street, Easthampton, MA

SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 22-25

PDF's 35th Birthday Bash with special events, keynote speaker and a new Peace Development Award



Mobile Art Bus in Palestine

RECENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING GRANTS

A ★ denotes a new grantee

★ American Indian Institute, Bozeman, MT
www.twocircles.org

Aztlan Cultura A.C., Colonia del Valle, Mexico
www.aztlanfund.org.mx/_/

Be Present, Inc., Stone Mountain, GA
www.bepresent.org

CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities, New York, NY
www.caaav.org

Changing Worlds, Chicago, IL
www.changingworlds.org

Circumpolar Conservation Union, Washington, DC
www.circumpolar.org

Columbia River Education - Economic Development, The Dalles, OR
www.mcedd.org

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, South Deerfield, MA
www.buylocalfood.org

Earthjustice, San Francisco, CA
www.earthjustice.org

Gardening the Community, Springfield, MA
www.gardeningthecommunity.org

Intertribal Friendship House, Oakland, CA
www.ifhurbanrez.org

Justice Committee, New York, NY
www.justicecommittee.org

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement – NY, Brooklyn, NY
www.mxgm.org/contact-us/new-york/

National Priorities Project, Northampton, MA
www.nationalpriorities.org

★ Natural Resources Defense Council, New York, NY
www.nrdc.org/newyork/

★ Ocean Conservancy, Inc., Washington, DC
www.oceanconservancy.org

Peoples' Justice for Community Control and Police Accountability, New York, NY
www.peoplesjustice.org

Picture the Homeless, New York, NY
www.picturethehomeless.org

Piñeros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste, Woodburn, OR
www.pacun.org

Positive Action Committee, Sylvania, GA

San Francisco Living Wage Coalition, San Francisco, CA
www.livingwage-sf.org

Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, AL
www.splcenter.org

Third World Newsreel, New York, NY
www.twn.org

Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, Northampton, MA
www.uunorthampton.org

White Earth Land Recovery Project, Callaway, MN
www.nativeharvest.com



Culture of Peace Alliance



Californians United for a Responsible Budget



Mobile Art Bus in Palestine



Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane



Picture the Homeless

AT RISK IN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

CONTINUED FROM COVER

receive individually designed peer assistance for court appearances, harm reduction and supportive counseling, and résumé and job application assistance. Working amongst peers allows for a space free of judgment so they can grow as community leaders.

Members can come to Persist offices for an intake with the clinical director offering comprehensive personalized medical care both on and off-site. They provide annual and routine medical exams, immunizations, initiation and maintenance of hormone therapy, sexual health care and HIV services including PrEP (an anti-HIV medication that keeps HIV negative people from becoming infected). They also offer supportive and affordable referrals for financial planning, health insurance and medical enrollment.

Persist has studied the New York court system and detailed human rights abuses during court proceedings. For example, interpreters often prevented the victims or the defendants from speaking freely about their experiences. Domestic violence proceedings often coincided with human trafficking hearings, so victims were forced to see their attackers during their own court proceedings. The overlap made it difficult for people to talk openly so the courtroom could not be a safe space.

Also exceedingly clear from Persist's research was the devastating racial inequality within the court system. People of color were subjected to twice as much service or jail time as white people. Such systemic racism bleeds into policing the streets.

Persist is advocating against unfair harassment and unlawful arrest for sex workers. They demand a change in loitering laws, as well as racial profiling, or profiling based on attitude, clothing and appearance. From using their uncanny bridge building abilities to host community dances, rallies and meetings for those involved in the sex industry or sex industry allies, to organizing against systemic racism in the court system, Persist is a truly effective intersectional community organization. ■

350 FOR 35 LEGACY CAMPAIGN

Celebrate PDF's 35th Anniversary Year by Putting PDF in Your Will

This year marks PDF's 35th year of providing grants and other resources to grassroots groups working for peace and social justice. Our **350 for 35 Legacy Campaign** goal is to identify bequests that will provide \$350,000 annually to permanently support PDF grantmaking and programs.

You can help us plan for the future.

Let us know if you have put PDF in your will and join our campaign to change the world! You may leave your gift to general support, endowment support, or a specific purpose that fits within PDF's mission, vision and goals—to provide grants, training, and other resources in partnership with communities, organizations, trainers, and donors with whom we share a common vision for peace and social change.

For more information about leaving a bequest to PDF, call 413-256-8306 or email kathys@peacefund.org. Please be assured that the information you supply will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Yes, I want to make change in the world! Count me in for PDF's 350 for 35 Legacy Campaign.

NAME _____

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PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

- I have already included PDF in my will.
- Please contact me to discuss putting PDF in my will.
- Please send me specific wording for putting PDF in my will.

We'd love to know what inspired you to make PDF part of your legacy!



FIGHTING AND WINNING FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

ALTHOUGH IT IS INTERNATIONALLY recognized as a human rights violation, female genital mutilation (FGM), otherwise known as female circumcision, is still a common cultural practice. A recent UNICEF report says that “current progress is insufficient to keep up with increasing population growth” and if trends continue the number of girls and women being cut “will rise significantly over the next 15 years.”

A draft report obtained by *The Guardian* said that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 513,000 women and girls are living with or at risk of FGM in the U.S. According to the United Nations, in Africa alone, there are approximately three million girls each year at risk. Particularly in Uganda, the practice still continues to be an issue, despite Ugandan MPs having outlawed it in 2009 and the government of Uganda promising to arrest and detain women involved in the practice.

FGM is a procedure that removes partial or total external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. Typically performed on girls ages 12-16, it is traditionally thought to ensure virginity and make women suitable for marriage. However, FGM has no health benefits and only reflects deep-rooted inequality between men and women. Apart from dehumanizing women, consequences of FGM include psychological and physical trauma, severe bleeding, infections, shock, death, childbirth complications and an increased rate of death for newborn babies.

As a response to the many cruel cases of FGM in Uganda and the concurrent HIV/AIDS pandemic, **Live with Hope Foundation** was started in 2006 to urge traditional cutters to stop the centuries-old practice. It supports women within the Amudat District of Masaka, Uganda, and improves the quality of life of girls and women affected by FGM by providing psychosocial support, love, care and compassion.

The organization’s vision has always been to empower women and young girls within their community to speak out against the injustices done to them and their peers, and advocate for fundamental change. With a grant from PDF’s **Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund**, Live with Hope Foundation ran a successful campaign that involved community participation to eradicate FGM in the region and to create awareness about the dangers of cutting females.

The majority of women within the Amudat District, where FGM practices prevailed in the past, denounced this practice. More than 85 percent of traditional cutters abandoned the use of FGM. Community members now have health and hygiene programs, training in literacy and numeracy programs, and saving and credit schemes for sustainable projects.

The lives of women afflicted with FGM improved. Start-up projects to raise their living standards empowered women socially and economically. Girls returned to their schools and are performing well within their respective classes. This is significant, as FGM traumatizes children and typically results in many girls dropping out of school. Women are now role models in the Amudat District.

The complacency of political leaders was one of the organization’s major challenges, as the leaders were not inclined to attend dialogue meetings for fear of losing voters. Live with Hope Foundation promoted, enacted and sought to enforce legislation and national policies to promote FGM abandonment. With persistence, they have created an anti-FGM movement among leaders in their community.

Live with Hope forged a collaboration at the local and national level to strengthen cooperation with key development partners, not only to abandon the harmful practice, but also end all violence against women in three districts of northeastern Uganda. After much pushback from traditional leaders resistant to change, nearly all leaders have now made a strong commitment to end FGM and have become community advocates.

The community empowerment program has since expanded to three districts aiming to improve the health and well-being of communities that abandon FGM practices. Through dialogue these groups are able to discuss the core principles of human rights, problem solving, health and hygiene, as well as FGM’s adverse effects on health. Other trainings focus on the importance of education for women and girls, project management and micro credit schemes, and valuing schooling within the community.

With Live with Hope Foundation’s intervention, local, political and religious sectors have come to realize that dialogue is the most effective method for change. Although prosecutions still fail and witnesses still fear discrimination and ex-communication by local leaders, Live with Hope Foundation will continue the important dialogues and trainings until FGM is no longer an issue for their country. ■

FOUNDATION ASSOCIATE

Fiona Servaes began working in the Amherst office in September managing PDF’s **Fiscal Sponsorship Program**: a program for grassroots organizations that lessens the burden of tax-exempt requirements and managing donations. The aspect she enjoys the most about her job is learning about many social justice issues and knowing that PDF plays an important role in the human rights and social justice movements. (If you know any grassroots organizations that need a fiscal sponsor, please contact Fiona at Fiona@peacefund.org or call 413-256-8306 ext. 100.)



Fiona Servaes (second from left)

Fiona’s own commitment to social activism is shown by her dedication to fighting human trafficking. She has been responsible for fund-raising and raising awareness of human trafficking with Urban Light, a grassroots NGO dedicated to empowering young men who are victims of sex trafficking and exploitation in Thailand. She also regularly speaks to the University of Massachusetts and Amherst community about human trafficking with the Education Development Team at the Freedom Café, a non-profit coffee shop committed to rescuing human trafficking victims in India.

This past December, Fiona had the privilege of presenting a paper on human trafficking at the international conference, “Communication/Culture and The Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges for a New Generation,” at Chiang Mai University in Thailand. Her presentation at the “Focus on Thailand” panel on “Sex Trafficking Issues in Thailand” highlighted the lack of awareness and research about boys and men as trafficking victims.

“I’m glad that I had the opportunity to attend, present and learn more about how to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,” she said. There is no doubt that PDF also strives towards these goals and she is proud to work with a team dedicated to making positive social change.

IN 2015, A CIRCLE OF DONORS

and organizers worked with PDF’s Executive Director, **Paul Haible**, to create **Partnership for Peace**, a fiscally sponsored project which builds on PDF’s capacity building program, the Middle East Peace Initiative.



Paul Haible (left) with Ali Abu Awaad

Partnership for Peace (PFP) is led by an active and engaged diverse community with roots in Palestine, Israel, Canada and the U.S., including the Threshold Foundation. PFP is supporting Taghyeer, a non-violence organizing effort in the West Bank. Its physical site is a Peace Center where Palestinians and Israelis from civil society and official sectors meet together to create “not peace itself, but the conditions under which peace is possible.”

According to lead organizer, Ali Abu Awaad, the work is about overcoming each other’s fears of the other, building on the work that has been done over the years by dialogue groups, encounter groups, joint Palestinian/Israeli programs and so much more. PFP recognizes and honors all that previous work, and operates from the belief that there may be space for the non-violent actors from all sides to coalesce around a unifying vision. PFP will primarily focus on Taghyeer, but will also support Roots, based at the Peace Center, and other related entities in both Palestine and Israel as recommended by partners on the ground.

PFP has supported several initial workshops, office and administrative development, an educational visit co-led by Paul to the region with a delegation of PFP participants and the first of six phases of building out the physical infrastructure of the Peace Center. ■

Read more about Partnership for Peace at www.peacedevelopmentfund.org/partnership-for-peace.

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DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP



BY AROUND 2020, “more than half of the nation’s children are expected to be part of a minority race or ethnic group,” the Census Bureau reports. Americans under the age of 18 lead a demographic that will see the overall population follow suit some 20 years later. Yet, women of color today are largely underrepresented in the national debate on key issues, including reproductive health care, women’s rights and the economy. In “The State of Women of Color in the United States,” the Center for American Progress reports: “Women of color have made incredible strides in educational attainment and in the workplace, but their earnings and net wealth still pale in comparison to white women. They also lag behind in political leadership positions and still face unique health disparities. Their voices are critical to shaping the policies that affect their lives.”



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PDF grantee, **Be Present Inc.**’s, roots are traced to nationally recognized trainer and social change activist Lillie P. Allen’s groundbreaking *Black & Female: What is the Reality?* workshop at the first National Conference on Black Women’s Health Issues held in 1983. Five years later, a group of African-American women trained by Ms. Allen as self-help group facilitators invited white women and other women of color activists to participate in Sisters & Allies, an 18-month leadership training project.

This initiative formed the foundation for Be Present, Inc., of Stone Mountain, GA. They call themselves “a diverse network of people willing to risk being different with one another, our families, communities, workplaces and organizations.” Their members are committed to build personal and community well-being on the strength of self-knowledge, rather than on the “distress of oppression.”

Be Present believes that the needs of next-generation leaders and changing demographics are creating a particularly urgent need for the non-profit sector to develop and support leaders of color and leaders from immigrant communities. Therefore, a strategic goal of Be Present is to strengthen the effectiveness of non-profits and leadership engaged in community activism.

One of the ways they do this is through their five-year Black and Female Leadership Initiative, which launched in 2013. This initiative raises the visibility of Black women’s leadership as key to social justice movement-building in the U.S. It highlights the process and the achievements of using a collective leadership approach, as well as specifically demonstrating the leadership of Black women in partnering with all people to create sustainable change that serves everyone in their communities.

In order to collectively build a more gender inclusive racial justice agenda, it is critical to invest in the lives of Black women and girls as vital partners in sustaining comprehensive change efforts and creating neighborhoods of opportunity. Be Present programs convene people of all races and ages in a transformative learning process to strengthen self-knowledge, build and sustain effective relationships, and underscore the importance of each person manifesting leadership of social justice agendas.

Margherita Vacchiano, Be Present’s chief operating officer says, “We see the transformative power in our stories to energize change, in health, midwifery, reproductive rights, criminal justice reform, education, domestic violence, family law, community organizing, philanthropy and the performing arts, among others.” Through the stories and shared experiences of such inspiring women, “Change becomes lasting, spreading through us as diverse Black women, and then across race, gender, class and power borders to create a just world.” ■

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Peace through Justice

MISSION STATEMENT

The PEACE DEVELOPMENT FUND works to build the capacity of community-based organizations through grants, training and other resources as partners in the human rights and social justice movements. As a public foundation, we nourish, foster and encourage the diverse, self-sustaining and economically viable communities that are essential to building a peaceful, just and equitable world.