



Highlander

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

Over 75 years working for justice.

Working Toward a Solidarity Economy

2016 Current Work and Strategies

Highlander's mission is to serve as a catalyst for grass-roots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the South.

Since our founding in 1932, we work with people fighting for justice, equality and sustainability, supporting their efforts to take collective action to shape their own destiny.

Through popular education, participatory research, and cultural work, we create spaces and processes -- at Highlander

and in local communities -- where people gain knowledge, skills, hope and courage, expanding their ideas of what is possible.

We develop leadership and help create and support strong, democratic organizations that work for justice, equality and sustainability in their own communities and that join with others to build broad movements for social, economic and restorative environmental change. Our primary constituencies are low-income communities working for change, with a focus on African American, immigrant and low-income white communities.

Our current programs are centered on solidarity economies, economic transition, racial justice, and intergenerational organizing and leadership.



Highlander works with people, groups and institutions on three levels -supporting resistance to unjust policies, working for just and progressive policies and creating new/alternative infrastructures to transform the legal frameworks in which all this operates. Highlander is prioritizing democratic participation and economics because of what we see and hear as needs and opportunities in the region and because they are central to any progress on the other leverage points.

Toward that end Highlander is:

- ♦ Anchoring the Appalachian Transition Fellowship, a new program impacting a just, sustainable economic transition in central Appalachia, designed for emerging leaders to spend a year working within host communities to help foster cross-sector partnerships (education, non-profit, for-profit, philanthropy and government), increase connectivity and collaboration in the region, and build personal and professional skills.
- ♦ Launching a new curriculum on democratic participation and the economy, working with a national group of educators and organizers to pilot and implement this adaptable curriculum for use on the ground. A Train-the-Trainer was held in Fall 2015 and the curriculum is now being tested in communities across the country.
- ♦ Investing in developing and anchoring networks, including the Southern Grassroots Economies Project to promote and launch sustainable cooperative economies. SGEP supports cooperatives and communities seeking cooperative economic models with training, support, and education. SGEP also operates The Southern Reparations Loan Fund (SRLF), making business loans to cooperatively owned businesses anchored in the most marginalized Southern communities.
- ♦ Partnering with Beautiful Trouble to support the creation of Beautiful Solutions, a content pipeline for sharing and strategizing just economic alternatives, including a book and website. The project will also incorporate our democratic participation and the economy curriculum in national and international outreach.
- ♦ Expanding worker justice organizing by building connections between unions and non-traditional worker organizing, supporting worker centers, day laborers, and connecting worker justice to immigrant rights work.



Participants share their community map at a November 2015 Train-the-Trainer for Highlander's Economics and Governance curriculum .