archive and reflection

compiled by
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with support by
upEND Movement
How We Map was a two-day creative exploration created by Benjamin Lundberg Torres Sánchez for upEND Movement’s How We endUP conference in 2021. Through this experience the conference community began to collectively map conditions that uphold the Child Welfare Industrial Complex, and consider how their relationships, roles, and work may shift as we realize the abolition of its systems.

The original exploration used a “sand box” format where participants were invited to contribute to many activities according to their own interest, flow, pace, and capacity. This document compiles the activities within How We Map as a resource for future organizing, as well as content that was co-created by the conference community through their collaborations within the space.

What is an Industrial Complex? The overlapping interests of government and industry...as solutions to economic, social, and political problems (Critical Resistance; What is the PIC? What is Abolition?)

What is the Child Welfare Industrial Complex? A term we use to describe overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, coercion, social stigma, and family separation as solutions to economic, social, and political problems. (Emily Ahn Levy, Liz Latty, Mariama J. Lockington, Benjamin Lundberg Torres Sánchez, Suzi Martinez Carter, Genevieve Saavedra, and Schuyler Swenson; Dream Mapping Adoption and Foster Care Abolition)
Stars are a tool people use for navigation: to chart physical paths and lifeways. As we journey together, it is easy to get lost, sidetracked, disoriented, or tired and confused.

The “True North” space invited conference participants to collaborate in guiding each other towards abolition by co-creating a set of guiding principles. This flexible activity can be an important practice when bringing a new coalition of people or organizations together. In addition to contributing a guiding principle, participants could also elaborate on ideas left in the space, or pose a question to fellow participants. If someone left something in the sky resonates with participants, they placed a star next to that idea.

Here are some strong contributions from participants at How We endUP:
Corporations and non-profits often perform their public-facing values in simplistic, digestible ways, shying away from addressing how they will be practiced, or confronting any contradictions between an organization’s practices, and their stated principles. Since many of us have been shaped by corporate and non-profit expressions of values there is a tendency for folks to contribute single words to this activity.

What do we mean when we use a word like Empathy or Solidarity? How do we resist feel-good language in favor of getting specific and concrete? How do we ground our guiding principles in the material realities and lived experiences of impacted people?
In this green field, participants were asked to gather our movement elders and ancestors by adding names and images of those who are with us today, and those who have gone before us. The label of “elder” here does not necessarily follow age. Additionally, following Mariame Kaba’s quotation, “Nothing that we do that is worthwhile is done alone,” participants could also add groups and collectives:

Archive of the “Who are our movement elders and ancestors?” activity at How We endUP
“Why do things happen where they do?” is a question Ruth Wilson Gilmore uses to describe a central question of Geography. Using Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s question, participants were asked to make statements about the Child Welfare Industrial Complex in the following format:

(What) happens (where) because (a reason)

If someone wrote something that resonates with you, place a "leaf" next to that idea

Archive of the "Why do things happen where they do?" activity at How We endUP
Using five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing) conference participants collectively built a collage of the current conditions of the Child Welfare Industrial Complex by placing words, doodles, photos, graphics, data, links, and more. The goal in this activity was to be as expressive as possible, and to not worry about being literal, or making sense. The only limit was our collective imagination.
Participants were asked to imagine using the cleansing fire of the volcano in a two-part activity.

First, participants “threw” the laws, policies, practices, and institutions they wanted to burn down, into the volcano. If something that was thrown into the volcano resonated, participants placed a flame next to that idea. Second, participants responded to “What will rise from the ashes?” in the gray clouds above the volcano.
Using Gloria Medina’s Introduction to Power Analysis presentation, participants collectively strategized around how to recognize and shift power towards the goal of abolishing the global Child Welfare Industrial Complex.

Below, participants used sticky notes to sketch out competing agendas ("ours" vs. "the opposition’s") thinking about conditions we want to bring about, and conditions the opposition causes or perpetuates.
With in the map, participants used symbols to map. Grey cloud icons were used to define the major conditions/problems which negatively impact people within the Child Welfare Industrial Complex. Aquamarine speech bubble stand for major issues/policy battles related to problems and conditions. Yellow arrows represent decision-makers; orange trapezoids represent organized groups; red rounded-rectangles represent un-organized groups.

The temporary community of the conference tried to keep in mind that every participant may not agree with one another, and contributed to the map knowing that it is a representation of a plural and collective perspectives, resisting a drive towards “right answers” or “perfection.”
In this three-part activity, participants looked at the work of Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) abolitionists, and the framework of “Abolitionist Steps” vs. “Reformist Reforms.”

As Derecka Purnell said during her keynote for How We upEND, we should ask ourselves when considering any action, “will this effort undermine and reduce the power of the present system?” Brianna Harvey elaborated this point during the Repeal Mandatory Reporting Laws panel saying, “we can’t keep funneling money to these reforms, and funneling money to this systems, and think the system is going to save us.” Joyce McMillan also spoke about taking actions to “shrink the system” out of existence. This has been expressed elsewhere as “reform to abolish.”

**Part 1**: Participants considered two graphics representing campaigns addressing the Prison Industrial Complex: the reformist campaign, “8 Can’t Wait,” and the abolitionist campaign “8 to Abolition.”

Using sticky notes, participants wrote down observation about the difference in strategies between these two campaigns.
Below is Critical Resistance’s Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps to end imprisonment poster. Participants spent time reading the introductory paragraph, and at least one example of a Reformist Reform, and one example of an Abolitionist Step before continuing to Part 3.

**Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps to end IMPRISONMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does this...</th>
<th>Reformist reforms</th>
<th>Abolitionist steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reduce the number of people imprisoned, under surveillance, or under other forms of state control?</td>
<td>YES. Decarceration justifies expansion.</td>
<td>NO. Building more prisons and jails creates more cages, period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduce the reach of jails, prisons, and surveillance in our everyday lives?</td>
<td>YES. As part of a broader political movement, we must focus on getting people out of the prison industrial complex.</td>
<td>NO. Building more jails and prisons increases the reach of the PIC, and prison industrial infrastructures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create resources and infrastructures that are steady, preventative, and accessible without police and prison guard control?</td>
<td>YES. We reject funding for jails and prisons that create opportunities to resist and prevent harm, and create processes for community accountability.</td>
<td>NO. Building more prisons and jails entrenches the current logic of accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strengthen capacities to prevent an address harm and create processes for community accountability?</td>
<td>YES. When we work to shrink carceral logics, we can work toward decarceration with other ways of responding to and preventing harms, and investing in community infrastructures that support and sustain people.</td>
<td>NO. When we reject funding for jails and prisons that create opportunities to resist and prevent harm, we create processes for community accountability and support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Building more prisons and jails creates more cages, period.

NO. If they built it, they can’t let it go. Building more jails and prisons creates more cages, period.

NO. Building more jails and prisons increases the reach of the PIC, and prison industrial infrastructures. Creating more cages means building something we have to tear down. We have to end imprisonment.

NO. Adding cages takes away street-level and local funding and resources that could be directed to community led infrastructures.

NO. Building more prisons and jails entrenches the current logic of accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.

NO. Prisons and jails do not create accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.

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Building more prisons and jails creates more cages, period.

NO. The history of the prison is a history of failure. Newer jails and prisons that are prepared as improvements or existing ones or buildings expanded the empire of cops to begin the life of imprisonment.

NO. There is no such thing as a “human” cage. Cages were designed under the premise of addressing the harms that imprisonment reinforces the logic of using caging as a solution for social, economic, and political issues.

NO. Arguments for jails to “serve the community” are the idea that jails and police create “safety” and take away the capacity to build resources that can create well-being.

NO. Prisons and jails do not create accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.

NO. Prisons and jails do not create accountability. They are sites that perpetuate violence and harm.

Building “closer” prisons and jails replaces them with the threat of jail or prison touring.

NO. Life-offering resources cannot be provided in spaces of imprisonment. These “service” or “human” cages are not sites where people can accept help, they keep specific groups of people incarcerated.

NO. Building jails and prisons unapologetically lock up specific populations expands the reach of jails and prisons, and surveillance.

NO. The argument for these jails and prisons is that they provide specialized services through policing and imprisonment.

NO. Manufacturing divisions between imprisoned people and the rest of the population builds our capacity to create new supports and resources that sustain all people.

NO. Geographic movement extends the violence and harm of imprisonment into people’s homes and everyday lives.

NO. E-carceration extends the violence and harm of the prison, jail, or detention center into a person’s home, turning it into a space of surveillance and a site of criminalization and a financial toll.

NO. Manufacturing divisions between imprisoned people and the rest of the population builds our capacity to create new supports and resources that sustain all people.

NO. E-carceration extends the violence and harm of the prison, jail, or detention center into a person’s home, turning it into a space of surveillance and a site of criminalization and a financial toll.

Public / private “partnerships” is another term for those that evaporate community resources and surveillance.

NO. These sanctions move people from one locked facility to another. They have the threat of jail or prison touring.

NO. These programs require moving through the policing and court systems to access any services that might be available there.

NO. These programs require moving through the policing and court systems to access any services that might be available there.

NO. Monitoring brings the prison, jail, or detention center into a person’s home, turning it into a space of surveillance and a site of criminalization and a financial toll.

NO. Manufacturing divisions between imprisoned people and the rest of the population builds our capacity to create new supports and resources that sustain all people.

NO. E-carceration extends the violence and harm of the prison, jail, or detention center into a person’s home, turning it into a space of surveillance and a site of criminalization and a financial toll.

Legislation and other efforts that single out some communities or individuals for criminalization and surveillance.

NO. This strategy victimizes the idea that the idea that some people are “worthy” to be watched and others are not.

NO. These efforts misclassify the idea that some people are “worthy” to be watched and others are not.

Building “closer” prisons and jails replaces them.

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The space below was designed for participants to practice charting Abolitionist Steps vs. Reformist Reforms. This version of Critical Resistance’s tool can help us to develop visions for the future and ways of accessing concrete actions we may take or support with regards to the Child Welfare Industrial Complex and systems of family regulation, surveillance, and policing. Participants were encouraged to use the tool as an opportunity to build understanding with one another, rather than to try to “get it right.”

Some ideas that were put forward by participants as Abolitionist Steps were “quality, free legal family defense,” “shutting down congregate care facilities and reunify those children with family,” “ending mandated reporting,” and “Give people who need it money, housing, transportation (not a temporary bus card), food, clothing, jobs, etc.”

Some ideas that were put forward by participants as Reformist Reforms were “eliminating all drug screening,” and “building family-centered visitation facilities”

We can reflect on whether or not we agree with these ideas.

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<th>reduce the number of families who are regulated, surveilled, policed, punished, and destroyed by the state?</th>
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<th>create resources that are steady, preventative, and accessible without contact with caseworkers and other agents of the Child Welfare Industrial Complex?</th>
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Archive of the “Abolitionist Steps vs. Reformist Reforms” activity at How We endUP, excerpt
In this activity, participants worked collectively to visualize “who is here?” How do individuals imagine themselves and their roles in the collective work that it takes to create a movement?

Using shapes and text, participants mapped themselves and their relationships. In yellow rectangles, participants were invited to make a statement about themselves. It could be related to identity, experience, profession, desire, what offerings they bring, and more. In the blue thought bubble, participants wrote statements about what they imagined their role to be within this movement space. Participants also used dark blue arrows to elaborate what resonance, relationship, or affinity they founds within the conference space.

Here is an example of two participants’ responses, reproduced with permission:

Sol (they/them/they)

As an infant, I was separated from my family of origin through the Child Welfare Industrial Complex & adopted through a transnational adoption process.

I am a community facilitator, organizer, & artist. Most importantly, a parent of two children. I am also the co-creator of podcast “Rescripting The Narrative”.

My political home is a constellation of adopted, fostered, & trafficked people who are abolitionists/learning about abolition.

Ben is my friend & comrade.

We met on an “adopted from transnational adoption group” Facebook group.

I was separated from my first family for 28 years through a private, transnational adoption process.

I am an artist, educator, and an organizer. My political home is a constellation of adopted, fostered, and trafficked people who are abolitionists/learning about abolition.

I want to build connections between impacted parent organizers and adopted/fostered/trafficked organizers.

Benjamin (they/them/elle)