



“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

Lilla Watson,
Brisbane-based
Aboriginal
activist and
organizer.



So what is Naming the Moment?

Naming the Moment is a process of engaging a diverse group of people to learn more about the unique opportunity that this specific time offers to make social and political change.

Usually the process happens over six to ten workshops. The workshops use a variety of popular education techniques to assist participants in uncovering what they know collectively and individually about the times we are in right now. These truths are looked at from different perspectives in order to critically think about what the issues are, what forces are at play and what change is needed to create a more democratic society.

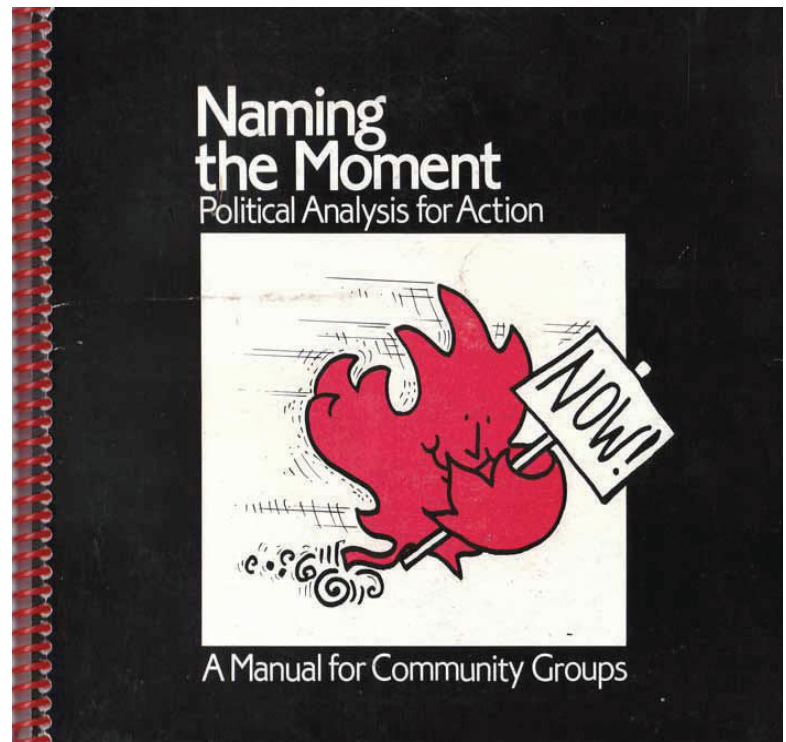
The Naming the Moment process provides a way to learn about the times we live in and the skills and resources we all have to contribute to

change. This is a great way to develop our capacities to be change makers at the same time we can be change makers.

This approach is based in popular education where engagement starts where people are at and spirals out to make the changes people need in their lives and community. This can be a new way of working to some people and can result in some feelings of uneasiness. How

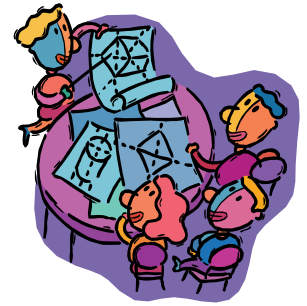
can you commit to being a part of TCDI’s “We make the road by walking” project when you have no idea where we are headed?

The easiest way to do this is to jump on board and use the newsletter, blog and links to inform yourself of our understanding of the process. And talk to each other about what being a part of this process could mean for you.



This book was created by Deborah Barndt as a part of the Naming the Moment Process at the Jesuit Centre in the 1980's.

A Series of Six Workshops



The time schedule for the 6 workshops has yet to be set. The content of those workshops will not be determined until the community partners have a chance to come together.

So what can you expect of the six workshops?

The workshops will be hosted at 5 community sites spread across the city. The reason for doing this is that we will learn more about each other and our city by travelling outside of

our own local neighbourhoods.

Each workshop will be between 3 and four hours long. As a part of meeting together we will share a light meal. Nothing stops collaboration like an empty stomach.

Each workshop will be attended by between 40-60 people. There will be a core group of TCDI members who will help to provide continuity across workshops.

During the meetings we will use

different methods to engage with the issues at hand. Some of these might include theatre of the oppressed, art activities, popular education tools, and guest speakers .

By the end of our 6 workshops we will have created living and breathing picture of the moment we are in and the actions we are taking.

A June Celebration

One of the goals that TCDI has is to celebrate more — our work, our successes, our ongoing commitment to change. We need opportunities to dance, sing and play together. And for that reason we are going to hold a community celebration in June. We will highlight some of the learning and actions

taken during the workshop series.

In addition to this, we would like to create an outdoor fair where people can participate in a number of activities that step outside of how we normally interact with each other. Maybe there will be yoga under trees and creative voice workshops. We may even have a

poetry session.

We also imagine some sort of grand community dinner where we can share and celebrate our cultures and food politics by sharing food together. The details are vague at this point but the vision excites us.

FIRST STEP:

Setting the Stage for Democratic Communication

Goal: ensure that communication needs are met for all participants

This first step includes making sure everyone has access to the same information and has the same basic understanding of what we are intending to do and the methods that will be used. This can happen by sharing information and having conversations.

It also includes making sure we have a shared understanding of what democratic process is and how to accomplish that.

As a part of democratic communication, we will also need to understand what communication needs that participants will have and figure out

ways to meet those needs.

By doing this, we are creating an environment where people will be safe to participate and start the process with similar understanding.

Doing this ahead of time may help to ensure a democratic process and actions in the end.

Documentation & Democratic Communication

Capturing what happens is an important part of any Naming the Moment process for a few reasons.

1. Sharing information with people who miss a session
2. Creating a collective history that is larger than what one person's memory
3. Using a variety of media like flipcharts, photographs, newsletters and blogs echoes the rich process
4. Providing a toolkit of how to create your own process in

the future

During the initial planning phase and after each workshop, newsletters will come out that help to capture the learning that is happening and the actions taking place. Let us know if you want to receive a copy. And keep checking the website.

A brief history: Made in Toronto

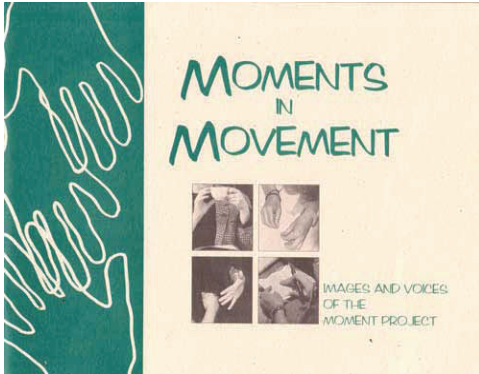
Naming the Moment followed the road back to Canada that many international development volunteers and workers took from the 1970s onward.

It was in Latin American critical literacy and development work that a number of Canadian educators encountered the variety of popular education methods being used to enable communities to better resist the many oppressions that are yet with us (if not intensifying).

One popular education method encountered was conjunctural analysis. As applied by some popular education organisations, this was a collective means of

conducting political analysis for action. Two dynamics proved important here: the movements of forces within society and the learning logic of action-reflection-action. What is unique about Naming the Moment is that it acknowledges that all people have experience that gives them the potential and the

There are two ways in which it is important to recognise the meaning of 'popular' in popular education. First is the choice that popular education makes to take the side of the oppressed, recognising, as Freire has argued, that no education is neutral. Second is the power of the process of action-reflection-action. When applied to the way in which people learn, this



MOMENTS IN MOVEMENT



That to me was the most important thing - to be in this group of people and meet people from other organizations and cultures and labour and things we think we're aligned with but never actually have any contact with.
Betsy Trumpener, Project READ, Parkdale

It's a base to start from a common understanding and an analysis of things, and to see the way you fit in with different sectors...It's an opportunity to look at issues together.
Chryg Louie, Cross-Cultural Communications Centre



Monthly Moment Workshops
The annual series focus on current themes and issues. Activists from many sectors come together to do collective analysis for action.

affirms that the starting point for all learning is action – people live in the world and act all the time. Nobody enters a relationship or a process as a blank slate. We all have experiences that have

right to engage in this kind of analysis, and in so doing, people can become actors in changing their world, and not merely 'acted-upons'.

shaped us and upon which we rely to explain the world to ourselves. In order to change the world in which we live, especially when it comes to re-

A brief history: Made in Toronto—cont'd

(Continued from page 4)

sisting oppression, we must reflect upon that experience, analyse it critically for strengths and weaknesses and, finally, bring our reflection to bear upon new action which in turn will need to be reflected upon.

As conjunctural analysis made its way into Canada, the importance of social location asserted itself. Who

was doing the analysis for whom? The educators who returned with the news and learnings about popular education were, predictably, relatively privileged individuals and, while no-one escapes participation in relations of oppression, it was important to be self-conscious about the stakes involved for returned Canadian volunteers and popular educators to be ad-

vocates of and participants in social justice movements. It was quickly obvious that before any popular education process could begin in Canada, there were questions that needed to be posed about who was involved in the work. Naming the Moment incorporated this as the first phase: Naming Ourselves.

So how *does* change happen?

Sometimes change happens when we are not even looking for it. Imagine that you are in your kitchen making some fresh salsa from some lovely ripe tomatoes that are for sale on the streets this fall. You are happily dicing tomatoes and herbs all the while collecting a pile of seeds, bruised spots and stems. Once you finish your salsa, you head out your backdoor to empty your kitchen waste into the green bin.

Suddenly you are distracted by the flurry of activity. The sky is filled with birds as they practice flying together before setting off on their trip south. You can't take your eyes off of the

birds. Absentmindedly you open the lid of the green bin to dump the seeds and totally miss the bin.

Happy surprise for you, late next spring when you head into your backyard little tomato plants are smiling up at you.

Sometimes change happens by accident.

At Toronto Community Development Institute, we have been thinking a lot about change. To find out more about how change happens, look at the TCDI blog at www.torontotcdi.ca



TCDI: A Look Back & A Look Forward—cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

justice movement building ...

Whatever we call it and whether we are volunteers or paid workers, we all have some things in common. We're trying to make a difference in our world by finding ways for people in neighbourhoods, communities, or regions to gain more control over their lives, and mobilizing for better living conditions, more social justice,

peace, equity, and opportunities to participate, contribute, and benefit from society.

TCDI has decided that instead of an annual conference, we will now go look for the knowledge of some Toronto's unique neighbourhoods. We will use a popular education process called Naming the Moment and seek out partnerships with a handful of agencies and/or community centres and together mount a popular educa-

tion workshop series to understand better the state of community development at this moment in time. This newsletter begins this very process.

Meanwhile, other smaller initiatives continue including hosting community conversations on a variety of topics, consulting with local community groups on projects they could initiate or be a part of, and launching a blog on community development.

Community Thoughts on NTM

One of the ways that we can learn more about the process of Naming the Moment and the impact it can have is by hearing from others. Some people use the process in its entirety and others use pieces. Here is what Rick had to share:

I never took the Naming the Moment methodology when it was active but I have used the materials extensively in developing different workshops related to my community development work at both Fred Victor (then Mission now Centre) in the 80's early 90's and here at St. Chris since the mid 90's.

I was very active in the Metro Network for Social Justice Economic and Political Literacy. Many of the workshops that we organized around free trade, elections, budgets, social secu-

re review, common sense revolution etc all had elements of the naming the moment approach. Many of the leadership of MNSJ were "graduates" of naming the moment. In particular, Naming the Moment was instrumental in building a critical analysis among the single displaced persons project and basic action poverty group and the fight for an affordable housing program. Again, most of the leadership of those groups had been through a naming the moment training.

My own experience is a bit of a blur as I stole workshop ideas from a wide range of resources. Gatt-Fly, Ah-Ha, Training for Transformation, Moment, Resource Manual for a Living Revolution etc. Often you packaged together pieces [from various sources] depending on the audience and the time available.

I would say that one of the most powerful exercises I ever taken part in and facilitated is the historical timeline exercise. It's ability to bring together and make connections between a wide range of experiences is incredible. It was used extensively by Metro Network for Social Justice (MNSJ) in training the trainers workshops to prepare community members to go back to their organizations and /or deliver on behalf of MNSJ to groups they out-reached to. It provided such a rich and deep foundation for the "conjunctural analysis" approach that people had the confidence and framework for engaging others.

I really like the idea of the Naming the Moment revival.

Rick Eagan does community development work at St. Christopher House (www.stchrishouse.org).

More examples of Moments

There are two kinds of successes that happen with Naming the Moment: those that happen within the process and those that happen as a result of the process.

During the workshop series there were countless moments of success which included:

- Learning about aboriginal history and traditions from a variety of aboriginal activists including a professional actor, a traditional Oneida chief, an historian and more.
- Designing, scripting and mounting a community puppet performance

of the Ojibway Prophecy of the Seven Fires and using the masks and puppets in a public demonstration to oppose the uncritical celebration of the Columbus quincentenary.

- Distribution of hundreds (perhaps thousands) of copies of a peoples' timeline of history leading up to the 1990 Us War in the Persian Gulf (this timeline had been generated by 40 workshop participants and then produced as a newsletter handout; it was copied by teachers and students in the hundreds and shared with peers, hand-to-hand)
- A series of children's books on aboriginal history were written

and published by Sister Vision Press

Resulting from the workshops were numerous independent initiatives that included collaborations of all kinds between a variety of agencies, advocacy groups and non-profits. New groups were created such as a popular education study group. Also, a number of women participants who were all recent immigrants from Latin American countries used the workshops a way to form their own non-profit group doing advocacy and education against violence against women.

Toolbox: Historical Timeline

THE BASIC STEPS

There are, of course, many ways to go about doing a timeline. The following description of steps is a common way that the Catalyst Centre uses.



Objective:

Decide exactly why you want to do the timeline: a warm-up to share some basic group knowledge; an orientation for newcomers; historical recovery of community events

Supplies:

- Markers (at least one dozen)
- Index-card-size post-it notes or sheets of paper (approx. 5" x 4")
- two different colours - one for "helps" one for "hurts"
- cutouts of relevant shapes drawing on a metaphor (e.g.: weather, garden, etc.)
- Masking tape
- Large sheets of paper or several sheets of flip chart (the heavier the better, newsprint is sometimes too flimsy)

Steps:

1. Post your paper on the wall and divide the paper with at least one horizontal line along which you can mark your divisions of time. Create as many other horizontal sections as you need and label them clearly. It is also recommended that you label the timeline

2. Introduce timeline and point out the sections and the events that facilitator has placed there. You can stress that personal experience includes both what has happened to us and what we know about (through family, friends, reading, etc.) that has affected us in some way
3. Distribute sheets of paper (half of letter-sized page or index-card-sized post-it notes or cutouts)
4. Ask participants to think of events that they know about.
5. After 15-20 minutes ask participants to post their contributions on the timeline.
6. Museum Tour: once it appears that the majority of contributions are posted suggest that everyone come up for a "museum tour" - to get a general look at the timeline.
7. After a few minutes ask for volunteers to talk about something they put up. If volunteers are scarce, read some of the examples and ask if the person that put it up would be willing to talk about it. Once the participants have had an opportunity to volunteer more detail, solicit questions about specific contributions that people would like to know more about.
8. Ask participants what patterns they see: either repetitions, absences, connections from one section to another and so on. List any critical questions or issues that warrant deeper discussion.

9. Point out that the timeline is obviously incomplete and can be added to at any time. (If you leave the timeline posted for the duration of the workshop, suggest that participants feel free to add to it.

Timelines are a fast and democratic means of sharing group knowledge. That does not mean they can be easily thrown together without fully understanding some things about how to represent events or the power of recognizing patterns.

To learn more about historical timelines, check out the chapbook that the Catalyst Centre created. You can find it by using this link:

<http://www.web.net/~story/RC/timelinechapbook.pdf>

*The basic steps for doing an historical timeline was taken in its entirety from **POPULAR EDUCATION TIMELINES—A Popular Education Chapbook version 1.0a**. This is a document produced by chris cavanagh for the Catalyst Centre and is copylefted.*



Copyleft is a play on the term copyright. Usually when something is "copylefted" it means that the person who created it wants you to feel free to use whatever was created as long as you let others know where you got it from. In the article on timelines, the information is copylefted by the Catalyst Centre.

Next steps –Working Together

Over the next few months, TCDI members will be familiarizing themselves with the process of Naming the Moment. That means reading lots of articles, visiting different links and experiencing some tools during our regular meetings.

We will also be identifying 10 to 15 community partners to participate in the planning and implementation of the workshop series.

Five of these partners will have an additional responsibility of hosting a workshop. This will mean booking space and arranging for food.

Once the five partners have been identified there will be an initial meeting to plan the overall flavor of the workshop series and to uncover themes for each session. When this has been decided, we will continue to recruit other community partners.

Each session will have planning meetings involving representatives from TCDI, the hosting partner and other interested participants. These planning sessions will be a part of regular TCDI meetings.

For now you can consider if your agency or group might be interested in participating by reading the related documents and beginning conversations in your local communities.

How to get involved

Currently we are looking to recruit community partners for this Naming the Moment Process.

Being a partner means that you are an organization or group, such as a network or coalition that is interested in community development and are working for political and social change.

It also means that you are committed to spend \$1000 of your professional



Pick me. Pick me. No need to worry. There are lots of ways to be a part of the excitement.

development money on being a part of this journey with us.

Being a partner will entitle you to send three people to the Naming the Moment workshops. We would like to suggest you send people from different parts of your agency. For instance you might send a community member, frontline staff, and a board member.

Imagine the change you could make within your agency/group and

the community if you develop capacity in such a broad way.

At the end of the Naming the Moment process, you will also receive a step by step manual of the Naming the Moment process including all of the tools, newsletters and other documentation. This will set you on the way to using Naming the Moment in new and exciting ways.

To find out more, please contact : **Chris at mythcast [at] gmail [dot] com or Deborah at deborah.konecny [at] gmail [dot] com**



www.torontocdi.ca

Working together towards collectively and democratically chosen goals, we know that people can achieve significant change.

About TCDI: By whom, with whom, for whom?

We intend this to be a gathering of budding activists and experienced practitioners from the whole universe of community work fields – community organizing, environmental advocacy, capacity building, movement building, unions, cooperatives, social enterprises, and more.

We are seeking to nurture and sustain opportuni-

ties over time that support linking and learning across generations, and among community members, leaders, resident activists, social justice groups, ethno-cultural organizations, faith groups, equity seeking groups, community arts and environmental activists, and the range of agencies, institutions and government initiatives that promote equity and social justice through community development activities.