

GSA Network

# **Global Solidarity**

## Introduction

Global solidarity is essential for our movement toward liberation for all. This toolkit contains train-the-trainer curriculum that you can use to lead a two-part workshop series on global solidarity that includes definitions, context, and examples.

# How To Use This Resource

This resource is designed to be flexible and accessible for a variety of audiences. Here are some suggestions for effectively utilizing this resource.

## Target Age Range

This workshop is suitable for youth and young adults, ideally ages 13 to 25. It can be adapted for younger participants with modifications to the language and activities to ensure understanding and engagement.

## Ability Considerations

**Physical Movement:** Participants may need to engage in some physical activities, such as small group discussions, role-playing scenarios, or movement exercises related to safety strategies. Ensure that activities can accommodate varying mobility levels. Offer alternatives for those who may not be able to move in specific ways.

**Emotional Safety:** Be mindful of participants' emotional well-being, as discussions around these issues may evoke strong feelings. Create a supportive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing and expressing themselves.

## Format Options

**In-Person Workshops:** The resource is designed to facilitate in-person discussions and activities, allowing for interactive engagement and immediate feedback.

**Virtual Adaptation:** This resource can also be adapted for virtual use. Utilize online platforms for group discussions and activities, ensuring all materials are accessible digitally. Consider using breakout rooms for smaller discussions and online tools (like polls or collaborative documents) to engage participants actively.

## Preparation and Materials

Review the curriculum timeline and objectives beforehand to tailor the content to your specific audience and context. Gather necessary materials, such as worksheets, visual aids, and a ball of yarn, in advance to facilitate a smooth workshop experience.

## Facilitator Role

As a facilitator, create an inclusive and engaging environment. Encourage participation from all voices, ensuring that each participant feels valued and heard. Be prepared to adapt activities and discussions based on the needs of your group.

## Follow Up

After the workshop, consider providing resources for further learning and opportunities for participants to stay engaged. Encourage them to share their experiences and continue the conversation in their communities.

# Table of Contents

## Objectives

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## Global Solidarity, Module 1: Making Connections

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## Global Solidarity, Module 2: Understanding Values and Impact

---

## Ten Terms

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## Sources

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"What is unique to Palestinians is that homophobia and transphobia have been weaponized against us to justify genocide... One cannot struggle for queer liberation if they are struggling just to survive".

**Zaheer Subeaux**

# Module 1

## Making Connections

This one hour module will explore our ideas of the world and share examples of global solidarity organizing.

**Duration** 60 minutes

**Objective**

- Explore what we know about organizing in different parts of the world, and our sources of knowledge about issues happening in the rest of the world
- Build understanding of histories of Trans, Queer, and Two-Spirit people globally
- Learn examples of organizing in solidarity with global struggles

**Materials**

- ☐ Facilitator's Guide
- ☐ Sign-in sheet
- ☐ Printed handouts from Examples section

**Accessibility** Dedicated space for small group discussions, with breakout rooms or designated areas (for in-person gatherings) to allow everyone to spread out comfortably.

**Key Activities**

**Opening (10 min):** Check-in question about how we are connected to young people across the world.

**A More Balanced View (15 min):** Hear statements about the world and explore where we land.

**Solidarity Organizing (25 min):** Learn about examples of organizing in solidarity with global struggle.

**Closing (5 min):** Reflect on level of connectedness.

## Agenda

Estimated  
Time

Activity and Topic

10 mins

### OPENING

~**Ask the Group:** Think about the things that connect you to others in your own community (like the ways you communicate, the places you gather, or the challenges you face). Now, think about young people across the world. What are some experiences, struggles, joys, or traditions that TQ2S+ youth and other young people share, no matter where they live? What do we all create, celebrate, or fight for?

Take a few responses.

We don't always get to hear about the people and movements around the world that share our struggles, dreams, and fights for justice. Today, we're going to learn about some of them and explore the connections we have across communities, cultures, and borders.

#### Emphasize:

The need for global solidarity is especially true for trans, queer, and gender nonconforming communities specifically. We are committed to freedom and self-determination, and LGBTQI+ communities exist around the world.

Review the agenda.

15 mins

### A MORE BALANCED VIEW

~**Ask the Group:** How do we learn about other places around the world? Through what sources? What do these sources say about them? Take a few responses.

#### Agree/Disagree (5 minutes)

Read statements and ask folks to stand on one side of the room if they agree, and the other if they disagree, or somewhere in the middle.

→ **Statement:** *The United States is more civilized than many other countries.*

Follow up: "Civilized" is a term that has been used in different ways throughout history, often carrying assumptions about culture, behavior, and development. At its most basic, it refers to societies or people that are organized, have systems of governance, and follow shared social norms. However, the word has also been weaponized to uphold colonialism, white supremacy, and

Eurocentric ideas of progress by labeling certain societies as "uncivilized" to justify oppression.

→ **Statement: Some cultures are more homophobic/transphobic than others.**

Follow up: Homophobia and transphobia are unfortunately universal global issues, but they look differently in different places. Different cultures think about gender and sexuality in many ways. Some societies enforce rigid gender norms, while others have long traditions of gender diversity that were disrupted by colonization. It's important to recognize these differences while also understanding that TQ2S+ people have always existed and resisted in every part of the world.

→ **Statement: It's more acceptable to be trans and gender nonconforming in the United States than other places.**

Follow up: There are trans and gender nonconforming people all over the world! Historically, many gender fluid-accepting societies have existed, particularly before colonization introduced (and enforced) more heteronormative and binary gender expectations. Some of these include:

- Two Spirit people (those Indigenous to Turtle Island who identify with both the masculine and feminine, with many regional and tribal variations and diversity),
- Māhū (a Hawaiian person of dual male and female spirit)
- Muxes (pronounced mu-shay, a recognized third gender among the Zapotec people in Oaxaca),
- Lugbara (transgender people of the West Nile region, which includes Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan)
- Hijra (third gender people in South Asia)
- And many more!

**[Facilitator Preparation:** You can read these examples or pre-write them onto a piece of chart paper or on a powerpoint slide, if you'd like!]

~**Ask the Group (10 minutes)**

- Any reactions or observations from this activity?
- Where do these stereotypes come from? Take some responses

After the activity on global cultures, it's important to consider the idea of **American exceptionalism** — the belief that the U.S. is unique or superior, which often creates a false divide between struggles here and abroad. This weakens the global efforts for justice across borders.

**Tip:** This concept can be new or challenging for people. Don't take it personally as a facilitator! If you receive pushback or hard questions, return to the bolded statement in the opening in response.

Many tactics are used by oppressive forces to weaken solidarity across LGBTQI+ communities. For example, the use of pinkwashing, which refers to when a state or organization appeals to LGBTQI+ rights in order to deflect attention from its harmful practices. Pinkwashing shows us that systems of oppression exploit identities to justify violence and gain support. By

recognizing these tactics, we can strengthen global solidarity and work towards a world of true liberation for all.

Next, let's explore some examples of how communities have taken action and

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25 mins

## **SOLIDARITY ORGANIZING**

Here are three examples you can use. You can also add your own!

1. The Third World Liberation Front
  - a. The Third World Liberation Front was composed of multi-ethnic coalitions of student organizations at two colleges in California, San Francisco State College and the University of Berkeley. They called on schools to address the systemic oppression caused by racism.
  - b. One specific demand was relevant, accessible education for and by BIPOC students, and student strikes in 1969 resulted in the creation of Ethnic Studies. They advocated for the stories and history of their communities to be told, and be told with accuracy, rather than not including the racism these communities experienced, and also their resistance.
2. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement
  - a. The BDS movement works to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians and pressure Israel to comply with international law. This movement was inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement.
  - b. Boycotts involve withdrawing support from Israel's apartheid regime, complicit Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions, and from all Israeli and international companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights.
  - c. Divestment campaigns urge banks, local councils, churches, pension funds and universities to withdraw investments from the State of Israel and all Israeli and international companies that sustain Israeli apartheid.
  - d. Sanctions campaigns pressure governments to fulfil their legal obligations to end Israeli apartheid, and not aid or assist its maintenance, by banning business with illegal Israeli settlements, ending military trade and free-trade agreements, as well as suspending Israel's membership in international forums such as UN bodies and FIFA.
  - e. People from all over the world participate to show their solidarity.
3. Free Nelson Mandela Campaign
  - a. Nelson Mandela was arrested in 1962, and in 1964 he and seven other leaders of the African National Congress were sentenced to life imprisonment in response to their liberation movement that opposed apartheid.
  - b. International pressure helped save them from the death penalty, and eventually resulted in Nelson Mandela's release in 1990. Mandela had become an icon of the freedom struggle. His release unleashed a wave of support for the ANC and heralded the beginning of the negotiations which led to a free and democratic South Africa.
  - c. Apartheid: The Apartheid (1948 to 1994) in South Africa was the racial segregation under the all-white government of South Africa which dictated that non-white South Africans (a majority of the population) were required to live in separate areas.

**Discussion** (15 minutes)

~**Ask the Group:** What from these examples resonates, when you think about these movements, the challenges faced, and their hopes for the world? How is it relevant today?

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5 mins

**CLOSING**

**Ask the Group:** Do you feel more connected/aware of movements around the world? If yes or no, why do you think that is? As we close, reflect on how and why we are disconnected from these movements -and who benefits from that, and what the costs are.

Ask the group to journal in response to these prompts, and discuss with a partner.

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# Module 2

## Understanding Values and Impact

This one hour module will explore how we allocate resources, build understanding of global impact, and cultivate shared connection.

**Duration** 60 minutes

**Objective**

- Build awareness of investment in a culture of dominance and oppression and the social cost of doing so
- Define military industrial complex
- Deepen understanding of the need for global solidarity with struggles for justice

**Materials**

- ☐ Facilitator's Guide
- ☐ Sign-in sheet
- ☐ Ball of yarn

**Accessibility** Dedicated space for small group discussions, with breakout rooms or designated areas for in-person gatherings to allow everyone to spread out comfortably.

**Key Activities**

**Opening (10 min):** Review agenda and check in.

**Resources and Values (15 min):** Activity on resource allocation.

**Thinking About Global Impact (15 min):** Learn about the military industrial complex.

**We're All Connected (15 min):** Creative activity demonstrating connection among ourselves and different examples of global solidarity organizing.

**Closing (5 min):** Make a commitment to learning.

## Agenda

Estimated  
Time

Activity and Topic

10 mins

### OPENING

~**Ask the Group:** What do you remember from part one of the workshop?

**Tip:** Restate this key point from the last module's introduction:

The need for global solidarity is especially true for trans, queer, and gender nonconforming communities specifically. We are committed to freedom and self-determination, and LGBTQI+ communities exist around the world.

Review the agenda.

Transition to the next activity by saying, **Culture is made up of many things, including values. Values can influence action and decisions about our resources, as individuals and also on a national level. It's important for everyone to understand the impact they are making.**

15 mins

### RESOURCES AND VALUES

How we choose to distribute our resources reflect what we think is important. In this activity, you will guess how much money the US government spends on different types of expenses. You have \$100, and you have to decide how much will go to the military, the police, education, and housing assistance.

~**Ask the Group:** How much did you allocate to each? Share responses (5 minutes)

Then, share the actual numbers.

- Military: \$820 billion, or about \$75 of our \$100.
  - Context: The United States spends more on its military than any other country relative to the size of its economy. The US military budget for 2023 was \$820 billion, which was 13.3% of the federal budget.
- Police: \$135 billion, or about \$12 of our \$100.
  - Context: In 2021, state and local governments spent \$135 billion on police (4 percent of state and local direct general expenditures). This does not include money spent on prisons.
- Education: \$79 billion, or about \$7 of our \$100.
  - Context: The federal government spends nearly \$79 billion annually on primary and secondary education programs.
- Housing and Community Development: \$65 billion, or about \$6 of our 100.
  - In 2021, state and local governments spent \$65 billion on housing and community development, or 2 percent of total direct general

expenditures.

**Tip:** Sources for these statistics are at the end of this curriculum.

~**Ask the Group:** How are these numbers similar or different than yours? What values were reflected in your allocation, and which do you think are present in the actual allocation? (10 minutes)

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15 minutes

## **THINKING ABOUT GLOBAL IMPACT**

~**Ask the Group:** We learned in the last activity that the majority of US spending is on the military. Would you guess that this amount of spending is average, more, or less than other countries?

Take a few responses, then share: The US is the largest military spender in the world - it spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined.

This is connected to an idea called the military industrial complex.

Share definition: The concept of military industrial complex is commonly used to refer to policy and monetary relationships between legislators, national armed forces, and the so-called “defense” industry (aka war profiteers). These relationships include political contributions, political approval for expenditure on weapons and war, lobbying to support bureaucracies, and oversight of the industry.

This is important for us to be aware of, as US government spending significantly impacts the rest of the world. See below for some examples. This is yet another reason why, as we organize to dismantle systems of oppression in our own communities, we must also be in solidarity with global struggles for freedom as well.

Then, share the below statistics on the impact of the US military industrial complex

- The top 5 weapons contractors in the United States made \$196B in 2022
- The US military is the world’s top greenhouse gas emitter and biggest polluter.
- The US controls about 750 bases in at least 80 countries worldwide.
- The American military is actively engaged in (at least) over 85 countries under the guise of ‘counterterrorism’. That’s 43% of the world.

~**Ask the group:** Think back to that \$75. How else could it be used? What resources do you want for trans/queer people?

**Tip:** Is there a theme in what people are proposing? Share your observations.

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15 minutes

## **WE’RE ALL CONNECTED**

We know why we need to be in solidarity - let’s explore another way to show the connections between students and liberation work domestically and abroad! Many people taking action in the local context all build up to global impact to build towards a safer and more harmonious world.

**Activity (10 minutes)**

- This is a creative exercise. Think of the ways we connect with each other through global struggle. Think of or look up one site of organizing outside of the US.
- Gather in a circle. Ask each person in the group to share their one example with the person to the right and left of them.
- Then, ask everyone to think of a connection between your person/place and that to the person to the left of you. Invite a volunteer to go first, and hand them the ball of yarn. They will share with the group. When the next person goes, invite the first person to pass them the ball of yarn. As people continue to share, you will see a visual representation of the connections.

**Tip:** Alternatively, you could plot this on a slide with a map, or on a piece of chart paper.

**Tip:** It's okay if people don't have a response or can't think of anything. Participants can pass if they need to.

**~Ask the Group:** What did you notice from everyone's responses? Invite a few people to share their responses (5 minutes)

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5 mins

## **Closing**

How can we commit to learning more about and being in solidarity with global struggles? Discuss with a partner, and write down your commitment.

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## Ten Terms

1. **Heteronormative:** Relating to or based on the attitude that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of solidarity.
2. **Colonization:** the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area
3. **Eurocentric:** Focusing on European culture or history as superior, excluding or devaluing a wider view of the world
4. **Pinkwashing:** When a state or organization appeals to LGBTQI+ rights in order to gain support and deflect attention from its harmful practices.
5. **Boycott:** To refuse to buy, use, or participate in something as a way of protesting.
6. **Divestment:** Reversing an investment to withdraw support from a harmful entity.
7. **Sanctions:** Financial and trade-related penalties imposed by one country on another entity (a country, company, or individual).
8. **Apartheid:** Unity or agreement among individuals or groups to support a common cause, particularly in the context of social justice movements.
9. **Bureaucracy:** A system of organization where laws or regulatory authority are implemented by non-elected officials.
10. **Self-Determination:** The right of people to make their own choices, decide their own destiny, and form their own political entity.

## Sources

- Sources for statistics on government spending:
  - [https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-does-the-us-spend-on-the-military/#:~:text=After%20adjusting%20for%20inflation%2C%20defense,\(also%20adjusted%20for%20inflation\).](https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-does-the-us-spend-on-the-military/#:~:text=After%20adjusting%20for%20inflation%2C%20defense,(also%20adjusted%20for%20inflation).)
  - <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/state-and-local-finance-initiative/state-and-local-backgrounders/criminal-justice-police-corrections-courts-expenditures#Question2Police>
  - <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/topics/school-funding-and-resources/school-funding/federal-funding/>
  - <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/10/infographic-us-military-presence-around-the-world-interactive>
- Sources for information on military industrial complex impact:
  - <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/6738-military-industrial-complex>
  - <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2023/08/07/americas-top-5-weapons-contractors-made-196b-in-2022/>
  - <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/6738-military-industrial-complex>
  - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6109c0dad559eb421e3e57b7/t/6137b023ea47387a7a5a6840/1631039524643/WOT+Infographics+%285%29.pdf>

# Contact

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