

Occupy Boston World Café Summit

Group Memory – OVERFLOW ROOM

November 19, 2011

1. Story so far

- More than just economics
- People empowerment
- Class, race, gender
- Short discussion about whether we're the left or not
- No issue is secondary to another, including more of oppression and environmental issues
- [Missed this point]
- Corporate power is what dominates
- It's okay not to have one answer figured out, we're setting up a process that'll take time
- Occupy Boston is supporting marginalized communities which are so often segregated from our culture
- Democracy is too strong to be (trounced by?) capitalism
- People are fed up -- started with banks and corporations, branched out to other inequalities
- Inclusion and family-like

2. Values we want to live by

- Nonviolence
- Inclusion
- Justice
- Environmental sanity
- Balance
- Solidarity
- Citizenship
- Change
- Compassion
- Listening
- Collective bargaining
- We don't have to accept what's given, we have choices including DIY, celebratory, creative, agile, strategic
- Two short ones but important -- anti-racism, changed that to equal rights for all
- Acknowledge complexity of problems that we face
- This is a big one, good job to us -- recognizing and communicating the fragility of the livelihoods of our friends, neighbors, and families
- Clarity
- Focus
- Discipline

- Transparent, democratic decision-making
- Addressing existing divisions so they don't weaken us further
- Anti-oppression
- Respect, equality, fairness, compassion
- Peace and prosperity for all not just few
- Economic justice
- Fairness
- Fairness in wages
- Access to education
- Access to healthcare
- Respect
- Civility
- Shared humanity
- Participation in government
- Love and respect
- Building trust through transparency and openness
- Acknowledging historical and current realities of oppression and the way that makes up the 99%
- Solidarity
- Treating others the way you want to be treated
- Actively participating
- Community
- Becoming more socially useful - Starting with the movement transferring into the rest of the world
- Share resources with all communities
- Moving towards health care food and medical for everybody

3. What do we need now?

- Organization
- Connecting with other groups
- Better information about how people who are not camping can participate and help
- How to avoid the message being distracted, the media being distracted from message by behaviors that are noteworthy on the media
- Strategic plan with list of outcomes
- We have to be careful not to think that we as the movement consisting mainly of middle-class and white and more male than female people, plus homeless contingent, represent the whole 99%, and so just generating wishes based on our perceptions, maybe exclusive rather than inclusive. More creatively involve people who may not identify as Occupy but who are actually part of 99%
- In light of all the egregious stuff continuing to occur, we do need a few demands to slow or stop that such as "Prosecute Wall Street"
- A winter plan, which might be to occupy a closed school or closed library
- Leave the square on our terms
- Continue to educate (broadly, not just social media)
- Draw attention to specific legislative actions - repeal or support
- Build democratic workplaces
- And support more individual economic action - be more conscious how we use money
- More conversations like this

- Supporting candidates or focusing on specific legislation
- Supporting other groups that may be occupying foreclosing buildings - City Life, Mass Uniting
- Getting numbers - petitioning for support for camp, reaching out to broader community for support
- Massive winterizing tent at once, so cops can't stop us
- Organizing Red Cross and union presence
- Set up a Christmas tree to set up at campus so cops can't bulldoze it
- Restore the social programs and economic programs that we've lost in the last 50 years
- Win what we have not yet won
- Intergenerational dialogue
- Active listening
- Accountability
- Take money out of politics
- Taking buildings
- Guerilla occupations
- Demonstrating what we have accomplished, the things that the liberal discourse doesn't recognize as accomplishments such as rebuilding community, mutual aid
- What to do when we win a victory
- Thinking of demands that don't put a stress as liberal reformism -- create real change, not bolster existing institutions
- Non-police ways to deal with disruptions at camp
- A process to communicate internally that addresses oppressions and hierarchies at the camp and in the movement
- Addressing divisions that are emerging so we don't fall apart
- Support folks in the camp - see what help they need
- Building means for accurate external communications - newspaper is good start, but don't rely on media
- Cut down statement of purpose to a concise three points
- Write more op-ed pieces to combat negative press
- Personally communicate message to everyone we know everywhere
- Clean up the camp
- Minimize the ways they can marginalize us
- Reaching out to suburbs
- Sustainable movement beyond camp to execute political campaign
- Organizing nonviolent direct action
- Mobilizing and inspiring people
- Proactively address communities of color from decision-making with more transparency and communal dialogues - discuss Occupy the Hood and other occupations outside of white suburban areas so we can better address issues that affect all of us not just a few of us
- More organization and a few basic concrete demands
- Not divided by recognizing our commonality
- Understanding global system that's oppressing us and our connection to movements around the world
- Recognize that an overtly angry tone can turn people off from our message

4. What must we do to take Occupy Boston to the next level?

- Neighborhood assemblies like in Spain
- Build on our groups that we've already mobilized - students, unions, veterans, anti-war movement, to move toward national general strike
- Bridge-building with people of different ethnicities
- Narrow down what is attainable now and figure out long term through popular education
- We need a multi-prong approach: hold current site as long as possible, look for permanent indoor sites for winter, and have spontaneous action and spread of smaller Occupations all over
- Effective broad communications of Occupy Boston's decision-making - invitations, meetings, etc.
- Make case on basis of information and not just ideology - facts speak for themselves
- Announce there's a trans awareness workshop tomorrow at 11 - Transgender Day of Remembrance tomorrow - PLEASE RESCHEDULE OCCUPATION ORIENTATION!
- Cement relationships with Occupy the Hood and Ocupemos el Barrio and repair relationships
- Community accountability process to address oppressive language and behavior in camp
- Connections with other organizations that share our values for specific projects such as service projects, protest actions (e.g., foreclosure demonstrations)
- Tell the story better
- Assess what we've done
- Simplify our message
- Educate - pass things out at T stations, make newsletter and newsletters
- Maintain set of diverse campaigns - follow where our success is and change where success isn't
- Help people connect with us in working groups
- Protect camp / winterize - and prepare for its destruction by extending connections
- Work against evictions - people are suffering, we want to stop it - identify what kind of abuse that leads to one of the most terrible forms of suffering such as evictions, how do we go about that, do we camp out at home that's being targeted for eviction or do we demand that the banks be prosecuted who are illegally doing these robo-signings and illegal committing mortgage fraud, etc. or do we identify new laws?
- Find ways to include people who are not in Boston participate who are in the communities
- Cleaning out the camp
- Have a bat signal like in New York
- Increase non-violent direct action to interrupt business as usual in places of power (mic checks) - last night some of us showed up at Newt Gingrich's book-signing - he canceled, packed up, and left
- Increase communication nationally and internationally
- Direct action organized like a flash mob - get in, get out; coordinate with other cities (e.g., BofA)
- Reaching out to towns that we normally wouldn't like Brockton
- Stealthily expand during the winter
- During the winter - occupy foreclosed homes or abandoned buildings - collaborate more with City Life
- Have a mass action like the one in Oakland where they shut down the port - possibly Verizon, having solidarity with labor and unions to get that accomplished
- Figuring out how a strategy for the election cycle in 2012

- Use Credo
- Moral courage
- Focus, focus, through four elements: Goals, demands, strategy, tactics - figure out what's achievable now, and in a year it'll be twice as ambitious - get demands and figure out how to accomplish it through strategy and tactics
- Every action should be focused against 1% - make it very clear
- All the problems we are facing - racism, sexism, ableism, all of those things are subsumed under the 1% - keep our eye on that
- Should produce a "I'm part of the 99%" bumper sticker
- Occupy a school like DC just did (they posted a couple minutes ago)
- Everyone's lives and experiences are valid, but the conclusions they draw may not be
- We think that to take Occupy Boston to the next level, we need an agreed-upon protocol for the shifts (e.g., same protocol for breakfast/lunch shifts at food tent) that are occurring at the camp itself
- Using service as a means to organize
- Resurgence in spring
- Philadelphia conference next summer
- Teach in for lower schools (grade schools and high schools) not just college level
- Difficulty between inclusion but not wanting to speak for people who we are not, and having demands that are summarized in a good way
- We need demands because people want to know is this train going somewhere? And am I going to be on this or am I not wanted?

5. What story do we long for future generations to tell about Occupy Boston?

- Once upon a time, Occupy Boston in solidarity with the rest of the Occupy Movement, triggered a shift in how we think about power. And the transfer of power from the elites to the people resulted in concrete changes to our existence - people and marginalized people for the betterment of society. And there's so much more!
- Occupy helped American society confront the problems with capitalism. We were the spark to reimagine the system. We had a peaceful revolution that reformed our politics and economy and bring attention to those who were ignored. We helped catalyze economic democracy that swept the globe, and we helped make authority obsolete. We pushed the limits of what was possible by breaking down the left-right dichotomy.
- Continuing with historical revolutions, it was a spark to end isolation and begin an age of true unity and democracy.
- Tell stories about Occupy - stood together against injustices of our time. The future should know that we made a difference by standing together.
- Occupy Boston provided a springboard to end the competitive tactics of patriarchy and unify a group of the 99% by localizing awareness on a national scale. And provided a turning point in the nation's previous agenda.
- Democratically arranged society to self-govern without hierarchy or oppression. Found ways to overcome previous people's movement's mistakes like ego and concentration of power. One person suggested that they hope people are so peaceful and harmonious that they won't even have to remember!
- We changed the system and achieved economic equality and social justice and a classless society that everyone now has equal access to education, health care, housing, nutritious food, and love. That everyone was heard or included. That my mommy brought me to every march and meeting.

- That we rehumanized society for everyone and not just the few. We backtracked the development of an empire. We reorganized the distribution of resources through our government, as well as we stopped global warming.
- An international movement came together. All they had to do was talk to each other respectfully. Conflict resolution and problem solving. They saved the environment and the world. They loved one another and lived happily ever after.
- Future political leaders came out of the movement
- From all points of the world, people came together to reverse the tide and change the world
- We abolished consumerism.
- The baby in the room is making noises and waking up. => The next generation is trying to speak for us!
- Occupy movements shifted what we were satisfied with. The amount of suffering we were willing to tolerate or that we were willing to ignore around us.
- People became responsible for what their dollars do.
- We know the 1% ... but we also have to look at the 49% and 50%. The 50% should make the same as the other 50%. So everyone can get equal income.
- Make civic engagement relevant so that everyone felt their voice was worth contributing whether one way or another, whether speaking with legislators or demonstrating, but everybody became civically active.