Polycentric Social Forum Proposal (https://pad.riseup.net/p/USSF3-PolycentricOutline2**)**
Draft: Dec. 5, 2013

One of the major concerns raised by the Poverty Working Group and a few other NPC organizations stems from the fact that we launched the site selection call at the same time amid discussions of the need for and vision of a "USSF of a new type." Now that we have more clarity on what a new type of forum should look like, we are seeing that our needs for site/s differ from that initial call. This proposal aims to integrate the different proposals on the table and offers a basis for discussion about ways forward around our shared visions for the U.S. Social Forum process as a movement-building tool.

In addition, we see a need to do more work to communicate the idea of a polycentric USSF. Many understand the forum in terms of the 2007 and 2010 experience. Announcing a single site at this time will reinforce that tendency and set in motion a process that will make it more difficult to realize the promise of the polycentric model.

Finally, it is a good time to reflect on how we structure relationships between the ACT and the NPC. There NPC has been growing and changing, and there is a need to help develop shared analyses as a body. While this has been happening within the ACT and working groups, there is a need to do more conscious work to create space for the development of relationships and analyses in the larger NPC. The NPC should be leading the USSF process and ACT helping ensure follow-through and accountability.

> ******Keep in mind:** The possibility of a WSF in Quebec in 2015 and its impacts on proposed timing and/or site selections.*

Recommendation A: CLARIFY SHARED VISION OF POLYCENTRISM AND ITS PLACE IN USSF PROCESS FROM 2014-2016.

- NPC must engage in more extensive deliberation and dialogue about how we define polycentrism and envision the polycentric forum developing over time. Specifically, how should the PMA process build? Does it make sense to envision a USSF in 2015 and a "National PMA" in 2016, or vice-versa? How would a "national PMA" and a USSF differ in practice? How do the steps we envision help advance USSF goals of movement building? (See visual on polycentric vs. centric models and other background documents on NPC wiki page)
- Communications and Technology working group proposal can help guide the practical work of implementing the process and building consensus across regions/constituencies/sites.

Recommendation B: CLARIFY RELATIONSHIP OF MULTIPLE SITES TO USSF "PROCESS"/ SPECIFY MECHANISMS FOR NATIONAL COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- *Discussion is needed to clarify what is meant by a PMA "movement hub." Whether a 'center site' is needed to facilitate/coordinate the national USSF process and how relationships between sites will be managed and coordinated. What division of labor is there between the NPC, LOCs, and any center- and other sites regarding the work of mobilizing people and resources, coordination, outreach, etc.*
- *Constant reflection and critical assessment of the relationship between ACT and NPC is important, especially as NPC builds and changes with added members.*

Recommendation C: BUDGET AND FUNDING

- Request that the Resource Development Committee (RDC) draft a USSF3 potential budget based on "core cost" needs, and based upon available information from USSF2 and USSF1. Alongside the core costs, information on potential funding opportunities for national operations and regional site support and a 2014 timeline will help guide the work.
    - Regional site leaders and local organizing committees should be asked to help RDC in identifying potential regional funding opportunities.
- This draft budget should include a soft recommendation for disbursement of the kick-start $50,000 funds for USSF3 that will support the immediate needs of each polycentric site.
    - *Discussion needed around whether the site team proposal to make Philadelphia a 'center site' warrants differential allocation of funds. What roles are associated with the center site in regard to coordination and facilitation of work in other sites?*
- Once a core budget and timeline are sketched out, work needs to happen with all relevant working groups to discuss how to support and integrate PMA-specific budgets into the national outreach and organizing budget, including staffing and materials.

Recommendation D: RE-OPEN SITE SELECTION PROCESS

- Announce selection of Philadelphia as one of the polycentric sites for USSF3.
    - Further discussion is needed in NPC about how sites will relate to one another: *Will Philadelphia be a 'center site'? What specific role will it play in the process? How will Local Organizing Committee relate to counterparts at other sites?*
    - *NPC Members, in coordination with relevant working groups, should be engaged in the design and organization of* ***National Dialogue Web Streams*** *that are integral to the process of building the polycentric USSF and building unity in the polycentric USSF process.*
- Announce site application invitations for 2-3 additional sites in diverse regions of the U.S. [Application deadlines should be set (??in the first half of 2014??).]
    - These sites are likely already engaged in the PMA process, and work needs to happen through the Outreach/PMA working group to cultivate sites.
    - Sites in the West are sought—both to invite more participation from regions more distant from first two USSFs and to lift up struggles particular to the region (Indigenous peoples, immigration/border issues)
    - Importance of the South in USSF process—Southern Movement Assemblies/ Jackson and the political moment
        - *Further discussion is needed to gain more clarity and specificity on what is needed or being asked of potential anchor organizations and what the NPC will offer and support for the build-up process.*
        - *NPC Support should include volunteer labor/ liaisons with working groups working, e.g., to raise resources for specific tasks, engage in communications and outreach, build local tech capacity, etc.*
        - *Need to revise the online site selection application to reflect different expectations about size and national coordination around USSF process.*