New Report Shows How to Improve Nonprofit Jobs

Staffing the Mission

Improving jobs in the nonprofit sector

Why does working for a cause or providing a human service so often mean low pay, skimpy benefits, little paid leave and secrecy about pay-setting?

Why don't more funders seem to care about the quality of the jobs their money creates?

Class Action's new program Staffing the Mission aims to turn this situation around. After surveying 82 varied nonprofit organizations and talking with more than 20 experts in the field, we wrote a report on the problems with nonprofit jobs, their causes and steps towards solutions.

The report features profiles of exemplary nonprofits, as well as quotes from critical survey responses. It puts unsustainable nonprofit jobs into the context of race, gender and class inequality.

The report includes tips that even nonprofits operating on low budgets can act on to improve life for their employees.

And more importantly, the report spotlights the roles that foundations and other funders play. Small changes by funders can have a big impact on grantees’ job quality.

The 5-year Program Plan for Staffing the Mission starts with wide dissemination of the report and the ideas in it. You can help by sharing the link with people concerned about equity and living wage jobs.

www.classism.org/programs/staffing-the-mission

Class Training for UK Mindfulness Teachers

By Colette Powers

I was a participant on the first training of activist trainers on class and classism in the UK in 2018. When I heard about the training I felt I'd finally found a place where I could name and talk about some of the many experiences I'd had of being working class. Having the chance to meet up with others and hear their experiences was both affirming and supportive. The training gave me a valuable template through which to explore class-based issues.

As a mindfulness teacher I'd long been aware that the mindfulness field is a predominantly white, professional, middle class mono-culture. Inspired by Class Action's training I offered a day-long class awareness workshop for mindfulness and dharma teachers in London in October 2019. The workshop was a great success with 20 people attending from across a range of organisations.

Participants particularly valued the opportunity to:

• Share class stories in a space where they could be honest and vulnerable.
• Own and share their experiences of inequality and exclusion.
• Explore the mechanics of how exclusion is established and maintained and how specific organisational practices alienate and exclude.
• Explore and honour class-based strengths.
• Build empathy, understanding and class-based alliances.
• Affirm their commitment to end class-based inequality and kick start the process of organisational change.

Our time together was emotional and tender, but practical and productive too. In the afternoon we formed groups to explore how to translate what we’d discovered into implementable action steps for each organisation.

The evaluation revealed that materials presented on the workshop had been continued on page three
By Shan Stephens

For the past year and a half, my friend D. Hunter and I have been developing and delivering workshops on class in Scotland. Our first workshop in May 2018 was a 3 hour offering at an event called the ‘Scottish Radical Herbal Gathering.’ Our next workshop was a day-long affair which we hosted ourselves at the Glasgow Autonomous Space. Most recently, we facilitated a 2-day workshop called ‘Class and Co-ops,’ at the request of someone who had attended both of our previous workshops.

Prior to both being recruited to facilitate that first workshop, we were strangers who only knew of each other through mutual friends, but our backgrounds and experiences seemed to fit together well. As a member of the training collective Tripod (www.tripodtraining.org.uk), I brought plenty of experience in facilitating experiential learning and group processes to the table, along with a blue-collar, working class upbringing. And as the author of the brilliant book ‘Chav Solidarity’ (www.chavsolidarity.com), D. brought a razor-sharp class analysis and the richness of his lived experience as part of the UK’s underclass.

From the beginning, we have been using some tools and ideas from Class Action, but we’ve also been developing our own methods and tweaking some of what we have borrowed. For example, we knew we wanted to use class caucuses for much of our first workshop and used a ‘class sorting’ spectrum line we’d heard about from Class Action’s workshops. We were happy with the results of this, except that one multiply-marginalised participant felt triggered by the exercise, explaining that there was no way they were going to go into their family trauma with a room full of strangers.

By the time our second workshop rolled around, I’d attended a training for trainers hosted by Peace News and Class Action [in Gloucestershire, England, in summer 2018], so we tried out the four corners class sorting exercise I’d experienced there, which had the advantage of delving less into personal history and potentially trauma, as the indicators were predefined and the exercise required little discussion. However, the indicators also seemed to be lacking something, especially in groups where not everyone had grown up in the UK or the global north. In our last workshop, we went for a hybrid approach, using a spectrum line tool for class sorting, but using a series of questions we created ourselves to set the parameters.

Perhaps one of the biggest differences between the way we’ve been developing our workshops and what I learned from attending the Class Action T4T, is our greater emphasis on the material and economic factors of class, rather than its cultural and social signifiers. I also have the impression that people who find their way into our workshops tend to already self-identify as anti-capitalists and have at least a bit of class awareness to start, meaning we can nudge them towards considering wealth redistribution in their own lives and organisations more easily. In our last workshop we adapted Class Action’s wealth distribution exercise, to show the distribution within the group we were working with, rather than society as a whole. It was a powerful moment and a startling realisation for people in the ‘capital heavy’ part of the room.

We’ve also been experimenting with new names for our class caucuses: Capital Heavy, Plenty of Capital, Mediocre Capital and Capital Light. This is partially because we find terms like middle class, working class, and professional middle class deeply limited, but also because the new caucus names reflect our long-term aim of redistributing capital within the entire working class, in order to build radical social movements which can destroy the owning and ruling class. ‘Middle class’ and ‘working class’ terminology has its uses, and for the most part is the language our workshop participants use, but we as facilitators avoided it as we think it’s liable to create unhelpful binaries. Some of us have been given more rewards, power and agency by the capitalist system, but that has created multiple stratas of the working class-stratas which we need to dissolve. We feel those in the capital heavy and plenty of capital groups need to be encouraged and supported to recognise their responsibility to share and redistribute the capital they have been bribed with amongst their comrades and wider community.

We are still figuring things out and experimenting as we go and looking forward to developing the 2-day format further. There is definitely an appetite and need for more of this work in UK social movements, judging by the six further requests for workshops we’ve already received.
By Nicole Brown

In July, Betsy Leondar-Wright and I had an amazing time leading two half-day trainings to over 150 dedicated and driven staff at Colorado State University (CSU), the first one focused on staff and the second focused on working-class and first-gen students.

It was inspiring to be around employees who were ready to do the demanding work of combating institutional and interpersonal classism. Guided by CSU’s Principles of Community listed on the website of their Office of the Vice President for Diversity, which are full of anti-classist values, we helped them highlight their strengths and raise red flags about class issues on their campus.

They tackled organizational classism in many, many aspects of their work. Bus schedules that kept commuter students from activities. Web pages for parents not translated into Spanish. Hungry students! Support staff with long commutes expected to arrive during blizzards with no assistance! Lack of affordable housing near campus! First-generation students falling through the cracks of the orientation program! Adjunct instructors facing last-minute course cancellations.

By the end of the two days, they had generated more than 50 concrete next steps for making CSU more class-inclusive, with someone in charge of following up on each one. Their hard work and commitment can be a model for other colleges to follow.

We found all of the staff we interacted with to be committed and enthusiastic; a special thanks to Tom Biedscheid AVP of the Division of Enrollment and Access who brought us in.

This training was a wonderful opportunity for Betsy and me to work again after 5 years and an opportunity for me to co-facilitate a Class Action training since taking a break for my graduate studies.

To facilitate continued conversation around class, inequality and working class cultural strengths, I’ve set up a:

- **Facebook page dedicated to raising class awareness** (https://www.facebook.com/Class-Awareness-UK-301866293726167/?modal=admin_todo_tour)
- **Online space called Conversations on Class** (www.colettepower.com) https://www.facebook.com/events/420018468872986/

Thanks to Class Action’s training for supporting and enabling class-based activism in the UK!

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A COLLEGE THAT TAKES REDUCING CLASSISM SERIOUSLY

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WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We are thrilled to welcome becky and Holly to the Class Action board. They will add dynamic perspectives and experiences to Class Action’s cross class efforts to end classism and all forms of oppression.

**dr. becky martinez** is a consultant and trainer with an emphasis on social justice, leadership and organizational change. Her work focuses on engaging individuals and groups to recognize systemic dynamics of privilege and oppression to create more inclusive and equitable policies, practices, and structures. She works with diverse groups at the college level, with community-based organizations, and government agencies. She is a faculty member for the Social Justice Training Institute and a Co-Lead Facilitator for the LeaderShape Institute.

Lately, one of her greatest joys is engaging in all things related to social class identity and class(ism). It’s been a great place of healing for her with a hope she can create ripples to elevate this area of inclusion work. She recently co-authored a book titled *Straddling Class in the Academy*. As a first-generation college student raised working class, it was a deeply meaningful project to research and write about something so near to her spirit.

**Holly Fetter** is an MBA candidate at Harvard Business School who’s passionate about economic and racial justice. After graduating from Stanford University with a B.A. in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity and an M.A. in Sociology in 2014, she worked at the Ford Foundation in a program area that funded social movement organizations. She then joined the National Domestic Workers Alliance staff as a Donor Organizer before moving to the MTV/VH1/Logo Social Impact Team at Viacom.

Holly has lived in California, Texas, Brooklyn, and Boston, and is a long-time chapter leader with Resource Generation.

You can read their and other board members’ bios at bit.ly/CA_Board