

20. The Regeneration Manifesto

Regeneración Childcare Collective

The Regeneración Childcare Collective is committed to growing an intergenerational movement for collective liberation, in which people of all ages can participate, learn from each other, take care of each other, and dramatically reshape the conditions of their lives. Since 2005, Regeneración has built relationships with and between domestic workers, immigrant families, families facing detention, queer families organizing for racial and economic justice, and radical parents and caretakers; we've sent delegations to the U.S. Social Forum, facilitated a children's program at the Critical Resistance 10 conference, and been in dialogue with radical childcare providers across the country; we've occupied cafeterias in New York City, swung on swingsets in Detroit, and played hide-and-go-seek in Oakland.

As we did all this, we discovered an incredible secret: the walls that constrain our everyday lives are riven with fissures, tears and holes. The holes are hard to spot, but once we notice them, they nourish us with a powerful magic. We can peer through them and see realities that

exist right now, inside this world and inside of ourselves—magical realities in which people fashion their world together, everyone feels respected and loved, and people are responsible to one another and to a collective vision. The more we practice our magic, the more we're able to notice these holes, tug at their edges, and begin stepping through them into what awaits us. Here are some pieces of the magic we've practiced so far. Use them wisely.

Intergenerational Movements are Powerful

When movements provide people of all ages a way to participate in their own liberation—from the very young to the very old—they are capable of fantastic things. Intergenerational movements sustain themselves through periods of intense repression and regenerate over time. They develop a profound collective memory, which allows each generation to learn from the experiences of those that came before. They offer more than a scene, which one dips into and out of on a whim, or a phase, which one ultimately abandons for more serious responsibilities. Intergenerational movements create cultures of resistance that people use to understand themselves, their communities, and collective action in the world throughout their entire lives. Struggles that embody this vision continue to surge from the global south, and they remain a huge inspiration for *Regeneración*.

Kids Change How we Do Politics

Kids teach us that movement is a process—not a program—and that this process is playful, imaginative and creative, not just serious and rational. In turn, we teach kids that their play is a powerful tool they can and should cultivate throughout their lives, with serious implications for the world we inhabit. Interactions with kids produce another kind of politics, one that recognizes play as a crucial ingredient of any movement, and demolishes the walls that sequester it in childhood or bar it from our adult lives.

Childcare is a Central Element, But Not the Only One

From its inception, *Regeneración* has provided childcare to low-income parents of color and queer parents, in order to facilitate their participation in movement groups. This ally role remains central to our work, but it's situated within a larger vision. *Regeneración* also wants to change and deepen the way groups interact with children. We want to build connections between radical parents and caretakers, furthering their self-organization and nurturing movement that is relevant and accessible to folks with kids. Ultimately, we want to change how individuals and groups connect: not just through formal meetings and compartmentalized issues, but through all our various forms of life, including families, caretaking and personal relationships. Connecting in this way enriches our movement, and at the same time, changes its scope and vision.

Childcare is Valuable, Critical, Beautiful Labor

As a form of work, childcare has been feminized and devalued in our society. All around us, women are expected to care for children in isolation and without support; schools and jails produce kids like commodities on an assembly line; and domestic workers are exploited while raising the children of the wealthy. Regeneración wants something better. We believe childcare is a central part of our creative activity as a people, a kind of labor that creates and molds subjectivity, producing human beings who can interact with others and cooperate with their peers. We believe childcare is the crucial labor that reproduces human community, generation after generation. We want to draw it into the open, recognize its true importance, and make it the collective labor of all.

We are a Cultural Catalyst

We aren't capable of organizing an entire intergenerational movement under our umbrella, nor do we want to. Our primary focus is not to grow our organization, but to grow our vision of an intergenerational movement for collective liberation. To do this we will model the movement we want to see, inspire other groups to transform themselves, and provide resources to help the process along. Our work is about more than just changing political positions, or having people adopt ours. It requires us to make

anew our entire culture, and reshape our communities and movements.

We Are On a Journey, Building the World We Want as We Go

Our dreams are big, and we still have much to do. But after some years of growing with kids and their communities, we see many more holes in the walls of the system than when we first started. They are all over the place, growing in size and connecting with one another. The small things we're doing now will further these openings, and the world that awaits us will become bigger, stronger and more beautiful.