The Beloved Economies campaign "supernova"

Background

Beloved Economies is a collaborative research and narrative-change initiative aimed at awakening popular audiences in the United States to the power we have to build economies that work for all, specifically through reimagining and repairing how we work. Informed by seven years of research with groups and organizations across the U.S. that are boldly breaking out of business as usual, Beloved Economies is a time-bound campaign set to close in December 2023.

The research and campaign illuminates that teams and groups intentionally changing how they work is an under-tapped yet powerful lever for economic transformation—and one which can reinforce and amplify the impacts of policy advocacy, labor organizing, and civic engagement. To date, Beloved Economies has offered an imagination-expanding vision of what work can be, through the book, *Beloved Economies: Transforming how we work,* shortlisted for the 2022 Porchlight Business Book of the Year award, and the speculative fiction podcast, *The Light Ahead: Stories for a beloved economy.* Each of these content pieces was beta-tested with target audiences and co-created with more than 100 contributors, individuals representing a wide array of organizations, and enterprises working to build economies that work for all.

As a time-bound initiative sunsetting in December 2023, we have sought to design a culmination and "supernova"[1] that will be supportive for collaborators and ongoing efforts dedicated to workplace transformation as a means of economic transformation. Over the past six months, we have consulted with our collaborators and co-learning community members, as well as with next-economy movement partners across the country, to identify core priorities for a Beloved Economies campaign supernova in the fall of 2023.[2]

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1. *We are purposeful in using the term "supernova" instead of the more common "sunset" to describe our wind-down. Whereas a sunset implies an ending, a supernova takes it one step further, describing a process in which materials are distributed far and wide to seed new stars.*

2. *For a list of the individuals who provided this input, see the final section of this document, on page 4.*

What we heard:

Three themes emerged from this input:

1. **Resonance with our call to action that *the time is now to reimagine and repair how we work.*** Across the board, every stakeholder with whom we spoke affirmed our analysis of the potential of this cultural moment: as our communities emerge from the pandemic, we do so having witnessed a dramatic shift in how we work—en masse, and overnight. From the racial uprisings of 2020 to the remote work revolution to the Great Resignation, the Overton window for profound change in work—as both a social institution and practice—is open. Indeed, the time is now to recognize our power to re-write the rules of how we work and, in doing so, bring to life economies of shared power, purpose, and prosperity. Our collaborators and peers not only affirm this analysis, they emphasize the importance of this framing being broadcast widely.

2. **Desire for a *dynamic learning exchange and collaborative space.*** Many collaborators and movement peers emphasize that, given the potential of this moment and the many possibilities emerging for a reimagination of work, it is critically important to come together to share and explore what our groups are building and learning. Specifically, many stakeholders suggested that our supernova process include opportunities to connect with and among Beloved Economies co-learners, collaborators, and movement groups actively engaged in advancing workplace transformation. Several members of our co-learning community recommended that an effective "assets transfer" from Beloved Economies' campaign should not be a static report, but rather a living, dynamic expansion of the co-learning community and process, one which can carry forward learnings alongside new questions and possibilities.

3. **Emphasis on *the vital role of communities of practice* in sustaining workplace transformation.** Many collaborators and peers point to a key dynamic of workplace transformation: by its nature, the process takes time and along the way generates challenges and complexities unique to each team and enterprise. While a training or informational resource can be effective at sparking workplace transformation, ultimately what sustains a group in the journey from visioning change to embodying that change is having support from a community of practice. Whether it's an informal group of peers who convene monthly for a support call or a formal cohort that is professionally facilitated through regular calls, some form of ongoing community for mutual learning and support tends to be decisive for real transformation actually happening.

Finally, as part of what our collaborators and peers shared on the above themes, there were two other recommendations frequently mentioned: First, that our supernova include targeted content for funders and capital-holders, including communities of practice in this field, in light of the outsized impact that funders can have in shaping what's possible for how we work. Second, that the imagination-inspiring element of Beloved Economies' book and podcast remain as a strong through line for the supernova process, in ways that support groups to integrate such approaches into their own workplaces.

How we're responding:

In response to these collaboratively-identified priorities, Beloved Economies has launched the following supernova process, to be implemented in collaboration with our network of co-learners and movement partners:

- An invitation for teams and communities of practice to participate in a Beloved Economies Learning & Practice Intensive, taking place through a series of three dynamic virtual workshops this fall. The workshops will take place on September 28th, November 16th, and December 6th. Each event will be rich with inspiring, actionable content as well as opportunities for participants to roll up their sleeves to workshop challenges and next steps. Participants will have the opportunity to sign up to be a part of communities of practice, whether those communities are a department team, an alumni group, the entire staff of a small company, or simply a group of friends and colleagues who want to support one another in transforming how they work.

  The content and experience across the three events will be designed to spark, nourish, and sustain processes of workplace transformation for each participating community of practice, moving forward. The target audiences for these learning events are organizations, companies, teams, networks and affinity groups that are interested in exploring Beloved Economies' call to action to reimagine and repair how we work, as part of transforming our economy to work for all. Each participating community will be asked to pay a modest fee in order to participate. These fees will support the costs of producing the Learning & Practice Intensive and creating informational assets that will be shared with participants. At the same time, we will ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation for any interested group. (For more information on each of the three workshops, see **this page**.)

  In recognition of the outsized impact that funders can have in shaping what's possible for how we work, the Learning & Practice Intensive will include a session focused on reimagining and repairing how we fund. As part of the November 16th workshop focused on economic imagination, there will be a session designed specifically for a wide array of communities of practice in the funding and investment space. The content and offerings of this workshop session will be co-created by a group of Beloved Economies team members, co-learners, and movement partners specifically working on reimagining how funding works—and how it can enable economies that work for all.

- An in-person strategy retreat for Beloved Economies partners dedicated to reimagining how we work and fund: In recognition of the strong interest among collaborators to come together for co-learning and strategizing, including exploration as to how Beloved Economies' findings and content can be carried forward in partners' ongoing work, we will be holding an in-person learning exchange and strategy session

with fifteen partner groups[3] at Opportunity Collaboration's "un-conference" taking place October 15th through October 19th. Opportunity Collaboration (OC) annually organizes this gathering on solutions to economic injustice via their format as an un-conference in which participants propose and create sessions. We have chosen OC as the venue not only because several people in our co-learning community and on the teams of our movement partners are already planning to attend OC this year, but also because of OC's growing focus on reimagining ownership, and its status as a well-loved forum known for deeper learning and idea-generation than tends to be possible at business-as-usual conferences. Through in-person time together in this exceptional space, with fifteen organizations at the forefront of shifting narratives and resourcing for workplace transformation, we will work together to further inform the content of the final two sessions of the Learning & Practice Intensive, as well as to identify opportunities for collaborative efforts among the groups moving forward. In the way, we hope to further boost broadening movements for reimagining and repairing how we work.

- Targeted assets-transfer of Beloved Economies narrative content and learnings: In the process of producing and distributing the book Beloved Economies: Transforming how we work and the podcast The Light Ahead: Stories for a beloved economy, the Beloved Economies team and collaborators learned hard-won lessons. This included insights about what works for breaking through to mainstream audiences and broadening who is engaged with content about transforming our economy to work for all. This also includes insights into narrative framing and formats that appeal to broader audiences and avoid the polarization or shutting down that too often happens in the U.S. when content touches on the subject of economy. As a time-bound initiative, we are committed to ensuring that the successful formats and tactics we developed do not end with our campaign, but rather than movement partners can carry them forward in targeted ways that boost their ongoing work. After exploration with several partners, we identified two ways that the Beloved Economies campaign will strategically transfer our narrative content and learnings as part of our supernova:

  > The Light Ahead podcast will be carried forward by the Futuring Collective, which will produce additional seasons of The Light Ahead via a model in which each season has a thematic focus relevant to economic transformation and is co-produced with a leading organization in that thematic area. A season two has already been confirmed for 2024, with Justice Funders as the production partner, for this six-episode season exploring liberatory futures of funding. A potential season three is also in conversation, with another Beloved Economies partner, for a six-episode season exploring futures of work, informed by BIPOC-led small businesses. The Beloved Economies team has played a key role in bringing together the partners for these conversations and supporting fundraising efforts to make future seasons possible.

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3. *Those partner groups are: Blue Dot, Common Future, Creative Reaction Lab, Full Spectrum Capital, Futuring Collective, JumpScale, Justice Funders, Kindle Project, Possibility Labs, RUNWAY, The Guild, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, Trust-Based Philanthropy, and Road to Repair Media.*

> For learnings from the creation and promotion of the book *Beloved Economies*, we are exploring the possibility of these being carried forward through a 2024 collaboration of four next-economy practitioners releasing books relevant to workplace transformation, in partnership with a national organization dedicated to advancing economies that work for all. This targeted narrative project would generate a set of tools and strategic media interventions based on shared calls to action across the books.

Through the above three strategies, we aim to equip those who take part in Beloved Economies' supernova to carry forward new energy and insights into transforming how they work—and to galvanize a wide array of communities of practice to sustain their members' journeys of reimagination and repair.

Beloved Economies never imagined how timely our findings and content would be upon entering the final year of our initiative. A growing movement of teams and groups intentionally reimagining and repairing how they work will accelerate the emergence of economies of care, well-being, and regeneration. Thanks to the input and energy shared with us by our growing community of collaborators, we are hopeful that Beloved Economies' supernova will indeed serve as a bright spark in helping to further ignite this movement.

Individuals who provided input on Beloved Economies' supernova strategy:

The aim and ethos of the supernova is inspired by practices and insights shared over the past several years by numerous members of Beloved Economies' co-learning community. The specific strategy we will be implementing was substantially informed by ideas and feedback shared by the following 34 individuals, through conversations held with the Beloved Economies campaign team during November 2022 to April of 2023.

abdiel j. lópez, Dino Foxx, & Lora Smith, **Justice Funders**

Antionette D. Carroll, **Creative Reaction Lab**

Belén Marco, Bryana DiFonzo, & Zac Chapman, **New Economy Coalition**

Betsy Wood & Dawn Neuman, **Incourage Community Foundation**

Brian Mikulencak & Bruce Campbell, **Blue Dot Advocates**

Brooking Gatewood, **The Emergence Collective**

Caitlin Morelli, **Common Future**

Daniel Roth & Jessica Loman, **JumpScale**

Deb Nelson, **Just Economy Institute**

Deborah Bidwell & McCall Langford, **Biomimicry for Social Innovation**

Dr. Virgil A. Wood, **Beloved Communities Initiative**

Hanni Hanson, **Compton Foundation**

Jaimee Estreller, Kelsey Baker, & Raymond Pettit, **Possibility Labs**

Jessica Norwood, **RUNWAY**

Jess Rimington & Asha Singhal, **the Futuring Collective**

Katherine Tyler Scott, **KiThoughtBridge**

Marlena Sonn, **Solidaire**

Matt Jorgensen & Sheeza Shah, **Zebras Unite**

Rachel Burrows & Taj James, **Full Spectrum Capital**

Tina Eshaghpour, **California Wellness Foundation**