

DAN CONTINENTAL - Who We Are & How We Work

On February 19th and 20th, spokespeople representing ongoing work in Boston, New York, Philly, DC, the South East, Chicago, Arizona, LA, San Francisco, Northern CA, Seattle and Vancouver came together in Seattle to create an ongoing network building off the spirit of Seattle's victories. What follows is the fruit of an intensive and challenging, but extremely positive consensus process.

We were faced with the decision of whether to out-line a proposal for an organization or simply a communications network. Many of us were apprehensive about the idea of an organization because we were afraid of the possibility of it infringing upon local group autonomy. However we decided that we should not shy away from decision making, but rather that we should put all our efforts into constructing a model for what a truly decentralized, confederated, directly democratic organization could be like. This is a huge endeavor, but if we believe there to be any hope for the transformation of greater society into an confederated union of local autonomous communities, then we feel that we should attempt to manifest such a reality under what we consider to be the very best of conditions-- a group of highly motivated, enlightened, and heartfelt activists united in common purpose.

For this reason we propose that DAN Continental engage in directly democratic decision making, with the following stipulations: 1. that all decisions come directly from the local; 2. that local groups be free to choose to participate or not to participate in Continental DAN at all times; 3. but that when a group chooses to participate in Continental DAN that they respect the guide-lines articulated below. The guide lines that we came up with, therefore only pertain to those instances in which a local group chooses to participate in Continental DAN-- which of course we hope will be often. We created the guide-lines so that those groups that are participating can have base-line of expectations for other participants-- so that work can get done and done well.

We ask that groups attempt to ratify this document as is, recognizing good faith in it's creation and our desire to move forward with the work of fighting corporate globalization at home and abroad. However, if there is something in this document that is prohibiting its ratification, we ask that the group as a whole articulate a concrete suggestion and post it to the rest of the network as soon as possible. This is a living document which we hope will grow with us.

DAN MISSION

We are creating a movement to overcome corporate globalization and all forms of oppression--a movement united in a common concern for justice, freedom, peace and sustainability of all life, and a commitment to take direct action to realize radical visionary change.

DAN PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

DAN adopts the following Principles of Unity inspired by and derived from those of the People's Global Action.

1. A rejection of neo-liberal politics and institutions which promote socially and environmentally destructive globalization
2. A confrontational attitude toward undemocratic organizations in which capital is the only real policy maker
3. A call to nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience and the construction of local alternatives by local people as answers to the actions of governments and corporations.
4. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization, direct democracy, and local autonomy
5. A rejection of all forms of oppression and exploitation such as patriarchy, white supremacy and imperialism
6. A commitment to working in solidarity locally and internationally to build a popular movement for radical social change and global justice.

DAN STRUCTURE

Local DAN Groups:

- Are autonomous and do work as defined by their own constituents
- Must affirm the DAN Principles of Unity when identifying or affiliating with the DAN continental network
- Are encouraged to participate in the Continental DAN Spokes Council either directly through their own spokesperson or through that of their local DAN Cluster. And if they choose to participate they must move or respond to proposals for actions or events in a timely manner.
- Are encouraged to commit to an anti-oppression process
- Are encouraged to build alliances with locally represented constituencies

Local DAN Clusters:

- Will be encouraged where there is a large concentration of local groups in a small geographic area or where there is a small concentration of local groups in a large geographic area
- May have a Spokesperson on the Continental Spokes Council
- Are autonomous and do work as defined by their own constituents
- May design their own structure for representation as well as processes for collecting and disseminating information.

Work Groups:

- Four ongoing work groups have been established:
 1. Communications/Clearinghouse: webpage, listserves, phone/ mailing address, broad sheets, etc.,
 2. Finances/Fundraising: establish new budget, request procedures, accounting system, checks and balances, initiate subgroups for fundraising, This group is limited to spokespeople (except for fundraising subgroups) due to its need for committed familiarity with DAN issues.
 3. Anti-Oppression: collect resources, begin incorporation in current trainings and new trainings, help local groups initiate process, serve as voice to insure all things we do reflect understanding and commitment
 4. Annual Meeting: where, when, how long, agenda, representation, etc.
- All work groups except Finances are open to non-spokes participation
- Each ongoing work groups will have an non-voting advisory spoke on the Continental Spokes Council.
- Through its advisory spoke each work group will propose its scope, role, criteria and work plans to the continental spokes council with regularity.
- Ad hoc work groups may be created as needed and will report through a pre-existing.

Continental Spokes Council (CSC):

- Issues Calls to Actions through consensus of the Spokes Council as a whole, and based on capacity and resources
- Coordinates work related to calls to action and insures accountability of work groups
- Serves as a space for learning and support among local groups
- Approves budget and expenditures

Representation on the Continental Spokes Council

- Each Local Group or Cluster may democratically select an empowered spokesperson.
- Each local group is also asked to identify an alternate to participate only when the primary spokesperson cannot participate or attend.
- Each local group or cluster has the right to recall their spokesperson at any time, if they are not fulfilling their responsibilities or representing the interests of the group.
- Spokespeople are suggested to serve for one year. Any change of spokesperson will ideally include a period of overlap (“spoke in training”).
- CSC will communicate through a listserv, monthly conference calls, and at least one face to face meeting each year outside of the annual meeting.
- Criteria:

Spokespeople must:

1. Spoke for a local group or cluster that has affirmed DAN principles
2. Accurately relay the decisions and sentiments of their group, setting aside all personal biases and agendas to the greatest extent possible.

3. Commit time and work including: making calls, attending meetings, moving proposals, collecting and disseminating information, and all in a timely fashion.
4. Have e-mail access

And it is recommended that Spokespeople:

5. Have organizing experience and skills
6. Have experience beyond local organizing
7. Have done work on and made a commitment to confronting race, gender, class and other forms of oppression

Decision Making

- Local groups and clusters will decide their own processes for decision-making
- The Continental Spokes Council will use consensus with the following parameters added to blocks:
 1. The block must be from the entire local group, not the individual spokesperson
 2. The block must be directly related to the principles, the validity of which will be determined by the rest of the Spokes Council.
- Proposals must be made by an affiliated DAN group or cluster.
- Spokes must post proposals via e-mail at least two weeks prior to any conference call or meeting in order to allow time for thorough local deliberation and decision making.
- Proposals should specify what is being requested and a time frame for decisions.
- The CSC has the ability to override this process of posting in the event an urgent action is needed.

Annual Gathering:

- open to all
- Sets overall strategy and priorities for upcoming year
- Opportunity to educate on issues, skill-share, dialogue on challenges
- Have fun with each other
- Possibly take action on local target