

Spiral of JUSTICE AND HEALING

Weaving Decolonial and Feminist Pasts, Presents,
and Futures to Sustain and Care for Global South
Leadership Transitions.



WHAT IS TRANSITION,

**IF NOT THE WHISPER OF CHANGE,
WEAVING NEW ROADS,
STEP BY STEP,
GENERATION AFTER GENERATION,
FROM TERRITORY TO TERRITORY,
LIKE ROOTS THAT DO NOT ASK PERMISSION,
BUT SPRING FORTH WITH LIVING AND PRESENT MEMORY?**

**WHAT IS TRANSITION,
WHEN IT IS ROOTED IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH?**

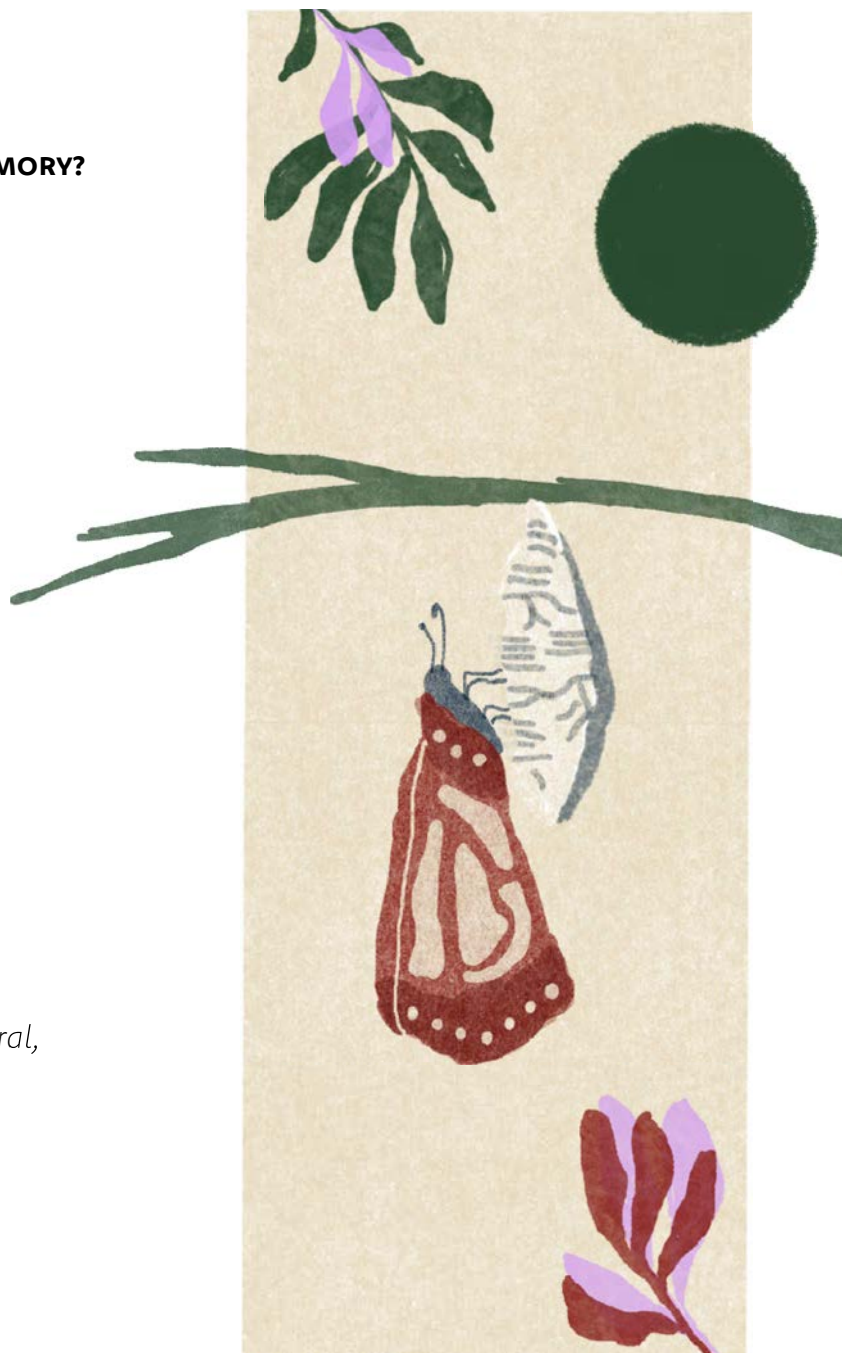
*A historic debt.
A pressing demand.
A spiral that seizes power,
history interrupted.
To return.*

**AND WHAT IS TRANSITION IN BODY, IN LAND,
IN COMMUNITY?**

*It is feeling every crease of colonialism
that still intersects us,
every structure that refuses to transform,
repairing injustices and making way for change.
It is inherited exhaustion,
the tremor of the new,
and even so,
the strength that endures.*

*In the South,
we have experienced transition as something natural,
like the river that changes its course
but never its source.*

*Our leaderships do not wait for an invitation:
they are our collective guide,
they represent our communities,
an unbreakable commitment—
because here, that is what matters.*



WHAT IS TRANSITION?

**IT IS LAND, COMMUNITY, POWER, MEMORY.
A HISTORIC DEBT.
TO RETURN.
A SPIRAL THAT RECLAIMS JUSTICE AND HEALING
CENTERED ON AND ROOTED IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH.**

“Spiral of JUSTICE AND HEALING:

WEAVING DECOLONIAL AND FEMINIST PASTS, PRESENTS,
AND FUTURES TO SUSTAIN AND CARE FOR GLOBAL SOUTH
LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS”

Is a report that compiles lessons and recommendations drawn from a close and extensive accompaniment journey of over three years with Latin American feminist leaders who today hold executive director positions of Global North-based organizations. This documentation and learning report reveals the urgency of care and sustainability needed in the current moment, understood through healing as a political strategy to reimagine power and transform the structures of oppression. These reflections are the products of dialogue and an exchange of collective knowledge, focused on confronting and dismantling racist, ableist, classist, and adult-centric injustices that persists in the world, in organizations, and often within social movements. This report contributes critical insights for the transformation and systemic change needed to build life-affirming worlds. That work requires more than reform. It calls on us to heal the fractures created by systems of domination and to weave different pasts, presents, and futures that can sustain feminist leadership transitions. Centering the wisdom, power, and leadership of the Global South is not simply about acknowledging a historic debt—it is a political commitment and an organizing agenda for the systemic change needed to move us toward justice and collective healing.

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The contents, information, and lessons shared herein are deeply rooted in the collective and intergenerational knowledge of the Global South, and this acknowledgement should remain in any documentation that uses this report.



Summary & KEY LESSONS

Spiral of justice and healing documents the accompaniment journey and experiences of Global South¹ feminist leaders as they navigated leadership transitions into Global North-based organizations, where each became the first Global South feminist leader to assume the role of executive director. The report offers collective reflections and analysis from Global South feminist leaders and allies across feminist movements who have led profound change, cultivating healing in the face of compounded structural injustices that have long prevented Global South leaders from reclaiming power, resources, and visibility on global space.

¹ Global South: Also referred to as Global Majority, names the peoples and communities historically shaped and impacted by colonialism, racial capitalism, and systemic marginalization. The term refuses narratives of absence or deficiency and instead foregrounds the knowledge, power, creativity, and political imagination cultivated through struggle. It affirms the dignity, resilience, and intellectual authority of communities long positioned as peripheral, while recognizing the collective practices of solidarity, care, joy, and resistance that sustain movements for liberation.

Rooted in decolonial feminist thought, the Global South is not a geographic designation but a political concept. It asserts the South as a site of knowledge, leadership, and transformative power. The term recognizes that the communities who constitute the majority of the world's population hold critical insights and practices necessary for advancing justice, healing, and systemic transformation.

Understood in this way, the Global South refers to communities historically targeted by systems of domination, particularly those produced and expanded through European colonialism and U.S. imperial power. It centers the experiences and leadership of peoples who have been marginalized within global political and economic systems, including diasporic and displaced communities living in the Global North, as well as indigenous peoples who continue to resist colonial domination on their own territories.

These systemic injustices—rooted in colonialism, racial capitalism, and unequal power—fracture our movements, strain our communities, and shape who has access to resources and who is forced to do more with less. Global South feminist leaders carry these pressures at every level of their work. Their leadership emerges in contexts where organizations remain chronically underfunded and structurally unsupported, leaving little room to prepare for or sustain the leadership transitions that are essential for continuity, renewal, justice, and collective strength.

Too often, Global South feminist leaders and organizations are expected to navigate leadership change without the accompaniment, political support, or material resources required to do so with care. Transitions are treated as administrative moments rather than what they truly are: deeply human, political processes that surface fear, grief, exhaustion, hope, and possibility all at once. Without intentional support, the emotional and relational labor required to move through these moments is invisibilized.

Transitions hold transformative potential. They are moments when movements pause, reflect, and decide what must be carried forward and what must be transformed. When held with care, they can generate new forms of leadership, solidarity, and political imagination.



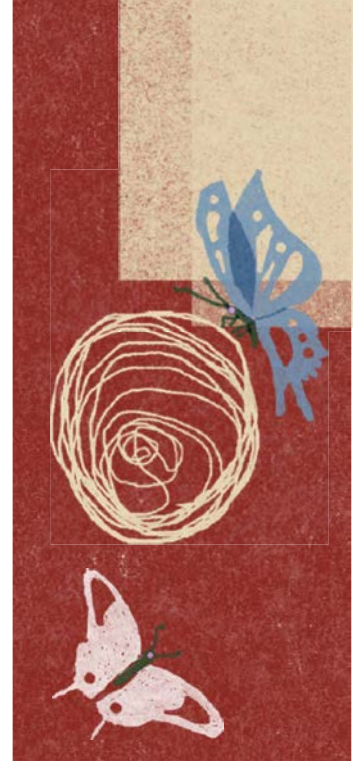
Spiral Of Justice And Healing analyzes **Global South feminist leadership transitions**,² and highlighting political care as the core component to guarantee sustainable, fair, and restorative processes. It proposes concrete strategies to confront the complexities of such transitions, acknowledging the multiple systemic oppressions —such as racism, ableism, classism, and adult-centrism— and the need for profound organizational transformation, particularly within organizations whose governance structures, processes, and decision-making practices continue to center Global North norms and power. This transformation is not understood merely as a mechanism for a group’s internal sustainability, but as a critical axis that recognizes organizations as living entities, with a direct impact on the broader ecosystem of social change and feminist and social justice movements.

² Global South feminist leadership: deeply political and strategic leadership, rooted in decolonial feminist agendas and the growth of intergenerational and emerging leadership, which situates the knowledge and power of the Global South not as a static identity or geography but as a dynamic, long-term political agenda. Such leadership acknowledges the complexity of lived experiences, including displacement, marginalization, and the intersection of race, gender, disability, class, caste, and geography, as well as structural challenges within organizations, boards of directors, and systems of financing. It focuses on transforming structures, questioning hierarchies, and opening spaces for those in proximity to injustices, beyond individual identities. Also, it recognizes transition as an essential dimension of leadership, understood as a verb of active action and not merely as a role. This implies confronting the tensions of inheriting previous systems, values, and challenges, and recognizing the importance of strategic preparation, inclusive accountability, and accompaniment by funders and internal teams as political and strategic allies. In itself, Global South feminist leadership is a political strategy toward systemic change.

MAIN LESSONS

• Decolonial care as political strategy:

Transitions situate approaches that acknowledge the painful and chaotic without erasing or delegitimizing them, transforming healing into an active tool for systemic change. Care is not an individual act—it is a political practice that redistributes power, strengthens feminist justice, and sustains leadership capable of transforming oppressive structures. In its decolonial dimension, care recognizes the body as a site of resistance and re-humanization, where every act of care and space for emotional release connects with ancestral knowledge that has survived centuries of violence. Care thus integrates body, mind, memory, and community, affirming collective strength and historical memory, and evolving into a comprehensive political strategy that dismantles oppression and nurtures transformative movements from the roots.



• The power and wisdom of Global South feminist leaders is transformative:

Global South feminist leaders carry forms of political wisdom forged in the daily work of survival, resistance, dreaming, creativity, solidarity, discipline, and collective care. Their leadership often emerges in contexts where institutions and spaces were not designed to include them, and where they must confront racism, casteism, ableism, classism, adult-centrism, and multiple forms of injustices while navigating organizations historically shaped by Global North power, governance, and norms. Stepping into these roles demands rebuilding trust within fractured teams, addressing inherited organizational tensions and harm, challenging entrenched hierarchies, building infrastructures that center wellbeing, and holding a collective political vision even as they face unequal scrutiny, resource constraints, and the emotional weight of transformation. And yet, through extraordinary resourcefulness, creativity, and courage, Global South feminist leaders draw on their lived experience, movement knowledge, community accountability, and ancestral wisdom to transform these challenges into pathways for change and justice. In doing so, they expand the meaning and practice of leadership itself—shifting it away from hierarchy and control toward relational power, collective responsibility, and political care—demonstrating that leadership rooted in the knowledge and power of the Global South is essential for building institutions capable of advancing justice, healing, and long-term transformation.

• Impact on racial, gender, and disability justice:

Global South feminist leadership challenges entrenched power by occupying management and leadership spaces and simultaneously resisting institutional oppression. Leaders cultivate inclusive, equitable, and sustainable models that reshape power within organizations and broader social movements. By centering racial, gender, and disability justice, these strategies enact systemic change, questioning hierarchies historically designed to exclude and marginalize. Real power emerges through reparation, solidarity, and collective governance creating leadership that sustains resilient and transformative social movements.

• Transitions as processes of reparation and strategic opportunities:

Taking on the leadership of organizations in the Global North—especially those historically led by leaders from the Global North—carries significant emotional, mental, and physical costs. Leaders confront racism, ableism, classism, casteism, adult-centrism, and multiple forms of structural violence while challenging systems that have long excluded them. Transitions are inherently traumatic under these systems and conditions, requiring the dismantling of hierarchies, questioning of entrenched norms, and resistance to internal and external pressures, all while maintaining a collective vision. Yet these moments are also strategic opportunities: to renew organizations, introduce inclusive and decolonial perspectives, illuminate overlooked power dynamics, and reshape power relationships. Transitions can foster collective leadership, embed comprehensive care practices, and create sustainable pathways for political and organizational transformation. The cost is high, but the resulting strength and innovation generate leadership capable of reimagining and reconstructing systems with equity and sustainability at the center.

• Need for comprehensive accompaniment:

Leaders cannot navigate transitions alone. Multidisciplinary accompaniment—including proximity, trust, spiritual care, political analysis, and strategic support—is essential to sustain leaders facing emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion. Effective accompaniment ensures that transitions are collective and holistic processes, promoting power redistribution, justice, and the integration of care and healing into organizational transformation.

• Collective sustainability for feminist leadership:

Transitions must be shared experiences that strengthen networks among leaders, teams, and communities. Mutual accompaniment sustains the emotional, political, and organizational weight inherent in challenging entrenched power structures, preventing these burdens from falling on individuals alone. Shared leadership also generates strategies for structural transformation, building support networks and political projects that amplify Global South voices and capacities.

• Documenting transitions as a narrative tool of transformation:

Recording lessons, decisions, challenges, and acts of resistance is critical to recovering histories often erased by colonial and patriarchal systems. Documenting transitions—painful, complex, expansive, diverse, and transformative—represents an act of political justice and historical reclamation. It preserves knowledge, acknowledges errors, and enables future generations to learn from the collective experiences of Global South feminist leaders. Historical narratives of leadership transitions—memory—affirm the idea that leadership is collective, holistic, and transformational. Retelling the process of transition allows us to acknowledge, recover, and share our knowledge and lived experiences with accountability and space to grow.

- **Critical analysis of cultural and historical contexts, power, and risk:**

Organizations operate within social, cultural, and historical contexts shaped by structural colonialism, racism, and oppression. Understanding these dynamics allows risks to be addressed precisely, rather than misinterpreted as fear or insurmountable obstacles. Risk must be assessed collectively, distributing responsibility, strengthening resilience, and guiding sustainable strategies. The real threat lies not in risk itself, but in the absence of support for emerging leaders and movements. Opportunities arise from cultivating diverse leadership, consolidating historical memory, and advancing decolonial feminist agendas centered on Global South leadership. Critical analysis of context, power, and risk is essential for designing effective, transformative strategies.

- **Comprehensive, intergenerational, and holistic support for incoming and current feminist leaders, past leaders, and funders:**

Incoming and current leaders, outgoing leaders, and funders play pivotal roles as strategic allies during transitions. Their support involves validating the experiences of new leaders, facilitating conversations with management and creating safe spaces where tensions and challenges can be addressed constructively. In many contexts, especially when Global South leaders join an organization, the opposite occurs: more is demanded of them with less support, without fully understanding the context, the power dynamics, and the specific needs of the people leading the transition. This produces added pressure, increases the risk of exhaustion, and overlooks the realities of systemic injustices and legacies inherited from previous leadership. Building peer relationships between incoming leaders (across organizations), previous leaders and funders boosts legitimacy, increases trust, and raises the effectiveness of processes of systemic change. A holistic, intergenerational approach acknowledges that successful transitions depend not only on new leaders, but on shared history, collaboration, and co-responsibility—building long-term, sustainable structures that strengthen movements and organizations. At the same time, it is critical to recognize that not all former or outgoing leaders should automatically be included in transition processes. In contexts where past leadership has caused harm, built or reinforced unjust organizational structures, left conflicts unresolved, or contributed to organizational damage, inviting those leaders into the transition without accountability can reproduce harm and undermine the process. Careful assessment, clear boundaries, and meaningful accountability mechanisms are therefore essential to ensure that transitions prioritize the well-being of staff, the integrity of the organization, and the possibility of genuine transformation.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS

✓ **Organize, hold, and center intergenerational dialogues and practices as long-term collective care:**

Acknowledge that transitions help re-energize and shift organizations and groups while adapting them to the evolving needs of movements. Treat generational transitions as a long-term political practice of care, allowing different generations to occupy and share spaces of power, decentralize authority, prevent burnout among founding leadership, and create opportunities for reflection and the documentation of profound lessons.

✓ **Raise visibility of systems of oppression:**

Actively identify and confront racist, ableist, classist, casteist, and adult-centric practices that obstruct transitions and perpetuate historical inequalities.

✓ **Transform organizational cultures:**

Embed feminist mechanisms of care, accountability, and rotating leadership to strengthen sustainability, internal justice, and organizational resilience.

✓ **Document collective memories:**

Preserve collective knowledge and prevent over-centralization around individual figures. Documentation ensures continuity, resilience, and intergenerational learning.

✓ **Promote collective leadership transitions:**

Reduce reliance on single individuals by building distributed, inclusive, and collaborative leadership structures that provide shared support during transitions and strengthen organizational capacity.

FOR PHILANTHROPY AND FUNDERS

✓ **Support Global South experience, resources, and knowledge:**

A majority of accompaniment consultants who are contracted in the philanthropic sector and by funders are persons from the Global North. Trusting and supporting the experiences, knowledge, and insights of Global South accompaniment consultants is also an act of political trust.

✓ **Fund transitions with a decolonial perspective:**

Invest in flexible accompaniment of 2 to 3 years, designed and chosen by Global South leaders.

✓ **Support holistic processes:**

Meet emotional, spiritual, and political needs, beyond the logistical aspects, acknowledging that comprehensive care is strategic. Foment intergenerational support and exchanges that include founders, predecessors, and leaders in transition.

✓ **Prioritize Global South leadership:**

Allocate funds for peer support networks, ensuring dignified severance with extended benefits, financial security, and sustainability of projects.

✓ **Build and promote safe spaces for care:**

Promote and guarantee spaces that collectively and organizationally involve other leaders who are in transition to create support networks with situated accompaniment. In addition to opening spaces with teams and management to implement transitions.



FOR LEADERS IN TRANSITION

✓ **Personal-collective care and reconnection:**

Acknowledge that external support is needed to recover creativity, the body, and spirituality as tools of resistance and political resilience.

✓ **Trust and center your power and wisdom:**

Affirm the knowledge, experience, and political insight you bring as a Global South feminist leader. Trusting your perspective—and grounding decisions in your values, community accountability, and movement histories—is essential to challenging dominant norms and reshaping leadership in ways that align with justice and collective well-being.

✓ **Weave feminist networks:**

Seek situated, intergenerational accompaniment with linguistic justice, so as not to face the challenges of transition alone.

✓ **Challenge paradigms of leadership:**

Redefine “success” far from colonial, capitalist, and hierarchical standards, building inclusive and transformative models of power.

✓ **Re-authorship, tell your own story:**

Create conditions to tell their own story of transitions, in addition to sharing multiple ways of sharing such stories. Move away from revictimization and approach dignity through narrative practice; tell their story in their own terms and centered on the care of the subject in transition.



Just leadership transitions, and all transitions of power, demand a paradigm shift across ecosystems, movements, and sectors. This means moving from extractive and colonial funding models toward decolonial and anti-ableist practices that respect the rhythms, bodies, and political realities of those leading change. It means transforming organizational cultures through antiracist, anti-casteist, and anti-classist practices that confront and dismantle the systemic barriers embedded in governance, decision-making, and resource distribution.

Equally critical is the role of accompaniment that is culturally grounded, politically aligned, and rooted in the lived realities of Global South feminist leaders. Too often, the expertise mobilized to support transitions continues to be concentrated in the Global North, reproducing the very power imbalances these transitions seek to transform. Meaningful accompaniment must therefore prioritize partnerships with practitioners, facilitators, and knowledge holders from the Global South whose experiences, languages, and political frameworks resonate with the contexts and communities involved.

At the heart of this transformation lies the collectivization of care, the intentional documentation of lessons, and the redistribution of power and resources. These are not peripheral practices; they are the infrastructure of movements capable of sustaining and realizing justice over time. When care is politicized, when knowledge is shared, and when leadership from the Global South is trusted and resourced—including through culturally relevant accompaniment—transitions become more than moments of change; they become sites where new political possibilities are practiced.



Only through this collective commitment can feminist movements cultivate organizations that are more equitable, more accountable, and more deeply rooted in the communities they exist to serve. In doing so, they do not simply manage transitions; they transform the very conditions under which leadership and power are imagined —placing collective justice and healing at the heart of it all.



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