



2024 Year in Review

A reflection on 2024 and looking forward to the year ahead

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Building Power, Creating Change

In 2024, Act Build Change deepened our commitment to building sustainable community power as challenges to democracy and social justice intensified. We've created a lasting impact across the United Kingdom through expanded partnerships, innovative programs, and a growing team.

A Growing Movement

This spring marked an exciting milestone with the launch of our membership program, now connecting 353 organising member organisations and leaders across all four nations of the UK.

We bring together new and experienced organisers, fostering collaboration and shared learning through:

- Regular live online training sessions.
- Coaching pods for peer-to-peer learning.
- Self-guided community organising and collective care training.

Our live trainings have been taken up by over 567 unique individual organisers and activists across the UK. In 2025 we will be reaching out to you, our members, to learn more about what you expect from us as an organisation.

Developing Our Coaching Programme

After a successful pilot last year, we relaunched our coaching pod to support community organisers and leaders to strengthen relationships and step into their power on their leadership and organising journeys. Our 2024 cohort combined a rich mix of experiences and expertise, with participants from Cornwall, London, Birmingham, Manchester and Scotland. They tackle a wide range of issues, including youth justice, LGBTQI+ rights, mental health, parent organising, racial, climate and environmental justice, as well as refugee and migrant advocacy.

“Brilliant practical examples on how coaching can support our work as Organisers. The regular opportunity to coach other organisers gives me confidence when coaching those in the community.”

— Coaching Pod participant



Academic Leadership

Our commitment to advancing organising practice reached new heights:

- Hosting Hahrie Han's transformative UK book tour, engaging over 248 individual organisers and social justice leaders from across the UK.
- Contributing to Harvard's "People, Power, Change" masters program.
- Securing teaching opportunities at Stanford University and Harvard for 2025.

Teaching Fellowship, Harvard University

In 2024, Stephanie had the extraordinary opportunity and privilege to work alongside Marshall Ganz as a teaching fellow for the People, Power, Change masters module. In this course, students form leadership teams of 3 to 5 people to organise individuals into a "constituency", capable of working together to run real campaigns by the end of the semester. She is deeply grateful to the remarkable Harvard teaching team – Marshall, Toni, Emily, Jake, Marianna, Pedja, Sylvia, Jen, Taarini, Alyssa, and many others – whose support and wisdom have made this journey possible.



Hahrie Han Partners with Act Build Change

During Stephanie's time at Harvard last year she witnessed Hahrie Han's powerful Tanner Lectures on her groundbreaking book, *Undivided*. Having long drawn inspiration from Hahrie Han's work in organising, she was thrilled when Hahrie agreed to partner with Act Build Change for a series of events in the UK.



Despite challenging storms and transportation delays, Hahrie's visit brought together organisers and social justice leaders from across the United Kingdom to tackle a fundamental question: **How do we build authentic, sustainable social movements capable of transforming our country, so that all people can live with dignity and belonging?**

Through events at Toynbee Hall, Save the Children, the Conduit Club, Conway Hall and the UCL Policy Lab, Hahrie engaged with over 248 of our members and friends, leading in community organising. These gatherings explored crucial themes from *Undivided*, particularly examining how to build power across differences for racial justice and foster genuine solidarity. Her insights arrive at a critical moment when many movements struggle to sustain momentum beyond initial sparks of outrage. Han's research demonstrates that building lasting power requires moving beyond quick fixes to creating spaces where people can truly transform – not just their actions, but their fundamental understanding of themselves as agents of change.

One of our events with Hahrie Han focused on organised money and we were excited to share findings from our [co-authored report on organising our money for power building](#). We wrote this report together with Love & Power based on research with 16 organisations. These included unions, political parties, large movements, small collectives, charities, co-operatives and academics.

In this report, we argue that the lack of organisations built from ordinary people's money, with some exceptions such as trade unions and religious congregations, is a fundamental block to the development of movement infrastructure in the UK.

Too often, organisations focus more on tracking funder relationships than being committed to community relationships. The truth is, you count what you value. True power emerges from deep, mutual commitments to a shared future – not from transactional relationships. Crossroads, an evangelical megachurch, offers a compelling example: its members contribute over \$63 million annually because they feel genuinely invested in their community's vision and values. While Crossroads is far from a perfect case study, its success reveals a crucial lesson about sustainable organising: while funding matters, our power builds when it flows from the grassroots.

When ordinary people commit their resources, it reflects and reinforces their ownership of the movement. This kind of financial solidarity, rooted in community investment rather than external dependency, creates lasting power for genuine change. In 2025, we look ahead to deepen our membership work and support others curious about developing their own membership organisation.

Thank you UNBOUND, Save the Children, and UCL Policy Lab, for your generous contributions to making this happen.

Transformative Partnerships

Shelter

Our work with Shelter's organising team exemplifies our approach to building sustainable change through organising and care practices. Through tailored training and coaching, we've helped strengthen their eleven-person organising team, focusing on:

- Boundary setting in one-to-ones.
- Developing a coaching approach to support teams to action.
- Building in rest, recovery and reflection time.
- Working sustainably and effectively with local teams.
- Exploring vicarious trauma and how it shows up in organising work.
- Implementing effective safeguarding measures.

We are thrilled to share that Shelter will be joining us as one of our partners in 2025.

“It was specific to organising, provided space to think through things we struggle with in our work that has a big impact on our health and care and to be trauma-informed. I particularly liked the skilled facilitators, the music, and the pace of the training.”

— Participant

POMOC

We were delighted to welcome POMOC as one of our partners in 2024. POMOC is a grassroots organisation dedicated to organising Eastern European migrants across the UK in their pursuit of dignity, power, and justice. POMOC builds power among people with marginalised genders – combining direct service support with leadership development, political education, and dynamic campaigning.

In 2024, we delivered a four-day residential program with the POMOC team. Through this, alongside responsive coaching, we have supported organisers across London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Cambridge to lay important groundwork for lasting change in migrant rights and justice.



At this pivotal moment in POMOC's development, we are providing comprehensive support to strengthen their organising efforts. We look forward to continuing that support this year.

"This was one of the best organising training I've been to and I'm a seasoned organiser for over a decade. It was not only a great refresher for me, but I learned new approaches."

— Participant

Bespoke Work

Throughout 2024, we expanded our reach through targeted training and coaching programs that strengthened organisations' capacity for sustainable organising. Our work with Citizens UK introduced trauma-informed approaches to their organising practices. We are developing a partnership with Manchester Students Union, where we support organisers and campaigners in building care-full organising practices to student-led campaigns. Our collaboration with the Southeast and East Asian Women's Association (SEEAWA) focused on establishing clear boundaries and developing compelling narratives in organising work, enhancing their effectiveness in community power.



This Autumn, we delivered a collective care training series to the team at Civic Power Fund. The purpose of this work was to support them to further embed care practices into their organisational culture and develop sustainable funding approaches for organising work.

A significant highlight towards the end of our year was a two-day residential with Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR), a dynamic human rights NGO in Northern Ireland. PPR's ambitious mission – transforming international human rights standards into practical tools for grassroots change – aligned strongly with our approach to community organising.



Care Work at the Greater London Authority

In 2024, we began a year-long programme with twenty-two community groups and the GLA to support resilience and sustainability in the migration sector. This consisted of workshops, coaching, therapeutic sessions, peer clinics and resources to help address vicarious trauma and strengthen collective care amongst practitioners.

The Migration Sector Wellbeing and Resilience Project aims to:

- Cultivate cultures of care.
- Build resilience for difficult times through learning and peer support.
- Support practitioners with vicarious trauma.
- Develop organisational structures to address burnout.
- Provide resources to support sustainability.

“Organisations run by and for migrants provide valuable frontline support for those in need. But staff may experience burnout and vicarious trauma, especially if they have similar lived experience. This programme provides a space to reflect, empathise and share best practice. It is an important reminder to all those helping others that protecting and looking after our own wellbeing is just as vital.”

— Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor of London for Communities & Social Justice.

Shape of Safety Guidebook

This year our collective care team collaborated with the National Survivor User Network (NSUN) on a guidebook, *The Shape of Safety*, to support those working with young people to approach safeguarding in more trauma-informed ways.

This project centred on those most affected by safeguarding to explore how they want to be cared for. We would like to thank the staff and young people from Revoke – an organisation that advocates for the rights and welfare of displaced young people – and Voice Collective – a project that supports young people who hear voices, see visions, or other sensory experiences – for their time and contributions. Together we explored how young people experiencing mental ill-health, distress and/or trauma are harmed by safeguarding systems and how to reimagine and build systems of care in safeguarding practices. You can download and read [the guidebook on our website](#).

Celebrating Our Team

Meet Our New Colleagues

Our staff at Act Build Change is expanding, bringing fresh energy, expertise and perspectives to our work. We're delighted to welcome two new project managers, Corinne Appadoo and Neha Bhayani, our senior community organiser, Ariel Whitson, and community organiser, Son Olszewski, and our new senior collective care trainer, Kennedy Walker. Each of them is motivated by a strong commitment to social justice and a desire to effect long-term change. They each bring unique skills and experiences that will strengthen our ability to engage with communities and support our partners in winning national campaigns.

Funding for Organisational Growth

Alongside funding from Big Lottery this year, we are thrilled to share that Esmée Fairbairn will be funding us for three years for core organisational support. Act Build Change has more than doubled in size this year, yet our reach and capacity are not sufficient for the volume of requests. This funding will support us in building our organisational capacity, providing resources for our CEO to step back from delivery and focus on long-term strategic growth with care and rigour.

Finally, we're also thrilled to have a new board member joining us, Ian Oakley Smith, whose expertise and vision will guide our strategic growth and strengthen our financial governance.

With this expanded team, we're positioned better than ever to transform the way communities organise and in turn, our lives and society at large, to build better worlds for all of us.

Honouring Louie Herbert

We want to remember our great friend and colleague, Louie Herbert. We shall continue to honour his legacy via our work. This year we will be making some of his foundational organising training available to our membership community. You can learn more about the work of Louie [on our website](#). We also had the pleasure of meeting Louie's Dad, Mick, who came to deliver training for us on the relationship between Asset Based Community Development and Community Organising.

On the Horizon of 2025

Growing Our Membership

We want to ensure Act Build Change is funded by our people and communities. This will ensure we build the people power we need for the world we imagine, to be accountable to ordinary people and shape our infrastructure in solidarity with what our community expects of us. Some of what to expect:

- Growing our membership and supporting others to learn how to organise their own money by sharing our lessons, failures and building peer-to-peer learning exchanges.
- Opportunities for members to share resources, celebrate wins and network with others in the field.
- Project Swaps to enable members to build relationships, share skills and resources.
- Launching new organisational membership opportunities and training.
- New Coaching Pod launching in the Spring.

Migrant Power Project

We are excited to announce our partnership with the Civic Power Fund to launch the Migrant Power Project this year. Over the next two years, we'll provide transformative organising training and coaching to 15 migration organisations, helping them build political influence and create lasting change for refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. Through this work, we aim to strengthen bonds of solidarity that will sustain future movement building. Stay tuned for more details!

Teaching at Stanford and Harvard University

Looking ahead, Stephanie is honoured to announce two significant opportunities: she will be teaching at Stanford University and returning to Harvard as Head Teaching Fellow for the master's program, *People, Power, Change*, in Spring 2025. An exciting privilege that will support Act Build Change's hopes to strengthen our teaching and international bonds of organising excellence.

Reimagining Safeguarding

After our sold-out reimagining safeguarding training, specifically for the migration sector – we will be launching a series of workshops exclusive for our members and partners, as well as open house events to support organisers and social justice leaders in centring care and belonging in safeguarding practices.

Everyday Democracy Project

Following successful National Lottery funding, in partnership with Involve, we will support 100 people to become Everyday Democracy Champions over the following year. Our goal is to change the balance of power in the UK's democratic system across all four nations. We recognise that individuals lack the power to have an impact on issues that they are often directly impacted by, and do not trust decision-makers to deliver what they need. To achieve this, we'll guide a cohort of participants through a carefully designed program that builds skills, fosters connections and creates meaningful opportunities for change. We will soon be recruiting for our next cohort so watch this space!

Acknowledgements

We extend our thanks to our members, partners and funders whose solidarity and resources allow us to do the work that we do. Act Build Change exists because of ordinary people, turning what they have into what they need to win change for all of us. In a world so full of despair, we recognise the discipline of hope in all our members and partners fighting for change. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.