

PRINCIPLES OF GIFT ECONOMICS

For those interested in requesting a training or presentation with us, please read this document to get a sense of how much we might “charge.”

The East Point Peace Academy is committed to offering all programming as part of an ongoing experimentation in the Gift Economy. The Gift Economy is an alternative paradigm to the current market economy, which can be highly exploitative and, in our view, has contributed to an isolating and individualistic society, a culture of greed, the destruction of our environment and the biggest income disparity we have seen in modern history.

A Gift Economy is based on relationship, faith and the inherent generosity of people.

While our commitment to the Gift Economy continues to be an experiment, here is some of what it means for us now.

1. We have never charged anybody a fee to attend any of our programs. This means that thousands of individuals have come through our workshops and trainings over the past 8 years, and not one of them had to pay a fee to attend.

2. We prioritize our mission and our relationships over funding. The vast majority of our work happens in communities who do not have the capacity to pay. This includes incarcerated people, youth and low-income community leaders. Many of our workshops and programs costs us money, and we do not wait to see if a grant or contract will come through before engaging in the work that we feel called to.

3. We do not take state money or most foundation funds. Too often, funding that comes from larger institutions come with too many strings attached or has too many administrative requirements that takes us away from doing the work. Our work grows through trusting relationships, not reports where we are forced to prove ourselves over and over each year. All of this means that we operate on a shoestring budget with very limited capacity and slow growth. For our work to be sustained, it is critical that individuals and institutions who have the capacity to pay more than what might be considered “fair market share” for our work do so. This is the only way that the Gift Economy is sustained – with the generosity of each party.

A story about the power of generosity.

Several years ago, we arrived at Soledad State Prison for our monthly workshop. We had been working in Soledad for years with a group of incarcerated nonviolence trainers that we have certified. At that point, over 700 men in that prison had gone through a two-day nonviolence workshop, led mostly by our incarcerated trainers.

When we arrived that day, the men handed us a check for over \$700. They had gone cell to cell throughout the prison, asking men to donate to support our work.

When they gave us the check, they said that “we want to make sure that people on the *outside* have access to these teachings.”

Men who make as little as \$2 a day for their labor made this gift, wanting to ensure that people *outside* of the prison had access to our programs. ***That*** is generosity.

For organizations and institutions considering partnering with us, we understand that it would be easier for us to present a “flat fee,” or even offer a sliding scale. However, these practices go

PRINCIPLES OF GIFT ECONOMICS

against the principles that we try to live into. For our relationship to be truly relational, we ask each potential partner to gain some understanding of what the Gift Economy is and why it matters to us, to have a sense of East Point's own finances, to look at your own financial capacity, have a slow and intentional conversation with your team, and based on all of that discern how much you may be able to give to support our ongoing relationship.

This will take more time than receiving a traditional project proposal and deciding whether or not you can afford it. And yet for us, this is what it means to be in relationship with each other. To get to know each other's story and values.

Please note that in many ways, the work that we may end up doing with you has already been paid for by those that came before you. It is our past supporters who make it possible for us to continue to offer our work as a Gift. We therefore encourage you not think about what might be a good amount for you to pay as a "fee" for our partnership. Rather, ask yourself how much you want to give to support others in the future in accessing our work.

In helping to figure this out, we ask each potential partner for these five things before contacting us:

1. Read the principles of the Gift Economy, attached.
2. Read our financial statement, attached.
3. Read a short description about our current work, attached.
4. Read our suggested guiding questions, attached.
5. Have a meaningful discussion with your team about these documents, look at your own financial resources and figure out how much you are able to, and want to, give to support our work.



As Marshall Rosenberg once said, *"When giving is done out of pure joy, you can't tell who the giver is and who the recipient is."*

Take a look at the picture above, of the boy feeding a duck. Who do you think is getting more joy out of that interaction? This is how we would like for you to think about any "payment" made to the East Point Peace Academy.

Knowing that any gift you offer is going to support the spreading of skills and frameworks of building a peaceful culture, knowing that the majority of our work goes to supporting and empowering incarcerated peacemakers, young people and low-income activists from marginalized communities, knowing that we are contributing to building a powerful movement for justice rooted in love and healing: **what amount would make you happy to give?**

PRINCIPLES OF GIFT ECONOMICS

The Principles of the Gift Economy¹

1: GENEROSITY

Pure generosity means giving without any expectation of reward or exchange. The giving that happens is not part of a *transaction*; rather, it is part of the *transformation* of our culture and relationships. We give because the act of giving benefits and brings joy to both the giver and the recipient. In this way, all programs offered by the East Point Peace Academy is offered as a gift, regardless of a participant's ability to pay.

In a market economy, goods and services are typically given out of self-interest. "I am providing this good/service because I want to get paid." The transactional nature of the exchange diminishes the joy of giving and receiving.

2: ACCESS

Assigning a monetary value to goods and services not only diminishes the true value of our gifts, but also creates a barrier to access. We are committed to practices – financial and otherwise – that allow for the full participation of all people.

In a market economy, because a monetary value is placed on accessing the goods and services, not everyone is able to participate. In a gift system, all are welcome regardless of their ability to pay.

3: INTERDEPENDENCE

While the market economy encourages independence and self-reliance, the gift system acknowledges the interdependence of all life. A gift system only functions when we are all giving in support of each other. The responsibility to meet our needs are held collectively, as opposed to each individual being responsible for themselves.

Because the "giving" in a market system is transactional, the exchange only benefits those directly involved. In a gift system, because giving is voluntary and made out of the desire to support others, that gift will go on to support those you may never meet.

4: INTENTION

Rather than living with an assumption that constant growth is always positive, we make all of our decisions with intention. As Gandhi once said, the world has enough for "everyone's needs, not everyone's greed." This means discerning what our need is versus what we feel like we deserve, as well as intention about how we raise money and what kind of growth we want.

In a market economy, the constant growth mentality ("bigger is always better") is pervasive, even in nonprofits. We are all taught to hoard as much as we can. In the gift system, we do not assume that bigger is better. We do not measure success by the size of our budget, and try to be intentional about how much resources we are taking from our ecosystem.

¹ Adapted from the work of the East Bay Meditation Center

Gift Economy

5: ABUNDANCE

As we try to move towards a needs-based economy, we acknowledge that we live in a world of abundant resources – enough for all beings not only to survive but to thrive. The false sense of scarcity has to do with how we define “resources” and how we are taught to measure success and safety. The earth is abundant if we value, honor and respect all the resources that are available to us: water, air, soil, relationships, wisdom.

The current market system teaches us that resources are finite, and we need to battle each other to hoard them so that we feel safe. The more we can remember what resources are actually necessary for us to thrive, the more we will realize that we live in abundance, the less we need to rely on a material and financial system made up of falsehoods.

6: EQUITY

We acknowledge that a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach to economics can perpetuate disparity and injustice. We work to honor the story, ability and capacity of each person. Acknowledging the generations of inequity that exists in the current market system, the gift system can be regenerative and healing.

The market economy conditions us to always be on the lookout for the “best bargain” and to pay as little as we can to get the most “bang for the buck.” This approach does not meet the needs of all people. The gift system takes into account each person’s story and history, and provides an opportunity to bring about equity by inviting those who have the capacity to give more than their “fair market share” to do so.

7: TRANSPARENCY

The gift system works to counter a culture of security and secrecy with radical transparency. The more transparency there is in the system, the more information people have – which in turn helps them discern how they want to interact with that system.

Unlike a market economy where personal and organizational finances are held as tightly guarded secrets, a Gift system shares financial information transparently. The vulnerability of such radical transparency can also increase trust and strengthen relationships.

8: FAITH

Rather than relying on fundraising strategies and retirement plans, the gift system relies on relationships and a faith that if we are on the right path, then our community will come together to sustain us. Rather than living in a scarcity model and pouring resources into fundraising, we try to live into the abundance of our world and focus our resources on our work.

Training Requests & Gift Economics

East Point 2021 Financial Statement

2021 was another year in which our faith in the power of the Gift Economy continued to deepen. With no fundraising staff, no fundraising budget and no fundraising events, our community came together to sustain our work for one more year.

With almost no effort put into fundraising, we were still blessed with a \$30,000 surplus coming into the year. Because of this, we were able to continue our practice of not asking for more than what we need, and rather than sending out a year-end fundraising appeal, we asked our supporters once again to consider what they would have given to East Point and instead asked them to support the [Sogorea Te Land Trust](#) and the [Black Organizing Project](#).

Coming into 2022, our big shift is that we hired a third staff person, and continued to expand our Core Team! In addition, we are excited to offer more programming this coming year related to the Fierce Vulnerability Network. So we will need more support this year as we look to expand our offerings.

If you have any questions about our finances, please feel free to contact us. As always, financial transparency will continue to be a core commitment for us.

With gratitude,

The Core Team and Board of the East Point Peace Academy!

Training Requests & Gift Economics

2021 Financial Statement

Expenses			Income		
Administration		\$10,976.12	Individuals		\$60,343.99
<i>Bank Fees</i>	\$1,473.39		<i>Crowdfunding</i>	\$23,252.22	
<i>Business Registration Fees</i>	\$175.00		<i>Donations</i>	\$21,322.84	
<i>General Liability Insurance</i>	\$499.92		<i>Monthly Sustainers</i>	\$15,768.93	
<i>Office Supplies</i>	\$137.78				
<i>Phone</i>	\$192.85		Program Income		\$21,711.00
<i>Postage & Mailing</i>	\$253.75		<i>Contracts</i>	\$8,790.00	
<i>Professional: Bookkeeping</i>	\$2,218.43		<i>Workshops</i>	\$12,921.00	
<i>Professional: Tax Preparation</i>	\$900.00				
<i>Rent & Utilities</i>	\$5,005.00		Institutional		\$119,934.58
<i>Website Development</i>	\$120.00		<i>Grants</i>	\$119,934.58	
Personnel		\$105,527.87	Other Income		\$19,480.95
<i>Payroll Tax</i>	\$7,459.70		<i>Merchandise</i>	\$141.95	
<i>Wages</i>	\$94,256.88		<i>Possibility Alliance</i>	\$19,339.00	
<i>Workers Comp Insurance</i>	\$3,811.29				
Programs		\$63,472.11			
<i>Book Supplies</i>	\$75.00				
<i>Digital Services</i>	\$1,391.95				
<i>Food</i>	\$307.65				
<i>Honorariums & Stipends</i>	\$35,268.01				
<i>Possibility Alliance</i>	\$13,829.00				
<i>Reparations</i>	\$2,560.00				
<i>Site Rental</i>	\$8,500.00				
<i>Staff Development</i>	\$250.00				
<i>Supplies</i>	\$1,290.50				
Travel		\$11,787.77			
<i>Flights</i>	\$148.00				
<i>Housing</i>	\$1,923.68				
<i>Meals</i>	\$607.00				
<i>Transportation</i>	\$9,109.09				
Total Expenses		\$191,763.87	Total Income		\$222,462.67

Training Requests & Gift Economics

East Point Peace Academy Current Programs

Peace from Within: This program facilitated nonviolence trainings in various correctional facilities across California. East Point has certified over 100 incarcerated Kingian Nonviolence facilitators in three different facilities (minimum of 100-hours of training), including two state prisons and one county jail. These facilitators ran regular workshops for other incarcerated men, with several hundred individuals receiving trainings each year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this program was suspended in March of 2020, with no word on when we would be allowed to run programs inside again. We have been in touch with many of our incarcerated trainers, and have supported them as much as possible, including sending them reading materials, Holiday cards and other ways to let them know that they are not forgotten.

Dojo: This is our public offering, with trainings in everything from nonviolence to mindfulness to movement building. Our trainings include nonviolence workshops based on the philosophies of Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi, the Fierce Vulnerability workshop which attempts to build a resistance movement based on healing principles, organizing workshops, meditation workshops, conflict skill-building workshops and much more.

Capacity Building: This program allows us to partner with other organizations and institutions, to offer our trainings and consulting services to even more populations. Through this program, we have partnered with countless nonprofit organizations, youth groups, high schools, colleges and universities, churches and Buddhist meditation centers, government agencies and others to design custom workshops that fit the need of those organizations. We have conducted meditation workshops, restorative justice circles, organizational development support, conflict mediation services and much more.

Fierce Vulnerability Network: Our major focus for the past three years, the Network is a collaborative effort between East Point and many other organizations and individuals from across the country. It is a decentralized constellation of small, autonomous teams engaged in nonviolence direct action at the intersection of climate justice and racial healing.

East Point is serving as the California hub of this network. This Network is where we placed the vast majority of our organizational resources moving forward. We believe that addressing the climate crisis must be a top priority for any organization doing social change work, and we are therefore changing gears and investing heavily into this work.

Training Requests & Gift Economics

Suggested Guiding Questions

Below are some sample questions that might be supportive in you discerning what might be the “right amount” for you to offer East Point for our collaboration.

1. How much resources do you have access to? How easy would it be for you to access additional resources?
2. How much more/less resources do you have relative to East Point?
3. What is the range that you typically offer for contractors/trainers?
4. How meaningful is this work for you?
5. What communities does your organization support, and who would a collaboration with East Point directly impact? Would this collaboration support communities who have faced or continue to face marginalization? If not, is there a way that this collaboration can support East Point’s work in communities who may not have access to resources?
6. What would it feel like for you to support East Point’s work, and our ability to have financial abundance and sustainability?

Note: East Point typically receives a minimum of \$1,000 for a day-long workshop, and as much as \$3,500. That said, we always place our commitment to the work and to our relationships first, and have conducted work where we have had to pay money out of our pocket. There is no amount that is considered too small, and no amount that is considered too much.