



Based in San Antonio, TX, Southwest Workers' Union (SWU) is a 30 year old organization of low-income workers and families, community residents, and youth, united in one organizational struggle for worker rights, environmental justice and community empowerment.

We envision an all-inclusive sustainable healthy community rooted in dignity, justice and respect for self-determination, social-economic well-being, autonomy and pachamama.

www.swunion.org
[@swujjustice](https://twitter.com/swujjustice)



the decolonize your pocketbook

toolkit

#SWUJustice
#ComadreEconomies

Southwest Workers Union

Comadre Economies Tool Box

developed by Beto Davila de León and Cristina Martinez



A special thank you to Monica Velasquez for
supporting with creative design and layout

- Cover Art by Isabel Ann Castro -





2	Introduction to Comadre Economies
4	Visioning
6	Branding / Marketing
7	Helpful Apps
8	Social Media
10	Flyers
12	Markets
14	Partnerships / Solidarity
15	Campaigns
16	Funding
19	End Notes & Special Thanks
20	Notes



an introduction to comadre economies:

Comadre Economies is a project based at Southwest Worker's Union in 2016 in collaboration with our Trabajadoras del Hogar En Accion - Domestic Workers in Action Union while discussing the history of women exploring and creating their own financial systems to sustain themselves and their communities. These financial models were often created out of a trust between individuals or groups such as a family, partners, cooperatives or close friends. We know this term in spanish speaking circles as a "comadre." Trust between

comadres challenges the larger systems of patriarchy and capitalism that have often left women and LGBTQ persons in the margins to survive solely by the means of their own ingenuity. Historically many women and queer persons around the world have been integral pieces of market culture, and have helped build up villages and towns with their crafts, textiles and produce among other goods such as services.

We are now at a time in our society where economic

violence forces many persons and families of color to consider alternative methods of generating income. Many people often work multiple jobs, or utilize their talents to bring in money by crafts, babysitting, offering traditional medicine, or offer other services. San Antonio is the base of our operation because our community has long be a site of trade, the

Trust between comadres challenges the larger systems of patriarchy and capitalism that have often left women and LGBTQ persons in the margins to survive solely by the means of their own ingenuity.



end notes:

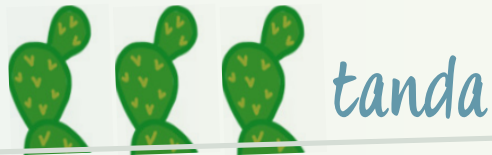
1. For a deeper dive into the Just Transition framework around Extractive Economies vs. Regenerative Economies please visit www.ourpowercampaign.org
2. To read more about Feminist Economies and to access the curriculum visit our Compañeros at Grassroots Global Justice Alliance <http://ggjalliance.org>
3. Other communities we are forever grateful for giving us inspiration include PODER SF, Cooperation Jackson, Black Mesa Water Coalition, East Michigan Environmental Action Council, Community 2 Community, Southwest Organizing Project, y Las Mera Meras . . . Fuerza Unida.
4. Please Continue to uplift your Comadres in their success, dreams, learnings, and struggles.

special thanks

All the work session Bean and Cheese Tacos. All the comadres, all the femmes, inbetweens and butches, all the brujitxs, all the ancestors, erykah badu, all of the artist, chefs, makers, market folk and vendors in San Antonio. Trabajadoras del Hogar en Accion - Domestic Worker's Union. All the Comadre Economies team: Diana, Moni V, Cristina and Beto. To Manny and Sol y Luna Soaps

To my Dad's family for growing up in the pulga and teaching me how to create my own business, to my Mom's family for working the fields away from their native lands and foraging for her siblings.

Thanks for being the inspiration. - Beto



The mera mera comadre economy fund, the tanda. *Tandas* are typically found in indigenous/latino circles as a means of support for a variety of reasons. Many of our moms, aunts and abuelas have participated in this practice at some point as an additional way of raising funds needed for a project, to catch up on bills or just to help breath during hectic financial times.

Tandas work when a small group comes together and agrees on an amount.

Let's say 5 comadres come together and decide to each invest \$100.00 over the next five months, each comadre will receive \$500 to spend on whatever they need support with. The magic lies in accountability, if anyone cannot commit to the 5 months it means someone would be shorted during their time and this is why its important to do this kind of community funding with people who you trust.

Tanda Example:

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May
Comadre A	\$100*	\$100	\$100	\$100*	\$100
Comadre B	\$100	\$100*	\$100	\$100	\$100
Comadre C	\$100	\$100	\$100*	\$100	\$100
Comadre D	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100*	\$100
Comadre E	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100*

* = persons turn to spend the collective \$500 for the month.

These are some of the many ways people have found funds to start a new business, expand their business or create new spaces or works.

Consider if any of these work for your vision and if not create new ideas and share with your community.

natural springs around us brought many different indigenous groups from north and south, and many of these same ancient trade routes were exploited by European colonizers, and later American slave owners. The exploitation and marginalization through force led towards a mixing culture that birthed a city. Throughout our history, brown women and LGBTQ persons have continued to maintain markets and challenge how money and goods are obtained. Today, because of the work of our ancestors, our labor organizers, our grandparents and families we continue to benefit from a culture of economic resistance. We have watched our aunts share money in tandas, we have helped our parents set up shop at the pulgas (flea markets or swap meets) and given whatever we can to continue lifting up our community. This is the spirit of the many artist markets run by women of color and LGBTQ artist, crafters and food justice advocates. We create our own spaces because we have often been told our ideas, crafts and work were not valuable.

We do not define Comadre Economies as solely the means to obtain currency. Among our community we find many examples of a thriving barter economy. Some examples are trading produce from their garden for child care, others helping with car pools in exchange for body work, among countless other exchanges. We define Comadre Economies as a social justice movement that aims to lift up marginalized folks to obtain that which they need: services, currency or goods.

Comadre Economies is the movement to dream of systems based on love and corazón, instead of profits and exploitation.

Comadre Economies is the movement to continue the fight for our communities to define what economic systems they chose to participate in. Comadre Economies is the movement to offer skills and tools that uplift dreams of financial independence. Comadre Economies is the movement to make sure that the work we do is seen as important and valuable. Comadre Economies is the movement to dream of systems based on love and corazón, instead of profits and exploitation.

visioning:



Tips:

light incense,
listen to your
favorite mix
tape, drink
gingko tea,
use jelly pens



Dreaming and defining your vision for a product or service is the first step towards creating your Comadre Economy.

Do you have an intention for creating your own economy?

If you are having trouble deciding what you can offer, think about what your work says about who you are.

The first step is really about reflection on our own skills, or a community desire.

Would you like to see more body positive clothing?

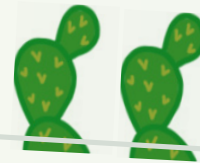
Would you like more natural products?

Need help with educating youth?

"Visioning" is really
dreaming of
economic justice.

trust your dreams

Understanding and Answering these pieces will help you to reflect on what you need to move on through the application process. The most important piece is to make sure you provide all required information, have a sponsor if you need it and to do it all before the deadline. It's good to give yourself a hard deadline before the grant to make sure you don't turn in anything late! For Example a grant application is due June 8th, make sure everything is ready to go no later than June 5th. If any emergencies come up you have 3 days to edit or update.



community funding

Make sure
to have
a clearly
defined
vision for
asking your
community
for funds.

The more
focused you
are the more
investment
you will find.

Many times grants will be formed by government offices, foundations or charitable branches of corporations. This is fine but we also have many people turning towards community funding such as fundraising or crowd sourcing.

There's a flexibility that comes from crowd sourcing, the funds come quick, you don't need a sponsor, and sometimes raising part of the money will help you apply for matching funds through a grant. We will only dip into this as many websites such as gofundme and kickstarter have more detailed accounts of how to create a campaign. It's important to know that these means often take a percentage of funds raised or have time limitations on fund goals. These can have effects on your overall final total. Explore these websites, get familiar with the language and devise a campaign for yourself as needed.

funding:

If you want to go bigger and need financial support to make your visions a reality, please consider the following community based options.



There are "seed grants" out there to help dreams and visions take off. Many times these are locally based organizations who come together to invest money in new projects. There are some things to consider when applying for a grant for your vision.

Do I need a fiscal sponsor?

— Not always, but it can help. A fiscal sponsor is a usually a non-profit organization. You can reach out to groups you work closely with and decide if they can support your project. It's important to be careful with your ideas and only work with organizations you trust. An ideal fiscal sponsorship should be a place that you know wants to see your personal goals flourish.

What's a 501c3 anyways?

— A 501c3 is the tax id for a non-profit organization. Many grants ask that your fiscal sponsor provide a letter of support for your project and a copy of their 501c3 form that proves they are non profit entity. This is not always mandatory but important to understand if you will be looking for grants.

What does a basic grant package look like?

— Complete your application, organize additional requested materials (photo samples, brochures, letters of support) The key is to follow instructions closely. Can I turn a grant in past deadline? NO. Don't try it for any reason, always be focused and on time.

vision

1. What can I offer my community?
2. What do I need to make that possible?
3. Where will I create my works or serve folks?
4. Where will I get what I need and how will I obtain supplies?
5. How will I promote my idea?

branding/marketing:

You have a great product that you know people will want! You have dedicated countless hours, you have poured love into this product, and now you know it's ready to be sold. Congrats-- that's the hardest part! What comes next?



Let's start with a killer name for your small business.

It's important to google every possible scenario where this name could be used. Check Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, .com, etc. You want to be sure that when someone Googles this name, they land on YOUR page. Got it? Great! Now go and secure all those sites with your name. Get a dotcom (sites like GoDaddy can help).

Think of three words that would best define the culture of your business.

For example, Humor, Color, Feminism-- think of these three words any time you make a new post on IG, when you talk about your work or when you have to describe your business. It will be so much easier to stay on track if you consider your 3 words before any new post. Also remember that it is perfectly ok to change these as your business grows and changes.

Logo

Sit in the idea until you know it's what represents your business best.

Whether it's an image, your own artwork, or something you've commissioned from an artist friend-- you'll want a logo that represents your business and will be both eye catching and informative. It's important to include your business name. Remember that you can include your name and social media handles + website too. Your image will likely be used on your website, Instagram, etc. So fall in love with it.

campaigns

1. What issue are you organizing around?
2. What do you think would be the most effective way to raise awareness and community support?
3. Who do you think will support your campaign?
4. How will you market this event?
5. What about outreach, media and design work?
6. Have you created an artist agreement for donations received?
7. Do you have any taxes or financial considerations?

partnerships & solidarity:



remember

you do not have to feel guilty about asking for something in exchange for your energy.



When you have established your service or product you're going to have opportunities to support movement building with your work. At times people will create raffles, clinics, or workshops to meet fundraising goals or you may choose to utilize your talents or networks to do the same. This is a great opportunity for you to spread both your brand and your wisdom.

While doing this remember this golden rule. You are not obligated to lower your prices or give things away for free, and in turn you should not expect others to do the same. Anything else is exploitation of the work and should have you reflect on what your goal originally was.

Solidarity can still be achieved with a percentage from sale of your skills. For example, your painting is being raffled for a non-profit fundraiser, your work has value and it is ok to ask for a percentage of the profit. Often times you will donate for free, or comrades will support you for free, this is a great offering! Just remember you do not have to feel guilty about asking for something in exchange for your energy. You have agency in how your work is utilized in all aspects, from asking for credit, to asking for payment. Partnership is about defining an exchange that is mutually beneficial.

Tip: Consider people from your community before asking people you don't know, they might be able to offer gift certificates for services, art, products.

Want to make your own campaign?

Let's walk through some steps:

helpful apps:

There are tons of free or cheap sites and apps that make it easy to run your business & make flyers/banners etc. You can run your hustle from the comfort of your phone! Here are a few resources that may be helpful to you:

flyers / layout

- A Beautiful Mess
- Over
- Layout
- Fontmania
- Canva

business

- Etsy Business
- Pages for Facebook
- Shopify Seller App
- Paypal
- Square Point of Sale

Websites/fonts/mock-ups/etc

- Thehungryjpeg.com
- Dafont.com
- Fontsquirrel.com
- Graphficburger.com

photo edits

- Afterlight
- Enlight

lists / organizing

- Evernote
- Wunderlist



There are tons of FREE tutorials, skillshares, and business advice vloggers on Youtube.

What are some of your favorite apps or websites?

social media:



You have a really badass business name and handle, congrats! Now that you have your IG, Twitter, etc. all set up, it's time to use these pages as tools for your business and bring in that paper!



Lots of small business, and to be real- big ones too, depend on social media to drive in new customers and display their products and services. Here are some key points to use your social media to it's best potential:



Post often,
but don't be
a bug.

While this can be hard to navigate at first, just think of the kind of content you like to see and how often you want to see it. A few posts a day, staggered over every few hours, is great. You'll find your pace soon enough and make the most of your social media.

A picture
is worth a
thousand likes

Take some time to capture your product in great lighting, with a cute background, and clear/concise info. It takes only a few seconds for someone to be interested in your photo long enough to click your link, so make it count!

Hashtag it!

It's unavoidable and ever-growing, so throw a hashtag in with your post. Think about the buyers for your market, what are they looking for that will land them on your page? Things like #madebyhand #madeinTexas #buylocally #wocentrepreneur etc are GREAT ways to drive buyers to your page.

markets

1. What is your market? Does it have a theme or message?
2. Where will you host this space?
3. Will you offer additional services?
(IE: skill shares, demos, DIY areas, childcare)
4. What is your budget?
5. Will there be a vendor fee? What does a vendor fee cover?



is this your first market?

don't forget

Table

Chair

Table Cover

Point of Sale
(Square Card reader,
Paypal Card reader, etc.)

Cashbox

Change (5's and 1's will be your best friend!)

Display stuff (for ex. Necklace stands, jewelry stands, etc.)

Extensions Cords & Lighting, if needed



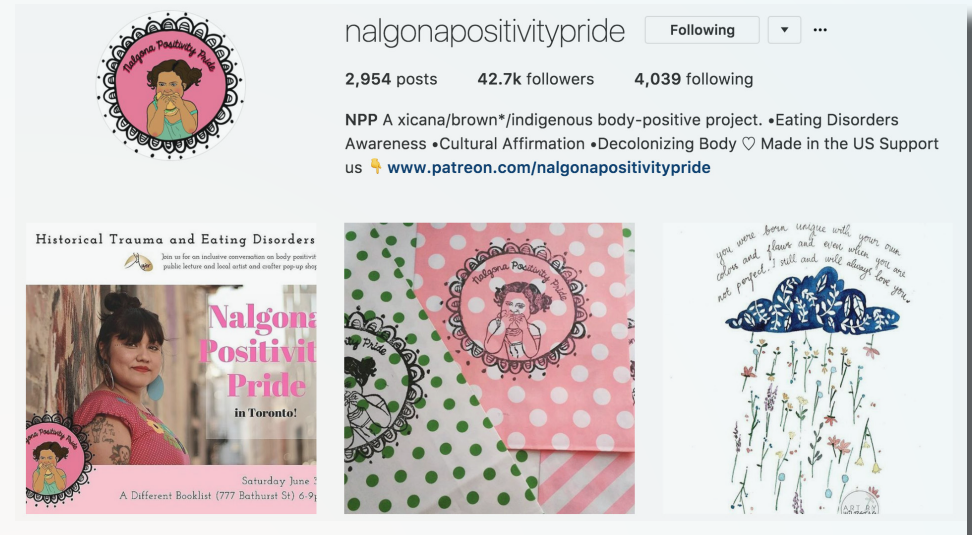
markets:

Building a market is ancestral work, its foundational work, it's where true alternative economies take shape. Building market spaces gives us opportunities to support other community members as well demonstrating different values.

We have had many markets that were started because many upscale market events have kept artists of color out, value their talent, or because people do not want to contribute to gentrification of neighborhoods. Comadre Economies are not based in models that exploit artists, chefs, healers or the spaces or neighborhoods that welcome them. As gentrification becomes a bigger and bigger problem, we must look at the ways creating new spaces affects the people around us at all times. Your market should work to support and uplift folks who have been kept out. This does not mean you should jeopardize the safety or atmosphere to accommodate toxic persons. You have a responsibility to offer your vendors a loving experience that helps promote their livelihoods.



Tips: create a work group, set agreements, discuss budgets and responsibilities, honor your commitments and be honest about what you can commit to



example of a bad-ass instagram



Have a great bio

A great bio is always important. Usually, we get just a few lines for these sites, so be concise with your info. Be sure to add links to your website, or Facebook page if that's in the works. It's important to direct folx to where they can see you in person, where they can buy your goods, or support your work.

Make it fun!

Add memes and personal pics every once and a while. Show your personality, and works in progress, etc. People love to see the corazòn behind the work.

flyers:

CUTE NAME → *MADE W/ A BEAUTIFUL MESS APP (FREE!)*


CREATE A BADASS EVENT FLYER!

VENUE INFO → 9483 BEYONCÉ LN. HOUSTON, TX (BABY)


TIME + AGES + \$ COST → 7-11PM, FREE + ALL AGES

VENDORS → VENDORS: CHINGONA, PODEROSX, CHULITO, BAE

MUSIC → MUSIC BY: DJ ANG, LORETTA BROWN, AY TÚ

FLY GRAPHIC → 

PERFORMERS →

SPONSOR LOGOS → 

CONTACT INFO → Brought to you by: ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES Y QUE
CONTACT INFO HERE: BIDIBIDI@BOMBOM.COM 223-123-1222

@VERYTHAT

There are just a few key components for a really powerful flyer for your event:

1. Foto: a powerful image that sets the theme
2. Title
3. Address/Venue Info
4. Time, Ages (family friendly? Pet friendly?)
5. Cost (even if it's free)
6. Vendors
7. Performers
8. Sponsor Logos/names
9. Organizers & contact info (phone number, email address)