

# Mutual Aid

**Basics, Theory & History**

**What do you know about this already?**

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# A Working Definition

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**Simply, the practice of caring for each other in times of need for a shared goal.**

**It's premised on solidarity, not charity, and the idea that we all have needs as well as things to give - not that we will rely on saviorism or hierarchy to get what we need from others without getting into action ourselves, or that we need to burn ourselves out giving more than we actually have, but that we need to save each other in difficult situations. This is not just community service, it's service in order to explore, understand, and change the situations we live in. Mutual aid often springs up in a crisis, but it is also a long-term project that prepares our communities for changing circumstances over the long haul.**

**(Thank you, Kate!)**

# What Mutual Aid is NOT

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--Charity, meaning any work based on those with money/access to power **gifting** it to those without

--Traditional social services delivery, meaning institutionalized programs that use a charity or client model such as food banks, which control the distribution of money/goods/access to those in need and are controlled by those funding the work and/or governmental structures

# So what's wrong with charity?

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--Who is in control of deciding who is “worthy” or “deserving” of resources?

--Who decides which strategies should be used by larger organizations by choosing which to fund?

--Who is left out of these structures as a result and what might we be missing out on?

--Do the conditions for disenfranchised people change after they receive it? Did anything change at all long term?



STOP BELIEVING  
IN AUTHORITY.  
START BELIEVING  
IN EACH OTHER  
MAYBE

200  
CURATE  
FOO

# Debrief

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--What ideas does this give you about projects you are already interested in?

--What questions do you still have after seeing this?

# Food Not Bombs

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--founded in 1980 by anti-nuclear activists

--loose-knit collective worldwide based on

shared value that food is a right, not a privilege

--always vegan/vegetarian, anyone can cook, anyone can eat

--often affiliated with broader anti-war or other liberation movements

--intentionally challenges unjust laws about use of public space and sharing food, historically resulting in arrest





# Black Panther Party for Self-Defense

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# Community-Led Disaster Relief

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--Occupy Sandy

--New Orleans Women's Health Clinic

--Hurricane Maria organizing in Puerto Rico

--Lightning Bolt (preparedness)

# Questions? Thoughts?

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--This is just meant as an introduction. There are so many resources and stories about this work and this is barely the tip of the iceberg!