

# The Narratives that Shape Us: Movement Leaders Share their S...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, refugees, black, personas, language, organizing, para, funders, stories, support, andrea, narrative, la, immigrant, black liberation, mother, fleeing, iraq, power, tambien

## SPEAKERS

Marissa Tirona

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00:04

Hey, everybody, back again. First of all, before we start I wanted to give a shout out again, to our colleagues from tech a lot. Doing the interpreting of all of the prepared remarks and the presentations is one thing to do it for spoken word and the amazing poetry from Amir is another so can we give them snaps? And I don't know if Amir is still with us, but I have to say poets are truth tellers, Oracle's philosophers, they got our way and I had my way we'd be doing a lot of poetry and GCIR as well. So I'm glad that he was able to join us and share his his insight and wisdom with us. Marissa Tirana president of juicer really, really grateful to be on stage with all of these leaders thank you again for being with us. So as I talked about before GCIR Were about purpose are about people first. And you know to quote actually a mayor he talked about that the power of narrative is that it can help to deconstruct the monolith, and so really grateful for all of these speakers to bring a range of experiences and stories. This is what we're calling I think, for big night talks. So it will be quick you're gonna hear five minutes stories for each powerful leader. Colleagues, if I look at you kindly to say, wrap it up, just know that will be coming. But we're really excited and really grateful for them to be here. So let me introduce our speakers and get right to it. I have directly to my left here. Jose Eduardo Sanchez with tech a lot. Ana Molina from organises Yan Latina the trends and take us Francisco steal from Living Hope wheelchair Association and Basma Alawi from we're all America. Finally, not a job be some blog alliance for Just Immigration. Terrific. So we are going to go ahead and start with our speakers and we're going to begin with Jose. Ready.

06:15

Thank you so much for focusing. I'm actually an interpreter and translator so it feels really rare to be up here on stage. I'm usually out there in the back with the mic on walking around covering my face. I also I I never read poetry out loud. I only write it but I think things to Amir I now have that little extra energy and courage that I needed for Karina was born on the water of the water by the water. It really led me to be exact. I was always told this growing up but this was alive. I was born in the hospital room in Iraq water when I learned to speak because I was being cut from inside my mother. My first word was a cry. I grew up on the water of the water by the water. I heard stories of the days when the

river broke to flood almost half of the town and the water reach all the way to my mother's house. On this land baptised by tragedy. I learned the word love Aveiro, in sacristy and I learned the language of laughter in a play and also Ronita which is the mother thing which for corn in water and love until one day the water was done. And as most animals know, when the river dries up, it's time to move up until you find more water, different water or the same water in a different form. I learned to speak English on the water of the water by the water halls by you to be exact. I always told myself this growing up but this was also a lie I learned to speak English in a hospital room. At LBJ hospital interpreting for my mother at nine years old as she was once again being cut apart in which failed me after that. So I went back to the water on the water by the water. I heard stories of black and brown workers fighting for dignity of immigrants in wheelchairs responding to crises with life saving supplies and community of powerful, indomitable trans women of color, creating and redefining home. This stolen land baptised by violence I learned the words wage theft and asylum, then the length that the language of memory is also the language of hope. Yet sometimes language still fails me. When language fails you right upon to my mother. You taught me that the first conquest was paradise. And we are the poor banished children of Eve that our mother's fate was enough to make us holy. What her crossing alone could not make us free. You taught me that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was always empire. But there are always new worlds to be created to be found. Where the water and language meet. Thank you

09:36

so Andrea Molina, so, pre Scenario A Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, so in a trance we lengthy is to witness the pace in documenta cerca de Daniels for their organization Latina interesante has come online document Tada kimono mocha trans. In the last milking session in the middle, this is your thick reamaze LOL variegatus and Andrea Cara Andre is wonderful here para la comunidad trans principalmente midlantic estaba en la Central's a CR one though you gave him better models condo UI the meta models or eco mucha the Miss Remar nurse in Miss combiner strands por la this per se la se worldatlas socio economic as political as equal to rallies can be the most and Latino America. Let me assume for sila para la Mahara strands sister aggressive Tanaka la vez mas Jo Jagermeister payees, I say big Daniels he or you I was gonna say opportunity is very last opportunity is non gelato para todas las oportunidad is most on DVD. The Portola Sandalow privileges are owners. In a Sunday law privileges outranks mientras no Samos consent is the mandalas revelations in a coma call to the salon was komunitas migrantes muqarnas Trans personas novena Arias a la mia roseum for Salah continue Ira Ramos yes Thomas criando he for policy under resistencia. At reversal last s versus Democrats transmit granted the Coronavirus Allianz era is the i ke viendo tanta as a hanseyachts test and as for San Jose poor SLL Kansei para nuestras comunidades Mirantis mercy interoperability era on rather the start of consistories he will recommend Mira for the most caminar to those who chose porque se no travel karma scooters and more credit strands moc Andros se na s and Latinoamerica dentro de la centros a 10 CR is presently gracias Cisco

12:02

see one has been started this a gracias primera mente pour in bitterness poor Tamara Quentin was Torani sincerely we hope we know praise Francisco City yo, yo soy or scenario there's always Potosi, Mexico, during a Kia last also needles in Milan know Sen toes know when they see it below the Sephora Clemente loosen us ever you guys know in a year and nearly a year at our complete bank depressa news they start Anastasia there with us up victim agreement may may or CELTA on May zero no Gulpin in conda vertebral II with comical Anastasia res pero a non hospital Chris via mas

therapy fizika a you know real name also grupo de nos conocemos en grupo de personas que estar masala Minmus it was Yan impulses a rainbow mill cinco el condado the curries Nostrovia la suplementos bicycles Persona Persona con discapacidad electrico Marico camassia raiders and the Lord is interested people a process and then those mill cinco Kitaro nessa user personas seen documentos a yes or no Spago we infer the autonomous K neural net NSS passou the ensembles Teva Musa assertiveness again for a polar solvent there is a problem in process for a mammal organization leaving hope como and 3ds companions cannot conocemos and Principi are most personas nada mas on this con on el problema de La Coruna vertebral pero this post if we're on Instagram though, personas cannot through people that this capacitor, a somos Cymbopogon grande como limousine personas tenemos muchos me Ambrose plenties Calamus in programa, Sintra de la organizzazione select Keepo Medeco in low supplies medical skills in a persona on this capacitor. There are tambien implementable sutras programas como Kusa and loads disastrous let them pariah they were pandas prepare Amazon was a member of sia kids the Merkin Xia persona por que a LIS the same was preparing for dollars person this is serious. Yes, procedurally, CRC sorry carries a layer the cassava yella tempura the invierno tambien. The Paramus Amritsar members yet competes the mercans are tres Quatro. Yes pero tambien se mas politicus publicus tenemos connected Connell passport a para personas con discapacidad and bn whose Teesha in Inlingua Hey, e tambien. A en el in LA Santo the Risa lo Lucha mas para que todos personas immigrant is on these capacitors she tambien personal Rico has taken an unknown MCOR

15:08

program Akira programas para que tener Makoto Salado yes

15:21

thank you. Can you hear me? I normally don't read out on paper but since I'm timed with five minutes, I want to make sure to keep up with the time and listen to Kevin I think of me your words really resonate a lot with me today. And I want to start by saying one of the most powerful human needs that we all share is being seen and heard. We all want to feel valued and essential and that we matter all the time. I am best not allowing a former refugee from Iraq, Muslim hijabi Arab American woman of color, and I want to share with you a glimpse of why I fight every single day to be seen and heard

16:09

I would love to play that with

16:10

you you reviewed people with blue eyes just those first initial class people these are not used to refugees from various committees.

16:45

This is relatively civilized, relatively European city, you wouldn't expect that

This is relatively civilized, relatively European city, you wouldn't expect that.

16:54

So what is NATO going to do if you know it's one thing for sarin gas to boost people in faraway Syria who are Muslim and who are of a different culture? What is Europe going to do? When it's on European soil done to Europeans?

17:09

So my heart stops shake every time I see this video and this video from a training that we have done for a local reporter in Jacksonville to make sure that they are really mindful when they are covering stories on refugees and war. We don't realize the harm trickles down from narratives and framing language like this. We might think it's background noise, but eventually the noise gets louder in our everyday lives. It ultimately shapes our unconscious perspective and what I and many other likes me have witnessed is these dangerous narratives turning into hurtful stereotypes and micro aggression in our workplaces and schools. We must realize that the media narrative and the language they use in the camp in comparing this refugee crisis so many other refugee crisis around the world are harmful and feed into them in their dangerous ideology. Even politician have used word like civilized intelligence educated inequality. To describe and differentiate refugees from other refugees. You rarely hear this language when it comes to people of color fleeing similar crisis in Iraq. I finished a school in engineering and was working for the country department of oil but how did the media describes people like me fleeing a country in the Middle East? Many of us have been listening and watching heartbreaking scenes from Ukraine. I almost cannot even imagine going through what millions of Ukrainians are going through right now. Unfortunately, I can say that I can. When I sit and watch these scenes unfold, I feel the tears singing in my eyes. Children, women and elderly people are dying and crying for help. Buildings are entirely in the flames and destroyed. People are fleeing to save their lives is ugly anywhere. And it's off the order really people who I love to suffer the most. Seeing these horrific images of bombarded to people fleeing to bomb shelter and border crossing are things my family and I also lived through this experience. In 2010 After surviving wars, dictatorship, invasion, and death threats we took our one year old daughter and left everything else behind our families, our home, our jobs, language and culture. The journey was significant loss, but I would find if it was my ultimate train. I found a new purpose in life, uplifting the voices and needs of us refugees, and correcting harmful and misleading narrative surrounding refugees and migrants, as refugees do not want to leave our homes as refugees do not want to leave our homes and I a dream of someday reuniting with my family who is still suffering in Iraq, gathering around that same teapots in the afternoon and sharing about our date but many barriers prevent me from living this moment. Yet. Each day I work to ensure that families are supported and reunited together as an everyday innocent, where I can reunite family, I can live this fulfillment of my dream my lived experience as a former refugee from Iraq fuel my passion for advocating for refugees and immigrants right in the US and abroad.

21:09

As a national campaign manager we oversee organizing efforts across 21 states or we all America which is dedicated to promoting policy that support refugee immigrants community. Through we are all America we have built the largest national infrastructure for refugees grassroots organizing to push pro refugee policy agenda, convened refugee and immigrant groups and uplifting their voices to

pave the way to share their stories. Our voices are what pushes back against the dangerous narrative, which have for long been used against us. Investing in local refugee grassroots organizing, policy work and of creating a leadership ladder for refugees is the solution to building power for refugees by refugees and combat the narrative is through our stories yet. This is difficult work but leaves a permanent, long lasting impact and is more meaningful, because it's create leaders like us. Everyone in this room has the power to help us to be heard and to be seen, and to make a true difference in our communities because we are the model of this work. Thank you.

22:42

Maha let's Good afternoon in the tree language of the essential people of Ghana My name is Nana jumpy and my pronouns are she her and wallow in tree. I must say that everything I've done in do is done in collective so it's a little strange to talk about your story that you're going to be seeing pictures I haven't seen in my own self and decades because I try not to look at myself if I can avoid it. And when you know and I know it's a slippery slope between tell us your story to dragging you off a pedestal you didn't even ask for. So my conversation about myself is really a conversation that is representative of so many of my comrades so many other black folks that are doing this work. I'm a daughter of black migrants from Donna. But I was born in the United States to a father who grew up impoverished but through his education was able to come to the United States. To get his PhD at Cal Berkeley. And then my mother still joined him peace be unto her. My dad then got a job with the evil empire known as the World Bank. He joined the World Bank because he felt that Africans needed to be at the table where they were definitely and continue to be on the menu. And he was in in in sistent that that would not happen on his watch. But while he was fighting that fight, he and my mother made sure that we went to private school throughout our whole youth whether that was international school in Cote d'Ivoire, while we lived in the Ivory Coast for some years, or St. Agnes school for girls in the DMV with the children of John McCain going to Easter egg hunts at the Reagan White House. The plan on paper was for me to go to a top university and become of course like any proper black immigrant child, a neurosurgeon.

24:40

Clearly that plan went awry. My unlikely path started though with that family, my World Bank dad he was also a stone cold black, nationalist, fundamental nationalist internationalist, who taught us from a very young age how to recognize and fight anti blackness. Lulu also told us about the black world everywhere he went Bolivia, Uruguay, Philippines he brought us something back of the black people there and told us their stories. My mother taught us that we were responsible to support people who needed help the most. Our house was never just us. Raise your hand if you lived in that house. And if you were undocumented, if you were queer if you were the victim of or a survivor of domestic violence and employ you could always find a place in a fear ademas house. My parents taught us that black people face oppression and trauma and we resist that black people are resilient, and that black people save ourselves and that is our responsibility as black people to support our resistance and resilience by any means necessary. For example, apparently I started working when I was three according to my social security number. So maybe not so strange that I'm sitting here and not in scrubs. Though I went to more now as a pre med student, I was determined to connect with black people and to organize and I got the best training on Black Liberation Praxis from Ujamaa Residential College, the Africana Studies Center, the mentorship of Dr. James Turner, who also happened to mentor Professor Kimberly Crenshaw, Andrea Ricci and Rosa Clemente. Not bad company. After two and a half years of organizing against apartheid and police and white nationalist violence on campus

locally and in New York City. I hung up my proverbial scalpel and decided to join the ranks of movement attorneys. I saw using their brilliance and their skills to support black freedom. I was very active in the Black Law Students Association, but I spent very little time on UCLA Law School's campus and a lot of time on skid row in downtown Los Angeles. And South Central. My last school friends and I started a nonprofit organization in Watts with not a dime of funding. By the way, I'm owed reparations, and we organized around youth homelessness and gang truces. We created a legal arm that was supported by volunteers of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the legal arm of the Black Revolution that just helped to free Sundiata yesterday so they are a cola co leads gonna be and the 92 Rebellion happened we represented one of the men accused of attacking Reginald Denny under the leadership of the great Sherpa in the Moomba, the first lawyer I ever saw in court. When I became a lawyer, I dedicated myself to being part of that tradition and being a people's attorney. I later added professor and radio show host to the organizing education and advocacy work I was doing all in the name of Black liberation. My work at Baji therefore brings me full circle. It's a space where I get to share my 30 years Yes, oldest dirt and twice as funky. Then support on Black people and Black Liberation with all of my hats on organizer, educator, attorney, abolitionist warrior. I continue to do this work because I am so so deeply in love with Black people. And I know that we will be free

29:09

Thank you. So I'm going to ask you all to do one more thing. I'm sorry. I got one more question for you. So you have a roomful of funders here. And you've already shared a lot and you might have also asked for things and other panels that you've been on. But what is one thing one thing? You want funders who believe in the movement and support the movement? What do you what's one thing you want them to do right now? And okay, so not as already? Yes, ready? So we're gonna start with you and then come back down this way. So some good yes, please.

29:45

I want you to make sure we make \$20 million by June teeth in the Black Power, Black migrant power get us to that 20 million by June 18. Reach out to Allah.

30:03

Yeah, I think it's been amazing. Hearing all of the recommendations from the panelists. I think a couple of things that comes to mind. One, if you are a funder, investing in organizing work go and stay one full day with an organizer and learn about the struggle of an organizer one full day. It's happened with me I did took out a funder for a full day organizing Florida and we became best friends. He became a mentor and has been helping our work forever. The second thing we do need 50 organizers paid refugees organizer in 50 states. And that will happen if you invest in our movement, because the refugee organizing movements have been really, really just came up and we need to make sure refugees are paid to do the job not paid to tell their stories suspect

31:04

Okay, opinion organization is diversity para que crane liderazgo passion for this GIG system permit us Daniel's solamente para apoyar las personas inmigrantes con these capacidad this prestigious personas is beyond the physical cake consider on a Playa simultaneous documentos a party canola

personas is beyond the physical care consider on a Maya simultaneous documentos a party canora discapacidad history and last year there were this mutual no problem with new surveillance manuals so they soon read over centigram the most direct thing for you Mr. Kraus.

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organisasi en es system Peninsula kappa the super airways 11 personas Allah detention better knowledge than seeking mentor machismo heroes in which are commonly heard they elicit those agents you're better no mo school to decipher SS community is Luna para Clara's school to recite ss Milan this test ng Lando is the pipes and scenarios will be listed by each oversell recruiters is a resource. This presents a level of centralization, zero stress cassioli whereas I see lots of scenarios the sport divers I'll say leave it alone central agency only lasts organizzazione Salah las manos de siendo Lastly, where are most federal knowledge they don't segmento necesita mas call today sciencey Tamar recources he falls backward to resell of Research Services ligula saloom Anti employer the Vienna hostess, REO school stores, employers Dino's Nancy Thomas law reporter source esta Masaki Glenda resistencia Eustace do not read courses but also stand upon a lot of the courses Barbosa continues to handle but you still know when I started in Westeros historias.

32:58

This this conversation

32:59

that we're having right now, so many parts of this conference site visits panels workshops would literally not be possible without a commitment to language justice. The ability for us to have this deep conversation and show up as our full selves is rooted in a belief that language is power. I think as funders as program officers, as community leaders and organizational leaders, you know, linguish This, this cuts through every single part of the work that we do, particularly working in immigrant and refugee communities. So I would ask you, what are the languages whose budgets for your organization's where are the line items for interpretation for translation for training for consulting, and where are those funds going redirected to organizations like an Andrea Cassandra we looked at the like living home literally, leaders powerful powerful leaders who have shifted the ecosystem here in the city of Houston, because of their demand for space, not asking if they could have interpretation, but demanding it so yeah, just I would say using language, not just as a form of access and as a form of bringing people in a space, but language is a tool to transform power. If we're not transforming power, we are not doing language justice.

34:25

So there is very little for me to add, but to say thank you marami Salama, but please join me in thanking Jose and Andrea Francisco, pasma and Nana, again, for sharing their stories and their wisdom and calls to action folks, we've got clarity around what we can do next. So please join me in thanking.

34:56

34:56

Another round of closes our speakers make the registration