



# WHO WE ARE



Solid State Community Society is building a network of worker co-operative enterprises with youth (under-35 years old) from racialized migrant families in Surrey, BC. We currently have 18 co-ops in operation with 120+ members from 35+ national backgrounds, and are reaching out to establish new hubs regionally, nationally, and internationally. With the support of mentors, advisers and community partners, members gain training and skills towards long-term economic self-reliance.

More than that, our model is most fundamentally about building long-term attachments and commitments: we believe that by working co-operatively together over an extended period of time, our cohorts develop a familial sense of place and belonging, and a different a different way of being in the world.

Solid State was founded in 2015 and launched in 2017 specifically to work and organize against the alarming tides of racial violence, xenophobia and white nationalisms that were increasingly evident in Surrey (like so much of the world) - and often coded in languages of concern over gangs, community safety and youth violence.

There are four core elements of our work:

1. We are addressing the endemic lack of opportunity and economic mobility for marginalized and migrant youth through workers' co-ops.
2. We are articulating new narratives in the face of rising racisms and xenophobias - trying to build intercultural solidarities.
3. We are building a constructive approach to addressing community safety.
4. We build hubs for youth and their co-ops: daily meals, access to space, resources, technical support, counseling/advising, events, meals and community



# MESSAGE FROM OUR



# CO- DIRECTORS

One of the best things that happened this year is that we expanded our co-directors from two to four. We end this year with a staff of fifteen, including four full-time. As we continue to widen and deepen our work, we are going to be slowly adding co-directors. Our goal is to have an entirely (or almost-entirely) full-time staff as soon as possible, operating co-operatively and supporting all members with strong living-wage incomes. We made major strides in that direction this year. Our three new co-directors are brilliant and are working together to shepherd all aspects of Solid State.

**Jshandeep Jassal** is a graduate from SFU with a background in Sociology, Criminology, and Social Justice. Her work at Solid State revolves around promoting wellness in racialized communities and finding ways to support the people connected to our organization. She is also in charge of administrative work for the overarching organization of Solid State, and responsible for three cohorts called GenConnect, the South Asian Healing Network, and Let Her Talk. Jshan loves animals, nature, and crafting.

In addition to completing her undergrad at Simon Fraser University, majoring in Communication, **Vanessa Fajemisin** works as a Solid State co-director, primarily with the Daily Dose of Blackness cohort and the communications team, and works as an Arts & Culture writer for Vice's NoBasicGirlsAllowed.com. Passionate about all things (pop)culture, media, and social justice, Vanessa aims to combine her various interests and skills to aid in creating an inclusive, rewarding, and fun environment for her community.

**Kevin Kapenda** works as a co-director and co-op developer at Solid State. Combining his background in urban planning, social policy, and stakeholder engagement, Kevin assists over 100 youth with the development of their co-op enterprises and non-profits, from "nuts-and-bolts" incorporation, to strategic planning. His passion for solidarity economics and co-ops was nurtured at the University of Toronto, where he earned an MSc in Urban Planning. He also holds a BA in communications and has over eight years of experience in that field, as a journalist and PR professional.

Together we continue to explore and expand Solid State's mandate and ambitions, and there is little doubt that having more people in on that conversation full-time is really deepening what we are capable of. We have a tremendous staff of eleven who we love and with any luck will be able to bring more of them on f/t to join our director's team in the near future.

# WHAT HAPPENED IN 2020-2021



The most obvious change in Solid State is that we continued to grow. We have continued to expand and now have approximately 120+ co-op members and a widening community of friends and supporters mobilized around us.

Like the rest of the world, we continued to flex and adjust around the pandemic, and as for so many others, things continued to substantively improve throughout the year. By the time Fall 2021 arrived we felt confident in our protocols and were operating at very close to full capacity. We have continued to limit occupancy and stick to pretty strict regimens of cleaning, but 100% of us are double-vaccinated and



This includes slowly working our way back to a regular schedule of events: guest speakers, film nights, community meals, celebrations and parties. We are just now using our space fully for the first time and are learning what a great place it is for gatherings of all kinds.



One of our major moves through 2020-21 was really to focus and double-down on our commitments to cohorts, and to ask the same in return. We lost some cohorts who were not able to commit sufficiently (for a variety of reasons) and added new ones with a clearer understanding of what is required to build a durable cooperative. Solid State has a hugely ambitious horizon and are asking all our co-ops to think similarly ambitiously and commit to working.

We do not consider co-ops that discontinue to be failures, but rich opportunities for learning all around. We have had eight cohorts thus far cease their work with us – some very pleasantly, some acrimoniously. Some because members went off to university or shifted their priorities or lost interest. Some because they couldn't get along. Some because the business model proved itself insufficient. Every time one of our cohorts ceases work it is hard in some ways, valuable in others, but we like to think of all of our cohorts - regardless of duration or financial success or community impact – as successful in all kinds of ways.

We currently have 18 cohorts up and running and are besieged with people interested in starting new ones. We are learning constantly about what works and does not, what we do well and what we need to improve on, and how we can support extant and new cohorts better.

We are definitely interested in continuing to expand our network, but not growing just for growth's sake. Our horizon is to build a co-op of co-ops here in in Surrey - to nurture a solidarity economy movement – and we learned so much this year about how we can make that happen, and what our next steps are to improve and deepen our work.



# THE SOLID STATE COHORTS

LET HER TALK  
LIGHTWORK  
CITOPIA  
GENCONNECT  
SAH NETWORK  
LA LIBELULA  
CITY IN COLOUR  
CLIMATE RECENTRED  
DAILY DOSE OF BLACKNESS  
BLACK SCHOOL'D  
BLAC  
MIL IEU  
STUDIO PLUTO  
SALAM CENTRAL  
ETHOS LAB  
PUSH YOUTH COHORT  
GAZA MEDIA CO-OP





SAH NETWORK



DAILY DOSE OF BLACKNESS



SALAM CENTRAL



GEN CONNECT



MILIEU



LA LIBELULA



STUDIO PLUTO



# WHAT'S NEXT THIS COMING YEAR?

We have two axes that we are working around: widening and deepening our work.



Solid State will continue to add cohorts through 2021-22. We are learning how to manage the ongoing and sometimes overwhelming volume of interest. We are convinced we are figuring out a durable model going forward, especially in the face of economic precarity and instability, and our goal is to build a cooperative of cooperatives here in Surrey. We do not have any set number we are aiming for, but we are seeking a critical mass to make real economic impact.



One of our main strategies for expansion is via organizational partnerships and collaborations. As we broaden our efforts nationally and internationally, as much as locally, we are finding that our most effective routes to building new cohorts is in partnership with one or multiple organizations. Solid State would never have made it this far without constant collaboration and support from partners and it is that that will be our primary route for continued expansion.

As we broaden and expand, we continue to remind ourselves to keep our eyes on the real prize: deepening our work here and now. This year we are really focused on doubling-down with our current cohorts as they flex fully into their ambitions.

We are most interested in creating living jobs and positioning Solid State as making a real economic impact in Surrey. Towards all this we are significantly expanding our budget: we are continually strengthening our team, adding to the resources and the support we can offer to cohorts.





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