Let Movements Lead

How to invest in training infrastructure so social movements can sustain their impact.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

About This Publication

This publication is a result of the combined efforts of many dedicated members of the Rhize global network and staff.

Special thanks to the members of the broader Rhize Coaching Corps, who spent many hours compiling information, relaying case studies and reviewing the details of this report to ensure it best represents the courageous work they have done and continue to do. Without our network of coaches, who often put their security and well-being on the line, the important work of supporting movements is not possible. These coaches cannot appear here by name in order to ensure their safety, but they are powerful and brilliant in their ability to organize, inspire and embody the values of community-led change.

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A note from the Rhize Founder

I first started to understand the potential for connectivity across movements in the summer of 2009. I had just finished organizing for what was then the largest grassroots mobilization in U.S. history—the first presidential campaign of Barack Obama. A growing movement of Albanian youth invited me to help them harness the “secret sauce” that led to Obama’s victory as they tried to take back their own government in upcoming elections. As the ballot results trickled in, we watched footage of Iranians pour into Valiasr Square in Tehran, protesting the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in what would later be called the Green Revolution. 850 miles away, Moldovans were in the midst of their own “Twitter Revolution” that overthrew the long-ruling Communist-led government. Little did we know that the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, the Arab Awakening, Occupy Wall Street, the Ukrainian Euromaiden Revolution, the Movement for Black Lives—some of the most defining movements in a generation—were just a few years from emergence.

Between 2010 and 2015, more movements materialized globally than those in the previous three decades combined. Slow and unresponsive bureaucracies, unprecedented access to information, and increased social connection through new technologies meant that failing top-down institutions started to give way to unparalleled citizen action, showing that when establishments start to break down, citizens often find alternative ways to meet basic needs.

Movements can get a bad rap as vehicles of disruption, disorder, and violence. Disruption—in the form of protest, civil disobedience, marches, and other public actions that call attention to injustices—is certainly an element of movements, but it is a gross oversimplification of the power of movements.

At Rhize, the movement training and support organization I founded five years ago with the help of activists around the world, we see movements as essential vehicles for social transformation. This means not just reforms or incremental changes, but true systemic change at all levels of society. When successful, movements put unlikely allies into partnership, build community, reshape institutions, establish new cultural norms, and often find alternative solutions to meet community needs that are frequently adopted by larger institutions.

While we are seeing more movements than ever before, the rise in collective participation alone does not guarantee success against the rising tide of repression and the closing of civic space that people are facing around the world. In fact, while the number of movements have increased, their relative success rates have declined.

Rhize explores new, grassroots-driven ways to support social movements and helps improve access to the skills and tools movement leaders need to fight today’s toughest struggles—against corruption, climate change, land grabbing, gender-based violence and inequities, economic injustice, and much more.

This report offers up a new model of support for the increasingly dominant force in civil societies globally: people-powered movements. The Rhize Coaching Model is an approach Rhize staff and advisors have developed over a cumulation of decades of working with movements around the world. Our team saw that the overall global ecosystem lacked an essential part of movement-building—the ability to learn from past movements’ successes and failures and to have the skills to adapt these lessons to local contexts. Simply put, without training and skills, movements struggle to sustain themselves over time.
RHIZE: LET MOVEMENTS LEAD

Throughout the report, we detail the Africa launch of what has become Rhize’s Global Coaching Corps, a coaching network. We forged the network using what has become the Rhize Coaching Model, which comes from our experience and from data and research pointing to the need for new methods for long-term support of movements. The Rhize team, along with community activists, combined our lessons and conclusions about what is needed to accelerate the impact and potential of grassroots movements globally.

For too long, civil society support has centered on formal institutions that, even at the community level, have floundered to create rooted, long-term power and community in ways that address our most deeply rooted challenges. Through learning about our Coaching Model, our goal is to create a seismic shift in our approaches to human rights and international development—one based in a theory of change around building power from the ground up.

In solidarity,

Erin Mazursky, Rhize Founder
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Main Idea
The Coaching Model

The Rhize Coaching Model: Investing in experienced movement organizers in their local context and facilitating their ability to more consistently provide trainings and new tools to movements in their communities creates a force-multiplying effect that enables more grassroots-led movement leaders to gain access to proven skills, strategies, and resources they can apply and adapt to build power through collective action around the issues their communities face.

1. Connect and Train Coaches
Rhize provides up-front investment in coach development in facilitation skills and movement strategy and trains coaches in the Coaching Model’s core components and tools.

2. Movement Support and Partnership
Coaches work in their communities to lead trainings, facilitate workshops and build stronger, long-term partnerships with grassroots movements.

3. Emergent Grassroots Training Capacity
Coaches begin to develop more sustained capacity for training through building new trainers networks, setting up their own training operations and identifying new coaches for Rhize to support.
SECTION 01: THE MAIN IDEA

Impact by the Numbers

- 8 COACHES
- 59 UNIQUE MOVEMENTS SUPPORTED
- 65 NEW TRAINERS DEVELOPED
- 178 FET’S DELIVERED
- 1,676 ACTIVISTS TRAINED
Key Terms

> **Africa Hub:**
The original ideal for building a network of coaches in Africa and setting up some basic operations there was referred to as the Rhize “Africa Hub,” but this idea evolved into simply supporting a coaching network.

> **Africa Coaching Corps:**
The network of Rhize coaches based in Africa are part of the Africa Coaching Corps, which is part of the broader Global Coaching Corps.

> **Coach:**
An experienced movement organizer who creates partnerships with current movement leaders to provide ongoing training, mentorship, and connections to networks and resources which leaders need to achieve their goals.

> **First Exposure Training (FET):**
A short three- to six-hour training on the basics of movement-building that culminates in the development of a simple action plan. The FET serves as a method for Rhize and coaches to more quickly identify movement organizers and with fewer resources than a traditional organizing training.

> **Global Coaching Corps:**
A global network of coaches from all different regions of the world who have been trained and are a part of the Rhize Global Coaching Corps.

> **Mobilization:**
A one-off collective action that involves mass participation that can, but does not necessarily, lead to ongoing participation or long-term struggle.

> **Movement:**
When a community or communities come together to take collective action with shared values against an injustice and build power over time to create transformative, rooted change in a society.

> **Organizers:**
The often-unseen activists behind the scenes who build relationships, leadership capacity, activate people around common challenges to share values, and ultimately “build power out of community.” Organizers are not always the loudest leaders in a movement, but they are the glue, the capacity builders, and the force multipliers who call others to collectively seek justice.

> **Popular education:**
A method of teaching and facilitation in which the trainer uses participatory practices so that the experiences and wisdom of participants draw out the learning goals and grounds participants’ understanding in their own contexts.

> **Sustained, active participation:**
The theory of change that movements will be successful when they have been able to activate people from diverse communities repeatedly over time in order to retain and grow movement membership.

> **Theory of Change:**
An idea based in substantiated principles of how to most effectively create change.
SECTION 01: THE MAIN IDEA

The Potential of Movements

With the emergence of more movements in the last decade than in the previous three combined, we face great potential for stronger, more resilient, and inclusive societies. When successful, nonviolent movements are a potent social and political force that can unexpectedly (mostly because they are underestimated by those in power) tilt the power balance toward the most marginalized communities and make significant changes in society.

Movements are powerful because they are an exercise in understanding, calculating, and building power in a way that challenges perceptions of those in positions of power and influence. New, rooted sources of power ultimately lead to the transformation of oppressive systems. Power comes in many different forms—money, influence, force, positions of authority. Movements deal in the currency of people power. Put simply: the more people who are actively engaged in a movement, the more power the movement has and the more likely its success.

We are seeing an uptick in the number of movements globally because of a growing distrust in the ability of traditional institutions to respond to and meet the needs of citizens. Movements are cropping up to fill the gaps governments and NGOs leave. From the outside, it may look like a spontaneous protest or a one-off action in response to these gaps. But what the public usually perceives as a movement is like the 10 percent of the iceberg that people can see above water.

Always honing their facilitation skills, coaches work together to think through ways to ensure their trainings are inclusive for all.
The Potential of Movements

The remaining 90 percent, the invisible work that most do not see, is where most of the critical work takes place. The visible actions are driven by actions, capacities, and leadership behind the scenes—intricate webs and networks of relationships, partnerships, and a coming together of complementary capacities and resources. A critical underpinning of movement-building is that movements do not just happen. Movement-building involves using strategies and employing skills to recruit, activate, and retain as many people as possible. Ultimately, popular and successful movements must not only recruit large numbers in one-off moments but focus on building their capacity so that they can create active, sustained participation of people from diverse backgrounds, communities, and skillsets. Without this kind of long-term presence from people, movements dissipate. Sustaining active participation requires movements to develop the capacity for leadership, skills, training, and strategic action.

Success rates of movements across the globe are falling, and it is due in no small part to a lack of training, skills, and resources to support the visible action. Rhize’s Coaching Model focuses predominantly on this invisible, behind the scenes work that goes into supporting and sustaining a movement. We are building organizing capacity and helping movement leaders develop skills and strategies to effectively train people in order to sustain and build participation in movements.

These are the foundational components for every movement organizer, but it takes time and support to master them. By creating sustained relationships between coaches and movement organizers, Rhize trying to change the landscape of creating and supporting successful movements.

“Our goal is to create a seismic shift in a broader approach to human rights and international development—one based in a theory of change around building power from the ground-up.”
The Case for Coaching

It is easy to simplify the process of movement-building into frameworks and clear-cut goals like sustained, active participation. However, a movement's development is rarely linear, requiring a support infrastructure to be flexible. In Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan, he details the eight stages of movement development, highlighting that building lasting power through collective action takes time, relationships, alliances, trust, and adjustments to rapidly changing social and political landscapes.

Movements often emerge quickly because of an injustice that incites passionate—commonly young—individuals toward action. They can also emerge slowly—by the coming together of engaged individuals facing longstanding, systemic injustice. However, a movement begins, movement leaders ultimately need training to sustain their efforts. Skills are the most critical long-term investment for movements, and enable organizers to recruit new movement activists, achieve sustained active participation of large numbers, and mobilize resources.

When movements have the capacity to train others, they can recruit more and diverse communities that can then adapt those strategies to local contexts. This means a movement's strength does not lie with one charismatic individual or core group. Power can be built from many different angles. Without training, strategies and tactics can become too centralized and too reliant on a few people to make decisions. Training decentralizes this power.

After years of testing the best ways to provide movements with access to proven skills, strategies, and resources, coaching emerged as the most obvious mechanism to support leaders. It also develops capacity within movements to build their own training and organizing operations, creating a force-multiplying effect. Coaches are movement leaders who have the ability to support and train others in the movements in their communities over the long term.

Through educational support, activists can turn their initial passion into strategy, making the movement efficient and impactful through better targeting, messaging, and building internal support systems for the mobilizing effort. During this educational process, organizers sharpen their skills and strategies—often in a trial by fire—in order to figure out what is most effective for their situation. This requires an iterative process and sustained learning, not a one-time training workshop.

Sustained learning and iteration can also account for the differing needs of movements. While the core principles of sustainable movement-building are universal, the movement's phase of development largely determines which type(s) of support it needs. Without reliable, local presence and knowledge, predicting these needs can prove next to impossible. Movement organizers are used to operating with limited resources and, many of them youth, are organizing and leading movements for the first time, which makes knowing their own exact needs difficult.
THE MODEL

The Components of the Rhize Coaching Model
Components of the Model

Ultimately, our goal became to create a Global Coaching Corps that would connect movement-building coaches around the world so that they can learn from one another in real-time and evolve the practices of movement-building. To build the Corps, the Rhize Coaching Model is a means to develop and connect coaches and build the critical infrastructure currently lacking to help movements gain access to skills and strategic training. The Coaching Model emerged through years of testing different modes of training, coaching, and partnership with movements by which the following principles emerged:

> **Coaches can create a force-multiplying effect:**
Training and investing in local coaches to identify and train other leaders creates a force-multiplying effect so that more people from more movements can be trained. An investment in a few key individuals that are positioned to educate and train movements means that more people gain access to critical strategies, lessons, and skills more quickly and at scale. Local coaching means fewer resources to reach more people that also creates the potential for in-depth relationships.

> **Long-term partnership with movements:**
This is needed because (a) movements build power over time; (b) their development is nonlinear so their needs are therefore changing; and (c) relationships and trust are critical to building successful movements and effective support. With a steady presence of a coach or coaches who are from that community and understand the political, cultural, and social landscape, coaches can build trust, help to identify and elevate needs, and connect movement leaders to new resources and networks.

> **Low resource, shorter trainings will lead to better investments later:**
Investment in one-off trainings puts a lot of pressure on one long training session and requires a concentration of resources that is not scalable. Plus, outsiders do not always know group dynamics and may overlook powerful organizers who may not be as visible. This means valuable skills do not reach the activists with the abilities or capacities to pass that knowledge and training to others. Shorter trainings with a local coach can reach more people and inform where to invest the higher concentration of resources later, which a coach is then positioned to follow up on.

> **Networked, peer-to-peer learning:**
The approaches and techniques for movement-building continue to evolve. Yet, there are proven skills, strategies, and tools that are common in historically successful movements such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa, the Arab Awakening in Tunisia, and the fight for marriage equality in the U.S. Because activists are often new to organizing, having been activated out of a passion for justice and freedom, they tend to enter movement-building without the access to these lessons of past movements. If we can connect movement leaders so that they can learn from one another, we can help movements reduce the duplication of mistakes and work across countries, geographies, and languages to innovate movement-building. Coaches are an entry point to building learning networks around the globe.
Components of the Model

Through coaching, Rhize helps movements build training capacities within movements and to equip movements with critical skills and strategies they can use to build upon existing lessons and innovate movement-building. The Rhize Coaching Model brings together these four components—force-multiplying effect, long-term partnership, shorter trainings for broader reach and peer-to-peer learning—which work together to help movements achieve their goals. From these core needs, emerged the critical tools and components that make up the Rhize Coaching Model.

Components of the Rhize Coaching Model

1. Getting Started: Identifying coaches

2. Building skills: Movement mapping, First Exposure Trainings, popular education, and peer to peer learning—to work together to help

3. Bringing skills to life: Sustained relationships, continued learning and setting up independent training operations

A Coach from Kenya establishes ground rules in an FET with activists from the Anti-Gogo Dam Movement.
SECTION 02: COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

Getting Started

Identifying coaches

Once the local context is established, finding the right movement leaders to enter the coaching ecosystem becomes much easier. The Rhize Coaching Model exists first and foremost to develop a consistent support network for grassroots movements. But, the Coaching Model approach is focused on building training capacity, which creates a force-multiplying effect because through training, coaches identify new trainers or coaches who can receive support from the coaching network and from Rhize. For Rhize's first cohort, we started with activists in our existing network, but we used a set of criteria that we continue to use as we recruit new coaches:

1. Has a track record in local organizing and activism and is respected by one's peers. Has a “movement mindset” in that they understand the importance of building power.

2. Shows signs of being a natural facilitator or trainer, often because they are already doing this work regardless of the support Rhize provides.

3. Has cultural competency and active listening skills so that they can interact with many different groups and types of people. They need to be someone who can be trusted.

4. Understands the importance of inclusivity and does not discriminate against minorities or other marginalized groups, and has a track record of working with and fighting for the rights of these groups. Coaches must be advocates for groups to build inclusively and intersectionality, ensuring marginalized populations—especially women—have seats at the table.

5. Is proficient in English (an initial criteria) so that they can learn directly from Rhize support and speak with other coaches. As the Coaching Corps grows, we hope to create more resources and access points for non-English speakers.

To properly identify coaches, it is critical to understand the movement landscape and the main players in a country, community or issue area. When first starting movement support in a country, it is critical to conduct a movement mapping exercise ahead of time so that one can understand the dynamics between and within different movements so that the right players can be identified as coaches. We have found that through this process and using Rhize’s Movement Mapping Tool, it becomes obvious who the respected, experienced trainers are who have the ability to work across groups and issue areas. Usually these individuals are not the charismatic, well-known activists but oftentimes those who work in the background, training, connecting and supporting others.
Building Skills

Movement mapping, First Exposure Trainings, popular education, and work planning

Core to Rhize’s DNA are four critical tools that we provide to coaches to help them best support movements:

1. Movement mapping
2. First Exposure Training (FET)
3. Popular education facilitation skills
4. Movement support work plans

Once the cohort of coaches is selected, they are brought together at an in-person retreat where Rhize’s trains coaches to use these essential tools and where coaches create their initial bonds.

1. Movement mapping
Movement support should be driven by movements’ needs and grassroots leaders goals. To ensure our coaches put movement leaders at the forefront of their work, they go through a critical movement mapping process. This critical first step to the Rhize Coaching Model is about gathering knowledge of the local context to help ensure long-term success. The process of movement mapping allows one to understand power dynamics on the ground between and within movements, analyzes the political context, brings clarity to existing relationships and networks, and evaluates movements’ strengths and needs. Mapping enables coaches to establish a baseline assessment so that they can design their support and trainings based on need. It also allows movements’ goals to remain front and center. Coaches do not create their own goals for movements, but rather base success on the goals and vision of the grassroots movements themselves.

Rhize developed the Movement Mapping Tool to have two functions. First, it helps to look at a movement landscape overall. Since movements are almost never driven by just one group, it is critical that coaches understand the myriad groups working on a specific issue or in a region. Ensuring coaches have a sense of the variety of groups involved in a movement means they can make strategic choices about how and who to support. This first landscaping phase usually starts with a coach’s analysis of public “grievances” and their corresponding politics around a specific issue. It is critical to understand how movements perceive and are speaking about the injustices they seek to challenge. This analysis is done through interviews with people from different parts of a movement, not just activist groups. With this, the coach produces a “grievance map” so that they can see a movement landscape in terms of how the public understands these issues—not in terms of the groups behind the work. Sometimes institutions looking to support movements overemphasize groups and organizations rather than looking at how different groups play a role in the action, narrative, and capacities of a movement.
Building Skills

Movement mapping, First Exposure Trainings, popular education, and work planning

The second function of the Movement Mapping Tool is assess movements’ strengths and challenges in order to determine how coaches can more specifically support them. To do this, coaches have more in-depth discussions with leaders of specific groups—often with multiple leaders from each group—in order to better understand their relationship to other groups and then to assess their work. The coach seeks to understand movements’ histories, strategies, strengths, and challenges. The assessment is based on seven key indicators:

1. **Movement origins:**
   How a group started and how its leaders approach strategy more broadly.

2. **Movement leadership:**
   This looks at the composition of the group’s leaders. Is there diversity in leadership that represents those most affected by the issue? Do leaders have clear ways of making decisions? How inclusive is this decision-making? How do leaders recruit others into the movement?

3. **Communications and narrative:**
   Narrative is critical to a movement’s development. This looks at how the group crafts messages. Are they building a conversation that is simply against something or one that is for a broader vision/value, the channels by which they are disbursing messages, etc.?

4. **Movement plan or strategy:**
   To assess if the group has a long- or short-term strategy and how they develop strategy. Does the group have a broader strategy? Is this strategy flexible and adaptive to changing political situations? Is this strategy well-understood among group members? What do they want to build toward?

5. **Recent activities:**
   Looking at how active the group currently is, the coach asks questions such as how the group is developing actions and who decides what actions are taken and when? What were the impacts of these actions?

6. **Inclusivity:**
   Without diversity of participation, it is hard for a movement to take off. The coach examines the numbers and types of participants within the group. How expansive is their reach? What training capacities do they have to keep people coming back? Is the group retaining new participants and how?

7. **Safety and security:**
   Increasingly—and depending on geographical or cultural context—the security and safety of the group members must come before anything else. The coach will speak with the group and examine the types of threats they face and the tools they have to manage them.

With this information, the coach will then evaluate the group’s most urgent needs and where they are in their development in order to craft a work plan of support in partnership with the group.
Building Skills

Movement mapping, First Exposure Trainings, popular education, and work planning

2. First Exposure Training
The creation of Rhize’s First Exposure Training (FET) marked a critical shift in how we approached training. True to the coaching principle of needing a short, low-resourced training mechanism, we created the FET to help movement organizers gain access to critical theory and strategies of movement-building and tools so that they can take action directly after the training. The FET is relatively simple to execute and around which other forms of support and involvement can be built based on the needs and opportunities.

The FET is a launching point for the coach to engage with a movement. It is where a coach sets the stage for interactive learning—a participatory workshop in which trainees are engaging with each other and tackling questions relevant to their organizing. The interactive nature of the workshop also helps them become excited about movement-building. The discussions started at these trainings often continue within the group long after the training is over.

Movement organizers attend the FET (usually a half or full day) with the aim of getting them interested and excited about movement-building, helping them understand how this approach is different from other forms of organizing and wielding power, and giving them the necessary skills to make the first step toward mobilizing their communities into a broad-based movement. In order to achieve this, coaches cover the following topics during an FET:

1. **Introduction to movements:**
   - Explains how movements are different from traditional organizations and also from spontaneous protests.

2. **Formulating grievances:**
   - Trainees learn to crystallize what is wrong in the community they are trying to mobilize and how their hardship can be turned into grievances.

3. **Models of power:**
   - Allows the trainees to see how power works in society and how they can influence it, pressure it, or bargain with it in order to achieve their goals.

The FET also creates shared language and movement concepts amongst a coaching cohort, which creates a basis off of which coaches can exchange lessons and relate to one another. Ultimately, the FET helps to center the goal of building sustained, active participation—creating people power to shift power and perceptions of power within a society.

“Skills are the most critical long-term investment for movements and enable organizers to recruit new movement activists, achieve sustained, active participation of large numbers, and mobilize resources.”
SECTION 02: COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

Building Skills

Movement mapping, First Exposure Trainings, popular education, and work planning

3. Popular education
How coaches train is just as important as what they train. Beyond just training content, it is also essential that coaches develop strong skills in training delivery. Popular education means that Rhize trainings are highly interactive. The coach serves as a facilitator rather than the main authority in a space, helping to bring out existing wisdom in the room and offering up additional frameworks in which movements can think about their work. Together, coaches develop fun and engaging activities that help draw out critical concepts around movement-building and share these creative activities with each other, often then integrating these new exercises into each other’s next trainings. Because coaches are not assumed to be the authority on movements who have to have all of the answers and because they adapt their trainings and activities to the group, Rhize’s curriculum and trainings can be adapted across countries and cultural and linguistic contexts.

4. Movement support work plans
Within the first few months of the pilot, Rhize developed a structured work plan for coaches to use to help them think strategically about how they would tailor their support to different groups, based on the findings of their movement maps. These work plans ensure movements’ needs and goals get centered in a coach’s work. Their accountability is to the movements. Work plans account for three months of work in which coaches plan trainings, meetings, workshops with different groups and then assess their work for the following three months. The work plan also helps to create mutual accountability between the coach and Rhize. Rhize can check in with the coach on their progress, and the coach has assurance that Rhize is positioned to support them in the ways that they will need.

At an FET in Kenya, a Coach uses the mattress activity that he designed with other coaches to train activists.
Bringing Skills to Life:

Sustained relationships, continued learning, and setting up local training operations

If Rhize’s model followed a more conventional approach, the first retreat, where Rhize introduced these tools, is where the engagement would have ended. Most training and organizing schools operate either as a place-based school, a fly-in-fly-out model where experts are brought in temporarily or do not teach movement-building strategy. With Rhize’s model, we are dedicated to long-term partnership with coaches so that they can mirror the same with grassroots movements, and this is where the work begins.

Once coaches are back in their local contexts, they begin executing their work plan with continued support from Rhize and from each other. Coaches have built relationships in their cohort, allowing them to informally share best practices, seek support and guidance, and celebrate successes in between official Rhize learning opportunities. Throughout the engagement with coaches, Rhize facilitates formal opportunities for connection and learning, including global gatherings and retreats as well as online webinars to deepen their knowledge and skills.

Using their movement maps to help strategize how they will support the movements they have been connected to, coaches develop a work plan to help them plan their training and facilitation engagements over a three-month period. In this way, their work will directly reflect the needs and goals of their movement partners.

As coaches trained different movement groups, they began to gain more respect and traction amongst other movements, groups and NGOs working in similar spaces, often being asked to then step in and provide these trainings to new groups. One of the last steps of the Rhize Coaching Model that we had not initially built into the first pilot (but had hoped would become part of the cycle of coach development) was coaches’ ability to set up their own training organizations or operations. Within the first year, 62% of the coaches either had their own training “shop,” where they received funding for their work outside of Rhize’s initial support. Within the second year, this number would become 100%.
How We Built It
SECTION 03: HOW WE BUILT IT

How We Built It

Before May 2017, when we launched our pilot, Rhize had tested our approach in 10 countries around the world—India, The Gambia, the Philippines, Bahamas, Cyprus, Kenya, Uganda, the U.S., Colombia, Nigeria—and researched movement support in an additional six—Burma, Venezuela, Sudan, Russia, Ukraine, and Egypt. Rhize had been doing work in most of these countries already, and could tap into existing networks of activists, organizers, donors, and other allies who had a presence there.

Africa Coaching Corps was essentially a pilot program for putting our lessons to the test and develop the Rhize Coaching Model. Ultimately, we sought to create a network of coaches that would become part of an overall Global Coaching Corps—people who were involved in amplifying and improving movements’ impacts and outcomes. In parallel, we also tested this same model in the U.S. at a smaller scale, training five coaches across the U.S. through virtual trainings, who then supported grassroots community groups. Here we will focus on our more intensive work in Africa. By focusing on one region, we could see how coaches could connect with each other, understand the kind of operations we might need in order to build and scale “hubs” around the world, and test our materials and tools for coach development. And, we could compare this to our results with the U.S.

From the key components of the Coaching Model, we created a phased approach to developing the core training infrastructure that became the Rhize Coaching Corps:
The African Coaching Corps

Phase 1: Connect and train coaches
In this phase, Rhize does a heavy, up-front investment in coach development in facilitation skills, movement strategy and learning how to use our core components and tools.

- Coaches identified.
- Coaches learn common frameworks of movement-building through foundational tools.
- A regional network of movement coaches built on trust, respect, and learning is catalyzed and connected through retreats, global gatherings and other organic opportunities.
- Coaches map movements in their countries to guide forms of training and support.
- Coaches provide FETs (basic skills) to broad range of movement organizers and leaders.

Phase 2: Movement Support and Partnership
In this phase, coaches go into their communities to lead trainings, facilitate workshops and build stronger, long-term partnerships with grassroots movements.

- Ongoing learning and exchange happens among coaches and between Rhize.
- Rhize continues support of coaches through ongoing virtual trainings to deepen knowledge and help them gain additional tools to provide more strategic support to movements.
- After doing a series of FETs, coaches provide more in-depth workshops to movements after having identified and built relationships with leaders and organizers.

Phase 3: Emergent Grassroots Training Capacity
In this phase, coaches begin to develop more sustained capacity for training through building new trainers networks, setting up their own training operations and identifying new coaches for Rhize to support.

- Learn how to give a Training of Trainers (ToT) for the FET
- Identify new trainers and coaches and train them with Phase 1 tools to start scaling support work
- Work to develop coach autonomy for training and resource support beyond Rhize

Each coach moved through the model in an effort to establish long-term progressive change. The coaches spent the first year engaging with movements, conducting FETs, providing support and advice, and monitoring how these movements progressed. Coaches expanded their own knowledge in two directions: First, at the strategic level support, acquiring the ability to conduct trainings that cover campaign development, strategic planning, branding, and other higher-level movement-building aspects. Second, we focused on a training of trainers, the ability to recruit, train, and manage a group of trainers to expand their reach. This process started in the second quarter of 2018 and has continued throughout 2019, as soon as the coaches conducted enough FETs and engaged with enough movements so that they had a basis to build on. For some, they are already running their own training organizations. Depending on their development process, it took some coaches a bit longer to develop the skills to provide strategic level support to movements. As they train movements, they are also recruiting and training enough trainers to help them conduct FETs and other trainings. In sum, they are building movements’ capacities to train and support new leadership and participation. This first year was important to create a foundation for the African Coaching Corps.
Phase 1:
Connect and train coaches

Getting started: Identifying coaches and hiring for the Africa Hub
As a pilot, it was important to build the African Coaching Corps with coaches from multiple countries in order to forge a network of peers who could learn, exchange ideas, and further their work together. We had developed coaches individually as we had received one-off funding opportunities in singular countries, but now it was time to observe the impacts of more systematically connecting coaches across contexts. To build off of the existing work and networks created over the previous three years (while keeping the pilot’s still somewhat focused scope), Rhize brought together eight coaches from six countries in eastern, central, and southern Africa, including Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The selection process for the African Coaching Corps lasted for six months and was completed by April 2017 so that the first gathering of the coaches could happen in May 2017. Two countries were represented by a pair of coaches, and one coach from the Anti-Apartheid Movement came to serve as an advisor. In most cases, there was a single coach coming from that country. The initial grant covered four countries, but we were able to include two more as we saw this as an important investment in the Coaching Corps.

We looked for coaches with a variation of skills, experiences, and identities. This diversity was central to making the model robust and scalable. Coaches ranged from ages 27 to 57 and had been activists anywhere from five to 40 years. Coaches were evenly distributed between male and female. We found that when people with different skill and experience levels work together in the same team, it enhances the interactive learning since more experienced coaches would interact with those who have more recent experience.

Initially, we left room for Rhize to explore the possibility of setting up more formal operations in the region as a training “hub.” We had one senior-level Training Director, who led coach training and skills development based in Nairobi, Kenya. We hired another staff person to serve as the Hub Manager, who would help run the more operational side of the work. This person worked closely with our Training Director to help coaches track their progress and incorporate learnings from trainings.

The Launch: Our First Coaches Retreat
The initial gathering of the coaches was in Nairobi in May 2017. Bringing all of the coaches together, the retreat served as the kickoff for the first year of our coach development process and the first formal event for our Global Coaching Corps. The main goals were simple:

- Create a foundation of trust and culture of learning among the coaches
- Master the Rhize foundational content (FET) and training techniques
- Set up structures for coaches to establish deeper working relationships and capacities to provide ongoing support to movements in their countries.
Phase 1: 
Connect and train coaches

The five-day gathering helped to do all of that and more. During the retreat, coaches were put through the paces: experiencing an FET, learning the material for the FET, and learning how to effectively deliver an FET. We discussed privilege and intersectional approaches to organizing, and coaches were introduced to more activity-based methods of training. Coaches also came with initial maps of the movement landscape in their countries so that other coaches could learn from them. To build trust, we led participatory exercises around nonviolent discipline, leadership, and security, and created time for discussion and bonding. There was also discussion and training on security protocols. At the end of the retreat, Rhize worked with coaches to start establishing clear community norms and next steps.

At the retreat, coaches learn about popular education techniques to ensure FETs are delivered in participatory and dynamic ways, which is a departure from conventional front-of-the-room training models.

The final element of the initial retreat is building a work plan based off of each coach’s movement map. Having coaches sketch out their goals with each other keeps individual coaches accountable while also giving them agency and ownership over their work. The goals are also then inherently rooted in a local context, which could vary from country to country.

It was clear that the retreat helped to spark immediate connections among the coaches. While coaches had been a part of activist networks before, Rhize helped create a learning environment more focused on training and long-term power and relationship development. Coaches bonded over their passions, not just for justice and movement-building, but also for training and supporting others. This is something that felt different from other spaces. Coaches continued to communicate via a digital platform in the following months, and joined periodic calls with Rhize staff and more regular calls with Africa-based staff who were tracking their work. Our Training Director discussed their upcoming and past trainings with them as well as their changing political contexts and how that affects movement strategy. We also held brainstorming sessions for new activities around core concepts and 12 additional weeks of webinar and online educational sessions to continue coach learning. The Hub Manager helped to connect coaches and the global Rhize team. For example, if a coach needed access to a training around peacebuilding or if Rhize found a funder interested in supporting trainings in a specific country, the Hub Manager helped connect them.

Coaches were able to grow together into a solid functioning group with deep bonds. This kind of communication supported coaches through informal channels, and acted as a learning bridge between official, in-person gatherings.

“The establishment of an autonomous, regional coaching network would enable stronger regional solidarity.”
SECTION 03: THE AFRICAN COACHING CORPS

Phase 1:
Connect and train coaches

Putting skills to the test: Coaches continue in local contexts
Opportunities for informal connection among coaches was important, but so was the formal role Rhize played to catalyze relationships amongst the coaches. Rhize created two additional opportunities for skills and bonds to grow with the Global Gathering in November 2017 and our second Coaches Retreat in May 2018.

Held in South Africa, the main goal of the Global Gathering was to facilitate connection between international organizers and the coaches who were part of the Africa Coaching Corps. Experienced organizers from different movements around the world—such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, community rights in Mexico, the democracy movement in Azerbaijan, and the fight for racial justice in the U.S.—joined members of the African Coaching Corps to double down on new facilitation skills, exchange experiences and knowledge, and help to collectively discuss how to build this more global community.

In addition to opportunities created by Rhize, Rhize also sponsored coaches to attend regional activist conferences together such as the annual Zinduka Festival. Some coaches also found their own resources to bring another coach to their home country to help them lead a training or a strategy session.

“Coaches are an entry point to building learning networks around the globe.”

A Rhize Coach from Mexico participates in a group brainstorm on how to build a more inclusive global learning network at the Global Gathering.
Phase 2: Movement support and partnership

Putting skills to the test: Coaches continue in local contexts
Following the initial gathering, coaches used the Movement Mapping Tool to redo their initial movement maps of their communities and then used this information to develop their own work plans. The mapping process helped coaches develop closer relationships with the movements with which they were involved. Then, with Rhize’s work-planning tool, coaches created one- to three-month plans on how they could support these movements through training and facilitation. The goals of the coaches were guided by the goals and the challenges of the movements, which, in turn, became the goals and impacts for Rhize. By design, the work plan would be updated monthly and then revisited every quarter with the understanding that circumstances can change for a whole host of reasons. The work plans served a few purposes:

1. They helped to track coach activities and movement impacts so that coaches, Rhize, and the movements we were supporting could better understand how our actions might affect results.

2. They helped raise challenges movements were facing so that we could help coaches adjust and hone methods of support.

3. They flagged potential needs of movements so that Rhize can connect coaches and/or movements to new resources to meet those needs (whether a new training, a partner organization, a funding opportunity, etc).

The implementation of work plans took place largely between September 2017 and April 2018, depending on the level of preparedness of the coach. Those with experience were able to conduct training relatively quickly and with ease, while others had to build their connections, reputation, and skills. The more experienced group of coaches had existing contacts and, in some cases, even had consulting arrangements with some organizations so they could use FETs in already planned workshops. Other coaches worked their way up, first conducting single sessions at existing meetings where they would be given limited time, and then later—as they gained recognition and as their reputation was being built—they started conducting day-long FETs.

Ultimately, supporting coaches to develop long-term relationships with movements so that they can not only meet needs but help to predict them proved critical. The work plans helped to do this and helped convey to movement leaders as well that coaches were here for the long haul, increasing trust and openness for support. The FETs created a critical foundation so that coaches began to identify groups they should come back to support through more workshops and trainings. Candidates for new trainers emerged so that coaches do not have to do all of the FETs themselves but rather start to support others to impart these skills, which resulted in a cascading number of new actions by groups.

As coaches worked with movements over time, movement organizers began to understand how they can use coaches as a resource and how to surface new training and support needs. This created a stronger cycle of support that allowed coaches to work with movements more consistently over time to build their capacities and abilities to make strategic decisions at key moments rather than calling upon the coach in a crisis moment, when it may be too late to give them the support they needed.
Phase 3:
Emergent grassroots training capacity

The Second Coach Retreat
The second African coaches retreat in Kenya acted in a similar fashion as the Global Gathering. It was an opportunity for connection, reflection, and growth. This retreat focused on trainings for more in-depth movement strategy work. We also brought in a few new potential coaches from Nigeria, South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda. Our original coaches learned how to execute a training of trainers (ToT), and taught these new coaches how to institute an FET. In this way, the coaches began to repeat Phase 1 of the Coaching Model and allow the cycle to start again.

Creating New Grassroots and Regional Training Capacities
Over the course of the year, some coaches had managed to grow or set up their own local training operations. At the second retreat, these coaches led a facilitated discussion about how other coaches can set up their own independent, training organizations in order to open them up to more consistent and sustainable resources. Many of the coaches either managed to set up their own training operations by the end of this first year or strengthen the training organizations they already had. For a few others who were less established, they were well on their way to creating their own, independent training structures, but it would take another year of Rhize’s support to do so.

By the end of the three phases, coaches shared a deep trust with each other as well as strong regional ties, and at the second retreat, they decided to form their own autonomous regional coaching network, separate from the African Coaching Corps. This would enable stronger regional solidarity. It meant that Rhize would continue to work as a connector, catalyst and training/education organization while ensuring grassroots leaders could dictate the structure and nature of their work together. In other words, we were able to democratize the leadership of the network so that the work was truly led by those we sought to serve.

We went into this pilot knowing we wanted to create a community that put grassroots leaders at the fore. We knew the process of what needed to happen, but we were not clear on the structure and still had questions around how to make this work sustainable. The obvious outcome—giving coaches tools and letting them decide how they want to use them—happened. We are proud to have been able to catalyze and support these relationships and will continue to help foster them and grow but not be the network.

In terms of Rhize’s infrastructure to train and support coaches, it was also clear by the time of the second retreat that it was not necessary to set up an official “hub”. At the beginning of this process, we thought that Rhize might support the creation of regional coaching hubs around the world. What we realized is that the strength of the work was in the relationships among coaches and the learning that happened—not in a formal operation. In addition, the idea of Rhize continuing to wield resources for a formal operation proved both unrealistic and not strategic. Rhize’s impacts had been in training and supporting coaches and helping to catalyze the network. We realized this was a critical role to play in and of itself and the lack of operational capacity meant opening up space for coaches to lead the way.
SECTION 04: IMPACTS & LEARNINGS

Impacts by Numbers

In its first 18 months of existence, the African Coaching Corps, as part of our broader Global Coaching Corps was quite successful. One of the coaches from northern Africa brought in an additional coach by the time of the second convening, and with nine coaches in five countries, we were able to:

- **8 COACHES**
- **59 UNIQUE MOVEMENTS SUPPORTED**
- **65 NEW TRAINERS DEVELOPED**
- **178 FET’S DELIVERED**
- **1,676 Activists Trained**

The force-multiplying effect is evident in these numbers. If the goal is to reach and make accessible movement-building training to as many activists as possible—knowing that skills and strategies help to ensure more sustained participation in movements (and thus more power)—then we count this as a successful venture.
Case Studies

Numbers are only a small portion of the story, as training is ultimately about helping movements achieve their goals and being more impactful. Some of these impacts will not be known for years given the long-term nature of movement-building. But, the following case studies illustrate some of the real-time impacts we saw in the work. (Note: Most of our case studies are from Kenya and Uganda, in part because that is where the majority of investment in our coaching went but also in part because of security concerns in other countries where we work.)

**Case 1 & 2**  
Shifting Movement Strategy—Save Nairobi National Park Coalition and the Anti-Gogo Dam Movement

**Case 3**  
Movement Emergence—Women for Uganda

**Case 4**  
Creating New Parallel Institutions—A social justice centre in Nairobi

**Case 5**  
Unleashing Creative Tactics—Grassroots Women Initiative Network - Kenya

**Case 6**  
Force-Multiplying Effect—The Case of training of trainers in Central Africa

**Case 7**  
Applying New Learning—The Case of Protests in Central Africa

**Case 8**  
Building Transnational Solidarity—The Case of the #FreeBobiWine Campaign

Coaches from DRC, Kenya and Uganda show the solidarity they have built at the end of the first retreat.
CASE STUDY 1 — A CHANGE IN MOVEMENT STRATEGY

The Save Nairobi National Park Coalition

Part of the work of coaches is to help movements use successful frameworks to be more strategic in their actions through a different analysis of power. The Nairobi National Park is a large nature preserve just outside of the city’s center, home to diverse animal species and protected wildlife. The Save Nairobi National Park Coalition emerged about a year before the African Coaching Corps launched when the Kenyan government decided to route transport infrastructure projects (roads and railways) through the park, a protected nature preserve. Before working with a Rhize coach, the group used litigation and garnered news attention in the wildlife conservation sphere to fight what would be a disruptive and damaging project. The coalition successfully brought together established NGOs, established a clear vision, and was passionate about the conservation of biodiversity of the park and the national heritage it espouses.

Eventually, they secured court orders against the government, which were promptly ignored. The coalition realized the institutional battle couldn’t be won if the government wasn’t playing by the rules and avoiding institutions. Their skills in formulating policy, lobbying, and advocacy were insufficient, but turning these organizations into entities that could mobilize a population proved to be a major challenge.

This is when the coach started engaging the group to offer support. The coach conducted an FET, followed by a series of facilitated meetings, in which he helped the coalition develop a strategic plan and a stakeholders map. In the course of his relationship with the coalition, the coach presented tools that helped them identify, understand, and engage different stakeholders, thereby increasing public support for preservation of the park, where institutional protection was faltering. As with many advocacy groups focused on working through government channels, the major challenge is that traditional organizations are ill-equipped to mobilize.

In collaboration with the coalition, the coach proposed expanding the coalition to include groups capable of mobilizing people, forming a broader alliance that would not be solely focused on saving the park but would also include issues affecting these communities which are in alignment with the coalition’s original vision. Directly after the FET, which helps to formulate an action plan, the coalition held their first public protest. In the litigation work they had been doing, the group had managed to attract attention from media outlets covering wildlife and conservation, reaching an audience that already agreed with them. But, their more public efforts brought mainstream media coverage and a broader audience that they had not had before, which helped bring on more effective public pressure.

The coalition continued to expand the types of actions they took in order to build greater participation and awareness about their work. They moved from working primarily through official channels to holding more public events and campaigns in order to mobilize local communities and the general public. The Coalition used tactics such as a series of petitions and court cases, but also street protests, talks, workshops, and organizing local communities in the park’s vicinity. Public pressure has become the ‘watchdog agency’ for the Park. While the railroad did get built, it never became functional. Since then, campaigns have died down, but the Coalition remains ready to act should they need to once again.
The Anti-Gogo Dam Movement (Kenya)

For years, activists from communities around the Lake Victoria basin in Kenya’s southwestern border have been fighting the construction of a dam that would displace them, and they were losing the struggle. The group was part of the Kenyan coach’s movement map, and he had been in contact with them for years. Before the coach engaged them, they tried lobbying the local government and fighting the construction of the dam using official channels, but to no avail. After the coach organized an FET, the movement held a series of community meetings and led protests and other public actions to pressure the local government. With more public support and more people actively engaged in the cause, they managed to physically block the construction of the dam for one month. In the end, they could not sustain the blockade, and activists either fell off of the blockade or were bought off one-by-one. Villagers involved in protests started moving out of the area. Ultimately, the support from the coach came too late in the process, and activists never got the full range of resources needed to sustain their efforts. We offer this example as a window into what is possible when support is longer-term and can come at earlier stages of a movement. Movement-building can only work as a long-term solution, not as a short-term mobilization.

“Movement-building can only work as a long-term solution, not as a short-term mobilization.”
CASE STUDY 3 — MOVEMENT EMERGENCE

Women for Uganda

Often groups take action in reaction to an injustice and find that, with a bit more strategy, they can work together to effect more systemic change. Through deeper conversations and the opportunity for space to think and create, coaches found that communities could find common cause and unite around shared values.

Our work in Uganda was part of an early pilot project in 2015. Women for Uganda emerged in mid-2016 after a failed attempt by a collection of broader activist groups working on a range of issues to spark national action for “democracy” in the lead-up to their presidential elections earlier that year. After the election, the group hit a wall. They needed to devise new strategies and, as a few of the female activists discovered, the broad change would never come if Uganda’s women were not organized.

Women began organizing public actions, first to hold Parliament accountable to a bill that promised free sanitary pads to all women across the country. The Parliament had failed to execute on this legislation, and some of the women of this initial group began bringing together women from diverse communities and identities—Catholics, Muslims, agnostics, rural, urban, students, mothers, lesbian, and transgender women. Usually these women would have little common cause to organize, but as one activist put it, “We all menstruate. We have common interest. Let’s put the other differences aside.” Once women began working together, other organizing and relationship-building became more natural.

Later that year, when a new bill was presented in Parliament to amend the maximum age that a candidate can run for president, they held a large prayer vigil in front of Parliament as the Women in White, in which 24 women were arrested but over a hundred more joined them with music, drums, and prayers outside of the jail where they were held until they were released some hours later. Their diversity proved to be their strength, as the government could not blame one group for the action. The public was inspired by what appeared to be a different kind of public action—not an angry protest or appeals purely through official channels, but something others could identify with and see themselves doing.

One of the women activists became a part of our initial coaches cohort in 2017. After this, she doubled down on her efforts in organizing women and conducted more than a dozen trainings for numerous activists of the loosely defined “women’s movement.” The coach trained both the leadership and common activists at various occasions, including trainings during already scheduled meetings. These short trainings excited activists about movement-building while they started to devise a longer-term strategy. As women became more confident in their ability to participate in nonviolent actions, they were able to inspire others to join as well. As a result of these engagements, the group started organizing monthly public actions and continued to hold prayer vigils with the purpose of keeping people involved, having public presence as the group hashes out the plan. The strategy team entrusted with devising the plan meets once a week and would potentially complete the plan of action in the near future.

Women for Uganda, as it is loosely called, emerged not through a perfect strategy but through a focus on organizing—bringing diverse stakeholders together and engineering creative actions that build sustained participation. Strategies and movement identities take time to develop, and it is often only through action and trial and error that a clear long-term grand strategy can form. As the coach continued to do trainings, she started to see opportunities to train new trainers in new communities, especially in universities. Through her work, she has found opportunities to amplify her work, garnered a higher profile, and, at the time of this writing, received full funding to expand her training and organizing work, an organization called Rhizing Women.
CASE STUDY 4 — CREATING NEW PARALLEL INSTITUTIONS

A Social Justice Centre in Nairobi (Kenya)

Long-term solutions typically take the form of parallel institutions that serve as a way for the movement to maintain its presence in the local community to organize occasional campaigns without needing a high-level involvement, which can make movements susceptible to attrition and burnout.

Sometimes a corollary and sometimes a direct result of movement-building, parallel institutions fill the gaps left by formal institutions. Often these groups develop extra-institutional approaches such as a coop or innovative access to public utilities that more effectively support a community. These methods are frequently so effective that formal institutions adopt them or integrate them into current systems, which is another reason why movements can be so powerful. They create truly grassroots solutions that better serve the community more efficiently. In other instances, new organizations arise to provide spaces and services that formal institutions do not.

In this case, new institutions formed through a movement born around a so-called social justice centre operating in one of the informal urban settlements of Nairobi. The centre’s mission is to protect human rights, and members have done projects on accountability, extrajudicial killings (a form of police impunity), but also on a number of environmental issues—such as creating drainage systems, access to hot showers, and designating and maintaining their own public parks—that residents of these settlements face.

The coach had previously worked with the group and knew their needs, especially after the movement mapping. Primarily, the group had formed to react to injustices as they happened. For example, they would protest after each instance of an extrajudicial killing. But this reactive mode was taking a toll on their sustainability, and activists faced burnout and threats from the police.

The coach provided an FET, which leads to the development of a short-term action plan for the group. After the training, they began more fully engaging with the coach and organized a joint event with the police in order to bridge the divide and potentially fraternize with them. This allowed the group to add another tactic to their playbook. Taking more action together led to greater trust and the creation of a body of a half dozen leaders that meets regularly to plan actions, thus moving away from a reactive into a more proactive way of organizing.

With more successful actions and greater synergy, they helped people in their extended networks copy their model, resulting in another five social justice centres in other informal settlements. This allowed for the group to set up a parallel structure embedded in the local community to support organizing over a longer period of time, which are key parts to solving issues of burnout and attrition.

Creative Tactics
Oftentimes activist groups or movements emerge out of reaction to a crisis. Coaches help to create convening space in which the group can explore the potential to continue their efforts in more strategic, creative ways. Through space, facilitation, and guided questions, coaches support communities to discover additional pathways ways to fight for their rights and additional leverage points.
Grassroots Women Initiative Network (GRAWINET), Kenya

GRAWINET emerged organically after a local official was implicated in the extrajudicial killing of a woman in an informal settlement in Nairobi. The group organized a vigil for the victim of the murder, but at the same time, a number of existing NGOs initially slow to respond to the crisis organized a protest. The competing events caused the effort to look uncoordinated and created undue competition between the groups, described by one of the participants as "between human rights defenders and human rights workers." More importantly, it killed the potential for public pressure to lead to tangible results.

The coach started engaging with the group around the time they were organizing and protesting extrajudicial killing. The coach conducted an FET and interacted with GRAWINET members in different forums, including meeting them frequently in meetings, gatherings, and various events over the course of a few months. Over time, the women of GRAWINET realized that they had to expand their message and their focus to better represent the concerns of other women in their neighborhoods.

As they started speaking to other women about the grievances and issues most directly affecting them, GRAWINET realized they had common challenges, particularly when it came to access to potable water. They were all using a common borehole and knew it was not safe, but every time they asked the local government to take action, the government insisted the water was safe. With another one-day FET, through the action planning process, the group realized they needed to find another way to test the water. They worked to build community support for an independent investigation of the quality of their local water supply, and the coach connected them to an environmental organization that had a laboratory to conduct the test. Sure enough, the lab found the water was not fit for human consumption. The women went back to the local government with these credible results, which forced action. Soon after, local officials shut the borehole. While the struggle continues for these communities, their collective actions facilitate a team spirit and help their movement craft an identity. They continue to look for ways to catalyze change outside of traditional channels, and they have more leverage for collaboration with traditional NGOs. The coach believes that this will lead to more victories if the pressure is sustained.

SOURCE:
https://twitter.com/grawinet/status/1132219176829051527?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
Training of trainers in Central Africa

Over the course of our first year with the African Coaching Corps, Rhize supported coaches who were a part of a grassroots democracy movement in a central African country. Initially, the movement started outside of the capital and fought for basic services like access to water. Over the course of five years, the movement developed their own training, values, common vision, and strategy. They were truly one of the most organized and strategic movements we have had the privilege of partnering with. The movement was highly decentralized across the entire country and had leadership in every province, not just one core group of leaders in the capital as many others do.

After a few years of building up their base and operations, their numbers stagnated, and they were not bringing in enough new members to scale the movement and build momentum in the ways they needed. The coaches brought the movement’s training team to Rhize to talk through their current strategies and look at how they might overcome some of these challenges. After a two-and-a-half-day facilitated workshop, the group was able to see that they needed easier ways for people to enter their movement beyond the eight-week training program they had been running. They went back and updated their strategy to include a plan to build a robust training infrastructure that would be able to bring in new members more quickly. The group also realized they needed to focus on recruiting women trainers if they wanted to ensure their movement leadership reflected the people they sought to include. They brought back forty trainers from almost every province in the country and worked with Rhize to train them in their strategy and in action planning and recruitment skills. These trainers went on to do 120 trainings in the following six months, reaching 800 new people. Before May 2017, this group had almost 300 active participants who came back regularly. A year later, they had almost 1,500 active members.
The Case of Protests in Central Africa

Perhaps some of the most meaningful impacts of the first cohort of the African Coaching Corps could be seen in the connections and support the coaches showed each other.

A regular coach presence meant that the movements they supported looked to them for support, advice, and tools as needs arose. It also meant that coaches had a solid understanding of each other’s political contexts and could give more useful advice and support at key moments. Over the course of the pilot year for the African Coaching Corps, several opportunities like this came up, but one stood out in particular. In one country where we were supporting coaches, mass protests broke out in an escalating political standoff between the ruling party and everyday citizens. As the protests unfolded, coaches in Africa as well as in other parts of the world were able to offer tools, advice, solidarity, and support. One coach from Ukraine gave advice about how to think about shaping their message during this critical time. Another coach from the U.S. sent over a field guide for how they trained people en masse during Occupy Wall Street. Meanwhile, coaches in Africa helped amplify the social media coming out of the country and helped ensure the right messages proliferated. They shared what they had done in similar situations and connected them to lawyers, security specialists, and other resources they might need.

Ultimately, the coaches, along with the movements they had been working with, created a space for protesters to discuss their vision for their country, brought new members into the movement, and had the capacities to train these new people long after the hype died down. While the political situation in this country remains tenuous, movements from all parts of the country are more connected, unified, and clearer on the ultimate vision they seek for each other and their future.

“Movements from all parts of the country are more connected, unified, and clearer on the ultimate vision they seek for each other and their future.”
The #FreeBobiWine Campaign

The 2018 parliamentary elections in Uganda proved critical. They took place in the wake of growing national dissent for the Age Limit Bill in which Parliament would amend the constitution to raise the age limit for a presidential candidate so that President Museveni, who has held that title since 1986, could run for another term in 2021 at the age of 77. Opposition groups looked stronger than ever to take over a more significant part of Parliament. Bobi Wine, a beloved musician in the country and throughout the region, decided to run for Parliament under the banner of an opposition party to Museveni’s ruling National Resistance Movement party.

In August 2018, Wine and Museveni found themselves campaigning in the same town, a stronghold of the opposition. People in the town threw rocks at the president’s car, which led to clashes between police and protesters, ending with Bobi Wine’s driver being shot dead and Wine arrested. He was released from jail a week later and then rearrested for treason, suffering severe injuries during the weeks he was in prison.

Meanwhile, the message of #FreeBobiWine took social media by storm. Ugandans protested for weeks until Wine was released, but Ugandans were not the only ones to take to the streets. Activists in surrounding countries, but particularly Kenya also staged protests outside their own state houses and local squares, some led by Rhize coaches. When asked why he felt that Kenyans were responding so strongly to the plight of Bobi Wine, one coach said, “I think it’s clear to Kenyans that if the Ugandan government can get away with this kind of impunity, our government will soon think the same.” People across the region saw the connection and felt personal investment in Bobi Wine’s release. The story ultimately made international media that shined a spotlight on the corruption in Uganda. Now, there is a cross-border movement that continues with Ugandan and Kenyan activists working together to fight corruption, with a deeper connection to the politics that connect them.

One of the hundreds of memes that got produced during the #FreeBobiWine campaign (c) Peril of Africa
LOOKING BACK

What We Learned

5
SECTION 05: WHAT WE LEARNED

Key Lessons

Looking back after almost two years since this effort was conceived, we can draw a lot of valuable lessons, assess the overall effectiveness of the model, define areas of improvement, and make certain adjustments in order to make the model perform better in the future.

Our measure of success is based on the strengthening and changes seen in the movements we worked with, based on their own goals. We witnessed different behaviors and outcomes of movements, stronger relationships, and connections. Our goals around coaching came secondary, but it is clear through our work that an investment in coaches means an investment in movements in ways that we never could have predicted at the beginning.

Ultimately, the coaching model worked. What we learned was more about Rhize’s role and how to strengthen the model. Now it is about doubling down on what we did best while looking at what we could improve in the future.

1. **The Numbers:**
   A Force-Multiplying Effect: Our ingoing hypothesis was that with an investment in coaches and training, Rhize will be able to reach more people in more movements. With greater access to training and skills, we can expect greater movement outcomes. Many of the impacts we had and continue to have on movements will unfold over the course of months and years, but we are proud of the force-multiplying effect of our model that started with just eight coaches but ultimately reached close to 1700 activists.

2. **Movement Outcomes:**
   Numbers are great, but we are under no illusions that numbers alone can tell the story of the impacts of the African Coaching Corps. Investing in coaches has solely been about furthering movement capacity, tangible wins, and more sustained, active participation in movements. Our case studies show impacts within so many movements that coaches supported and will continue to support. Because movement-building is a long-term proposition, the long-term coaching presence is important. As we explain in the case study of the Anti-Gogo Dam Movement in Kenya, movements have setbacks. It takes trial and error, and there are also many conditions that cannot be fully predicted: the changing of a government crackdown on civilians, increased risks in security, etc. Our hope is that long-term partnership with movements means that coaches can help movements better strategize and predict these events before they happen so that they can be better prepared or, at the very least, so that they have resources and other networks that can support them. In the case studies we highlight, the critical changes were activists’ understanding of their own power and how to build collective power together. Our model and methodology focuses on changing perceptions of power so that when official avenues fail, activists have the abilities to turn outward, toward others to build public support and execute more creative, nonviolent actions. These are outcomes we hope to further.
Key Lessons

3. **Movement Mapping Proved Critical:**
   Funders, individuals, and other NGOs often ask us what success looks like or what we want movements to achieve. Our answer is simple: we define success according to how movements define success, which looks different with each movement. In order to develop a baseline understanding of our goals—which are the coaches' goals and the movements' goals—the movement mapping process proved critical. Coaches came to understand how they can support groups and processes that already exist and help groups come to their own decisions about what they should do together. As we saw in the case of GRAWINET, the Social Justice Centre in Nairobi, and Women for Uganda, the groups' goals changed over time because the more they worked together, the more possibilities opened up. Coaches often served the purpose of simply creating the space for groups to strategize, create vision, and find common cause.

4. **Peer-to-Peer Learning Is a Must:**
   Connection among coaches is one of our most welcome results. We knew that Rhize's resources alone would not be enough. Our curriculum is based on research and experiences with successful movements from around the globe, but movements must evolve in the way they work and continue to push the learning curve forward as activists face new challenges. Their ability to learn from each other, mentor each other, and form lasting bonds sparked transnational outcomes and acts of solidarity that we never could have predicted would happen so quickly.

5. **Invest in Coaches and Networks, Not Hubs:**
   We realized that there was no real need for an official "hub," staffed by an individual. We instead invested time and resources into ensuring coaches built relationships with each other and stayed in communication. In the future, we will look to make even deeper investments in coaches and their lateral relationships.

As we expand the Coaching Corps in numbers and by regions, we will use the Movement Mapping Tool and our coach criteria to identify those who share a passion for movements and training. Through a combination of in-person retreats and ongoing virtual communication, the networks prove more powerful (and more sustainable) than brick-and-mortar operations. But as we saw with the U.S. Hub, solely bringing folks together virtually did not have the same impacts. That said, instead of hiring an outside person to staff the Coaching Corps, we will work with coaches to identify one of them who can be a liaison between the other coaches and Rhize so that Rhize can be more responsive and coach oriented. Just as movements must be led by those most affected by the injustice, so must networks be run and represented by the people for whom they are created.

6. **Learning Who Is a Coach:**
   The coaches we identified for the first cohort of the Coaching Corps proved to embody all that we were looking for: experienced activists with a passion for training and ability to support and facilitate others. At our second Coaches Retreat in May 2018, we invited a few more potential coaches to join us for one of the days. What we learned was that there are many amazing, courageous activists out in the world, but not everyone is meant to be a trainer, and not everyone is an organizer (someone who can recruit and bring more people into a movement). Activists play many essential roles in movements: as human rights defenders, tacticians, journalists, charismatic spokespeople, fundraisers, etc. But not all are trainers, and those who benefit most from Rhize's support and from the network are those who are natural educators and organizers.
Key Lessons

Coaches Who Have Independent Operations Have More Sustainable Results:
It also became clear that coaches who were able to set up their own training operations were the most successful. This allows for the coach to have autonomy, outside of Rhize, and makes it easier for them to secure their own funding for their work. For some organizations, this means an exercise in humility. We often expect formal associations with brands or institutions. For some coaches, a formal association with a global organization helped build their reputation and garner resources. For others, coaches were safer and their work more effective if perceived as solely local actors. Rhize acts as an intermediary between tools and movements and builds the capacities necessary for movement organizers to continue and augment the work they were already doing with or without Rhize. Some coaches came into the Coaching Corps with an already-established or semi-established training organization or collective. These coaches needed less support from Rhize in the long term but were able to benefit more from the support of peers in the network and ultimately become mentors to less experienced coaches. However, over the course of the last two years, nearly all coaches who wanted to make training their full focus have been able to secure funding from local and regional sources. This was not originally part of our model (for coaches setting up their own training operations)—at least not explicitly for this initial pilot. But now we see that through connection with Rhize, we were able to help them gain more opportunities and visibility that ultimately led to receive funding for their own trainings.

Understanding Systems of Learning and How to Evaluate:
While we were able to obtain many of our results in hindsight, we are now working to develop capacities for Rhize and coaches to be able to learn from each other in real time. This means being able to reflect on lessons learned from training, adapting new activities and approaches that coaches used with different groups to strengthen the curriculum, developing case studies that can be used by all coaches, etc. While coaches share with each other organically, some of this information can be made more valuable with an intermediary like Rhize that can ensure we improve upon existing resources and help codify some of this learning so that new cohorts of coaches can continue to build off of existing knowledge.

By living our values and allowing coaches to lead and dictate their needs, new possibilities for grassroots leadership emerged.

“By living our values and allowing coaches to lead and dictate their needs, new possibilities for grassroots leadership emerged.”
What’s Next

After the successful launch of our African Coaching Corps, where we piloted the Rhize Coaching Model, we continue to iterate on our successes. We continue to invest in the coaches we currently have, specifically in Uganda and Kenya, where they have only recently begun to set up their own training operations. Through this support, we have continued to hone and iterate the model as well as our own infrastructure to support coaching at scale. This means we are working on improving our learning practices, helping coaches to develop more in-country training networks, and continuing to support the movements they have been supporting in addition to new movements.

Next, we are using these first two years of the African Coaching Corps, as well as some initial work in Southeast Asia and the U.S. to launch a new cycle of the Coaching Model at a larger scale through a new program, Rhize’s Global Coaching Fellowship. The Global Coaching Fellowship will follow the same sequence of coach development as we did in Africa but welcome new coaches from other countries and regions. Through the fellowship, Rhize will continue to create a global learning space, where movements benefit from new lessons and best practices in real-time. By investing in new coaches, we will seek to replicate and build upon the same kind of solidarity that was built with the African coaches.

Members of our current Coaching Corps will have the option of continuing to build their training operations and skills by returning as mentors. Rhize will continue to support them in building their own network of trainers in their countries. This puts in place a two-year cycle of the Coaching Model. Over time, as we support more new coaches from multiple regions through the fellowship, the Global Coaching Corps will expand into a truly global network of movement trainers who have national and regional networks but also share solidarity and learnings from leaders and movements.

To continue to expand our offerings to coaches in their learning process, we also seek to build more formal partnerships with other organizations who offer important and complementary skills and strategies for movements. Building a coalition of training groups and organizers will allow our coaches to continue learning and to support the development of regional and global networks. These partnerships will also help us assist coaches in gaining access to resources so that they can become more independent in their work.

Ultimately, with coaches becoming more independent over time, it became clear that as a global, intermediary organization, our aptitude lies in our ability to provide resources, coaching support, and connections across borders. Therefore, we will continue to strengthen our ability to develop some of the world’s greatest movement trainers and organizers and to connect them. Together we can innovate movement-building for the 21st century so that movements can continue to push societies to even greater levels of justice and equity.
SECTION 06: THE FINAL WORD

Conclusion

This report is about changing the way we think about social change. Our hope is that the Rhize Coaching Model can serve as an example of what is possible when an organization invests in change infrastructure rather than in direct outcomes. We have all seen the power of movements in our societies—they are capable of paradigm shifting change, from the currently ongoing movement for self-determination in Hong Kong that have captured the imagination of the world to this year’s successful revolution in Sudan that dethroned President Omar al-Bashir after 35 years to the increasingly visible and resilient global movement for climate justice. The impact they can have on a society, on cultural norms and values, and on the quality of life of communities cannot be overstated. We may see protests out on the streets, but these actions require strategic planning, strong alliances and support from diverse communities to succeed. This takes years to build, which means long-term investment.

In the current landscape of movements, Rhize saw a tremendous need for skills, training, and ongoing support. The Rhize Coaching Model was designed to meet those needs, and to meet organizers where they are in terms of their own development. This is a divergence from previous movement support infrastructure, but we know that a new approach is needed in order to make better use of the already-sparse resources available to support movements. Our approach enables communities to discover their own needs and own solutions. It puts movement organizers—not the agendas devised in the highest board rooms of NGOs or foundations—in the driver’s seat. It allows for flexibility, as movements navigate difficult and often unpredictable political shifts. It ensures that community leaders can articulate why others should join with them to fight in a way that speaks to their community’s needs. Oftentimes, the thing that movements need the most is time and space to determine their own strategy and direction, and as we saw in the preceding case studies, coaches often serve simply as the organizer and facilitator of these spaces.

Through a better understanding of the Rhize Coaching Model and how it not only facilitates movement development but also peer learning and innovations in movement-building, we hope that more people in positions to support civil societies will invest in—and more responsibly so—movements and their potential. Social change takes root when it truly comes from the grassroots, those who experience injustice and inequities on a daily basis in ways that impede their ability to live healthy, flourishing lives. Through a greater investment in the process of change rather than the outcomes, we believe that greater, more force-multiplying impacts are possible. This ultimately must come with a steadfast belief in the power of collective action and the will to allow grassroots communities to be the harbingers of their own destiny.

“Our hope is that the Rhize Coaching Model can serve as an example of what is possible when an organization invests in change infrastructure rather than direct outcomes.”
Endnotes


8 For security reasons and in order to protect the work and safety of our coaches, we are unable to disclose the names of the other two countries.
Movements need all of us.

Get involved by visiting:
www.rhize.org/join-us