

# Robert L Stilger

## Education

California Institute of Integral Studies, Doctorate in Transformative Learning and Change, 2004

California Institute of Integral Studies, Masters of Human and Organizational Transformation, 1999

Carleton College, BA in Social Change, 1971

## Professional Positions

I have spent a lifetime working in the nonprofit sector.

- New Stories (<http://www.newstories.org>), 2000-Present; Co-President. I founded New Stories in 2000 as a nonprofit from which to explore the new stories beginning to emerge as we began to collectively imagine and act to create an alternative future. New Stories worked in partnership with The Berkana Institute and after several years I stepped fully into Berkana. After a period of dormancy, New Stories reemerged under new leadership and I became its Vice President. Now New Stories is engaged in a delightful body of work around Great Transition Stories, Thriving and Resilient Communities, new technologies for story telling, and also provides a base for my resilient communities work in Southern Africa and Japan.
- The Berkana Institute (<http://www.berkana.org>), Board Member, 2001-2011; Co-President, 2004-2009. For a decade, The Berkana Institute was my primary base for work in the world. Serving as Co-President from 2004-2009, we grew Berkana from a small nonprofit where Margaret Wheatley and Myron Rogers did their experimental work on life-affirming leadership to a nonprofit with offices in Spokane and Boston cultivating a field of inquiry and practice on life-affirming leadership. Much of our work centered on developing a translocal learning community of people and organizations called the Berkana Exchange. The Exchange existed to support action learning around practices of leadership for healthy and resilient communities working closely with a number of people and organizations in from Pakistan, India, Greece, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Mexico, US and Canada. Another key aspect of our work was to steward the development of a global community of practitioners called Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter (<http://www.artofhosting.org>) supporting each other in developing and using a variety of dialog and conversation methodologies to help people step into their leadership. In 2009, because of the economic recession, Berkana morphed into a self-organizing system and in 2012 closed its doors, at least for a time.
- Northwest Regional Facilitators (NRF), Cofounder and Executive Director, 1974-2000. The Environmental Symposium Series, described below, created a broad base of support in Spokane. At the close of EXPO '74 World's Fair, some of our staff and community advisors agreed to create a new nonprofit corporation which would help people think about what kind of future they wanted and how to get it. Beginning initially with citizen participation and community education work, NRF began to apply the same values to low-income housing development, childcare services and nonprofit capacity building. When I left in 2000 we had about 50 staff worked with combined annual operating budgets were around \$2 Million with annual construction budgets of \$3-6 Million. After my departure NRF deconstructed itself into a number of different corporations:

- Spokane Housing Ventures, a nonprofit housing development and management corporation initially created as a subsidiary of NRF is now the largest nonprofit of its kind in eastern Washington.
  - Northwest NonProfit Resources established itself as a separate 501(c)3 corporation, providing connection, services and advocacy for nonprofit corporations in the Inland Northwest
  - Spokane MarketPlace also became a separate 501(c)3 corporation which developed and managed Spokane's first public market
  - Child Care Resource and Referral became part of Community Minded Enterprises, a community services organization working in aligned areas.
  - NRF itself redefined itself as Community Frameworks and grew into a statewide housing agency with offices in Spokane as well as in the west side of the state, becoming one of the largest low income housing developers outside of King County.
  - Community Frameworks continued to operate the Lindaman NonProfit Center as an office and support center for small nonprofits in the Spokane area.
- EXPO '74 World's Fair Environmental Symposium Series, Program Director, 1973-1974. Working through OMSI, mentioned below, and other public education institutions in the Northwest, we created a program for the six-month World's Fair that featured an exhibit center and 26 conferences and symposia. We approached this work with an unusual orientation: We thought that people with different points of view should listen to each other! Conferences included three international symposia, a series of six topical symposia, twelve national perspective days and a variety of special conferences.
  - Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), 1959-1973. In 1959, at the age of ten, I started working at Portland's new science museum. Over the next fifteen years I worked in all phases of Museum operation. Beginning with handing out handbills at the nearby Portland Zoo for fifty cents an hour, I was involved in everything from running the museum on weekends to serving as the research and development director for a startup company which took on Xerox in the elementary and secondary science education markets. It was an amazing way to grow up!

## Consulting Work

For nearly forty years now I have had the opportunity to work in a number of different systems, primarily in the areas of social innovation, community participation and citizen involvement. I've had the privilege of working with an amazing array of public and private entities including:

### International

Japan for Sustainability, Japan  
 Goi Peace Foundation, Japan  
 Japan Future Center Network  
 Miratsuku, Emerging Futures, Japan  
 KDI Division of Fuji/Xerox, Japan  
 KSB Television, Japan  
 Tokio Marine Systems, Japan  
 Sabi Consulting, Zimbabwe  
 Municipality of Ethekeiwi, South Africa  
 National Disability Services, Australia  
 Providence Care, Canada

### United States

St. Luke's Health Initiatives, Phoenix, Arizona  
 Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, Oklahoma  
 U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
 National Municipal League

Charles F. Kettering Foundation  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Nebraska State Energy Office

### **Washington State**

Washington Family Policy Council  
Washington State Energy Office  
Washington Department of Social and  
Health Services

Washington Department of Community  
Trade and Economic Development  
Washington Department Of Ecology  
Washington Coalition for Rural Housing  
Washington State Bicentennial Commission  
and Alternatives for Washington  
Spokane County  
City of Spokane  
City of Renton

## **Teaching Positions**

I began teaching at the graduate level while completing my doctoral research on *enspirited* leadership. I was attracted to teaching because I appreciated the intensity and commitment that adult learners brought with them. As a practitioner, I appreciated the opportunity to pause and reflect on what I was learning in my work in the world and to share that with others as we engaged together around questions of what makes enough of a difference to make a difference in our world today. I've taught at a number of institutions:

- ✓ Gonzaga University, Adjunct Faculty, Doctorate in Leadership Studies, 2004-present
- ✓ St. Mary's College of California, Adjunct Faculty, Masters of Leadership Program, 2002-03, 2011-present
- ✓ ALiA Summer Institute, Organizer, Faculty, Host. 2004-present
- ✓ Union Institute & University, Visiting Faculty, Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies, 2012-2013
- ✓ Whitworth University, Adjunct Faculty, MBA, and BA Completion Program 2010-present
- ✓ Organizational Systems Renewal Masters Program, Distinguished Visiting Faculty, Seattle University, 2007
- ✓ Bainbridge Graduate Institute, Faculty Academy, MBA, Sustainable Business 2004-2007

## **Publications**

### Books:

Stilger, B. (2015). *Resilience: Calling Communities Back to Life* (Japanese). Tokyo: Eiji Press. (*Pending*)

### Juried Chapters:

Stilger, B., & Saionji, Y. (2014). *Enspirited Leadership in Japan*. In K. G. Schuyler (Ed.), *Leading with Spirit, Presence and Authenticity*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

Stilger, B. (2014). *Enspirited Leadership*. In R. Selladurai (Ed.), *Servant Leadership Research and Practice*. Hershey, Pennsylvania: IGI Global.

### Invited Articles:

Stilger, B. (2014). *Fukushima's Future*. *OpenDemocracy: Transformation*.

Stilger, B. (2013) *Disaster as a Springboard for Thriving, Resilient Communities*. *REFLECTIONS* reflections.solonline.org website

Stilger, B. (2008). *Hear and Now*. *Ascent*, 37.

Stilger, B. (2005). *Landmarks for Leaders in Times of Uncertainty and Chaos*. *The Systems Thinker*, 16, Number 8.

### Organizationally Published Pamphlets, Books and Magazines:

Stilger, B., & Dunford, A. (2009). *Alive in Community*. Boston, MA: The Berkana Institute.

- Stilger, B. (2007). *Enspirited Leadership: Landmarks for Uncertain Times*. In T. B. Institute (Ed.). Spokane, Washington: The Berkana Institute.
- Stilger, B. (2005). *Enspirited Leadership: Creating A Future of Possibilities*. Spokane, WA: The Berkana Institute.
- Stilger, B. (1974-78), Northwest Regional Facilitators, Publisher, FuturesConditional Magazine,

## Learning Journeys

Part of my work at The Berkana Institute was to design and host learning journeys to visit Berkana's learning partners in different parts of the world. The purpose of these journeys was to create a temporary learning community in which people were introduced to others doing inspiring work in ways which would cause participants to challenge their traditional ways of thinking. Over a four year period I designed and hosted five learning journeys:

- ✓ Parent-Child Learning Journey, 2008, South Africa
- ✓ Barr Fellows Learning Journey, 2008, Brazil
- ✓ Southern Africa Learning Journey, 2006, South Africa and Zimbabwe
- ✓ India Learning Journey, 2006, India
- ✓ Arts for Social Change, 2004, Brazil

I hosted my first learning journey in Japan in 2012.

## Major Presentations

After beginning work with The Berkana Institute I began to receive invitations to keynote or make presentations in a variety of venues in the US as well as other parts of the world. My presentations generally touched on life-affirming and enspirited leadership and practices to build healthy and resilient communities. They have included:

- ✓ Keynote Address, Asia Regional Meeting of Organizational Development Network, Kyoto, Japan, August, 2014
- ✓ Commencement Address, Saybrook University PhD Program, Seattle, August, 2014
- ✓ Systems Thinking In Action - STIA+, Keynote Presentation, Seattle, April, 2014
- ✓ TEDxTokyo Teachers Presentation, Tokyo, March, 2014
- ✓ International Leadership Association, Annual Conference, Concurrent Session, Montreal, 2013
- ✓ Bioneers Conference, Concurrent Sessions Presentations, California, 2013
- ✓ International Association of Facilitators, Pre-Conference Workshop and Concurrent Session, Tokyo, 2013
- ✓ Symphony of World Peace Prays Interfaith Dialog Host, Mt. Fuji, Japan, 2013
- ✓ International Peace Research Association, Panel Presentation, Tsu, Japan, 2012
- ✓ Bioneers Conference, Concurrent Session Presentations, California, 2012
- ✓ International Association of Facilitators Asia Conference, Shenzhen China, 2012
- ✓ Symphony of World Peace Prays Interfaith Dialog Host, Mt. Fuji, Japan, 2012
- ✓ Goi Peace Foundation Annual Peace Prize Forum Panel, Tokyo, Japan, 2011
- ✓ Conference on Multicultural Issues, Nagoya International School, 2011
- ✓ TEDxTokyo, Father-Daughter Presentation, Tokyo, Japan, 2010
- ✓ St. Luke's Health Initiative Keynote Speaker, Phoenix, AZ 2009
- ✓ World Affairs Summit, Workshop Presentation, Tacoma, WA, 2007
- ✓ Pegasus Systems Thinking in Action Conference Concurrent Sessions in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2009

- ✓ National Summit of the American College of Mental Health Administrators, Keynote Speaker, Santa Fe, 2006
- ✓ Washington Family Policy Council Annual Summit Workshop, Vancouver, WA, 2005
- ✓ The Brazilian Association of Human Resources Congress, Keynote Speaker Porte Alegre, Brazil 2005
- ✓ International Leadership Association Simultaneous Session Workshop, Washington D.C.,2004

## Major Translocal Learning Events

For many years I have worked with teams to design and host gatherings that bring social innovators and entrepreneurs from across the world to exchange and create learning. We have called these translocal learning events rather than global to emphasize that they are based on sharing experience and wisdom from many local areas.

- BerkanaExchange, Art of Learning Centers – Zimbabwe-2008, Greece-2007, Mexico-2006, Canada-2005. Over time, the gatherings of the Berkana Exchange grew to more than 60 people who came together for 10 days. These translocal events brought people together from community-based leadership initiatives around the world who were already in learning relationship with each other through The Berkana Institute. I served as a primary designer and facilitator for each of these gatherings
- Pioneers of Change Summer School – South Africa-2004, Egypt-2003, Mexico-2002. Pioneers of Change was a global network of innovators and entrepreneurs in their 20s and 30s who came together around themes of social justice, ecological integrity, wise business and sustainable development. I was a Board Member, learning partner and engaged elder who supported them and assisted in the design and facilitation of these gatherings.
- Global Learning Village, Castle Borl, Slovenia, 2002. More than 100 people of all ages converged in Slovenia for a week long learning festival around themes and questions of sustainability, resilience, arts and culture, right livelihood. I was a member of the core design and hosting team.
- From The Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way – UK-2000, US-2001, South Africa-2001. The Berkana Institute, New Stories and Peer Spirit launched a global leadership initiative based on dialog. We brought three different groups of 60 people from different parts of the world together for a four day practicum on leadership and hosting dialog. I served as event organizer and designer.

## Public Policy Work

My work as Executive Director of Northwest Regional Facilitators often focused on the development and adoption of public policies in a wide variety of areas. This extensive work included:

### 2000s

- Served on the design and facilitation team to develop a new Master Plan for the Colville National Forest – a forest about the size of Rhode Island. An innovative stakeholder engagement process worked under the unifying theme of “there’s enough forest for all of us” that allowed everyone from timber harvesters to wilderness advocates to create a nationally acclaimed master plan. (Independent work after leaving NRF)

### 1990s

- Served as consultant to Spokane County, Washington, to design and facilitate a community engagement process to determine urban growth boundaries as part of a locally contentious, statewide Urban Growth Management Act.

- Served for 6 years on the Governors Nuclear Waste Advisory Council. Advised Washington Department of Ecology on cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear Reservations, the single largest nuclear waste depository in the US.
- Developed and facilitated participatory processes for the City of Renton, Washington on transportation, growth management and annexation. Renton is a crossroad for all vehicular and utility connections between west and east King County, Washington's largest urban area.

#### 1980s

- Worked with others to create the Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium as a unified point of research and advocacy for low income housing in the greater Spokane Area.
- Worked with the Burlington Northern Foundation's President to convince then Washington Governor Booth Gardner to appoint the Governor's Task Force on Hunger which was a privately funded (Burlington Northern Foundation) and privately administered (Northwest Regional Facilitators) government commission. Established as a State Commission to determine the nature and extent of hunger in Washington State and to recommend public and private actions to alleviate hunger. I served as a member of the Executive Committee and supervised staff.
- Worked with the Junior League of Spokane and Eastern Washington University to create FutureSpokane, a "third generation" community futures program designed to mobilize private sector initiatives to improve quality of life in Spokane, Washington. Designed and organized this major public-private initiative with other community leaders.

#### 1970's

- Worked with Kim Herman to form the Washington Coalition for Rural Housing which developed and successfully advanced a call for the creation of the Washington Housing Finance Commission in order to access low-income housing tax credits in Washington State. Herman became the first Executive Director of the Commission.
- Created a model public engagement process as part of the U.S. Bicentennial. Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the program worked in four different parts of Washington State to combine community learning, community meetings and community surveys into a unique methodology for citizen engagement.
- Designed and conducted the community phase of Alternatives for Washington, a state futures program launched by Governor Booth Gardner and chaired by the founding President of Northwest Regional Facilitators, Whitworth College President Edward Lindaman.
- Began my work with citizen participation and public policy by working with the City of Spokane to design and facilitate a citizen engagement process working in Spokane's low-income neighborhoods to give residents in low-income neighborhoods considerable power to direct the City's Community Development Block Grant Program. Over the next 20 years the program created an entirely new relationship between City Hall and people in low-income neighborhoods in Spokane based on good communication and effective cooperation.

### **Current Volunteer Services**

I work with many people in many parts of the world. In some cases I am able to devote the time and energy needed to support them as an active Board member. These have included:

- ✓ Member, Executive Advisory Cooperation Circle, United Religions Initiative, 2012-2013
- ✓ Member, Katerva Awards Spotters Network, 2012-2013
- ✓ Member, Board of Directors, New Stories, 2000-present (Founder, President 2000-2008, Co-President 2012-present)
- ✓ Member, Board of Directors, Berkana Institute, 2001-2011

- ✓ Member, *Miratsuku*, Emerging Future, Japan 2011-2013 (Co-Founder and Vice President)
- ✓ Advisor, Social Venture Partners – Shikoku, Japan 2011-present
- ✓ Member, Eagles Council, Kufunda Learning Village, Zimbabwe, 2002-present
- ✓ Member, Advisory Board, Lapeng Child and Family Center, Johannesburg, SA 2009-present
- ✓ Member, Board of Directors, Pioneers of Change, Johannesburg and London, 2001–2008

## **Work in Japan**

I first went to Japan as a student in 1970 and discovered my spiritual home. In 2009 I was invited to bring my work on dialog, leadership and healthy and resilient communities into Japan. Since January, 2010 I have been working extensively in Japan, spending nearly half of my time each year in that country. It has been an amazing journey.

I have made dozens of presentations and hosted close to 100 workshops and dialog sessions since the beginning of 2010. In March, 2011 my work took on a much sharper focus as I began to work with many others from nonprofit organizations, academia, business, government and citizen advocacy groups to discover how the triple disasters of 3.11.11 might be used as a springboard to create a new future in Japan. Stories of my experience during this time can be found in blogs on the New Stories website.

Grants in 2012 and 2014 from Give2Asia allowed me to work across the disaster region to host dialogues to catalyze collaborative action and do introduce a community building and social innovation approach we call Future Centers. This work is featured in my forthcoming book from Tokyo's Eiji Press.

## **Contact**

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