



**Solidarity Stories from Asian American and Pacific Islander
Community Leaders, Asian American Leaders Table**

DJ Kuttin Kandi, REACHipHop

Introduction

“To me, solidarity is the care, the commitment, the humanization of one another. The ability to have the revolutionary capacity to hold space for one another, and to really show up for one another.”

Welcome to a Solidarity Story featuring [DJ Kuttin Kandi](#), community organizer and co-founder of the media justice organization REACHipHop. For two decades, the group has been organizing for fair and equal representation in hip-hop radio and building multi-racial coalitions among Asian and Black artists in New York City. REACH began in 2005 when community leaders, activists and artists organized to protest HOT 97 FM, a local radio station that aired a racist song mocking victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami. As a result of the protest, the station issued an apology, suspended the DJ and crew involved, and re-routed their salaries to tsunami relief funds.

Takeaways

1. Identify your role(s) when it comes to building solidarity.

In the early days of REACH, Kandi worked to build solidarity between Black and Asian communities by drawing on her long-standing relationships with folks inside and outside the hip-hop industry. By seeing opportunities for connection and mutual support, Kandi embraced her role as a weaver within the movement.

2. Name anti-Black racism in your communities and industries.

Kandi emphasized the importance of owning and addressing anti-Blackness within her own community, especially while attempting to build connections and commonalities among people. By acknowledging the systemic nature of racism and anti-Blackness, the community was able to join together to demand media reform, rather than allowing radio stations to drive a wedge between Black and Asian artists.

3. Keep studying.

When asked what advice she would give to young activists, Kandi says: “Make room for constant study.” In addition to formal education and training opportunities, Kandi emphasizes the importance of listening, paying attention to others, and approaching solidarity work from a place of openness and curiosity. “Enjoy where you are right now and enjoy learning,” she says. “Take everything in.”

4. You can't have solidarity without trust.

Solidarity requires long-term commitment and mutual trust, not transactional alliances. “You can't have solidarity without trust, you can't have solidarity without a relationship,” explains DJ Kuttin Kandi. “It's the most foundational thing you can ever have when it comes to solidarity.”

Your Turn

Your Turn

What is your social change role? What can you offer ongoing movements for justice?

How does anti-Blackness show up in your community or movement spaces?

How can you build meaningful, long-term relationships with others?

What are the most important lessons you have learned about solidarity? Who taught you these lessons?

Some quotes in this article have been edited for clarity.