CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.

Immigrant-Led Organizers in Their Own Voices: Local Realities and Shared Visions

A Report by
CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC. (CLINIC)

Written by
Sibora Gjecovi, Esther James and Jeff Chenoweth

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INTRODUCTION

The United States is experiencing historically unprecedented levels of immigration. As of March 2005, there were 37 million foreign-born persons in the United States, making up 12 percent of the population.[1] Approximately 14 million immigrants arrived during the 1990s.[2] From the early 1990s to 2000, the number of immigrants increased by 61 percent. Today, immigrants are changing the face of the cities in which they settle. Some have argued that immigration policies, including immigrant integration, are necessary to ensure our nation's security and domestic harmony.[3] While society as a whole should be responsible for addressing the integration needs of immigrant communities, in many cases immigrants themselves have taken the primary initiative to integrate into U.S. society. Many have chosen organizing as a powerful way of doing this.

The way an immigrant enters a foreign country deeply impacts his or her life. Immigrants leave their home communities with the hope of improving their lives and creating other communities to which they can belong. During this process, an immigrant struggles to gain the respect that has been eroded by the difficult entry experience. Community organizing is about creating a bond to connect people to each other and to help them work on difficult issues that the particular community or society at large is facing.[4] It is about gaining both personal and communal respect in a constantly changing and challenging society.

Immigrants come with a variety of experiences. Some have been active in their home countries, while others have utilized passivity as a technique to survive politically hostile environments at home. Such profound experiences guide and influence immigrants' organizing in the United States; every group has its own perspectives, weaknesses, and strengths. While it is helpful to have American-born organizers assist immigrants in community organizing, it is also crucial that immigrants do this for themselves, adapting their ways to those of their current environment. This experience often involves a deep shift in immigrants' way of thinking and working, but it is clear that no matter where they come from, immigrants can organize effectively.

At its core, organizing is an expression of democracy. It is this very notion that attracts many to the United States. But democracy does not often come easily for those who are disadvantaged. Many immigrants associate organizing with political engagement, but the range of topics around which immigrants organize today encompasses much more than the political sphere. Depending on the constituency, along with the needs and assets of a particular community and its neighbors, organizing groups work on a variety of pertinent issues. Often, partnerships are created among communities of varying perspectives and interests. Depending on the issues, immigrants can collaborate with the native-born, the undocumented, labor and tenant groups, and others.

Organizing efforts are not only a vital part of the immigrant community; they are also effective in helping address society-wide struggles. Immigrants are crucial participants in the U.S. labor market, for example. Half of the workers who entered the U.S. labor force during the 1990s were immigrants.[5] Immigrants also participate in many aspects of social life in the United States. They belong to more than just the immigrant community. They are often poor, discriminated against, and in need of good economic and educational opportunities. Immigrants who are part of educated, professional communities may still face discrimination based on race, nationality, or immigration status.

If immigrants are involved in so many arenas of U.S. civic life, why shouldn't they have a voice and the opportunity to impact both broad and population-specific policies? Shouldn't we rely on the accounts of those at the center of such experiences in order to make progressive decisions? Immigrant organizing can be powerful and significant for all communities in the United States, but particularly for the poor and oppressed. Immigrants play an important role in seeking fair solutions to social problems.

1 Pew Hispanic Center. "The Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.," (March. 7, 2006), p. 4.

2 Urban Institute. **http://www.urban.org/toolkit/issues/immigration.cfm**

3 Edgar, J., Meissner, D., & Silva, A. "Keeping the Promise: Immigration Proposals from the Heartland," The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, (2004), p. 3.

4 Amato, T. "Lessons from Immigrant Organizing in Stockton," *Social Policy* (March 2003), p. 30.

5 Urban Institute. **http://www.urban.org/toolkit/issues/immigration.cfm**

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According to the Urban Institute, immigrants in the last decade have settled primarily in non-traditional states, such as those in the Southeast, Midwest, and the Rocky Mountain region. These immigrants have fewer marketable skills, are generally poorer, and have weaker English-language skills. In addition, these states lack experienced bilingual teachers and immigrant support organizations, and have limited public benefits and social safety nets. Thus, new immigrants desperately need the leadership of effective organizers. In this report, CLINIC will look closely at the birth, development, and maintenance of the organizing process among immigrants.

Literature Review

The literature overall is focused on the daily lives of immigrants, rather than on their organizing efforts. Few scholarly articles analyze immigrant-led organizing. These articles emphasize the personal experience of organizing and the individual benefits, rather than the community experience and the impact on society and policy issues.

Newspaper articles seem to be a richer source of coverage of immigrant organizing activities. Major events and proposed legislation, such as the "Immigrants Freedom Ride" of 2003 or the "Dream Act" in Congress, have a better chance of gaining coverage, but local stories of immigrant struggles and successes are becoming more frequent as immigrants move into new communities. In addition, newspaper articles have primarily covered labor organizing among immigrants; in the last couple of years, they have most often featured immigrants' efforts to exercise their voting rights.

Pro-immigrant organizations have produced reports that shed some light on immigrant organizing. However, these reports have primarily targeted grant makers. While organizing groups undoubtedly need to educate potential funders, this report aims for a broader audience. In addition, it seeks to foster collaboration between policy makers, grant makers, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and others.

National Immigrant Empowerment Project Participating Organizations*

Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee

Border Network for Human Rights

Immigrant Services Diocese of Rockville Centre

Central American Resource Center

Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles

Colonias Development Council

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization

El Buen Samaritano

Iowa Immigrant Rights Network

National Association of Latino and Appointed Officials Educational Fund

National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency

Sunflower Community Action

Tenants and Workers United

VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

The Workplace Project

*See Appendix B for detailed descriptions

Purpose of the Report

Despite record levels of immigration, the United States lacks coordinated and responsive integration policies. CLINIC has recognized the increasing need for immigrants to integrate effectively, and the benefits that this provides for both the foreign- and the native-born.

This report attempts to give voice to immigrants as they struggle in their migration and integration experiences. As a result, it contains numerous quotes from community organizers, particularly on why and how they organize.

Over the course of three years (2001-2004), with generous funds from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, CLINIC provided grants and technical assistance to 17 community organizing organizations across the country that are engaged in fighting systemic barriers to immigrant integration and civic participation. Active in

communities as geopolitically and socio-economically disparate as the *colonias* along the U.S.-Mexico border and African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods in Wichita, Kansas, these agencies shared the common objective of empowering low-income immigrants to engage in civic participation and community integration. While observing the obstacles and achievements of these particular groups, CLINIC recognized the need to study immigrant-led organizing, particularly from the perspective of organizers themselves. This report analyzes the unique contributions of immigrants to community organizing in the United States.

The report demonstrates that community organizing increases civic engagement and integration of immigrant communities. Its intended audience includes community organizers and immigrant advocates; national networks of immigrant services and policy development; faith-based institutions; elected officials; researchers; and funders. CLINIC hopes that the inspirational words of immigrant organizers will encourage others to share in their struggle for justice through social change.

Methodology

CLINIC gathered information for this report through phone interviews with immigrant organizers across the United States. (See Appendix C for a list of interview questions). It conducted full interviews with staff and representatives from participating organizations in its National Immigrant Empowerment Project. In addition, CLINIC interviewed other organizers recommended by various interviewees.

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Interviewees ranged from staff of large national groups to organizers of grassroots community efforts. Geography was varied as well, with four West Coast organizations; four Southwestern; three Midwestern; and six on the East Coast. The majority of interviewees work with immigrant communities in large cities, such as Boston, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C., while a few organize smaller rural or suburban communities in Des Moines, El Paso, Las Cruces, and Wichita. Organizers were of diverse ethnicity and national origin, with varying degrees of organizing experience and educational backgrounds.

CLINIC also met with academics and other experts in the organizing field. This report benefits from their perspectives and scholarship.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leaders are at the core of organizing. They draw others into organizing efforts and guide the process to achieve set goals. Leadership development is not necessarily a linear process, but it does involve stages. Leaders are identified and then trained to enhance their skills, values, and commitments. Some groups have resources to train leaders in human rights and social justice issues. Organizations have employed a range of strategies to identify, train, and retain leaders. Immigrant organizers and advocates at all levels of development are best served by organizations that value culturally appropriate, thoughtful, and strategic action.

Leadership Identification

Groups concerned with immigrant community organizing may identify and recruit potential leaders by providing services in the immigrant community. Many groups provide "Know Your Rights" presentations, where immigrants learn about the rights they have as employees, tenants, students, or consumers. Such presentations are an excellent educational and organizational recruitment tool, as they build trust between organizers and the community. Sometimes individuals become involved in organizing efforts after having received direct services from an agency. When the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) helps an immigrant laborer who has been mistreated by an employer, the laborer is invited to become involved in helping another immigrant work through a similar issue. The Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) of Boston reported similar experiences with their worker's center.

Most community organizations – particularly new ones — struggle with whether to provide individual services.[6] Most of the groups interviewed for this report avoid individual services altogether. A few separate their service provision from organizing. The latter include Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), El Buen Samaritano, and Catholic Charities of Rockville Centre. These organizations seek to channel "clients" into organizing efforts. For example, a client seeking affordable housing might be recruited to join a campaign to expand the city's budget for low-cost family-housing construction. One risk to organizing effectiveness is when funding for services comes from contracts with federal, state, or local government, and community action is directed at the same source of funding. In these circumstances, the organization risks losing funding and community leader support.[7]

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Immigrant community organizers report that leaders need not be the most articulate or dominant group members. Qualities interviewees seek in leaders include commitment and willingness to learn. Angelica Salas, Executive Director of CHIRLA, says that a leader should demonstrate commitment to the organization's mission; commitment of his or her time; and a track record of leadership within other communities (such as being a leader in one's home country). Leaders who have emerged at CHIRLA have started as volunteers or service-seekers. "We don't necessarily look for individuals to be articulate," she adds. "Sometimes an individual can be very shy, yet a very good leader."

"A community leader must be relational so he or she can develop a network," says Don Stahlhut of Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO). He notes that the leader should also have the ability to be a follower; be willing to learn and take risks; be curious about the community; be compassionate; and be directly involved and impacted by issues on which CCISCO is working.

6 Brooks, F. "Resolving the Dilemma between Organizing and Services: Los Angeles' ACORN's Welfare Advocacy," *Social Work* (Vol. 50, No. 3, July 2005), p. 262-270.

7 National Housing Institute. "The Power of a Community-Based Development Coalition: Lessons from the Demise of the Chicago Association of Neighborhood Development Organizations," *Shelterforce* (May/June 2005), p. 29.

Something to Declare: Organizers' Experiences in their Countries of Origin

Saul Solorzano, Executive Director of the Central American Resource Center, is originally from El Salvador, which suffered from civil war throughout the 1980s. "In El Salvador I was a member of the Christian-based communities. We organized support to internal refugees in the countryside. Because of this, I had to leave the country because of persecution." His journey as an immigrant took him to Los Angeles. There, he says, "I got together with other young people like me who were forced to leave El Salvador. In Los Angeles, we organized committees for human rights with the support of churches. Then I got involved with churches working in the refugee movement in the United States. We did a lot of organizing before NACARA (the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act.) In 1986 I joined a Latino coalition. We organized as many as 25,000 people to participate in a march for legalization for undocumented immigrants. I was very involved in organizing tenants' associations to [address] the city's housing policies discriminating against Latinos. We filed a case against the city and the landlords." Mr. Solorzano has gone on to be a major figure in community organizing in the Washington, D.C., area.

Colonias Development Council (CDC) recruits leaders through one-on-one interviews and focus groups with people who have shown a commitment to the issues affecting immigrants and a willingness to learn. These leaders then become a crucial part of what CDC calls *research action groups*. These groups hold meetings to research problems and design action plans to address the issues.

CDC recognizes a broad range of skills that different people bring to the table. "Recruiters look at many different qualities in a potential leader that can range from person to person and that depend on the job that needs to get done," says Sheila Black of CDC. "However, two of the core qualities desirable in every leader are willingness to learn and commitment. CDC's goal for leadership development is that people learn a process that they can apply in many situations and to many issues."

CDC values an open-door policy and gives its participants permission to move in and out of leadership roles without reprisal. "Issues are always changing and people's lives are always changing. That is why it is key to provide leaders with more flexibility and to welcome them at any point in the process," says Ms. Black.

Other organizations recruit leaders with the help of pastors who refer congregation members interested in community organizing. Seeing that faith moves people to action, CCISCO values leaders who are part of an established religious community. CCISCO's church-based networks are an effective way to develop organizers and advocates. Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee also uses its religious leaders to recruit new organizers.

Leadership Training

Community organizing groups often use curricula to teach leadership skills and to educate immigrants on the U.S. political process, as well as on human and civil rights issues.

Most groups interviewed have created, borrowed, or adapted leadership training manuals. Some of these resources are quite thorough and include evaluation measures that are helpful in ensuring the appropriateness and effectiveness of the leadership training and development practices. Common sources for externally-produced manuals are Midwest Academy, Industrial Areas Foundation, Partnership for Immigrant Leadership Action, Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, and labor unions. Other sources and documents include the Immigrant Legal Resource Center's "Immigrant Leadership Training Curriculum" and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service's "Inspiring Leadership in Immigrant Communities." The Center for Community Change has many training materials on organizing methods, policy development, storytelling for media outlets, and revenue-generating ideas. The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing also issued an "Annotated Bibliography on Youth Organizing."

The Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) in El Paso, Texas, has developed its own leadership curriculum, which it describes as "experience-based." The curriculum consists of modules organized around key concerns, such

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Training Immigrants in U.S. Protocols of Public Dialogue

Almost every immigrant community organizer has a story to tell of how institutions have confounded the communities with which they work. **Marcelo Gaete**, Director of Constituency Services for the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), points to *Robert's Rules of Order*—the book that codifies procedures for private societies, loosely modeled after procedures of the U.S. House of Representatives—as an example. "In my opinion, *Robert's Rules of Order* is overused by some neighborhood councils. Youth especially are put off by it. The rules make people uncomfortable, afraid to share their view." Mr. Gaete also pointed out the role of education in understanding rules and regulations. The NALEO Educational Fund is considering including *Robert's Rules of Order* within its curriculum for community organizers, as well as (perhaps contradictorily) making a policy recommendation discouraging neighborhood councils from using it. In addition, it will advocate for a policy requiring professional translators to be present at neighborhood council meetings for those neighborhoods in which 50% or more people are not fluent in English.

as "how to break the myth that immigrants, especially the undocumented, are not able to organize themselves due to fear, frustration, or tiredness," and "how to transform, within immigrant communities, the culture of abuse and fear into a culture of human and constitutional rights." Through collective analysis, leaders in training compare their self-identified rights with those rights enumerated in international and U.S. laws and policies as they are practically implemented. Using this curriculum, BNHR trains community members to become *promotores de derechos* (rights organizers) who give rights presentations to others in their community and organize community-based committees that help document law enforcement abuses.

Gladys Vega of Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee says that as an organizer, "you never stop training people. You always put them in a leadership role. You encourage people to grow and never take leadership development for granted." She says that leadership training manuals have their role, but she also provides developing leaders with personal mentoring and coaching. For example, she will prepare people to participate in meetings.

The return on even basic leadership training can be tremendous. El Buen Samaritano, which serves the Stony Point neighborhood of Austin, Texas—home to some of the poorest Latino immigrants in the central Texas region—has seen a community transformed through leadership development. "El Buen Samaritano is helping residents work with government officials to improve services in the area," says Executive Director Rev. Ed Gomez. "After a course in leadership training that included learning how to work with government, transportation, health, and education systems, these men and women are making progress getting their roads fixed and establishing new bus routes that will help them with employment and medical services."

Community organizers also cited success in achieving tangible goals within larger campaigns. The CDC's environmental justice campaign is a case in point. Environmental justice can be a broad and abstract issue for many people, but CDC's leaders made the topic relevant to its specific constituency. The community decided that it wanted to address environmental issues through a neighborhood cleaning project. Soon residents discovered that the largest contributors to the neighborhood's trash problem were private businesses and the county government. This led community leaders to organize and enter talks with the county and others in an effort to protect their environment.

Motivating Organizers through Power-Mapping

Colonial Development Council in Las Cruces, New Mexico, finds that mapping decision-makers in the community by name, entity, and function—often called "power-mapping"—can either make people upset at the lack of power they have exercised so far, or help them feel that they can shift that power. In either case, when they know who holds specific powers and what can be done to change the balance of power, people are motivated to act. As most organizers know, empowerment is a key step toward reaching the campaign goal.

According to the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship, "the public sector is increasingly fragmented as municipalities, special districts, counties, states, and a huge range of special interests pursue issues of particular concern to them, in ways that are bewildering to the average citizen, not to mention an immigrant who grew up in a very different sociopolitical context."[8] One practical solution is to coach immigrants "on strategies for posing

8 Kissam, E., Garcia, A., Jeter, I., & Levitt, M. "Evaluation of the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship," (December 31, 1999), Chapter 6, p. 25.

Chelsea Latino Organizing Committee

difficult questions, issues about protocol, and ways of thinking about the objectives of meetings."[9] Immigrants should be given progressively more challenging communication and analytic thinking "assignments" to develop as leaders and effective organizers:

> "Building experience and skill in civic action should be an integrated 'curriculum' of action learning. This is the fundamental insight of theorists of popular education such as Freire and Macedo, as well as contemporary adult educators concerned with building civic skills. Immigrants' skill development should be unequivocally oriented toward informed and strategically thoughtful action (or inaction where merited). To build skills needed to participate effectively with collective efforts to address civic problems, it is necessary to provide learners with opportunities to gain successively more demanding experience in teamwork, communication, and decision-making. Their experiential involvement needs to be based on analysis of facts, issues, pros and cons, strategic options."[10]

Other experts concur that training must involve an orientation to U.S. politics on all levels. According to a report by Mosaica, refugees and immigrants may view the political system through experiences in their countries of origin, which may be irrelevant to the U.S. political context:

"Organizing training that does not address the differences in political systems, experiences, and contexts may not provide immigrant and refugee-led organizations with the understanding necessary to navigate the U.S. system or the tools to examine the underlying (and perhaps inaccurate) assumptions they may make based on their own experiences."[11]

Something to Declare: Organizers' Experiences in their Countries of Origin

Prior to immigrating to the United States, **Lucia Veronica Carmona** of Colonias Development Council worked with indigenous communities in Guadalajara and low-income suburban communities in Monterrey, Mexico. She also was involved with an adult education center in the suburbs of Mexico City that drew on Paulo Freire's model of popular education to help adults complete elementary and high school. Ms. Carmona learned about popular education and other pillars of community organizing from books, interactions with independent groups, and Catholic parishes inspired by liberation theology. "In the Mexico City suburbs, I saw people struggling with issues of housing, labor, salaries, environment, education, and health. Now in this part of the United States [New Mexico and west Texas], I am seeing the same faces and the same needs. Poor communities in both countries are the target of environmental abuse and suffer social injustice. In both countries, I have been part of efforts to turn people toward civic participation. I like to see people learn who is making the decisions in communities—what the decision-making boards are, and how economically poorer people can join these boards." She views this type of power as key to community organizers "delivering alternatives, not just complaints."

Leadership Retention

Talented leaders stay involved with a community organizing effort when its mission and work are relevant to their daily lives. Community organizing entities can help keep their leaders and/or volunteers engaged the same way any organization retains its staff: with clear expectations (best when written), training, and accommodations for special needs. In addition, organizers generally find it helpful to recognize certain individuals or groups for their work. Most of the groups interviewed engage in various forms of celebration after a victory (whether that victory is one of outcome or process).

9 Ibid., p. 33.

10 Ibid.

11 Mosaica: The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism. "Immigrant and Refugee-Led Organizations and their Technical Assistance Needs: Report of a Study conducted for the Ford Foundation, Migrant and Refugee Rights Portfolio," (2000), p. 22.

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CHIRLA shows appreciation to the entire community by arranging special meals or events, sometimes to benefit community members in particularly difficult circumstances. For example, the group buys roses for mothers whose children are not with them on occasions such as Mother's Day, or they plan Thanksgiving dinners for day laborers. In this way, CHIRLA recognizes the contributions and the needs of all who belong to the community. In addition, CHIRLA engages in more typical recognition of people involved in its efforts. "We celebrate all who volunteer their time at the worker's center," says Executive Director Angelica Salas. "Constituents as well as staff are asked to nominate people to receive certificates in recognition of volunteer service."

CCISCO finds that recognizing specific individuals can be beneficial, but it risks creating the misconception that only certain accomplishments merit recognition. However, this risk is outweighed by the way that recognition encourages leadership development.

CDC shows its appreciation of leaders by not judging their sporadic or changing involvement in the group. At CDC, organizing is seen as a process in which issues are always changing along with the course of people's lives. As a result, CDC welcomes the involvement of leaders at any point in the process and on any issue.

According to Chinese Progressive Association staff, their participants tend to feel they should show appreciation to the organization, not the other way around. A successful campaign is its own reward. "Appreciation is not for us to show them. It is for them to see the impact that they make in the community," said Karen Chen, Lead Organizer.

Similarly, Gladys Vega, Project Director of Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee, says that the best reward for an immigrant organizer is to see the results of his or her efforts, such as "when they see their apartment getting fixed. Organizers have a checklist that they use to go in people's houses and check to see what needs to be fixed or is in violation of the laws. Then they call the inspectors. This can sometimes lead to a rent strike. The reward is to seek change on their behalf. By sticking together we give them a lot of power."

Obstacles to Leadership Development

Organizers face many obstacles in recruiting and retaining leaders. Some of these difficulties are group- or leader-specific; others are population-specific or related to a particular situation. It is safe to say, however, that most organizers struggle to engage certain groups of individuals, such as those who work long hours, women who are juggling multiple roles and responsibilities, or men who might lack a community approach to solving problems.

Newly-arrived immigrants are also considered difficult to organize. Many do not understand U.S. policies and individual rights (which is why "Know Your Rights" presentations are effective at engaging and empowering them). New immigrants are also struggling to cope with language barriers, family separation or reconfiguration, and workplace issues. Community organizing is often not a priority for them. CHIRLA often writes letters to employers, asking them to allow newer immigrants to attend events or meetings. In doing so, CHIRLA draws on its good reputation in the community.

"It's easier for us to organize immigrants who have been here longer, because they understand the American life better and the value of organizing," says Karen Chen of the Chinese Progressive Association. "For the newer immigrants, we start with education in the drop-in centers to cultivate leadership. People can be intimidated by those with power, which is another obstacle."

Immigrants may come to the United States with differing expectations of political entities, such as unions. Sister Mignonne Konecny, Lead Organizer of Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee, says that, "sometimes immigrants who have had some experience with unions in home countries have difficulty understanding why they can't operate like that here."

For some communities, like those that the Colonias Development Council organizes, the interconnectedness between people is strong However, at times this asset makes confrontation and accountability difficult. Another drawback of small rural communities is that the activity level may not be as high as in large urban areas with a greater number of participants.

Group-specific obstacles often have to do with balancing the goals and objectives of training leaders and the problems that are being addressed. For example, some immigrant-organizing groups are more engaged in changing government policies than on leadership recruitment goals. CHIRLA, for example, has responded to the immigration policy crises and deemphasized its leadership development activities. In this sense, it may be evolving to become more of an advocacy organization than an organizing entity.

Fear is an obstacle that can appear in all stages of the organizing processes. Some immigrants fear becoming involved in community organizing because of their status as undocumented migrants. They may shy away from the visibility and media coverage that community-level political involvement can bring. Other immigrants may avoid community organizing because they are intimidated by those with power. Others fear losing jobs or access to education for their children. For example, Gladys Vega of Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee, finds that it can be difficult to retain leaders and volunteers—“to keep people fighting for the cause” of improved housing conditions—because they fear being evicted due to their organizing, and the committee cannot provide them with housing. “Some of our models of confronting those with power can intimidate people,” she said. Fear can be debilitating, but it is not insurmountable. Working one on one with individuals, achieving small victories, being established for many years within a community, and other tactics can build confidence.

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Beatriz Maya of the National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency, which is associated with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, is a native of Argentina. “When I was a student, I participated in the Argentinean resistance movement against a military dictatorship," she said. "But the reality of being a professional organizer only exists here in the United States. In other countries, you engage in community organizing because you are resisting a form of government, because it is the right thing to do. As a student you may do leafleting or spread the word in your university or workplace. You do many of the things you do here as an organizer, but without the title. It is interesting to think about the effect of ‘professionalizing’ community organizing. There are pros and cons to it. When you are a professional organizer, you can do it all day long, maybe 24-7. On the other hand, as a paid organizer some people become part of the middle-class. They may become too comfortable.”

To say there are obstacles does not mean there are no solutions. CCISCO responds to language obstacles by providing simultaneous translation at meetings and by treating every community member, whether they speak English or not, as equal partners. CCISCO also chooses not to become involved in issues that are “unwinnable” given a certain local or national political climate. By identifying problems that can be solved, CCISCO builds trust and self-confidence within communities. The Chinese Progressive Association and several other organizations use drop-in community and workers’ centers to cultivate leadership among newer immigrants who may otherwise lack the time, confidence, or connections to become involved.

Leadership development is crucial in addressing issues and bringing about social change. It is not only central to the birth and growth of an organization, but it is also beneficial to individuals who continue to struggle against injustice.

Leadership development tactics differ depending on the constituency, culture, length of time in the United States, and other factors. However, the most effective leadership comes from within the community. In addition, leadership development is a process in which organizers sometimes step away from leadership roles or the organization’s priorities change.

PARTNERSHIPS

Immigrants Forging Partnerships with Each Other

"We have encouraged our leaders that, regardless of where we come from, our main issues should be the advancement of our community." Gladys Vega, Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee.

Opinions differ among community organizers and their supporters about how immigrants' shared nationality contributes to organizing efforts. Some say that networks of family, village, or national groups are not necessarily relevant or helpful to community organizing in the United States. Others find that these networks can be bridges to effective organizing for U.S. communities.

Home-country social relationships, cultural norms, and political concerns play a significant role in how immigrants view community life, and how they perceive community organizing in the United States. Immigrant organizing groups need to confront the dual concerns immigrants have for their native countries and the new communities in which they live. Immigrants engaged in local organizing efforts are often compelled to build new and larger social networks between immigrant groups, and establish principles for how people work together on shared concerns.

In evaluating the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship in California, the Aguirre Group found that immigrants often have strong expectations of social reciprocity and collective action based on home-country ties. However, the Aguirre Group strongly suggests that these ties cannot be the foundation for meaningful civic and political engagement in the United States. Immigrants, the evaluators said, need to be "introduced to the distinctive organizational styles and processes of California life.[12]"

Saul Solorzano, Executive Director of the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) in Washington, D.C., has tried to use existing networks to achieve his group's goals. He points to the valuable role of nationality-based philanthropic groups in U.S. immigrant community organizing: "We have partnerships with hometown associations [of immigrants who] get together to support their overseas hometown. We help them to facilitate the development of their organizations. Sometimes we sponsor their events, and they in turn get involved in local issues to try to prevent negative legislation, such as restrictions on driver's licenses, access to social services, health care, and tuition assistance. We want the office to be a center for services, but the life of the organization should be outside." In short, CARECEN uses native-country concerns to educate immigrants on U.S. issues. This can be seen as a novel form of the "Know Your Rights" teaching technique.

Sheila Black of Colonias Development Council in New Mexico says "the communities are very small, so everyone knows each other and conflict can arise. This makes it difficult to hold someone accountable. Getting confrontational is very difficult because of the inter-connectedness of the communities and makes for an obstacle to action by leaders."

Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee's Gladys Vega says that partnerships need to be based on a sense of shared mission. "Setting a specific goal and addressing the issues in a general way makes a powerful partnership. I tell people to leave your personal interests at home and come with the mentality that you want this community to grow. We have encouraged our leaders to believe that regardless of where we come from, our main issues should be the advancement of our community."

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center, based in Morristown, New Jersey, organizes immigrants based on their current employment or neighborhood realities, not by kinship or nationality. "Our immigrant rights committees have a minimum of five people who meet at least once a month," explains Lead Organizer Angel Patiño. "Committees are created on the basis of where these people work, live, or study. When people are organized from the same country, it is very difficult because they tend to care a lot about the national issues and are more interested in the politics of their country, not the politics and living conditions here in the United States. They tend to be more like philanthropic groups that want to help people in their countries. We want them to change the focus to organize around issues that are here in the United States. This has been very difficult. So, now we put them

12 Kissam, E.; Garcia, A.; Jeter, I.; Levitt, M. "Evaluation of the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship," (December 31, 1999).

in groups according to where they live or work or study instead of nationality. We want them to focus on the immigrant issues, and they have to work together."

It is no surprise that immigrants express dual concerns for their home countries and their chosen communities in the United States. This is particularly true for newer immigrants confronting systemic barriers to integration. Organizers know not to ignore these dual concerns. Rather, they use them to help shape new communal bonds focused on achieving what is best for the future.

Intergenerational Partnerships

Organizing for social justice is a challenge. Including youth in the organizing process can increase the challenge but also adds many benefits. Organizing for the improvement of a community reinforces in adults' minds why they live and work hard in the United States: for the betterment of their children's future. Good citizenship is modeled when adults organize in front of youth; it is a form of civic education that young people do not receive in school. Also, organizing youth with adults energizes the process. Adults who encourage youth to participate inform the younger generation that they are needed to be torch-bearers in the pursuit of justice. In addition, community organizing engages and empowers young people, which is particularly important for those who are vulnerable to violence.

Paula Endo

Immigrant marches across the country on April 10, 2006 for comprehensive immigration reform and against a bill to make illegal presence a felony involved many youth who marched with schoolmates and their families. An important question for adult organizers is how to continue to build momentum following the historic marches and nurture youth who have leadership potential. In the words of one Woodbridge, Virginia high school student leading hundreds of fellow students to march, "I think the perfect leader is a human one. You need a leader that understands his people. I think that's why people listen to me. People can relate to me. They say, 'Hey, he's going through what I'm going through.' "[13]

The Chinese Progressive Association, based in Boston, encourages youth to connect their ethnic history to current realities. "We teach them Chinese American history and relate that to the issues Chinese immigrants today face," Karen Chen explains. "They then do a project that relates to what they have learned. Throughout the years, we have had youth get involved in our campaigns. They have their own campaigns also. Our youth are now trying to get a public library built in Chinatown. Every neighborhood has a library except for us. The youth researched the history and then did a survey among the community to see what the community would like for a library."

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) values the involvement of youth but has found it difficult to organize them. Executive Director Angelica Salas notes that young people are pulled by high school and college responsibilities, are often far away from their home communities, and need to work to earn money for tuition. "To sustain a relationship we have created a group that meets on the breaks. CHIRLA was not organizing youth prior to 2000, but we thought it would be good to have youth be an equal part of our work. So we made a commitment to this process and it was one of the best decisions we ever made. The organization has grown much as a result of this. It has presented challenges for the organizational culture to treat youth equally and work with them equally, yet differently. The adults are also happy to see youth attend our meetings and events that they turn around and become volunteers also."

Youth involvement in CARECEN in Washington, D.C. has been tied to the college admissions process. Executive Director Saul Solorzano says that based on performance—which is measured against the youth volunteers' job descriptions—CARECEN writes letters of recommendation for college applications.

Massachusetts' Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee coordinated a successful summer youth employment/gang prevention program, which was born from the violence of September 11. "The morning of September 11, we had a meeting of Latino leaders, youth advocates, Catholic nuns, police officers, and many others. Two kids had been killed by joining a gang and another one had been shot and paralyzed within the space of six months," says Gladys Vega. "Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee gathered all these different interest groups to do something about [violence] as a community and to address the issue of gangs, because we knew that a Salvadorian gang called MS 13 was recruiting in the city. Once you have a gang, another one comes, so something needed to be done. This group of collaborators decided to create a program that would keep kids busy, especially in the summertime. The program

13 Shapira, I. "Cause Transforms Woodbridge Teen Into Activist Leader," *The Washington Post*, (April 17, 2006), p. A01.

would provide structure, mentoring, and education on avoiding gang membership. We knew that once we had the tough kids involved with us, we could control the recruitment of gangs. This program gave youth jobs, which was very desirable because the community is so poor. Last summer 265 kids were hired."

Partnerships with Community Leaders and Power-Brokers

Organizers frequently use power-mapping skills to analyze and chart who makes decisions in a particular community and the relationships that can be influenced to redress a problem or unjust condition. Organizers who were interviewed said that they mostly targeted elected officials and business owners as power-brokers. They emphasized that organizing efforts with power-brokers need not always be confrontational, but they must seek to shift power to community members. These efforts often involve engagement with their own boards of directors and community-based boards, or *collectivos*. Organizers find that allies, including immigrant elected officials, cannot be taken for granted and must be held accountable.

Jon Liss, Executive Director of Tenants and Workers United, based in Alexandria, Virginia, points to the importance of "a regional power analysis that situates your work." He says power analysis can help an organization identify the issues on which it should be working. Power analysis depends on the insights of community members who have personal experiences with injustice and a systems perspective on institutional authority. Power-mapping is critical in the earliest stages of developing a campaign strategy, but it needs to be repeated to identify alternative strategies when success is not achieved as expected.

Sheila Black of Colonias Development Council, located in Las Cruces, New Mexico, has learned that "power-mapping and power analysis as part of a basic organizing training can be significant in motivating people." She gives the example of an environmental justice campaign. At first, CDC found it difficult to motivate the community around environmental justice because the issue seemed too abstract. The agency then found out that its constituents wanted to organize a neighborhood cleaning project. In carrying out the project, community members discovered that the entities contributing to the inappropriate amounts of trash were not just individuals, but also the county and corporations. "The community decided that something should be done about this. This led the community to enter talks with the county and the companies to protect the environment," reported Ms. Black.

Some organizers have developed nuanced relationships with government that may surpass those understood by classic community organizing models. Marcelo Gaete, Senior Director of Programs and Javier Angulo, Director of Civic Education, of the NALEO Educational fund reflect that there are opportunities to an organizing style that can engage government as a partner. As an association of elected officials, they say the NALEO Educational Fund is an aspect of government. Yet much of the NALEO Education Fund's work with grassroots Latino participation may conflict with its members who are elected officials. They point to an example of tension sparked by the NALEO Educational Fund forum which invited members of the community chosen at random from a large list of voters to speak to a media group about issues of concern to them. The intention of the forum, says Gaete, was to give "the elected leadership a sense of community concerns." However, when a participant from East Los Angles used the forum to complain about actions of an elected official and a newspaper published the quote, the official was angry at the NALEO Educational Fund. "Some officials take a while to understand that the issues are not about them but about the community as a whole," concludes Gaete.

Despite such tensions, NALEO's membership of elected officials has been supportive to community organizing efforts. Angulo and Gaete recall that several years ago, when the Los Angeles City Council proposed that neighborhoods with burglar alarms receive first response to crime, poorer communities without alarms were threatened with a loss of policing services. The neighborhood council, supported by NALEO, contended that police allocation should be based on crime reports and statistics, not the presence or absence of burglar alarms. A City Council member who belonged to NALEO helped broker an agreement to this effect.

Chelsea residents are constituents of the first Latino senator elected in Massachusetts, according to Gladys Vega. That elected official is using Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee's successful youth summer employment project as a "poster project" to help pass a bill that would allocate funds to summer employment for immigrant youth, as well as a victim's protection program to combat gang violence and protect families.

Board members can be well-established power-brokers, or if not, encouraged to use their respected status in the community to act in support of immigrant needs. Most of the organizations interviewed for this report enjoyed diverse boards. "The board is made up of people close to Voz—its supporters," explains Romeo Sosa, Lead Organizer of Portland Voz Workers' Rights Education Project. Voz's board is typical of most organizations interviewed. It is comprised of a professional grant proposal writer; an American Friends Service Committee employee;

a Portland State University student; a high school English teacher; and a pastoral counselor working in a Catholic parish.

Some organizations do not rely solely on traditional boards for direction and leadership. Angel Patiño, Lead Organizer of Wind of the Spirit, explains that his group has two governing bodies. "The board has legal and fiscal responsibility for the organization. They decide to approve the budget and the annual working plan, and they approve annual reports and make changes in the bylaws if needed. They meet twice a year. The second governing body is the *Colectivo*, an assembly of all stakeholders. We hold open *Colectivo* meetings each month. This is where we decide all the policy issues. We have working groups; these people are in charge of the day-to-day work of the organization and this group includes paid staff. The two annual board meetings have more authority, but the *Colectivo* and the working groups operate under a more cooperative environment. Ours is more of a circular structure. We do not say the board is higher than the *Colectivo*. It is more of a horizontal hierarchy."

Similarly, Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee "provides the staffing for the organizing, but the committees do all the work," says Gladys Vega. While the governance and administrative functions in support of the committees are behind the scenes, their work needs to be made transparent. Nevertheless, the people of Chelsea see first and foremost the committees working on their interests.

Las Posadas: A Story of Faith in Action

Beatriz Maya of the National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency tells of an advocacy action with religious resonance. Honoring Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of shelter, "Las Posadas" [which literally means "shelter"] is a neighborhood event that takes place at Christmastime throughout Mexico. Children and adults dressed in costumes representing Mary, Joseph, and others central to the story form a procession, walking from house to house to plead for shelter. The National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency reinterpreted "Las Posadas" to communicate the struggles of undocumented workers in the United States. "We took Las Posadas to the local offices of our Congress people [representatives and senators]," says Beatriz Maya. "We dressed as Jesus, Mary, shepherds, and others, and sang traditional songs. The idea was to call attention to Mariá and José as immigrants in a new country looking for shelter and hospitality. We related that to the position of the undocumented here, the way they are treated and the respect they deserve." Ms. Maya said this action received excellent media coverage and was satisfying to her group for its cultural and social relevance.

Partnerships with Faith Groups and Civic Organizations

"…efforts for justice, the struggle against every oppression, and the safeguarding of the dignity of the person…are choices and acts that have a profoundly religious inspiration; they are true and proper sacrifices that are pleasing to God." Pope John Paul II (January 10, 2001).

It is important for immigrant community organizers to form as many partnerships with people of good will, faith, hope, and a commitment to justice. Organizers may find churches institutionally poised to engage in immigrant-led community organizing, or, if not, they have members who are supportive. Organizing among allies may take place within religious institutions, especially on issues as divisive and complex as immigration and workers' rights. Forging partnerships across faith and civic group lines expands and strengthens the efforts.

Faith is often a foundation of immigrant community organizing. Religious groups typically have a strong commitment to human rights and the just treatment of people.

Belief that God has power in individual lives gives many communities hope. This hope may empower individuals to take action on issues of concern to their communities. In addition, faith-based institutions often hold considerable power in a community, which can be used to bring about desired change. These are important dynamics to understand in the context of community organizing.

Although the National Immigrant Empowerment Project was funded by two Catholic institutions, CCHD and CLINIC, only one of the 17 sub-grantees was a Catholic organization. The remaining organizations were a combination

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of non-sectarian or interfaith-based groups. However, since most of the organizers and community leaders were from Mexico and Central America, the Christian faith—Catholic and Protestant—was pre-eminent in their identity. In a 2001 study, 64.7 percent of immigrants expressed a preference for Christianity, with 42 percent described themselves as Catholic, 18.6 percent Protestant, and 4.2 percent Orthodox. Immigrants identifying themselves as Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu totaled 15 percent.[14]

"There is a natural alliance between immigrant-led and faith-based organizations, partly because they share the same constituency base." says Tom Chabolla, CCHD's Associate Director for Programs. "Leaders in community organizations often turn immediately toward faith-based groups because their leadership and religious congregants provide spiritual and moral support as well as political power," he says. His colleague Renee Brereton adds, "Places of worship are one of the few safe places immigrants, particularly the undocumented, can have open conversation and be heard. Churches are expanding how they respond to immigrant needs by adding leadership training that bridges native and foreign-born members acting in solidarity in the public arena."

Reverend Ed Gomez is Executive Director of El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission, which provides integrated health care, emergency food, advocacy, leadership development, and basic education for working-poor Hispanic families in Austin, Texas. Rev. Gomez says that his organization's leadership model is "community-centered, with a spiritual component. The Hispanic model of leadership tends to follow the pattern of the oppressed and the oppressor, where whoever is in charge gets as much as he can for as little as he can do. This is a brutal model. El Buen Samaritano's programs introduce a call to ministry and teach that a true leader is a servant leader, and that personal prosperity depends upon prosperity of the community at large." Rev. Gomez asks the organization's paid *promotores* (community outreach workers) to consider themselves in the context of "the Jesus model, the servant model."

Amanda Morgan

CARECEN in Washington, D.C. formed a partnership with several local churches and community-based nonprofit organizations serving immigrants—such as AYUDA, Casa De Maryland, and Hispanic Committee of Virginia—in order to write a multi-agency grant proposal. CARECEN also works with other community organizing entities, unions, *pro bono* attorneys, and the city government's Office of Latino Affairs. "Now we are in the stages of joining other regional efforts," says Saul Solorzano. "If we are leading the coalitions, we go to find partners. If we are just supporting the coalition, we provide strategic support. Finding our role is what can make partnerships very successful."

Gladys Vega provides examples of Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee's partners: "Centro Latino (they provide ESL classes and citizenship application assistance); La Communida (they provide direct immigration services); and St. Luke's Episcopal Church. We partner with agencies such as boys and girls clubs. Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee is always recruiting new immigrants so we look for agencies [to partner with] that draw many families and communities."

Faith-Based Inspiration in Seeking Justice

Credible Signs of Christ Alive: Case Studies from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development identifies clear theological principles at work in the lives of low-income people striving for justice in their communities. The book vividly details projects initiated and led by the poor, including attention to immigrants' experiences in changing oppressive social structures. Readers are offered insightful reflections, questions, action steps, and further study references at the conclusion of each chapter.

Rev. Ed Gomez says El Buen Samaritano, in coalition with churches, has partnered with some of the most established community institutions—banks and law enforcement—to improve the lives of undocumented immigrants. It is not uncommon to find these employees as members of a congregation. "With the undocumented, there's a lot you

14 Jasso, G, Massey, D. S., Rosenzweig, R., Smith, M., & James, P. "Exploring the Religious Preference of Recent Immigrants to the United States: Evidence from the New Immigrant Survey Pilot," (2001), p. 5.

can do. We can empower them to understand their rights within the system. We can teach them that they have a right to be protected from crime." El Buen Samaritano has partnered with Austin's police department, as well as with businesses that provide banking services to immigrants. "The police department and Wells Fargo were concerned that the undocumented people in Austin without bank accounts were getting mugged. The police worked with Buen Samaritano's *promotores* to inform the community about the availability of banking services for the undocumented.

Volunteers

"Leaders in community organizing do not come in to do what others tell them to do. They come in with ideas and to build relationships." Sister Mignonne Konecny, Lead Organizer, Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee.

While volunteers share concerns with the wider community, they also wish to improve their personal situations. It is important in recruiting and retaining volunteers to recognize both motives. It is also important not to view them simply as unpaid helpers or "just" volunteers but as a linchpin of future success. Organizers know their limitations and help empower volunteers to outlive particular social causes—or even the community organizing entity itself.

Sheila Black of Colonias Development Council says that "paid staff does not drive the action. Community groups drive the action, and they deserve a lot of credit when something does happen. Colonias Development Council's main role is to provide direction and funding for these groups. Community group members do not consider themselves as volunteers of Colonias Development Council. They see themselves as being autonomous, and they actually have their own names for their groups. One of Colonias Development Council's primary goals is to train leaders who will continue their work even if the Development Council ceased to exist."

In order to motivate the community to action, CCISCO starts with the principle of self-interest. "Self-interest moves people," says Don Stahlhut. "It is important to find out what the interests of the community and the particular leaders are. People act on issues that impact them or their families. CCISCO identifies the issues that impact large numbers of people and organizes community leaders around them. Leaders will stay involved as long as the organization addresses issues that impact the community at large."

Catholic Charities of Rockville Centre, located in Long Island, New York, created a formal partnership with immigrant community leaders under its Alliance of Citizens and Immigrants (ACI). Carmen Maquilon, Director of Immigration Services, says, "We use volunteers from ACI for advocacy. When an issue comes up and we need to make visits to legislators in Albany, or if we need people to make phone calls or write letters, that's the group we call first." ACI is comprised of high-school youth who speak to legislators about their situation and the struggles of undocumented children. "Having these volunteers makes our advocacy real," continues Ms. Maquilon. "It makes a big difference to have the U.S. citizen spouse of an undocumented immigrant show up in Albany with his two kids, saying to a legislator, 'Look, without my wife's legal status, I cannot function.'"

A Volunteer in Action

Mr. Martinez (not his real name) is a volunteer organizer in the San Francisco Bay community of Richmond, California. He came to the United States from Mexico in the 1980s and worked hard to support his wife and children until he became disabled on the job. Sadly, his son was accidentally struck and killed by a car as he walked home from school. There was no crosswalk caution signal to alert the driver, which was a persistent complaint among neighborhood parents concerned for their children's safety. Mr. Martinez's grief, combined with a disability that left him with time on his hands, motivated him to organize his neighbors to get the city to place crosswalks and safety signals on roads around the school. The group was successful. But Mr. Martinez didn't stop there. He continues to work with Contra Costa Interfaith Sponsoring Committee (CCISCO) and a local parish to work against gang and drug-selling activity, organizing hundreds of residents in his apartment complex.

National Networks

Most immigrant-led community groups have worked in local and national networks urging Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that would legalize the roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants believed to be living in the United States. A series of demonstrations across the country with hundreds of thousands of immigrants joined by church groups, labor unions, and civil rights organizations marching on streets and into public squares gives evidence to the growing ties between local organizers and national networks.[15]

15 Swarns, R. "Immigrants Rally in Scores of Cities for Legal Status," *The New York Times*, (April 11, 2006).

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National organizations partnering with local groups on legislative advocacy include National Council of La Raza, Center for Community Change, National Immigration Forum, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Local advocacy efforts have presented compelling cases to the media and Congress of young people who have been barred from higher education due to their lack of legal status. Although "Dream Act" legislation has been pending in Congress for several years, the momentum to pass legislation is a tribute to the partnerships formed between local organizers and national immigrant advocacy groups.

Amanda Morgan

Many community groups also belong to local and national networks that support comprehensive immigration reform legislation. They support providing a path to legal status for qualified undocumented persons and creating a labor-based visa system rooted in the country's workforce needs. Community organizing groups have created or joined the National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency, the Center for Community Change's Fair Immigration Reform Movement, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Justice for Immigrants Campaign, and the New Americans Opportunity Campaign. Success in reforming U.S. immigration laws can only be achieved through grass-roots mobilization.

"National networks and local groups have strength in knowledge and experience in different ways," says CCHD's Renee Brereton. "National networks can take time to pioneer into new directions and create new training using resources that local groups can't easily tap into."

National and Regional Networks as Another Layer of Community Organizing

According to the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship, national and regional networks of politically active immigrants comprise another layer of immigrant community organizing. "Immigrants can be meaningfully involved in national and state-level issues as well as in the civic life of the local community in which they live. This represents an important insight, the awareness that immigrants 'belong' both to local geographically-defined communities and to larger 'virtual' communities comprised of ethnic groups and the community of immigrants in general." (Kissam, E.; Garcia, A.; Jeter, I.; Levitte, M. "Evaluation of the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship.")

Conversely, says Brereton's colleague Tom Chabolla, "local organizations have leaders and untapped constituents who are not easily accessed by national networks."

To make a network function well, it is important for members, particularly leaders, to implement checks and balances in the decision-making process. Imbalances happen when either the national organization gets out too far in front of local members on a policy issue, or local members remain too rigid to be active in a national partnership.

Beatriz Maya of the National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency offers advice on creating policy networks that include the voices of non-immigrants, forge equitable partnerships, and identify broad priority issues. She notes that the National Coalition values collaboration with labor unions, faith communities, organizations of people of color, and progressive social change groups. "When we talk to members of Congress, we need to show that these issues we care about are not just immigrant issues, but they are national issues and there are many different citizens who are supporting us."

She cautions that partnerships and collaborations are satisfying for her group only when people come to them "willing to listen…. We avoid partnerships where we can have no say on the agenda. We look for people who are willing to share and to work in honest ways."

In identifying priority issues, she stresses the need to include those most impacted. "If you don't have farm-workers in your base, you can't decide to push for AgJobs [immigrant farmworker legislation]. It would also be inappropriate to get behind a bill that would provide legalization only for Mexicans, even though some of our members, such as Associacion Tepeyac, have primarily Mexican constituents."

David Bacon

Romeo Sosa, Lead Organizer for Portland Voz Workers' Rights Education Project, notes that his organization has benefited from the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, which is based in Los Angeles. A Portland Voz organizer attended the Network's national gathering in New York, but budget restrictions prevented Mr. Sosa and others from attending. Several organizations interviewed for this report are members of this immigrant laborers' group, which is a collaborative of 18 community-based organizations that organize day laborers in different parts of the country. The Network is in the process of determining how to reorganize itself in order to sustain itself and increase its effectiveness.

Funding

"Developing a culture and practice of democratic and transparent finances is very important to us." Jon Liss, Executive Director of Tenants and Workers United.

It is easy for a study of community organizing to conclude that a lack of resources hobbles progress. This is true. It is difficult to raise money from foundations for community organizing, and particularly difficult to raise money from constituents who are poor. However, addressing financial challenges with community members can raise awareness and spur people to action. Scarce funding can also help them to prioritize their work and partner with others who have resources.

The literature affirms that funding is tight for immigrant community organizers. "The time and energy spent in raising funds is seen as the most serious obstacle to immigrant and refugee-led organizations' development…. Organizations [studied] most needed funding for long-term and flexible or general support; staff; programs, especially organizing and advocacy programs; space; training and technical assistance; and developing leadership."[16]

The literature also shows that unlike more mainstream U.S. associations, immigrant organizing groups cannot count on constituents as a funding base due to their limited understanding of U.S. nonprofit structures and limited financial resources. "While they may give funds to organizations for specific emergencies—to start a language class, or as a fee for services—constituents are less inclined to give general donations and may believe that general operating funds will simply 'go into the executive director's pocket.' As a result, it has often been very difficult for organizations to develop a constituent funding base for their advocacy."[17]

In its public report for the Hyams Foundation, Mosaica found that "relatively new, small groups…often lack the funding to provide salaries or fringe benefits sufficient to retain talented individuals—especially those with families to support."[18] It can be difficult to take on or retain staff members who sacrifice their time, resources, and earning potential.

Rev. Ed Gomez of El Buen Samaritano notes that a big challenge is to retain immigrant community organizers through the organization's *promotores* program. "*Promotores* is a management nightmare," he says candidly. "This is grassroots organizing. They need a real job and we can only pay $40 per presentation. That's only $160 over a month. You can clean two houses in a week for this. Why go through it?" He notes that *promotores* devote their own resources to this service. *Promotores* enjoy intangible benefits, including new connections and stature in the community, and satisfaction in seeing the results of their work.

CARECEN's Saul Solorzano says, "it is most difficult to get money for organizing. Now we are getting some support from the Jewish Fund for Justice. We used to have CLINIC money under the National Immigrant Empowerment Project, funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. We are trying to persuade the Mayor's Office for Latino affairs to fund us. We are getting

16 McKay, E.G., Scothmer, K., Ros, M.E., & Figueroa, M. "Immigrant and Refugee-Led Organizations and Their Technical Assistance Needs," (2001), p. 7, 15.

17 Mosaica: The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism. "Immigrant and Refugee-Led Organizations and their Technical Assistance Needs: Report of a Study Conducted for the Ford Foundation, Migrant and Refugee Rights Portfolio," (2000), p. 21.

18 Mosaica: The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism. "Research on Barriers and Opportunities for Increasing Leadership in Immigrant and Refugee Communities: Public Report," (April 2000), p. 7.

money from the D.C. Housing Department. Close to the presidential elections, a lot of sources offer us grants to increase the numbers of registered voters, but after [the elections] we don't have any." Mr. Solorzano says the group has not had the capacity to develop private donors. "CARECEN does sponsor events, but proceeds are used mostly to support the hometown associations. After the earthquakes in El Salvador, we raised a lot of money. But for local [D.C.-area] programs, we still need to find a way to make people respond to local issues."

Even if unrestricted gifts from constituents are rare, fees for services can be part of a group's funding stream. Mr. Solorzano says that developing as a membership organization can help raise funds; asking for modest fees for services has helped CARECEN. He estimates that membership and fees for services contribute 15% of the organization's budget.

Catholic Charities of Rockville Centre, in Long Island, New York, created the Alliance for Citizens and Immigrants as a means to strengthen the immigrant community's advocacy agenda. ACI is structured as a membership group. Carmen Maquilon, Director of Immigration Services, says, "We charge $5 per year for membership in ACI. This allows us to help defray the cost of postage for anything we need to send to members, and to defray the cost of membership card production. It also allows us to support staff time conducting outreach at different parishes and helps with the cost of our travel expenses that we can't charge to grants. With 1,000 members, the $5 can add up so it really helps."

The Alliance for Citizens and Immigrants views membership fees as a way to promote "buy-in" to the entity's structure and mission. "When a client pays for something," explains Ms. Maquilon, "it brings a commitment from the client and from us, keeping us both in check. It gives us more freedom [to do what we need to do] and holds us accountable to do something. And I think clients don't appreciate things as much when they are free. The $5 represents almost one hour of work, hard work, for the client. If we gave the membership for free, they might not appreciate it as much."

Although many immigrants engaged in organizing efforts are poor, they give what they can. Money may not be the primary resource at their disposal. Working in solidarity and gaining trust are precursors to establishing a dues-paying membership.

Jon Liss, Executive Director of Tenants and Workers United, sees organizational development advantages in scarce funding. "We are evolving. We have had a spontaneous approach [to issue identification] in the past, but as funding became scarcer, we started to become more specific. We now organize around seven to eight campaigns; all can fall under the bigger umbrellas of race, nationality, gender, and class. We negotiate based on what resources we have, interest among members, and staff time."

CHAPTER 3

EVALUATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZING[19]

Importance of Evaluation

Grantmakers and other nonprofit agency stakeholders use evaluation as a tool to assess program performance and monitor the accountability of agency staff. In most nonprofit agencies, success can be measured by criteria like the number of children participating in school breakfast programs; number of new housing units produced; and percentage of participants placed in jobs. For community organizers, evaluating "success" or "effectiveness" is less clear than measuring service outcomes; "change" does not always lend itself to quantifiable measurement and causal relationships between actions and success are not always clear. Still, the need for evaluation remains.

Challenges in Measuring Community Organizing

Winning a community organizing campaign is usually the result of a confluence of factors, including:

- Many years of educational, persuasive, and sometimes coercive strategies applied by a host of organizations and/or individuals;
- A favorable economic environment when governments have budget surpluses or at least are not facing deficits;
- A political environment where legislators and/or the executive is predisposed to supporting the constituency; and
- Socio-cultural trends and counter-trends that might make social change more politically feasible.

These factors highlight the non-linear, long-term, and context-specific nature of community organizing and social change work. Measuring shifts in power poses an added challenge to evaluating community organizing.

> "This [evaluation] is our weakness. We recognize this and have started making some changes within the agency. We do more evaluation of campaigns. We are trying to develop an evaluation about whether we are reaching our goal—especially our policy goals—as it relates to leaders and coalitions." Angelica Salas, of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles.

Some researchers argue that quantitative evaluation models are ill-suited to community change efforts, and that they can harm an organizing campaign by diverting resources away from what is most important. For example, essential steps to a legislative victory might include gaining greater respect for the organizing group among policy makers; increasing savvy and sophistication of grassroots leadership and constituencies; and building confidence of grassroots leadership to participate in policy processes. Yet these successes may be given short shrift in a rush to achieve more measurable outcomes. In addition, grassroots community groups must have the flexibility to respond to crises, and not have their actions hampered by working to achieve an outcome promised before a crisis existed. New policies and sudden budget cuts can legitimately divert a campaign from its original intent. Therefore, evaluations that do not take the need for flexibility into account can be counterproductive.

A Participatory Approach

Approaches to evaluating community organizing are typically process-oriented, flexible, and participatory.

Process-oriented outcomes reflect the steps necessary to build power to affect social change. Some process outcomes can be quantified, such as number of new leaders developed; size of active membership; membership participation in public speaking, mobilization, meetings, or other events. Although these outcomes may not demonstrate a

19 The authors wish to thank Catholic University professor Linda Plitt Donaldson, Ph.D. for writing this chapter.

David Bacon

direct causal link to the ultimate campaign victory, they still show success and are valuable. An added benefit of process outcomes is that they help to tell the story of how the group built power over time, an important component for building momentum for the next campaign.

Flexibility is an important benefit to participatory evaluative methods. If a group is working collectively to evaluate its work, it can decide to shift “outcome measures” based on emerging crises.

Participatory evaluation engages the people directly involved in the campaign at all levels of the evaluation process, including identifying the outcomes; selecting how data will be collected; gathering and analyzing the outcome data; writing the evaluation; and learning it. Participatory evaluation does not mean that a group cannot bring in an “outside” evaluator, but an outside evaluator must be willing to facilitate a process where the grassroots community is a collaborator.

Participatory evaluation began in less developed countries in the 1970s, where traditional research methods, distance from subjects, and control over development and distribution of knowledge, produced findings that were irrelevant to the community.[20] Since that time the academic community has begun to acknowledge participatory evaluation as an important research method when the purpose of the research is to be useful to community partners and contribute to community development or social change.

To achieve accuracy in evaluating community organizing, one needs to engage directly and build trust with community partners to gather relevant data and to assess more accurately cause-and-effect. Because of the complexity of social change practice, distance from a project and reliance on “expertise” of trained researchers may lead to false conclusions.

Outcomes for Community Organizing

Outcomes for community organizing will vary based on the campaign, the socio-political-economic context, and the skills and level of cohesiveness that exist in the community. Therefore, no single template for evaluating a community organizing campaign exists. Some measures used by organizers as benchmarks for success are included in Appendix D. The list does not include progress goals associated with legislative or administrative policy campaigns.[21] In addition, since every community organizing strategy is context- and issue-specific, groups should work collectively to identify the outcomes that make the most sense for their unique situations. The purpose of Appendix D is to stimulate thinking around possible outcomes.

Summary

Community organizing is a social-change strategy designed to alter power relationships between marginalized groups and people who have control over funding, policy decisions, and other resources. It takes time, often years, to build power and the road is fraught with difficulties. Consequently, community organizers must educate funders and other potential supporters about the nature of their work. Community groups need to be given the time and flexibility to effect long-lasting change.

20 Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R., & Donohue, P. *Community-Based Research and Higher Education: Principles and Practices.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

21 Alliance for Justice. “Investing in Change: A Funder’s Guide to Supporting Advocacy,” Washington, D.C., (2004).

REPORT SUMMARY

The United States must find ways to integrate its record number of foreign-born residents. Community organizing can be an effective and meaningful way to promote integration. It allows immigrants to navigate the social, political, and economic terrain of their new country, and to tackle the thorny problems of injustice and discrimination.

National Immigration Forum

There are few studies that examine immigrant-led organizing, but journal and newspaper articles have yielded important information about the organizing challenges particular to immigrant communities. This report adds a rich stream of voices to this literature. It highlights the importance of immigrant-led organizing, but also its many challenges.

A central challenge is to develop and retain leaders. Immigrants—newly arrived immigrants, in particular—struggle with myriad difficulties: language barriers, low income, family separation, and unfamiliarity with the social, political, and economic realities of their new country, to name a few. Many are intimidated by power, while others fear reprisal—such as job loss—if they become involved in groups working to effect change.

Despite these challenges, organizations are developing good leaders within immigrant communities. Sometimes leaders are identified as a result of an existing relationship between the immigrant and organization. Leaders may also come to the attention of the organization through a "Know Your Rights" presentation, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, volunteer efforts, or referral from others. Leaders are not always the most vocal or dominant personalities in a group; nor do they have to be. Organizations look for commitment, compassion, the ability to work with others, and a willingness to learn.

Once leaders are identified, they are trained and oriented to U.S. social and political processes and to the reality of their own communities. This occurs in a variety of ways, including through leadership manuals and formal training. For many, a key part of the training process is power-mapping.

Community groups employ a variety of means to retain leaders including training, recognition of leaders' work, and special celebrations. For many organizers, seeing the fruits of their work is a compelling enough reason to continue working for change.

Success is achieved in large part due to partnerships. Partnerships take many forms, including between individuals and organizations with similar goals; community leaders and power-brokers; civic organizations; volunteers; and national networks. Each type of partnership brings unique rewards and challenges. For example, difficulties may arise when organizing work conflicts with the policies of elected officials. Such relationships require nuance and balance in order to achieve the group's goals.

Churches and faith-based organizations can be rich resources, both institutionally and as communities where supportive individuals can be found. Many religious traditions strongly value human rights and social justice. In addition, faith can instill hope, and motivate and inspire action.

Partnerships are also essential because immigrant organizing groups have to work with limited resources. Raising money from outside sources is difficult, as is generating revenue from inside the community. But some organizations have found creative ways to increase their revenue streams. One way is to create a "membership" organization where members contribute $5 a year, which can at least help defray the cost of postage when organizations need to mail information to their constituents. Many report that immigrants place the organizations' work in higher esteem if they are required to contribute monetarily to it.

Another challenge is how to evaluate campaign outcomes. Determining what makes a campaign successful cannot always be quantified. In most cases, organizing is a long-term process that must respond to changing political, economic, and cultural environments.

Promising approaches to evaluating community organizing are process-oriented, flexible, and participatory. Process-oriented outcomes look to quantifiable measures, such as the group's size and number of new leaders developed, but

also at the steps necessary to build power that will effect change. Flexibility allows groups to evaluate their work regularly and to change benchmarks for "success" based on evolving conditions. Participatory evaluation directly involves community members in identifying outcomes, selecting how data will be gathered, analyzing the information, and writing the evaluation. Such methods try to take into account the changing nature of organizing, while ensuring that the evaluation's results actually reflect what the organizers are experiencing.

At its core, community organizing is an expression of democracy. The freedom to effect change is a powerful right, and the work of immigrant-led organizers toward achieving fair and just policies represents a meaningful way to integrate them into our participatory democracy. Immigrants are changing the face of the United States, and it is essential that their voices and experiences contribute to positive social change.

ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee, Austin, TX
Sister Mignone Konecny, *Lead Organizer*

Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Washington, DC
Tom Chabolla, *Associate Director of Programs*
Renee Brereton, *Community Organizing Grants Coordinator*

Catholic Charities of Rockville Centre, NY
Carmen Maquilon, *Director of Immigrant Services*

Central American Resource Center, Washington, DC
Saul Solorzano, *Executive Director*

Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee, New York, NY
Gladys Vega, *Project Director*

Chinese Progressive Association, Boston, MA *
Karen Chen, *Lead Organizer*
(*On the suggestion of other interviewees, CLINIC contacted the Chinese Progressive Association for an interview even though this organization was not part of the National Immigrant Empowerment Project. We thank Karen Chen for sharing the organization's story with us.)

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, CA
Angelica Salas, *Executive Director*

Colonias Development Council, Las Cruces, NM
Sheila Black, *Grant Writer, and Lucia Veronica Carmona, Organizer*

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization, Richmond, CA
Don Stahlhut, *Executive Director*

El Buen Samaritano, Austin, TX
Reverend Ed Gomez, *Executive Director*

Iowa Immigrant Rights Network of Catholic Charities, Des Moines, IA
Carlos Rios, *Coordinator*

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, Los Angeles, CA
Javier Angulo, *National Director of Civic Education, and*
Marcelo Gaete, *Director of Constituency Services*

National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency for Undocumented Immigrants, Toledo, OH
Beatriz Maya, *Executive Committee Member*

Tenants and Workers United, Alexandria, VA
Jon Liss, *Executive Director*

Portland Voz Workers' Rights Education Project, Portland, OR
Romeo Sosa, *Organizer*

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center, Morristown, NJ
Angel Patino, *Lead Organizer*

NATIONAL IMMIGRANT EMPOWERMENT PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CLINIC's National Immigrant Empowerment Project (NIEP) aimed to promote collective action among low-income immigrants to effect change in the systems that negatively impact their communities and lives. Generously supported by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, CLINIC awarded 17 community-based nonprofit agencies with grants to help immigrant communities identify problems that impede their full participation in this country, develop a plan of action to address these problems, and draw upon a network of local and national agencies for support. Collectively, the NIEP grantees worked on a broad range of issues, including legalization for undocumented immigrants; U.S.-Mexico border enforcement abuses and immigrant deaths on the border; immigrant access to drivers' licenses and consular identification; immigrant workers' rights, health, and safety; leadership development; civic engagement and participation; community safety and access to community services; affordable and safe housing; access to healthcare; and access to education for immigrant students.

Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee

1301 S. IH 35, Suite 313
Austin, TX 78714
512-916-0100

Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee organized immigrants to form an "education action team" to work on the issue of immigrants' access to community colleges. The action team held an accountability session with candidates for the community college board that was attended by more than 100 immigrants. The city subsequently passed a referendum bringing the area of DelValle into the Austin Community College (ACC) district. The referendum was a major victory for immigrants in the DelValle area because it made college much more affordable for them. (Because ACC is partially funded by tax revenues from residents of participating school districts, students living within a participating district pay about half the tuition of those outside the district.) In addition, the Committee secured funding for English classes that will serve approximately 2,000 immigrants. The budget for the classes was threatened by cuts, but preserved when immigrant leaders attended meetings and spoke with city and county officials.

Border Network for Human Rights

2101-B Myrtle Ave.
El Paso, TX 79901
915-577-0724

Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) organized human rights committees in border communities. Approximately 140 people participated in committee meetings each month and helped monitor abuses on the border. In addition, BNHR filed 22 complaints with the U.S. Office of Inspector General against the former U.S. Border Patrol – El Paso Sector. These incidents of abuse were collected during BNHR's 2002 Abuse Documentation Campaign and were analyzed by the Texas Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights. The cases included incidents of excessive force, unlawful entries into homes, and deprivation of food and water. In response to the various abuses committed by the Border Patrol, BNHR organized a one-month campaign for human and constitutional rights. This event engaged 25 human rights promoters in southern New Mexico border areas to post 300 signs on streets, homes, and grocery stores to raise community awareness of human and constitutional rights. Also, BNHR held a "Luminaries on the River" event on All Souls Day, November 1, at the banks of the Rio Grande to bring attention to the hundreds of migrant deaths on the border. Migrant families placed more than 300 luminaries to honor the dead.

Immigrant Services Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York

143 Schleigel Blvd.
Amityville, NY 11701
631-789-5224

Catholic Charities organized the "Alliance of Citizens and Immigrants" (ACI) to advocate on issues affecting immigrants in the community. During the project period, the ACI registered more than 3,000 new members. A local bank agreed to accept the ACI membership card as a valid document for opening a savings account. This policy makes immigrants safer by not making them have to carry a lot of cash, and it allows them to begin creating an official record of their presence in the U.S. in order to qualify for legalization in the future. In addition, Catholic Charities organized a community meeting in Riverhead to explain a new Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) policy that threatened to revoke the driver's licenses of tens of thousands of immigrants who cannot verify their Social Security numbers. Members of ACI participated in a letter-writing campaign that yielded 5,000 letters protesting the policy to the New York DMV commissioner and Gov. George Pataki. Approximately 300 people took part in a Good Friday protest at the DMV office in Riverhead.

Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)

1459 Columbia Road, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
202-328-9799

The Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) conducted a citizenship campaign in the Latino community, with extensive outreach on voting, elections, and the importance of being civically engaged. In addition, CARECEN worked with the Fair Budget Coalition on a D.C. Voter Guide for the primaries and the general election, formulating the issues and questions for the candidates to address. The organization also translated the guide into Spanish and distributed it widely in the Latino community. CARECEN joined the D.C. Latino Coalition and other ethnic organizations to support the passage of the Language Access Act, which was signed into law by the mayor of Washington, D.C., on April 21, 2004. The legislation requires translators in city agencies and the appointment of a citywide coordinator to ensure that residents who are not proficient in English are provided equal access to services.

Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee

300 Broadway
Chelsea, MA 02150
617-889-6080

Chelsea Latino Immigrant Committee registered more than 1,400 new voters during the project period, including 75 newly naturalized immigrants. The Committee mobilized 955 Latino voters in city elections. The percent of Latinos who voted in these elections exceeded the percent of non-Latinos who voted. The Committee also convinced the City Council president to sponsor the appointment of a Latino immigrant to the Housing Authority Commission and recruited five Latino immigrants as School Committee candidates under a newly organized School Committee structure. The School Committee election had a record Latino turnout, and Latinos achieved much better representation on the School Committee, with two Latinas elected to serve on it. In addition, the Committee provided 18 workshops on workers' health and safety for more than 305 workers to inform them of their right to organize. As a result, the Committee succeeded in winning health and safety improvements for 45 food-processing workers at Logan Airport. The Committee also helped eight workers to file wage and overtime complaints to the State Attorney General's Office, and secured an agreement from one employer to provide back pay to 10 day laborers. The Committee also helped draft state legislation to protect temporary workers.

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles – Leticia A. Network and the Immigrant Youth Leadership Development Project

2533 W. 3rd Street, Suite 101
Los Angeles, CA 90057
213-353-1333

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) collected 6,000 petitions urging President Bush to sign the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act in 2004, as part of a national coalition that collected more than 100,000 petitions. Together with a local DREAM coalition, CHIRLA sent a delegation of 10 students to Washington, D.C. The students spent three days making legislative visits to key supporters and to senators who have opposed the DREAM Act. The delegation held a large press conference that generated dozens of national articles on the DREAM campaign, and marched to the Department of Education to turn in the 100,000+ petitions to President Bush, where they held a mock graduation ceremony, dressed in caps and gowns, to highlight the situation of undocumented students. In addition, CHIRLA's youth group initiated and carried out a two-week fast and vigil demonstration in September 2004 to draw attention to the DREAM Act

before the end of the Congressional year. This effort was coordinated nationally, with students participating in fast/vigils in New York, Massachusetts, and Oregon. The California fast/vigil took place in front of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where more than 100 participants fasted for varying lengths of time. It opened with a press conference and included visits from elected officials, local leaders, and other supporters throughout the fasting period. This event garnered a great deal of media attention and resulted in the DREAM Act being passed through the Senate Judiciary Committee as an attachment to a Department of Justice bill.

Colonias Development Council

1050 Monte Vista
Las Cruces, NM 88001
505-647-2744

Colonias Development Council (CDC) organized residents of border communities called colonias to obtain needed infrastructure in their communities. During the NIEP project period, CDC recruited 16 colonias residents to be trained and employed as application processors for a wastewater hook-up project in Dona Ana County, where more than 3,000 households were signed on to the project. In addition, residents in five communities met with their state representative, state senator, country commissioner, and mayor to discuss ways to address their infrastructure needs, including problems with flooded roads, crime, and the wastewater system. CDC also worked with a housing organization to help residents of Montana Vista apply for home rehabilitation loans and to develop a homebuyer training program.

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO)

724 Ferry Street
Martinez, CA 94553
925-313-0206

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO) helped to secure passage of an inclusionary zoning law in the city of Brentwood, California, that will result in 675 new low- and very low-income homes over the next five years—a benefit of more than $202 million. Following passage of a similar law in the city of Concord, California, CCISCO met with housing officials to encourage the development of 27 affordable homes. In addition, CCISCO organized three "Immigrant to Citizenship" forums in the cities of Richmond, Concord, and Brentwood. More than 550 immigrants attended these forums, where they heard inspirational speeches on civic participation, learned how to move toward full citizenship, and consulted with attorneys on their individual cases.

El Buen Samaritano

7000 Woodhue Dr.
Austin, TX 78745
512-439-0700

El Buen Samaritano used NIEP funds to support its Community Leadership Promotores (CLP) program. The CLP has a decision-making group of 68 low-income immigrants divided into 13 community groups that provide people with information on civic, social, and health-related topics. El Buen Samaritano held information and training sessions for its promotores during the project period, covering topics such as voting, community organizing, and community needs assessment. In addition, El Buen Samaritano organized a committee of four promotores to meet with representatives of the city of Bastrop to negotiate for adequate sewage and street repair for the Stony Point neighborhood. They succeeded in getting the city to agree to install sewage lines and in getting one street repaired. The committee also worked with the city to get bus service for the area.

Iowa Immigrant Rights Network

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Des Moines
601 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50303
515-244-3761

The Iowa Immigrant Rights Network held a statewide meeting that was attended by 210 people representing every local chapter and other locations across the state. More than 75% of the participants were immigrants. The day began with training on asset-based community development, followed by local area presentations, open dialogue to share experiences, and workshops to plan direct action. In addition, the Network distributed talking points for a local version of the DREAM Act, and issued action alerts to call and write local representatives that yielded more than 200 calls and postcards. More than 20 immigrant members of the Network planned and carried out a rally calling for passage of the DREAM Act and other pro-immigrant legislation during a visit by President Bush to Dubuque. In 2004, the Iowa state legislature passed a bill supported by the Network that is the first step in creating a process for training and certifying translators and interpreters. The new law will reduce the barriers faced by immigrants in accessing basic services.

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund

1122 W. Washington Blvd., 3rd floor
Los Angeles, CA 90015
213-747-7606

The National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund worked to organize, certify, and support neighborhood councils in Los Angeles' immigrant areas. During the project period, NALEO organized a leadership training program for two of the neighborhood councils, and staff provided technical assistance and support in the Board of Directors election for the Pico-Union Neighborhood Council. NALEO assisted in conducting a massive outreach campaign with door-to-door canvassing to encourage stakeholder participation in the pre-election voter forum and the election. As a result, 350 community members voted in the election, and 23 volunteers from the community and neighboring councils assisted with the election. In addition, NALEO assisted the Pacoima Neighborhood Council in organizing its executive board election, writing the bylaws, and facilitating meetings. During its Election Day 2004 activities, NALEO recruited many volunteers to staff its bilingual voter information hotline through its network of neighborhood councils, and received an overwhelming response.

National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency

1221 Broadway St.
Toledo, OH 43609
419-243-3456

The National Coalition for Dignity and Permanent Residency conducted legislative advocacy visits in Washington, D.C., with key congressional players on legalization. The Coalition also created an "Immigrant Manifesto" outlining principles for immigration reform and delivered it to more than 100 congressional offices. The Coalition launched a postcard campaign to encourage President Bush to act on immigration reform before the elections, and mailed 3,500 postcards to the White House. In addition, the Coalition organized a national day of fasting and prayer for legalization on Good Friday. Local actions such as vigils, pilgrimages, and media events happened in Seattle, Washington; Owatonna, Minnesota; Toledo, Ohio; New York, New York; Providence, Rhode Island; Houston, Texas; Palo Alto, California; Cleveland, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Maryville, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; Goldsboro, North Carolina; and Indianapolis, Indianapolis.

Sunflower Community Action

1528 N. Broadway, # 103
Wichita, KS 67214
316-264-9972

Sunflower Community Action (SCA) participated in a march and rally in the state capitol to support pending driver's license and in-state tuition legislation for immigrants. The event attracted 2,000 people from 13 cities and towns, including 54 members of SCA's North Chapter. As a result, Kansas state legislators passed a law May 7, 2004, allowing undocumented immigrant students to pay in-state tuition. In addition, SCA organized a public meeting between immigrants and local officials that was attended by 150 people. The state secretary of labor was in attendance to hear testimony and concerns from immigrant workers. A local judge announced new efforts under way to address concerns with fraudulent immigration attorneys, and a bank vice president announced newly available services to the undocumented community in opening bank accounts with Individual Tax Identification Numbers. After immigrants organized by SCA identified better police protection as a major issue they wanted to address, they met with the captain of the local police station, who agreed to work to address unsolved crimes in their neighborhood.

Tenants and Workers United

3801 Mt. Vernon Ave., #5
Alexandria, VA 22305
703-684-5697

Tenants and Workers United, formerly known as Tenants and Workers United, worked to improve access to healthcare for the uninsured in Fairfax County, Virginia. A regional sub-committee was formed to work on a campaign, aimed at Inova Health Systems, to end the unfair practice of differential billing of the uninsured. After two years of advocacy, TWSC secured an agreement from Inova Health Systems to end the practice of differential billing of the uninsured by giving a 35% discount to uninsured patients. TWSC held a press conference to announce this victory, where immigrant leaders spoke. TWSC members also participated in quarterly meetings of the Community Health Advisory Committee of Fairfax County. In addition, TWSC met with two members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors about creating low-income housing cooperatives in the county. After the supervisors indicated their general support for cooperative housing, TWSC members worked to research and identify suitable properties in the county.

VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project

330 SE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214
503-233-6787

VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project organized community forums to educate immigrants about legalization proposals in Congress. The forums were attended by 50 people, including 18 day laborers. In an effort to build better relations with local law enforcement, VOZ invited cadets from the Oregon Police Corps to meet with day laborers for dialogue and the exchange of life histories. Eighteen cadets and 20 day laborers participated in this event. In addition, VOZ provided monthly workshops, each attended by approximately 30 day laborers, on how to prevent employer abuse, worker rights and responsibilities, and collective problem solving. The laborers took a leadership role in the meetings by organizing meals, setting the agenda, and giving presentations on topics such as how to file a wage claim. VOZ also organized an annual leadership training at a local college that was attended by 25 community members.

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

19 Market Street
Morristown, NJ 07960
973-538-2035

Wind of the Spirit worked with the New Jersey Immigration Policy Network to launch a statewide campaign for legalization and secured support for pro-immigrant legislation from two New Jersey legislators. The organization also collected 365 signatures for the Dream Act campaign and participated in a legislative action to support a state version of DREAM by contacting the chairs of the education committee in the state legislature. In addition, Wind of the Spirit organized three new Immigrant Rights Committees (IRCs) in the neighboring towns of Madison, Parsippany, and Morris Plains, and provided two leadership training workshops for IRC members. The organization provided monthly outreach presentations on legalization and highlighted border deaths in its public education efforts, offering a community training session on legalization entitled, "No Human Being is Illegal."

The Workplace Project

91 N. Franklin Street, Ste. 207
Hempstead, NY 11550-3003
516-565-5377

The Workplace Project offered weekly orientations to workers with labor-related problems and presented a proposal to the mayor to improve a day laborer pick-up site in Freeport, New York. The organization also escorted workers to small claims court to sue for unpaid wages, and held protests against five local employers that resulted in more than $50,000 recuperated in lost wages. In July 2004, the Workplace Project held a meeting between the chief of police for Suffolk County and more than 40 workers to discuss enforcement of laws against the non-payment of wages. The police chief agreed to initiate criminal investigations against employers reported by workers, meet regularly with workers to follow up on these investigations, and proceed with the investigations regardless of workers' immigration status. In addition, the Workplace Project organized tenants in a Farmingdale, New York, apartment building that the town planned to demolish and replace with luxury condominiums. The building is one of the only affordable housing units in the town, and is home to many Latino immigrants. Shortly after the first tenant meeting, more than 100 residents were evacuated due to a suspicious leaking pipe and placed in shelters. The Workplace Project helped the tenants obtain legal representation, and they were allowed to return to the building two days later.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following is a list of questions asked by CLINIC in interviews with immigrant-led organizers. Interviews were semi-structured. Not all questions were asked of, or answered by, every interviewee.

Introduction

The purpose of this interview is to gather information to be documented, with your permission, in a report on best practices of immigrant-led organizing efforts. We are seeking to highlight the challenges and successes of the agencies we interview and not to evaluate the efforts in a negative way. The purpose of the interview is only to gather information, particularly quotes from organizers on important aspects of their work.

General Questions

1. When was your organization founded?
2. What is your organization's stated mission regarding organizing?
3. How does your organization operationally define organizing?
4. What is your professional and non-professional background in organizing?
5. Is there a staff member or volunteer who was an organizer in their home country and applies those experiences in the United States?
6. Is there a particular document (book, training manual, report) that has inspired you or that you hold to be very important in your organizing models and efforts? If yes, what is it?
7. Is there a document, published or unpublished, dealing with best practices on organizing issues that has guided your work?
8. What are your organization's needs for growth and capacity building?

Needs Assessment and Prioritizing

1. What are the primary issues around which you organize?
2. How do you determine and prioritize those issues?
3. Do you have an example of when you had a priority but had to change it because of a change in circumstance or wishes of the community?
4. What is your decision-making model?
5. What are the barriers in accurately assessing the needs of the community and setting priorities?

Leadership Identification and Development

1. Are there certain characteristics/competencies that are sought in a community leader or that help identify a community leader? If yes, what are they?
2. How do you recruit leaders to organize around community-prioritized issues? Are there any specific recruitment methods you use?
3. How many trained leaders, paid or volunteers, do you depend on?
4. Whom do you consider to be your key leaders? Are they paid staff? Are they volunteers? Board members?
5. What methods do you use to motivate and educate leaders to be active?
6. How do you show appreciation to leaders? How do you retain leaders to prevent burnout and turnover?
7. What leadership development curricula do you use? Did someone within your agency develop it? Did you borrow or adapt it from another organization?
8. Do you evaluate your leadership recruitment, training, and development strategies? If yes, how often and what tools do you use? If no, why not?
9. What are the challenges you encounter in recruiting, training, and retaining leaders?
10. How are you involved in training youth as leaders?

Campaign Strategies

1. How do you use the technique of framing an issue to leverage more support, particularly from power brokers?
2. Can you provide us with an example of an issue that gained larger support and achieved success after framing it in a better way?
3. Who are your main community partners in organizing?
4. What are the main challenges you face? How do you respond to such challenges?
5. Can you give an example of a successful campaign and a less successful one? Why were they successful or not successful?

SUCCESS MEASURES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Benchmark	Quantitative Indicators	Qualitative Questions
Developing Grassroots Leadership	■ # of new leaders participating in skills training ■ # of times new leaders report (or were observed) practicing: ● Conducting research on issues ● Public speaking ● Chairing meetings ● Testifying ● Planning strategy sessions ■ # of members serving in leadership roles: ● Participating on committees, block clubs, neighborhood associations ● Serving as board members, officers, or committee chairs ● Other leadership roles specific to the campaign	■ Do participants have a sense of political efficacy and confidence, and how has this changed through participating in a group or skills training? ■ Do new leaders demonstrate knowledge about systems affecting them?
Demonstrated Political Power	■ # of new voters ■ Changes in voting rates of constituency ■ # of media hits ■ # of members placed on key policy working groups ■ # of public events sponsored by group, e.g., rallies, protests, candidate forums, press conferences ■ # times participated in hearings	■ Are politicians/staff of public agencies aware of issues, and do they have a deep understanding of the issues? ■ Are politicians/staff of public agencies aware of the community organization and the issue positions? ■ How is the issue "framed" in local media stories? ■ How great is the community's influence on external policy? ■ Do elected officials feel accountable to the community organization? ■ Is government data more transparent?
Building Coalitions, Partnerships, & Alliances	■ # of partnerships, alliances, or membership with: ● Local coalitions ● City, county, state agencies ● Local businesses or associations ● Public schools and universities ● Cultural and faith-based institutions ● Other community organizations	■ Does coalition/partnership build collective power and/or leverage resources? ■ Does association with coalition/partnership result in relationships of mutual trust and reciprocity?

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Benchmark	Quantitative Indicators	Qualitative Questions
Organization Building	■ # of years of continuous leadership/membership ■ # of active members ■ Amount of money raised through grants, membership dues, contributions ■ # of people organization can turn out at events (mobilization capacity)	■ What is the organization's capacity to monitor programs/issues? ■ What is the organization's capacity to plan and carry out an organizing strategy?
Policy Outcomes	■ # of issue campaigns won ■ Funds leveraged as a result of organizing effort ■ Improved public service delivery or community ■ # of physical improvements to community	■ What is the organization's capacity to plan and carry out an organizing strategy?
Economic Outcomes	■ In-kind resources provided to organization ■ Volunteer hours provided to organization ■ Funds leveraged for community ■ Employment/unemployment rates ■ Homeownership	■ How is the community better off economically as a result of the organizing efforts?

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