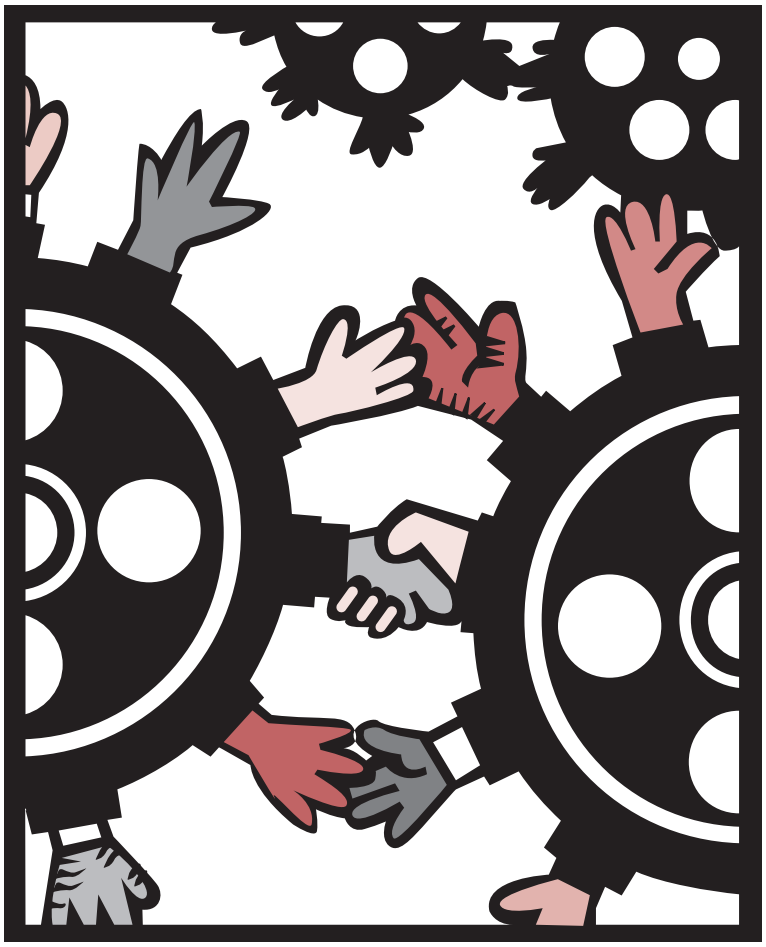
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

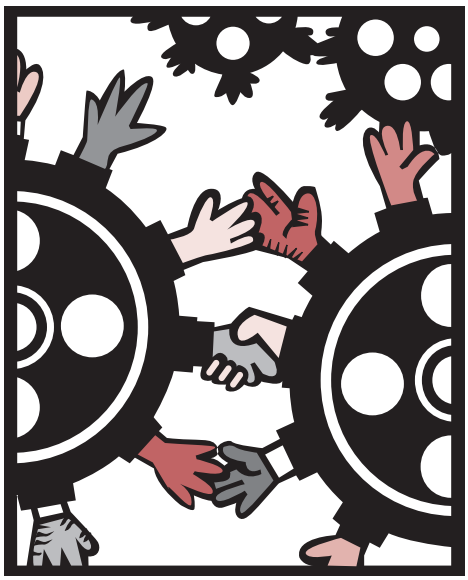


TOOLBOX

A Funder's Guide to Community Organizing

Neighborhood Funders Group

COMMUNITY



ORGANIZING TOOLBOX

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April 2001

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THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZING TOOLBOX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This *Community Organizing Toolbox* (the *Toolbox*) is part of the continuing program of the Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG) to provide information and professional development opportunities to our members. We encourage you and other grantmakers to use this framework for developing, expanding and fine-tuning funding of community organizing (CO). This educational resource for funders will be posted on our Web site, **www.nfg.org**, where additional background information will be available.

NFG members focus on improving the quality of life for residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities. To carry out their varied but related missions, these grantmakers fund a wide range of community-serving organizations and activities — including human services, education, community development, civic participation, and CO. For many members, NFG's work to advance CO is one of the association's most critical priorities. It's a funding strategy that directly addresses NFG's goals for supporting poor people and their communities. In a 1999 survey, 88 of NFG's 200 member organizations said they funded CO. They range from small local funders to five of the 15 largest foundations in the country.

This *Toolbox* is the second produced by NFG. Its development is the culmination of many years of attention to lessons learned in CO by NFG members — in our annual conferences, in our newsletter, *NFG Reports*, and in other programs for our members. Many thanks to committee chair Henry Allen of the Hyams Foundation, who was joined by Jeannie Appleman of Interfaith Funders, Fabio Naranjo of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and Frank Sanchez of the Needmor Fund, in many months of discussion and thought that guided this publication. They particularly appreciate the time given by Hubert Dixon of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Jane Downing of the Pittsburgh Foundation, Madeline Lee of the New York Foundation and Regina McGraw of the Wieboldt Foundation to review the *Toolbox* during its development.

Independent consultant Larry Parachini, aided by Sally Covington of the National Center for Schools and Communities, researched and wrote the *CO Toolbox*. We thank them for the thoughtful way in which they worked with the committee in developing and producing it. Lucinda Flowers provided editorial assistance and expert guidance and the *Toolbox* was designed by JoAnn Juskus.

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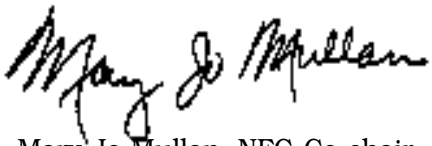

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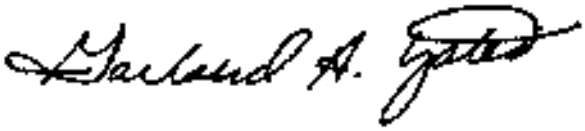


Garland Yates, NFG Co-chair
Annie E. Casey Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Organization means hope for people. It means making their institutions relevant. But most of all, organization means power. It means being able to do something about things they've been frustrated about all their lives.[1]

— Ernesto Cortes, Industrial Areas Foundation

Community organizing explicitly seeks to build the power base of the poor so they can affect and change the public policies and private market forces that create and sustain social and economic inequality.[2]

— Henry Allen, Hyams Foundation

The United States enters the 21st century with a level of income inequality and wealth polarization that is now wider than at any time since World War II. Even in today's economy, wages continue to stagnate or erode for those in the bottom half of the nation's income distribution. Close to 43 million Americans are medically uninsured — and poverty remains entrenched — in inner-city and rural communities across the country. Meanwhile, the income and wealth of those at the top have grown exponentially. Those in the Forbes 400 now hold as much wealth as the 50 million households in the bottom half of the population.[3]

Such large-scale inequities are mirrored in other dimensions of American life as well, most notably in the realm of political participation and democratic engagement. Study after study has documented that political participation in and beyond the voting booth is skewed by class, with upper-income and more educated citizens participating more frequently and at higher rates than those with fewer financial resources and years of schooling. To paraphrase one observer of the American political landscape, the heavenly choir of American interests continues to sing with an upper-class accent.

Community organizing — or CO, as we will refer to it throughout this *Community Organizing Toolbox* — is one of the few strategies working to build grassroots leadership, community initiative and constituent influence in neighborhoods and communities that are often forgotten or ignored by those in power. The Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG) considers CO an important strategy for change. We encourage grantmakers to learn more about the vital contributions that CO has made to broader community development and renewal efforts.

CO — A Key to Realizing NFG's Goals

NFG members are grantmaking institutions committed to making the promise of our democracy work for the most disadvantaged in society. Their strategies target for assistance especially those persons living in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and communities across the country.

NFG members are convinced that America's promise "can be achieved only when people gain the political and economic power necessary to make key decisions about their futures and the future of their communities." [4] This is an overarching goal of CO.

Nationally, CO groups have:

- Leveraged billions of dollars in public- and private-sector investment;
- Expanded and improved city services;
- Prevented industrial plant closings;
- Secured fair-share hiring agreements from public- and private-sector employers;
- Cleaned-up toxic waste dumps in low-income communities;
- Organized public and private housing tenants;
- Improved the climate, operation and performance of neighborhood schools; and
- Built or rehabilitated thousands of affordable housing units.

CO has also nourished and supported local leadership by teaching people how to convene meetings, conduct research, analyze public policy positions, negotiate with public and private officials, register people to vote, develop a common vision for struggling or distressed communities, and implement a work plan to address and resolve important issues or problems. For a more extensive discussion of CO results go to *CO Accomplishments* section on page 33.

CO's growth, increased sophistication and impact have momentum. CO groups are now paying far greater attention to educating opinion-makers and to pursuing more thoughtful communications strategies. An increasing number of foundations with more traditional service-oriented grantmaking programs are now exploring and investing in CO. This underscores CO's increased visibility and importance, and helps to spread the knowledge of CO's value to previously uninformed sectors of society, including grantmakers.

WHY A CO TOOLBOX?

> *When public policy seems to favor the monied and powerful, when citizens of many minority neighborhoods feel alienated and intimidated, we have moved backwards in time....[We] hope that we achieve the greatest possible return on our grants by training, organizing, and empowering people to learn about the policies that affect them and mobilize to be heard.*[5]
>
> *— Steven D. Heyman, chair of the board, New York Foundation*

Many NFG members have long recognized the value that CO brings to their grantmaking programs. They have made substantial investments in grants and other support for CO groups and efforts over a significant period of time. Other NFG members are testing the waters with initial modest funding for CO groups or projects. And still other members have made grants to groups that include CO as one of several undertakings, or for comprehensive initiatives involving CO. But this grantmaking does not directly support the organizing activities.

Still, overall funding for CO is relatively small when compared with grantmaking for other types of community activities or strategies, such as social service delivery, housing development and rehabilitation, community economic development and community building. Because it considers CO to be an important, if underutilized, strategy for change, NFG devoted its September 1998 annual conference to the subject. The conference highlighted foundation investments in the strategy, to assist funders seeking to assess for themselves the importance and viability of CO.

NFG members took a next step in educating funders about CO by contracting for the development of this *Toolbox*. Its overall goals are to encourage grantmakers to learn more about the vital contributions that CO has made to broader community development and renewal efforts, and to help grantmakers learn how to undertake CO grantmaking. The *Toolbox* is one of several publications and resources produced by NFG to provide information and support innovation among grantmakers who care deeply about making a difference for low-income and other historically disenfranchised constituencies. (For information on NFG and its programs, go to **www.nfg.org**.)

NFG's OBJECTIVES FOR THE TOOLBOX

The *CO Toolbox* has several objectives:

- To increase attention in the philanthropic community and the broader public to how CO makes changes that benefit low- to moderate-income people and their neighborhoods and communities;
- To explain what CO is and how to recognize it, and to show the relationship of CO to other strategies for community change;
- To illustrate and underscore the many concrete accomplishments that CO has made in galvanizing ordinary people to work for a higher quality of life in areas like housing, jobs, education, the environment, health and more;
- To encourage NFG members and other funders to consider making CO a priority in their grantmaking, and to integrate their CO support with other grantmaking investments for neighborhood and community revitalization;
- To provide advice and linkages that go well beyond this text for additional learning about the CO field;
- To highlight lessons and promising grantmaking strategies from foundations already investing in CO; and
- To share lessons on why and how some grantmakers who had not earlier supported CO decided to do so.

The *Toolbox* should be useful to a broad range of funders — from small, local foundations to larger national funders; from those beginning to think about how CO might fit with and strengthen their grantmaking to those with years of experience; from those who focus entirely on local community development to those whose grantmaking extends to broader geographic and policy arenas; from those whose grantmaking responds to unsolicited proposals to those who place priority on foundation-determined initiatives.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TOOLBOX

This *CO Toolbox* is the second produced by NFG. The first, *NFG's Jobs Toolbox*, was published in 1999. Some descriptions, data and analysis presented in *NFG's Jobs Toolbox* that are highly relevant for CO grantmaking considerations are referenced in this one.[6]

The first section of this *Toolbox* is *CO: The Basics*. It provides solid background on CO, its history, the different types of CO organizations and what CO has accomplished over the years. This section assumes that readers know little, if anything, about CO.

The second section, *Grantmakers and Community Organizing*, provides a full picture of how and why funders get involved in CO funding. Among the topics: setting a CO funding strategy, choosing groups to fund, how CO funding fits with other funding priorities and how to evaluate CO funding.

The third section, *Two In-Depth CO Case Studies*, showcases the activities of two foundations with a strong commitment to CO grantmaking: the Hyams Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Readers interested in CO's results may want to pay particular attention to the sections entitled, *CO Accomplishments* (page 33), *Why Grantmakers Prioritize CO* (page 49) and *Measuring Results: How to Evaluate CO Initiatives* (page 70). The case studies in the third section provide some highlights of CO victories and accomplishments, as well.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLBOX

The *Toolbox* can be read cover-to-cover or in sections, in hard copy or online. It is designed for easy use. You can copy sections, perhaps for board members, colleagues or grantee organizations. The electronic version is available through NFG's Web site, **www.nfg.org**. It contains links to the Web sites of many of the organizations mentioned in the text and an extensive resource list with links. Note: links found in the text, as well as on NFG's Web site, point to other sources of information for further study. The online version allows you to search for specific information. For example, if you want to find out about what community organizers do, you can search for "community organizer," or if you want to find out about a particular organizing group, you can search for it by name.

---

[1] Ernesto Cortes, Industrial Areas Foundation, as quoted in: Harry C. Boyte, *The Backyard Revolution: Understanding the New Citizen Movement,* Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1980, p. 44.

[2] Henry Allen, "Organizing, Power, & Public Policy: One Foundation's Road to Supporting Community Organizing," *Shelterforce,* September/October 1998, p. 31.

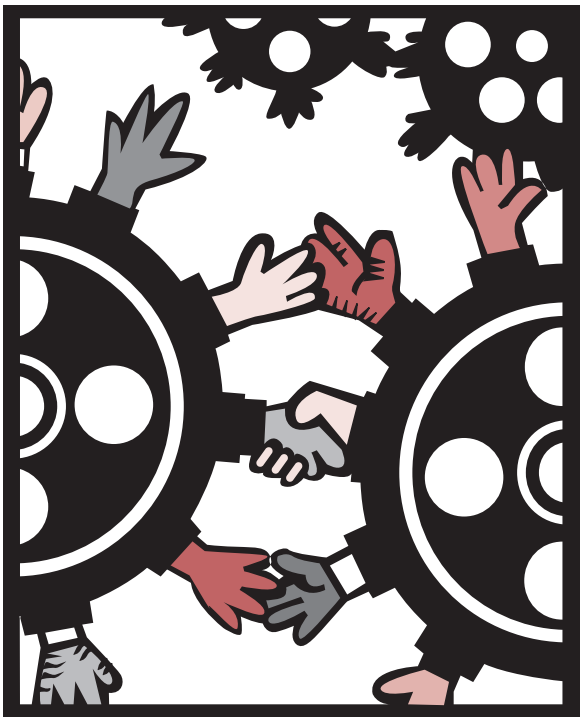
[3] Statistics from *Divided Decade: Economic Disparity at the Century's Turn,* by Chuck Collins, Chris Hartmann and Holly Sklar, United for a Fair Economy, December 15, 1999.

[4] Neighborhood Funders Group, *Plan 2000, Three-Year Strategic Plan,* 1997.

[5] The New York Foundation, "Message from the Chair," *1994 Annual Report.*

[6] *NFG's Jobs Toolbox* was published in 1999 and can be accessed through NFG's Web site, **www.nfg.org**.

COMMUNITY



ORGANIZING

TOOLBOX

Community Organizing: The Basics

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: THE BASICS

WHAT IS CO?

> *Community organization is that process by which the people…organize themselves to 'take charge' of their situation and thus develop a sense of being a community together. It is a particularly effective tool for the poor and powerless as they determine for themselves the actions they will take to deal with the essential forces that are destroying their community and consequently causing them to be powerless.*[7]
>
> *— Reverend Robert Linthicum, World Vision International*

> *Organizing does two central things to seek to rectify the problem of power imbalance — it builds a permanent base of people power so that dominant financial and institutional power can be challenged and held accountable to values of greater social, environmental and economic justice; and, it transforms individuals and communities, making them mutually respectful co-creators of public life rather than passive objects of decisions made by others.*[8]
>
> *— Mike Miller, Organize Training Center*

Just what is CO? What are its driving philosophy, values and goals? Who employs the strategy? What are some examples of CO in practice? What is being accomplished? Why does it seem to be gaining in importance and use today? How does CO differ from other strategies, activities or interventions that seek to benefit low-income people and communities?

This section of the *Toolbox* paints a broad-brush picture of CO and underscores its importance for making what may be called "bottom-up" change in pursuit of social and economic justice.

CO is a values-based[9] process by which people — most often low- and moderate-income people previously absent from decision-making tables — are brought together in organizations to jointly act in the interest of their "communities" and the common good. Ideally, in

the participatory process of working for needed changes, people involved in CO organizations/groups learn how to take greater responsibility for the future of their communities, gain in mutual respect and achieve growth as individuals. Community organizers identify and attract the people to be involved in the organizations, and develop the leadership from and relationships among the people that make the organizations effective.

Typically, the actions taken by CO groups are preceded by careful data gathering, research and participatory strategic planning. The actions are often in the form of negotiations — with targeted institutions holding power — around issues determined by and important to the organizations. The CO groups seek policy and other significant changes determined by and responsive to the people (that is, their "constituencies"). Where good-faith negotiations fail, these constituency-led organizations seek to pressure the decision-makers — through a variety of means — so that the decision-makers will return to the negotiations and move to desired outcomes. CO groups continuously reflect on what they have learned in their action strategies and incorporate the learning in subsequent strategies.

Definitions of CO range from a single sentence — "Organizing is people working together to get things done" (followed by a book length discussion to demonstrate what this means)[10] — to long listings of what are thought to be its most important characteristics, to lengthy essays containing assertions about CO.

Modern CO rests on a solid bed of key principles around which most knowledgeable practitioners and observers are in general agreement. The degree of adherence to these principles, and the relative emphasis placed on one principle or another, provides the best means to distinguish CO groups and efforts from each other. These same principles also help to distinguish CO from other types of strategies for neighborhood and community change and social betterment.

The central ingredient of all effective CO in the view of many involved in the field — what they believe distinguishes CO most clearly from all other social change strategies — is *building power*. CO builds power and works for change most often to achieve social justice with and for those who are disadvantaged in society.

CO encompasses other principles that were described in a particularly thoughtful article jointly written a few years ago by a veteran foundation official and an experienced community organizer. The authors, Seth Borgos and Scott Douglas, stressed that "the fundamental source of cohesion of every strong CO group is the conviction that it offers its members a unique vehicle for exercising and developing their capacities as citizens."[13] The authors also noted that the most common usage of the term CO "...refers to organizations that are democratic in governance, open and accessible to community members, and concerned with the general health of the community rather than a specific interest or service function..."[14]

Power is the purpose of community organizing, and the issues, problems, strategies and victories are a means to the end of increased power for the organization and the community.[11]

— Dave Beckwith and Randy Stoeker

The empowerment process at the heart of CO promotes participation of people, organizations and communities toward the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice.[12]

— Nina Wallerstein, American Journal of Health Promotion

According to Borgos and Douglas, the key principles of contemporary CO are:

- **A Participative Culture.** CO organizations view participation as an *end in itself*. Under the rubric of leadership development, they devote considerable time and resources to enlarging the skills, knowledge and responsibilities of their members. "Never do for others what they can do for themselves" is known as the iron rule of organizing.
- **Inclusiveness.** CO organizations are unlike other kinds of voluntary associations that, in most instances, tend to draw their membership from a narrow social base and their leadership from business and professional elites. As a matter of principle, CO groups are generally committed to developing membership and leadership from a broad spectrum of the community, with many expressly dedicated to fostering participation among groups that have been "absent from the table," including communities of color, low-income constituencies, immigrants, sexual minorities and youth. Working with marginalized groups demands a high level of skill, a frank acknowledgment of power disparities, and a major investment of time and effort.
- **Breadth of Mission and Vision.** In principle, every issue that affects the welfare of the community is within CO's purview, where other civic institutions tend to get stuck on certain functions while losing sight of the community's larger problems. In practice, strong (but by no means all) CO organizations have proven adept at integrating a diverse set of issues and linking them to a larger vision of the common good. This is a holistic function that has been largely abandoned by political parties, churches, schools and other civic institutions.
- **Critical Perspective.** CO organizations seek to change policies and institutions that are not working. In many communities, they are the only force promoting institutional accountability and responsiveness. Because community organizations take critical positions, they can be viewed as partisan or even polarizing in some contexts,

and an obstacle to social collaboration. However, research suggests that effective governance depends on "civicness" — not consensus. A critical stance may generate conflict, but it can also stimulate participation and sharpen political discourse in ways that lead to deeper forms of social collaboration.[15]

How CO Differs from Other Strategies. CO is one of many strategies for revitalizing disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities and for pursuing social change on a broader basis. But CO is the only strategy that invests all of its resources and energy to build the power of the people themselves — low-income residents, people directly impacted by the issues being addressed — to work effectively for community change.

CASE STUDY #1: SOUTHERN ECHO

CO at Work: How a CO group helped to break down racial barriers in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi.

Meaningful and lasting impacts usually come through processes that involve community folk in a long-term approach to the work. One of the things I learned during the civil rights movement is that it takes a long time to build trust in a community especially in Mississippi where people have been left isolated and standing alone for a long time. You've got to get beyond talking to prove to people you're not going to run in and run out. You need to become part of the community.[16]

— Hollis Watkins, Southern Echo

Southern Echo, a multi-issue CO organization in Mississippi, honors the legacy of and carries forward the goals of the civil rights movement. Its work is inspired by the spirit of those organizers and leaders who gave so much to this cause. Following is but one example of Southern Echo's work and impact. The group's results — like those of many CO groups around the country who tackle the toughest issues — are all the more remarkable when seen in context, as described briefly here.

The population of Tallahatchie County, on the eastern edge of the Mississippi Delta, is 59 percent African American. The county has a long history of racial oppression — it was in the county courthouse that the men who lynched Emmitt Till in 1957 were acquitted by an all-white jury. As of 1990, nearly a generation after enactment of the Voting Rights Act, no African American had ever won a countywide election. Tallahatchie is one of the ten poorest counties in the nation; yet, the county's Board of Supervisors refused to cooperate with

efforts to attract new industries whose presence might affect and boost wage levels on its cotton, rice and soybean plantations.

These conditions were in part due to the intransigence of the white minority, but they were also the product of internal strife, turf battles and unaccountable leadership within the black community. The unity of purpose achieved in the civil rights movement dissipated into "mischiefs of faction" during the 1970s and 1980s, as a multitude of organizations, clubs and networks pursued their own divergent agendas. The prevailing opinion in the county was that it was impossible to unite the black community around any issue of importance.

In January 1991, Jackson, Mississippi-based Southern Echo conducted a weekend-long workshop in Tallahatchie on redistricting opportunities in the wake of the 1990 census. Community residents learned about the technical aspects of redistricting, dissected the issues in small groups, and engaged in a "role-play" presentation to the County Board. By the end of the workshop, contrary to all expectations, the participants had formed an umbrella organization encompassing all the major factions within the African American community, and had agreed upon a plan to take a redistricting proposal to the County Board of Supervisors. Southern Echo then initiated a six-month organizing campaign that resulted in the Board agreeing to hold public negotiations at the county courthouse — the first time the supervisors had ever agreed to negotiate with a black organization.

The negotiations stretched out over more than a dozen sessions, and for most of that time the white supervisors remained silent; an attorney spoke on their behalf. But by the end of the process, the supervisors acquired a grudging respect for the expertise and commitment that the community negotiating team brought to the table, and they were talking face-to-face about demographic details. Finally, in the same courtroom where the murderers of Emmitt Till were acquitted, supervisors and the community negotiators shook hands on a plan to create three "electable" black districts for the five-member board.

This plan was subsequently rescinded by the supervisors under pressure from their white constituents, and then restored, in a somewhat different form, by a federal court. The habits of unity and risk-taking that were acquired in the months long effort were not lost to the African American community. In 1993, three residents who led the redistricting struggle stepped forward to run for the county board. With the help of a strong get-out-the-vote effort, two were elected to office. While they aren't a majority, their presence has fundamentally altered the culture of Tallahatchie County government.

Since their election, the county has attracted several new industries, created two public parks, and won designation as a federal Enterprise Community. Community activists also formed a nonprofit housing corporation and are involved in state legislative and Congressional redistricting.[17] And, on a broader basis, Southern Echo's CO work has expanded to many other communities in the Mississippi Delta. Its work has attracted funding from a significant number of national foundations, including Ford, Kellogg and Charles Stewart Mott.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CO

> *The roots of modern community organizing are as intertwined with the settlement house movement of the nineteenth century...as they are with the protest movements of the 1960s.*[18]
>
> *— Gary Delgado, Applied Research Center*

To better understand where CO stands today, it is helpful to view its history. Over the decades, CO has increased its sophistication and networking for greater impact and wider results. Today's CO field[19] encompasses varied philosophies, approaches, organizational arrangements, actors, priorities, issues and constituencies. CO has taken root in both urban and rural settings. It enables ordinary people to work effectively together for change, often with significant impact at the block, neighborhood, community, city, county, regional, and, at times, state and national levels. Various racial and ethnic groups, and other disadvantaged or disenfranchised groups, use CO to fight for fairness and equity.

Robert Fisher and Peter Romanofsky, the editors of *Community Organization for Social Change*, grouped CO activities and perspectives into four historical periods: [20]

1890 – 1920. *The heyday of neighborhood organizing before 1960. Liberals and progressives sought to meet the challenge of industrialization — the bigness of cities and their chaotic social disorganization — by organizing immigrant neighborhoods into "efficient, democratic, and, of course, enlightened units within the metropolis." Since the emphasis of the reformers was mostly on building community through settlement houses and other service mechanisms, the dominant approach was social work.*

1920 – 1940. *Community organization became a professional sub-discipline within the social work field. Little was written about decentralized neighborhood organizing efforts throughout the Great Depression. Most organizations had a national orientation because the economic problems the nation faced did not seem soluble at the neighborhood level.*

1940 – 1960. *A new interest in CO from the social work perspective. This development dovetailed with the emergence of the distinctive approach of Saul Alinsky. Federal involvement in reshaping cities and their neighborhoods through the post-World War II urban renewal programs abetted this unique alignment. (Note: more information on Alinsky is included over the next few pages.)*

1960 – 1980. *Neighborhood organizing became widespread beginning in the 1960s. Literature analyzing events at the grassroots during this period is extensive. Experience with federal anti-poverty programs and the upheavals in the cities produced a thoughtful response among activists and theorists in the early 1970s that has informed activities, organizations,*

strategies and movements through the end of the century, though many major changes in CO have occurred since 1980.[21]

The Roots of Modern CO. A discussion of CO's history and current practice must feature Saul Alinsky, the founder of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). His work from 1938 until his death in 1972 is unique and had a powerful, multi-dimensional influence on the CO field. It was Alinsky who drew the roots of CO together in the late 1930s — roots first planted in the American Revolution and later sprouting in the populist movement of the 1890s, the political radicalism of the 1920s and 1930s that focused on organizing tenant unions, unemployed councils and other organizations to protest the horrible conditions of the period, and industrial union organizing of the 1930s.[24]

The Alinsky-inspired approach to CO catalyzed the creation of many organizations while he was still alive. He learned from his experiences in city after city, and spearheaded efforts to modify organizing methods and strategies for maximum effectiveness. Many current CO groups that trace their own history to Alinsky combine the best of Alinsky with fundamental modifications they have made to forge the approaches they now employ.

Many books, reports, critiques and films about Alinsky and his efforts are available. Alinsky himself wrote two books, *Rules for Radicals* and *Reveille for Radicals*, that are immensely popular and in constant use as tools in training for community organizers and leaders and in some college-level courses, primarily in schools of social work. A selected bibliography of resource materials by and about Alinsky, and information on obtaining a recent documentary film about Alinsky and the work of IAF,[25] is on NFG's Web site, at **www.nfg.org**.

Labor Organizing in the 1930s: Seeds for CO's Future

In the 1920s and 1930s, labor militants created unemployed councils to raise immediate demands for public relief as part of their effort to build a working class movement. They used a range of supplementary action tactics, including local and national demonstrations, hunger marches on employers and government officials, petition drives, street corner speakers, etc. In addition, to strengthen their movement efforts among the unemployed, they supported community-based tenant associations to fight evictions, farmers' unions to fight foreclosures, veterans' committees to demand bonus payments, cultural associations among immigrants and artists, share-croppers' unions among Southern Blacks, and underground in-plant organizing committees.[22]

…The eventual course of this work contributed heavily to the enactment of the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act, and other landmark New Deal programs, and to the establishment of industrial unionism in mass production. It also set off a wave of organizing across the working class.[23]

BACKGROUNDER # 1

Tracing the Influence of Saul Alinsky on Modern CO

Most contemporary community organizing finds its beginnings in the work of the late Saul Alinsky. He organized the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council (BYNC) in Chicago in the late 1930s. Allied with the United Packinghouse Workers Union, BYNC was instrumental in helping tens of thousands of packinghouse workers to dramatically improve their standard of living and gain the dignity that comes with union recognition and collective bargaining. BYNC brought together under one organizational umbrella not only the union but most of the Roman Catholic parishes in the BYNC neighborhood and a myriad of other voluntary associations. The organization quickly developed sufficient power to be able to deal effectively with the Chicago 'machine' and win victories on numerous issues, including child welfare, public school improvement and neighborhood stabilization.

For Alinsky, the BYNC experience also led to recognition by the powerful Archdiocese of Chicago, John L. Lewis of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and wealthy department store owner Marshall Field. Backing from them helped Alinsky to form the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which was Alinsky's base of operations for the remainder of his life.

After World War II, Alinsky brought Fred Ross, Sr. onto his staff. Ross's work in California led to the formation of the Community Service Organization (CSO), largely Mexican American, and the identification and training as an organizer of Cesar Chavez, then a community leader. Unlike BYNC, which was an 'organization of organizations,' CSO took a 'direct membership' form, a precursor to the ACORN model initiated by Wade Rathke. Chavez, of course, founded the National Farmworkers Association and later was the principal leader of the United Farmworkers Union. Chavez involved Ross in his organizing, calling him 'my secret weapon.' It was Ross who trained many farmworkers and students — and trainers who could extend the training to others — for work on boycotts across the country. In the labor movement today, almost every union that is actively involved in organizing has staff who went through the farmworkers union experience. The same holds for numerous community organizing groups.

By the late 1950s, Alinsky broadened his base of institutional support from the Chicago Archdiocese to Catholic dioceses all over the country, and to many mainline Protestant denominations. The impact Alinsky's (and IAF's) work had on how a fair number of American churches increasingly supported urban

BACKGROUNDER # 1 (continued)

reform efforts and fought racism and poverty beginning in that period is still in evidence in such grantmaking agencies as the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

In 1959, the impact of the emerging civil rights movement in the South was beginning to be felt in northern ghettoes. With support from both Catholic and Protestant funding sources, Alinsky began work in the largely African American Woodlawn neighborhood in Chicago. The next year the student-led sit-ins began in the South. As the civil rights movement spread and gained momentum, it generated considerable interest in economic and racial justice issues in colleges, and in religious seminaries and denominations across the country, and created new sources of organizers and funding for community organizing. Alinsky capitalized on this to spread his brand of organizing to still more communities. Paralleling this development, urban unrest grew; poverty and racism became increasingly unacceptable in northern communities of color, Black and Hispanic, and this too obviously spurred community organizing's growth.[26]

— Mike Miller, Organize Training Center

CO Today. Since the mid-seventies, and particularly in the 1990s, CO strategy has prioritized the development of powerful, multi-issue organizational vehicles with the track records, intent and potential to become significant long-term players for change. And this is exactly what has happened. The CO field is studded with powerful organizations achieving important results, and more such groups — nurtured by national organizing networks — are emerging. These groups, and CO practitioners as a whole, have demonstrated increased sophistication in attracting allies, developing community cohesion, and marshalling power not only locally, but on regional, state and national levels. The *Toolbox* focuses primarily on this modern period.

LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION: HOW CO GROUPS WORK

> *It was women going door-to-door, speaking with their neighbors, meeting in voter-registration classes together, organizing through their churches that gave the vital momentum and energy to the movement, that made it a mass movement.*[27]
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CO places its faith in the value of people working together for common ends, and in what they can do if given appropriate guidance and opportunity. In CO, the people lead. Without them there is nothing that can properly be called CO.

Organizers call the work they do to involve people "base-building." It is continuous and challenging, whether done through religious institutions, as in the faith-based approach to CO, or directly with individuals and families in direct membership CO groups. Base building is recruiting and engaging new people, keeping current members motivated and involved, and deepening member participation.

Foundation Support for Base-Building. Base-building is not a "project" that can easily fit into narrowly defined grantmaking categories. Its effectiveness is hard to measure but critical. A strong and successful CO organization's base must have qualities like heart, hope, persistence, resilience and energy. It must be truly representative of and accountable to the community, continuously making room for new people and adapting to new circumstances.

Funders often invest in CO because they believe in the way CO reaches out to and involves people who have not been well served by societal institutions, who aren't voting or don't believe that their voices count. The funders want to see hard results — changes in policies, new jobs in the community, reductions in health hazards and more. But they know that the work of change that is responsive to and "owned" by the community takes long-term base-building efforts.

The Importance of Developing Community Leaders. Any business, governmental unit, nonprofit organization, or foundation rises or falls with the quality of its leadership. For CO groups, the importance of identifying and developing responsive and effective leadership from the community cannot be understated.

In CO, "the goal of encouraging people to feel and be more powerful is typically as important as achieving substantive change. Hence, leadership development is critical. ... Every member is encouraged to take leadership roles. Members and leaders make all organizational decisions, from bylaws to slogans. Members raise and select organizational issues

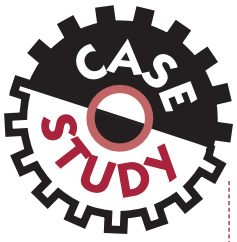
One Group's View of Base-Building

The French American Charitable Trust (FACT), a national, family foundation based in San Francisco, is among those funders that have prioritized base-building organizations in their grantmaking. In its first five-year report issued in April 2000, the foundation stated:

"The belief that base-building organizations are critical to achieving lasting social change is central to everything we do. We are convinced that societal changes come about most often through the involvement, instigation, and commitment of many people. Furthermore, history has shown us that it requires vigilance on the part of the public to implement and maintain good social policy. We think that base-building organizations are a key mechanism for educating and involving the public in decision-making processes and for maintaining people's involvement over the years."[28]

based on the self-interests of the group, and broad agreement among members is necessary before the organization will pursue an issue. Most grassroots organizations work on many issues at once. Decisions regarding strategy, tactics, and targets are made by leaders and members, using staff consultation. ... Pressure activities are implemented and evaluated by members. Leaders speak to the press and negotiate with targets."[29]

CASE STUDY #2: LYNDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



CO at Work: How a Minneapolis group builds upon relationships among neighbors, block by block.

The Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA) has received national attention for its work in Minneapolis, making the transition from a crime-infested, transient community to one of the most diverse and vibrant neighborhoods in the city. The area's recent renaissance — new housing, revitalized retail areas, and community-based services for families and children — is due in no small part to the work of hundreds of residents organized by LNA.

LNA takes pride in its reputation as an organization that empowers the community. Based on the philosophy, "We're not building a community organization, we're building a community," staff was cut dramatically several years ago, and the organization now depends on the talents and abilities of residents to define its goals, create projects and implement solutions to neighborhood challenges. Hundreds of residents are involved in LNA's work each month, and the organization focuses on building resident leaders. LNA supports with technical assistance and funding any project residents want to take on, providing an incentive for residents to become

CASE STUDY

organizers and gather support for desired projects. This level of involvement holds true for virtually all of the group's community initiatives. Even young people plan and implement programs to serve their needs.

Through a decentralized network of block clubs — 48 of the neighborhood's 52 blocks participate — LNA's organizing approach emphasizes strengthening relationships among neighbors, finding common interests, and developing mutually supportive skills and needs, and then building on these relationships to shape how problems get solved. Residents who work with LNA choose to be involved in every aspect of the systems that provide them with services, both to avoid being relegated to "client" or "customer" status, and to ensure that the community controls how its needs are met and develops its own capacity to meet those needs.[30]

COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS: WHO ARE THEY?

> *The soul of organizing is people. An organizer might be paid or work as a volunteer. The group could start as part of a master plan hatched in a smoke filled room or out of a 'spontaneous' community reaction to a crisis like a toxic waste dump. They might base their work on house by house prayer groups or cells of clandestine conspirators. The ultimate goal could be the preservation of Hopi language and culture or the overthrow of the real estate tax based system for financing public education. Organizers can differ on strategy, tactics, even on what seem to be base values. However, all organizers believe in people, in the ability of regular folks to guide their lives, to speak for themselves, to learn the world and how to make it better.*[31]
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Achieving the long-term goals and specific concrete objectives of CO in and for a community of any size is challenging work, to say the least. A CO organization never starts with a level playing field. To develop, mature and succeed over time, it must constantly fight uphill battles. There is no roadmap to accomplishment. Resources are often in short supply. Risks are high.

Behind the success of any CO organization or effort are community organizers. Many have called organizers the "driving force" of CO,[32] though CO's principles require that they facilitate the people's work, not lead it.

Just what organizers do can sound like any standard job description — "administration, planning, policy decision-making, program and leadership development and action implementation, public relations activities, and service activities."[33] But CO work takes form within the dynamics of community and struggle, requiring organizers to have an extraordinary range of competencies.

The organizer must thoroughly understand the characteristics and the power patterns of the community through extensive interviews and discussions with community members. The organizer is a listener. The organizer identifies and trains potential leaders. These potential leaders are not necessarily the titular heads of organizations. Through an extensive listening process issues or problems of concern to the people are identified. People must be encouraged to talk about their views of the community and it is important that they realize that the organizer does not come with a preconceived program. An organizer must also be able to agitate people to act. "Until the people recognize that it is they who must do something about their own problems, and that it is only THEY who can be trusted to do the right thing — and until they realize that only if they organize enough power in their community that something can be done about these things, nothing will get done." [34]

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Among a wide array of organizations that strengthen the CO field, the National Organizers Alliance (NOA) is the only one whose membership is primarily community organizers. Launched in 1992, NOA has more than 1,000 dues-paying members and a larger affiliated community of more than 5,000 persons involved in CO, representing over 2,000 organizations. NOA supports people of color becoming organizers and encourages people from diverse communities to enter the CO field. For more information on NOA, visit the NFG Web site at **www.nfg.org**.

Wage Scales for Community Organizers: One Perspective

As a committed CO funder, Regina McGraw, executive director of the Wieboldt Foundation, is keenly aware of the extraordinary efforts put forward by many community organizers. For what they do and accomplish, they are often underpaid. McGraw recommends that funders examine grantee wage scales and benefits packages to see if they are appropriate to the level of skill, management responsibilities, interpersonal skills, and public presence that are needed for success. She believes that if nonprofits are to pay full benefits, funders must support the expenditure by giving operating support whenever possible.

BACKGROUNDER # 2

The Roles and Responsibilities of Community Organizers

Organizers challenge people to act on behalf of their common interests. Organizers empower people to act by developing shared relationships, understandings, and tasks which enable them to gain new resources, new understanding of their interests, and new capacity to use these resources on behalf of their interests. Organizers work through "dialogues" in relationships, understanding and action carried out as campaigns. They identify, recruit and develop leadership, they build community among that leadership, they build power out of that community.

Organizers develop new relationships out of old ones — sometimes by linking one person to another and sometimes by linking whole networks of people together.

Organizers deepen understanding by creating opportunities for people to deliberate with one another about their circumstances, to reinterpret these circumstances in ways that open up new possibilities for action, and to develop strategies and tactics that make creative use of the resources and opportunities that their circumstances afford. Organizers motivate people to act by creating experiences to challenge those feelings which inhibit action, such as fear, apathy, self-doubt, inertia and isolation with those feelings that support action such as anger, hope, self-worth, urgency and a sense of community. ...

Organizers work through campaigns. Campaigns are very highly energized, intensely focused, concentrated streams of activity with specific goals and deadlines. People are recruited, battles fought and organizations built through campaigns. Campaigns polarize by bringing out conflicts ordinarily submerged in a way contrary to the interests of the organizing constituency. One critical dilemma is how to depolarize in order to negotiate resolution of these conflicts. Another dilemma is how to balance the work of campaigns with the ongoing work of organizational survival.

Organizers build community by developing leadership. They focus on identifying leaders and enhancing their skills, values and commitments. They also focus on building strong communities: communities through which people can gain new understanding of their interests as well as power to act on them. Organizers work at constructing communities which are bounded yet inclusive, communal yet diverse, soladaristic yet tolerant. They work at developing a relationship between community and leadership based on mutual responsibility and accountability.[35]

TYPES OF CO GROUPS AND THE WORK THEY DO

By one estimate, there are more than 6,000 community organizations in the U.S. using some form of CO to carry out their community-serving missions. Most have been formed in the past 25 years or so.[36] A far smaller but rapidly growing number of groups, no more than several hundred, can be most accurately categorized as full-scale CO groups — groups of all sizes whose values, goals, accountability, governance, organizational development and operational strategies consistently reflect CO's core principles, and who can readily be distinguished from other types of nonprofit organizations. There are also some two dozen or more intermediary groups at regional and national levels that play critical roles in training community organizers and community leaders, and provide technical assistance and other services to strengthen CO.

Though community organizations with CO as their central strategy come in all sizes, shapes and locations, they share the elements listed below.

- They enable grassroots people — not the government, business, academics, the media or anyone else — to set their own priorities.
- They help their members and constituents to develop skills and know-how to act on those priorities.
- They have an impact, changing public and private policies and priorities to become more responsive to the needs of the people closest to the problem.[37]

The most advanced and highly regarded of CO organizations today work on a range of issues, are staffed, intend to be around for the long term, and are invested in building the capacity of their constituencies — often of many races and/or cultures — to address increasingly more difficult, complex and/or recalcitrant issues. Many CO groups also seek to contribute to the growth of a broad-based movement toward their vision for a more humane and just society, and may seek to model that vision in their internal structure and operations. Changes sought by CO organizations often require them to pursue collaborative efforts with other CO organizations, as well as with other types of groups, in order to effectively address issues at jurisdictional levels beyond the current scope of any one of the CO organizations. Most receive assistance from intermediary organizations that provide training, advice and resources.

Three Types of Groups. On the broadest level, CO organizations can be roughly categorized by where they most closely fit within three major approaches. (See Backgrounder #3 for examples of each approach.)

1. ***Direct or individual membership groups*** that are typically small and geographically-based efforts to organize individual low- and moderate-income people. The members may be broadly focused on improving their neighborhood or working on a specific issue like workers' rights or environmental degradation. The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now's (ACORN) individual groups are among those that fit this category.

2. ***Issue-based coalitions*** that mobilize public interest groups, unions and other already established groups to affect a public policy or to address a common concern, such as a crisis in the public school system. The Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee and the Interfaith Coalition for Workers' Rights are two such coalitions.

3. ***Institution-based organizing*** (or congregation-based or faith-based organizing) that is rooted in and brings together local religious (and most often other) institutions to work on behalf of a community. The IAF pioneered this approach with Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio, Texas.

None of the three CO approaches exists in "pure" form, nor are the approaches accompanied by hard and fast rules to which all CO organizations of a particular type subscribe. Many CO organizations employ approaches that are mixed "models" or hybrids. What is best for any given community can only be determined in the context of that situation. The CO field is quite dynamic: for CO groups, adjustments in organizational structure, tactics and strategies to meet changing societal conditions are more the rule than the exception.

strategies and movements through the end of the century, though many major changes in CO have occurred since 1980.[21]

The Roots of Modern CO. A discussion of CO's history and current practice must feature Saul Alinsky, the founder of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). His work from 1938 until his death in 1972 is unique and had a powerful, multi-dimensional influence on the CO field. It was Alinsky who drew the roots of CO together in the late 1930s — roots first planted in the American Revolution and later sprouting in the populist movement of the 1890s, the political radicalism of the 1920s and 1930s that focused on organizing tenant unions, unemployed councils and other organizations to protest the horrible conditions of the period, and industrial union organizing of the 1930s.[24]

The Alinsky-inspired approach to CO catalyzed the creation of many organizations while he was still alive. He learned from his experiences in city after city, and spearheaded efforts to modify organizing methods and strategies for maximum effectiveness. Many current CO groups that trace their own history to Alinsky combine the best of Alinsky with fundamental modifications they have made to forge the approaches they now employ.

Many books, reports, critiques and films about Alinsky and his efforts are available. Alinsky himself wrote two books, *Rules for Radicals* and *Reveille for Radicals*, that are immensely popular and in constant use as tools in training for community organizers and leaders and in some college-level courses, primarily in schools of social work. A selected bibliography of resource materials by and about Alinsky, and information on obtaining a recent documentary film about Alinsky and the work of IAF,[25] is on NFG's Web site, at **www.nfg.org**.

Labor Organizing in the 1930s: Seeds for CO's Future

In the 1920s and 1930s, labor militants created unemployed councils to raise immediate demands for public relief as part of their effort to build a working class movement. They used a range of supplementary action tactics, including local and national demonstrations, hunger marches on employers and government officials, petition drives, street corner speakers, etc. In addition, to strengthen their movement efforts among the unemployed, they supported community-based tenant associations to fight evictions, farmers' unions to fight foreclosures, veterans' committees to demand bonus payments, cultural associations among immigrants and artists, share-croppers' unions among Southern Blacks, and underground in-plant organizing committees.[22]

…The eventual course of this work contributed heavily to the enactment of the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act, and other landmark New Deal programs, and to the establishment of industrial unionism in mass production. It also set off a wave of organizing across the working class.[23]

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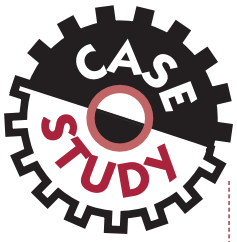

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Organizers develop new relationships out of old ones — sometimes by linking one person to another and sometimes by linking whole networks of people together.

Organizers deepen understanding by creating opportunities for people to deliberate with one another about their circumstances, to reinterpret these circumstances in ways that open up new possibilities for action, and to develop strategies and tactics that make creative use of the resources and opportunities that their circumstances afford. Organizers motivate people to act by creating experiences to challenge those feelings which inhibit action, such as fear, apathy, self-doubt, inertia and isolation with those feelings that support action such as anger, hope, self-worth, urgency and a sense of community. ...

Organizers work through campaigns. Campaigns are very highly energized, intensely focused, concentrated streams of activity with specific goals and deadlines. People are recruited, battles fought and organizations built through campaigns. Campaigns polarize by bringing out conflicts ordinarily submerged in a way contrary to the interests of the organizing constituency. One critical dilemma is how to depolarize in order to negotiate resolution of these conflicts. Another dilemma is how to balance the work of campaigns with the ongoing work of organizational survival.

Organizers build community by developing leadership. They focus on identifying leaders and enhancing their skills, values and commitments. They also focus on building strong communities: communities through which people can gain new understanding of their interests as well as power to act on them. Organizers work at constructing communities which are bounded yet inclusive, communal yet diverse, soladaristic yet tolerant. They work at developing a relationship between community and leadership based on mutual responsibility and accountability.[35]

TYPES OF CO GROUPS AND THE WORK THEY DO

By one estimate, there are more than 6,000 community organizations in the U.S. using some form of CO to carry out their community-serving missions. Most have been formed in the past 25 years or so.[36] A far smaller but rapidly growing number of groups, no more than several hundred, can be most accurately categorized as full-scale CO groups — groups of all sizes whose values, goals, accountability, governance, organizational development and operational strategies consistently reflect CO's core principles, and who can readily be distinguished from other types of nonprofit organizations. There are also some two dozen or more intermediary groups at regional and national levels that play critical roles in training community organizers and community leaders, and provide technical assistance and other services to strengthen CO.

Though community organizations with CO as their central strategy come in all sizes, shapes and locations, they share the elements listed below.

- They enable grassroots people — not the government, business, academics, the media or anyone else — to set their own priorities.
- They help their members and constituents to develop skills and know-how to act on those priorities.
- They have an impact, changing public and private policies and priorities to become more responsive to the needs of the people closest to the problem.[37]

The most advanced and highly regarded of CO organizations today work on a range of issues, are staffed, intend to be around for the long term, and are invested in building the capacity of their constituencies — often of many races and/or cultures — to address increasingly more difficult, complex and/or recalcitrant issues. Many CO groups also seek to contribute to the growth of a broad-based movement toward their vision for a more humane and just society, and may seek to model that vision in their internal structure and operations. Changes sought by CO organizations often require them to pursue collaborative efforts with other CO organizations, as well as with other types of groups, in order to effectively address issues at jurisdictional levels beyond the current scope of any one of the CO organizations. Most receive assistance from intermediary organizations that provide training, advice and resources.

Three Types of Groups. On the broadest level, CO organizations can be roughly categorized by where they most closely fit within three major approaches. (See Backgrounder #3 for examples of each approach.)

1. ***Direct or individual membership groups*** that are typically small and geographically-based efforts to organize individual low- and moderate-income people. The members may be broadly focused on improving their neighborhood or working on a specific issue like workers' rights or environmental degradation. The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now's (ACORN) individual groups are among those that fit this category.

2. ***Issue-based coalitions*** that mobilize public interest groups, unions and other already established groups to affect a public policy or to address a common concern, such as a crisis in the public school system. The Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee and the Interfaith Coalition for Workers' Rights are two such coalitions.

3. ***Institution-based organizing*** (or congregation-based or faith-based organizing) that is rooted in and brings together local religious (and most often other) institutions to work on behalf of a community. The IAF pioneered this approach with Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio, Texas.

None of the three CO approaches exists in "pure" form, nor are the approaches accompanied by hard and fast rules to which all CO organizations of a particular type subscribe. Many CO organizations employ approaches that are mixed "models" or hybrids. What is best for any given community can only be determined in the context of that situation. The CO field is quite dynamic: for CO groups, adjustments in organizational structure, tactics and strategies to meet changing societal conditions are more the rule than the exception.

BACKGROUNDER # 3

Examples of the Different Types of CO Groups

Example: Direct or Individual Membership Groups

In New York City, Oakland (California), St. Louis (Missouri), Denver (Colorado) and elsewhere **ACORN** has focused organizing campaigns on creating better schools. In the Rockaways section of Queens, ACORN first organized parents several years ago around the issue of a summer program that was slated for closing at one public school. The parents were successful, and this gave them confidence to tackle larger concerns about the school. Through a series of classes over a six-month period, they studied such issues as achievement tests, tracking, parent participation and teacher qualifications. They visited schools with innovative programs. They determined what kind of school they wanted for their children. Working with school officials, they created the Rockaway New School, a "mini-school within a school" for children from kindergarten through sixth grade. The school features hands-on and cooperative learning, multi-grade classrooms, collaboration between parents and teachers, and an exceptional level of parent involvement in both day-to-day classroom activities and the governance of the schools.[38]

Having built on this experience, New York ACORN runs high schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan and is organizing around issues such as attracting and keeping experienced teachers and smaller class sizes.

Example: Issue-Based Coalition

The **Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee (CSM)** brings together community, government, labor and business representatives to form "a grassroots organizing project for family-supporting jobs and a community voice in economic decisions." CSM's specific strategies integrate CO with coalition building and advocacy. In its jobs and welfare reform work, CSM created the Central City Workers Center, which has connected hundreds of low-income residents to family-supporting jobs — entry-level positions in the Laborers Union that pay more than $12 an hour. The Center demonstrates that there is a viable alternative to low-wage, dead-end jobs that have too often been the outcomes of welfare reform efforts in Wisconsin and elsewhere. The Center also serves as a means and a place for organizing residents into a membership-based union, deepening their understanding of community issues and developing their research, leadership and advocacy skills, so that they can take instrumental roles in developing and implementing CSM's action strategies.[39]

BACKGROUNDER # 3 (continued)

Example: Institution-Based Organizing

When a Levi-Strauss cut-and-sew factory on San Antonio's South Side closed in 1990, coming on the heels of other plant closings and looming defense cutbacks, good-paying jobs were lost, many of them blue collar. Alternative jobs were in low-paying service industries. Meanwhile, higher-paying jobs in the health industry and elsewhere were unfilled for lack of skilled workers. Two powerful San Antonio congregation-based organizations affiliated with **IAF — Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS)** and **The Metro Alliance** — joined forces to find a solution. The result — after years of house meetings, research actions, dialogue, and debate with corporate and public officials, and other organizing activities — is Project QUEST (Quality Employment Through Skills Training). It involves collaborative relationships among IAF, the business community, employers of high-skilled workers, the city government, the regional PIC, the governor, the Texas Employment Commission, education and training institutions, and state social service agencies. Project QUEST established a new intermediary that recruits employers and secures job commitments; designs training programs; recruits, evaluates and refers trainees; counsels and supports trainees; and supports the trainees' families. The Project heavily involves neighborhood residents in meeting its objectives. At its peak, before federal budget cutbacks several years ago, the Project had enrolled 1,200 people, most from IAF's organized low-income neighborhoods. At the end of its second year of operation, 85 percent of enrollees had stayed in the program and, by early in 1996, almost 400 had found and been placed in jobs in which the average salary paid was $7.83 an hour. Project QUEST, funded by the Ford Foundation and other private and public sources, has been replicated at other IAF sites throughout Texas.[40]

CO Organization Networks. CO today is primarily identified with a number of national CO networks, each with its own unique history and accomplishments. Core staff of the networks — mostly persons who are experienced community organizers — take a major hand in developing and supporting the networks' affiliated local organizing groups. They provide a range of assistance to initiate, fortify and evaluate the work of the local groups, help to train and develop community organizers and local leaders, and connect the affiliates together for broader impact in addressing regional and national issues.

A number of regional CO networks are taking similar roles with member groups in their areas. Finally, many CO organizations, while drawing on advice and help from a range of intermediaries, are operating independently in disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout the country. Most of the independent groups are small, and some will eventually affiliate with one of the networks. A few independent CO groups have become significant, long-term city- and community-wide forces for change in urban and rural areas. For more information on national and regional networks, see the section on *How National and Regional Networks Provide Training, Technical Assistance and Other Support for CO* on page 31.

Independent CO Organizations and Regional Networks

The work of the national networks has been the most visible sign of CO's vitality — its importance, continuing growth and rapidly increasing impact over the past two decades. Those funders most familiar with CO have generally learned about the field through interactions with, and their funding of, one or more of the networks and/or network-affiliated groups. But the value of CO and its enormous potential can be fully understood and appreciated only when seen through a wider lens.

There is a wide variety of independent local community organizations that are unaffiliated with the national networks. These groups are numerous and can be found in nearly every major city of the country. Many of these local independents are attracting funding from one or more NFG members. Among some of these independent organizations are: Hartford Areas Rally Together, Connecticut; Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Kentucky; People United for a Better Oakland, California; and Native Action, Montana.

There are also several regional networks that provide local organizations with training, technical assistance and networking opportunities. Among these regional networks are: Western Organization of Resource Councils, Montana; Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, Washington; Grassroots Leadership Network, North Carolina.

CASE STUDY #3: PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (PICO)

CO at Work: How a faith-based New Orleans group reaches out person-by-person to identify its priorities and implement change.

All Congregations Together (ACT) is one of the largest institution- or faith-based CO groups in the country. The citywide New Orleans group is a PICO affiliate. Through its membership of more than 60 congregations, ACT represents more than 150,000 city residents — youth, senior citizens and all ages in between; Black, White, Hispanic, Asian and more; from across the economic spectrum; from 13 different religious denominations. Here is how ACT describes its commitment, its constituency, its work and some of its results:

ACT is "united in faith — faith that teaches us to reach out to our neighbors; faith that tells us that we have a responsibility to ease the suffering of our brothers and sisters and leave this world knowing that because of us, it is a better place than it was when we entered it — that we have indeed made a difference."

ACT does its primary work in one-on-one conversations[41] — more than 10,000 over the past six years — with people in its congregations and surrounding communities. The issues that ACT prioritizes for its research and action strategies come from these conversations. In this way, ACT ensures that its CO is truly bottom-up, rather than top-down with issues imposed on the community. ACT has trained more than 1,000 leaders from the community and, with the spark and hard work of these leaders, has established itself as a highly effective, results-oriented grassroots organization. Some of ACT's accomplishments include:

- **Securing public resources.** The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reported that ACT's "public accountability sessions" with city leaders had produced "remarkable results. ... City Hall attention to ACT concerns is a sign that the organization has made the transition from noisemaker to player in city politics." The city increased funding for demolition of abandoned buildings in response to ACT and now has two of its 10 health inspectors responding to ACT complaints.
- **Establishing effective relationships.** New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial keeps a copy of ACT's nonpartisan platform for rebuilding the city on a wall in his office. Shortly after his election in 1994, Morial directed his top staff to go on retreat with ACT leaders to strengthen that relationship. Morial says, "Government can in no way do it alone, not without the help of the people most affected and leaders in the community willing to lend of themselves and their time. The formation of ACT is truly a godsend."
- **Impacting a failing educational system.** In 1998-99, ACT sought major reforms in the exceedingly low-performing Orleans Parish school system. ACT's 10-issue platform was presented to the School Board in May 1998 at by far the best-attended meeting in the board's history — over 1,000 residents were brought together by ACT. The platform is

the basis for significant structural, policy and other reforms that now have the backing of the city's business, political and university communities. Recently, the Director of the Greater New Orleans Education Foundation credited ACT with "making the reform movement happen and holding us accountable for results."

- **Building clout on a broader scale to affect public policies.** ACT is also working statewide with other groups in the PICO network to develop state support for after-school academic learning centers (several million dollars have already been committed by the state), steer the resources to the most needy schools in each community, measure and demonstrate the results in improved student performance, and seek increased resources to expand the number of centers so that as many under-performing students as possible can be served.[42]

HOW NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NETWORKS PROVIDE TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR CO

National and regional organizing networks train organizers and leaders, support organizational development, give programmatic and strategic guidance, mentor and evaluate organizers, assist in fundraising, and promote and facilitate cross-training and learning among affiliates. The relationship between the local affiliates and the networks is very tight, multi-dimensional, and absolutely essential to the effectiveness of CO strategies at neighborhood, community, regional and national levels.

The networks and other intermediary organizations fall into four categories:

- **Regional centers that provide a wide range of services to a cross-section of groups in their areas,** such as the Community Resource Center in Denver, Colorado and the Western States Center in Portland, Oregon;
- **Training groups building their own networks,** such as PICO, IAF, DART (Direct Action Research and Training), and Gamaliel Foundation;
- **Constituency-focused intermediaries providing training and technical assistance for groups that involve and represent those constituencies,** such as The Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland, California, which works with communities of color; and the Center for Community Change, in Washington, D.C., which works with low-income communities; and
- **Intermediaries concerned with building a formidable network and developing other organizations in the field by integrating them into network training events and through consultative assistance,** such as The Midwest Academy in Chicago, ACORN's Social Justice Institute, and the Western Organization of Resource Councils, in Montana.[43]

CASE STUDY #4: DEVELOPING A FAITH-BASED CO ORGANIZATION

CO at Work: Lessons from The Gamaliel Foundation on How to Build a Faith-Based CO Group.

Faith-based CO organizations are most often developed in local communities by one of the national CO networks, though some local groups have emerged on their own. A few of the latter remain independent of networks, while most have sought and obtained affiliate or membership status with one of the networks.

Each network follows a similar process in developing local faith-based organizations and in according them affiliate status. The Gamaliel Foundation's process, which has been used in the development of some 40 affiliates and sponsoring committees across the country, normally takes a year or more to complete. It builds local commitment to and "ownership" of the organization from the very beginning. The steps that groups must follow in Gamaliel's process are listed below.

- Recruit a minimum of 20 congregations (generally emphasizing those serving low-income communities and communities of color), form a multiracial and ecumenical sponsoring committee, and raise $100,000.
- Hire in concert with Gamaliel a professional organizer to guide its work.
- Assure that the organizer meets with every pastor and 10 laypersons from each congregation to learn about each congregation and to identify potential leaders.
- Bring three to five leaders from each congregation to a weekend retreat to study the basic concepts of organizing.
- Have each core leader who goes through the retreat recruit another 15 – 100 leaders in his or her congregation.
- Have this expanded team of 300 – 800 leaders go through four hours of training in conducting "one-on-one" interviews with congregation members.
- Over a six-week period, visit anywhere from 150 – 1,500 people within each congregation.
- Hold a large convention[44] in which participants choose four top priority issues and commit themselves to working on one of them.
- Have up to 300 leaders go through another four-hour training, this time to learn how to conduct one-on-ones with public officials, professors, agency heads and business CEOs.
- Assure that the leaders spend eight weeks conducting one-on-ones with public officials.

After all of these steps are taken, the group holds its first public "action," often with more than 1,000 people taking part. The group presents clear problems and solutions to politicians, agency heads and corporate leaders. The goal of the "action" is to win allies and gain recognition for the group.[45]

Other organizations play significant roles at the national level in assisting CO organizations. Among them:

- **The Grassroots Policy Project, Washington, D.C.** – trains environmental and economic justice groups for increased participation in the political process;
- **The National Center for Schools and Communities, New York City** – research, training and other assistance to catalyze and strengthen school reform and community-building CO groups and strategies;
- **Enlace, Portland, Oregon** – strengthening and expanding the base for low-wage worker organizing;
- **The Progressive Technology Project, Washington, D.C.** – making effective use of computer technology, the Internet, and other rapidly evolving technologies and communications vehicles for organizing and change; and
- **The Grass Roots Innovative Policy Program, Roanoke, Virginia** – builds greater capacity and linkages for policy impact by CO groups.

CO ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Here is a brief sampling of results produced by CO groups over the past few years, organized by issue area. More examples are cited throughout the *Toolbox* text.

Community Reinvestment. The efforts of CO groups, including National Peoples Action and the National Training and Information Center, have translated into more than $1 trillion in loans for qualified homebuyers, affordable housing developers and business entrepreneurs in low-income communities. Their years of work contributed heavily first to enactment of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, followed by the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) in 1977. Since then, CO groups have worked to ensure effective implementation of the Act, and to translate lending commitments into loans for qualified homebuyers and business entrepreneurs in low-income communities. They have also worked with national organizations like the National Community Reinvestment Coalition to protect it from being

weakened and possibly eradicated by various congressional efforts. A few achievements are listed here.

- Negotiated landmark agreements with banks in 16 cities, making more than $1 billion available for loans in low-income neighborhoods. Pioneered a comprehensive mortgage-counseling program that has put more than 21,000 families into their own homes. (*ACORN*)
- Won more than $100 million in CRA agreements with banks in Dade, Pinellas and Palm Beach counties by DART organizations in Florida. *(Direct Action Research and Training*)
- Sought and obtained loan commitments of $469.3 million for mortgages, community development corporations, and small businesses in underserved Milwaukee neighborhoods. *(Milwaukee Interfaith Congregations Allied for Hope, a Gamaliel Foundation affiliate)*
- Negotiated a $337 million community reinvestment agreement from a legal challenge of the First Union/CoreStates bank merger, including keeping branches open in low-income neighborhoods. *(East Philadelphia Organizing Project)*

Education and Youth Development. Over the past decade, more CO groups have begun to focus on school and educational inequities, responding to parental and community concerns about substandard education provided to most low-income children and children of color. The groups are finding innovative ways to transform the culture and operations of schools, leading to enhanced school and student performance. Some CO groups have found effective ways to involve young people, helping them to influence school issues. A few achievements are listed here.

- Developed a statewide network of 139 "alliance" schools beginning in 1991, which work to enhance

Why Some CO Groups Fail

Of course, some CO groups fail. Because CO prioritizes the processes of democratic practice and leadership development, critics and skeptics may (and do) argue that CO groups are "hung up on process at the expense of product," or "focus too narrowly on what is in the self-interest of members ignoring big picture concerns." Of course, some CO groups and efforts are clearly marginal and may indeed be "guilty as charged." Emerging CO groups, with resources and support in short supply or caught up in internal struggles, at times fail to mature and progress. Some older CO groups fail to self-renew, keep pace with changing needs, constituencies and conditions, or raise their sights as high as they might. But on the whole, even the least promising or successful CO groups have made some impact on their community.

the academic achievement of low-income students. Worked with the state education commissioner to convince the legislature to provide $2 million in new funds for low-performing schools in 1993, increased to $5 million in 1995. Trained hundreds of teachers and principals in working with the community to turn around low-performing schools. Significantly enhanced school and student performance in schools where CO has worked to forge new, collaborative relationships among principals, teachers, parents, community residents and community leaders. *(Texas IAF)*

- Placed the largest ($9.2 billion) school facilities bond in U.S. history on the state ballot to raise funds for much-needed school repair and construction, in addition to a state law dedicating $50 million for after-school programs. *(PICO California Project)*

- Organized young people who spearheaded the Kids First! Coalition that won the passage of a groundbreaking city ballot initiative setting aside $72 million over 12 years for youth development programs. *(People United for a Better Oakland, Oakland, California)*

- Took the lead in educating constituents and organizing statewide advocacy efforts that led to enactment of the groundbreaking Mississippi Adequate Education Program, appropriating $650 million over five years to improve the quality of public education in the state. *(Southern Echo)*

Jobs and Living Wages. Poverty has become more concentrated and entrenched in distressed inner-city and rural communities nationwide. Broader economic and public policy trends have undermined wages for the majority of families, with real family incomes falling for those in the bottom three-fifths of the income distribution. CO has addressed poverty conditions and wage erosion through a variety of living wage and other campaigns. Examples are listed below.

- Secured passage of landmark Worker Retention and Living Wage Ordinances in Los Angeles in 1995 and 1997, and amendments strengthening these ordinances in 1998 and 1999. The Living Wage ordinance, paying (in 1999) $7.25 an hour with health benefits or $8.50 without, will cover 15,000 workers by 2002, the most extensive coverage in the country. *(Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy)*

- Obtained legislation requiring the city of Milwaukee to guarantee that unemployed inner-city residents comprise 14 percent — later increased to 21 percent — of the workers on any city project. *(Milwaukee Interfaith Congregations Allied for Hope)*

- Fostered employee buyouts of three companies, saving 3,100 jobs and keeping $200 million in income in New England's Naugatuck Valley. *(Naugatuck Valley Project)*

- Won passage of a state law in South Carolina that provides anti-firing protection to more than 1.5 million workers who are covered under the state workers' compensation system. Closed a loophole in the law that had allowed employers to "opt" out of the system and provide inferior benefits to injured workers. More than 800 companies that had dropped out have had to resume participation in the workers' compensation insurance system. *(Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment)*

- Secured funding to open a dozen "one-stop centers" where AFDC/TANF recipients and the working poor can obtain child care, soft skills job training, access to health care, and micro-lending services. Won public funding, including first-time federal, county and city funds, for developing coop businesses owned and managed by poor people, and started more than a dozen cooperatives employing more than 100 people from low-income urban and rural neighborhoods. *(Sacramento Valley Organizing Community, Sacramento, CA)*

CASE STUDY #5: AN EMERGING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LABOR AND CO

CO at Work: How CO groups play a role in the living wage movement.

There has been a recent upsurge in working relationships between some unions and labor leaders, and some CO groups and networks. The work of Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) in Baltimore, leading to the nation's first living-wage ordinance, was accomplished in partnership with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). ACORN has been forging alliances with local labor federations, internationals of unions and locals in some cities for a number of years. IAF and the Gamaliel Foundation are working with public-sector unions to challenge efforts that seek to discredit public services and to increase the quality of public agencies. Independent CO groups are also working closely with some union locals. Leaders of the AFL-CIO and a number of its affiliated unions are using community organizers as consultants and trainers in their work to organize low-wage workers.[46]

No one can forecast how the CO-labor partnership will evolve. It may be possible to overcome the many challenges to forging common agreements and cooperative action necessary to move forward on a large scale. Clearly, some results to date are quite significant and have captured public and media attention for CO strategies. Here is one recent example as reported in *The Los Angeles Times*:

In Los Angeles and elsewhere, a small but increasing number of employers who do business with the government are suddenly finding themselves required by local ordinances to grant big raises and benefits to their low-wage workers. Forty cities and counties in 17 states, particularly those with large constituencies of low-wage workers have enacted such wage laws since the movement began five years ago.

CASE STUDY

As one follows another, lately at the rate of a new ordinance a month, the movement has begun to broaden from a simple emphasis on higher wages into a wide range of requirements involving health insurance, vacations, sick pay, job security, and incentives to unionize.

"You have to look at the living wage movement in the context of the utter failure of federal labor law, now so stacked against workers," said Madeline Janis-Aparicio, director of the Los Angeles Living Wage Coalition. She cited what she said was Washington's failure to raise the national minimum wage to keep pace with the needs of the working poor or to strengthen labor's bargaining power.

Wage ordinances have become a goal of such national groups as the Industrial Areas Foundation and ACORN that seek to bring community groups together in social action campaigns. And with increasing frequency, the ordinances are becoming big issues in local politics.

The first such ordinance was passed in December 1994, largely through the efforts of a community organization called BUILD. Last November, BUILD got thousands of residents of poor neighborhoods to the polls. Most voted for the re-election of Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland, who is increasingly using the city's ordinance as a model for contracts that the state makes with private companies.

Here in Los Angeles, Mayor Richard J. Riordan tried to block the measure, but his veto was overridden by the City Council. Mayor Riordan said, however, that he agreed with supporters of the wage ordinance that income inequality had increased in part because of the decline in union bargaining power. Several ordinances try to reverse that trend through an "opt out" loophole that lets companies partly off the hook if they agree to let their workers organize — a central goal of Ms. Janis-Aparicio's coalition.

"Whenever you rely on legislation solely, the gains can be lost," she said, noting that the Los Angeles City Council's pro-labor bent could disappear in a future election. "So we need to build union agreements that have community support and will last."

While running a refugee center here, Ms. Janis-Aparicio, 39, was recruited into her present line of work in 1993 by Miguel Contreras, now the powerful secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Mr. Contreras, who had worked with Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers, was mindful of the public support — the consumer grape boycott — that had brought such success to the farm workers. So he asked Ms. Janis-Aparicio to set up a nonprofit organization that could foster similar community support for labor. She founded the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), which operates with a $1 million annual budget and 18 salaried staff members. The wage issue soon became the central cause.

"The question of job inequities in the public sector, if we address it as a union, people say we are self-serving," Mr. Contreras said. "But if it has the cloak of religious leaders and community activists, then it becomes a community issue."[47]

For a listing of labor and community collaborations see The New World Foundation's Phoenix Fund web site at **www.phoenixfund.org.**

Environmental Quality and Environmental Justice. When the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted a study of eight southern states to determine the correlation between the location of hazardous waste landfills and the racial and economic status of near-by communities, the results showed what low-income constituencies already knew — that race and economic status were major determinants in the siting of such facilities. The GAO study found that three out of every five African Americans and Latinos live in a community that houses unregulated toxic waste sites. These sites exist largely because decision-makers found and expected no resistance from community residents or leaders. CO groups have taken the lead to address this and related issues in what has come to be known as the environmental justice movement. Below are some examples of what the movement has accomplished.

- Forced companies to clean up, move or cancel plans for toxic chemical plants, dumps, discharges or waste incinerators in Memphis, Fort Worth, Philadelphia, Des Moines, New Orleans, Dallas, Minneapolis, Jacksonville, St. Paul, Chicago and St. Louis. *(ACORN)*
- Overcame long odds to block a proposed mountaintop removal permit on Big Black Mountain, Kentucky's highest point and home to at least 50 plants and animals found nowhere else in the state. (Mountaintop removal is strip mining; the surface of the mountain is literally blown up and destroyed. Homes, personal property and the environment are damaged.) Negotiated an agreement with nine coal companies assuring no future mountaintop mining. *(Kentuckians for the Commonwealth)*
- Ended the San Diego Port District's use of methyl bromide, a toxic pesticide that had been causing widespread health problems in Barrio Logan, a poor neighborhood situated near the Port. The Port is one of the largest and most heavily used in the country. As a result of this work, became the only local group to participate with national and international non-governmental organizations during discussions of the Montreal Protocol, an international treaty regarding the phasing out of ozone-depleting chemicals that include methyl bromide. *(Environmental Health Coalition)*

Democratic Participation. Below are some examples of how the CO movement has improved democratic participation.

- Secured passage of the National Voter Registration Act ("motor voter") by the Mississippi legislature, blocked three times in attempts to impede increased voting turnout of African Americans. Prevented onerous voter identification requirements from being attached to the legislation. The Act was vetoed by the governor in 1998, but the efforts have paid off in major changes in the legislative process that have benefited African Americans. As reported in the local press, efforts to diminish the impact of voting by African Americans have "evaporated." *(Southern Echo)*

- Registered more than 500,000 new voters since 1980. Struck down barriers to voter registration in Bridgeport, Pine Bluff, Little Rock, Atlanta, Grand Rapids and Pittsburgh. *(ACORN)*

Health. Below are some examples of how the CO movement has addressed health needs.

- Extended Medicaid coverage to an additional 42,000 North Carolinians. Led lobbying campaign for a $10 million program to reduce infant mortality rate, with money secured for maternity and infant care, pap smears and breast cancer screenings. Forced state government to open a health department serving poor residents of Edgecomb County. *(North Carolina Fair Share)*
- Worked with coalition partners to get the Texas state legislature to approve a first-time-ever package of legislation on indigent health care, resulting in the provision of $70 million in new funds to provide health services in poor, underserved communities. *(Texas IAF)*
- Won expanded in-home care services to more than 1,200 people with disabilities; the restructuring of Idaho's medical indigence program, resulting in $6 million in new Medicaid services; and concessions by the Board of Medicine to make significant expansions in the scope and practice of nurse practitioners and physician assistants. *(Idaho Community Action Network)*

Crime and Safety. Below are some examples of how CO has addressed crime and safety issues.

- Forced police and city officials to respond more effectively to rapes in low-income neighborhoods and to establish rape-prevention programs in St. Louis, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans and Des Moines. Won new programs to fight drugs in New Orleans, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Boston and Detroit. *(ACORN)*
- Initiated local organizing campaigns that resulted in 15 new school-based anti-drug and gang prevention projects and the implementation of gang prevention curricula in six junior high and elementary schools. *(People Acting in Community Together, San Jose, California, an affiliate of PICO)*
- Secured numerous agreements with police departments to fight crime and drugs. More police were stationed in crime-ridden areas, and hot spot campaigns allowed neighborhood residents to report crimes anonymously. *(Direct Action Research and Training in Florida)*

City Services. Below are some examples of how CO has improved city services.

- Obtained more than $13 million between 1991 and 1996 for youth and neighborhood programs, including $2 million for a new youth drug treatment facility and $6 million in redevelopment funds. *(People Acting in Community Together)*

- Secured a steady, annual funding source for children's services in the San Francisco city budget, with $160 million to be provided for children's programs between 1993 and 2003. *(Coleman Advocates for Youth, San Francisco)*

Corporate Social Responsibility. Below is an example of how CO has played a role in corporate social responsibility.

- Persuaded business leaders to launch a $25 million scholarship program to assist Baltimore's public school graduates, primarily low-income students. Secured the agreement of the business community to guarantee three job interviews to every high school graduate with a 95 percent attendance record. *(BUILD, an IAF affiliate)*

Institutional Racism. Below is an example of how CO has addressed institutional racism.

- Persuaded the Office of Civil Rights of the U. S. Department of Education to address extreme racial disparities encountered by African American youth in Darlington County, South Carolina. The county school system has been compelled to enter into a legal agreement to address the disparities. *(Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment)*

THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

CO's Promise: "Liberty, Equality and Community"

The community organizing movement is a largely American phenomenon. It is based deeply in our democratic values. It is, in the view of its participants and practitioners, the members, leaders and organizers of mass organizations, the major hope for the building of democracy in our country. It comes directly to grips with the two central problems of our time: economic and social inequality on the one hand and the alienation of the people from civic life on the other. It is growing both numerically and in its self-confidence. If it continues and avoids some of the mistakes of the past it offers the promise of becoming a major new force in American public life. The likelihood of this happening is increased both by the continuing economic and spiritual crisis of our times and by the growing consciousness, confidence and competence of the organizers and organizations who now are part of the movement.

The movement is 'outside the system' in the sense that it is creating new forms of participation and power in public life. It is 'inside the

system' in the sense that it is firmly rooted in the American democratic tradition and uses the Constitutionally guaranteed rights of the people as the basis for its organizing work.

Those of us who are in the movement imagine ourselves to be in the great tradition of American democracy. Our hopes and dreams are based on our confidence in the people as a whole to govern themselves. We have seen nothing in past or present experiences to persuade us that any other approach will bring us closer to liberty, equality and community.[48]

— Mike Miller, Organize Training Center

CO is a serious and effective but imperfect strategy. Those involved in the field measure their chances for future success on the basis of what they have experienced — learning from trial and error, taking it step-by-step, building for the long term. CO's work is in distressed communities and with disenfranchised constituents — a "school of hard knocks" if there ever was one. With resources in short supply and no magic bullets to be found, CO's practitioners can have few false illusions. You do it or you don't, and you try again until you've succeeded.

CO groups have made enormous progress against long odds in a range of areas. The progress is measured in people with power capable of shaping their futures and in tangible, meaningful policy and program benefits. This progress is likely to continue and spread if for no other reason than the determination, grit and intelligence of those within CO who are dedicated to its success. And the vision to which they are dedicated is America as it was meant to be.

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[7] Robert C. Linthicum, *Empowering the Poor: Community Organizing among the city's "rag, tag and bobtail,"* Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1991, p. 31.

[8] Mike Miller, Organize Training Center, as quoted in Sally Covington and Larry Parachini, *Foundations in the Newt Era,* Washington, DC: The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 1995.

[9] The term "values-based" refers to values that form the basis of CO theory and practice. For most community organizers and CO groups, the values include: community, solidarity, equality, freedom, justice, the dignity of the individual, respect for differences, civility, and political democracy.

[10] Si Kahn, *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders,* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982, p. 1.

[11] Dave Beckwith and Randy Stoecker, *Community Organizing: Soul and Substance,* forthcoming.

[12] Nina Wallerstein, "Powerlessness, Empowerment, and Health: Implications for Health Promotion Programs," *American Journal of Health Promotion,* 1992, (6): 197 – 205.

[13] Seth Borgos and Scott Douglas, "Community Organizing and Civic Renewal: A View from the South," *Social Policy,* Winter, 1996.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Hollis Watkins, Southern Echo.

[17] Borgos and Douglas, *Community Organizing and Civic Renewal.*

[18] Gary Delgado, *From the Ground Up: Problems and Prospects for Community Organizing,* prepared for the Ford Foundation, Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center, February 1993, p. 5.

[19] The term "CO field" is not one that all or many involved in CO utilize. In fact, no single term that captures CO in all its varieties is in common use among CO practitioners. Some prefer the term "craft," while others use "profession." Both of these terms refer mostly to the roles of community organizers.

[20] Robert Fisher and Peter Romanofsky, "Introduction," *Community Organization for Social Change,* ed. Robert Fisher and Peter Romanofsky, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981, pp. xi-xviii. Fisher and Romanofsky's historical overview was summarized in Michael R. Williams, *Neighborhood Organizations: Seeds of a New Urban Life,* from which this section is taken.

[21] During these four periods of social reform CO history, counter-productive local organizing also flared periodically with equal intensity. For example, fierce anti-black "Neighborhood Improvement Associations" formed in Detroit after 1915, as blacks poured into the city from the South to work in the auto plants. These neighborhood organizations had only one purpose: to maintain their all-white areas against black encroachment. And, in another of dozens of examples that might be cited, the Citizens Council in New Orleans during the late 1950s opposed school integration orders, organizing citywide and targeting specific neighborhood schools. See B.J. Widick, *Detroit: City of Race and Class Violence,* Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972, pp. 3 –22, and, Neil McMillen, "The Citizens Council in New Orleans: Organized Resistance to Social Change in a Deep South City," in Fisher and Romanofsky, pp. 157 – 185.

[22] Drawn from: Ann Bastian, *Why Do We Need Strategic Practice?,* New World Foundation, undated.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24]Mike Miller, internal memorandum discussing forthcoming book, *Organize! Training Center,* May 2000.

[25] *The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky & His Legacy,* produced by Bob Hercules and Bruce Orenstein for the Media Process Group, Chicago, IL, 1998.

[26] Mike Miller, memorandum prepared for NFG to assist in development of the *CO Toolbox,* May 2000.

[27] Andrew Young, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as quoted in Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1995, p. 265.

[28] *FACT's Five Year Report, 1995 - 1999,* SF, Fact Services Company, Inc., 2000, p. 8.

[29] Jacqueline B. Mondros and Scott M. Wilson, *Organizing for Power and Empowerment,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

[30] "Lyndale Neighborhood Association," *Shelterforce,* Orange, NJ, September/October, 1998, p. 32.

[31] Dave Beckwith and Randy Stoecker, *Community Organizing: Soul and Substance,* forthcoming.

[32] Mondros Wilson, *Organizing for Power and Empowerment,* p. 12. The authors cite many sources.

[33] Mondros and Wilson, *Organizing for Power and Empowerment,* p. 27.

[34] Carl Tjerandsen, *Education for Citizenship: A Foundations Experience,* Santa Cruz: Emil Schwarzhaupt Foundation, Inc., 1980, p. 240.

[35] Marshall Ganz, unpublished paper, 1995.

[36] Delgado, *From the Ground Up,* p. 27.

[37] Jim Castelli and John D. McCarthy, *Power Organizing: How to Build Community and Reinvigorate Democracy,* forthcoming, p. 29.

[38] As presented in Charles Bruner and Larry Parachini, *Building Community: Exploring New Relationships Across Service Systems Reform, Community Organizing, and Community Economic Development,* Washington, DC: Together We Can, 1997, p. 25.

[39] Drawn from Larry Parachini, with Andrew Mott, *Strengthening Community Voices in Policy Reform: Community-Based Monitoring, Learning and Action Strategies for an Era of Devolution and Change,* Washington, DC: Center for Community Change, July 1997, p. 37.

[40] Bruner and Parachini, *Building Community...,* p. 25. Project Quest's results were reported in Dennis Shirley, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform,* Austin, TX, University of Texas Press, 1997, p. 198.

[41] The "one-on-one" interview is a basic technique used in CO to build relationships of value for the organizing process. Organizers and leaders are given training in how to conduct these interviews.

[42] This example has been compiled and edited from three sources. They are, *Building Civic Capacity through Faith-Based Community Organizing,* prepared by ACT and presented to school reform activists and foundation representatives convened at the Open Society Institute, NYC, in May 1999; Castelli and McCarthy, *Power Organizing: How to Build Community and Reinvigorate Democracy;* and *Site Visit Report – ACT,* prepared by Larry Parachini for the National Center for Schools and Communities, NYC, May 1999.

[43] Delgado, *From the Ground Up...*

[44] Such founding conventions of Gamaliel's affiliates have attracted as many as 1,000 participants.

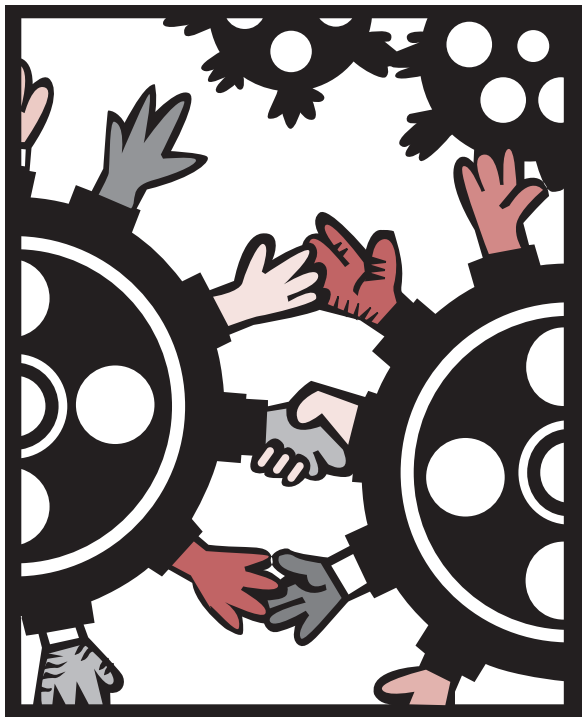
[45] Gamaliel Foundation, as quoted in Castelli and McCarthy, *Power Organizing...,* p. 39.

[46] Mike Miller, memorandum prepared for NFG, May 2000.

[47] Excerpted from: Louis Uchitelle, "Minimum Wages, City by City," *The Los Angeles Times,* November 19, 1999.

[48] Mike Miller, *The Ideology of the Community Organizing Movement,* Organize Training Center, 1979.

COMMUNITY



ORGANIZING

TOOLBOX

Grantmakers and Community Organizing

GRANTMAKERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

There are many reasons why funders have been hesitant to fund organizing efforts. …[But] organizing is fundamentally about relationship building, and an intersection of the values of community and the interest of individuals. Organizing is about community building and is a process that helps ensure our democratic values and citizenship. Organizing efforts can cut across our diverse society, connecting interests, issues and basic objectives to build community. Organizing also involves the development of leaders and community bridge builders, who should be of special importance to funders. After all, one goal of philanthropy is to build bridges between people to solve problems. Many foundations have retreated from funding organizing, both because of myths and from real experiences. The myths need to be busted and real issues need to be discussed. Foundations need to understand when and why different organizing models work. Organizing needs to be placed within the context of community building. Where does it fit? How does it compare with other techniques and strategies, advocacy, economic development and systems change?[49]

— San Francisco Foundation – Forum on Organizing

ISSUES TO CONSIDER AT THE START

This section of the Toolbox addresses a number of key issues that grantmakers may want to address before initiating, strengthening or expanding a CO grantmaking program.

- What are the most important reasons an increasing number of grantmakers are prioritizing CO? Why has a core group of funders made commitments to supporting CO over a long period of time?

- How do funders determine what efforts and organizations within the CO field best fit with their grantmaking objectives?
- What do funders think about CO's impact?
- How do CO's results compare with those of other programs or initiatives in grantmaking portfolios?
- How does CO relate to and affect other grantmaking strategies, particularly those focused on community efforts intended to benefit poor people? How are these connections working?
- What are the challenges to CO's development and how can funders contribute to extending CO's use and impact?
- How can funders evaluate CO to assure funders that grantees are meeting the objectives specified in their proposals, to assist funders in determining the overall value of the strategy for social change, and to help grantees strengthen their organizations and their work?
- What are the specific steps a funder should take in exploring and developing a CO grantmaking strategy?

CO GRANTMAKING AND NFG'S MISSION

CO is a funding strategy that directly addresses NFG's goals for supporting poor people and their communities:

- Increasing social and economic justice;
- Building vibrant, effective community-based organizations;
- Developing strong and effective community leaders; and
- Supporting communities and individuals to shape their futures.[50]

Other Funders as a Great Resource

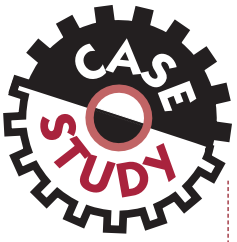
Grantmakers who are already investing in CO are more than willing to help other funders explore it as a potential strategy. They actively seek funding partners for their work. They know the issues and have advice about how to handle them. They know the questions that need answering before a foundation can make a strong commitment to CO. The examples in this section can be used as a starting point for further investigation and serious conversation with peers. Assistance for making connections with peer funders involved with CO is available to NFG members through NFG's Member Directory, at **www.nfg.org**, or to nonmembers by emailing nfg@nfg.org.

Why It's Important to Learn About Funding CO

Educating and exposing funders to CO is a critical first step to help them understand how CO can enhance their existing grantmaking. Most foundation funding for bettering neighborhoods and communities is directed to programs and operations of well-established groups that are not change-oriented, are not community-based and cannot play effective leadership roles in local revitalization strategies. On an overall basis, the lion's share of foundation funding at the local level is for mainstream groups in the arts, health and education. CO groups and others that are dedicated to making bottom-up social change — strategies developed and directed by disadvantaged constituents to reach goals they determine — are drastically under-funded relative to their importance and potential.

CO is an important strategy for achieving positive social change philanthropy. The widening gap between rich and poor, the shameful neglect of poor inner-city and rural communities and other major impediments to achieving a healthy and just society — all of these issues demand the absolute best from grantmakers. Effective CO — and the kind of collaborative strategies CO engenders — transforms residents of distressed neighborhoods and their communities, empowering them to shape their own futures.

CASE STUDY #6: A FUNDER'S ADVICE ON DISPELLING THE MYTHS OF CO



Foundation Funding of CO: Understanding How CO Can Build Leaders and Transform Communities.

Funders may be unaware of CO's value in part because of controversies and myths that have accompanied CO efforts over the years. Straight talk about CO is necessary to overcome suspicions and doubts and the feeling that CO is somehow a 'fly by night' kind of thing. In fact, CO has grown and matured over the past 20 years and demonstrated real staying power and results. Many CO organizations are now celebrating their 10th, 15th, and even 25th anniversaries. Many of them are very significant organizations in their urban and rural communities across the country. They are now recruiting and training a second generation of leadership while many of their first generation leaders remain

involved or have moved to other positions of influence. They are now dealing with large policy issues that affect thousands of people. They have the discipline to work on multiple issues and move on when they achieve their goal. In the past, CO organizations tended to last only as long as the issue did.

CO's importance for making democracy work needs to be understood. Democracy is not seasonal; it is an ongoing dynamic process that calls for active citizenship. Community organizations are one of the few vehicles left in our country that provide a place for ordinary citizens to learn democratic practice. Community organization is the engine for that dynamic process of engaging ordinary citizens in democracy.

The critical value of CO's unique role in transforming ordinary citizens into leaders of community organizations and of their communities cannot be overstated. Where CO-trained community leaders started out and where they are today — fully engaged in significant decisions that affect their families, neighbors and communities — is amazing. CO's leadership development processes help ordinary citizens — often low-income persons of color victimized by discriminatory practices — become adept at understanding and analyzing the decisions and policies that affect their lives and working creatively to change bad policies. CO elevates new voices and leaders and helps to build their reputations.

A good community organization transforms not only individuals but whole communities over the years. It weaves and knits relationships that have been fragmented by isolation and the consumer approach to politics. Once a community embarks on a deep organizing process it cannot turn back. Communities are shaped for generations through CO, as power relationships are altered and new voices accountable to the community take places at the decision-making tables.

Funders are always looking for concrete accomplishments from strategies they invest in. CO doesn't take a back seat to any other approach in producing measurable, positive and significant change. Beyond this, however, CO's greatest contribution to disadvantaged people is undoubtedly its ability to spark hope and facilitate poor people's ability to imagine new possibilities for their communities.

— Frank Sanchez, Needmor Fund

WHY GRANTMAKERS PRIORITIZE CO

An increasing and significant number of grantmakers fund CO groups, with a growing number making CO a priority in their grantmaking.[51] In a 1999 survey, 88 of NFG's 200 member organizations said they funded CO. They include small local funders as well as five of the 15 largest foundations in the country; community foundations, family foundations, public foundations, church giving programs and corporate funders; foundations funding primarily in urban areas, and others with significant rural portfolios. NFG members can find out more about these grantmakers, their funding and the names of program officers interested in serving as resource persons on CO grantmaking by going to the NFG Web site at **www.nfg.org** and clicking on "Member Directory." Nonmembers can email the NFG office at nfg@nfg.org.

Funders investing in CO are influenced or directed in their choice of what to fund by factors unique to their institutions, such as:

- Their varying missions, history and leadership;
- Amount of money at their disposal;
- Differing contexts for their grantmaking;
- Their views about societal issues and what they can do to address them; and
- Their sense of CO's importance and potential.

Following is a summary of key reasons that funders are investing in CO.

CO is the baseline strategy for effective community revitalization. Some grantmakers start with the premise that CO is fundamental to revitalizing communities. Their "theory of change" says that no disadvantaged "community" can reach its potential unless its residents or constituents are fully engaged in determining what should be happening, and in leading the necessary change-oriented work to get it done — in short, the people need to be organized, skilled and powerful. In their view, effective CO transforms residents of distressed neighborhoods, empowering them to win concrete improvements in key areas like housing, education, jobs and the environment.

CO can help find solutions to the critical issues of poverty and race. Some funders see CO's value in addressing issues of race and poverty. They generally believe in the principle that "those who suffer the problems have the most to offer to its solutions." They see and appreciate CO's work in poor communities — often communities of color, where people of differing races and cultures are brought together in CO organizations for common struggle. Through CO, people learn and grow together and take leadership in making their communities whole. CO has fashioned numerous multiracial efforts among poor people that have improved public policies benefiting the poor, eased racial tensions, and provided purpose and hope for previously unorganized communities.

CO can affect change by building the capacity of people and groups working at the grassroots level. More and more funders are working with CO groups to build community capacities and to develop, recast or strengthen their grantmaking programs. The strategies of funders investing in CO for the long term generally include grants to CO networks or intermediaries to assist their grassroots grantees with organizational, leadership and constituency development processes.

CO can revitalize our democracy. A number of funders find CO a valuable strategy in seeking to help "repair the torn fabric" of our democracy. CO reflects and practices democracy — in its principles, in the way CO organizations are structured and operate and in its continuing efforts to foster informed dialogue and build common, participatory efforts in their communities and among their constituents.

Yes, There are Risks

The confidence funders place in CO groups, especially fledgling ones, carries an element of risk. Instead of supporting "experts" to solve problems for communities, they are banking on the talents and commitment of ordinary people who have not yet demonstrated — to the "outside world" at least — they can themselves be properly regarded as experts. However, these funders also appreciate that the failure to build and bank on the communities' own people and capacities has been a missing link in community change strategies.

Many of these funders recognize that most community groups are not representative of or accountable to their communities — they are not "community-based" as are CO groups. They appreciate that the task of developing and sustaining community-based organizations — where leadership from the community can be nurtured and "authentic" leadership can emerge — is a difficult one. CO is seen by some of these funders as the only capacity building strategy out there that prioritizes these essential community-base building and authentic leadership development objectives. As a result, their funding for CO is "patient" and long-term.

Maximizing the Use of Grant Dollars:

How CO Catalyzes Change in Rural Areas

Funders focusing on the needs of resource-shy rural communities are particularly determined that their grant dollars catalyze change. Few funders nationally prioritize rural issues; however, some are finding that investments in rural CO groups can trigger a range of significant outcomes unlikely to result from more traditional rural grantmaking. Among its results, rural CO has produced new and increased resources directed to low-income rural residents, public policies responsive to unique rural needs, and effective working partnerships of urban and rural organizations. Funders of rural CO understand that CO efforts are actively involving many people long thought too apathetic to care.

CO groups are often funded under categories called "civic participation" or "governance." Some grantmakers meet their objectives for strengthening democracy by funding CO groups' environmental justice or jobs efforts, or by supporting CO's leadership development strategies.

CO gets the best mileage for grant investments. Small funders especially realize that, because of size limitations, their dollars can do only so much. They often look for catalytic effects from their grantmaking — resources attracted from other sources, partnerships formed, leadership developed that can take on important challenges independent of the funders' support, recognition from the broader public of the importance of the funded efforts, and so on. These funders appreciate how CO groups inspire and rely on an unusually committed brand of volunteerism to get results, how far they stretch their dollars and how dedicated are their staffs. These funders distinguish CO groups from other types of community efforts that deliver a service but do not work for change.

CO is a long-term strategy that makes a significant difference. Many funders are determined to support CO through thick and thin. They are convinced that the resolution of social problems requires years of sustained efforts to build the necessary community capacities and power to address them. They believe CO is the antidote for "quick-fix" projects or initiatives that do little good.

The Wieboldt Foundation has been a CO funder for more than two decades. Only a few funders have supported CO for as long a period. Wieboldt's leaders believe its CO grantmaking makes a vital and unique long-term contribution to change. Their view was strongly validated in a detailed review of the first ten years of its grantmaking.

BACKGROUNDER # 4

Comprehensive Community Initiatives and CO

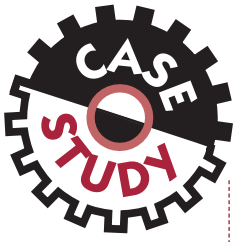
Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) are grantmaker-driven efforts intended to improve poor, generally urban neighborhoods and the lives of their residents. Many funders, singly or in partnership with other grantmakers, have developed and implemented CCIs over the past decade, and dozens of CCIs are in operation. While individual CCIs vary considerably, all of them are guided by principles of comprehensiveness and community building.

Most CCIs are relatively large, multi-site initiatives. They include the Ford Foundation's Neighborhood and Family Initiative operating in four cities; the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Project in the South Bronx funded by several grantmakers; the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Rebuilding Communities Initiative in five cities; the Children, Youth and Family Initiative of the Chicago Community Trust; the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative, funded by the Cleveland Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation; and many others.

The high priority CCIs place on resident-driven approaches to making change fits naturally with the work of CO groups. No other types of community organizations can claim CO groups' effectiveness in bringing residents to the table to share in community decision-making or in developing leadership to direct communities' futures. Yet, very few CCIs have involved CO groups. Perhaps the primary reason for this is the lack of understanding and appreciation for the value of CO on the part of grantmakers.

The Neighborhood Partners Initiative (NPI) of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation in New York City is one CCI that does value what CO can contribute to community building. "NPI works to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) to improve the quality of life in small, targeted neighborhoods through methods that encourage significant resident and community participation."[52] Among the five CBOs the Foundation is supporting are a local ACORN group and two others that make CO strategies central to their NPI efforts.

CASE STUDY #7: REBUILDING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE



Foundation Funding of CO: The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Rebuilding Communities Initiative.

The Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI), underway since 1993, requires groups to make their activities resident-driven, taking a CO approach to develop a strong and lasting constituency for change. The Foundation has seen that while a CO approach achieves very important results it is not a simple transition for community based organizations. Bill Traynor, executive director of the Lawrence Planning and Neighborhood Development Corporation, assessed the challenges facing community-based organizations and residents involved in RCI.

The first is overcoming the "caretaker" mentality and allowing residents to become "owners" of their agencies. At the core of organizing philosophy is a "reciprocal" relationship between organizer and the organized. According to Garland Yates and Sherece West of the Foundation, "This was a leading challenge for most of our RCI sites. ... To meet this challenge head-on, each site has worked hard to make community residents true owners and leaders guiding their agencies. For the organization, CO forces changes in decision-making, power sharing and risk taking. For the individuals in the organization, it can raise serious challenges to long-held personal attitudes, instincts and behaviors."

To face this and other challenges, the RCI sites are working to develop their capacity in four areas:

1. **Developing a culture of organizing.** Bill Traynor states, "The entire organization needs to think like an organizer rather than like caretakers or service providers. ...Thinking strategically, viewing residents as leaders, valuing collective power, being willing to use mobilization and other organizing tactics are all essential instincts that the group can develop."
2. **Creating an apparatus for social capital development.** The group needs to have the capacity to do outreach to community residents.
3. **Building systems for leadership development.** A significant investment in leadership development and training is essential. Creating a learning organization with an action — reflection — change — action style is necessary for both staff and leaders.
4. **Conducting effective campaigns.** Every community based organization needs to have the ability and will to mobilize its members when necessary. The organization needs to feel comfortable with conflict and have the skills to wage effective campaigns.

CASE STUDY

Organizing often leads to challenging power which can be very uncomfortable for agencies who must collaborate on projects and programs. These tensions are important to be dealt with by the organization and its leadership. It is also important that funders understand these tensions.[53]

DETERMINING AN OVERALL CO GRANTMAKING STRATEGY

Funders interested in making CO a grantmaking priority face an enormous array of choices. How other funders have proceeded can help funders that are new to CO think concretely about what might be the most critical goals, objectives and criteria of their CO grants programs. Case studies and other examples presented in this *Toolbox* provide some guidance. However, there is no substitute for funders conducting considerable outreach and investigation on their own, testing their ideas with leaders of CO groups and developing their plans accordingly.

Be Realistic

Before forming a CO grantmaking strategy, it is important to be clear about your foundation's mandates, resources and limitations. In short, adopt a realistic sense of what might be accomplished with the amount of grant dollars available.

Where to Begin. Before initiating any new CO grants program, funders will have to gain a good grasp of the landscape within the targeted geographic area — such as the groups, leaders, organizers, issues, objectives, strategies, actual accomplishments, potential accomplishments and multiple dynamics.

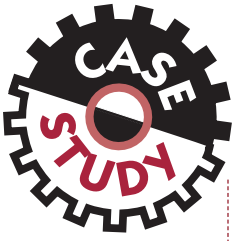
Many funders approach CO grantmaking through the prism of issue areas that their institutions prioritize — jobs, health, environmental justice and so on. Their decisions are based on CO work in those issue areas and how it relates and contributes to the funders' objectives. Others funders approach CO grantmaking from the standpoint of strengthening CO work and improving its chances for results. They may use a broad category, such as leadership development or civic participation, to provide focus, or simply fund worthy CO groups that otherwise meet their funding criteria.

As in the development of any new grantmaking program, funders investing in CO for the first time will want to find the best match between a foundation's needs and resources and the needs of CO groups and efforts they might fund. The case of the California-based James Irvine Foundation illustrates how one foundation, starting with its own decision to

target a region of the state that it believed was underserved by philanthropy, devised a CO initiative that fit its objectives and those of CO groups in the region. The foundation placed significant value on CO, maintaining a long-term partnership between the foundation and its grantees, and establishing a continuing and open community-foundation dialogue to inform and "ground" the foundation's decisions. Specifically, the Foundation worked with area organizations to form the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship — a "learning collaborative" with a common purpose: to build throughout the Central Valley voluntary, self-perpetuating capacity for naturalization and full civic participation.

All of these aspects of the foundation's CO work can be used as meaningful criteria for effective CO grantmaking by other funders. For more information on the Irvine Foundation, go to **www.irvine.org.**

CASE STUDY #8: THE JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION



Foundation Funding of CO: How the James Irvine Foundation helped to form a California group dedicated to naturalization and civic participation.

In 1996, the James Irvine Foundation targeted California's Central Valley as a place of particular need. Known as America's breadbasket, the Valley is the richest region of agriculture production in the history of the world. It is also home to many of the state's poorest residents, large numbers of whom are unnaturalized legal permanent residents. The Valley leads the state in unemployment rates, which have hovered nearly 50 percent higher than the state average since the 1970s. By focusing significant grantmaking on the Valley, the Foundation acknowledged that the region has been underserved by philanthropy.

Rather than devising an "innovative" grants initiative from outside the Valley, the Irvine Foundation regularly convened representatives of prominent community organizations inside the Valley. Many — including lead staff from several CO groups — had never met each other before. After many meetings, as a degree of trust developed among them, they found that they were pursuing similar goals and that they had much to learn from one another. Working together, the Foundation and the organizations formed the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship — a "learning collaborative" with a common purpose: to build throughout the Central Valley voluntary, self-perpetuating capacity for naturalization and full civic participation.

The partners meet quarterly to teach one another, coordinate efforts and conduct joint campaigns. A faculty member from the University of California at Davis serves as the group's "learning coach." A communications consultant is helping the partners use video in outreach, training and documentation. A technology specialist assists in upgrading the

CASE STUDY

computer systems of member groups, who are now using e-mail and a common Web site to improve their communications across the far reaches of the Valley.

The Irvine Foundation provides core support for each partner organization and works strategically with them. It takes a seat at the Partnership table, but makes very clear that the community organizations are the key to the Partnership's success.

Craig McGarvey, the Irvine Foundation's program director responsible for the Partnership strategy, is very clear about the value of this collaborative work and of the importance of CO in building community. McGarvey believes that CO is synonymous with "experiential, community-based, adult education in democratic participation." He believes that CO, seen in this light, is the essential life-blood of achieving and sustaining healthy communities.

McGarvey says that, "Only collective community problem-solving can lead to positive and needed change. People come together, often guided by a community organizer, to identify issues

Central Valley Partnership For Citizenship

The Partnership's work centers on citizenship — assisting newcomers to learn English and naturalize by means of experiential curricula in civic engagement. As complementary aspects of the overall Partnership strategy, member groups prioritized strengthening nonprofit leadership in the Valley and addressing public policy concerns. The partners have:

- Created the Central Valley Forum to bridge a gap between grassroots civic organizing and state policy development. Nonprofit agencies commission papers from researchers and deliberate with political leaders about issues that impact Valley residents.
- Created and organized the Small Grants Program to provide support to grassroots efforts that encourage civic participation. The program offers grants from $600 to $5,000, and encourages outreach by agency members to very rural areas.

Larry Ferlazzo, executive director of Sacramento Valley Organizing Community, a strong CO group that is affiliated with the IAF, is one of the key leaders involved in the Partnership. He believes that it offers far more than the sum of its parts:

We're an organizing group, not a naturalization organization. But because of the Partnership we now have the technical resources to effectively assist people to become naturalized. Other groups that are tremendously proficient at naturalization are learning from us about civic participation.

More Lessons for Funders New to CO

In the past, CO funders have met with organizers and others to discuss funding needs for the entire CO field or for CO in their particular regions. Proceedings and other information about some of these gatherings are available from the grantmakers involved.[55] Occasionally funders and organizers have formed partnerships to jointly plan and carry out activities designed to attract increased resources for CO. These partnerships may hold important lessons for funders new to CO. NFG staff and leadership can provide helpful information on these partnerships.[56]

important to the quality of life in their communities, to make and implement plans for improvement. Through this shared experience, they develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and relationships. These are the building blocks of community. ... The organizer is a lead educator, not teaching at the front of a classroom but behaving in such a way that others are encouraged to take responsibility to learn. The learners encourage others to learn." The Partnership stresses:

- The importance of human dignity and difference — each person has the right to be educated; and
- The importance of human inclusion — people should learn together, building relationships across the lines that can divide them.

For McGarvey, "the assessment standards for CO work are no more and no less than the authentic measures of success for our best educational institutions." In short, CO is education and hands-on guidance for active and responsible citizenship.[54]

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CO FIELD

Just as each foundation has many aspects that make it unique, each CO group has particular needs. Funders new to CO will need to determine how best to pick and choose among them.

In his 1993 report for the Ford Foundation, veteran community organizer Gary Delgado discussed six areas in which "strategic funding initiatives by members of the philanthropic community could make a significant difference in helping CO make a real contribution to the field of community development."[57] Delgado's list included items listed below.

1) **Collaborative Projects.** Includes support for collaborative efforts among CO groups, other types of community organizations, intermediaries, universities and others similar to those that have contributed greatly to the growth of the community development field.
2) **Emerging Communities of Interest.** Includes organizations and supportive networks in communities of color;

immigrant rights groups; networks to support the development of effective organizations in the gay and lesbian, women's and disabled communities; and networks focusing on the intersection of race and environment.

3) **Multiple-Year Core Support for Key National Networks and Major CO Training Intermediaries.** Includes work to enhance the ability of national networks to initiate campaigns that combine local action with the ability to apply pressure at the national level.

4) **Professionalization and Infrastructural Development.** Includes work to spur the creation of new entities and strengthen existing ones that can provide research, training, legal backup and other needed assistance; attract and develop young people for CO work; facilitate the exchange of ideas, strategies and techniques; and undertake other efforts to strengthen the CO field.

5) **Leadership Development for Poor, Indigenous People.** Involves allocating foundations' program resources from existing leadership development programs — most of which focus on development of professional people (often of color) — to CO-type leadership development that targets indigenous leaders who have a following and are accountable to an organization.

6) **Small Grants to Local Organizations.** Involves strengthening the local work that is the "heart of CO." For funders who can't evaluate each of the local groups in their area, a re-granting partnership with a CO training intermediary is recommended.[58]

Funders new to CO will find Delgado's advice[59] helpful in establishing priorities. The CO field is constantly changing, building on its experiences and tackling emerging issues. Funders will find it challenging and necessary to stay on top of developments to inform their grantmaking and to help ensure that their CO grantees learn and grow with the times.

CASE STUDY # 9: THE TOLEDO/NEEDMOR CO PROJECT

Foundation Funding of CO: How a national funder worked with a community foundation to jointly develop a CO funding strategy.

In 1995, the Needmor Fund — a small national family foundation based in Boulder, Colorado — approached the Toledo (Ohio) Community Foundation (TCF), proposing that the two institutions combine their efforts to strengthen CO in Toledo, with grant funds to be provided by Needmor. The Needmor Fund is a longtime supporter of CO groups; it was established and operated for many years in Toledo. The TCF agreed to join forces with Needmor and, working together, they set up the Toledo/Needmor Community Organizing Project.

CASE STUDY

The TCF had no experience with CO prior to Needmor's offer to fund Toledo-area groups' CO efforts. The TCF needed and wanted to move into CO funding on a careful, step-by-step basis. To guide the process, a local Needmor Advisory Committee, staffed by the TCF, was set up. It considered grant requests, made funding decisions and monitored the progress of funded programs. The Advisory Committee's members included TCF board members and several community representatives knowledgeable about CO. TCF also conducted baseline research regarding the status of local CO efforts to answer questions such as "who's doing what?" and "is it really community organizing?"

During 1996-97, the Advisory Committee approved grants to support the salaries of organizers and some operating expenses for CO efforts proposed by three community development corporations (CDCs), each operating in different neighborhoods. Two of the them, the LaGrange Development Corporation and ONYX, are continuing grantees of the Project; the third was dropped after first-year funding. The TCF also completed its research and, in consultation with its grantees, the Advisory Committee determined that with expert technical assistance and training, CO could be further strengthened.

At the end of 1997 the Advisory Committee and the grantees selected ACORN as its technical assistance/training provider and hired an evaluator to monitor and assess the technical assistance and training program.

The evaluator's first-year progress report provided the TCF and the committee with data that suggested very positive results had been achieved through ACORN's work with the CDCs. Each now operated under a common definition of organizing and a much better understanding of CO; each identified opportunities to work together for the first time across neighborhood lines; CO was being integrated with the overall work of their organizations; and two highly trained organizers were now working effectively in the Toledo area.

The project operates with continuing guidance from the Advisory Committee. The two CDCs and ACORN decided to initiate a citywide organizing effort. ACORN is to open a field office in Toledo by the end of 2000, eventually employing two organizers, with the lead organizer a Toledo native. A sponsoring committee of residents is being formed to oversee development of the local operation. Members of the project's advisory committee are serving on this new body. ACORN will assume fiscal and programmatic responsibility for the Toledo CO effort. Needmor's grants will go to ACORN via the TCF and ACORN will disburse funding to the CDCs, taking responsibility for meeting all grant requirements.

Many of us really didn't have a sense of CO and what it could provide for our community. The Needmor Fund — and our own Steve Stranahan, whose family started Needmor — were the driving forces. Needmor provided the financial support for these local organizing efforts and we have been privileged to 'come along for the ride.' In providing local administrative and staff support, interacting with the Advisory Committee and talking about the Project with community leaders, we have learned a great deal. Our learning continues as the Project is still evolving. We are very encouraged by the progress to date and anticipate providing continuing and possibly increased support for CO in the future.[60]

— Pam Howell-Beach, executive director, The Toledo Community Foundation

EVALUATING GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING AND ORGANIZATIONS: CHOOSING CO GROUPS TO FUND

> *I think funders must allow communities to choose their own issues and organizing approach. Anything else is manipulative. It's especially bad when white outsiders dictate organizing methods to poor people of color who have good reason to feel disenfranchised and discriminated against.*[61]
>
> *— Garland Yates, Annie E. Casey Foundation*

Whatever rationale, goals and funding strategies new funders choose, the effectiveness of their CO grantmaking rests on the quality and performance of their grantees. All of the thoughtful ideas and guidance from others can add up to very little if funders' grant decisions are not very good. This is in part why experienced CO funders claim there is no substitute for getting into communities and talking with folks, listening and learning before making their decisions. No proposal or advice can tell a funder what a group looks, feels and smells like. Funders can minimize grantmaking mistakes through on-site interactions with CO groups, their staffs, leaders and constituents.

As one funder said in urging colleagues to conduct site visits before making grants, "even renowned winemakers taste each of their offerings each year to be sure they meet high standards."

Looking at the General Characteristics of Grassroots Organizations. Following are some key questions to ask.

- Does the organization involve large numbers of people in its geographic location?
- Are its members actively involved in the work of the organization in ways that go beyond subscribership or donating money?
- Is it democratic, with the leadership and staff accountable to the membership?
- What are its principle objectives?
  - ➢ Developing the capacity of its members to participate effectively in public life?
  - ➢ Delivering concrete victories on issues of direct concern to its constituency?
  - ➢ Affecting institutions, public policies and power relationships in ways that advance social, environmental and economic justice?[63]

Learning from the Community: A Guide to CO Funding

Leaders of the New York Foundation stress that the Foundation's expanding commitment to CO is directly related to board and staff reflection and the on-going dialogue that exists between board, staff and grantees. The Foundation's year-long review process in 1992-93 involved extensive outreach to the community and several facilitated discussions involving staff and trustees about grantmaking priorities. When the review was completed, the Foundation chose to redirect a considerable portion of its grants and grant dollars from direct services to CO. New York Foundation grants supporting direct service programs fell from just under 25 percent of total distributions in 1991-1992 to about 6 percent in 1995, while grants supporting CO increased from 18 percent to 46 percent during the same period.

Today the Foundation's grantmaking prioritizes long-term commitments to CO groups in the City. "What is good about the New York Foundation," executive director Madeline Lee states, "is that we listen to our grantees rather than to other funders. This in fact should be the first, second and third priority — to listen to the people who have the problems and who are struggling the most." Foundation Trustee Robert Pollack agrees. In fact, he argues that it is out of this process of learning about and from grantees that long-term philanthropic strategies and priorities can and should emerge.[62]

Grantmaking Criteria. Grantmaking criteria vary from funder to funder. Most make few, if any, distinctions between the requirements for CO groups and those expected of other grantseekers. However, funders making a serious long-term commitment to CO have found it helpful to have a set of criteria that can help them to identify effective CO groups — as well as to distinguish CO groups from other kinds of community organizations.

One leading CO funder, the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, developed and uses the following checklist to evaluate CO groups.

Membership

- ✔ Does the organization have a membership or constituency base?
- ✔ Is there a membership recruitment plan? Does it include one-on-one engagement of people? Does membership recruitment play an important role in the organization? Is there a mechanism to retain current members?
- ✔ Does the membership reflect the diversity of the community?
- ✔ Is there active participation in the group by people of color and women? Are questions of race and gender addressed in the education and leadership development process of the group?

Leadership and Governance

- ✔ Is the organization democratic? Specifically, does the membership have some direct control over the decision-making process and structure of the organization? Over programmatic policies, the budget and staffing?
- ✔ Are members and leaders involved in all levels of the organization, including fundraising and financial oversight?
- ✔ Is the leadership elected, and actively changing every few years?
- ✔ Are people of color and women part of the decision-making and leadership bodies?
- ✔ Does the organization have an identifiable leadership development process?
- ✔ If the organization is staffed, are professional community organizers included in the staffing structure? Are they trained and regularly provided additional training opportunities?

Strategy

- ✔ Does the organizational mission identify the values of social, economic and environmental justice as part of its work?
- ✔ Does the group have the ability to realistically assess the political terrain and devise strategies to address their concerns in the long and short term?
- ✔ Does the organization think systematically about the education of its membership, leadership and staff?
- ✔ Is there evidence that the group works collaboratively in coalitions?
- ✔ Does the organization have a strategic plan in place that makes them viable and sustainable for the long haul?
- ✔ Is the organization developing its own culture, social relationships and celebrations?

Impact

- ✔ Is the organization developing creative solutions to difficult community problems?
- ✔ Does the organization have a record of and/or the capacity for delivering victories?
- ✔ Is the organization increasing the civic participation of communities traditionally left out of the political process?
- ✔ Does the organization have a stated method for organizational evaluation? Is the evaluatory process a measure of the objectives met as well as a learning tool for the organization?

Tips for Smaller Funders: One Funder's Perspective. With all of the CO groups and strategies to choose from, how can a small funder new to CO grantmaking wisely allocate resources? The Liberty Hill Foundation, a local foundation in Los Angeles, has nearly a quarter century of CO grantmaking experience. Funders with similar size or even far smaller allocations available for CO than Liberty Hill's may find elements of the Foundation's approach, as well as its overall strategy, worthy of further investigation.

The Liberty Hill Foundation makes some $3 million in grants annually, nearly all of them for CO or related efforts in the Los Angeles area. The Foundation's grantmaking strategy provides flexibility, allows coverage of a range of different groups and permits the Foundation to focus on top priorities. In its strategy, the Foundation seeks to achieve the best possible balance between the desirability and need to fund new CO groups, and requirements for long-term support to established CO organizations that can help them grow and address more difficult and complex challenges. Key elements of the strategy include:

- Flexible grantmaking categories that can provide both start-up grants for fledgling CO efforts as well as larger grants to intermediate-size platform or anchor CO groups;
- A single annual cycle per grant area or category, along with an interim funding option; and
- A combination of focused grant programs as well as ones that can accommodate various organizational needs and sizes.

In addition to its central grantmaking, the Foundation also provides small grants for technical assistance to grantees and frequently convenes grantees for training and technical assistance purposes. [64]

CASE STUDY #10: CO AND RACE AND POVERTY

Foundation Funding of CO: How the Liberty Hill Foundation improved the lives of Korean immigrant laborers in Los Angeles.

The Liberty Hill Foundation, based in Los Angeles, provided a seed grant of $4,000 to Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA) in 1993 that helped spur the organization's development and catalyzed significant multi-racial CO efforts. KIWA has had extraordinary results in working with low-wage workers. The following illustrates how strategically chosen small grants for CO can have very substantial impacts.

As a young and enthusiastic union organizer with the successful Justice for Janitors campaign in the late 1980s and 1990s, Roy Hong came into contact with many of his fellow Koreans who were working in low-wage service industries. He also became keenly aware of a contradictory but recurrent theme — the image of the Korean immigrants, both within and outside the Korean community, as successful and financially secure business owners.

Aware that 70% of Korean immigrants are laborers working for someone else, Roy was bothered by what he calls the myth of the "model" immigrant community. He also saw the potential for a meaningful organization that could represent low-wage Koreans and build a progressive voice in the Korean community. So, in 1992 he and a few friends created the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA), the first and only organization of its kind in the country.

Roy and other KIWA organizers began very simply by visiting Korean immigrants working in the garment and restaurant industries to find out their problems, needs and hopes. They made individuals aware of their rights and educated them about labor codes in this country. Soon KIWA set up a legal clinic to help individuals solve work place grievances and from there connected one worker with another who, in turn, supported and organized still others.

Through a process of experience and education by KIWA organizers, many Koreans soon realized they were not alone when it came to earning substandard wages and working in unhealthful and often dangerous conditions.

Through persistence, patience and, above all, vision, KIWA has become the voice for the working poor in the Korean community. KIWA has organized pickets, press conferences and boycotts against the most negligent firms employing Korean immigrants. They have researched the abuses of such companies and publicized them both in the English and Korean press.

Recognizing that Koreans are not alone in suffering from exploitation in low-wage industries, KIWA has also begun organizing Latino immigrants who work side by side with their Korean counterparts, helping to build a unique multi-racial partnership between two communities that are often pitted against each other.

From the reinstatement of employees who are wrongfully terminated to an industry-wide labor agreement with the Korean Restaurant Association, KIWA has helped workers to protect themselves, expanded their rights, and improved the quality of lives for themselves, their families and the entire Korean community.[65]

Liberty Hill's 1993 seed grant was crucial in getting KIWA off the ground. Since then, the foundation has made larger grants from its Fund for a New Los Angeles to strengthen this important organization.

HOW CO GRANTMAKING FITS WITH OTHER FUNDING PRIORITIES

Nearly every funder supporting CO also makes grants for a range of other programs and strategies. Funders vary in what the relationship between CO and funding in other program areas is, the importance of the relationship and the ways it is incorporated into their grantmaking.

A number of funders strategically link CO to some or all of their institutions' other grantmaking priorities. Often, these funders place their CO program within a broader funding area, such as poverty alleviation, democratic renewal or community revitalization. Or, they are making grants to address needs of particular neighborhoods and feature CO as one of the strategies they are supporting in those places. These funders ask CO groups to show them how their work meets the goals of the broader funding area, and how they are seeking to connect their efforts to those of other organizations and funder strategies.

At the other end of the spectrum, many funders fund CO groups as part of one or more of their grantmaking priorities, but place no particular emphasis on the relationship between CO and other groups or strategies they are also funding. For many grantmakers new to CO, simply getting their feet wet by funding one or more CO groups in this fashion may be the best approach.

However, CO grantmaking is often seen initially as "risky" by funders not having a long history with the strategy. Determining whether and how CO can contribute to strengthening the funder's overall grantmaking or a particular program priority and developing plans accordingly may be a critical factor in attaining needed internal support for CO.

One Approach: The French American Charitable Trust (FACT). The French American Charitable Trust (FACT) is a relatively new California-based family foundation. The information presented here illustrates how CO contributes to the Trust's overall goals and objectives for its grantmaking, and how considerations around CO influenced the content and direction of the Trust's overall program. The study also underscores how extensive outreach and strategic thinking can inform funding decisions.

When FACT — a moderate-size family foundation — opened its doors in San Francisco in November 1994, it hadn't yet settled on specific grantmaking priorities. FACT's principals were clear that they wanted the Trust — a national funder in the U.S. (with a grantmaking program also in France) — to address fundamental inequalities and injustices in society. They were convinced that today's critical societal problems are complex and require integrated, long-term work to achieve solutions. But they weren't sure what issues, strategies or groups to prioritize with (what is now) its annual $3.5 million in grants.

FACT decided to listen and learn from others before making any grants. After spending a month clarifying its own mission and designing a structural framework for its grantmaking, FACT's staff took to the road to identify and get to know groups and leaders who were making a real difference in working for change. They decided to focus especially on organizations taking a multi-issue approach and actively involving their constituents in determining and carrying-out strategies of change.

FACT's outreach proved to be extremely valuable for its decision-making — so valuable that FACT staff today probably spends more time in the field than any other national funder. (FACT chooses not to take unsolicited proposals and makes no grants without first doing on-site investiga-

FACT'S GRANTMAKING APPROACH

Major Funding Categories:

- Social and Economic Justice
- Environmental Health
- Infrastructure

Strategic Building Blocks:

- Focusing on funding base-building organizations (CO)
- Funding clusters of organizations that have relationships with each other
- Funding in a vertically-integrated way; i.e. supporting the training, research and technical assistance groups that are connected to and work with the base-building organizations on collectively held goals

Core funding Practices:

- Making fewer and larger grants (grants now range from $40,000 to $100,000)
- Providing long-term support (80 percent of grantees can expect five or more years of support)
- Providing general support grants (almost all grants are general support)

tion.) FACT's first-year grants list featured a number of the nation's best CO groups that FACT staff had identified, were excited by and invited to apply for support.

Eight of the CO groups that FACT funded in its first two years of operation are now FACT "anchor groups" — on-going grantees that FACT has committed to funding for a decade or longer. The anchor groups (there are a total of ten, including two national organizations providing technical assistance, training and other support for CO groups and strategies) take roles with FACT in developing and implementing programs and strategies to strengthen CO and other efforts across the country. The director of one of the anchor groups serves on an on-going basis as a principal advisor to FACT's board of directors.

In its initial field work, FACT sought to build relationships with groups and other funders so that, as much as possible, it could act collaboratively with them in grantmaking strategies. FACT was prepared to experiment and take risks in its grantmaking, and looked for opportunities to fund organizations with active constituencies that were making breakthroughs in critical issue areas. These are now important operational objectives in FACT's approach to grantmaking.

FACT's outreach to and interactions with groups in the field contributed directly to its decisions on an overall grantmaking strategy. For example, FACT now prioritizes issues of low-wage worker organizing in general, and contingent work (or non-standard employment) in particular. Contingent jobs are those that are part-time, temporary or contracted out; contingent workers earn less, have fewer benefits and have no job security compared to standard full-time workers.

FACT organizes its grantmaking around two primary goals: strengthening organizations that are developing the leadership and analytical capacities of a broad membership through active involvement in issue work, and strengthening the organizations that are capable of influencing the development of progressive public policies that have wide impact.

FACT's giving program "centers on funding organizations that activate, organize and empower the grassroots." FACT is interested in projects that "focus on individuals and communities that traditionally have been ignored or denied power" — and will not support organizations that do for others, but, rather, groups that help people recognize what they can do for themselves.

By engaging with other foundations, community leaders and community organizations across the country, FACT has found that many CO groups and efforts embody its values and beliefs, are taking on the tough issues, and are exceedingly effective. It has placed its grantmaking investments accordingly. Since its inception in 1994, FACT has become one of the most important national funders of CO, funding more than 80 organizations, many of them CO groups. FACT is proud of their, and its, track record.[66]

CASE STUDY #11: UNITED WAY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY

Foundation Funding of CO: How one United Way agency set criteria for rating funding proposals.

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay (UWMB) in Boston is a fundraising federation that operates special grantmaking and other programs. In 1999, it raised and distributed $35.7 million to affiliated agencies and non-affiliated nonprofit organizations serving 80 communities in the greater Boston area. Increasingly, this innovative United Way agency is focusing its resources in ways that emphasize resident participation in community affairs.

One of the driving forces behind the United Way's approach is Marilyn Anderson Chase, UWMB's senior vice president in charge of community investments. As a former executive director of Boston's well-known Roxbury Multi-Service Center, she strongly believes that community-based agencies should not just deliver services, but also provide a means for neighborhood residents to express and act on community concerns. Since 1997, she has been working with United Way staff in Boston to advance a community building agenda, one that increasingly embraces CO as an important, indeed indispensable, component of community revitalization.

The new orientation, which Chase points out had been in the works for several years prior to her arrival, builds on John McKnight's work emphasizing the importance of community assets — rather than a community needs — focus. In Chase's view, the "mainstreaming" of McKnight's work has opened up new ways for United Ways and other charitable efforts to engage and improve communities. Principal among them is the encouragement and support of efforts that involve community residents in a process of collective action and community problem solving.

Unusual for most fundraising federations, the UWMB has a new set of community involvement criteria that staff and volunteers use to rate agency affiliation proposals. Chase explains the shift in UWMB's thinking:

> *Old-style agencies need to talk with us differently now. They need to tell us how they are working* with *the community to achieve community-defined goals. With community building as a clear new focus, we at the United Way have come to see organizing's value in helping a community figure out its assets, strengths, and concerns, and in developing action strategies to move the community towards it goals and aspirations.*

Each new agency proposing affiliation with the UWMB is now rated to see if it fulfills the following criteria.

1) **Citizen Participation.** The agency regards the people in its community as residents, as opposed to clients who need services. The agency sponsors or facilitates activities that promote civic involvement, community or cultural pride, and/or neighborhood development (e.g., small community problem-solving, parents' councils, voter registration, etc.).
2) **CO.** The agency strives to *mobilize* people in the community and help them realize their collective power to effect change, gain social and political influence, and help ensure access to public and private resources (e.g., large collective action).
3) **Leadership Development.** The agency encourages residents or members of the community to become active leaders and participants in their communities and neighborhoods, and provides opportunities for leadership positions within its own organization.
4) **Advocacy.** The agency engages in activities that influence public policy decisions that in turn strengthen families and neighborhoods.

UWMB has a Neighborhood/Community Building Fund through which it channels some of its discretionary dollars to support CO efforts. Listed below are grants the Fund made in 1999.

- **Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO).** Founded in 1996, the GBIO is a partnership between IAF and the Organizing and Leadership Training Center. It brings together more than 80 member congregations, community organizations, social-service agencies, and labor unions to develop local leadership, identify community issues and concerns, and mobilize action on social justice issues affecting low- and moderate-income people. GBIO actions have focused on affordable housing and public school reform. Its accomplishments include more than 3,000 one-on-one and small group discussions with residents of Greater Boston, the development of an action agenda stressing affordable housing and school improvement, commitments from area banks to finance more than 2,000 low interest rate mortgages, and the initiation of a Boston Youth Organizing Project to involve and support youth leaders in public school reform and community change activities. The United Way awarded a $25,000 general operating support grant to support GBIO's organizing and leadership development efforts.

- **Low-Income Welfare Organizing Collaborative (LIWOC).** Formed in 1998 as a collaborative of ten greater Boston area groups with low-income leadership and organizing missions, the LIWOC seeks to build a cohesive group that ensures low- income people have the tools they need to build a more positive future. They are concerned about the impact of Massachusetts' two-year time limit on welfare benefits on low-income women, and lim-

CASE STUDY

ited access to meaningful job training and education. The United Way facilitated LIWOC's formation and subsequent development, first through a generous planning grant and then through a $50,000 operating support grant. The Collaborative developed a plan to build low-income women's power and leadership on relevant policy issues, with community education, institutional outreach, and action strategy components.

- **The Mattapan Community Partnership.** The United Way is taking a proactive stance to help the Mattapan community get organized for community power and neighborhood improvement. The Partnership brings together into one coordinating body all of the public and nonprofit agencies, community groups and civic associations to help plan how public and private resources can best be used to serve the Mattapan community. Much of the Partnership's work will involve CO, action research, agency coordination and outreach, and other activities to build a stronger community that is better able to articulate its needs, to hold institutions more accountable to those needs, and to make more efficient use of existing resources. Its operating premise is that, unless the Mattapan community gets organized, public and private agencies will continue to neglect the neighborhood's growing problems, such as high infant mortality rates and serious residential overcrowding.

MEASURING RESULTS: HOW TO EVALUATE CO INITIATIVES

> *Effectiveness must become the principal criterion for givers of time and money.*[67]
>
> *— The National Commission on Philanthropy and Civic Renewal*

Funders of all persuasions — progressive, middle-of-the-road, conservative — can agree that a bottom line for funders is, or ought to be, getting results from their grantmaking. CO grantmaking is no exception to this rule.

Long-term funders of CO are convinced of its value and, for the most part, are more than satisfied with their funding results. Funders new to CO will need to be equally convinced that CO will produce outcomes of the type and scale they believe possible, necessary and/or desirable.

But how can funders classify and measure CO grantmaking results? What can be learned and how best to learn it? How soon can funders expect results?

This section of the *Toolbox* discusses the CO evaluation strategies of the Woods Fund. The Woods story, which is followed by tips for designing an evaluation system, includes informative pointers for funders who want to plan and implement a formal evaluation strategy. The Woods Fund evaluation is valuable, particularly for funders new to CO, because it documents the important achievements of CO and identifies current weaknesses and/or limitations that need attention if organizing practice is to improve and become an even stronger and more viable strategy for positive change. Other notable evaluations have been those conducted by the Boston Foundation, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) and other grantmakers. The complete evaluations of the Discount Foundation, CCHD and the Woods Foundation are available online at **www.nfg.org.**

Various funders have been and/or are incorporating mandates for evaluation in their grants to CO groups — often requiring the groups to contract for outside evaluation and to meet the funders' specifications. Some foundations examine CO groups and efforts as part of their own program reviews, to resolve questions about continuing support for CO or to expand support.

For more resources on developing and implementing evaluation systems, visit NFG's Web site at **www.nfg.org.**

The Discount Foundation's Approach

The Discount Foundation has made a substantial funding commitment to supporting CO. In an interactive process involving staff and board members, the Foundation developed five criteria for assessing the strengths, limitations and future potential of those groups seeking its support:

- Winning concrete improvements and policy changes through collective action;
- Permanently altering the relations of power at the local, state or national level;
- Developing citizen leaders in poor, urban communities of color;
- Increasing civic participation at local, state and national levels; and
- Building stable and financially viable organizations, accountable to the communities in which they are located.

How The Woods Fund of Chicago Approaches Evaluation. One of the most extensive evaluations of a foundation's CO grantmaking was carried out in the mid-1990s by the Woods Fund, a small foundation based in Chicago. Both the process and the results of the evaluation are noteworthy and offer considerable guidance for funders already involved with CO and those new to the field, as well as to CO groups.

The Woods Fund has long supported CO in the city through its grantmaking and other strategies. In 1995, the Fund engaged an outside evaluation team to examine its CO grantmaking, its major priority for over a decade. The evaluation team included seasoned community organizers and trained program evaluators.

The evaluation was extensive — the most substantial evaluation of CO ever undertaken by a foundation — and covered the Fund's CO grantmaking over a ten-year period, from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s.

The team concluded that the Fund's $4.2 million investment had achieved significant results when judged by three broad criteria: community improvements, leadership development and democratic participation.

The evaluators stressed that CO's ability to achieve widespread community improvements was clear-cut and unambiguous. They reported that CO had successfully "brought millions of dollars into low-income communities for housing, job creation and other community improvements by challenging bank lending practices." Organizing also "trained and supported dozens of parent leaders in local schools, who have ousted non-performing principals and developed new local school programs and policies." And, finally, CO secured "significant public investments in neighborhoods...," and "won efforts to keep out resources and programs deemed inimical to the community's health (by successfully fighting) land fills and hazardous waste facilities."

The Woods Fund evaluation also found that "organizing has indeed been quite effective in promoting democratic participation in the wider community" and that it "developed dozens of leaders and involved thousands of citizens in securing these results."

Other findings candidly raised a number of critical issues and themes related to the constraints and limitations of CO as a strategy for change. Included were: 1) the precariousness of the organizing infrastructure itself, owing to the "weak and unstable funding base for organizing"; 2) the inattention given to "promoting democratic participation of individuals" within the community organizations studied by evaluators; 3) the limitations of CO in effectively addressing "fundamental urban problems," such as poverty, job and wage erosion, drugs and crime; 4) the lack of vision, or, conversely, parochialism that too often characterizes CO groups and activities; and, 5) the disconnection between CO and public policy work.

Following its review of the evaluation report and discussions with the evaluation team members, the Fund's trustees determined that the foundation would continue to place a high priority on funding CO. The Woods Fund reaffirmed its support for funding CO in its 1995 Annual Report. In part, the Fund's decision was responsive to another critical finding

of its evaluation team with respect to the weakening funding base of CO groups in Chicago when the evaluation was conducted. The team found that:

> *At the same time that organizers have begun to face significant role strain, the funding infrastructure for organizing seems to have deteriorated. This declining external support for organizing has taken place in years when sources of support internal to the community have also eroded, thanks to growing class segregation, aging church facilities and declining middle class members, and the loss of business activity in our low income neighborhoods.* [68]

How the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) Approaches Evaluation. CCHD has been one of the major funders of CO for over 30 years. During that period, CCHD has provided nearly $300 million to more than 3,500 projects. In 1994, the organization undertook a year-long study of its funding activities, carried out by John D. McCarthy of Catholic University of America. He examined 325 groups that received CCHD funding in 1991, 1992 or 1993. Below are some of the study's key findings.

Funding and Budgets

- The groups had a combined budget of $64,980,487 for the year for which they requested CCHD funding.
- The average budget for funded organizations was $213,050.
- Forty-five percent of the groups' income came from grants.
- Almost two-thirds of the groups' expenditures were for personnel.

Who They Are and Who They Serve

- One group in eight was at least 15 years old.
- Their work benefited an estimated 38.5 million people, of whom 18.2 million were poor. This represents half of the U.S. poverty population in 1994.
- The groups had an average of 16 board members and a median staff size of 3.1.
- The majority of those they served were minorities. The majority of members and half of the beneficiaries were poor. A majority of members, beneficiaries, staff and board members were women.

What They Do

- The most frequently addressed issues were housing, jobs, education and health.
- The most commonly used methods for reaching group goals were research (70.8 percent of groups) and membership development and training (69.5 percent). Six groups in 10 (59.1 percent) used protest, negotiation and other forms of direct action.
- Two-thirds of the groups used technical assistance for member, staff or board development.

One conclusion of the study was that CO works in low-income communities, and has significant impact at the local, state and national levels. The study found that the groups changed laws and policies and generated billions of dollars for low-income communities and their residents. Even the least successful groups had some victories.

The author concluded his report by stating:

> *The groups funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development are heavily minority and female in their composition. They address a broad range of issues with a broad range of methods and benefit large numbers of people. They tap outside resources for technical assistance and expertise and receive funding from major American institutions — religion, foundations, business, and government — and from a wide variety of grassroots sources. Many of the groups we have profiled have demonstrated staying power, with lifespans of at least 15 years.* [69]

Pointers for Designing a CO Evaluation System. Some funders are using innovative techniques to gain an accurate picture of and assess their CO grantmaking. For example, they are funding consultants to conduct periodic observations of grantee activities, prepare ongoing documentation of grantee work, and develop in-depth case studies. Others are underwriting retreats where varying questions and views are aired at length with grantee representatives and outsiders knowledgeable about the CO field.

Evaluating CO is not impossible, but it can be difficult. Using these and other methods singly or in combination may yield a useful and meaningful evaluation system. It is important to consider the cost of the evaluation, what can be gained from it to satisfy funders' needs and how it can contribute to strengthening grantees.

Funders new to CO will want to consult widely with other funders before embarking on the challenging work of designing and implementing an evaluation system. Some funders are developing or exploring evaluation designs that they hope can be useful to other funders in evaluating CO. Among them are FACT, the Public Welfare Foundation and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock.

The Woods Fund evaluation team made several recommendations for "increasing evaluations of organizing" because CO organizers, leaders and organizations can learn from evalua-

tion and because too much that has passed for evaluation is too "quick and dirty" to generate significant learning. "The state of the art of outcome measurement in organizing is pretty crude."[70]

They found three major problems to be addressed in designing a meaningful evaluation system.

1. *The key to organizing success is its process, but valid benchmarks for assessing the success of this process have eluded us so far.*
2. *Numbers measures utterly fail to get at intensity, quality, the "spirit and the vision."...We need to find ways to supplement membership numbers with other measures that capture quality and intensity of participation. We need ways to supplement leadership numbers with other measures of leadership quality and sophistication.*
3. *Listing issues victories fails to isolate the role of CO in effecting the victory; assess the depth of challenge of the victory; or assess what impact the issue victory made on the community, the organization and the people involved.*

The team of evaluators also felt that naturally occurring opportunities in CO for continuous evaluation are being missed. The heart of leadership and membership development — reflection-in-action — is an evaluative experience, they suggested. They asked, "How can organizing more systematically accumulate and distill the learnings from these separate reflections? And, is there a growing dichotomy between reflection and action?" [71]

For funders new to CO, it may be valuable to discuss the Woods Fund evaluation in some depth with representatives of the Fund, leaders of CO groups in Chicago who are grantees of the Fund, and members of the evaluation team.

In addition, two sociologists — Jacqueline B. Mondros and Scott M. Wilson[72] — are tracking and writing about CO groups and doing useful groundbreaking work in developing methodology for evaluating CO. A number of academicians are studying and assessing faith-based CO networks as well, and others are examining CO's impact in various arenas such as health and education reform and environmental justice. Books and articles that may be helpful to funders interested in evaluating CO are referenced on NFG's Web site at **www.nfg.org.**

Another effort at evaluation has been developed by the Development Leadership Network (DLN). DLN is a network of hundreds of neighborhood-based community development practitioners who believe that CO should be integrated with bricks and mortar strategies, and that community development efforts must be accountable to the community members served. In partnership with the McAuley Institute, DLN has published a *Success Measure Guidebook*, developed by and for practitioners, to improve evaluation, to better manage programs, and to expand the ways in which practitioners are able to communicate to broader audiences about the benefits of community development programs and activities in low-income communities.

BACKGROUNDER # 5

Common Pitfalls of Evaluation from a Foundation Executive

Many of the most methodologically ambitious attempts to evaluate long-term program impact have yielded disappointing results, feeding the perception in some quarters that 'nothing works.' Yet if we step back a bit from our work, it stands to reason that it's rather unrealistic to expect time-limited programs to engender long-term change, particularly in communities with few other support systems in place. That is why we and others have invested in longer-term, multi-faceted funding initiatives. But it only makes the challenge of evaluation that much more complicated.

Even with a relatively sophisticated evaluation design in place, there remains the challenge of attribution. How do we know that the results observed are due to the program we've funded?...Most of our grants programs are being implemented in 'high noise' settings where there are multiple interventions simultaneously taking place. Even if we were able to employ methodologies such as random assignment and control groups, there's no guarantee that we would be able to unequivocally attribute observed outcomes to our funding...

...Rarely in the worlds of policy and practice are such 'textbook' standards decisive....Judgments tend to be made on other forms of information, whether they are quantifiable intermediate measures of success, other forms or documentation or even well-told anecdotes.

...We have made it clear that we are still concerned about tracking outcomes, but our first priority has been to provide continuous feedback to our grantees to help them enhance program effectiveness. We have also acknowledged the importance of building the capacity of grantees to conduct their own data gathering and evaluation activities as a key component of the ultimate sustainability of their work[73]

BACKGROUNDER # 6

Ten Years of CO Grantmaking — Compelling Results

The Wieboldt Foundation is a small Chicago-based foundation and an NFG member. It has long been a vigorous supporter of CO. In 1990, it conducted an extensive internal review of its ten years of CO grantmaking.[74] The review was quite positive about what its CO grants had accomplished and helped dispel three of what the Foundation identified as "myths" about CO.[75] After the review, the Foundation's president and executive director wrote enthusiastically about CO's value and why the Foundation would continue to prioritize CO groups and efforts in its grantmaking:

What are the results of funding organizing? The results of funding organizing are not all in yet. In fact, the results will always be coming in, because we are investing in an ongoing process of developing leaders, and that is a major result.

Growth and development of local leaders. *We can name dozens of people who have developed out of their neighborhood organizations and who have made concrete and important contributions to the life of Chicago.*

An organized infrastructure within a neighborhood that provides a forum for decision-making, creates action, and is ready to take action when needed. *When Chicago's school reform decentralized power and authority, dozens of neighborhood groups were ready and have played a significant role in the election, training and support of local school councils.*

Successful actions, victories, public policy changes. *The list is long: getting new schools built, passage of the Tenants Bill of Rights (of no small import in a city where two-thirds of people rent), passage of the Community Reinvestment Act that has resulted in millions of dollars being invested in city neighborhoods, Chicago's revolutionary school reform, passage of the Tax Reactivation Act that allows community groups to obtain abandoned houses and apartment buildings from slumlords and rehab and sell them, and much more.*

Innovation and invention. *Community groups are small, scrappy and resourceful. They live by their wits. Their resources are strategic thinking, public process, lots of people, and the kind of innovation that only occurs in an organization that is unfettered by bureaucracy and needs to stretch every dollar. From including a day care home within a block of new low-income houses (result: a job, a community service, and a home) to reclaiming public school buildings as community centers, community organizers are social entrepreneurs in a democracy.*

Winston Churchill once said, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the rest." He could have been describing organizers' work to ensure a powerful role for the public in public life; to develop local leaders, to promote racial, ethnic and socioeconomic inclusion; and to demand fairness. This work is rarely tidy or quiet; it is lively and participatory. We believe it is more timely now than ever.

FIRST STEPS IN PLANNING A CO GRANTMAKING PROGRAM

Now that you are ready to begin CO grantmaking, here is a checklist of steps to follow in getting started.[76] You can also review the two following case studies, for a look at how each planned a CO grantmaking program.

Educate Yourself About CO

- ✔ Think about how CO might relate to your institution's mission, reviewing current grant priorities to determine how a CO strategy might fit. What might it replace or reduce, and how might it contribute to strengthening your current efforts? Review the *Toolbox* to answer any new questions you've raised. For more information, consult additional resources on NFG's Web site at **www.nfg.org.**
- ✔ Prioritize what you've learned and begin to discuss it with colleagues at your institution. Then, identify colleagues from other funding institutions who are supporting CO and spend time talking in depth with them about what they have learned. Ask about particular individuals and groups in the CO field they would recommend you contact.
- ✔ Follow-up and do some personal reconnoitering. When you have identified a CO group that you're interested in, schedule and hold an informational meeting with them. Explain beforehand that you are simply exploring ideas. Do not convey any false impressions about the availability of possible grant dollars to the groups you visit.
- ✔ After you've gained some comfort with a group or groups, plan a more complete site visit to one or more of them and make sure to include discussions with community leaders involved with the group.

Educate Your Institution About CO

- ✔ Develop an internal strategy for your institution to begin discussing CO. Seek advice about your strategy and plans for initiating a grants program from colleagues in other foundations, understanding that each institution is unique and must consider factors that you may or may not have to consider. Develop talking points from these discussions and prioritize them.

- ✔ Hold internal meetings that are carefully planned to assure that your objectives for them are met. Seek to make step-by-step progress, solidifying support for each step before moving on. If there is resistance to CO, be sure to develop a strategy that minimizes possible opposition. Identify your allies, and share with them what you have learned and any conclusions you've developed.
- ✔ Put in writing your institution's CO grantmaking initiative. Your plan for a CO grants program may be best presented to your institutional colleagues in draft, and/or in pieces, so that there can be careful study and dialogue without lengthy meetings. Consider everything from the size and type of grants to how you want to address or account for particularly difficult challenges.
- ✔ Give serious consideration to providing core support for CO groups, as contrasted with project support. If you conclude that this is the best funding approach, as most CO leaders will urge, be well prepared to counter challenges from your colleagues with evidence from the field and thoughts from CO funders. Be sure to anticipate the questions and concerns of institutional colleagues and prospective grantees.
- ✔ To build support and educate yourself and your colleagues, spot and take advantage of opportunities to bring in persuasive community leaders who are invested in CO. Ask them to share their experiences with your trustees and staff colleagues. Prepare the invited leaders ahead of time for what might be the most important thoughts and feelings to consider.
- ✔ Proceed carefully to gain agreements within your institution. Be certain about what is being agreed to and what is not. Try to build ownership and enthusiasm for the CO grantmaking program. Take and convey the attitude that it is not your program but the institution's, and that it needs to be seen by the institution as a long-term endeavor.

Launch Your Institution's CO Grantmaking Program

- ✔ Don't go public with your plans until all of your ducks are in line and the new grantmaking program has been approved. For your launch, prepare clear and specific materials to distribute to CO groups — include goals and objectives of the program, guidelines for proposals, etc. Your materials should convey your chosen grantmaking approach and the rationale for it. Anticipate and plan for what will happen when your grants program goes public, and make sure that you have staffed the effort adequately.
- ✔ Be ready to quickly and accurately answer a wide range of inquiries once you've gone public. You may be asked to meet with CO groups, other funders and persons within your institution. You will have to play a significant, ongoing role in ensuring the program gets off to a great start and fulfills your expectations for it. Count on spending much more time than you envisioned to make it a truly responsive and effective program. It will be worth it!

THE CHALLENGE AND THE OPPORTUNITY

Funders with a long history of involvement with CO groups and strategies agree that CO has not maximized its potential for building citizen power, developing community leaders and transforming communities. One significant barrier to maximizing CO's potential is the organized opposition to empowered communities by those who resist changes sought by CO groups. Another is inadequate resources. Now funders are shifting funding toward CO. For example, in 2000 the Ford Foundation launched a new multi-year CO initiative. As many funders have found, supporting CO groups and other organizations can lead to the development of effective strategies for community change.

How CO Builds Community. Achieving CO's goals for building a community — in accordance with the vision of the people it organizes and trains to take leadership — requires widespread and meaningful participation by many key sectors of the community. Often, there is resistance to CO's community-building efforts and a power struggle results. Seeking to change the status quo is never an easy exercise.

Bringing CO's Results to Scale. While some CO groups are tied exclusively to their neighborhoods, most are working with others in city, metropolitan, regional, state and national strategies. CO groups are tackling major issues and breaking ground in dealing with them in promising new ways. They are building strong and informed constituencies whose self-interest is more and more defined for themselves — through training and in their experiences of leading CO in action — as demanding they work in the public interest.

There are many examples of CO efforts moving to scale — efforts that have strong neighborhood and community roots, are driven from the bottom-up, and are addressing large issues in strategies that bring many CO groups together with other organizations.

A few include IAF's Alliance Schools strategy in Texas; ACORN's living wage work in numerous cities; PICO's statewide legislative victories in California; the national policy impact of the Transportation Equity Network; and, of course, CO's leadership and enormous influence over the years in helping to pass and implement the Home Mortgage Disclosure and Community Reinvestment Acts.

CO and Traditional Advocacy Work. CO strategies are aided by funders who distinguish CO efforts from traditional policy advocacy, which some of them also support. In traditional advocacy, "an individual or small group of individuals speaks on behalf of another individual or group."[77] Advocacy often involves mobilizing people to take part.

For its public policy work, CO groups require something very different, more difficult and essential. Advocacy, in their view, needs to be informed and carried out as much as possible by the people for whom the benefits are sought. Rather than mobilizing people to back efforts designed by the few for what they perceive as the common good, CO organizes

people to design and work for the policies that they believe are best.

Some CO funders are trying to bring CO groups together with advocacy groups on state and national levels for collaboration — to ensure that policies reflect the views of organized constituencies, to deepen the constituencies for policy reform and to help groups be more effective in policy debates. A $5.3 million, multi-year national project that seeks to bridge the work of CO and advocacy and involves numerous CO groups as grantees was funded by the Ford Foundation in 1998. Called the Devolution Initiative, it provides funds for core support and coalition building in eleven states

In May 2000, the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Security was launched as an outgrowth of a two-year organizing process initiated by the Center for Community Change. The Campaign's founding members include all of the key organizing networks, who are working together to combine grassroots organizing power with policy expertise and advocacy at the local, state and national levels.

This *Toolbox* encourages funders interested in CO grantmaking to move from thought, to action, to results. It also urges funders already funding CO to consider new ways of thinking about your work and collaborating with your colleagues. The *Toolbox* is an in-depth guide for your work in developing and refining CO grantmaking. We urge you to study this material carefully. Early on, follow-up with colleagues in other foundations that are funding CO, particularly those with foundations mentioned in the *Toolbox*, and draw on their advice. Also, be certain to contact NFG's staff, who can direct you to other individuals within philanthropy and in the CO field who can be of assistance.

[49] Joe Brooks, Rowena Pineda, Fred Blackwell, "Introduction," *ORGANIZING: A Fundamental Step in Ensuring Citizen Participation in a Democratic Society,* San Francisco Foundation, 1996.

[50] Neighborhood Funders Group, *Plan 2000,* 1997, p. 4.

[51] The evidence for the assertion that an increasing number of foundations are funding CO groups and a growing number are making CO a funding priority comes from several sources — NFG's close monitoring of philanthropy, reports and anecdotal information provided NFG by CO groups, and some systematic data collection such as a study by the National Network of Grantmakers.

[52] Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Program for New York Neighborhoods.

[53] *RCI News,* Rebuilding Communities Initiative, An Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Winter 1999-2000.

[54] Drawn from the James Irvine Foundation's *1998 Annual Report* and a forthcoming paper written by Craig McGarvey.

[55] Over the past decade or so, the following grantmakers are among those who have convened or participated in meetings to discuss funding needs of the CO field: Ford, James C. Irvine, San Francisco, Surdna, New York, New World, Unitarian Universalist Veach Program at Shelter Rock, Public Welfare, Jewish Fund for Justice, Charles Stewart Mott, and many others, as well as the Neighborhood Funders Group and the National Network of Grantmakers.

[56] Two of these currently operating are: an effort coordinated by the Southern Empowerment Project (SEP) in Tennessee that involves numerous CO groups and several foundations; and an effort sponsored by the French American Charitable Trust with its ten anchor groups.

[57] Gary Delgado, *Beyond the Politics of Place,* Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center, 1993, p. 79.

[58] Drawn from Delgado, *Beyond the Politics of Place.*

[59] Portions of Delgado's analysis and recommendations met with some criticism in the CO field. For an alternative view on key matters discussed by Delgado, see Mike Miller, *Beyond the Politics of Place: A Critical Review,* San Francisco, Organize Training Center, 1993.

[60] From materials provided by The Toledo Community Foundation (TCF) and discussion with TCF's Executive Director Pam Howell-Beach.

[61] Garland Yates, "Passive Progressive," *City Limits,* November 1998.

[62] Drawn from "The New York Foundation and Empowerment-Oriented Grantmaking," in Sally Covington and Larry Parachini, *Foundations in the Newt Era,* Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, September 1995.

[63] Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, undated internal materials.

[64] Liberty Hill Foundation materials adapted by Emily Goldfarb, consultant, March, 2000.

[65] Liberty Hill Foundation, *1998 Annual Report,* Los Angeles, p.6.

[66] Drawn from interviews with Christina Roessler, FACT's managing director, FACT's *Five-Year Report,* and other FACT materials.

[67] The National Commission on Philanthropy and Civic Renewal, *Giving Better, Giving Smarter,* Washington, DC, 1997, p. 114.

[68] This discussion of the Woods Fund's evaluation of CO was presented in its entirety in slightly different form in Sally Covington and Larry Parachini,"Community Organizing: Democratic Revitalization Through Bottom Up Reform," *Foundations in the Newt Era,* National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, Washington, D.C. September 1995, pp. 47-48.

[69] *Working for Justice: the Campaign for Human Development and Poor Empowerment Groups,* John D. McCarthy and Jim Castelli, Aspen Institute Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, 1994.

[70] All discussion of the Woods Fund evaluation is drawn from the final report of the evaluation team.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] See particularly Chapter Eight, "Evaluating Outcomes: Victory and Defeat" in *Organizing for Power and Empowerment.*

[73] Tom David, *Evaluation of Foundation Grants,* internal memorandum from the Executive Vice President to the President and CEO of The California Wellness Foundation, November 18, 1999.

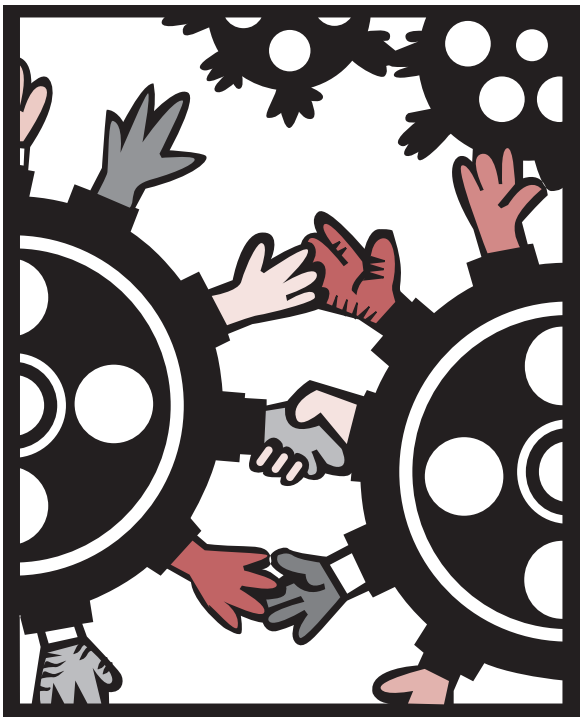
[74] Anita S. Darrow, president, and Anne C. Hallett, executive director, *Message from the President and the Executive Director,* Chicago, Wieboldt Foundation, March 1990.

[75] *Ibid.* The three "myths" discussed in the review were: Myth One: Organizing is a relic of a bygone era; Myth Two: When community organizations mature, they leave organizing behind (and move up to development); and, Myth Three: Organizing is a militant, radical activity.

[76] Drawn from Spence Limbocker, *Making the Case — Supporting Grassroots Leadership Development,* Neighborhood Funders Group, prepared for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, February, 2000.

[77] David W. Richart, B*uilding Bridges: Linking Child Advocacy and Community Organizing Strategies,* prepared for the National Institute on Children, Youth and Families, Inc. at Spading University and the National Association of Child Advocates, 1999, p. 5.

COMMUNITY



ORGANIZING

TOOLBOX

Two In-Depth Case Studies

TWO IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, CO's growing strength, sophistication and impact has attracted new interest and attention among grantmakers. This section describes how two foundations — one national, one local — made major commitments to CO.

Use their experiences to explore how CO strategies fit within and support your broader funding goals and objectives (a series of mini-case studies are sprinkled throughout the *Toolbox* to emphasize and illustrate key points made in the text).

These in-depth case studies were developed through on-site and telephone interviews with key foundation staff and trustees. In one, interviews were also conducted with selected grantees. Both draw extensively on public and internal documents such as annual reports, grantmaking guidelines, staff memos and positions papers.

The foundations studied are:

- **The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**, a large national foundation with more than $2.4 billion in assets in 1998 and grant allocations of $88.2 million the same year. The foundation has domestic and international funding interests that include civil society, the environment, community education, and economic opportunity and development.
- **The Hyams Foundation, Inc.**, a private family foundation, funding in the greater Boston area with assets totaling $160.6 billion in 2000 and grant allocations of $4.4 million in 1999.

While each differs in size, style and approach, they share a number of common practices and themes.

- **Strong Institutional Commitments to CO Funding**. Each has made a deep and profound commitment to CO. Both launched a highly interactive and strategic planning process to develop a new mission statement and set of program priorities. The results were a clear institutional commitment to CO as a primary strategy to advance broader foundation objectives.
- **Dedicated Staff with CO Knowledge and Background**. Both hired staff with broad CO knowledge and experience to develop new grantmaking programs and priorities. These staff members actively sought to increase internal understanding and support of CO by synthesizing the research, convening formal and informal meetings, writing position papers, and bringing in the voices and experience of CO practitioners and technical assistance providers.
- **Pragmatic but Persistent Efforts.** In developing a CO grantmaking portfolio, staff members placed CO firmly within the foundation's own funding traditions and institutional

context. Pragmatic but persistent efforts were made to relate CO to previous grantmaking initiatives, often by explaining concretely how organizing strategies helped the foundation to build on past efforts, extend its impact, and embody its institutional values.

- **Continuous Staff Dialogue and Board-Staff Interaction.** Team-building, first at the staff and then at the trustee level, was critical in developing a broad-based consensus on the role and importance of CO for advancing the foundation's broader institutional goals and objectives. Critical opportunities were identified for staff and trustee site visits. There, they continued to learn about the local, state and national CO work and the impact of CO groups and networks. Discussion often focused on the simple justice inherent in organizing marginalized constituencies to gain their rightful place at public and private negotiating tables.
- **Attention to Broader Trends and Contexts.** Broader social, political and economic trends were identified and used to bolster arguments in favor of CO. For example, devolutionary trends that shifted decision-making power and authority from the federal to state governments was used as an opportunity to bring underrepresented constituencies to state and local negotiating tables, and even to coalesce groups around new national objectives.
- **Commitment to Program Review and Impact Evaluations.** CO impacts are documented by incorporating evaluation into grantmaking programs. At the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, staff have awarded grants to assist CO groups to assess the quality and impact of their own organizing efforts. The Foundation developed general and specific benchmarks by which to gauge progress in building national CO infrastructure. The Hyams Foundation also took seriously the need to assess progress, document impact, and distill lessons from its multi-year efforts supporting CO. It commissioned an independent evaluation of its first major CO funding initiative, which helped staff and trustees to distill and apply lessons learned to other areas of its grantmaking activity.

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY #1

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Type: Independent

Location: Flint, Michigan

Assets: $3.22 billion (12/31/99)

Major Program Categories: Civil Society, Environment, Flint Area, Pathways Out of Poverty

Contact:
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INTRODUCTION

When the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation began devising new funding mechanisms to support grassroots groups in the mid-1970s, support of CO in the foundation community was in its infancy. Much has changed since then, both in the field and among individual funders. The Mott Foundation has today become the first major national funder to establish a grantmaking program whose aim is to build the power and capacity of the CO field. That program — Building Organized Communities (BOC) — is part of a new, six-year plan for its Pathways Out of Poverty program that Mott trustees unanimously adopted in September 1999.

That plan is Mott's blueprint for funding one of its four major programs through 2005. Its mission is to *identify, test and help sustain pathways out of poverty for low-income people and communities.* Toward that end, the Foundation plans to give $240 million over the next six years to nurture systemic change in the educational, economic and community dynamics that have produced and perpetuated poverty in the United States. Of that amount, the Foundation anticipates investing at least $5.5 million per year to build CO infrastructure nationally and to support issue organizing at statewide and regional levels.

How did Mott's interests develop over the last 25 years from its earliest exploratory interests to the crucial role that CO plays in advancing the Foundation's anti-poverty objectives? This case study examines that history, highlighting key developments in its support of CO as an essential ingredient in its fight for a more just, equitable and sustainable society.

PIONEERING A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR GRASSROOTS FUNDING

In many respects, the key to understanding the Mott Foundation's evolution lies in its principled and long-standing commitment to community. That commitment stretches back to C. S. Mott himself, who asserted that "every person, always, is in a kind of informal partnership with his community." Foundation President William S. White elaborated on this theme in *Neighborhood Organizing: Nurturing Strong United Voices,* a special section of the Foundation's 1984 annual report. White described the Foundation's "fundamental belief that our nation's greatest resource is the determination, experience, knowledge and unlimited potential of its citizens," and stressed the vital role that neighborhood-based organizations play in engaging and involving low-income people in the issues that affect their communities. "The Mott Foundation designed its neighborhood program with citizen involvement in mind," White wrote.

This commitment led the Foundation in the mid-1970s to pioneer the development of a national strategy for grassroots funding. While the strategy was not then based on CO principles, it did establish Mott as the first national foundation committed to using its resources

to help nascent neighborhood groups grow into viable community development organizations.

Mott launched its first such effort — Stimulating Neighborhood Action Program (SNAP) — in the 1970s. SNAP funded a network of organizations to provide small grants to community school councils involved in activities ranging from neighborhood newsletters to youth employment programs. After several years, it became clear that both seed money and technical assistance were needed to help stabilize and grow neighborhood organizations capable of taking on complex issues, and that a large national funder like Mott could not effectively manage a small grants program alone. This realization was reinforced when President White, asked the Center for Community Change (CCC) to assess the status of community building in Flint, Michigan, Mott's hometown. The Center issued a bleak report noting little or no positive community action and declaring the Foundation an obstacle to it. CCC recommended a program that would provide seed money and ongoing technical assistance to fledgling groups working in low-income communities around the country.

Mott's creative response was to launch the Intermediary Support Organization (ISO) program in 1979. Originally designed as a five-year national funding effort, the program is now in its 22nd year. The Foundation operates the program by distributing an annual grant of approximately $300,000 to each of six Intermediary Support Organizations (ISOs). These ISOs then identify emerging groups in their catchment areas and provide them with small grants and technical support to help them grow financially and organizationally. Mott sets the program's basic parameters — each ISO must make annual grants of up to $15,000 to a dozen or so groups — and then leaves the ISOs alone to select grantees and run their own technical assistance programs. Since the program's inception, Mott has invested some $16 million in more than 1,000 neighborhood groups nationwide.

FROM COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT TO ANTI-POVERTY

Mott's success with the ISO program gradually led to new CO funding opportunities, according to Jack Litzenberg, who was involved with the ISO program in the 1980s. Larger economic and policy trends — including growing poverty and federal budget cuts — underscored the need for community action. As the ISO program evolved, it began to fund an increasing number of groups to organize low-income residents so that they would have a voice in the decisions that shaped their communities and their lives. In Wichita, Kansas, for example, Sunflower Community Action grew from a dozen low-income residents into an activist organization with more than 1,400 members in 35 neighborhoods. In Southern California, Concerned Citizens of South Central L.A. emerged as a major urban force with a $7 million budget from its roots as a struggling coalition of three block clubs. And in Providence, Rhode Island, Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE), grew from its start as an economic justice campaign located in one neighborhood into a major institution now organizing childcare workers statewide.

Mott funded several independent assessments of the program — two by the Center for Community Change in Washington, D.C. and three by the Oakland, California-based Applied Research Center. All of the studies were supportive of the ISO program, including its evolving role in stimulating the growth of the CO field. These assessments would later be important, as Mott staff began to develop a strategy for building a stronger bridge between the CO field and the Foundation's 25 years of support for grassroots organizations.

In the late 1980s, almost a decade after the ISO program had begun, Mott President White initiated a strategic planning process that would set the stage for expanded CO funding efforts in 1999. Between 1988 and 1990, the Foundation worked with a consultant to identify the biggest issues then facing the nation and the world, and to develop grantmaking strategies to address them. Trustees were interviewed for their views on the country's most critical public needs, and staff members were asked to submit their written thoughts on the issues they thought the Foundation should most address. Six big issues emerged, with persistent poverty and education topping the list.

This planning process led the Foundation to emphasize poverty alleviation over community development. Litzenberg explained the significance of this shift: "In moving from community development to poverty alleviation as a funding orientation, we began to think more seriously about the need for poor people to have a voice in their own futures. It began to be our view that we needed to address one of the basic problems in low-income communities, which is that poor people are alienated from power." The Foundation's new poverty grantmaking guidelines explicitly included CO and grassroots leadership development as funded activities.

RATCHETING UP FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR CO

It was in the late 1990s that the Mott Foundation made CO one of three strategies for poverty reduction. Its decision to do so reflected a two-year strategic planning process that Mott's poverty team initiated in 1997. Ron White, who joined the team as a program officer in 1997, played a key role in ratcheting up the Foundation's support for organizing. Hired specifically for his knowledge of the CO field, Ron White saw an opportunity to expand Mott's support of CO by building on the ISO program.

Planning efforts got underway formally in the fall of 1997, when the Foundation's poverty team traveled to New York City to discuss future anti-poverty grantmaking strategies with Mott trustees. Staff and trustees also made joint site visits to see the work of New York City-based CO grantees. Returning to Flint, the team planned eight staff learning sessions on topics from an overview of poverty in the United States, to the impact of public policies on low-income communities and grassroots organizing approaches to community change.

The first of two learning sessions on CO included a video case study examining how CO helped to rebuild Boston's Dudley Street neighborhood, followed by a discussion of the role

that CO plays in resident-led community renewal efforts. In the second staff learning day, Mott's team invited CO practitioners, technical assistance providers and funders to present their perspectives on the history, methods, strengths and weaknesses of the CO field. For both discussions, Ron White developed a briefing binder with selected readings on CO history, organizing models and policy impacts in the areas of Foundation concern. Readings included overviews of the CO field, work by the Industrial Areas Foundation's (IAF) Ernie Cortes on CO and social capital, and case studies of effective CO campaigns addressing such key issues as deindustrialization and education reform.

One month later, Maureen Smyth, Mott's vice president for programs, and three members of the poverty team traveled to South Texas to view first-hand the work of local IAF affiliates. The team met with IAF organizers and community leaders over several days in San Antonio, Brownsville and Austin. This trip not only laid a sound basis for further planning, but also led to a $1 million grant — later increased to $3 million over three years — to IAF's Texas Interfaith Education Fund to expand its organizing, leadership development, research and evaluation activities in 13 communities in five states. The grant, intended to build the IAF's general organizing capacity for education, economic opportunity and civic engagement, represented the cross-program efforts of Mott's entire poverty team.

Smyth noted the importance of the trip:

> *When we went down to see the IAF in Texas, you couldn't help but be impressed by the work they are doing. It became obvious that, whether you were talking about better schools, quality after school programs, or job creation, CO was producing many of the programs and outcomes that we cared about.*

Building on the excitement generated by the Texas trip, Ron White then developed two internal memos that presented a rationale for funding CO at higher levels, highlighted new funding opportunities within the field, and recommended grants to major organizing groups, networks, and projects.

The first memo argued for direct funding of the major CO networks, describing them as "the next step in the structural evolution of grassroots civic involvement." Noting that "Mott had demonstrated the foresight to establish its ISO program long before others in the field recognized the necessity," the memo argued that the Foundation was "now in a position to be a leader in establishing support directly to organizing networks which have, as their primary task, the building and sustaining of highly effective and tested organizations in low-income communities all across the country."

In making this case, White discussed the added value that he thought the CO networks would bring to Mott's long-term effort to build strong and effective grassroots community organizations through the ISO program. First, he noted that, unlike the intermediaries whose focus and expertise lies in helping new groups form, the CO networks continue their

relationship with local groups for years, and often for decades. Second, the networks' primary aim is to build strong, multi-issue organizations through the continuous development and mentoring of new leaders. Third, the networks usually teach a specific model of organizing, one that they have worked on and refined for years. And fourth, the networks charge dues to affiliates for their training and technical assistance, creating economies of scale while also ensuring their accountability and responsiveness to local needs. The memo also noted the CO networks' unique ability to link their affiliates together across states and communities to enable low-income constituencies to be heard on policy issues that transcend neighborhood boundaries.

The second memo proposed that the Foundation strengthen issue organizing at statewide and regional levels, with a particular focus on improving education and increasing economic opportunities in low-income communities. White reasoned that larger developments — the elimination of cash assistance to the poor as a federal entitlement and the devolution of power and authority from the federal government to the states — made it increasingly necessary for local groups to come together at state and regional levels to help shape public policy debates on issues of local concern. He proposed that Mott fund new regional or national structures or projects that could link and support low-income constituencies to address problems that are experienced locally but created externally.

Having laid out a rationale for a two-pronged funding strategy, White then recommended that Mott provide direct support to four major organizing networks and award grants to a half dozen or so groups working to develop regional and national policy campaigns.

BUILDING ORGANIZED COMMUNITIES

This is a very important moment in the field of community organizing. The capacity and sophistication of organizing networks has increased so dramatically. This fact, combined with the new awareness that all of the interest groups in the world will not have any major impact without constituency, has created great new organizing opportunities. I've always felt that if more money could go into the field, dramatic things could happen.

— Ron White, Program Officer, Pathways Out of Poverty

Mott's BOC program area today seeks to strengthen and sustain the involvement of low-income communities in policymaking arenas by enhancing the variety, geographic reach, influence and effectiveness of the CO field.

BOC's two program components include:

- **Building infrastructure** to improve the quality of CO in low-income communities by increasing resources to institutions, organizations, technical assistance providers and networks that produce, nurture or expand community-based organizations, or increase awareness of their effectiveness as an anti-poverty strategy nationally; and

- **Issue organizing** to strengthen the organizing infrastructure of state and regional issue collaborations that focus on improving education or increasing economic opportunity in low-income communities.

To achieve these objectives, Mott program staff are particularly interested in building the organizational capacity, financial stability and policy impacts of the major CO networks — especially those with an articulated social analysis of how to build power in low-income communities, an established CO method, and a significant geographic spread. Other infrastructure-building goals include increasing CO's influence and visibility by encouraging more relevant research, effective communications and the development of new philanthropic resources for CO.

Finally, BOC's resources are also targeted on projects that convene, network or link grassroots groups with grantees under the Mott-funded State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, a jointly funded program with the Ford Foundation and the Open Society Institute to increase the capacity of nonprofit groups to analyze the effects of state fiscal and tax policy decisions on low-income constituencies.

Since Mott trustees formally approved the Pathways Out of Poverty plan, the Foundation has invested millions of dollars to support CO nationwide, with sizable grants awarded in 1999 to almost all of the major organizing networks, including Direct Action and Research Training (DART), the IAF, Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO) and the Gamaliel Foundation. Mott has also invested substantial grant resources to support the development of regional issue campaigns.

SELECTED GRANTEES

Infrastructure Building Grants

- Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (TIAF)/Texas Interfaith Education Fund. Received $3 million to support TIAF's work in 13 Southwestern communities over three years, including organizing efforts to increase access to good jobs, improve educational outcomes for poor children, and rebuild citizen engagement through organizer trainings and leadership development activities.
- Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO). Received $600,000 to support issue development, organizational development, staff training, fundraising, and planning and management.
- The Gamaliel Foundation. Received $240,000 to help create and nurture new statewide, regional and national campaigns; to expand capacity to provide leadership training, staff recruitment and mentoring, issue research and consultation; and to hire new staff to assist in campaign expansion and leadership development.
- Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART). Received $300,000 to assist the network in building new state and regional organizations and developing DART's issue campaigns around public education, employment, banking policies and health care.

Regional and National Issue Organizing

- Partnership in Action for Authentic Community Development, Oxfam America's U.S. Program. Received $500,000 to support Oxfam's efforts to increase capacity and collaborative effort among its 32 partner organizations in the Southeast. Through the Partnership in Action, Oxfam will expand its leadership training and focus on increasing regional issue analysis, organizing and coordinated policy advocacy.
- 9 to 5, National Association of Working Women. Received $100,000 to support 9 to 5's Midwest campaign to improve job conditions for the working poor. The campaign is conducting research on contingent and part-time work in two Midwestern cities, training leaders to develop and implement local and regional organizing campaigns, and developing policy solutions to improve the more egregious workplace conditions and abuses.
- Northwest Federation of Community Organizations. Received $156,080 to support the Federation's ability to conduct issue research, recruit and train leaders, and develop multi-state organizing campaigns on issues of concern to the region's most economically disenfranchised residents.

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND IMPROVING COMMUNITY EDUCATION: CROSS-PROGRAM PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF CO

> *Community organizing is foundational. You can't do effective community development without it. Our plan at Mott is built around the idea that you have to organize communities around economic or educational equity agendas. It is ludicrous to think that you'll get good outcomes without an organized community.*
>
> *— Jack Litzenberg, Senior Program Officer, Pathways Out of Poverty*

The planning process that led to the development of BOC also generated significant new thinking among Pathways Out of Poverty program staff members who are involved in other areas of Mott's anti-poverty work. Increasingly, poverty program staff members are working together to recommend large, multi-year grants to CO networks or groups that address education and economic security issues through CO, leadership training, coalition-building and policy reform activities.

One good example of such integrated grantmaking is a $3 million grant that Mott made to the IAF in 1998 to expand its organizing, leadership development, research and evaluation activities in 13 Southwestern communities. The Pathways Out of Poverty program staff worked collaboratively to support the IAF's work, with budgets from Mott's Improving Community Education, Expanding Economic Opportunity and Building Organized Communities components each contributing one-third of the total grant.

Poverty program staff members are also integrating CO strategies into their own grantmaking portfolios around education and income security. Mott's Community Education program provides a prime example. According to Zoe Gillett, a Mott associate program officer, CO has increasingly been seen by Community Education staff as a major and necessary component of effective school reform:

> *Over the years, what we have found in Community Education grantmaking is that school-community initiatives are among the most effective strategies for improving learner outcomes. It has thus made sense to build on these initiatives in order to enhance student learning. When we looked deeper at which school-community initiatives seemed to be most effective, it was the CO models that jumped out at us. Community organizing is not only increasing the number of parents involved in their children's education — one of the things that we know matters for sure in raising student achievement — it is also increasing the likelihood that other school reform strategies will be implemented more successfully.*

The Foundation's Improving Community Education program area made grants totaling $1.75 million in 1999 to support a growing number of CO groups and networks targeting high-poverty schools and districts for improvement. Grants in this program component, called "Success in School," are expected to continue through 2005 at the level of $2.75 million per year or higher. The program has supported an impressive array of school reform campaigns around the country. Current grantees under Mott's Improving Community Education program include PICO, ACORN, the Eastern Philadelphia Organizing Project and Youth United for Change. All are using increasingly sophisticated organizing strategies to improve educational opportunities for low-income children through campaigns for more rigorous coursework, quality after-school programs, improved professional development for teachers and better school facilities.

Recognizing the synergy that has developed across Mott's funding programs, Gillett noted that many of the CO groups that she now supports were first funded under Mott's ISO program:

> *We are very fortunate at Mott to have such a strong history with community organizing. Much of the success we have experienced through Success in School is because we have built on the CO funding efforts of Building Organized Communities, first through the ISO program and now through funding of the networks. The ISO program is helping new organizations to develop, many of which are tackling education. As a result, more than half of our demonstrations projects in Success in School have participated in the ISO program or are affiliates of a network that has received Mott support.*

CHARTING PROGRESS

Following the decision to invest millions of dollars between 2000 and 2005 in CO, Mott trustees encouraged staff to further refine the key program objectives and progress indicators the Foundation can use to assess how well BOC meets its goals. Program staff worked collaboratively to identify the five following objectives:

- Enhancing the leadership capabilities of local organizing networks by increasing the number of paid, professional organizers in the field;
- Building the research and information dissemination capacity of the CO sector;
- Increasing public understanding of and support for CO groups, intermediary organizations and CO networks;
- Developing the organizing infrastructure for statewide and regional policy campaigns to expand educational and economic opportunities; and

- Creating new linkages between state policy analysis organizations and grassroots organizing with statewide or regional organizing campaigns.

Staff also outlined progress indicators and convening or evaluation activities in several key areas. Together, they convey the seriousness of Mott's commitment to building the power and capacity of the CO field.

- **Leadership Development.** Program staff expect Mott funding to help the CO networks double their collective capacities to train new local leaders by adding at least 15 professional organizers each year between 2000 and 2005. The Foundation plans to facilitate the recruitment, training, assignment, professional development and retention of professional organizers by establishing a permanent task force, including representatives from all of the major CO networks, to work with the Foundation in determining the field's human resource and support needs. Mott staff have committed to periodic evaluations — one in 2002 and another in 2004 — to assess the degree to which the networks have been able to create a more stable, professional and effective group of organizers.
- **Research and Dissemination.** Program staff members expect that alternative and grassroots think tanks and resource centers will become more financially secure and more capable of producing credible, focused research and information on the issues facing low-income constituencies. Program staff members hope to see these think tanks increasingly merged with or connected to strong organizing efforts. Program staff will also look for significantly increased media coverage of CO activities and impact. To encourage greater coverage, Mott staff plans to convene its CO and ISO grantees to develop local, state and national media strategies, and to harness the power of the Internet to influence public opinion.
- **Statewide and National Issue Campaigns.** Program staff expects that BOC funding strategies will produce at least 15 state welfare or economic security campaigns between 2000 and 2005, with ten achieving significant wins on behalf of low-income people. Staff will also look for at least one national issue campaign to emerge by 2001 on the issue of federal welfare reform. Staff expects, as well, that one-third of the major CO networks will develop and assist state and regional collaborations or organizations, with at least five state issue campaigns becoming active on educational equity issues. The Foundation also plans to convene state policy groups and organizing networks to tighten coordination around key education and economic issues in 2001, and to follow up two years later to determine how the meeting helped to shape future work and the effectiveness of both sectors or constituencies.

CONCLUSION

In talking with Mott staff and trustees, one is tempted to interpret the Foundation's current CO funding efforts as an expansion of effort, with staff working across Pathways Out of Poverty's three program areas to build on and deepen the Foundation's 25-year history of support for grassroots community organizations. In many respects, they are right. Clearly, Mott's strong community orientation, leading to the development and long-term support of its ISO program, laid a significant foundation for subsequent funding developments. Such an interpretation would not do full justice to Mott's evolution, for the Foundation has traveled quite a distance from the early days of the ISO program.

Then, the ISO program supported a blend of community building, development and organizing activities in ways that neither distinguished between, nor focused on, aggregating the voices of low-income people. Today, the Foundation will be committing substantial resources — projected at $5.5 million per year or more through 2005 — to enhance the organizational capacity, resource base and policy impact of the CO field locally, regionally and nationally. It is closing in on a serious, focused, strategic and explicit way to organize communities to shape their own futures through concerted community and political action.

Evidence of Mott's seriousness of purpose is not only seen in the level of resources that Mott is committing to CO, but also in the size and multi-year character of its CO grants; the explicit power-building language that Mott uses in its grantmaking guidelines; the interlocking strategies developed to build CO infrastructure and policy campaigns at state, regional and national levels; the significant cross-program collaboration and support for CO that is occurring within the Pathways Out of Poverty team; and the specificity with which program staff have developed program benchmarks and progress indicators.

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY #2

The Hyams Foundation

Type: Private

Location: Boston, Massachusetts

Assets: $160.6 Million (6/30/00)

Major Program Categories: Civic Participation, Community Economic Development and Youth Development

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INTRODUCTION

We fund organizing because it has significant potential to bring about change, and change is what we're all about. The reason that CO has this potential is because it brings people together to speak in one voice. The power of this is tremendous, especially when the voices that you're bringing together are those that traditionally have been left out of policy debates. What one usually hears is the voice of one or two people. But if you're trying to influence public decisions affecting powerless groups, you're going to need a lot more people than that.

— Beth Smith, Executive Director. The Hyams Foundation

Through its Civic Participation grantmaking program, the Hyams Foundation allocates roughly one-third of its grants to support community organizing, leadership development, voter and citizen participation, and public-policy advocacy. CO anchors the program, with special grantmaking emphasis placed on civic participation activities that combine public-policy advocacy with organizing, or that promote voter education and registration within a CO framework. Under new grantmaking guidelines, priority is given to groups with the strongest commitment to building and sustaining democratic and participatory organizations based in and accountable to low-income communities.

The Hyams Foundation has not always embraced CO as a major funding strategy. Still, many within the Foundation see its support for CO as a natural extension of earlier work. One can understand why. The Foundation has long been known for its strong neighborhood funding orientation, respect for local leadership, commitment to building local institutional capacity, and concern for low-income communities. Such a view, however, belies the highly deliberate, thoughtful, strategic and, above all, persistent role that key individuals played over a number of years in opening up the Foundation to serious consideration and ultimate embrace of CO as an effective social and community change strategy. In a period of about seven years, Hyams went from being a grantmaker with modest commitments to CO to one that has made CO a central feature of its grantmaking program.

This case study examines the process that led Hyams trustees to vastly increase the Foundation's support of organizing. It also describes some of the new efforts and initiatives that Hyams staff and trustees have undertaken to increase the pool of money for grassroots organizing and leadership development in low-income communities.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Beginning in the 1980's, The Hyams Foundation began to lay what would, in retrospect, become important groundwork for developing and institutionalizing a CO portfolio. First, the Foundation adopted an approach to its grantmaking that emphasized the involvement of the residents of low-income neighborhoods in issues of importance to them. While this did not always translate into an organizing approach, the Foundation funded a small number of grantees that included organizing in their work (such as the Committee for Boston Public Housing, first funded in 1981, and Massachusetts Senior Action Council, first funded in 1986). The Foundation also was involved in initiating a major multi-year effort designed, in part, to increase the participation of low-income tenants in the rehabilitation and maintenance of their housing.

In addition, the Foundation staff was influenced by the precedent-setting work of The Boston Foundation (TBF) which, in 1989, created a new program to provide grants to CO organizations. TBF staff became a resource to Hyams staff as they learned more about CO groups and helped to raise general awareness about this relatively new area of funding. In

1990, the Hyams Foundation and TBF came together with several other funders interested in funding organizing through Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts (AGM). As a part of this work, AGM sponsored a seminar for funders titled Expanding Community Participation in early 1990 and produced a primer on *Funding Community Organizing* in 1991. The Foundation used these additional opportunities to learn more about funding organizing, and to share its experiences supporting CO organizations.

Finally, the Foundation's eventual focus on CO was influenced by the composition of both the Hyams staff and board. At the board level, the trustees had made a commitment to increasing not only the racial and ethnic diversity of the board, but also to adding the perspectives of individuals with significant direct experience in low-income communities. The Foundation's diversity-related work evolved over a period of years and resulted, among other things, in a formal Statement of Diversity Principles that includes values such as "recognizing and amplifying communities' 'voices,'" "building on the strengths of community residents" and "developing local leadership." Two trustees in particular — James Jennings, who joined the board in 1991, and Meizhu Lui, who joined in 1995 — were very knowledgeable about CO. Both also were trustees of color. Their experiences added to those of Harry Spence, a trustee from 1983 to 1995 (he recently rejoined the board in September of 2000), who, as the former receiver of the Boston Housing Authority, had been a firm believer in developing strong tenant organizations and leaders.

According to Harry Spence, the Foundation's efforts to become a more diverse organization also increased its capacity to debate hard topics, something that would later be important in the evolution of its grantmaking priorities:

> *By their nature, foundation boards fear conflict and seek consensus. In order to get to organizing, it was important to build a culture that embraces diversity and is able to deal with the conflict that such diversity can produce. Our commitment to transforming the racial and class composition of the Hyams board developed our ability to address controversial issues. The arguments we had internally about race and class were also about how to make change in the neighborhoods we focused on. In this sense, diversity opened up opportunities for the board to examine and commit to CO as an important method of change.*
>
> *— Harry Spence, former receiver of the Boston Housing Authority*

BUILDING A CO PORTFOLIO

Hyams' first major commitment of funds to support CO came in 1992, the year that violence reached epidemic proportions in many of Boston's neighborhoods. It was in that year that the foundation launched its Building Community Initiative (BCI), a multi-year effort to use CO and coalition-building as primary strategies to prevent and reduce youth violence and neighborhood crime. A four-year program that remained active for eight, Hyams invested $2.5 million in the BCI on the premise that "grassroots organizing held the greatest promise for effectively mobilizing residents, community agencies, law enforcement and other public officials in the effort to create safe neighborhoods." Its four components included:

- **CO,** which provided the resources for grantees to hire one full-time community organizer;

- **Technical Assistance and Training,** which provided technical assistance and training to assist grantees to carry out their CO and coalition-building activities, and in raising additional funds for their work;

- **Public-Policy Advocacy,** which focused on public-policy advocacy by linking grantees together to address and act on common concerns at the city-wide level; and

- **Evaluation,** which committed funds to support an evaluation of the initiative so that its lessons could be distilled and disseminated to others interested in or engaged in similar work.

Planning for the initiative began in 1990, when discussions with Hyams grantees and media reports on escalating neighborhood violence convinced the Foundation that it should take action to address the problem. Henry Allen, recently hired as director for special projects, took the lead role, spending 50 percent of his time researching the issues and engaging in extensive conversations with Hyams grantees, crime prevention experts and funders. With a strong background in CO, Allen developed an options paper for staff discussion that outlined two strategic directions. The first was an expansion-of-services model that would have provided additional funds to community-based agencies delivering high quality services to neighborhoods afflicted with high crime rates. The second, which Allen strongly favored, was a CO model to build resident leadership and support community action strategies to prevent and reduce crime. In the end, staff and trustees endorsed Allen's approach, believing that neighborhood-based, resident-led organizing and coalition-building held the greatest

promise for responding to communities' needs for more and better services, increased program coordination, and police and criminal justice reform.

After issuing a targeted request for proposals to seven neighborhood groups, the Hyams Foundation selected and funded four coalitions, providing annual grants of between $50,000 and $60,000 to help them organize residents for neighborhood safety. Each grantee hired organizers to identify, develop and support community leadership; build the organization through outreach and education; assist the organization with the implementation of community-driven action plans; provide the day-to-day support necessary to nurture and sustain organizational progress; and link organizing efforts across neighborhoods and communities.

Throughout the life of the project, Foundation staff had frequent and continuous interaction with BCI grantees. Staff members made special efforts to encourage and support grantees to access technical assistance support in order to stabilize their operations and resource base. Hyams trustees also had significant interaction with BCI grantees, either through trustee site visits or through presentations that coalition staff made to the board.

DOCUMENTING BCI'S IMPACT

Committed from the start to learning from its experiences, the Hyams Foundation contracted with a team of evaluators to begin a four-year assessment of the coalitions' organizational and programmatic accomplishments. The team evaluated the coalitions along five dimensions, and found that BCI had generated results that were both significant and tangible. Foremost among them was the building and strengthening of many new relationships among neighborhood residents; between neighborhood residents and the police; and among government agencies, community-based organizations and grassroots neighborhood groups.

The evaluation noted that these relationships "are now a permanent part of a community infrastructure that can, over time, reduce neighborhood crime and violence; increase feelings of confidence, safety, and connection among residents; and further a broad community development agenda that will contribute significantly to creating and sustaining healthy, safe, and prosperous neighborhoods."

BCI evaluators also found that, in each of the targeted neighborhoods, "the very existence of the coalition and its on-going outreach and network development served as a source of comfort, confidence, and empowerment for residents." All of the neighborhood coalitions made progress in programmatic and organizational development terms — a significant achievement in some of the neighborhood contexts where little, if any, organizational infrastructure existed prior to BCI. Successful organizing drives were waged against drug trafficking and other criminal activities. Block associations were formed to link and inspire community residents to action. And coalitions expanded their outreach to and contacts with other groups and government agencies.

Laura Younger, the board president of one of the BCI coalitions, echoes this assessment:

> *Our networking has prevented the city from saying different things to different neighborhoods or blocks. By linking grassroots groups together and developing community leadership, we have been able to go beyond adversarial tactics to build new relationships based on mutual respect. That's what organizing is — being able to be at the table, and to design and implement a plan that goes beyond pathology to progress for the community.*

BCI's evaluation component documented the coalitions' accomplishments and distilled lessons important for future grantmaking. Chief among them was the need to make a long-term commitment to building capacity in under-resourced communities. At least two of the BCI groups experienced significant difficulties in getting started, with one going through three community organizers in its first few years of operation. It took the careful listening and active support of Hyams staff to help the groups weather unstable staffing arrangements and other serious operational challenges.

While two of the projects eventually became less focused on organizing as a strategy, they nevertheless made important contributions to their surrounding communities. The other two groups developed strong internal organizational capacity that has enabled them to use CO to address a range of neighborhood issues. These results have underscored the Hyams trustees' original belief that not all initiatives will proceed as designed, and that true innovation requires risk-taking as well as flexibility.

The wait for results did not dampen trustee enthusiasm for organizing. The fact that many of the coalitions' achievements came in the BCI's third or fourth years underscored the point that organizing strategies require patient money and lots of support over time. The site visits that trustees made deepened their understanding of and respect for the organizing process. As Hyams' board chair, Jack Clymer, noted:

> *We all felt very good about BCI because it significantly improved relationships between the police and neighborhood people, and local leadership has been developed with staying power. We also saw what a long-term process organizing is. It involves placing your trust in people to decide for themselves what's important to address and act on. This is not always easy for those who have traditionally controlled the purse strings. Our experience with BCI showed us, though, that if you just stick with it long enough, positive change could happen.*

Harry Spence also stated his belief that BCI reconstructed community-police relations on more positive grounds. In his view, the relationships that were built contributed to Boston's dramatic crime reduction while also helping to avoid the more draconian measures that alienated low-income communities and communities of color in other urban areas of the country.

THE FUNDED COALITIONS

CO coalitions funded by the Hyams Foundation through the Building Community Initiative.

- **Four Corners Action Coalition.** Housed at the Greenwood Memorial United Methodist Church and working with an expanded number of neighborhood groups, the Four Corners Action Coalition has achieved impressive victories in its eight-year fight for safer streets and better communities. Since 1992, it has broken up drug houses, cleaned up neighborhood streets, prevented the opening of an all-night bar, pressured public officials to repair a vital neighborhood bridge, led a community planning process for economic development in the neighborhood that may lead to significant public- and private-sector investments, and advocated for improved public transit in the area. In the process, the Coalition, staffed by an experienced community organizer, has helped new block associations to form, and supported local residents to get involved in crime watch and other community safety and renewal strategies.

- **Project R.I.G.H.T. (Restore and Improve Grove Hall Together).** With a mission to promote resident leadership and neighborhood stabilization through door-to-door organizing campaigns, Project R.I.G.H.T. has developed into a coalition of more than 25 neighborhood organizations. It helps residents organize themselves and others into block associations for community action. Through its organizing activities, Project R.I.G.H.T. has developed partnerships with the city of Boston to acquire new housing, demolish abandoned buildings, and build new schools and community centers for youth. Similarly, it has developed strong partnerships with the district attorney, the state attorney general and the Boston Police Department, all of which have resulted in more effective and respectful relationships with the community.

- **Project F.R.E.E. (Franklin Residents Efforts for Equality).** A coalition of residents in the Franklin Hill and Franklin Field public housing communities, Project F.R.E.E. works

with and through the Committee for Boston Public Housing to reduce crime and increase residents' sense of safety by organizing public housing tenants and youth. The Project has formed and maintained resident-led committees — first on safety, then on public housing maintenance — to develop violence-reduction strategies and improve police protection and housing authority maintenance. With substantially fewer gang-related conflicts and fewer apartment break-ins, tenants report feeling safer in their homes and community, especially at night, and are more willing to let their children play outside. One of Project F.R.E.E.'s major accomplishment has been to create a youth council that unites young people from the two developments previously divided by turf issues and related violence. The focus of Project F.R.E.E. over the past few years has been on youth leadership development and organizing.

➢ **Mattapan-Dorchester Churches in Action.** Mattapan Dorchester Churches in Action initially worked with Boston's Organizing Leadership Training Center to develop and implement an organizing model and anti-crime/violence prevention strategy based on a systematic process for developing congregation-based organizations dedicated to training and leadership development. The Coalition collaborated with local police and drug enforcement personnel to rid the neighborhood of drug dealers and to close down crack houses that provided an operations base for drug trafficking. Its work resulted in numerous arrests and the seizure of property identified as drug assets. Through organizing, the Coalition also secured city funds for the renovation of a local park and a decrease in the hours of service of a fast food establishment on one of the neighborhood's main commercial streets.

NEW PLANNING AND ACTION OPPORTUNITIES

The success that the Hyams Foundation had with BCI was critical to its later decision to make CO a central component of its grantmaking. Although not initially conceived as a strategy that would impact Hyams's overall grantmaking, BCI ended up having that effect. It let the Foundation experiment with funding CO on a larger and multi-year scale around an objective — increasing neighborhood safety — that all could support. It helped the Foundation build on its prior but more limited experience in funding a new approach to community change. It also exposed Foundation staff and trustees, in a much more significant way than had previous CO grants, to the CO process and its ability to leverage significant change in low-income neighborhoods. And, it generated key lessons on which the staff and trustees could build in the process of developing a new mission and grantmaking priorities.

In 1995 and 1996, the Foundation continued to organize a strategic planning process that involved both staff and trustees in significant and on-going discussions about the Foundation's history, core values, past and current strategies, and impact. With the support of Beth Smith, Hyams' executive director, staff developed a strategy to increase further Hyams' support of organizing. This strategy involved constant discussion of the issues, with key individuals taking the lead in writing and circulating position papers, conducting research, and creating regular opportunities for trustees to meet with CO groups and others knowledgeable about CO. Materials either developed or collected by staff for distribution included:

- *Community Organizing: Measuring the Impact. Key Findings from Three Studies,*
- *Reweaving the Fabric: the Iron Rule for Dealing with Poverty through Power and Politics,*
- *Grantmaking and Community Organizing: Making the System Work for Us, and*
- *What Does Hyams Mean by Community Organizing?*

In one staff position paper entitled *How CO Meets Criteria for Choosing New Funding Priorities,* Henry Allen and Enrique Ball, a program officer with prior experience in CO and leadership development, elaborated on how CO fit within the criteria that Hyams trustees established to guide their selection of new funding priorities. They pointed to the fact that a hallmark of the Foundation had always been its focus on low-income neighborhoods and that CO for the most part occurs in these communities. They also highlighted how consistent CO was with the Foundation's interest in investing in neighborhoods with less access to private and public resources. And they flagged devolution as an issue that made it all the more important to help low-income residents get organized to ensure their fair share of resources. Finally, they pointed to the fact that, because most CO groups are small, Hyams'

typical grants — ranging from $15,000-$30,000 at that time — could have a decisive impact on their ability to develop leaders, expand membership, engage in campaigns, and win concrete improvements for low-income families and communities.

Allen and Ball's paper also offered a definition of CO as "a process that brings together people who on a daily basis win personal battles of survival yet lack the ability or power to bring about positive change in their communities. The CO process allows people to act collectively and through an organization to bring about changes that improve the quality of life of community residents, change public policies, and nurture community leaders who represent an organized base. Successful CO brings together people of various class, race, and ethnic backgrounds to promote social change, alter the relations of power, gain social and political influence, and make demands on private and public institutions."

Given the importance of CO as a process of leadership development and resident involvement, Allen and Ball also underlined the importance of letting low-income people decide what is most important to them:

> *As a funder, we should not decide that Egleston Square ought to be more concerned about housing than crime, and that we will only fund one but not the other. Rather than defining the issues we will fund, we propose that we issue guidelines outlining the types of organizations we will support and what we consider to be the most effective, inclusive, and participatory form of CO.*

Remembering this period of planning and discussion, Beth Smith stated:

> *The foundation debated whether we should fund community organizing to support change in particular issue areas. In the end, we decided not to draw any issue parameters. If it is important to low-income people, then that's our criteria for funding.*

Jack Clymer agreed:

> *An awful lot of our funding had been organized around neighborhoods. With this as a giving focus, we came to the sense that it was not the best or wisest use of our money to force community groups to fit our funding guidelines and priorities. For me, this was personally reinforced when I would make site visits to some of the community groups we funded or were considering funding. When people described what they were trying to do, I would always come away feeling very impressed with their eloquence and intelligence. It made me believe in democracy.*

Today, the major debates over organizing versus services versus advocacy have largely been resolved. Dedicated to increasing economic and social justice and power within low-income communities, the Foundation draws no issue parameters around its support for CO. Instead it favors groups that:

- Link short-term, measurable outcomes — which have an impact on the quality of life of low-income communities — with a longer-term vision;
- Show a commitment to developing new leaders and strengthening their memberships;
- Have decision-making processes that are democratic and participatory;
- Raise funds from their members and other grassroots sources; and
- Collaborate with other organizations.

Current grantees include organizations funded under the previous Hyams's guidelines, such as Massachusetts Senior Action Council, the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance, Parents United for Childcare, Chinatown People Progressive Association and City Life/Vida Urbana, as well as newer grantees such as the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), Massachusetts Jobs With Justice, Immigrant Workers Resource Center, the Boston Tenants Coalition, and Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (IAF). All of these groups have demonstrated their capacity to organize low-income people and to promote their concerns in public arenas or policymaking forums.

Between 1990 and 1999, Hyams staff estimate that grants to organizations with a significant focus on organizing almost quadrupled, from $140,000 in 1990 to $615,000 in 1999. The Foundation made an additional $250,000 in grants in 1999 for public-policy advocacy, most of which included CO as a component. An additional $470,000 was voted for leadership development programs, some of which involved low-income people in CO activities.

The Chinatown People's Progressive Association, for example, has won a series of impressive victories, defeating a proposal to build a ramp for the new artery in Chinatown, winning more than $100,000 in back wages due immigrant restaurant workers, and supporting the formation of strong tenant unions to preserve affordable housing stock in Chinatown for current residents. ACORN successfully fought to secure a living wage of $8.23 for hourly workers of for-profit and nonprofit organizations doing business under contract with the city of Boston. And the newly-formed Greater Boston Interfaith Organization collected more than 120,000 signatures in a petition campaign and held multiple accountability sessions with key state legislators to push for housing policy initiatives

that resulted in an increase of $30 million in new state funds to support low-income housing development.

Since 1997, Hyams staff and trustees have continued to explore and create new CO funding opportunities. The Foundation recently commissioned new research to identify the barriers to and opportunities for increasing leadership in immigrant and refugee communities. Recognizing the serious shortage of organizers of color, it is also examining how it might best support the recruitment and retention of organizers of color. Drawing on what it learned from BCI, staff has also worked collaboratively with other funders to catalyze a new organizing initiative on behalf of school reform.

BOSTON PARENTS ORGANIZING NETWORK

The Boston Parents Organizing Network (BPON) is a new city-wide initiative to organize low-income parents and communities into a powerful force for school and education policy reform in Boston public schools. A five-year collaboration between foundations and organizing groups, BPON has been built on the premise that public schools are more accountable and effective when parents and the broader community are actively engaged in their children's education.

Initial planning for BPON started in June, 1997. On behalf of Hyams, Henry Allen and colleagues Klare Shaw from the Boston Globe Foundation and Bob Wadsworth from the Boston Foundation began meeting with CO and advocacy groups to explore options for how they might initiate an effective city-wide parent organizing effort. All agreed that:

- The Boston Public School System (BPS) was continuing to fail the majority of its students, who are predominantly low-income students of color;
- An organized parent and community constituency was an essential component in successful school reform;
- Grassroots parent and CO for the reform of individual schools was exceedingly limited, and almost no organized efforts existed at the city-wide level to hold BPS accountable for meaningful reforms; and
- Groups with a successful track record in organizing neighborhood residents — many of whom were public-school parents — could apply their experience to parent organizing for school reform.

Between June 1997 and October 1998, the idea for BPON gradually emerged. The Hyams Foundation joined one national and six local funders to create BPON as a new funding collaborative that would raise and channel resources from the philanthropic community to support grassroots organizing for school reform. Formally launched in 1999 as a five-year initiative with a budget of $2.8 million, BPON provided six first-year grants to community organizations to build the capacity of low-income parents and community residents to effect change in their children's schools at both an individual school and system-wide level. By December 2000 two more foundations had joined, for a total of ten, and BPON had raised almost $1.7 million. Funders to the initiative now include three national foundations (Annie E. Casey Foundation, Edward A. Hazen Foundation and the Roblee Family Foundation) and seven local foundations (Boston Globe Foundation, The Boston Foundation, the Hyams Foundation, State Street Foundation, the Schott Foundation, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and one anonymous foundation).

BPON founders expected that in the initiative's first year (July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000) most of the direct organizing work would take place at the local, rather than city-wide, level. The goal was to have each of the six BPON grantees identify at least one issue at the local level for an organizing campaign. With BPON now in its second year (as of July 1, 2000), the expectation is that BPON groups will begin to identify issues of common concern and coalesce around a city-wide school reform campaign. In fact, BPON has been structured to make this happen by requiring grantees to sit on BPON's steering committee and attend regular monthly meetings to facilitate information-sharing, build relationships among the groups, and identify specific systemic reform issues on which the groups might work together. A BPON coordinator, hired by the steering committee and housed at the Institute for Responsive Education, is responsible for organizing meetings, facilitating trainings, sharing information and drawing on a wide range of resource people to work with parents.

The Hyams Foundation has committed an initial $225,000 to support BPON over the first three years, and is open to renewing its support for an additional two years at $75,000 per year, based on progress during BPON's initial years. Committed to evaluation of the initiative, the funders also have selected an experienced team of evaluators to document BPON's progress. Similar in intent to the evaluation component of BCI, it will examine the work of BPON and its grantees over a four-year period to assess how well the initiative meets it key parent organizing and school reform objectives.

PARENT ORGANIZING GRANT RECIPIENTS

- **ACORN.** ACORN has established an education committee that has begun to identify and train parent leaders. It also has completed an extensive survey of parents in two of the school district's zones, which has identified three key issues as an initial focus to its organizing: increasing parent-teacher conference time: improving the quality of substitute teachers, and improved teaching materials and textbook availability for all students.
- **Black Ministerial Alliance.** The Black Ministerial Alliance is mobilizing and training a new generation of African American parents to become leaders in education reform in Boston. It has formed education committees in 10 of its 51-member congregations that will serve as an organizing base, and has begun training of parent leaders. It also has played a leadership role in the city on the issue of the negative impact of "high stakes testing" for students of color.
- **Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative.** DSNI is developing a shared community vision for schools in the Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods. It has formed an education committee whose activities include collecting data and identifying issues for short-term and long-term campaigns. Its initial focus has been on improving access to higher education for area students by advocating for improved student support services and programs to deal with the high dropout rate for minority students.
- **Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.** GBIO is focusing on leadership development through relational organizing to build power for improving the Boston public schools. It is beginning by seeking out parents who belong to member congregations, training parent leaders and conducting home meetings to identify key educational concerns. It has begun its "Thousand Conversations" campaign, which is designed to elicit the highest priority issues from among its membership. The campaign will guide its organizing and advocacy campaigns.
- **Greater Jamaica Plain Parent Organizing Project.** A collaboration between City Life/Vida Urbana, the Latino Parents Organization and the Hyde Square Task Force, this project is organizing a series of parent meetings to identify and prioritize issues and to develop campaigns to address them. Its focus is specifically on identifying and meeting the challenges to the active involvement of Latino parents. It has initially concentrated on developing a series of leadership training workshops for its constituency.
- **Parents United for Child Care.** PUCC is focusing on East Boston, working with public school parents to identify and prioritize local school issues and to develop strategies to address them. It is building on its success in other parts of the city in organizing parents to demand pre-school and after-school care in the public schools.

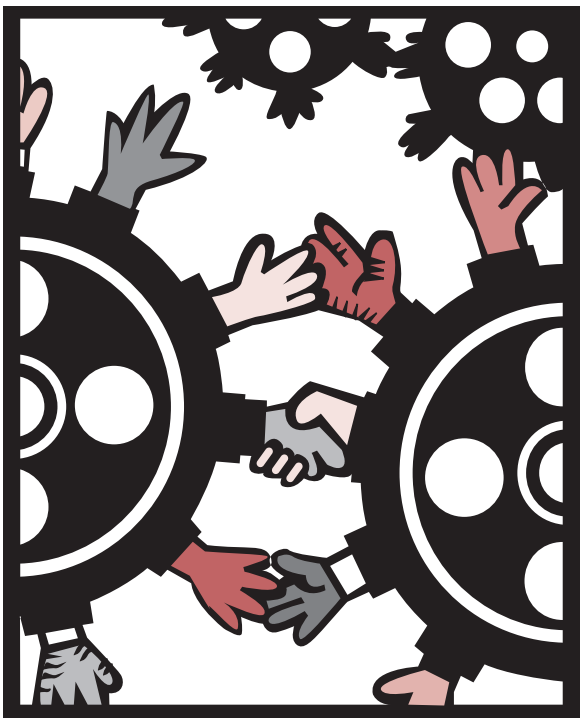
CONCLUSIONS

Hyams' evolution was marked by several key turning points between 1990 and 1997. They included:

- The influence of The Boston Foundation and other pioneers in funding organizing;
- The diversification of the Foundation's board;
- The hiring of program staff with significant knowledge of and experience with CO;
- The development of a major anti-violence initiative that used CO and coalition-building as primary strategies to combat and reduce youth violence and neighborhood crime; and
- A planning period characterized by intensive staff and staff-trustee interaction.

Each of these turning points opened up new possibilities, leading ultimately to a major transformation in the Foundation's funding priorities and approach that is best captured by its new mission statement: *to increase economic and social justice and power within low-income communities.* The result was that, in just a seven-year period, the Hyams Foundation moved CO from the margin to being a central component of its grantmaking programs.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING TOOLBOX



Resources

RESOURCES

Throughout the *Toolbox*, books, articles, reports, films, and other materials have been cited that can be useful for funders interested in exploring various aspects of the CO field and in designing and implementing a CO grantmaking program. In addition, Web site addresses and other information about key organizations involved with CO — both funders and CO groups — accompany many of the case studies and other examples that are used to illustrate major points in the text.

In this brief section, we list and describe the contents of several publications that various NFG members have found particularly helpful to them in implementing a CO grantmaking program.

For additional references, please contact NFG's staff.

WEB SITES

Organizing Networks*

www.arc.org - The Applied Research Center is a public policy, educational and research institute which emphasizes issues of race and social change.

www.acorn.org - The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) Web site includes a Living Wage Resource Center, publications, and other campaign updates.

www.ctwo.org - The Center for Third World Organizing site has information on trainings and other resources to promote and sustain political analysis, policy development, and collective action in communities of color across the U.S.

www.gamaliel.org - The Gamaliel Foundation is a network of professional community organizers and key institutional leaders working to rebuild urban areas, with a predominant focus on faith-based community organizations.

*Some organizing networks do not have a Web site.

Other Web site resources

www.americanprospect.com - *American Prospect* is a monthly news magazine which frequently covers organizing campaigns.

www.citylimits.org - *City Limits* is a monthly New York city-based monthly publication covering organizing and other strategies for community groups.

www.commchange.org - The Center for Community Change helps poor people to improve their communities and change policies and institutions that affect their lives by developing their own strong organizations. Publishes *Organizing*, a periodic update on organizing campaigns across the country.

www.comm.org - COMM-ORG is hosted by the Urban Affairs Center and Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at the University of Toledo and has an array of resources on CO.

www.ig.c.apc.org/jwj - Jobs with Justice is an national campaign for workers' rights that works through coalitions of labor, community, religious and constituency organizations.

www.lincproject.org - The Low Income Networking and Communications Project (LINC Project) is the electronic crossroad where the members, leaders and organizers of low-income organizations can connect, gather, and exchange information and have their organizing efforts represented. The site has a directory of low-income organizations working on welfare issues.

www.mindspring.com/~midwestacademy - The Midwest Academy is one of the nation's oldest and best known schools for community organizations, citizen organizations and individuals committed to progressive social change.

www.noacentral.org - The National Organizers Alliance holds annual gatherings, sponsors a Retirement Pension Program, and other activities on behalf of organizers.

www.nhi.org - *Shelterforce* Online features many articles on CO strategies.

www.socialpolicy.org - *Social Policy* is a quarterly publication which frequently covers CO campaigns and strategies.

www.unfenet.org - United for a Fair Economy provides extensive educational resources and supports grassroots groups and legislation to reduce income inequality.

www.unionweb.org - Union Web links to union web sites, including international unions and information about community/labor organizing efforts.

PERIODICALS

RCI News, Rebuilding Communities Initiative, a quarterly publication from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202, www.aecf.org.

Organizing, a periodic newsletter on organizing issues from the Center for Community Change, 1000 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20007, www.commmunitychange.org

BOOKS

Saul D. Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals,* New York, Random House, 1969.

The classic clarion call to organize the people to claim their rights and powers of citizenship in a free society. Many regard Alinsky as the "father" of modern CO. His views and methods continue to influence CO today, but the book is particularly useful for establishing a baseline and helping readers to understand how CO has evolved, and is evolving still, since Alinsky's time. The book is written in hard-hitting, passionate and colorful language.

Gary Delgado, *Organizing the Movement: The Roots and Growth of ACORN,* Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1986.

ACORN was launched in 1970 and has grown to become one of the country's most prominent and effective organizing networks. ACORN is a poor people's organization first and foremost, and has confronted and overcome immense challenges in its evolution. This book is an analytic account of ACORN's birth and development over the first decade and a half of its life. Delgado — who is the founding director of the Center for Third World Organizing and is now the Director of the Applied Research Center — spent much of this time working with ACORN and thus brings an informed inside view. Yet the book pulls no punches — the good decisions and the mistakes get balanced treatment. Readers wanting to learn how poor people can be organized to work for change and get important results will find this book a vitally important text.

Robert Fisher, *Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America,* Updated Edition, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1994.

Fisher's book insightfully traces the history of CO in the U.S., probably with broader sweep and in greater detail than any other. The book has been regarded by many activists, funders and historians as an indispensable resource for those who want to understand CO.

Fisher's bibliographic essay that is appended to the narrative is in itself worth far more than the cover price of the book.

William Greider, *Who Will Tell the People: The Betrayal of American Democracy,* New York, Touchstone, 1993.

We are called to action by Greider to reclaim democracy from the special interests. In discussing his wide ranging views on what has gone wrong with democracy, Greider points to CO as a route to making government work for the people. He is one of the few popular American authors to recognize CO's critical value, and he does so based on his own investigation of CO groups in Texas affiliated with IAF.

Jacqueline B. Mondros and Scott M. Wilson, *Organizing for Power and Empowerment,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

This book examines specific strategies for building a successful progressive CO organization. It treats in detail such subjects as recruiting members, developing leaders, building consensus, identifying issues, and developing and implementing practices. The authors incorporate the practice wisdom of over 80 local to national organizers and leaders, and give detailed advice on everything from planning and implementing strategy, to evaluating and publicizing organizational victories, to structuring and funding social action groups. By reading this book, funders interested in exploring a CO grant program will get an "on the ground" feel for the challenges confronting CO groups and how they deal with them and a thoughtful academic perspective on CO.

Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle,* Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1995.

Payne's compelling book demonstrates the importance of CO efforts in the Mississippi civil rights movement. As Aldon Morris has commented, "It shows how ordinary Black people pushed their churches, ministries, organizations, and institutions to get involved in the fight to destroy racial segregation and inequality." This is history from the bottom-up, an authentic version validated by many participants that challenges popular views of what drove the movement and brought it profound results."

Mary Beth Rogers, *Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics,* Denton, TX, University of North Texas Press, 1990.

Cold Anger is a story about politics by working poor people who incorporate their religious values into a struggle for power and visibility. It is the story of Ernesto Cortes and the Texas IAF network of organizations and how they have transformed politics in Texas.

What is NFG?

The Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG) is a national network of grantmakers working to expand support for organizations that help low-income people improve their communities. NFG began in 1980 as an informal network of funders with a deep interest in community-based grantmaking. Since then, our membership of grantmaking institutions has expanded to include hundreds of grantmaking professionals. NFG members share their expertise through the annual conference, regional meetings, Working Groups, special Council on Foundations' sessions, membership directories, and listservs.

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Call the NFG office at 202-833-4690 or go online to www.nfg.org for a Membership Application form.

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