



Transforming Our World:

U.S. GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS
AND THE GLOBAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

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Table of Contents

FORWARD: The Time Is Now.....	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
Summary.....	1
Research Questions & Theoretical Framework	1
Research Scope and Participation.....	3
FINDINGS	4
Work of Grassroots Organizations	4
Impact of Engagement.....	5
Grassroots Organizing and Engaging in Global Movements: Inspiration from Global Movements ...	6
Domestic Workers United	7
International Perspectives: Deepening Transnational Connections	15
United Students Against Sweat Shops	17
Farm Labor Organizing Committee	20
Resource Mobilization and Challenges: Critical Challenges in Funding and Safety.....	21
CASE STUDIES	24
Community Voices Heard	25
Indigenous Environmental Network.....	30
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America	35
Solidarity Work.....	38
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.....	40
Jobs with Justice.....	45
PODER, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights Case Study	49
CONCLUSION	53
RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION.....	53
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE	54
FURTHER AREAS FOR STUDY	56
PROJECT LEADERSHIP	58
COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS	60
REFERENCES	62

Forward: The Time Is Now

Impacts of the Neoliberal Economy

As we publish this study, the world is facing its most severe economic crisis in nearly a century; and the work of grassroots organizations in the movement for global justice is more important than ever. Financial markets are collapsing, triggered by the bursting of an economic bubble in the housing sector and driven by unfettered investor speculation. The U.S. unemployment rate has reached over 17%, the highest level in a generation. Forty million people globally lost their jobs in 2008 alone, and tens of millions will be forced into poverty, according to World Bank projections. There is potential for tens of millions of new economic refugees to be forced from the rural areas of the world in search of a means to survive.

The depth of the current crisis is under debate. Some claim that it is part of the normal cyclical nature of capitalism and that we are already on our way to recovery while others assert that its dimensions are structurally much deeper and will require fundamental reform of the world's economy. Whatever the scope and scale of the crisis, it has highlighted how immediately connected we all are.

The economic crisis is only one of several global challenges that confront us. Climate change still looms as one of the greatest and most imminent threats to the survival of our species, and is already imposing social and economic pressure on coastal regions, Pacific Island nations and the Caribbean. Coupled with the growing scarcity of fossil fuels, the world is challenged with finding viable and sustainable energy alternatives within the next generation.

For much of the world's population the symptoms of the current crises are not new. Since the rise of industrial capitalism, millions of people have been subjected to severe poverty and political disenfranchisement wrought by global economic policies. The global economic policies that dominate today took shape throughout the 20th century and materialized as full-blown neoliberalism in the 1980's.

Neoliberalism promotes privatization, deregulation of laws that restrict the mobility of capital, and the reduction of taxes and wages. Some of the institutional pillars of this economic framework are the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and trade agreements like NAFTA and the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement.



People's Movement for Change

In the 1990s, a global movement began to emerge in resistance to neoliberalism. This movement came to be known as civil society in some circles, or the Global Justice Movement (GJM) in others. Many attribute its genesis to the struggle against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the early 1990s.



In 1999, the GJM exploded on to the world scene, as tens of thousands of protesters from throughout the world shut down the negotiations of the WTO. The broad alliance of peasants, Indigenous people, environmentalists and workers reflected the breadth of popular reaction to the impacts of neoliberal global policies. Mass protests followed at convenings of the WB, IMF and the G-8 Summit. In 2001, global justice activists convened the first World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil under the banner "Another World is Possible!" The forum is a worldwide process to define alternatives to the neoliberal agenda, focused on human rights, social justice and ecological sustainability. Millions of people have since participated in the WSF or its local, regional and thematic versions.

A U.S. Based Alliance for Global Justice

The Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJ) was born through the global justice process. GGJ reflects many of the constituencies within the U.S. who have also experienced the negative impacts of neoliberalism: immigrant farm workers living in squalor and without the protection of labor laws, single mothers dependent on welfare and who have been dropped from the system of government services, unemployed people who have seen their jobs outsourced, Indigenous people who struggle to save sacred sites from mining and energy extraction. GGJ also represents a vital sector of independent, grassroots, base-building organizations that are a key foundation in constructing a democratic society. This is a sector that is fundamentally local in its efforts, developing democratic participation through membership structures and leadership development. It lacks a coherent identity and is often fragmented by diverse ethnicities, regions and issue silos. GGJ is an effort to develop a convergence of these different tendencies and movements within the grassroots organizing sector, and to build strategic alliances with other sectors and international counterparts.

Jobs with Justice (JwJ) was one of the founding organizations of the GGJ alliance. For over two decades JwJ has established local coalitions between unions, communities, students and faith-based groups to support labor organizing struggles in 45 U.S. cities. JwJ was key in the early actions of the Global Justice Movement, and realized that it was critical to expand and deepen partnerships with community-based organizations and others within the grassroots organizing sector to address issues of globalization.



GGJ and JwJ recognize that organizing in the 21st century requires us to be local at our core, national in our scale, and global in our scope. This is a new paradigm derived from the 1970s slogan “Think Globally, Act Locally.” The case studies in this document verify that grassroots organizations with few resources are grappling with the question of how to act globally as well. It reflects a realization that local struggles in today’s world ultimately lead to decision-making that is taking place in global arenas. Groups are also seeking to redefine international solidarity seeking more strategic alliances and ultimately coordinated strategies

to address the impacts of globalization and navigate the complexity of the global economy. The electoral victory of President Barack Obama re-affirmed the fundamental importance of grassroots organizing. The field campaign was rooted in organizing principles of engaging people directly, defining community values, developing new leadership, and mobilizing them to take action. These same principles have been in practice among existing grassroots, community-based and worker-based organizations for generations. With broader alliances and adequate resources we believe that grassroots organizations can achieve a level of scope and scale that will allow them to participate effectively in political discourse at the national and international levels.

This study examines the efforts of thirteen GGJ member organizations in their efforts to forge international relationships and identify common strategies with global partners. The challenges faced by the groups are not surprising – being able to sustain an international program is daunting even for well-resourced, international, non-governmental organizations (NGOs). What is striking is that despite the enormous challenges, all of the organizations in this study, and many more, are making the effort and see this work as essential to their vision for building grassroots power. Our expectation is that national and international collaborations like those documented in this study, and new and emerging alliances like GGJ, will play an important role in shaping the global political landscape at the beginning of this new century.

– Michael Leon Guerrero
Director, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance

Introduction

SUMMARY

The following are key outcomes of the Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ) study “Transforming Our World: US Grassroots Organizations and the Global Justice Movement,” a Ford Foundation funded collaboration with Christine E. Selig, PhD, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance members and staff, and Jobs with Justice. The principal investigator, Dr. Christine E. Selig, is a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley and a board member of People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (a GGJ member organization). Dr Selig worked in collaboration with a GGJ research team that included Michael Leon Guerrero, Director, Grassroots Global Justice; Sarita Gupta, Executive Director, Jobs with Justice; and Walda Katz-Fishman, Professor of Sociology, Howard University. The research team greatly appreciated the support of the Ford Foundation for this important co-produced research project. This support not only allowed us to produce an in-depth investigation into key questions of social change, but also to explore the potential for collaboration among social movement leaders and academics in the pursuit of effective and relevant models of social science research. Specifically, this research focused on the work of GGJ and its member organizations. This study explored the impact of the engagement of these organizations in global movements, primarily through the World Social Forum process.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The central question for this study was - what have been the impacts on U.S. based grassroots organizations of engaging in global movements? The organizations in this study have effectively worked in their own communities and at the U.S. national level to impact the conditions of the lives of their constituents and base. Still, the challenges they face are largely a result of global economic forces, neoliberal globalization.

What is NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION?

Neoliberal globalization (neo-liberalism) is used to define the **current global economic** system that is characterized by a premise that global economic markets, and corporations that operate in these markets, work most effectively **without government regulation**. It is typified by three policy implications:

- Governments should allow corporations to **cross national boundaries** freely with their goods and capital.
- Governments should **privatize ownership of national enterprises**.
- Governments should **minimize or eliminate any social welfare programs** that work to address economic disparities and inequalities in their country. (Wallerstein, I., 2008)

This study begins with the theoretical assumptions that oppression is systematic and institutionalized (Jackins, 1990, 1992; Wallerstein, 1989). The difficulties that low income communities of color face are not a result of their individual or cultural inadequacies, but rather of economic, political and social institutions that increasingly function transnationally. Therefore, making substantial change requires addressing systematic oppression, or “root causes” as it is articulated by grassroots organizations themselves (Selig, 2005). Many studies have been conducted on the ways in which grassroots organizations have worked effectively to impact their local conditions and the challenges these organizing based groups face in their work (Burawoy, 1991; Catells, 1977, 1983). The questions of this research sought to further develop theories of community-based change. In particular, what are the ways that

community-based organizations can effectively engage globally to impact the global systematic causes of the local day-to-day oppressive conditions that their base faces? Participants were asked to describe the theory of change, type of work, base focus, and vision of their organization. In addition, they were asked to reflect on the ways in which their global movement work had strengthened or hindered their effectiveness at home in their U.S. communities.



What is GLOBAL JUSTICE?

- Global justice recognizes that **justice** for local communities **depends on justice for all communities** around the world.
- Global justice asserts that **another world is possible** – one based on principles of international solidarity, justice, peace, dignity, equality, human rights, sustainability and democracy.

RESEARCH SCOPE AND PARTICIPATION



Seven organizations participated in the written case study documents: PODER (People Organizing to Demand

Environmental and Economic Rights), National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Indigenous Environmental Network, Jobs with Justice, Community Voices Heard and United Electrical Workers. Six organizations participated in the interview process: United Students Against Sweatshops, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Labor Community Strategy Center, Domestic Workers United and the Black Mesa Water Coalition. Grassroots Global Justice member

organizations were interested in participating in the research project and specifically appreciated the opportunity to systematically

reflect on their work, particularly as it relates to other GGJ organizations

and the broader political and economic context in which they work. Participants found that social science research, when conducted collaboratively in a way that engaged the thinking of the participants in not only producing data, but also in producing analysis, can be useful for their work in both ways they predicted and ways they had not. The project also included two interviews with international allies: Gustavo Codas from the CUT, Central Union of Workers labor federation of Brazil (www.cut.org.br) and Raffaella Bolini from ARCI, Associazione Ricreativa e Culturale Italiana (www.arci.it).

Findings

WORK OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

Leaders from GGJ member organizations who participated in this research study engaged in a diverse range of social movements, including: environmental justice, immigrant rights, sovereignty, workers' rights, unions, women's, student and welfare rights. Participants focused on a range

of particular constituencies in their organizing including: immigrant, youth, families, students, women, domestic workers,

undocumented migrant workers, welfare recipients,

Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, Asian Pacific Islanders, Latinos/as and Chicanos/as. Organizations represented in the study were both local grassroots organizations and networks of grassroots organizations or local chapters.



For all the local groups involved, a key aspect of their work is organizing members through popular education, leadership development, campaigns, networking and alliance building with other organizations and networks. For the

networks and workers organizations in the study, their member organizations or unions are largely made up of local

organizations or chapters that have as a major aspect of their work

organizing members and building a membership base. The network organizations were based in Oakland, California; Washington, DC; Bemidji, Minnesota; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Toledo, Ohio. Local organizations that participated in the study were based in Miami, Florida; San Francisco, California; New York, New York; Flagstaff, Arizona; and Los Angeles, California. Grassroots Global Justice's major strength and uniqueness is that it builds a cross geographic and cross issue alliance of primarily base building organizations. GGJ creates opportunities for these organizations to be part of an alliance which unifies the work of grassroots organizations across a broad geographic and issue base. In addition to their alliance building work within GGJ, all the organizations in this study were active through GGJ in the World Social Forum process. The World Social Forum process, and bringing that process to the United States, is the primary focus of global movement work in this study.

What is the World Social Forum?

- First organized in 2001, the World Social Forum (WSF) is an ongoing global process where organizations, social movements, artists, students, academics, and activists engage in an open meeting place for reflective thinking, formulation of proposals, exchange of experiences, and coordination for effective action. Key principles that guide the WSF process include:
- The WSF believes that “another world is possible,” one not based on neo-liberalism or imperialism, but instead where people’s needs and well being, and care of the environment are prioritized over the accumulation of profit.
- The WSF process is committed to understanding the current situation of global capitalism and current global economic crisis.
- The WSF process is committed to creating alternatives and building a world where there are fruitful relationships among peoples and between people and the earth. (www.forumsocialmundial.org.br)

IMPACT OF ENGAGEMENT

The following is a summary of key findings of this study regarding the impact of engagement in global movements, organizational strategy, and the research process itself. Directly capturing the voices of social movement actors was an important aspect of the research and documentation of this study, and in the process of this co-produced research project, one which engaged participants not only in data collection, but also through analysis. Therefore, extended interview quotations are included throughout this report. Additional detailed outcomes are also contained in the case study excerpts included in this document. The case studies were written by participating organizations.



GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING AND ENGAGING IN GLOBAL MOVEMENTS: INSPIRATION FROM GLOBAL MOVEMENTS

Findings

- Engagement in global movements strengthened participating organizations' U.S. based work through leadership development, education, relationship building, policy development and campaign development.
- Engagement informed new perspectives on participants work in the U.S., increased understanding of the global economy, and created potential ways to address current challenges.
- Organizations faced significant challenges that foremost included difficulty in raising resources to support their current work and more potential opportunities for effective change.
- Organizations faced challenges in accessing information and model resources regarding building transnational efforts for social change.
- Co-produced academic research-based projects, which engage the participants in data collection and analysis, strengthens the data and analysis collected and increased the usefulness of the research cess for participants in the study, in this case specifically, grassroots movements in the United States.

The focus of the local grassroots organizations highlighted in this study is to improve the day-to-day conditions of their members' lives. This work is based on a principal that engaging people directly in addressing the difficulties they face both empowers people to work to improve their own living conditions, and creates more effective solutions. The people directly facing the struggles are the people who work collaboratively to develop the solutions. Organizing members is a key component and strategy of the work of all local GGJ member organizations who participated in the study. However, all organizations understood that although they work locally, the challenges they face are a result of broader socio-economic conditions. Alliance building across issue and geography is therefore a key strategy for each participating organization.



Domestic Workers United

AI-JEN POO, LEAD ORGANIZER

New York, New York, www.domesticworkersunited.org



DWU WORK To organize unorganized domestic workers for power, respect, fair labor standards and to help build a movement for social justice.... [Our work] is about building a strong, united, membership-based organization for nannies, housekeepers and other companions We have five aspects to our organizing strategy which include membership base building, leadership development, grassroots campaigns, alliance work and organization work. We do a number of different programs including a nanny training program, a leadership development program, but also programs like computer classes and English classes that are targeted towards domestic workers' practical skills that we feel are very important aspects of empowerment. We also do campaign work to concretely improve day-to-day living and working conditions for domestic workers.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK Our involvement with international movements and organizations is essentially through two ways: one is through our participation in GGJ, and GGJ's program has been mostly related to participating in convergences with social movements and the social forum process and figuring out how to raise the voice and experiences of the oppressed people within the United States and connect those voices and those experiences and struggles with those of other communities around the world so just by participating in some of the delegations of grassroots organizers and community members and then through GGJ's work around the trade agreements and hopefully soon around the work we are planning on doing against the war abroad and at home. And through the work that we do in our sector as domestic workers, we have participated in an international meeting of domestic workers groups that took place about a year and a half ago in the Netherlands and our presence inside the movement of domestic workers globally has helped us build strong relationships with domestic workers unions in Asia, in the Caribbean and also in Latin America. We anticipate that as our national work, as the national domestic workers alliance, becomes stronger and our agenda becomes clearer then we will do more work internationally, so we anticipate that work growing and we anticipate connecting more with organizations around the world.

VISION We are trying to organize workers with a social movement building perspective. It's our belief that movements for justice or workers rights need to be fundamentally integrated with social justice movements as a whole and people's movements. And it's not just about getting a bigger piece of the pie but it is about changing society so that working people have power and can live with dignity. In order for us to do that we need to build a broader social movement....We are essentially trying to organize a significant percentage of domestic workers in New York. We have a vision that one day we will be able to unite with other workers across the city... [around] things that really mean something in the lives of working people, to be able to have the capacity, the unity, the leadership and the organizations to actually implement things at that scale.



GGJ is a broad alliance that includes regional and national networks as members as well as locally-based organizations. Many of the organizations involved in GGJ are also members of these networks and alliances. For GGJ and GGJ's local member organizations, it has been an effective strategy to work directly with the leadership of networks and local organizations. This additional level of coalition building helps make local work directly part of a coordinated effort for broader social change – expanding the impact of their local work. Networks and national organizations benefit from directly working with locally-based organizations and networks because their work is more directly informed by local level day-to-day experiences. At any particular GGJ decision making or working group meeting, participants typically include GGJ staff, staff leaders from national organizations or networks, staff leaders from local organizations, and member leaders from local organizations. This model allows capacity to be built simultaneously in both directions.

Local groups have increased capacity to develop a national agenda including strategy with impact beyond their local community and with a force or power to effect change that is drawn from national organizations. National groups have increased capacity to develop effective strategy because it is directly informed by local experiences across geography and across issue focus areas. Change needs to happen locally, but it also needs to be connected to national change. This alliance building creates the potential for addressing the structural conditions that create the problems people face in their day-to-day lives.

GGJ organizations are all U.S. based local or national networks and organizations. The primary focus of their work is changing and improving the conditions of working class and low-income communities of color in the United States. GGJ member organizations understand that local change is strengthened by connecting work nationally to other local organizations and to national networks and organizations. Similarly, GGJ member organizations understand that the conditions they are working to change are largely a result of the global economy.

Primarily through the World Social Forum process, GGJ member organizations began to work together to engage in global social movements. They began by working to understand the World Social Forum process itself, learning about the work of and exchanging with movements outside the United States, and building relationships with movement leaders internationally. GGJ organizations conducted workshops, were asked to participate in workshops hosted by non-U.S.-based organizations, and were asked to facilitate World Social Forum plenaries. In 2006,

GGJ petitioned for and was accepted to be on the coordinating body of the World Social Forum process, the International Council (IC). In addition, GGJ became active in the Americas Hemispheric Social Forum process, became a member of the facilitating body, and strengthened working relationships with movements throughout the Americas. Over this same period, GGJ was asked by the WSF IC to initiate the development of a U.S. Social Forum process, and in particular, the first U.S. Social Forum. GGJ incorporated its commitment to having grassroots organizations central in the work and slowed the process down to deliberately make sure that grassroots organizations played a central role in organizing the first U.S. Social Forum.



Black Mesa Water Coalition

ENEI BEGAYE, CO-DIRECTOR

Flagstaff, Arizona, www.blackmesawatercoalition.org



BMWC Work We are an organization of young people working with elders and our communities to protect mother Earth and the integrity of Indigenous peoples' cultures with a vision of building sustainable and healthy community. [We work on] energy and water issues mostly in Indigenous peoples' communities in the Southwest.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK We have been active in United Nations policy work with the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues. Through a lot of that work we have made network alliances with international groups. We have a good connection with a lot of Indigenous people working on similar things through the Indigenous Environmental Network. We have participated in meetings of the International Water Forum as well. And, we are part of the International Water Warrior.

We feel a lot of connection with other communities and are very interested in the networking pieces and the sharing of strategies pieces with other communities that are being affected by these same corporations by which we are being affected. That piece of networking and building alliances and building strategies is one of the bigger reasons why we got involved in policy aspect with the UN to try and hold the corporations accountable, highlight some of the issues and take them to the international arena to highlight them and hold our local governments accountable to those international policies. We want to be a part of building the language in those policies, and to bring our local community work to a larger arena. We want to highlight it and also to make sure that we are at the table for our communities. It is always a balancing act. It is not easy to see the connection with our local work or in the direct impact of our international work on our local community, or at least it's hard for some of our community members to see that, but I do think it has a trickle-down effect and the relationships that we build with other organizations and individuals out there build a support for larger movement

VISION That our communities will be locally sustainable, that we are not dependent on the globalization structures for things to eat that have to come from some other country or some other people's land, the houses in which we live them the resources come from somebody else's land, the energy that we use comes from somebody else's land. Our vision is that our communities will be sustained locally at what we eat, drink, live in will all come from what we can produce locally.

GGJ member organizations that participated in this study identified important benefits from engaging with global movements. GGJ became a key mechanism for leadership development for member organizations. Participation in the WSF process by organizational staff leaders and member leaders provided excellent opportunities for education. Participants developed a deeper understanding of the connection between the struggles they face at home locally and the global context, which in turn helped to develop even more effective strategy. Hevily Ambriz Espinoza of United Students Against Sweatshops, describes how their experience in global movement work has led to greater understanding and new strategy ideas for their work at home.

It has been important for us to see other global movements work whether in education, labor, housing, etc. and find out how they create change, but also find out what strategies they've used to win their campaigns or get what they need. For example, one year one of our students went to the Philippines and saw how they flyer on buses. She came back and said "why don't we flyer on buses." So we started doing some flyer on buses and around bus stops near universities. What I think has happened is that we developed a lot of techniques and tactics from other people's work involved in the global movement that we hadn't necessarily used in the past, I think that has strengthened all of our campaigns and all of our work (interview, 1.14.2008).

Ai-jen Poo from Domestic Workers United explains how global movement work has educated their members, provided inspiration and informed strategy.

It is largely about broadening our understanding of what is happening and it helps us to make concrete decisions about what we want to prioritize. Social Forums have provided an opportunity for our members to really feel what it feels like to be part of a movement, to see that there are people around the world really invested in countries around the world who are rising up against the unequal system and largely against our government. That, I think, was really important for people to see and understand in order to understand our task as groups that are based in New York. The perspectives, the analysis and the experience of actually understanding what a movement feels like – all of those things are really important. The domestic workers sector has been important for people globally understanding women's work and women's work as a form of waged work around the world, and their struggle for recognition. It teaches us something also about the global economic system relying on gender norm particularly in devaluing of women's work in the home. All of that has strengthened the understanding of what we're up against and what we need to do (interview, 2.18.2008).

Tammy Bang Luu from Labor/Community Strategy Center (L/CSC) explains that involvement in global movement work has also given them inspiration.



This has been a chance to meet with people who have an opportunity to see revolution in their life time – see and experience and participate, to hear how they built the struggle against apartheid, how they thought about their work and political education. There is a lot that we can learn.... Learning how people were able to force conversations and change inside their own country. These opportunities create hope – new vigor and new vibrancy (interview, 2.15.2008.)

Labor/Community Strategy Center



TAMMY BANG LUU, SENIOR ORGANIZER AND
CO-COORDINATOR OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL
FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Los Angeles, California
www.thestrategycenter.org

L/CSC WORK The Labor/Community Strategy Center is a multiracial “think tank/act tank” committed to building democratic, internationalist, Left social movements and challenging the ideological, economic and political domination of transnational capital (L/CSC Mission Statement, see organizational website). We train organizers. We have a national school of strategic organizing with a 6-month residency program. We write and produce publications, tackling some of the burning questions of our time inside the left. What we are best known for is our grassroots organizing campaigns.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK We are an internationalist organization. Our movement is tied to the success of the international movement....connections and learn from their work. Our work around the USSF in many ways is taking up the challenge [from movements outside the US] “what are you going to do around the United States?”

VISION I think what drives our work is first self-determination... It has to address the environment – there are finite resources. Whatever we are trying to create in terms of another world we have to address that dimension. We have to live differently in relationship to the earth. We have got to live differently in terms of our consumption of resources... You want to be able to feed everybody. What does that look like – where people have joy in their lives and are able feed people of the world all over and be able to meet people’s basic needs?

I think initially what we are trying to build is a movement strong enough.... We are trying to really reflect on the past experiments and figure out what we can learn from them ... inside the bus riders union, inside the strategy center. Our contribution is building a multi-racial organization of folks that understand those issues, who are able to take on targets that are much bigger than ourselves that create the kind of organization, the kind of movement that reflects the kind of world we want to build. We are also training and building and creating power in a way that can open us up to more possibilities where we can actually start experimenting on a grander scale than what any of us can imagine now.

Member organizations built important relationships that led to further exchanges. These exchanges also led to transnational campaign development and partnerships. Enei Begaye explains the benefits to the Black Mesa Water Coalition.

Building relationships with organizations and people from other countries has helped us think about strategies that work, helped us learn techniques that have worked, and learn new technologies that people use like rain water harvesting that have helped us to rethink our traditional ways of harvesting water. Definitely the networking piece has helped us to broaden our understanding and education on some solutions and strategies.

Having links with communities outside the U.S. that are part of these larger networks, and the same corporations we are impacted by, has meant we now have global support when we have taken action locally. Through the UN work we have come up with internationally recognized language around policy. Even when such language is specifically directed, we have still been able to utilize it as a way for us to show that the world is looking, globally, at what's going on at local levels, and that our local governments need to be accountable. In some cases it even means that we are able to have better dialogue with our local governments (interview, 5.1.2008)



Miami Workers Center

GIHAN PERERA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Liberty City, Miami, Florida

www.miamiworkerscenter.org



MWC Work: We were founded as a volunteer organization in 1999 by former union organizers, Gihan Perera and Tony Romano. The Center helps working class people build grassroots organizations and develop their leadership capacity through aggressive community organizing campaigns and education programs. The Center also actively builds coalitions and enters alliances to amplify progressive power and win racial, community, social, and economic justice (MWC website).

Global Movement Work: The international movement work we are involved in is through alliances. First, our membership in GGJ and being part of the World Social Forum process, and all the different processes within GGJ. Second, the Right to the City alliance is increasingly moving towards figuring out its relationship with international urban movements. We are involved through our role in Right to the City track of the World Social Forum and also through other networks of urban inhabitant movements. We are being increasingly asked to be part of different international political dialogues and discussion processes - largely presenting ideas and experiences.

Vision: We are trying to build an organization that's principally working class grassroots folks. But increasingly we are clear that if we just organize our folks it is not enough power to win. We really want to build alliances within our cities that are strong enough to really challenge for power. What do those organizations look like - partly it is building grassroots organizations, partly building strategic alliances that are across broader sectors, putting together much broader coalitions than we are used to running. To make this effective, our core organizations have to be strong.

Our vision is to build that organization on a bunch of different levels; neighborhood, regionally, and then across regions. Over the long term for us our focus is what is a vision that actually builds organization and alliances across the south? What does that look like, what does that take, and how do we do that? Secondly, we are not just building organization we are trying to change consciousness. So part of that is by grassroots organizing, but also by a ton of other work that actually shifts the battle for what is possible. We are asking ourselves - how do we do that directly, how do we do that connected to the organizing, beyond the organizing, and then how do we do that at the different level? How do we then get a vast broader group of people, including our core constituency, engaged in this level of thinking and consciousness? ... If we are going to make a difference and be real partners with the global south - a key question for us is how does our work here and the movements we are building get to scale enough to make the difference that they need?

This increased sophistication, a result of the exchange of perspectives and information that is part of building relationships, strengthened GGJ member organizations' ability to analyze the impact of U.S. policies at home and abroad, including in the areas of trade, immigration, environment and militarization. Over time, GGJ's work focus grew to more directly incorporate the impact of U.S. foreign policy abroad. Specifically, GGJ developed a program area that linked the impact of U.S. militarization abroad to the impact of that same militarization on working class and low-income people of color communities here at home in the U.S. What developed was both a deeper and more concrete understanding of the multiple connections and impact of US and transnational policies that make the framework for globalization. At the same time, GGJ's sophistication regarding how to address the negative impacts of globalization evolved and strengthened.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: DEEPENING TRANSNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

Grassroots organizations in the United States have had long histories of learning from movements outside the U.S. and in engaging in solidarity to support those efforts through donating resources and working to change U.S. foreign policy. GGJ's transnational movement work has built on this history and further developed this work primarily in two ways. With globalization and the increasing development of transnational corporations, including different stages of production increasingly dispersed around the world, affecting the working and living conditions in local communities has increasingly required the ability to impact policy on transnational levels. In addition to strategies that include learning from each other and supporting each other's movements, strategies that impact global policies are increasingly necessary. Therefore, the formation of an effective transnational movement to develop, fight for and implement these changes has become crucial to social justice work. The World Social Forum process has been crucial at facilitating the formation of these relationships. Gustavo Codas, of the Brazilian Central Workers Union (CUT), explains that although relationships began during some of the articulations in the 1990s, such as the WTO protests,





In reality, most of the relationships we built were through the World Social Forum, since 2001, or through the World Social Forum process. The first ones were the people we met a long time ago, during some of our social movement work, like Fred Azcarate (former Jobs with Justice Executive Director). And then we met Latino immigrant organizations and organizations and campaigns against the war (interview, 6.05.2008).

GGJ has built important international relationships and developed many allies through the World Social Forum process, in particular through its role on the International Council and the Americas Hemispheric coordinating body. GGJ member organizations have established and developed specific relationships with international organizations and networks based outside of the U.S. that work in their specific sector, whether it is welfare rights, workers' rights, environmental justice, housing rights, immigrants rights or numerous other focuses of work. Jobs with Justice, for instance, developed a workers' campaign through contacts at the World Social Forum that linked workers in the U.S. with high technology workers in India in outsourced sectors (JWJ case study). GGJ organizations based in workers' rights, environmental justice, Indigenous sovereignty, immigrant and refugee rights, among other movements, have clearly understood that the effectiveness of their movements is dependent on being able to build international partnerships and strategies for social transformation.

United Students Against Sweat Shops

HEAVILY AMBRIZ, ESPINOZA, DOMESTIC CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

Washington, DC with chapters on campuses around the U.S.
www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org

USAS WORK We started out doing sweat-free clothing ... in 1997 we realized that each university has control over who makes the garment that has a university logo on them and so we worked really hard to get factory disclosure, knowing where our universities clothes were made, and then we worked hard to get codes of conduct for those factories... We ask universities and brands to keep production of clothes in factories that have successfully formed unions. ... We've grown to include labor in the U.S. We also work with unions in the U.S. to organize workers that work on university campuses, and we do a lot of solidarity with janitorial staff on campus or housekeepers... Our main work is on campaigns that are directly tied to power we have as students.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT Work Our ties are broad with the global movement and with the global labor movement, we have connections with organizations that work all over the world. Most of our relationships are in Latin America, Africa and in some parts of Asia... We do solidarity work but also we have a program of visiting our partners around the world in the summer, strategizing with them and understanding how we can be a resource for them in that way.

VISION Our organizational vision ... is to start off with institutions that we have power over, like universities, and transforming those into what we would like the world to look like – having a university that respects workers rights, environmental policies, and challenge this within our universities. And then take [our knowledge that] that vision can happen and bring it out for the rest of the world to change other institutions.



Another step towards developing these relationships was GGJ's encouragement of international allies to participate in the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia in June 2007. Gustavo Codas, from the CUT and Raffaella Bolini from the Association of Social Promotion (ARCI) in Italy both participated in the USSF. In fact for them, as well as for many organizations, their relationship



with GGJ and GGJ member organizations has provided a much fuller picture of the work for social change in the United States. Bolini was, for instance, especially impressed that immigrants were at the center of the U.S. Social Forum process, not just representing the immigrant rights movement, but also working for environmental justice and many other issues. For Bolini, the USSF was:

A turning point for me in the relation with U.S. grassroots movements is the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta. Before the USSF, even though I knew that there were a lot of organizations working on social issues, my main personal relations were with the peace movement. I come from the peace movement and I spent most of my life and my activism in the anti-war movement, and also the “another world” movement, which was born during the Bush wars. So the main relations I had until Atlanta were with the peace movement. Atlanta was for me a sort of really, really positive shock, something changed in my mind. For me it was really incredible to find in the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta not only activists speaking about excluded people, but also organizations formed by excluded people, excluded people and social actors. One of the problems we have here in Europe is that in the movement, in the leftist, progressive movement, in these last years, most of the social actors are speaking about people but they aren’t able to involve the people they are speaking about. Most of the organizations are formed by well educated and middle-class people who are not living the problems that they are speaking about. And the leftist organizations in this moment are not able to involve the people from the barrios, the migrants and the workers of the informal sector, which are becoming the main part of the workers in our countries. That is a problem not only for the grassroots movements but also for the trade unions (interview, 5.26.2008).

For Bolini, Europe and the Social Forum process could learn significantly from work in the United States.

Codas explains what it means to him to have had the opportunity to work with GGJ,

For us, the presence and work of U.S. organizations has been very important. First, because this has a very strong effect in moral terms, emotional, I will even say, to Brazilian workers and other third world countries, to understand or see that they have a common struggle with the workers or movements inside the United States. Now the United States does not appear to us as one block, instead there is a separation between the people of the United States and the North American capitals and to the Bush government, etc...

The other issue, for us, that has been very important is trade unionism. I was talking about, that with globalization and the markets ever expanding, union disputes tend to be more global. Let's say, it's very difficult to win a victory in one country or defend a victory in one country, because with the world-wide functioning of the markets there is a tendency of capital to pressure the country where the workers have won this victory. So, our point of view is fundamentally that the workers' struggles around public services or social rights have to be as international as possible. For us, the international dimension of a strategy is fundamental and decisive for our own national strategy (interview, 6.05.2008).



Farm Labor Organizing Committee

BEATRIZ MAYA, SECRETARY TREASURER, ELECTED IN 2006

Toledo, Ohio, with locals throughout the U.S. and in Monterrey, Mexico
www.floc.com

FLOC Work A union of migrant farm workers working to address migrant farm workers rights. In October 2007 we launched a new campaign to organize tobacco harvesters for R.J. Reynolds. That is our current focus; some of them are farm workers that come from Mexico under the H2A visa. This is a Department of Labor program that authorizes employers who are able to show that they cannot find domestic workers for a particular work here in the United States.... That is our most recent campaign.

Global Movement Work We are part of the labor movement. In terms of specific networks we are also part of GGJ, and through them have been connected to the World Social Forum. We are also part of the immigrant rights movement and through this movement we have made connections with immigrant rights groups in other countries, in Europe and so on.... This happened 10 years ago ... FLOC is a farm workers' union that was started in the late 60s by people who were mainly citizens, Mexican Americans were coming at that time from Texas but also from Florida every summer to harvest the crops here in the north. Particularly through the 80s and then increasingly after NAFTA ... a mainly Mexican American [workforce] changed to an undocumented work force coming from Mexico and other Central American countries. Having a base that is actually transnational obviously moved us at FLOC more intensely toward international work.

Vision A vision that we all share in GGJ is of a more sustainable planet where we can use the resources that we have in a more equitable way that is just for everyone, that is just and peaceful. Less consumerism, where everybody can use the resources we need but no more than that. [Our vision is for] an equitable way of using resources, Not on one side having people that don't know what to do with their money and on the other side kids dying.



For Codas, as with many GGJ allies, it is important both to the perspective of their work and to the strategy they develop. Over time, GGJ's work with allies has continued to develop from relationship building to strategizing to campaign development. A significant step in the role of GGJ's work was its successful initiation of the U.S. Social Forum process, and of course the implementation of the ongoing process with grassroots organizations at the center of

the work. GGJ continues to be an important link for grassroots organizations in the U.S. and the global movement.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND CHALLENGES: CRITICAL CHALLENGES IN FUNDING AND SAFETY

The primary challenges that were identified by participants involved their ability to raise sufficient resources to support this work. Many GGJ organizations supported their engagement in global movement work through grassroots fundraising. All study participants indicated funding resources as a major challenge. While this study clearly showed the ability and need for grassroots organizations and alliances to effectively build and engage in global movements, study participants argued that resources for this often went to organizations that did not engage in grassroots organizing. Participants identified a sort of “division of labor by funding” that does not reflect the actual or needed division of labor among non-profits as one factor inhibiting grassroots alliances and organizations from attaining sufficient support for their work in global movements. The biggest challenges with regard to funding include securing sufficient resources for staff time, developing and implementing popular education modules, conducting international organizational exchanges, travel costs, and translation of materials as well as interpretation.

Jonathan Kissam from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America explains in the case study included in this report that, “we face the constant challenge of being able to fund this work on the scale that is necessary.” Colin Rajah from National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights explains,

First and foremost, funders have a tendency to want to fund efforts that produce immediately quantifiable results. Since much of our international work has “trickle down” effects and results aren’t realized until much later, this has been challenging to demonstrate. On top of that, since it has already been demonstrated that very few organizations and efforts take on the global perspective as extensively as we do through organizing at the community level, very little information and knowledge is available to the larger public about these efforts (which we also try to counter). As a result, whatever we articulate and promote with regard to this work is often new information that needs to be digested and considered more thoroughly before resourcing can be directed for it. Therefore, there is a constant “lag effect” that we experience in resourcing for this work (included case study).

For some organizations, the capacity to engage globally meant taking away capacity to do local work. Perera describes the challenges for the Miami Workers Center,

1) The work [of local organizing and global movement building] is constantly demanding – choose what to do and what not to do given the amount of increasing need and opportunity. 2) How do we do it in a way that really sustains folk, builds leadership in terms of up and coming staff and members and leaders over time? So that taking on more work and more external work builds the capacity of the organization



rather than zaps it. And 3) It is really hard to find a pool of people that are conscious and can do that work at least here in Miami. Although it is growing somewhat, is still really small. There is almost a sense that people have to stretch. There are so few people still doing this work and we haven't figured out how to significantly break through, to expand so that there are actually tons of people wanting to do this work. Finally, no matter how much good

organizing we do I feel like we are still relatively small and it is hard to grow the size of our organization significantly. How do we get a bunch more people involved – how do we grow the culture and the work of the organizing to get to that point where it is chaired by still more people and the power is bigger? (Interview, 5.13.2008)

For many organizations, the challenge of developing campaigns that have both local impact and are strategic for international allies was a new area, requiring resources which support relationship building and strategic planning processes, and was not necessarily an immediate outcome of the work. Additionally, groups felt funding for the infrastructure needed to better support information and skill exchanges to scale up transnational movement building work was critical. In the JWW incorporated case study, Gupta explains that currently there is not much funding available for integrating local and global movement building.

For one GGJ member organization, Farm Laborers Organizing Committee (FLOC), the challenges of expanding their organizing of workers across the U.S. border included experiencing the assassination of one of their leaders,

We won that contract in 2004 and one of the things the workers immediately asked us to do was to open an office in Monterrey, Mexico. They told us their issues and problems and expectations were not limited to North Carolina but in many cases actually start in Mexico in their dealings with recruiters who arrange work under the H24 visa program. We found that these recruiters were asking the workers to pay what in Mexico they call “mordidas” for the chance to be recruited under these programs, that it was a very common practice, and that there were other fees that the workers also were paying that were not allowed under the H2A contract rules. So we opened this office and began exploring the work over there and we currently have three people working out of that office. We have always had two or three people working there

researching how the whole recruitment process takes place and defending the workers ... And in spite of the contract, our collective bargaining agreement eliminated the fees and mordidas and bribes that the workers had to pay over there. Unfortunately of course that got us in trouble with the powerful rings of cartels of recruiters and human traffickers. We ended up with one of our organizers killed. In April 2007, Santiago Rafael Cruz was assassinated in our office there (Maya, interview, 2.20.2008).

For FLOC, organizing transnationally was a direct outcome of changes in the global economy, NAFTA in particular, because over time their worker base became migrant labor from Mexico and Central America. As a result, they needed to increase their relationship building and network to have increased ability to handle the challenges of organizing across the U.S.-Mexico border that their constituents needed. GGJ organizations in this study identified the need to continue to develop more access to models or skills of how to set up transnational work, and the need to set up mechanisms to exchange information and resources for building more multi-dimensional work. Building transnational campaigns is still a relatively new area for GGJ member organizations, and study participants identified challenges in creating more over-arching campaigns that had still direct tangible impact on the day-to-day lives of their membership in the near term.



Case Studies

The following are excerpts from extended case studies written by GGJ member organizations who were participants in this study: Community Voices Heard; Indigenous Environmental Network; United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America; National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; Jobs with Justice; and PODER – People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights. These participant-drafted case studies were an important aspect of the research because they were a concrete way for GGJ member organizations to engage in an extended reflective process on their involvement in GGJ and global social movements. This report contains excerpts from each case study written in their own voices. Full case studies for each participant organization can be found at www.ggjalliance.org. Each case study gives a detailed explanation of specific organizational work in global movements, discusses the impact of this on their local work, and reflects on broader theoretical questions.



CASE STUDY ¹

Community Voices Heard

New York, New York, www.cvhaction.org

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ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Community Voices Heard (CVH) is an organization of low-income people, predominantly women with experience on welfare, working to build power in New York City and State to improve the lives of our families and communities. We are working to accomplish this through a multi-pronged strategy, including public education, grassroots organizing, leadership development, training low-income people about their rights, political education, civic engagement and direct-action issue campaigns. We are currently working on welfare reform, job creation, public housing and other economic justice issues that affect low-income people, particularly low-income women of color. While we focus on welfare reform, we broadly define welfare activism to be multi-issue, and thus must include issues such as education, training, jobs, housing, economic development and other community issues. We fill a crucial gap in that our organization connects public policy with grassroots organizing and leadership development.

Why and How CVH Got Involved in Global Movement Work

CVH's involvement in global movement work came about because of a confluence of two predominant factors: (1) the opportunity granted to us to take a delegation to the World Social Forum in 2002; and (2) the underlying interest in such work on behalf of our staff leadership at the time.

The experience of the first CVH delegation was significant in that it inspired the group to think more critically about the connections between our local struggles and struggles of similarly marginalized groups overseas, between local policies we were confronting and global trends, and between local organizing efforts and global organizing needs. Upon returning to New York City, the delegation organized a report-back to the larger membership at CVH and began to dialogue with folks about how best to integrate their learnings into our everyday work and perspectives. As an outgrowth of the report-back, a Global Connections Committee was born at CVH. This committee was made up of upper-level leadership interested in challenging the broader organization to integrate a global perspective



into our work, and engage with others doing the same. While not campaign-oriented from the start (like the great majority of CVH's work), the group looked at the work as a critical component of consciousness-raising and movement building.

CVH GLOBAL CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE WORK

- Supporting the Social Forum Process in NYC
- Building the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
- Crafting and Conducting Popular Education Modules on Global Topics
- Sending Grassroots Delegations to the World Social Forum
- Establishing a Sister-Organization Connection
- Organizing Through the U.S. Social Forum

IMPACT ON LOCAL WORK & ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The most profound impact of our organizational engagement in global movement work has been the broadened perspective and consciousness of Community Voices Heard's upper-level leadership. Our connection to GGJ and our participation in various convenings and exchanges has allowed our leadership to begin to make connections between their local struggles and the global context within which they take place. In addition, and perhaps more concretely, participation has exposed our leadership to other issues and movements outside of their own. Our leaders now not only know about the issues that they personally are battling against, but also have begun to gain exposure to the many other battles—both those that are similar to and those that are dramatically different than their own—that exist in the U.S. and the broader world.

Welfare recipients and public housing residents in New York now have knowledge of life in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; they know of the struggles in the urban slums of Nairobi, Kenya; they have a sense of the Indigenous struggles in the U.S. and beyond; they have an understanding of what environmental racism is though we ourselves do not work on it, etc. While the broadened knowledge and understanding has not necessarily contributed to our local campaigns in a concrete way, it has contributed to the deeper politicization of our membership.




The most concrete impact of our involvement in global movement work has actually been through the relationships built with other U.S.-based organizations engaging in this exploration with us. We have developed strong relationships that have allowed us to learn techniques and strategies from other similar groups, and that have provided us with a network to call upon for assistance and strategic advice in times of need. Additionally, our engagement in the World Social Forum process allowed us to learn how to utilize such spaces for the most productive advancement of our movement building agenda. Past learnings at the Forums inspired us to utilize the United States Social Forum as a space to develop relationships to advance our campaigns. We used the moment to convene groups from across the country working on similar public housing preservation agendas and were able to have this moment jumpstart the building of national networks to collectively address the issues at hand at the federal level.



Working on global movement building has also provided us with a broader umbrella under which to address all of our different campaigns together as well as campaigns of others that we deem important but may not be focusing on ourselves. Our organization can only currently run a couple of campaigns effectively at any given moment. This limitation makes it impossible for us to cover all the issues and concerns that our members have, and some of the deeper reasons behind why their more localized problems exist. Thankfully, engagement in the global movement work provides a space within which we can engage some of these broader and deeper issues collectively with others.

CHALLENGES FACED IN OUR WORK



The biggest challenge that we have faced in carrying out global movement building work has been that of limited resources to provide for additional staff time to focus on this piece. When we started our global connections work, approximately 25% of one staff person's time was allocated for interfacing with Grassroots Global Justice, for developing and carrying out popular education modules for our membership to bring them up to speed on broader global issues and concerns, and for staffing the exchange that we were trying to maintain with our sister organization in the global south, CONGESCO. This time was never supported with any dedicated funding. While we were once able to get discretionary resources to support bringing two leaders from Rio de Janeiro to NYC for a week and sending four CVH representatives to Brazil for a week, we never were able to get resources to support the ongoing education and networking work. It was hard to prove "concrete impact" of the relationship building we were advancing, and the fact that the work at this stage was not campaign-oriented made it hard to find support.

CVH has also been challenged in making easy connections between our campaigns and work and the broader global issues that the global justice movement is organizing around. Whereas it would be easier to connect up, for instance, a local public housing campaign to a national public housing campaign, it is harder to connect our local public housing campaign work to organizing work around border justice issues or NAFTA. We believe in the need to consider these additional issues that face our society as a whole, and we can even draw out connections (e.g., privatization) between forces and processes that function in both realms, but working on these larger issues adds a whole new element rather than simply building on our current work. This means that engaging takes more time and energy and makes it seem less natural.

CONDITIONS THAT COULD MAKE WORK MORE EFFECTIVE

Our global movement work would be more effective if we were able to have resources for someone on staff to focus at least half-time on this piece of work—developing popular education modules and holding teach-ins/trainings, engaging new people in the work rather than just our current leadership (perhaps people in our base who would want to participate around these issues more so than our other core issues), working with other groups to develop collective campaigns, etc. Our relationship with CONGESCO in Brazil could benefit from more regular exchanges. The personal connections and understandings developed are core to laying the foundation for solidarity and/or mutual work. It would be phenomenal if there were a way to support two to three CONGESCO members coming up to NYC for a week each year and sending two to three CVH members down to Brazil yearly. These exchanges serve both as incredible educational opportunities and, over time, support the evolution of collective work.

EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT AT GLOBAL LEVEL

Community Voices Heard has participated in the World Social Forum since 2002. We have sent delegations yearly and in addition to the delegates funded through GGJ, we have prioritized our own fundraising to assure that more of our members would be able to participate in this important space. Each year of our participation, we have been able to get more out of the Social Forum process—becoming more and more aware of how to utilize the space to build the movement we need as well as just to learn about others' movements. We came to recognize that the best way to utilize the Forum space was to work in advance to pull together the types of groups that one wants to interact with proactively rather than just showing up at workshops that sound appropriate to one's interest. Thinking in advance about what one wants to learn or what groups need to come together to build particular aspects of the movement helps one make the space more productive for the long haul. But, one often needs to learn the necessity of this through going slightly undirected the first year.

Community Voices Heard has prioritized the participation of a broad representation of our leaders over the years. While we have benefited from being able to expose a lot of our members to the Social Forum space, we have been limited somewhat in terms of continuity. With limited resources, however, our organizational priority on developing leadership among our base constituency makes us choose broader membership exposure over deepened staff engagement. Ideally, we would be better positioned to do both simultaneously—perhaps sending one staff and one leader regularly to the spaces, while also sending two new members yearly.



Indigenous Environmental Network

Bemidji, Minnesota, www.ienearth.org



MISSION

The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) is an alliance of grassroots Indigenous Peoples whose mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from contamination and exploitation by strengthening, maintaining and respecting traditional teachings and natural laws.

Overall IEN Goals

(Developed and adopted during the formation years of IEN from 1991-1993)

- To educate and empower Native grassroots people developing strategies for the protection of their environment.
- To re-affirm traditional and natural laws.
- To recognize, support and promote environmentally sound lifestyles and economic livelihoods.
- Commitment to influence all politics that affect our people on a local, regional, national and international level.
- To include youth and elders in all levels of IEN.
- To protect our rights to practice our spiritual beliefs.



Unifying Principles (Values)

The Indigenous Peoples of the Americas have lived for over 500 years in confrontation with an immigrant society that holds an opposing world view. As a result we are now facing an environmental crisis that threatens the survival of all natural life. We believe in unified action, sharing of information, and working together with mutual respect. We recognize we must assert our sovereignty and jurisdictional rights through the application of our traditional laws and recognizing our traditional forms of leadership of our Indigenous nations. We stand on principles of empowering and supporting each other to take direct, informed action and affect our ability

to protect our lands from contamination and exploitation. By attempting to fulfill our responsibility to defend our mother earth we are assuring the survival of our unborn generations. The members of IEN are unified in our recognition that the traditional teachings, lifestyles, spirituality, cultures and leadership of our people as well as the survival of our future generations, are entirely dependent upon our respectful relationship with the natural world and our responsibility to the sacred principles given to us by the creator.



IEN Environmental Code of Ethics

As Indigenous Peoples, we speak for ourselves; no one else is authorized to speak on our behalf. Environmental groups have no right to represent Indigenous Peoples. We represent ourselves. We will always stand by the strongest position in defense of Traditional Natural Law.

- We will support Indigenous People's rights to self-determination.
- We will not make accommodations for, or deals, with polluters.
- We support basic principles of environmental justice, including the rights of people to a clean environment regardless of race, economic position, gender or national identity. Violations of environmental justice we understand to be violations of International Law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

IEN CURRENT CAMPAIGN AND PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1. Networking – Building the base, organizing and movement building locally, nationally and internationally.
2. Information Clearinghouse – Development and dissemination of information to Indigenous communities locally, nationally and internationally. For Indigenous peoples, information IS power.
3. Toxics and Environmental – Organizing work within Indigenous communities on issues related to toxics and environmental health.
4. Water – Currently integrated into IEN program and campaign work. IEN has been initiating North American (2001), national and global discussions and meetings on the protection of and access to water.



5. Mining Program – Working with Indigenous communities in the U.S. and Canada impacted by mining activities.
6. Native Energy and Climate Justice Campaign – Currently working within all levels: local grassroots, tribal governments, U.S. federal and globally.
7. Native Youth Program and Leadership Development – This has been incorporated into all IEN programs and campaigns. 70% of our Indigenous leadership are young people under 28 years of age, as a result of our previous youth leadership work (1999-2005).

ENGAGEMENT IN GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK

Throughout the past eighteen years, our work with grassroots organizations, tribal communities, Indigenous traditional societies and elected tribal leadership has provided a wealth of information related to the protection of the environment and natural resources, biodiversity and challenges of building sustainable tribal communities. IEN is one of the leading organizations and networks within the U.S. environmental justice movement. This experience has led IEN and its delegation to be important players within the international community. IEN is very knowledgeable in the broad arena of issues from poverty eradication, to models of sustainable development, environment, and in the rights of Indigenous Peoples and treaty rights.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK IMPACT ON LOCAL WORK

From the 1990s, since our organization is Indigenous community-based, we have always been mindful on the impact, pro and con, of our involvement in global work. Bringing local activist communities into the global context has always been a challenge. The weight of evaluation from our grassroots communities has been on how it strengthens their work and goals of their local organizing/campaign goals. The value of building relationship between the Indigenous brothers and sisters of the South and North became very important in determining the success of international work. It was discovered that many of the Indigenous communities in the Global South come from isolated communities with very little support base and concerns of trust of NGO's and church groups. The value of networking as an ingredient of organizing work was recognized in IEN's work. However, many foundations do not share the value of relationship building and networking, which take money and resources to develop and maintain.

It has had positive impact to our work. The only distraction has been to provide trainings to local communities of the North, on how this global work strengthens both local work and the empowerment of Indigenous communities of the South. The need to do this strengthens the evaluation of the local community person that has travelled to the Global South in her/his report-back to the community. Developing an exchange between the “Eagle and the Condor” that allows Indigenous peoples from both worlds to visit each other is very much needed.

CHALLENGES FACED IN OUR WORK

There is an excellent report, entitled “Indigenous Movements in Latin America,” by Juan Houghton and Beverly Bell of the Center for Economic Justice, 2004. It profiles the shared goals and demands of the broader social movements and the Indigenous movements, most notably in challenging economic integration and similar goals towards states, multinational corporations, the international financial institutions and trade initiatives. But the report notes a strong distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous movements. In part this is due to the traditional marginalization of Indigenous peoples by other sectors, even other progressive struggles.

There is a deeper reason as well. It is that, in general, Indigenous movements demand the construction of power, land, water and justice outside the framework of the nation-state. Indigenous peoples want, for the most part, to consolidate our own governments. Most social movements, on the other hand, propose progressive or radical modifications within the totality of national political and civil societies. Stated otherwise, Indigenous movements most commonly demand full and separate societies, while social movements express interests and necessities within the national society.

This is not to say that there is not overlap between the two. Indigenous peoples and movements participate in some larger social change configurations, such as the Via Campesina and the Convergence of Movements of Peoples of the Americas (COMPA). But for the most part, the objectives, programs, ideologies and organizational struggles are distinct. Given the critical role of Indigenous peoples and our lands (and waters) and resources in the plans for neoliberal globalization—and our role in opposing that paradigm of globalization—a deeper understanding of the goals and strategies of Indigenous movements is vital. The work, mission, values and goals of GGJ are critical in understanding this.



Other challenges - lack of funding sources.

- Costs for Indigenous community representatives and IEN staff to travel to international meetings and have visitations.
- Resources for Indigenous community representatives from the Global South to travel to the North to have an exchange with one of our Indigenous communities of the North.
- Development of educational materials in Spanish, French, Portuguese and other languages.
- Having translators and interpreters available that are knowledgeable of technical language such as, but not limited to, science terminologies, climate, energy, and environmental and Indigenous rights.
- Increased challenges of Indigenous brothers and sisters from the Global South having difficulties in acquiring visas to visit U.S. meetings.

CONDITIONS THAT WOULD MAKE WORK MORE EFFECTIVE

GGJ needs to help create and be an advocate to create conditions whereby funders are successfully collaborating to increase funding resources that would meet the needs for networking and base building between Indigenous communities of the South and North.



United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, www.ueinternational.org



MISSION

We, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE), realize that the struggle to better our working and living conditions is in vain unless we are united to protect ourselves collectively against the organized forces of the employers. Realizing that the old craft form of trade union organization is unable to defend effectively the interests and improve the conditions of the wage earners, we, THE UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS (UE) form an organization which unites all workers in our industry on an industrial basis, and rank and file control, regardless of craft, age, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, race, creed or political beliefs, and pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions.

INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT WORK

Most fundamentally, we organize and represent workers in their workplaces. However, we are deeply committed to fighting for a social, economic and political program that benefits working people, especially around the issues of workers' rights, national health care and peace. In our globalized world, this also means we must establish working relationships of solidarity between workers and their organizations in different countries and confront the power of corporations and the neo-liberal ideology, policies and structures of corporate globalization while at the same time working to develop alternatives.

Central to much of this work is our Strategic Organizing Alliance with the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT) of Mexico. Our ongoing relationship with the FAT, first developed during the struggle against NAFTA, has led to a extensive network of international contacts for both unions, which we have called upon in a variety of campaigns. We have also linked our international work with projects in the United States. The most developed part of this work is the International Worker Justice Campaign (IWJC) in North Carolina, which was inspired by the FAT's use of international



human rights law. Their knowledge, experience and concrete solidarity have been crucial to the successes of the project. The IWJC combines international relationships of public-sector workers, grassroots community organizing, and creative lawyering in order to challenge North Carolina's ban on collective bargaining in the public sector and expose it as a violation of internationally recognized human rights.

International Solidarity Strengthens Work at the National and Local Level Our international work and engagement with the global justice movement in the U.S. and elsewhere is also a significant part of why, although we are very small by comparison to most U.S. trade unions, we are looked to by many progressive activists in trade unions, community organizations and academia in the United States. This has given us a wide network to call upon for assistance in particularly tough battles with employers.

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

Our approach to international solidarity, with its focus on long-term relationship building and rank-and-file exchange, has frequently resulted in strengthening our work in ways we did not anticipate when we began developing our international work. A few examples:

- The International Worker Justice Campaign grew out of discussions with the FAT when a women's delegation from the FAT visited with UE public-sector locals in North Carolina and Virginia in the summer of 2003.
- The 2007 visit of a municipal worker from Chihuahua to Connecticut, where UE represents some 2,000 municipal workers, had a profound impact on our how our membership there (who are mostly European-American and African-American) view the immigration debate.
- Our Connecticut public-sector Local 222 also, following this visit, initiated a "Buck-a-Brick" fundraising campaign to help the Chihuahua municipal workers' union complete the building of a union hall. This initiative, which came from the membership, not only raised funds for our allies in Mexico but became a mechanism for the leadership of Local 222 to engage their membership, and members of other UE locals, in discussions about the importance of international solidarity.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our emphasis on worker-to-worker exchanges in our international relationships has also been important for rank-and-file leadership development. Education has always been an important aspect of our work: whether it is through developing and debating union policy, through workshops, educational materials or discussions. Worker-to-worker delegations to other



countries have played a particularly important role in bringing home to our membership the reality of the global economy and the importance of international solidarity. They have also strengthened rank-and-file leaders' effectiveness in the workplace and community; the ability to compare experiences with workers in different situations, and to gain a better understanding of the global political-economic context of their local work, has made them more effective leaders in the shop. Many members have also commented on how the experience of meeting workers from other countries has made them more confident in confronting their legislators over issues of trade and globalization. In addition to the value of worker-to-worker exchanges as leadership development opportunities in and of themselves, the UE and FAT have conducted two joint ten-day intensive trainings on organizing, the first in Mexico City and the second in Chicago, where UE represents hundreds of primarily immigrant factory workers.

Our practice of building alliances with strong connections from our rank-and-file leaders, not just from the top ranks of our union, has helped us maintain a rank-and-file leadership with an internationalist perspective. This is one of the things that distinguishes our union, and is a major source of our strength, in struggles at the local, national and global levels.



CHALLENGES

As with any grassroots organization with limited resources, we face the constant challenge of being able to fund this work on the scale that is necessary to make real progress on the issues confronting our members, and the working class in general. Funding from foundations—separate from the dues money which goes to support organizing, bargaining and political action work—has been critical to our ability to do this work, but relying on foundation funding is not a good long-term solution for progressive organizations. We have also had some success in getting some of our locals to initiate a supplementary dues check-off (where members can voluntarily pay supplementary dues from their paycheck) to support international work, and of course the “Buck-a-Brick” campaign mentioned above raised some funds.

Taking the international work deeper into our membership base has also been a challenge. Our most successful strategies to deal with this have been based on the worker-to-worker exchange model: on the shop-floor level the participation of a rank-and-file leader in an international delegation, or a visit to that local or shop from a Mexican or Brazilian trade unionist, makes a much deeper impact than reports from national officers or staff.

CONDITIONS WHICH FACILITATE EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WORK

Our experience suggests several principles which we feel are crucial to successful grassroots international solidarity:

- A sense of equality and mutual respect, and an understanding of the difference between solidarity and charity
- An understanding on the part of U.S.-based groups of the role that the U.S. plays in the rest of the world — in other words, an understanding of U.S. imperialism and of our role in the “belly of the beast.”•An understanding on the part of U.S.-based groups who may have more monetary resources than groups in the Global South that there are other kinds of resources such as experience and membership commitment which other groups bring to the table, and that having more monetary resources does not give U.S.-based groups the right to expect to be dominant in the relationship.
- Commitment to taking concrete action to support each other.
- Exchanges at the rank-and-file (membership) level, while maintaining relationships at the leadership level.
- Commitment to long-term relationship building.

Our international solidarity work predates the “social forum” movement and the founding of Grassroots Global Justice (GGJ). Both of these developments have enhanced our work significantly. UE has participated in every World Social Forum since 2002, and also in regional and national social forums held in the U.S.: the Southeast Social Forum, the Border Social Forum and the U.S. Social Forum. We have also been a GGJ Coordinating Committee member since its inception at the 2002 WSF.

The World Social Forums, by bringing together the most internationalist segments of the world’s labor movements, have been a wonderful opportunity for us to strengthen existing relationships, develop new relationships, and to introduce allies from different countries to each other. This has been crucial to developing the multi-national alliance of GE workers mentioned earlier. At the WSFs in Porto Alegre, Brazil and Mumbai, India, we were able to identify sister shops (factories owned by the same multinational corporation) in the area and use the opportunity to bring Terex workers from the U.S. to meet with Terex workers in Brazil, GE workers from the U.S. to meet with GE workers in India, etc.

The Social Forums, as well as our participation in Grassroots Global Justice, have also been an important educational experience for our membership who participate in them, in ways that are qualitatively different than the union-to-union worker exchanges. They expose our rank-and-

file leaders to the existence of a broad movement for social justice, something many of them were only dimly aware of, if at all. Being exposed to a broad array of grassroots movements, and being able to situate their own struggles within that context, has been both inspiring and transformative for our members.

We believe that GGJ holds great potential, as a national alliance, to facilitate cross-issue and cross-geographic solidarity within the United States, as well as a stronger internationalist perspective among its own membership. Some of the challenges of building relationships of solidarity across issues and across communities in the U.S. are similar to those of international solidarity; the same principles of mutual respect, commitment to action, and most importantly, member-to-member exchange and interaction apply. However, the expense of travel is much less of an obstacle.

We believe that the best way for GGJ to encourage and support member organizations' engagement in different aspects of global justice work would be for GGJ to take a more active role in facilitating exchanges and interaction between member organizations (many of whom are within driving distance of each other) at the member-to-member level. Participating in the GGJ Coordinating Committee, WSF delegations and Membership Assemblies have been important for those UE leaders who have been able to do so, and GGJ can serve as an important force in facilitating such contact and communication between organizations.

The UE is one of a number of organizations within GGJ with significant international ties. GGJ is in the process of developing a work plan to build grassroots power through international grassroots. We think that GGJ play an important role in making sure that member organizations that are interested in developing international relationships can learn from and make use of connections that have already been established by other member organizations such as the UE and others.

Finally, we think it is crucial for GGJ to launch at least one campaign that has broad appeal across sectors, connects local issues to national and global issues, and, most importantly, can be engaged in locally. Our international work has confirmed our belief that the context of acting together in shared struggle is crucial to building solidarity across differences, and we would like to offer this experience as a contribution towards building a strong, grassroots movement for global justice in the U.S. and throughout the world.

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Oakland, California, www.nnirr.org



MISSION

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) is a national organization composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights and labor organizations and activists. It serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to



educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important immigrant and refugee issues. We work to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the United States and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status. The National Network bases its efforts in the principles of equality and justice, and seeks the enfranchisement of all immigrant and refugee communities in the United States through organizing and advocating for their full labor, environmental, civil and human rights. We further recognize the unparalleled change in global

political and economic structures which has exacerbated regional, national and international patterns of migration and emphasize the need to build international support and cooperation to strengthen the rights, welfare and safety of migrants and refugees.

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT WORK

Education & Capacity Building

The Education and Capacity Building Program works to create a multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual and anti-oppression movement led by those bearing the brunt of the effects of injustice and oppression: low-income immigrant and refugee communities themselves. Grounded in popular education methods and philosophies, the program develops spaces to share our experiences, understand those of others, share strategies, and develop collective visions for a better world.

Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy.

The BRIDGE curriculum is a set of popular education tools and exercises designed to engage immigrant and refugee community members in dialogue about racism, labor, migration and global economic structures in relation to migration.

Immigrant Justice & Rights

NNIRR's Immigrant Justice & Rights Program is breaking the silence on the devastating humanitarian crisis being visited upon immigrant communities as a result of U.S. immigration policies and laws, which are inflicting widespread abuses and rights violations.

International Migrant Rights and Global Justice

Building upon the verity that migration is a global phenomenon, this program emphasizes the need for international efforts and cooperation to effectively respond to the broader challenges around immigration.

HOW & WHY NNIRR GOT INVOLVED IN GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK

Since NNIRR's inception, it has always understood immigration as a global phenomenon, not merely a domestic one. But beyond that, it also understood that the global economy and international policies played a vital role in the international patterns of migration, particularly over the last 20 years or so. Even during the formative years of NNIRR, it was strongly influenced and informed by active global movements at different stages, reflected by local communities organizing around those. These included, but are not limited to, the movements around El Salvador and Palestine, just to name two prominent ones.

The World Social Forum process itself has been a unique experience where we are able to familiarize ourselves with other potential allies and partnerships, develop an understanding of conditions in other regions, and build upon ongoing relationships. But this is only accomplishable if enough up-front investment is made into preparation for each Forum.

For instance, the relationship we had with European networks working on border militarization issues (from previous Social Forums) going into the 2007 Forum in Nairobi enabled us to co-organize a number of workshops with them, as well as the culminating platform on migrant rights. However, the most beneficial outcome of this was the ability to meet with the Europeans' African partners and allies in this context, which we had been lacking up to that point. This has resulted in significant collaboration with new African partners, as well as a much deeper understanding about the critical conditions facing that region. It has also indirectly resulted in a convening in Africa around migrant rights in preparation for the 2008 Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

HOW GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK HAS STRENGTHENED OUR LOCAL WORK

Most immigrant rights organizations in the U.S. are desperately attempting to respond to local attacks and national legislation that will increase the repression upon our communities. Some articulate an analysis of how immigration is a transnational phenomenon but very few actually operationalize this analysis. NNIRR has not only consistently had a global analysis about the conditions surrounding migration (as stated in our mission statement), but also actively operationalized this by embarking on international monitoring, advocacy and networking activities. This has enabled us to not only stay very apprised about policies and trends, but also to be able to efficiently and effectively respond. For instance, because of our tracking of policy initiatives at the World Trade Organization (WTO) level, we were able to quickly expose the effort to launch a global guestworker program, and then alongside our national and international allies, quickly mobilize our local members to respond to it with a widely endorsed international statement that was delivered to Congress, a Congressional briefing, as well as an international symposium during the WTO ministerial in Hong Kong.

Similarly, we also co-organized a series of parallel international events in New York during the UN High Level Dialogue (UNHLD) on Migration and Development in 2006, and followed that up with even larger events during the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Brussels in 2007 and the upcoming GFMD in Manila this year. In fact, it is expected that the parallel events we will be co-organizing during this year's GFMD will be one of the largest international mobilizations of migrant rights groups ever!

What is particularly important in all this, is that with our work with community organizing and base-building among immigrant communities in the U.S., we are able to effectively move organizing efforts to have this larger analysis while embarking on local campaigns and activities, so that these are comprehensively informed and as a result more effective.

Similarly, we are also able to thrust local initiatives into the global arena so that the realities lived on the ground are able to be represented in policy negotiations. For example, during a series of



briefings and discussions with our international partners and allies with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, we were one of the first ones to be notified of the ILO's intention to introduce an International Convention on Domestic Workers in 2010. We immediately communicated and briefed our local domestic worker members and actively ensured that they were not only in communication directly with the

ILO around this, but also directly in discussion about the developments of the convention. It is hoped that one of the primary outcomes of this will be a solid piece of international policies which protect domestic workers' rights and can be used to circumvent domestic and local legislation which impinge on these rights resulting in abuses and exploitation against an incredibly vulnerable workforce such as domestic workers are.



CHALLENGES FACED IN OUR WORK

While we believe it is vitally important to engage in such international efforts, it necessarily consumes resources. Since there is no abundance of resources, particularly for community organizing efforts, this has sometimes become a trade-off when resources were particularly tight. This sometimes means that some piece of local work has had to be shelved or de-prioritized while attempting to maintain the international pieces, and at other times, the international work has had to take a back seat while critical national and local activities were taking place. However, in the grand sum, maintaining the international work as how we have contextualized it, while continuing to prioritize and build upon the local community organizing and activism aspect of our work, has enabled us to significantly create a multiplier effect in every area of our work. As such, any “detraction” is only for a short period and always produces returns down the line.

With regard the international work, it is excruciatingly difficult to convince others, particularly funders, of its inherent importance. Resourcing this work has been near impossible and we still only have one FTE dedicated in our budget, while in actuality, the output is considerably much more.

First and foremost, funders have a tendency to want to fund efforts that produce immediately quantifiable results. Since much of our international work has “trickle down” effects and results aren’t realized until much later, this has been challenging to demonstrate. On top of that, since it has already been demonstrated that very few organizations and efforts take on the global perspective as extensively as we do through our grassroots organizing, therefore very little information and knowledge is available to the larger public about it (which we also try to counter). As a result, whatever we articulate and promote here is often new information that needs to be digested and considered more thoroughly before resourcing can be directed for it. Therefore, there is a constant “lag effect” that we experience in resourcing for this work.

Similarly, it is also challenging to bear the burden of educational capacity building of this work almost entirely in the U.S., at least. With the already limited resources available, GGJ global movements study—what this means is that it gets stretched very thinly and often seems inadequate and ineffective.

CONDITIONS THAT WOULD MAKE OUR WORK MORE EFFECTIVE

On two levels, our international and global work could be far more effective if:

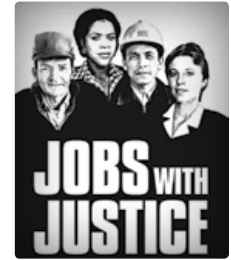
1. Resourcing is more readily available for it and in a timely manner.
2. More national allies and partners were able to correspondingly provide more grassroots education and capacity-building around this work.

Both of these are necessary and urgent since the limited resources currently available to us, plus the amount of effort it takes to not only be sufficiently appraised of international developments, and also be building and sustaining international relationships, do not allow for sufficient investment into local education and capacity building. If both of these conditions were significantly improved, we would most certainly be able to witness a significant “multiplier-effect” in the actual product and outcomes of our international work.



Jobs with Justice

Washington, DC, www.jwj.org



HOW AND WHY JWJ GOT INVOLVED IN GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK

There are many challenges that U.S. workers face in combating neo-liberal policies. Privatization, de-regulation and globalization are all expressions of a market-driven approach promoted by corporate interests. As JwJ's approach to fighting these economic and political forces has developed over the years, we have come to understand that these forces are international in scope, and therefore so too should be our response. Our model has always placed a high value upon local organizing that engages people in campaigns that are relevant to their local reality. As we enter our third decade of organizing for working people, we recognize that corporate targets are no longer local. Given this reality, we see the creation and strengthening of national and international movements for justice as the springboard and frame through which we must work toward the other results that we envision, including leveling the playing field for workers in the U.S. and globally while dismantling the corporate-driven economic model. If we do not connect our local and national movement-building efforts to international and global movements for social change, we severely limit our capacity for creating systemic change.

Jobs with Justice's work on the global level began through our work opposing free trade agreements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which created many opportunities for cross-border solidarity work. The "Battle in Seattle" and mass protests of the IMF and World Bank engaged a larger base of our national network in the U.S. global justice movement. The work has since grown through our involvement in the World Social Forum and the creation of the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, which led to a bi-national collaboration with NTUI in India and a current organizing effort throughout Asia to raise the floor wage for garment workers in the global garment supply chain.

GLOBAL WORK STRENGTHENS OUR LOCAL WORK

The work of JwJ local coalitions has benefited from our global work by providing a broader frame within which local issues are being addressed. Our global work has created the opportunity for linking local campaigns to a bigger picture. For example, a number of local coalitions have been able to support the Signal International campaign and use this work to make the linkages

between trade and migration and its impact on attacks on workers' right to organize and on immigrant communities in the United States. This is critical in educating the JwJ base of activists to develop a real political analysis of the global economic system we are living within. It is important that our traditional base not see the problem as the creation of jobs abroad, but rather the types of jobs created and the corporate interests that drive these shifts.

Our global work has provided real tools for JwJ local coalitions to talk about the need for and ways to achieve long-term systemic change versus fighting for band-aid solutions. Through our engagement in GGJ and participation in the World Social Forums, we have been able to expose JwJ activists and leaders to social movements in the U.S. and around the world. This has helped us to place our work in the context of movement building. Through GGJ, we have been able to connect to other social movements within the U.S. that have created opportunities for cross-learning and sharing of strategies. For example, it is through GGJ that we have developed relationships with environmental justice organizations like Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) in New Mexico or other national networks like the Indigenous Environmental Network. We have learned a great deal from some of the strategies and approaches of environmental justice (EJ) groups that we would not have been exposed to without GGJ. Most recently, we have built a relationship with Domestic Workers United (DWU) in New York City, which was again developed and nurtured around the GGJ table nationally. Building upon this and the existing local relationship between DWU and NY JwJ, we were able to develop a state-wide strategic alliance with DWU to support their Domestic Workers Bill of Rights campaign. And now nationally we hope to identify more collaborative work together as they build the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

Through our collaboration with the NTUI, we have been able to take this cross-learning to new heights. We have been able to share lessons and approaches that have worked in the U.S. context, and we have learned a lot about how labor relates to social movements in other parts of the world. We have also learned a great deal about the different methodologies of political education that are used by social movements in India, which is something we are grappling with as a network.



The AFW campaign has necessitated that we build relationships with other organizations and unions in Asia, as well as in Europe in order to carry out a comprehensive campaign. It has also created opportunities for us to build more strategic relationships with anti-sweatshop groups and unions in the U.S. who are impacted by the global garment supply chain. Exposure to other social movements within and outside of the United States has transformed many JwJ leaders and activists. It has provided them with an analysis of the global economy, opportunities to learn about new tools and strategies, and ways to think about our work in a larger context of movement building.

CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK

One of the challenges we have experienced as we engage in global movement work has been making the concrete links between this and our local work. Although we understand that global justice work can and should assist in the effectiveness of our local work, it is not always possible to find a campaign that has all the right ingredients to integrate the global level with the local. Another key challenge has been not having enough resources and capacity to adequately support this work. Many foundations are interested in funding local work or international work, but very few actually fund the integration of both. The lack of consistent funding has hindered our capacity to have more effective engagement on the global level. This work requires consistent relationship building, follow-through and infrastructure, which is why we decided to hire a dedicated organizer based in India.

However, we have faced many challenges: raising the resources to support her salary and benefits; finding other U.S.-based groups that are comparable to us in size and budget, with international organizers from whom we can learn about setting up office infrastructures and personnel-related systems; and providing enough oversight of this work to help identify the opportunities for integrating the local and the global.

It has also been difficult to find ways to connect the bases of other organizations outside of the U.S. with our network base versus having the national JwJ office hold and nurture all of the international relationships with one or two key leaders/representatives of other social movements around the world. This raises one other challenge, which is learning the landscape of social movements in other parts of the world, so that we can make smart and effective decisions about our work with such limited resources. Often, we do not even know which



other U.S. grassroots organizations have existing relationships with groups in other regions of the world, with whom we can share landscape knowledge, approaches and political flags.

THINGS THAT CAN MAKE OUR WORK MORE EFFECTIVE

GGJ's attempt at documenting the global work of grassroots member organizations is critical and can help us to develop a more cohesive approach to our global work as a movement. Developing a map of U.S. grassroots groups doing work with groups in other parts of the world could be a very helpful resource. It would assist us in identifying other groups to share knowledge with and potentially collaborate with on work within specific regions. Another useful tool would be documenting effective models and approaches that grassroots groups around the world are using to integrate global and local work and to develop strategic international relationships. As we develop our capacity to take on more global work, we need to identify different sources of long-term funding and organizational capacity-building support. It would be great to know what resources exist to support groups like ours in developing transnational capacity.



PODER, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights Case Study

San Francisco, California, www.podersf.org



MISSION

PODER is a grassroots, membership-based organization in San Francisco's Mission District, a predominantly working class, low-income neighborhood, with a large population of Latinos and Latino immigrants. We organize community members to come together to work on local solutions to issues facing low-income and communities of color. We believe that the solutions to community problems depend on the active participation of all people in the decision making process. PODER believes that improvements to our urban environment must be made through environmental and economic justice.



PODER's key programs The People's Plan Campaign, The Immigrant Power for Environmental Health and Justice Initiative, The Common Roots: Youth Organizer Program, Jóvenes Unidos para Derechos Inmigrantes (JUDI), or Youth United to Defend Immigrant Rights, and Pa' Mi Comunidad Latina: ¡Yo Voy a Votar!, PODER's voter education project.

PODER's Collaborations Local - Chinese Progressive Association, Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition (MAC). Regional, State, National - Bay Area Environmental Health Collaborative, California Environmental Justice Working Group (EJWG), California State Alliance, Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, United States Social Forum, Grassroots Global Justice.

PODER's involvement in Global Movement Work PODER's global movement work was launched through our participation in the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ). As a bi-national network, the Southwest Network has afforded PODER





opportunities to deepen relationships between organizations in the U.S. and, specifically, organizers and organizations in Mexico. Through SNEEJ, PODER participated in the 1999 WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle – the “Battle of Seattle.” Through GGJ, PODER began participating in delegations to the World Social Forum.

At the same time we participated through doing support actions with

the SNEEJ regarding border mobilizations that the network coordinated. In addition, through SNEEJ’s Women’s Commission, PODER attended hemispheric gatherings in Nicaragua. PODER also hosted a delegation of youth through an exchange sponsored by the South Africa Exchange Program on Environmental Justice. And a year later participated in a trip to South Africa hosted by the South Africa Exchange Program on Environmental Justice. These are just some of the examples of the global solidarity work that PODER has been involved in. PODER got involved in global solidarity work because we have recognized that to have the impact of transformational change that is needed to bring about environmental justice, working in our neighborhood, cities, regionally and nationally is not enough. We need to build bridges across movements from the Global North to South to reach the kind of changes that we are organizing for. We have had opportunities through these different coalitions and networks that we are participating in to do this work in a concrete way.

PODER’S VISION

Our vision relates to who we are and what we do. As an organization that works with Latino immigrant families we have the following key aspects to our vision:

3. A world where people regardless of their legal status are treated fairly and feel empowered to have their say and have an impact on decisions that are made that affect them and their families.
4. A world in which some communities and neighborhoods aren’t considered expendable, where it is acceptable to locate polluting facilities. A world where everyone has the right to a clean environment and good health.
5. A world where how we see our cities develop and grow is not at the expense of those

who have less education or lack the latest skills. But that we have a diversity of jobs and decent paying jobs regardless of educational attainment. Where people have the option to live and work where they want to, and where all people have access to good quality basic services including health care, education, and any other services they may need. •A world where there are more opportunities for youth, such as educational and recreational, verses criminalization. Criminalization, especially for youth of color, is happening too often.

6. A world where people regardless of their status have the power to have a say in decisions. Where we have electoral processes in which people's legal status is not a litmus test for whether or not they can vote, and where people are truly engaged in having an accountable government - where elected officials are people who speak to community needs, and are reflective of and accountable to constituencies. A prerequisite to having some of these things happening is having more democratic control of corporations. This requires getting the money out of politics and the interest of a few as opposed to the interest of the many, as well as subsuming of corporate practices to the public will.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT WORK AND LOCAL WORK

Our engagement in global movement work has given us a better sense organizationally of the resistance that is happening and the movements that are taking place in different countries. It is always empowering to know that we are not alone and that there are others engaged in similar struggles. For those of us who have had opportunities to directly engage with leaders and participants in global movements, learning from them has strengthened our work. Our global movement work has been an important opportunity for us to educate our members, and knowing what is happening in other areas has expanded our framework and what we are doing with the people we work with as members and leaders.

Our global movement work has not detracted per se from our local work, but it takes time, money and resources to participate. It affects our ability to focus on our programs or campaigns when we are engaging in some of these efforts. In addition, PODER's participation in these global efforts only makes sense to the extent that we are rooted in our community. Our work creates opportunities for us to share what is happening in the U.S. There often seems to be misperceptions by people outside the U.S. about the conditions we face. We have also learned from others how to do things differently.

CHALLENGES

Our major challenge is the time, resources and energy it takes to be engaged. At times this work has been at the cost of implementing our campaigns and programs on the ground. It has been a challenge to make sure that these opportunities don't stay with the people that participate, but is something that is understood and shared with other people within the organization—staff,

members, board, and that the organization as a whole is learning from it and growing from it and integrating lessons learned at a much broader level. We seek to continue to improve our popular education. An additional challenge has been linking and synergy between the global movement building work and the organizing work that is happening on the ground. Sometimes things are interesting and important but don't really speak to issues we are moving on the ground. Given the work that we do—we put a certain priority on the organizing and base building work. We also recognize that there are other strategies and approaches that are valuable. Organizing, however, continues to get the least resources. There are certain inequities that don't get balanced out. It speaks to what gets prioritized by others, versus what we think should be prioritized.

IMPROVED CONDITIONS

Increased clarity about the roles and responsibilities, and having increased transparency about what we are trying to build together and the agenda we are pushing for. Increased resources are crucial, which speaks to the issue of the balance of local work and global work. Having the resources to send people and cover expenses, but also support for the time it takes to engage. Increase the ways in which organizing is valued and increase resources to this strategy for change.





Conclusion

Recent social-economic crises have left no doubt that the global economy impacts the day-to-day conditions of the lives of working class, low-income communities of color and Indigenous communities throughout the United States. The work of the GGJ Alliance and the U.S. based grassroots organizations that make up GGJ are crucial in affecting the change that is necessary for significant social transformation to a world that is more just and where everyone has a chance at a decent life. Change requires the effective engagement and collaboration of grassroots organizations.



Effective collaboration is important locally, nationally and globally. As a national alliance, GGJ serves a necessary and crucial role in supporting the organized and collaborative engagement of these U.S.-based organizations in the global movement. With increased resources and support, GGJ and U.S. grassroots organizations are positioned to develop key campaigns and global collaborations that are vital to achieve social justice.



Research Methods and Data Collection

Data collection for the study incorporated a process of participatory research, qualitative ethnographic field notes, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews, content analysis of organizational documents, and research participant drafted case studies by member organizations. In addition, each member of the research team, including the principal investigator, was active in GGJ from one to four years prior to the initiation of the study, and understood the scope and breath of GGJ's work including the questions raised in this study. The principal investigator and research team drew on this previous knowledge to both draft study questions and analyze findings. Participants in the study included GGJ member organizations and international movement leaders that have worked with GGJ. Participants were either interviewed by the principal researcher or submitted a written case study based on an outline of questions drafted by the principal investigator and research team. The principal investigator and study team members were actively engaged in the process documented and analyzed here, drawing on the tools of social science research. Key objectives were to create data for later analysis and reflection, and to have the research processes serve as a vehicle for GGJ to reflect and strategize about its work. All data collected was reviewed and analyzed by the research team.

A concurrent GGJ process of strategic planning, which all members of the study team were part of, was also integrated into the data collection and analysis created by the research team.

Participatory research and the co-production of knowledge combines the tools of social science with the hands-on experience of those involved directly in social change through organizing, campaigns, direct action, education, communication and policy development. The strengths of academic theory are combined with the strengths of theory developed in the field by organizers and community-based organization leaders and participants. This process can result in a fresh look or new perspective, and creates new opportunities to develop strategies and implement new ways to create change. Based on the work of Paolo Freire and further developed by social scientists in a range of disciplines, participatory research aims to make the tools of social science most directly relevant and useful for the work of social change. At the same time participatory research strengthens the development of theory both inside and outside of the academy.

This study utilized academic principles of participatory research methodology in order to allow participants in the project (GGJ member organizations) to engage in a reflective research process that not only documented the work of GGJ and its member organizations, but also helped them to begin a process of evaluating the effectiveness of this engagement and to think freshly about their work. This is a reproducible model of research that draws from an academic and practice perspective that can be used by other researchers and organizations seeking to develop effective grassroots-academic partnerships.



Social Science Research Methods for Social Change

Participants in this research study thought that it was crucial to make social science research more relevant to social movements, and that this entails making more effective bridges and collaborations among social movement activists and academics. They expressed the desire to move away from the model of movement leaders merely being the subjects of academic studies.

Guerrero explains:

I think we all realize that it is important, the research and the work, and now it is real essential to our work, there is kind of a perception or assumption that we as grassroots organizations don't have that capacity or that we don't have that academic style or the ability of doing research. It is true to the extent that we are doing organizing work and that's where the primary emphasis and resources go, but yet all of the organizations have some kind of analysis or vision relating to their work. I think that with more capacity it would enhance and strengthen the work that we do in terms of making strategic decisions. I think part of the thing is there has been a disconnection from

academic institutions and researchers because the dynamic has been that academic institutions and researchers come in and do the research about us (Guerrero, study team methods focus group discussion, 4.10.2008).

Gupta explains why developing social science theory is an important aspect of her work as a social movement leader:

Theory is important because it gives us a sense of clear purpose and with theory we can produce a level of alignment within our bases and there is the feeling that if we have a collective vision it will inform our strategies... [and] it hones in on what is the purpose of the work that we are doing and how we are engaging around an issue” (Study team methods focus group discussion, 4.10.2008).

While many participants thought that it was important to build the capacity for social science research inside grassroots organizations, networks, alliances and movements, some participants also identified that their goal was not to be able to “do everything” and valued working with researchers that were situated in academia and benefiting from the resources that academic institutions can offer (Perera, interview, 5.13.2008, ongoing research team methods discussion).





Further Areas for Study

Several questions for further research have emerged in the process of creating and implementing this research that were outside of the scope of the original project.

1. Further study would be important on the impact of global movement engagement on organizational membership.
 - That is, how have organizations effectively developed leadership building opportunities and engagement for their base members?
 - How do organizations build engagement processes that reach beyond the individuals that participate in the direct global movement engagement, e.g., beyond those that have the opportunity to attend World Social Forums?
 - Hearing additional voices of members who are not would be very important to develop an understanding of the depth of the impact of the work on membership and the insights members have to offer.
2. This study also raised numerous questions about resources.
 - More needs to be explored concerning what resources are needed and how these resources can be developed to support the full potential of this work for social transformation.
 - Resource questions also include how do US based grassroots organizations identify and create models to increase the exchange of information necessary for transnational capacity building? This study investigated the impact of global movement work locally on U.S.-based organizations. Further research needs to be done what is the impact of U.S. grassroots involvement on strengthening global movements and organizations around the world?

These are some of the key questions this study raised that would be important for further investigation and additional research to support the effective development and strengthening of this field.

Project Leadership

Christine E. Selig – Project Coordinator and Principal Investigator

The primary researcher on this project was Christine E. Selig, Ph.D. Dr Selig is currently a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley in the Graduate School of Education. Her postdoctoral work further develops the research she began during her Ph.D., at UC Berkeley, on the uses of education to strengthen social movements and how people learn in collaboratives.



Through her participatory research involving U.S.-based grassroots movements, she has become knowledgeable of the major debates within the U.S. and internationally surrounding the World Social Forum, the WSF International Council, the Americas Hemispheric Council and the Social Movements Assembly. Her research interests also include the role of social movements in environmental and health justice, the role of technology in teaching and learning, and the uses of social science research for social and institutional change. Dr Selig is a board member of PODER, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights in San Francisco, California.

Michael Leon Guerrero – GGJ Alliance Director

Michael has been the Coordinator of GGJ since April of 2004. Previous to that he worked for 17 years at the South West Organizing Project where he served as a community organizer, Lead Organizer and Executive Director, supervising organizing efforts in low-income communities throughout New Mexico and organizing campaigns on issues of environmental justice, corporate accountability and globalization. Michael is Chamoru (from Guam), and is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. He studied for 18 months at the National Autonomous University and the National Visual Arts School of Mexico City. He began working with SWOP as a Minority Activist Apprenticeship intern with the Center for Third World Organizing in 1987. Currently Michael serves on the Boards of the Progressive Technology Project, Jobs with Justice, the Alston Bannerman Fellowship Program and the New World Foundation.



Sarita Gupta – JwJ Executive Director

Sarita joined the national staff as Field Organizer for the Northeast in fall 2002 after serving as the Executive Director of Chicago JwJ for four years, where she helped build the coalition and deepen their work through various projects, including the Chicago Day Labor Organizing Project, Chicago Health Care Without Harm, and the Chicago Student Labor Action Project. During her tenure in Chicago, she served on the National Board of JwJ. Sarita was elected President of the U.S. Student Association (USSA) in 1996, and served as a Grass Roots Organizing Weekend Trainer for three years. Sarita graduated from Mount Holyoke College where she was active in a wide range of issues including leading a successful recruitment and retention campaign of low-income students and students of color. Sarita became Field Director in July 2004; she became Executive Director in March 2007.



Walda Katz-Fishman – Professor of Sociology, Howard University

Walda Katz-Fishman, Ph.D., is a scholar activist, popular educator, and professor of sociology at Howard University. She is a founding member and former board chair of Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty & Genocide, serves on the National Planning Committee of the U.S. Social Forum, is active on the Political and Popular Education Committee of Grassroots Global Justice, and is on the Executive Committee of Sociologists without Borders-USA. She is author/co-author of numerous chapters and articles, and a contributing editor to popular education toolkits and books including *The United States Social Forum: Perspectives of a Movement*, *The Roots of Terror*, *Today's Globalization*, *The Critical Classroom* and *Readings in Humanist Sociology*. She was co-recipient of the American Sociological Association 2004 Award for the Public Understanding of Sociology.



 Collaborating Organizations

Grassroots Global Justice Alliance

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The Grassroots Global Justice Alliance is a U.S based alliance of grassroots organizing groups connecting their local struggles to the international movement for peace and justice. GGJ's constituencies represent a broad cross-section of the United States – from single mothers on welfare in New York City to immigrant farm workers in the fields of Ohio, to displaced workers in Tennessee, to school maintenance workers in San Antonio, and unemployed families in L.A. Members conduct campaigns for health care access, environmental justice, fair wages and safe workplaces.

After the 1999 “Battle of Seattle” that shut down the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings, and after the first World Social Forum in Puerto Alegre Brazil in 2001, It became clear that grassroots organizing groups in the U.S. needed sustained support to participate in international movement building. GGJ is committed to supporting US-based grassroots groups to affect global policies that shape local conditions.

GGJ's work has included exploring ways to deepen relationships with international allies, draw from the movement building experiences in other countries, and develop proactive and strategic participation on behalf of U.S. based grassroots organizations in international politics on issues including climate change, war and militarization and the global economic crisis. GGJ played a central role in organizing the first U.S. Social Forum (USSF), and has continued to be active in US and World Social Forum convenings. Through convergence, education, leadership development and coordinated action, GGJ connects real people and their local struggles to promote system change for a peaceful, democratic world.

Jobs with Justice (JwJ)

JwJ was launched in 1987 as a national campaign for workers' rights. JwJ's primary goal is to level the playing field so that working families can assert their right to live in healthy communities and work in safe environments. JwJ creates spaces where workers can participate in actions to improve their own lives through the organizations that represent them (unions, congregations, community groups, etc.) and directly as JwJ activists.

Jobs with Justice's central belief is that in order to be successful, workers' rights struggles have to be part of a larger movement for economic and social justice. JwJ builds coalitions of labor, religious, student and community organizations. In 25 states and the District of Columbia, JwJ coalitions bring together "unlikely allies" who understand that their struggles are intrinsically linked to others', and are building power to win bigger victories.

JwJ has been committed to global justice since its founding. As JwJ's participation in the global justice movement has evolved, deepened and strengthened over time, building alliances and a global justice program, JwJ has identified the need to build relationships with similar organizations in other countries and explore opportunities for multi-country actions and international solidarity. At the same time, many JwJ coalitions are facing challenges in workplace justice campaigns where good jobs are being outsourced and off-shored. JwJ is concerned with the scape-goating of workers in other countries and the effects on our efforts to defend immigrant workers' rights in the U.S. JwJ has shared interests in an international workers' rights project that builds solidarity through information-sharing, exchanges and joint campaigns. JwJ's collaboration will focus on sectors where U.S. multinational companies are making rapid inroads (such as engineering, IT and garment) and will also address phenomena that have implications for worker rights – such as outsourcing, immigration and the growing unorganized sector.

In addition to playing a leadership role in GGJ, JwJ participated in the planning and coordinating of the U.S. Social Forum, and is on the USSF national planning committee. Jobs with Justice's past experiences and current participation in the global justice movement, and its ongoing work with GGJ, made JwJ an ideal organization to host this project to investigate the impact of global justice work on strengthening the local work of grassroots organizations within the United States.



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