HONOR THE WORK

Building Capacity for Social Change in Communities of Color

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Authors' Note

Writing Honor the Work - Building Capacity for Social-Change in Communities of Color has challenged us to put in writing our worldview and the philosophical underpinnings of our work. It has helped us document the practice developed at the National Community Development Institute in hopes of sharing our knowledge with you.

We see this book as a beginning and look forward to your feedback and comments so that your ideas can help us grow in our thinking and work. It is our hope that this book contributes to building the capacity of the nonprofit sector and the work of capacity builders by highlighting a racial equity lens that is often overlooked by those who prefer to see the world from a colorblind perspective.

For those who are working to improve their communities every day, we hope that this book will help you see the necessity of incorporating capacity building as part of what you do. For those who are capacity builders, we hope the tools included in the book add power to your work.

We are grateful to our friends and colleagues who have contributed their voices and perspectives included here: Beth Rosales, Kelley Gulley, Marco Montenegro, Harry Snyder, Patricia Harbor Moore, Manuel Pastor and Pamela Moore. We honor your teachings.

We truly appreciate Wendy Johnson, who coordinated the Building Capacity for Social Change training program in the Southern Region. We thank all the community builders who participated in the Building Capacity for Social Change trainings in the South, Midwest and Western regions. We are humbled by your dedication and unflinching commitment to social change.

Finally, we are indebted to two wonderful editors, Susan Starr and Nancy Adess, who helped us complete this work.

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Introduction

Honor the Work – Building Capacity for Social-Change in Communities of Color represents the knowledge and insights that come from working with organizations and leaders of color, as well as other justice-seeking people, across the country over the last thirty years. The authors are honored to have been invited to work with a wide array of amazing people who, in their own ways, are doing extraordinary work to improve social conditions for people of color in this country and around the globe.

Social transformation occurs when a critical mass of community stakeholders comes together to define and implement social change strategies with a single sense of purpose and determination. Capacity builders contribute by bringing together the diverse voices of a community to develop a common agenda for social change. They help build more community capacity by engaging community residents and leaders, building strong organizations, and strengthening relations that people and groups have with each other. They help improve community life by strengthening programs and services, advocating for change, and sharing the community's story. Supported in this way, communities are better positioned to fulfill their dreams and work collectively toward building a just society. The purpose of Honor the Work – Building Capacity for Social-Change in Communities of Color is to give community builders one more tool to use in reaching that goal.

BACKGROUND

This book was initially developed as a resource guide for the four-day Community Building Leadership Institute conducted by the National Community Development Institute (NCDI). The Leadership Institute evolved from the Professional Development of Consultants training program that was started with funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation in 1998. From 1999 to 2006, this program trained about 200 individuals (community builders, organizers, service providers, funders and others) working mostly in communities of color to develop their knowledge and skills to engage in capacity building as an intentional part of their social change work.

In late 2006, the training content evolved to focus specifically on NCDI's capacity-building methodology, called "Building Capacity for Social Change" (BCSC), which led to development of the Community Building Leadership Institute. From 2007 to 2009, the Leadership Institute was held in cities across the Midwest, South, and Far West regions of the United States. By the end of 2009, more than 200 people had completed the program in the following places:

- Southern Region: Mobile, Alabama; Atlanta/Savannah, Georgia; Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana; Greenville and Jackson, Mississippi; Durham, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee.
- Midwestern Region: Benton Harbor and Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Western Region: Oakland, California; Seattle, Washington.

This training and curriculum development work was generously funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Marguerite Casey Foundation. NCDI is grateful for their support.

OVERVIEW

This book is divided into two parts with four chapters in each part. Part One gives an orientation to NCDI's capacity-building methodology – what it is, how it was developed and how it is used in communities of color. Part Two describes in more detail the specific methods used by NCDI to build capacity for social change in communities of color.

In Part One, Chapter One provides an introduction to the National Community Development Institute approach. Chapter Two tells the story of how NCDI was founded and how it developed the Building Capacity for Social Change approach. Chapter Three describes the current social and political contexts in which NCDI's work is done around the country, noting some of the important economic, political and social trends and conditions that affect life in communities of color. Chapter Four defines community building and capacity building and shows the vital relationships between these two types of community change work.

In Part Two, Chapters Five through Eight describe the four core principles of the Building Capacity for Social Change model and how they are applied in the capacity-building process in communities of color. Each of these chapters focuses on the core value (belief), way of working (methodology) and the "self" (attitudes and perspectives) that one must bring to the work when serving communities of color.

Honor the Work – Building Capacity for Social-Change in Communities of Color is offered to capacity and community builders as a tested way of working in communities of color, but it is not a one-size-fits-all template. The ways of working described here need to be adapted to each organization and community in which community builders are invited to work. Because this approach honors the indigenous wisdom and unique circumstances of each group, it will yield effective results with most communities and organizations working for social change.

In these pages are contributed stories, quotes and words of wisdom from many valued partners, colleagues, teachers and collaborators. NCDI benefits from their counsel, support and wisdom every day.

Part One
BACKGROUND

The National Community Development Institute's approach to its work was developed over a thirty-year period and based on our broad experience working in communities of color amidst the changing political and social conditions in the country. Over time, we came to recognize that, as vital as is the work of struggling to improve the lives of people in communities of color through community-building activities, that work would advance with more efficiency and greater effectiveness if it were rooted and developed within a framework of capacity building for social change.

The first three chapters in this section describe the approach that NCDI has developed, the story behind our work and the context in which our work is done. The fourth chapter compares community building and capacity building and shows how these two approaches must be linked to overcome injustice in communities of color.

Chapter One
INTRODUCTION TO THE NCDI APPROACH

This book is a guide to a transformational capacity-building process for individuals, organizations and communities that can be adapted to their unique social and cultural contexts. When working with organizations and communities, NCDI conscientiously addresses race, culture and power issues and intentionally links the capacity-building process to a broader social change agenda with the vision of bringing about social transformation in communities of color.

We believe that it is not enough to do good, solid capacity-building and/or organizational development work. Capacity builders must have a commitment to fighting for social equity and against all forms of social oppression. NCDI views capacity building as social justice work. It is through this lens that we work to build capacity in communities of color and other justice-seeking groups.

Reflecting on the Work

For capacity builders, it's not enough to finish a contract, which is the norm for conventional consulting. For social change to occur, the work must be done in a way that puts social change at the center, focuses on how the results will be sustained over time, and builds long-term relationships with leaders and organizations.

WHY BUILD CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?

Communities of color in the United States face enormous challenges as a result of institutional racism, economic disparity, social dysfunction and a long history of white cultural domination in American society. NCDI focuses on building capacity for social change to enable communities of color to play a pivotal role in transforming the social institutions and practices that perpetuate racial injustice and inequality. From this perspective, capacity building is part of a much larger mission whose purpose is beyond developing a board or creating a useful strategic plan - a mission that keeps social transformation at the center of the capacity-building process.

Capacity building focused on bringing about social change is much more than tuning up an organization to fix a particular problem or address a single issue. Working in this way means focusing on problems that are systemic to the current social order and solutions that create lasting social change in addition to and moving beyond addressing immediate issues.

Working in this way is the difference between letting problems define our world and setting our own agenda to be in the lead. NCDI works with organizations and communities that may feel stuck, and shows them how to think differently, dream bigger, reframe issues, ask new questions and connect what they do day-to-day to the bigger context of creating societal change. NCDI links capacity-building work with the social change movement to build the broadest base of engagement across the widest constituent base, whether the immediate focus is on board development, team building or some other operational issue.

In summary, Building Capacity for Social Change is a methodology that is rooted in the racial and cultural dynamics of communities, based on social equity principles, shaped by the voice of the people and focused on social transformation.

Race and Culture

Race and culture matter in all aspects of NCDI's work. Therefore, a primary role for capacity builders is to learn about the cultural dynamics and address the racial disparities in the organizations and communities they work in.

Social Equity

Social equity is a fundamental guiding principle and an achievable goal. Consequently, another important role for capacity builders is to help organizations and communities to envision an alternative or desired future and link their work to the broader social justice movement.

Community Voice

Building capacity the NCDI way requires engaging communities according to their own cultural norms and practices. For example, if Latinos are the majority group in a community or organization, meetings should be conducted in Spanish rather than translated from and to English. Working in an American Indian community, the talking circle might be the mode of decision making. In these important ways, organizations and communities that work with NCDI have the key decision-making role in defining their own process, methods and destination.

Social Transformation

Communities can guide their own social transformation process when they have good information, adequate resources and the right kind of support. The capacity-builder's mission is fulfilled when innovative things happen in communities of color to solve community problems and are sustained after s/he is gone.

THE WAY NCDI WORKS

NCDI works in communities of color guided by four core values (beliefs) and four operating principles (practices) that shape our work to build capacity for social change.

Core Values

- Each community of color has its own indigenous wisdom and assets that deserve honor and respect.
- Community members must define their own social change strategy and capacity-building process.
- By linking action and learning together, community members can solve problems, build relationships and renew hope.
- Building capacity for social change empowers and transforms communities.

Core Principles

- We work from the community by listening and learning.
  We listen to, learn from and build trusting relationships with each organization and community we serve.
- We work with the community by co-designing the change strategy.
  We form genuine partnerships with organizations and communities and work as peers – not experts. We see ourselves as facilitators, catalysts, resources, cheerleaders and critical friends in the capacity-building process.
- We work in the community to facilitate action and learning. We help organizations and communities to develop viable strategies and action plans to solve community problems based on best practices in the field.
- We work for the community to build capacity for social transformation. We work in intentional ways to bring diverse voices together to develop and implement a common agenda for social change that is focused on six main capacity-building areas, described in the following section.

THE WORK NCDI DOES

Cookie-cutter approaches are not effective in this work. Each community leader, organization and community comes from a different history. To honor each unique situation, NCDI helps communities develop a customized capacity-building plan, focusing on the six key areas depicted in Figure 7.1.

FIGURE 1.1. Six Key Areas to Build Capacity for Social Change

Community Engagement:

Informing, connecting and engaging people in the social change process.

Far too often, community-building programs do not sufficiently involve residents and other constituents in strategic planning and decision-making roles through information-sharing and skill-building activities. This is simply a waste of valuable community talent. Resident leaders can help community organizations plan, design and implement programs to meet community needs. They can play a lead role in implementing outreach, education and leadership development programs for residents. They can also assist with setting evaluation benchmarks to measure progress toward achieving community-defined goals. Success with any community engagement process will be greatly enhanced when community members are deliberately engaged and when they see themselves as owners and drivers – the solution-makers – not merely as observers and passive consumers.

Strategic Questions

> How can residents and other key community constituents be engaged to play active, relevant and meaningful roles in the social change process?

> What capacity needs to be put in place to develop a critical mass of residents/constituents who can be engaged in community change work across multiple issues over time?

Community Organizations:

Building strong organizations and networks and developing institutional capacity for social change.

Community organizations often play an indispensable role in communities of color. They organize residents, provide a wide array of critical services, implement community development programs and advocate for better policies and practices. They are often seen by policy makers and those outside of the community as important information and knowledge gateways to the inner life of the community. These are some of the main reasons why community leaders and members need to focus on strengthening community organizations and ensuring that they are accountable.

Strategic Questions

> How can capacity building be done to strengthen community-based organizations in ways that keep the bigger social change picture in view?

> What capacity needs to be put in place to develop a core group of anchor community organizations that are sustainable and work together to bring about community change?

Community Relationships:

Building relationships and forming viable partnerships across racial, social and cultural communities.

Across the country, communities are struggling with racial, ethnic and cultural dynamics that result from fighting over scarce resources, language differences, different cultural norms, and prejudice and stereotypes that are perpetuated in mainstream media. When strong relationships are built in communities of color, people from different cultural backgrounds are more likely to be able to work through conflicts in both good times and bad. Building community relationships is perhaps the most important factor in sustaining community transformation, yet it is an area that is not well understood or highly valued by policy makers, funders and many practitioners in the field.

Strategic Questions

> How do we build authentic, multi-cultural partnerships where those without power and voice begin to see each other as allies, not competitors, in the struggle for social equity and justice?

> What capacity needs to be in place to enable people and organizations in communities of color to be connected and work together toward a common goal?

Community Development:

Improving the quality of life by changing material and social conditions in the areas of economic well-being, education, health, housing, public safety, transportation, the environment and other areas of communinty life.

In a very practical sense, capacity-building work is about improving the quality of life for people living in communities of color. This is not just about providing more social services; it's also about changing the social conditions, power relationships, cultural norms and institutional practices that keep people

poor and without access to resources, opportunities and power. Too often, community development decisions about complex issues such as land use, housing, economic development and transportation are not made in the best interests of communities of color and don't involve a significant number of residents. Capacity building can play an important role in enabling residents to lift their voices and work together to bring about social change.

Strategic Questions

- How can different cultural groups have access to institutional resources and services so that the quality of life improves for everyone and with equitable results?
- What capacity needs to be put in place so that communities are able to meet their needs, change social conditions and improve the quality of life?

Community Advocacy for Systems Change:

Changing institutional policies, practices and modes of investment.

Community leaders and residents often find that policy making is an alienating and foreign process that has its own secret language, protocols and set of assumptions. The two most challenging yet critical aspects of advocacy and systems change work are developing a community-wide policy agenda and establishing a community-wide process for holding community leaders, community organizations and public institutions accountable. Including and expanding the voices of community members in advocacy and systems change work will help lead to more sensible, relevant and meaningful public policies – an indispensable step in rebuilding communities and becoming a truly democratic civil society.

Strategic Questions

- How can communities be mobilized to work together to develop a common policy agenda to achieve both systemic change and institutional accountability?
- What capacity needs to be in place so that residents/constituents are able to advocate effectively for systems change that benefits the community?

Community Research and Evaluation:

Documenting and telling the community-building story from the perspective of the community.

Unfortunately, the work of research and evaluation, much like community development and policy advocacy, has been consigned by and large to academics and other "professionals" who are external to communities of color. However, old research and evaluation paradigms are beginning to shift. Residents and leaders need to be involved in evaluation processes not only as consumers of final reports, but also as active researchers, data gatherers, focus group facilitators, door-to-door surveyors, report writers, picture takers, meeting documenters, graphic recorders and the like. When residents are able to help shape the evaluation design for community revitalization programs, they are more equitable players in the community change process.

Strategic Questions

- What is needed to put the community's voice in the front and center of research and evaluation so that people can document, analyze, frame and tell their own stories about lessons learned in the rebuilding of communities?
- What capacity needs to be in place so that communities can document and tell their own story in diverse ways to multiple audiences with maximum effect?

THE BENEFITS OF THE NCDI CAPACITY BUILDING MODEL

There are many practical benefits of using the NCDI capacity-building model when working with communities of color to build capacity for social change. These benefits extend both to the communities in which the work is being done and to those doing the work.

Benefits to Organizations and Communities

• The Building Capacity for Social Change model provides a simple and useful framework for organizations and communities to plan and execute their work to build capacity for social change.

• The BCSC model has a practical format that organizational and community leaders can use to describe and communicate their capacity-building work to constituents, funders, governmental agencies, partner organizations and other invested groups.

Benefits to Capacity Builders

• The Building Capacity for Social Change model provides a tested methodology for capacity builders to define, analyze, execute, assess and communicate their work to others.

• The BCSC model offers a useful way for capacity-builders to talk about the role of capacity building in the social change process.

• The BCSC model supplies a basic framework for informing and influencing the field about the capacity-building process in communities of color.

Chapter Two

THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE STORY

IF YOU HONOR THE WORK, THE WORK WILL HONOR YOU.

NCDI is a decidedly different kind of capacity-building organization. In contrast to mainstream consulting firms, whose clientele are mostly corporations, public agencies, or large nonprofit organizations, NCDI's focus is on small to mid-size organizations and groups in low-income communities of color.

People working primarily with mainstream agencies in this role are called "consultants." At NCDI, we prefer to be called "organization helpers" or "capacity builders" – colleagues who help organizations and communities facilitate social change.

In conventional contexts, consultants are seen as experts who have more knowledge and wisdom than those being served. In fact, they are often called in to "provide the answers" a group or corporation is seeking. In contrast, NCDI understands that wisdom lies within and flows from the community.

In traditional consulting firms, the primary motive for the work is profit. At NCDI, the mission is to see power and resources more equitably distributed in our society by building sustainable capacity for social change and community transformation.

Reflecting on the Work

NCDI believes that capacity builders need to be humble and vigilant in serving communities as responsible agents of social change. Being a servant in the change process means bringing one's best self to the work and staying focused on its greater purpose.

THE PATH TO NCDI

Omowale Satterwhite founded the Community Development Institute (CDI) in 1979 with a mission to assist diverse, low-income communities to combat the causes of racism and poverty –- a serious but neglected problem in communities of color.*

While all eyes were focused on the pervasive poverty and social disorder in these communities, virtually no one was dealing with the fact that in most areas there were no sustainable organizations - perhaps other

than the church - with the resources and capacity to solve social problems in a major way. Why was this important? Because in nearly every community where the institutions are strong and viable, the quality of life is markedly better than in communities where the opposite is true.

NCDI was created to develop durable organizations in communities of color so that they would have the institutional capacity to lead, govern, educate and provide for themselves - or, as the saying goes, to fish for themselves for a lifetime.

Over the past thirty years, CDI evolved from a small community service program to a national technical assistance provider; today it is a stable advocacy and empowerment-research firm. In 2000, Satterwhite formed the National Community Development Institute (NCDI), a sister organization of CDI that is devoted to organizational and community capacity building in communities of color at the national level. *

LEARNING FROM DOING

From 1979 until 1983, the main role of CDI was to help incorporate the City of East Palo Alto, California CDI was primarily responsible for staffing and coordinating the incorporation process. It played this role because of Satterwhite's belief that a basic goal of the social justice movement was developing community-controlled political institutions.

In 1983, after the city was born, CDI began focusing on community-building activities in East Palo Alto, such as youth leadership development, organizational capacity building and economic development. It became clear that for CDI to continue playing a pivotal (sometimes controversial) role in the community, it would have to generate a significant amount of unrestricted revenues in order to have the independence to be an authentic champion for the community free of the restrictions or dictates that often accompany foundation grants.

By 1985, CDI had begun to change its focus from being a grant-dependent organization serving only East Palo Alto to earning its own income by providing organizational services to grassroots, social change organizations throughout the region. As CDI took on more and more of this work, its reputation and credibility grew in the Bay Area and around the country. In 1989, CDI was asked by The Funding Exchange, a national network of progressive community funds based in New York City, to assist with developing its first strategic plan and by the Highlander Education and Research Center, a regional economic and social justice organization in New Market, Tennessee, to assist with an organizational planning and leadership transition process. The work with these two well-known organizations gave CDI high visibility and exposure around the country. Social justice groups saw that CDI knew about the problems they experienced and could help them move past those problems, without the superior attitude that many mainstream consultants brought when working with grassroots organizations in communities of color.

During the late 1980s, CDI's main role as a capacity-building provider was to engage the boards, staff and constituents of grassroots organizations in examining key issues and formulating dynamic strategies to

*From 1980 to 1988, CDI received an unrestricted annual grant in the amount of $75,000 from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Because of this grant, CDI was able to build its internal capacity and expand its work to other communities. Hugh Burroughs was the Program Officer at Hewlett who made this key investment in CDI.

achieve their goals. CDI believed in helping empower community groups to define their own needs, in their own way, on their own terms and with their own voices as part of its social change mission. Its job was to listen and create a safe space for people to set their own agenda, have their own conversations and chart their own futures. Its primary role was to prep for the dialogue, facilitate the discussion, challenge people to think creatively, share new information, document the conversation and staff the whole process so that people could show up and do their best work.

During these initial years, CDI did a lot of thinking about what was and still is perhaps the most fundamental question in doing this work: how to do capacity building in communities of color in a way that truly honors and reflects social justice values. What should capacity builders do to live by their own principles, maintain their integrity and fulfill their social responsibility through the work they do and how they do it? At its essence, this is not a question about having good technical skills or using the right tools; it's more fundamentally a question about the self that one brings to the work: How does a capacity builder walk the talk, practice what s/he preaches and always honor the work when serving communities of color? How CDI came to answer those questions helped to shape the methodology that NCDI uses. CDI saw that if you want people to be empowered, then you have to create a space for them to make the choices about the journey that they're going take. If you believe in equity, then you have to ensure that everyone is respected for who they are and can share in the fruits of the work. If you value democracy, you have to make sure that all voices are at the table and that each voice has a right to be heard. And if you stand for justice, then it's imperative to treat people fairly, with respect and in a non-discriminatory way.

From the beginning, one of the main challenges in this work has been helping residents and organizational leaders in communities of color to see the practical connection between capacity-building activities and the large-scale social change goals that they seek to achieve.

For dedicated social change activists who eat, sleep and breathe their organization's mission, the relationship between capacity building and social change must be clearly defined, and they must see the practical value of investing time and resources in developing their organizations to advance their cause of eradicating poverty, racism, gender discrimination or other forms of oppression in our society.

Though there is growing evidence linking capacity building to increased social impact, implementing a capacity-building strategy for long-term community transformation is seldom a high priority for progressive organizations, whose energies are more often concentrated on solving immediate problems and providing for immediate needs; this issue continues to be a significant challenge in NCDI's work.

MAKING PROGRESS

By 1989, CDI was providing capacity-building services to organizations throughout the Bay Area and around the country. It was primarily known as a technical assistance provider for grassroots organizations serving diverse populations in communities of color. The vast majority of its clientele were community-based groups engaged in organizing, service delivery, community development and/or advocacy activities in diverse, low-income areas.

Throughout the 1990s, CDI continued to have a dual mission: doing community-building work in East Palo Alto and providing organizational services in other communities around the country. Locally, CDI operated a youth leadership program called the Leadership Training Academy, established one of the first Black fatherhood programs in the country and sponsored various housing and economic development projects in East Palo Alto. On a national scale, CDI provided capacity building and training to grassroots, social justice organizations in nearly every region of the country.

This work deepened our understanding that the key to rebuilding communities is developing viable institutions with the capacity to solve human problems - institutions with visionary leadership, effective management systems, an organized constituency and programs that are responsive to changing community needs. Further, the work demonstrated that community-based organizations could assume a pivotal role in the social change process if they were supported by capacity-building programs that addressed their particular challenges and needs.

CDI articulated this message in communities of color wherever it served: capacity building is a fundamental goal of the social change process – that is, capacity building is not only the means to achieving social change, it is also one of the main results of doing so. Over time, it became clear that CDI was expressing the sentiment of many activists in communities of color who also linked capacity building as defined by CDI to their social change goals. CDI began to assert boldly that ***without capacity building, there can be no enduring social change*** and shared this vision with a sense of optimism and hope across the country.

By the end of its second decade, CDI was assisting more than 100 organizations a year and had served more than 1,000 organizations in 38 states. The organization's clientele spanned the country, but the primary focus outside the Bay Area was on serving communities in the southern region of the U.S.

THE FOUNDING OF NCDI

In 1999, at the urging of Shiree Teng, a Program Officer with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, CDI submitted a proposal requesting a multi-year grant to solidify and expand its capacity-building program, recruit and train consultants working in communities of color, and build an organization that could extend its reach beyond its founder. When the grant was awarded, the decision was made to form a new intermediary organization called National Community Development Institute (NCDI) and to locate it in Oakland, California. NCDI's mission was to build capacity for social change in communities of color. Its fundamental purposes were to provide technical support, training and consultation services for communities of color and to be a leading advocate for transforming the way that capacity-building work is done in communities of color.

NCDI recruited a diverse staff who spent the first few years together developing an identity statement for the organization that defined our vision, mission, core values, priorities and niche in the capacity-building field. The discussions focused on two recurring questions: First, how should capacity building be done in communities of color? Second, what type of capacity building should NCDI do? This book has been written to inform others about how NCDI has addressed these questions and how we work to build capacity for social change in communities of color around the country.

In 2010, NCDI has grown to a full-time staff of seventeen people located in three states and has more than fifty affiliate capacity builders in its national network. The organization works with a broad range of constituencies, including the following:

- Individuals, organizations and communities of color on a variety of capacity-building projects
- Regional and national foundations implementing community change initiatives and/or capacity-building programs for their grantees
- Public agencies on implementing community engagement strategies and conducting community-focused dialogues about social equity issues
- Peer organizations on expanding their knowledge base and influencing how they do capacity-building work in communities or color

HONORING THE WORK

NCDI's core beliefs, primary goals, basic approach and terms of engagement are all centered on developing self-reliant organizations and communities to bring about social change.

Core Beliefs

NCDI values the assets of residents, organizations and communities of color; believes that these communities have untapped wisdom to share and valuable lessons to teach; listens to and shows profound respect for community voices; and learns from the authentic experiences of clients, peers and partners in the field.

Strategic Aims

NCDI has four strategic aims (1) to engage people in the social change process, beyond just involving them in addressing current issues; (2) to develop enduring partnerships among different identity groups, beyond just establishing short-term relationships; (3) to build capacity for social change, beyond just improving organizational effectiveness; and (4) to transform communities, beyond just increasing program impacts.

Basic Approach

NCDI is mindful of, and intentionally addresses, race, class, power and other cultural dynamics in the capacity-building process. NCDI customizes its work to meet the needs of each community partner and co-designs the capacity-building process with maximum community input. We are client-centered, and we engage organizations and communities as a peer, not as an expert. The work of capacity building is about the organization or community who invites us to serve, not about the capacity builder. Community members must have a pivotal role in the social-change process for transformation to occur.

Terms of Engagement

NCDi uses project teams that reflect the communities being served and employs capacity builders who are humble, open to learning, capable of honoring the work from a heart-centered place and have an unflinching dedication to social justice. NCDI challenges organizations and communities to dream more hopefully, think more broadly, act more intentionally and work more collaboratively. Its role is to serve as a facilitator, resource, broker, cheerleader and learning partner as an organization or community charts its future.

At NCDI, the motto is "Honor the work, and the work will honor you". When work is done with communities of color in the ways described here, capacity builders are able to live by their own social justice principles, maintain their integrity and fulfill their social responsibility through the work they do and how they do it. As changes take place in communities of color, watching and being part of that transformation is the biggest reward and the way the work honors those devoted to it.

Listening to and showing profound respect for community voices honors the work. Establishing enduring relationships to transform organizations and communities honors the work. Customizing the work and being community-driven honors the work. Engaging organizations and communities as a peer and not as an expert honors the work. Ensuring that community residents have a pivotal voice in the social-change process honors the work. Co-designing the capacity-building strategy honors the work. Intentionally addressing race, class and power issues honors the work. And challenging communities to be more hopeful, think more broadly and work more collaboratively honors the work.

Leaders who emerge from the capacity-building process with a vision for justice; organizations that grow in an ability to work honestly, respectfully and diligently with their members and allies; and communities that reclaim their power for self-determination - these are the signs of being honored by the work of capacity builders in communities of color and they are the greatest rewards.

> To lead people walk beside them... As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate.... When the best leader's work is done the people say, "We did it ourselves!" **- Lao Tsu**

Chapter Three

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT FOR NCDI'S WORK

The nation stands at a crossroads as we move further into the new millennium. On the one hand, we are living in an era of unprecedented human achievement, with astonishing developments in science, technology, medicine, communications and other fields. On the other, we are witnessing a profound human crisis in low-income communities of color, as evidenced by institutional forms of political, economic, social and cultural inequity. The future well-being of low-income communities of color will largely depend on whether we are able to develop the indigenous leadership and institutional capacity to tip the scales toward social change.

In the Building Capacity for Social Change approach, race, class and power dynamics are intentionally addressed as a normal part of working in communities of color. NCDI deals with these topics in all aspects of its work, whether providing organizational development support, conducting a training session, convening a peer exchange meeting or delivering a keynote speech.

NCDI creates space and facilitates dialogues where people feel safe to talk about issues of race, class, gender, age, sexual identity and other equity issues – focusing on the causes and effects of inequity, how the multiple forms of inequity are connected and ways to address these issues in social change work. These conversations examine the history of social movements, lift up recurring themes and summarize the lessons that history teaches us today about building capacity for social change in communities of color.

Reflecting on the Work

NCDI focuses primarily on race issues because institutional racism is real, and racial oppression is a pivotal problem that is too often downplayed in communities across the country.

Racial prejudice and stereotypes, language differences, homophobia, xenophobia and other ways of putting some people on top and others on the bottom have affected most communities negatively, and communities of color are no exception to the societal rule. Tensions between new immigrants and long-term residents often increase as neighborhoods transform, gentrify and evolve. These cultural divides are fueled, intentionally or unintentionally, by history (the intangible but powerful community boundaries that are passed down from one generation to the next), economic conditions (who can afford the new housing developments), public policy (who has a voice in zoning decisions), budgets (which libraries and schools get more funding and have better facilities, equipment, playgrounds) and a general sense of powerlessness (that's just the way things are so there's nothing we can do).

Perhaps the most significant problem in low-income communities of color is the socioeconomic disparity that exists as a result of the pervasive racism and poverty in the United States. Virtually every aspect of community life – including employment, education, housing, public health and criminal justice – is marked by economic and social inequities that result in dismal living and social conditions for low-income residents.

Bringing about social change requires working on multiple levels – individual, organizational and community - and in multiple ways to inform, engage and empower communities of color. Before describing NCDI's capacity-building approach in more detail in Part Two of this book, it is important to discuss the context in which the work is done.

This chapter explores key national trends and socio-political conditions in the United States that affect the quality of life in communities of color and provide a context for doing capacity building in communities of color. This discussion is neither exhaustive nor definitive; its purpose is to place capacity-building work in communities of color within a social and political context.

KEY TRENDS

Over the last forty years, the political and social landscape has changed significantly as the nation has turned more conservative, become embroiled in debate over the government's role, experienced a massive outsourcing of jobs, watched immigration skyrocket, and waged wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have siphoned precious resources and divided the country. In our work across the country, NCDI has observed a number of important national trends affecting communities of color and the capacity-building work that we do:

- We live in a global economy. Organizations and communities do not exist in isolation but rather in regional, national and international contexts. We are living in an era where multinational corporations operate outside of the boundaries and controls of the nation-state. In a practical sense, this means that what happens with sweatshop workers in Oakland, migrant farmers in Florida and auto workers in Detroit is linked to economic patterns and working conditions for workers in China, El Salvador, India and other parts of the globe.

- There is an increasing gap between the haves and have-nots. Whether it's described as a resource gap, an equity gap, an access gap or an opportunity gap, the concentration of wealth among a small percentage of people in this country has a salient impact on low-income communities of color. According to United for a Fair Economy, "people with the top 1% of the country's wealth continue to own as much wealth as those in the bottom 90%."[1] The gap between median family income for white, Black, and Hispanic families in the United States has lessened only slightly over the last sixteen years. According to the Census, in 1990, median Hispanic family income was 63% of that of white families ($36,915 and $23,431 respectively), and Black family income was 58% that of whites ($21,423). By 2006, median Hispanic family income ($40,000) was 65% that of whites and median Black family income ($38,269) was 62% that of whites ($61,280).[2] Between white and Black families, that gap has remained nearly

[1] United for a Fair Economy, Accessed August 18, 2009 from http://faireconomy.org/issues/growing_divide.
[2] U.S. Census Bureau. The 2009 Statistical Abstract: Money Income of Families–Median Income by Race and Hispanic Origin in Current and Constant (2006) Dollars: 1990 to 2006. Accessed August 20, 2009 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0674.pdf.
[3] Current Population Reports. Consumer Income. Income in 1968 of Families and Persons in the United States. Table B. Number and Median Income in 1968 of Families...for the United States. Accessed August 20, 2009 from http://www2.census.gov/prod2/popscan/p60-066.pdf.

constant since 1968, when Black median family income ($5,360) was 60% that of white family income ($8,937).[3] Moreover, a growing number of people of color are in poverty. In 2007, fewer than one in ten whites (8.2%) lived below the poverty line, compared with one in four African Americans (24.5%) and one in five Latinos (21.5%). [4]

• The workplace is changing as a result of an information explosion, new modes of production, the weakening of unions and loss of manufacturing jobs in a troubled economy. In the mid-South, we see fewer textile, tobacco and furniture companies. In the Midwest, the job loss has been greatest in the automobile, steel and rubber industries. In California, job growth since 1990 has been considerably more concentrated in high-wage and low-wage jobs, with much less growth in jobs with mid-range earnings.[5] Throughout the country more and more people make lower wages in unskilled positions with little opportunity for job advancement.

• Family life is different in households across the country. It is now commonplace for families to have two wage earners with one or both having more than one job, and for families to have at least one wage earner who is unemployed or underemployed. In the current recessionary economy, it is not unusual for working families to be poor, for middle-class families to have higher credit card debt and lower property values, and for the elderly to be less secure due to lost investment and retirement income. Recent studies show that more and more Americans no longer believe that their children will be better off than they are.

• At all levels of government, there is much conflict over social policy, from education and immigration to health insurance and urban poverty. As a result, the needs of low-income people of color and other poor people are no longer national priorities.

• The traditional safety net programs funded by the federal government have been scaled back and devolved to the states. Beginning with the Nixon administration in the 1970s, there has been a steady decline in public funding for social programs to help impoverished Americans, a funding shift that was accelerated during the two Bush administrations. As a result, more and more people are turning to nonprofit organizations to meet their basic survival needs, which has created a demand for nonprofits to expand their services and assist more people – but with fewer financial resources.

• The population of the country is changing. Whether this demographic shift is talked about as "immigrant rights" or "controlling the borders," this issue is of significant importance to capacity builders in communities of color. By 2050, one out of every three people in this country will be of Latino descent, and more than one in two people (54%) will be a person of color or from a biracial family. [6]

• Technology is having a pervasive influence on virtually every aspect of our lives – in the home, school, workplace and community. One of the most challenging and perplexing questions in this technological era is how to address equity issues concerning the digital divide for low-income communities of color.

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[4] Accessed August 18, 2009. from http://faireconomy.org/files/sod_2009_charts/SoD_09_Charts15.jpg.
[5] California Budget Project. A Generation of Widening Inequality: The State of Working California, 1979 to 2006. August 2007. Accessed August 19, 2009 from http://cbp.org/pdfs/2007/0708_swc.pdf.
[6] U.S. Census Bureau News, "An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury," Released August 14, 2008. Accessed August 18, 2009 from www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html.
The authors use the terms structural racism and institutional racism interchangeably in this document.

• There are growing demands from government, funders and the general public for measurable results, more transparency and increased accountability from nonprofit organizations. In some cases, these requirements can provide protection against fraud, embezzlement and the like, as has been seen in some large nonprofits. On the other hand, many foundations are requiring that their grantees develop a theory of change, logic model or results-based plan as a condition of funding – even though many of these planning models have not been proven as useful management tools for community-based organizations. In those cases, an emphasis on short-term funding that can be justified through measurable results as projected in a logic model seems to undermine the larger-scale work with longer timeframes that is needed for social change to occur.

The net effect of these national trends is that low-income communities of color face daunting challenges. Nonetheless, although it is true that communities of color are subject to relentless economic and social disadvantage, it's also true that they have shown to be resilient villages with a wealth of untapped resources that can be mobilized to address chronic social and economic inequities. Low-income communities of color are capable of guiding their own transformation to successfully address the complex issues that confront them when there is the right mix of people, ideas and resources.

KEY CONDITIONS

There are four basic conditions in the United States that guide and shape NCDI's capacity-building work in communities of color:

1. Institutional racism is deeply entrenched in U.S. society.
2. There are destructive attitudes and behaviors in communities of color that are harmful to community life.
3. Residents and other constituents do not participate in community change work at the scale needed for their voices to be heard.
4. The social change movement is overly fragmented, with too many identity groups working alone.

Let's take a deeper look at each of these issues – what they are and why they are so important.

Condition #1: Institutional racism is deeply entrenched in U.S. society

In the United States today, we live in an era where overt acts of racism are generally less acceptable and less commonplace – although thinly disguised racial attitudes and stereotypes of Blacks ("inferior"), Latinos ("illegals"), Asians ("model minorities") and American Indians ("alcoholics") persist in the country. Beyond individual racism, however, there is a more insidious form of racism embedded in the political, educational, social and religious institutions of society. Whether one calls it "white supremacy" or uses more popular terms like "institutional racism" and "structural racism," the patterns of economic, political, social and cultural domination and inequity are pervasive. [7]

[7] The authors use the terms structural racism and institutional racism interchangeably in this document.

The term institutional racism was coined by Kwame Toure (aka Stokely Carmichael) who, in the late 1960s, defined it as "the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture, or ethnic origin."[8] Today, institutional racism is commonly defined as the array of policies and practices that intentionally or unintentionally place non-white racial and ethnic groups at an economic, political, social or cultural disadvantage in relation to whites in a way that the inequities are systemic, pervasive and perpetual.

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change defines structural racism as "a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of American history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with 'whiteness' and disadvantages associated with 'color' to endure and adapt over time." [9]

In 1994, in a conversation with Omowale Satterwhite, Loretta Ross, then the Research Director at the Center for Democratic Renewal in Atlanta and now head of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, described how "white supremacy" is justified, codified, propagated and preserved by the social institutions of society. Her observations are pertinent as well to understanding institutional or structural racism.

Ross stated that a common practice in Euro-American history is for the religious institutions to "sanitize" white supremacy and provide a moral justification for this doctrine. For example, it was widely propagated as "God's will" that Europeans should colonize Africa to "convert the heathens" and that the United States was following Divine will in its "Manifest Destiny" to expand from the Atlantic to the Pacific - despite the toll in human genocide caused by these colonial quests.

The political institutions "legalize" white supremacy and codify it into law. This legalization has been patently true throughout U.S. history - for example, the slave laws enacted prior to the Civil War, the Black Codes passed after reconstruction and the Jim Crow laws that remained in effect until the mid-1960s. In the last quarter-century, a number of laws have been passed by federal, state and local governments that protect white privilege and negatively affect communities of color. For example, federal law criminalizes the types of illegal drugs used by Latinos and Blacks (such as crack cocaine) far more harshly than those associated with white drug users (such as marijuana), resulting in disproportionate numbers of people of color being sent to jail. What's more, because most states bar ex-felons from voting, the high numbers of these ex-felons returning to communities of color who can't vote effectively stunts the political power of these communities and leaves them further disempowered in the political process. Beyond criminal justice, other salient examples of this type of legislation can be found in the areas of environmental justice (placement of toxic dump and land fill sites in or near poor communities), housing (urban renewal eliminating lower-cost housing and leading to gentrification), transportation (location of freeways near poor areas), and education (more school closings and higher expulsion rates in poorer communities).

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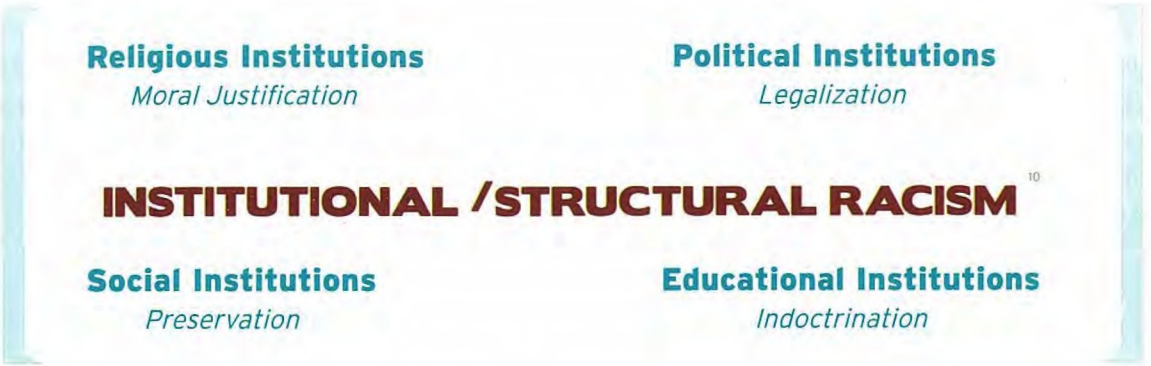
[8] Quoted by Wikipedia. Accessed August 19, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_racism.

[9] The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, Structural Racism and Community Building, June, 2004, p.11,Accessed DATE from www.aspeninstitute.org/atf/cf/%7bdeb6f227-659b-4ec8-8f84-8df23ca704f5%7D/aspen_structural_racism2.pdf.



The educational institutions "propagate" white supremacy by indoctrinating people (under the guise of socialization) from the cradle to the grave about white power and privilege. In schools all over the country, for example, children are taught a distorted history of how the "settlers" were "pioneers," while the epic stories of Native Americans along the Trail of Tears and at Wounded Knee are hardly found in the curriculum.

The social institutions "preserve" white supremacy through bureaucratic structures and practices that reinforce and maintain the status quo where white privilege is prized, promoted and protected. This preservation of white privilege brings about economic and social disparities in the everyday lives of people in communities of color - as experienced, for example, in the economic disinvestment and urban blight in inner cities, the shocking dropout rates in public schools, the drastic cuts in government programs that disproportionately affect communities of color, the marginalization and scapegoating of new immigrants not from Europe, and the racial profiling that puts Blacks and Latinos at daily risk of being stopped, frisked and jailed.

Given that institutional racism is deeply entrenched in U.S. society, the most important tasks for capacity builders working in communities of color are to debunk the myth that there is inherent fairness in our system, bring diverse groups together to work on common issues, work to change institutional policies and practices that are biased and harmful, and adopt racial equity as a central tenet for all the work that we do.

Condition #2: There are destructive attitudes and behaviors in communities of color that are harmful to community life.

The effects of structural racism are pervasive, but that is only one part of the picture. We have to look inside of communities of color to get the rest of the story.

We are witnessing a social crisis in communities of color. Too many youth of color do not finish school, are unemployed, are teenage parents, and too many are killed or raped in gang violence, addicted to drugs and imprisoned. These are the harsh realities in low-income communities of color across the nation. No matter what the causes, there is too much anti-social, self-destructive behavior that has a devastating effect on community life.

[10] Private conversation with Loretta Ross, former research director at Center for Democratic Renewal, Atlanta, circa 1990

One can argue that the social conditions found in communities of color are directly derived from a set of historic relationships to white power and white privilege that can today be linked to institutional racism. Although it's understandable that people of color blame racism and other external forces for the social dysfunction in their communities, we also need to face up to the internal causes of many of these problems and take responsibility for changing the way things are, regardless of their causes. To do this, we have to overcome the internal dynamics inside communities of color that prevent us from coming together and working together for social change.

Self-Perpetuating Cycle of Internal Dysfunction in Communities of Color

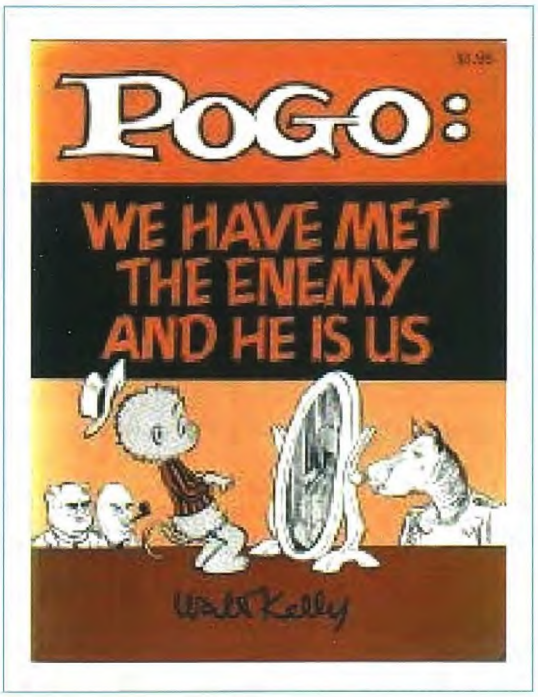
For example, there is too much distrust both within and across communities of color. Too often, people doubt and mistrust each other, letting language and cultural differences overshadow our commonalities and common interests. We fall victim to racial stereotypes of each other that allow social problems affecting us all to go unchallenged or unchanged.

There is too much self-interest, exhibited by people typically focusing on only their own problems and issues. The Chinese saying, "One only sweeps the snow in front of one's front door" captures an all-too-common pattern of self-interest that is a detriment to social progress.

There is also too much disunity and, as a result, people with mutual interests don't work together for the common good. Too many believe that they can solve complex, multi-generational, structural problems by working only within their own identity group and leaving others to fend for themselves.

Worst of all, there is too much self-destructive behavior – domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, gangbanging, drug-motivated crimes, senior abuse and other forms of accumulated anger, negative attitudes and harmful actions. This phenomenon is known as "internalized oppression," a state in which the destructive attitudes from the dominant group that label people of color as inferior or undeserving become absorbed by the community, resulting in low self-esteem, dependency, self-devaluation, hopelessness and violence against one another. Too often, these issues are treated as "taboo" and those who dare talk about them are seen as dupes of "the system" or as disloyal to the community. Although frank and candid discussions of our own internal problems are very hard to have, they are a necessary prelude to collective healing and social action.

These factors bring to mind the old cartoon from the Pogo Papers: "We have met the enemy, and he is us." [11]



Although there is social dysfunction in our communities, we need to remember, honor and celebrate those everyday unsung heroes and heroines who are actively working for social change, justice and equity in communities of color across the country.

So, our work is to shine the light on the situation – if "us" is responsible for the social dysfunction in our communities, then "us" has to be responsible for changing the way things are. As the saying goes, "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

Condition #3: Residents and other constituents do not participate in community change work at the scale needed for their voices to be heard.

Wherever we go, community activists are calling for residents' voices to be heard. Despite the good organizing work, such participation doesn't often happen in a meaningful or sustainable way. One of the main reasons for this capacity-building problem is that there are no common standards for working with residents/constituents in low-income communities of color and no common expectations for their involvement.

To address this issue, NCDI has developed a "Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Residents and Other Constituents in Low-Income Communities of Color." When working in communities of color to bring about social change, NCDI is guided by this set of beliefs about the rights and responsibilities of residents and

[11] Accessed August 18, 2009 from www.amazon.com/Pogo-We-Have-Met-Enemy/dp/0671212605

other constituents. In our view, community residents and other constituents of any change effort have certain inalienable rights that must be honored and certain responsibilities that they must fulfill in their role as community change agents:

- ***Right to know:*** Residents and constituents need to be informed about community issues if they are to play active and meaningful roles in the social change process. With this right comes the responsibility to seek information, ask questions and challenge the status quo.

- ***Right to learn:*** Residents and constituents need to have linguistically and culturally relevant training, mentoring, coaching and peer exchange opportunities to participate effectively as informed partners and practitioners. With this right is the responsibility to identify learning needs and engage in continuous learning activities to increase knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence.

- ***Right to participate:*** Residents and constituents must have leadership roles and participate in all phases of the community-building process. With this right goes the responsibility to be actively involved and stay at the table through good times and bad.

- ***Right to decide:*** Residents and constituents must define their own goals, develop their own plans and make their own decisions about the future direction of their community. With this right comes the responsibility to listen to other voices, carefully consider the options and make the best decisions for the community.

- ***Right to cultural respect:*** Residents and constituents must be able to engage in the community-building process in their own culturally authentic ways. With this right is the responsibility to share information about one's culture, increase understanding of other cultures and value the cultural diversity of the community.

- ***Right to tell their own story:*** Residents and constituents need to be able to document and share their story with key audiences in culturally appropriate ways. With this right goes the responsibility to document the work, apply what is learned and lift up the lessons for others to see.

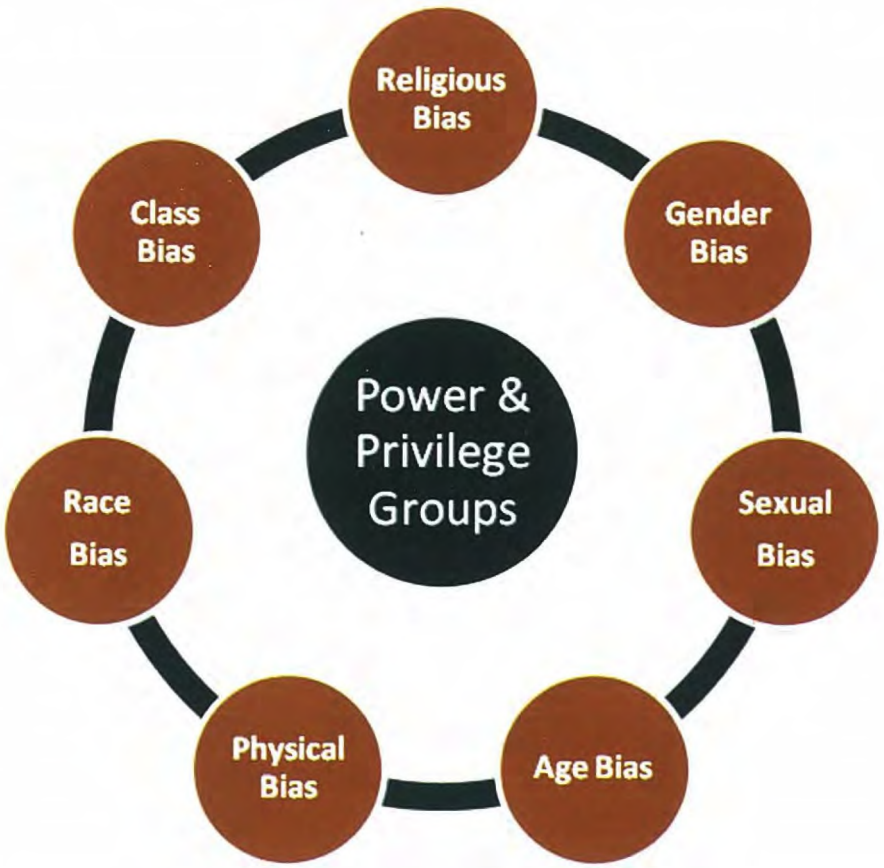
NCDI is guided by, and advocates for, these basic resident and constituent rights in our capacity-building work in communities of color. This work to honor residents' and constituents' rights is uncompromising and unending.

Condition #4: The social change movement is overly fragmented, with too many identity groups working alone.

An identity group is a body of people who share common physical or biological characteristics, political or religious beliefs, economic or social status, educational or cultural interests, or gender or sexuality. All over the country, identity groups are fighting their own battles in isolation and don't see why or how to link their struggles to a broader social change movement.

The following diagram shows a pattern that is fairly common in our society.

FIGURE 3.1. POWER/PRIVILEGE GROUPS AND SOCIAL BIAS IN U.S. SOCIETY

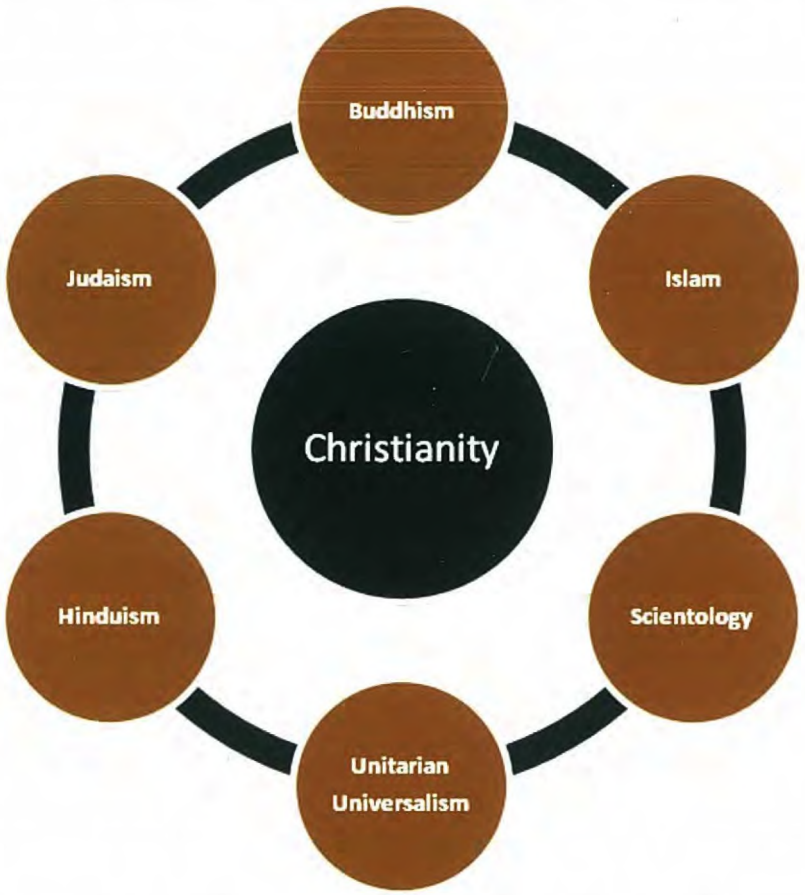


No matter what the identity issue - race, class, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age or other forms of identity – there are groups in the center circle who are privileged and perpetuate the status quo, and there are groups on the outside who feel belittled, marginalized or oppressed. In this diagram, the people with power and privilege are in the center and others on the periphery.

If the issue is race, white people are in the center and people of color are on the outside. If it's class, then wealthy people are located in the inner circle and low-income people are on the outside. If the topic is gender, men are in the center, and women are not. If it's religion, Christians are insiders and all other religious groups are on the outside. If it's disability, the insiders are the able-bodied and the outsiders are those with physical or mental challenges. If it's sexual identity, heterosexuals have the privilege and gays, lesbians, transgender and bisexual individuals are the oppressed groups. If it's age, then adults are the privileged group and children, youth and seniors are marginalized.

It's important to note that on the outer ring there is not one monolithic identity group in each circle, but rather different groups who experience being marginalized in their own way because of their particular identity. For example, in the diagram above, there are different people of color groups in the race circle, different faith groups in the religious circle, different social classes in the class circle, different age groups in the age circle, and so on. In the following diagram, we show as an example some of the main faith groups to be found in the religious circle.

FIGURE 3.2. CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN THE U.S.A.



Depending on the issue, each one of us is sometimes part of a privileged group and sometimes part of a marginalized group. When people belong to a privileged group, they naturally tend to act to maintain the status quo and are unconscious or less active on behalf of the suffering that others are experiencing as a result of their privilege. When people belong to identity groups on the outer circle, they tend to focus on solving problems for their own identity group in their roles as organizers, advocates and service providers.

In the next diagram, we show as an example some of the main racial groups to be found in the race circle where white people have the power and privilege. Though less common today, there is a strong tendency for groups on the outer circle to work on their own problems with limited collaboration and resource sharing and, thus, at a scale where there is no sustained or systemic impact.

FIGURE 3.3. WHITE POWER/PRIVILEGE AND OTHER RACIAL GROUPS IN THE U.S.A.

This isolation and singleness of purpose among identity groups present some of the most daunting challenges in the social change movement. Thus, a fundamental role of capacity builders is connecting identity groups so they can speak with one voice and make social change happen because they speak with one voice.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we identified important national trends and socio-political conditions to provide a context for doing capacity building in communities of color. In the next chapter, we discuss the two main kinds of work being done - community building and capacity building - to effect meaningful change in communities of color.

Chapter Four
COMMUNITY BUILDING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Community building and capacity building are interrelated approaches to working in communities of color to eliminate unjust social conditions. Community building - that is, bringing people together to solve problems and improve the quality of life – is the approach that resident leaders, community organizations, funders and others most often employ. At NCDI, our focus is on capacity building, or more specifically, on building capacity for social change – that is, developing the structures, methods and tools that enable community builders to sustain their work beyond the current situation.

Reflecting on the Work

When one bolsters community-building work through capacity building, then that work is done not only more efficiently but in a more lasting way that can potentially be taken to scale.

In the broadest sense, community building can be defined as the process of working to transform neighborhoods by engaging in a comprehensive and interconnected set of organizing, service delivery, advocacy or (physical) development activities to empower communities and improve the quality of community life. Its focus is on bringing people together to speak with one voice and work for change in the areas of education, economics, health, housing, public safety, transportation and/or the environment.

In contrast, capacity building refers to undertaking activities that enable individuals, organizations or communities to improve the effectiveness of their organizing, service delivery, development and/or advocacy work, sustain the work over time and take the work to scale at the local, regional or national levels. Capacity building happens with individuals, organizations and communities both independently and in interconnected ways. For individuals, capacity building usually refers to leadership development, skill-building, and other personal and professional development activities. For organizations, capacity building refers to activities undertaken to improve organizational effectiveness, strengthen programs, expand impact and promote sustainability. For communities, capacity building involves a coordinated set of activities to develop people (training), strengthen organizations (technical assistance), coordinate programs, form social networks and build the local infrastructure needed to change social conditions and improve the quality of life for residents.

The following chart shows the contrast between community building and capacity building.

Chart 4.1. Community Building and Capacity Building

	COMMUNITY BUILDING	CAPACITY BUILDING
Purpose	To solve problems, improve the quality of life and empower the community	To do more effective community-building work, sustain the work over time and take the work to scale at the local, regional or national levels
Desired Results	Communities that are better off and empowered	Organizations and communities that are stable, self-reliant and resilient
Indicators	Improved social conditions for vulnerable children and families in the areas of education, economics, health, housing, public safety, transportation and the environment	Improved capacity in six key areas: community engagement, community organizations, community relationships, community development, community advocacy for systems change and community research and evaluation
Strategies/ Methods	Implement four basic community-building strategies: organizing, service delivery, advocacy and (physical) development	Implement four basic capacity-building strategies: developing people, strengthening organizations, stabilizing and transforming communities and influencing the field

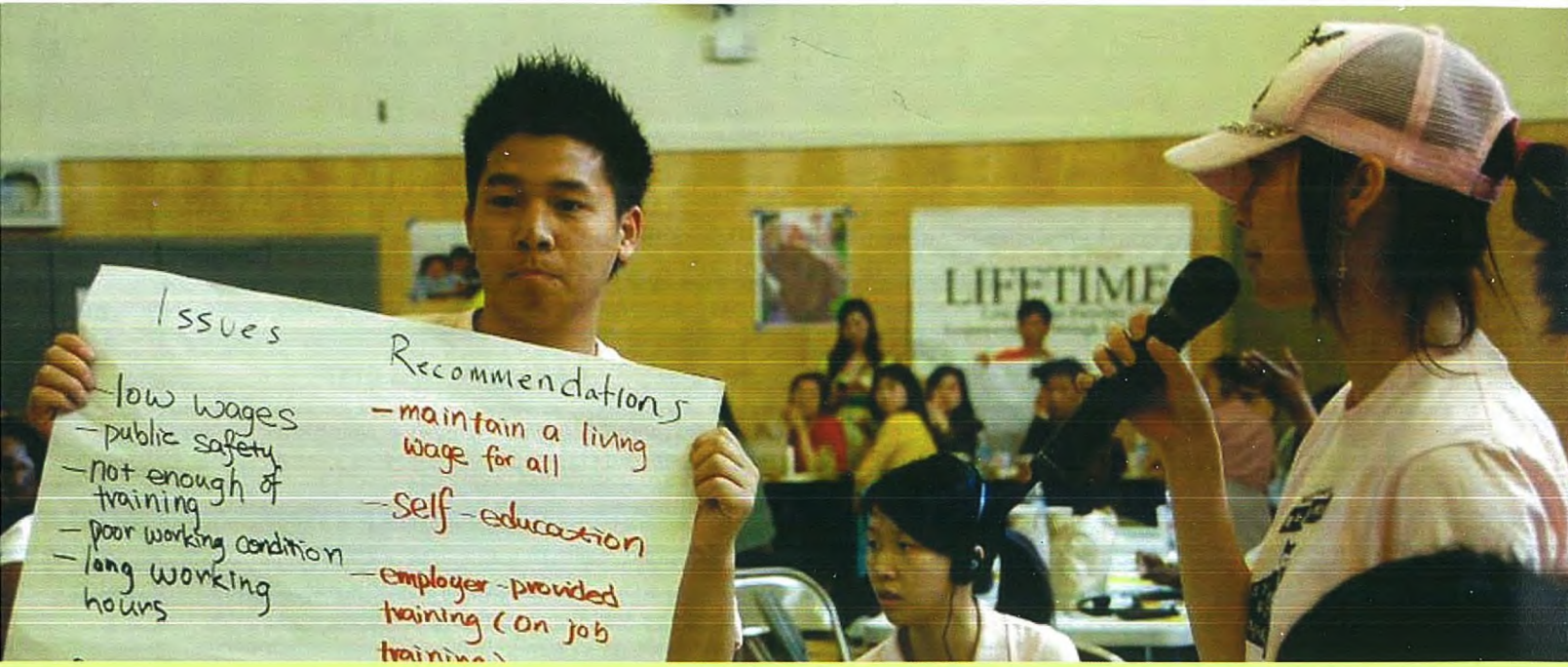
NCDI focuses on building capacity for social change to enable communities of color to play a pivotal role in transforming the social conditions, power relationships, cultural norms and institutional practices that perpetuate racial injustice and inequality. As discussed in Chapter One, our capacity-building model is based on four key premises: (1) race and culture matter in capacity-building work; (2) capacity building is an essential part of the social change process; (3) communities of color can define and lead their own social change process; and (4) social equity is an achievable goal.

Obviously, both community building and capacity building are important. In fact, the basic formula guiding NCDI's work in communities of color is...

"COMMUNITY BUILDING + CAPACITY BUILDING = ENDURING SOCIAL CHANGE."

We know that if there is no capacity building or if capacity building is undervalued in favor of community building, then communities might find short-term solutions to certain problems, but they won't ever gain the independence and stability to "fish for themselves for a lifetime."

The next two sections further define and present the core principles of community building and capacity building and how they relate to each other.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

From 1993 to 2005, the National Community Building Network (NCBN) was the leading national organization working to define, develop and advance the community-building field. Its mission was "to promote and advance community-building principles, in practice and policy, to achieve social and economic equity for all children and families." During a twelve-year period, NCBN served as a national clearinghouse for community builders, built a large and active membership network and was recognized as the main thought-leader and knowledge resource for those engaged in community-building work. [12]

Definition

The National Community Building Network defined community building this way:

> [Community building is] an approach to improving conditions, expanding opportunities, and sustaining positive change within communities by developing, enhancing, and sustaining the capacities and relationships of those who make up the community. This approach is applied in hundreds of communities and a host of fields including economic development, community development, family service, youth development, and public health. Community-building initiatives operate in urban, rural, and suburban communities across the United States and in other countries.
>
> Community building is not a format for programs. It is a framework for addressing interrelated troubles—poor schooling, crime, bad health, unemployment and underemployment, family instability—that ensnare people in chronic poverty. Its practitioners believe that comprehensive, community-driven efforts offer the best hope for revitalizing neglected neighborhoods, especially in the urban core.
>
> Community building also recognizes that escaping persistent poverty is as much about building relationships as it is about good services, programs, and institutions. Community building puts residents at the forefront of efforts to rebuild their neighborhoods. Community building is not done to or for neighborhood residents. It is done by and with neighborhood residents—with the residents as the dreamers, planners, and implementers of a collective vision for their neighborhood.

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[12] Leila Fiester, "Building a Community of Community Builders," a report commissioned by the Urban Strategies Council, pp. 2-8., 2007. Accessed May 8, 2009 from www.handsnet.org/NCBN_final_report.pdf.
[13] Ibid

CORE PRINCIPLES

NCBN developed the following eight core principles to define and direct the community-building activities of its diverse membership:

1. Integrate Community Development and Human Service Strategies
Traditional anti-poverty efforts have separated "bricks and mortar" projects from those that help families and develop human capital. Each approach needs the other to be successful.

2. Require Racial Equity
Racism remains a barrier to a fair distribution of resources and opportunities in our society. Our work promotes equity for all groups.

3. Value Cultural Strengths
Our efforts promote the values and history of our many cultural traditions and ethnic groups.

4. Forge Partnerships Through Collaboration
Building community requires work by all sectors—local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, schools, religious institutions, health and social service agencies—in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and respect. It takes time and committed work to make such collaboration more than rhetoric.

5. Start from Local Conditions
There is no cookie-cutter approach to building community. The best efforts flow from and adapt to local realities.

6. Support Families and Children
Strong families are the cornerstone of strong communities. Community-building efforts help families help themselves.

7. Build on Community Strengths
Past efforts to improve community life have too often addressed problems or deficits. Community-building efforts should build on local capacities and assets.

8. Foster Broad Community Participation
Many community programs have become professionalized and alienated from the people they serve. New programs and policies must be shaped by community residents.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The Alliance for Nonprofit Management is a national professional association of individuals and organizations devoted to improving the management and governance capacity of nonprofit organizations. Its mission is "to increase the effectiveness of individuals and organizations that help nonprofits build their power and impact." Since 1998, the Alliance has been a valued resource for professional development, served as a national clearinghouse and supported a large and active membership of thought-leaders and practitioners in the nonprofit capacity-building field.

DEFINITION

The Alliance defines capacity building this way:

Capacity building consists of activities that improve an organization's ability to achieve its mission or a person's ability to define and realize his/her goals or to do his/her job more effectively. For organizations, capacity building may relate to almost any aspect of its work: improved governance, leadership, mission and strategy, administration (including human resources, financial management, and legal matters), program development and implementation, fundraising and income generation, diversity, partnerships and collaboration, evaluation, advocacy and policy change, marketing, positioning, planning, etc. For individuals, capacity building may relate to leadership development, advocacy skills, training/ speaking abilities, technical skills, organizing skills, and other areas of personal and professional development.

There is a large range of capacity-building approaches—a continuum—that includes peer-to-peer learning, facilitated organizational development, training and academic study, research, publishing and grantmaking. Adding to the complexity, capacity building also takes place across organizations, within communities, in whole geographic areas, within the nonprofit sector, and across the sectors. It involves individuals and groups of individuals, organizations, groups of organizations within the same field or sector, and organizations and actors from different fields and sectors.

Capacity-building agents come in many shapes and sizes. Those that first come to mind are management consultants (either independents or for-profit firms) who provide expertise, coaching, training and referrals. There also are nonprofit consulting organizations—referred to as management support organizations (MSOs) that provide consulting, training, resources, research, referrals and other services for nonprofits. Grantmakers—foundations and government organizations—often get involved in capacity building either through their grants or sometimes by offering training, consulting and resources themselves.

Researchers play an important role in capacity building—identifying issues and trends, and building knowledge for nonprofits and other capacity builders to use. Universities and other academic centers provide formal training and certification opportunities for individuals. They also conduct research and often have resource centers (online and on-site) for nonprofit organizations. Intermediaries and umbrella organizations with multiple grantees or chapters usually conduct their own capacity-building activities that respond to specific organizational priorities and needs.

There are attorneys and accountants who specialize in nonprofits, as well as technology firms and other service providers who often play capacity-building roles. And there are national and international organizations—membership organizations, coalitions, think tanks, research institutions and others—that are part of the nonprofit infrastructure of the sector and seek to make systemic improvements across the nonprofit sector. [14]

[14] Deborah Linnel, Evaluation of Capacity Building: Lessons from the Field, Alliance for Nonprofit Management, pp. 13-14, 2003. Accessed May 8, 2009 from www.allianceonline.org/assets/library/4_evaluationofcapacity.pdf.

NCDI'S STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

NCDI developed the following standards of practice to guide how we do capacity-building work in communities of color. In our capacity-building framework, these standards are described as "the self you bring to the work."

1. Be humble
Work with others in a compassionate, supportive and unassuming way without arrogance, conceit or pretentiousness.

2. Have an open heart and an open mind
Be willing to listen, suspend judgment, rethink assumptions and change your way of being.

3. Put the community first rather than yourself
Lift up the community voice without pushing your own agenda and work as a peer, not as the expert.

4. Be transparent
Communicate openly and honestly without a hidden agenda.

5. Be a co-learner in the capacity-building process and be willing to learn from mistakes
Be willing to ask questions, conduct research, analyze facts, consider new information and rethink choices.

6. Be the best community servant possible—someone who is informed, reliable and gets results
Do all that you can to serve each organization and community in the most optimal way and honor the trust that the community places in you.

7. Be a neutral facilitator and a people connector
Be an unbiased and impartial facilitator who builds trusting relationships among the diverse cultural groups in a community.

8. Practice tough love—challenge people to do the right thing
Challenge everyone to put the community first, see the big picture, work for the common good and do the right thing for the community.

DOING CAPACITY BUILDING: THE CHALLENGE

All over the country, people are working diligently to solve community problems and change social conditions – in other words, doing noteworthy community-building work. However, wherever one goes, the story is the same: community builders are asking how to work more effectively, how to have more impact and how to be more self-reliant. But given the enormous needs they are dealing with and their 24/7 work schedules, they don't often take the time to reflect seriously on these issues and respond to them in a proactive way.

When NCDI is invited to work with grassroots community builders, we often ask the following questions to initiate a conversation about capacity building for social change. By asking these questions, our intent is to begin a reflective process where people start to see the long-term benefits of building capacity for social change to improve their current effectiveness, sustain their work over time and take their work to scale.

1. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness (efficiency and impact) of your work?
The purpose of this question is to get community builders to reflect on whether they are getting the results that they want from their work and, if not, why not. Typically, people acknowledge some dissatisfaction with the scope and impact of their work and often identify the main reasons as too few people, too much work, too little power and not enough funding. Although these things may be true, community builders begin to see that their work also fails to address basic capacity-building issues in the areas of governance, finance, programs and operations. At this early stage of the dialogue, our aim is to get hard-working community builders to do a candid assessment of where things are and what is needed if they want systemic change to occur.

2. Are you trying to fix a specific problem or change a social condition?
The purpose of this question is to get community builders to be honest and realistic about the scope of change that they are trying to achieve through their work and whether what they're doing is what is needed to bring about enduring social change. The typical response to this question is that systemic change is the goal, but that capacity building is not a central part of their agenda for change because the community has so many needs and the work is so demanding that there aren't enough hours or resources to deal with capacity-building issues. With this question, our intent is to get hard-working community builders to realistically define the scope of change they want to achieve and what they are doing (or not doing) to achieve it.

3. How is your work linked to other social change efforts?
The purpose of this question is to encourage community builders to ask themselves if working alone (or in cliques) is really the best way to bring about the breadth of change needed in their community. Usually, people acknowledge the potential value of forming strong alliances across issues but once

again argue that given the many needs and limited resources they cannot justify the time required to collaborate with others in a sustained way on important community issues. Through this dialogue, we want to get hard-working community builders to step out of their boxes and critically examine how they are collaborating (or not collaborating) with others to change the unjust social conditions.

4. What will it take to advance your work to the next level?
The purpose of this question is to get community builders to think beyond the moment, to envision an alternative future for their work and to be candid about what capacity is needed to bring about enduring social change. Usually, the initial responses to this question are, once again, that a lack of people, money and influence inhibit their efforts. As the discussion unfolds, people gain more insight into what capacity building is and how it can add value to their work. They realize that more people and money might ease their pain but won't necessarily position them to change the social conditions in their community. They discover that the fundamental challenge is not how to do more of the same, but rather how to build capacity to broaden and sustain their social impact.

5. What legacy of service do you want to leave behind?
The purpose of this question is to get community builders to think about their long-term social impact on the community. This is not a question to feed the ego, but rather one about what they want to leave behind in the community after their work is done. Typically, people want their community to be more empowered, to have a stronger voice, to be more self-reliant and to have a better quality of life. At this latter stage of the dialogue, our aim is to have an enlightened discussion about the fundamental importance of capacity building and how to integrate capacity-building goals into the community-building work that people so passionately do.

Through this discussion, it's our hope that community builders begin to see that in order to make the shift to give capacity building more priority, they must rethink and adjust how they work for social change in the following ways:

- **Be more strategic:** Think beyond the current crisis.
- **Be more entrepreneurial:** Give as much attention to developing a sustainable organization as to doing mission work.
- **Be more reflective:** Be willing to learn and to change organizational practices.
- **Be more collaborative:** Strengthen relations with other community organizations and build bridges across identity, sector and geography.
- **Make room for the next generation:** Create space for new leadership to emerge and help that leadership mature and develop.

DOING CAPACITY BUILDING: THE RESULTS

In this chapter, we have stated that community building and capacity building go hand-in-glove in the social change process. We defined these two terms, described the vital relationship between them and argued that too little attention is given to capacity building, resulting in short-term actions to solve chronic, multi-generational problems in communities of color. In Part Two, we explain in detail how to generate better outcomes using the NCDI Building Capacity for Social Change framework.

In Chapter One, we introduced NCDI's Building Capacity for Social Change model and described the four core values and operating principles as well as the six main capacity-building priorities in our work – namely, engaging communities, strengthening organizations, building relationships, improving neighborhoods, advocating for policy change and conducting community-based research and evaluation.

The outcomes of this capacity-building work can be seen in two crucial areas: (1) the benefits of the process for individuals and organizations when they assume the challenge and activities of capacity building – namely, being able to work more efficiently and effectively on behalf of their constituents and (2) the results for communities in terms of being stronger, healthier, more resilient places with the leadership, infrastructure and constituent base to effect social change, shape public policy and influence the political economy in an increasingly diverse society.

These outcomes can be tracked using the following benchmarks of progress that we call the "8 Ps of Capacity Building":

- **Pillars** – There are anchor community organizations that are more stable, share a common sense of purpose and work together for community change.
- **Participation** – A critical mass of people are more aware and actively engaged in the community change process.
- **Purpose** – Organizational and community leaders share a common purpose and work together for community change.
- **Power** – Community members have a voice and a place at the decision-making table.
- **Partnerships** – People and organizations are better connected and work together more consistently and more effectively.
- **Programs** – Programs and services are more accessible, better coordinated and have greater impact.
- **Policy** – Public policies are changed with a positive impact on the community.
- **Promotion** – Community members are able to document their work and tell their story in compelling ways to key audiences.

Part Two

THE NCDI FRAMEWORK: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

In the NCDI Framework, NCDI's core values (beliefs) and core principles (practices) come together as a methodology for building capacity for social change. In this section, each chapter focuses on one core principle for building capacity for social change. It describes the core value that underlies the principle, the goals of the principle and the ways of working, and the self that one brings to the work. The relationship of these elements and the way they interact in NCDI's building Capacity for Social Change model are correlated in the chart below.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE FRAMEWORK: CORE VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND WAYS OF WORKING AND BEING

Core Value: Each community of color has its own indigenous wisdom and assets that deserve honor and respect.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PRINCIPLE #1	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work from the community by listening and learning	• Learn about an organization or community • Form relationships • Build trust	• Listen to and learn from community voices • Gather information from multiple community sources • Challenge personal assumptions and biases	• Be humble • Have an open heart and an open mind

Core Value: Community members must define their own social change strategy and capacity-building process.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PRINCIPLE #2	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work with the community by co-designing the change strategy	• Develop a concrete community-building or capacity-building strategy • Clarify roles, expectations and protocols • Engage the broadest group of stakeholders in planning the community change process	• Work as a peer, not as an expert • Be community-driven • Co-design the community-building or capacity-building process and adapt it based on evolving needs • Be mindful of race, class and power dynamics at play in every organization and community	• Put the community first rather than yourself • Be transparent

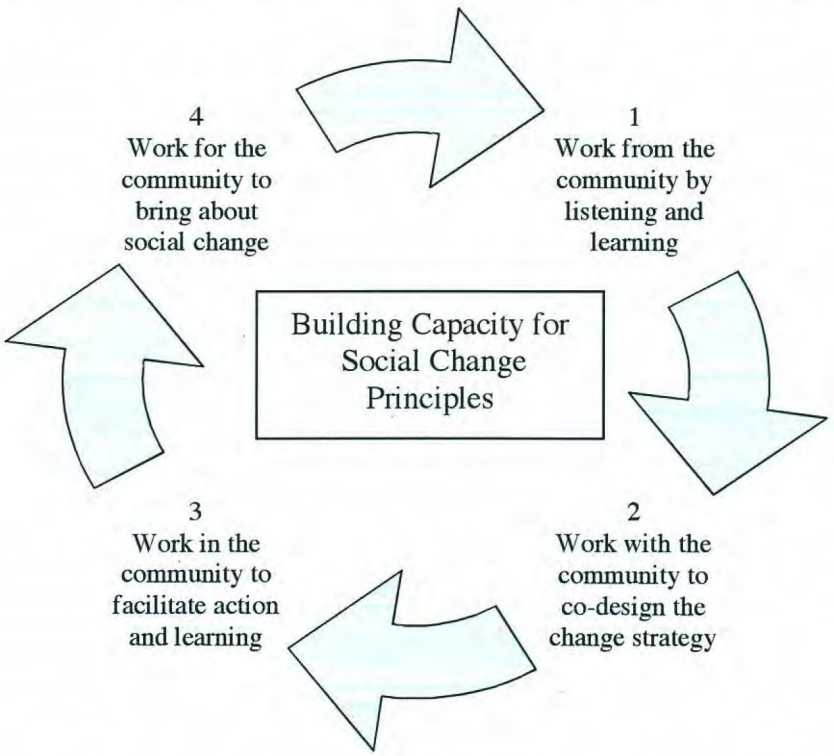
Core Value: By linking action and learning together, community members can solve problems, build relationships and renew hope.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PRINCIPLE #3	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work in the community to facilitate action and learning	• Bring community members together to solve problems • Build working relationships among diverse identity groups • Renew hope for the future	***For Action*** • Develop social change vision • Define the core capacity-building issues using the NCDI model • Facilitate action in the six capacity-building areas ***For Learning*** • Use a learning community approach in doing the work • Be a learning catalyst	• Be a co-learner in the capacity-building process and be willing to learn from mistakes • Be the best community servant possible

Core Value: Building capacity for social change empowers and transforms communities

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PRINCIPLE #4	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work for the community to bring about social transformation	• Organize and engaging people • Strengthen community organizations and networks • Improve communities • Influence the field	• Implement capacity-building strategies in six key areas for individuals, organizations and communities	• Be a neutral facilitator and a people connector • Practice tough love… challenge people to do the right thing

How these principles – working from, with, in and for the community – work together to build capacity for social change is depicted in the following diagram:



The chapters that follow describe how to do the work of building capacity for social change. We recommend you keep a notebook handy for doing the exercises and reflections and for noting other thoughts and experiences you have along the way.

Chapter Five

WORKING FROM THE COMMUNITY BY LISTENING AND LEARNING

Core Value: Each community of color has its own indigenous wisdom and assets that deserve honor and respect.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE PRINCIPLE #1	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work from the community by listening and learning.	• Learn about an organization or community • Form relationships • Build trust.	• Listen to and learn from community voices • Gather information from multiple community sources • Challenge personal assumptions and biases	• Be humble • Have an open heart and an open mind

Communities of color and other justice-seeking communities have a wealth of knowledge and expertise that is largely unacknowledged and untapped. For this reason, the NCDI model stresses the importance of beginning the capacity-building process by conscientiously listening to, learning about and building trust with each community and organization being served.

Communities of color have historically experienced economic, political, social and cultural oppression in the U.S. We are often told in many ways that our voices and opinions do not matter. We are often treated as though we do not belong here and are told to "go home," even though we may have been born here, our families may have been here for many generations, and our people have fought and bled for the nation. We are often taught "American" history that blatantly belittles and distorts our struggles for freedom and equality.

As a result of the long U.S. history of racial prejudice and discrimination, many people of color have lost hope, doubt their worth, are unwilling to challenge the status quo and believe that they do not have much to contribute. In Chapter Three, this phenomenon was referred to as internalized oppression - where we come to believe as truth what those in power have told us about ourselves and we act out those perceptions in self-destructive ways.

Too often, what we do know to be true about our own communities is treated as folklore or referred to as anecdotal stories rather than recognized as an indigenous asset to be honored and native wisdom to be valued. In a culture that reveres empirical evidence, community wisdom tends to be treated as inferior. Working in communities of color using the Building Capacity for Social Change model allows access to a deeper, more authentic and complete truth.

Reflecting on the Work

- ✓ NCDI believes that communities of color and other justice-seeking communities have indigenous wisdom that holds valuable lessons in their stories.
- ✓ The NCDI model seeks out the community's many voices and listens with intention and commitment in a way that uses judgment to up lift rather than put down.
- ✓ The NCDI model uses project teams that reflect the communities being served and engages capacity builders who are humble, open to learning, capable of honoring the work from a heart-centered place and have an unflinching dedication to social justice.

WAYS OF WORKING

In the NCDI model, the capacity builder seeks out community voices to learn about the history, demography, leadership, organizations and social relationships in the communities of color in which we work. NCDI looks to community members to develop and deepen our understanding of the social conditions and the race, class and power dynamics shaping community life.

The main goals in carrying out the first principle - working from the community - are to learn about an organization or community, form relationships and build trust. This is not done overnight, but over time with humility, respect, patience and a heart full of compassion.

LISTEN TO AND LEARN FROM COMMUNITY VOICES

Many books have been written on how to listen, but there is a distinction between listening as a skill and listening as an attitude. Listening as an attitude comes from the heart, by caring, respecting and honoring the stories that are being shared.

Reflecting on the Work

It's not easy to listen from the heart. Working in communities entails encountering many different types of people, all of whom have to be listened to and engaged. Think about how you listen to people you care about, those you don't like, those you supervise, those you work for, those who criticize you, those you want to assist. Be conscious of how you listen to others, because the people you work with are conscious of you.

Communities are served well when capacity builders are sensitive and respectful in honoring and safeguarding the stories of people of color and other justice-seeking communities. Our stories have been misrepresented (most people who receive public benefits are African American women exploiting the system, who were called "welfare queens" by the Nixon Administration), our symbols misappropriated (school mascots and logos expropriated from Native American culture), our workers exploited (undocumented Latinos paid below minimum wage) and our value denied (Asian Americans' contributions to building this country are rarely taught in schools). The legacy of white colonization that led to the "discovery" of "savages" and the subsequent destruction of their ancient civilizations has left a collective psychological scar that we are not immune from, even to this day.

By honoring our communities' stories, the NCDI approach challenges the old exploitive mode, models a new way of working in communities of color and raises expectations of how our communities ought to be treated and valued.

Reflecting on the Work

When NCDI listens to the voices of community members, it uses more than technical skills. Deep and true listening is an attitude that is fundamentally driven by the belief that there is much to learn from the members of the community NCDI serves. From this listening place, community members will detect sincerity, a genuine desire to know, interest in their stories and a respect for who they are.

Active listening is a tool for really hearing and valuing what people are saying. Active listening techniques include waiting for the person to finish what s/he is saying, mirroring the speaker's language so s/he knows you heard clearly and checking with the speaker to clarify what you heard. Following are some of the main blocks to active listening – internal dynamics that prevent one from listening to others with humility and compassion. We all encounter these blocks in ourselves. By making them conscious, we can begin to eliminate these habits that interfere with truly listening to others. Which of these listening blocks are things that you do when communicating with others? What are other listening blocks have you observed in your work?

Judging people

When listening, we may spend more time labeling and categorizing people than hearing what they are saying. When we judge others in this way from our own limited frame of reference, such filtering often distorts what we hear.

Thinking we know what someone is going to say

When we think that we know what someone is going to say, we may tune the speaker out before s/he has finished talking, or we may interrupt the person to finish her/his sentence. Either behavior is disrespectful and can result in misunderstanding, frustration, anger or conflict.

Reframing a message to make it say what you want it to say

When we reframe a message to suit our purposes, we restate something that has been said by another person in a different way or give it a different interpretation based on our own views about the matter. Such reframing might occur, for example, when a "neutral" facilitator in a meeting repeats a comment but twists the meaning to make a different point. This type of reframing comes about when we tend to hear only we want to hear, not what is truly being said.

Following our own emotions

If something that is said triggers an emotional response in us, this "emotional cotton" blocks listening and can cause us to misinterpret what a person is saying. If you find your emotions getting in the way, look at why that's happening and try not to project your own emotions about an issue onto others.

EXERCISE 5.1. LISTENING

• Seek out someone who's very different from you (race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual identity, language preference, etc.). Ask an open-ended question that you're genuinely interested in hearing about, such as the history, demography, diverse cultures or other things about a community. Listen to her/him as actively as you can, writing down ten key words or phrases that catch your attention. Check out the feelings these words elicit in you. (You can also do this exercise by yourself: try watching a TV program that you usually avoid, or one that feels foreign to you.)

• Choose a short meeting that you will be attending. After the meeting, spend ten minutes jotting down the reactions you had while you were listening. Observe the ways that you made judgments about the speaker(s), the ways you raced ahead in your mind, the ways that you thought you knew what s/he was going to say. Observe the feelings that the speaker triggered in you. What insights opened up in you?

GATHER INFORMATION FROM MULTIPLE COMMUNITY SOURCES

If you are from the particular community where you have been invited to work, then you will know much about both its assets and its problems. If you have not been there for a time, or no longer live there, you will need to reacquaint yourself with its recent history, demography, triumphs, setbacks and existing issues.

If you are from a community that is similar to the one where you are working (in terms of culture, economic status, ethnicity and/or language), it's important not to make assumptions based on your own past experiences. It is your responsibility to learn about the particular history and nature of the place you have been invited to serve. As your understanding grows, your work will be strengthened by drawing on your own life experiences to empathize fully and be in compassion with those who are seeking your assistance.

If you are not from a community and don't have a similar social or cultural background, then it will be very important to let go of your biases and do your homework in a careful and thoughtful way. Your work will be greatly enhanced by understanding and honoring the community's history and culture.

The following tool can guide you in gathering information about an organization or community. It highlights six areas where it is useful to gather information when doing capacity-building work in communities of color: Community Definition, Community History, Community Leadership, Community Norms, Community Relationships and Community Organizations.

Tool 5.1. Gathering Community Information and Cultural Data

TOPIC	GUIDE QUESTIONS	SOURCES
Community Definition	• How do people define their community? • What are the natural boundaries of the community, whether officially drawn or not? • What is the demographic makeup of the community? • Where are the special landmarks? • What are the things that the community is known for?	***Residents*** • Resident leaders • Long-time residents • Block captains ***Organizations*** • Organizational leaders • Neighborhood associations • Nonprofit organizations • Faith-based organizations ***Public Agencies*** • Current/past elected officials • Government agency staff • Public records • Census data ***Information Sources*** • Reporters and other media sources • Librarians ***Public Documents*** • Newspaper archives • Newsletters • Demographic reports • Neighborhood pvlans
Community History	• What are the key historical developments that have meaning to resident and organizational leaders? • What are the significant events that have helped shape the community? • In the past 2–3 years, what are some key community triumphs? Setbacks? • Is there a history of gentrification or displacement? • What has been the community's political and social relationship to the city? County? Regional bodies?	
Community Leadership	• Who are the most influential and respected formal and informal leaders - the deal-makers and the deal-busters? • How have they contributed to the community's development? • Who are the community elders? Religious leaders? Activists? Peacemakers?	
Community Norms	• What are the community and/or cultural norms around conflict? • How does an individual preserve "face" in this community? • How often are third parties relied on as bridges to communication? • How are meetings conducted: what are the rituals, ground rules and decision-making practices? • What value is placed on time? Place? Relationships? • What are the major festivals and celebrations in the community?	
Community Relationships	• What is the sense of belonging – that is, identification with or pride in the community? • Where do people go to exchange information and socialize? • Where do residents from different ethnic backgrounds gather? • How do people relate to each other? To outsiders?	
Community Organizations	• What are the main organizations doing organizing? Service delivery? Advocacy? Development? • What are the existing collaboratives and service delivery networks? • What are the community-based and faith-based organizations with an influential voice? • Which organizations have effective youth leadership development programs?	


Haimanot Habtu

What becomes obvious here is that most of this information will not be found in a Google search but rather from conversations with those who have invited you to work with them and other stakeholders in a community. As part of engaging the community, your homework is to listen, understand the context and use your curiosity as a guide. When you don't know, ask. And then listen and listen some more.

EXERCISE 5.2. GATHERING INFORMATION

- What other key things do you want to know about an organization or community?
- Imagine yourself as a board member of a community organization that has invited a capacity builder to assist your group. What do you want this person to know about your organization or community to be able to work effectively with you?

CHALLENGE YOUR PERSONAL ASSUMPTIONS AND BIASES

"We don't see the world as it is; we see it as we are." [15]

When you build capacity for social change, it is important that you are of the community – not necessarily that you were born, raised and live there, but that your attitude is one that begins with not assuming you know what is in the best interest of the community as a whole, the residents who live there and call it home and the people who have invited you in to work with them. You may at first feel as though you are in a foreign landscape as you encounter different types of people you may never have worked with before.

The person you work with may seem illiterate. He may have never held a job for more than six months. She may have a dual diagnosis of mental health issues and substance abuse. He may sell sex for a living. She may be a survivor of domestic abuse and violence. He may be transgender and used to be a she. She may have had children removed from her care. He may speak very slowly and not get to the point in a succinct way. He may not offer any eye contact.

We are human and naturally feel more comfortable with what we know and we have affinity for those who look, speak, think and act like us. People naturally make assumptions about things they don't know – the ability to speculate, stereotype and put things in categories is a normal coping mechanism, a way to try to make familiar what is unknown. People are often afraid of or unsure about what may be foreign to them.

Whatever is seen on the surface, however, the first job of the capacity builder who works in communities of color is to start by deeply knowing what values and perspectives you bring with you: your own class, ethnic, gender, cultural, spiritual, political, socio-emotional and other deeply ingrained biases.

[15] Title of Blog written Caroline Keem. Accessed August 21, 2009 from http://rollingmeatball.blogspot.com.

Reflecting on the Work

Working to build capacity for social change in communities of color requires us to share our own assumptions openly, let our biases go and listen from an open-minded place. In this way we can step up to our higher selves and listen from the heart.

It is important to be in touch with your own internally held biases and assumptions. When you listen to others in their communities, you are listening from a certain cultural reference point. We are not insinuating that viewing the world from your own lens is a problem. We are simply calling attention to the importance of knowing and accepting our own cultural viewpoint so as to be aware of the biases we bring to the work.

EXERCISE 5.3. PERSONAL ASSUMPTIONS

Consider the following questions:

- What are commonly held assumptions that you are aware of, whether you personally believe them or not, about people of color - Asians, Latinos, Native Americans or African Americans - and about other marginalized groups such as gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgender people; persons with disabilities; homeless individuals; and youth?
- How have you connected successfully with communities that are significantly different from the one you come from? What qualities in yourself did you draw on?

THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK

What is the self that one must bring to the work in order to honor the first principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model and truly work from the community? The two main qualities needed by capacity builders working in communities of color are to be humble and to have an open heart and an open mind.

BE HUMBLE

People define humility in many ways, often by saying what it is not – that it is the absence of vanity, conceit, snobbery, egotism, extravagance, pretentiousness or arrogance. Others describe it as simply being aware that everyone is equal as a human being, that you are not superior to anyone and that your duty is to serve others with the unique gifts that have been bestowed on you.

To honor the first principle of this model, it is necessary to be humble in every way. The story of Tenzin gives you a chance to think about what humility looks like in the work that you do.

THE STORY OF TENZIN TAKLHA

By Beth Rosales, Senior Adviser, The Lia Fund

Tenzin Taklha did not call attention to himself at meetings. He sat quietly next to the self-assured Seattle billionaire who was the sole sponsor of an upcoming ecumenical gathering of spiritual leaders that would include Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and people of other faiths, along with academics, political personalities, community leaders and worshippers. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was to host the gathering and share the story of how Muslims and Buddhists lived for hundreds of years in peace and harmony in Tibet. People of the two faiths had once planted seeds together during rainy seasons, harvested rice in the summer, helped one another build temples and mosques after harvest season and even married across faiths. This lost relationship was a rare vision of peace for today's divisive sectarian landscape. The organizers wanted the gathering to examine ways that people today can find a similar peace together while honoring each other's religious practices and cultures.

The planning committee had in-depth discussions at our preparatory meetings, in which Tenzin Taklha joined, about all aspects of the program, including security, media message, and programmatic content. We discussed many topics, such as whether Indonesians, from the country where the highest number of practicing Muslims reside, were proportionately represented in the program; did we ensure that both Shiites and Sunnis were heard on stage; should female attendees be asked to wear headscarves; and what was the protocol for celebrities who wanted private sittings with His Holiness.

Tenzin Taklha spoke sparingly at these meetings. When he did contribute, he eloquently shared the Dalai Lama's principles of equality, humility and gentleness. During our weekly conference calls, it was clear that he was a personage at the highest level of His Holiness' Tibetan Office. When offered the plush, marble-floored Presidential Suite for His Holiness' use at the conference however, Tenzin Taklha demurred, choosing a far simpler suite for the Dalai Lama and the six monks who would share the room with him. And he gently thanked but declined at least ten offers of a private jet to pick up His Holiness from India and deliver him to a private airport. "His Holiness likes to travel in commercial planes, economy seats," Tenzin Taklha explained. "His Holiness accumulates frequent flyer miles that way."

Tenzin Taklha never introduced himself with his title as spokesman for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in the Government of Tibet in Exile. He rarely chaired any meetings and never pulled rank throughout the five months of meetings and weekly international conference calls. Instead, he encouraged rotating "wisdom guides" to lead the discussions. In fact, he seldom spoke, and when he did, it was only to remind us what our ultimate goals were for this historic event and to ask us to reflect on the best path to meet those goals addressing the issues of harmony, equality, and security in each decision we made. He fielded everyone's suggestions with the same care and respect, from the Imam to the IT geek who showed him how to use a laptop. Instead of objecting to any point of view, Tenzin Taklha would offer an affirming insight and gently ask if anyone could add his or her personal experience. The experience of every person who attended the gathering was shaped by Tenzin Taklha's unassuming wisdom.

Tenzin Taklha redirected our attention to the value of equality and courtesy to everyone; as one example, he arranged private sittings with His Holiness for the hotel kitchen help, maids, and bellhops as well as for filmmaker George Lucas and his daughter. Senator Dianne Feinstein's husband, Richard Blum, had to wait his turn while the Dalai Lama chatted with the high school volunteers who spent countless hours cutting the thousands of ribbons that would carry guests' messages for peace.

Tenzin Taklha's leadership was marked by absolute gentleness, humility, and self-discipline.
When asked what he did for the Dalai Lama, he responded modestly, "I cook his meals and make sure his tea is hot."

More than two years later, I find myself returning to the lessons that I learned during that time. I am reminded of Tenzin Taklha's self-control, quiet presence and affirming approach to unifying disparate groups. These are the secret ingredients that can transcend the sense of self-importance and ego that get in the way of our becoming effective capacity builders.

These days, I am working very hard to become a cook.

HAVE AN OPEN HEART AND AN OPEN MIND

When someone has an open heart, that person is respectful, sympathetic, supportive, tolerant, forgiving and compassionate toward other human beings. When someone has an open mind, that person is willing to listen, observe, take advice, ask questions, suspend judgment, rethink assumptions and be exposed to new ideas.

To honor the first principle of this model, it is critically important to have both an open heart and an open mind when working with organizations and communities of color. A good example of what we mean is conveyed in the following story.

DEEP LISTENING CAN OPEN THE HEART

by Patricia Moore Harbour, Ed.D, CEO, Center for Quality Education
Founder, Healing the Heart of Diversity, a Social Change Process

In all thy getting, get understanding.
- Proverbs 4:7

Authentic listening is listening from within. When I listen, to the extent possible, from where you "sit," I hear your story and gain a deeper understanding of how you see the world. Thus, I enlarge my perspective, increase my knowledge and deepen my understanding of who you are.

Hafiz, the Sufi poet, described that he listens as though the speaker was his most revered teacher sharing his cherished last words. In a moment like this, a shift occurs, and the speaker feels accepted and is more willing to communicate authentically, say what is true for her or him. The listener and speaker become connected, and bonding through understanding is a possibility.

At one Healing the Heart of Diversity Retreat, a diverse group of participants strained to stay engaged with a Moslem member of the circle who shared his beliefs about gays and lesbians. He said, "I know this is hard to hear, but if we can't speak authentically here and tell our truth, then where can we do it?" He told how he grew up, what lessons the Koran taught him and how, being a true believer, no matter how much he cared about his friends and colleagues who are gay, he had to believe what he was taught or his faith was a sham. Many challenged his perspective and some put it down as wrong. Tensions from the discomfort silenced some and enraged others, but the circle continued to work through the difficult interaction.

Finally, a Hindi businesswoman said, "It has been a challenge to listen to you and keep my heart open. I understand now what I did not know before. Although I still do not agree with you, I do love you, and there is room in my heart for your perspective to exist." In that moment, I could feel a shift in the room. Listening with the heart expanded the thinking and speaking for the entire group of participants. They became inclusive rather than exclusive. It was possible for different perspectives and truths to exist. They respected one another and continued to work together.

Experiencing the practice of deep, authentic listening in a community of colleagues gave me hope for change that is sustainable. I witnessed people who walked very different paths giving respect and appreciating each other more and more. They established a forum for working together.

Deep, authentic listening is necessary for a community committed to shifting its way of thinking, speaking and behaving in order to achieve a vision that sustains social justice and change.

To build bridges across race, class, gender and other potentially divisive cultural lines, we as capacity builders have to create a space where people with strong differences are willing to communicate with each other and listen to each other with open hearts and open minds. Doing so is the first step to making our dialogue fruitful.

SUMMARY

The first principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model is work from the community by listening and learning. As with building a house or making a meal, the first step is often the most important, because one is laying a foundation for the future. Listening to and learning about the community enables capacity builders to ground themselves, develop relationships, build trust and learn new and important things about those they are working to serve. What you hear and learn will guide you through the rest of the process.

The first principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change is *work from the community by listening and learning*. To honor this principle...

> Listen to and learn from community voices. Gather information from multiple sources. Challenge your own assumptions and biases. Be humble and have an open heart and an open mind.

Chapter Six

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY BY CO-DESIGNING THE CHANGE STRATEGY

Core Value: Community members must define their own social change strategy and capacity-building process.

Building Capacity for Social Change Principle #2	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work with the community by co-designing the change strategy	• Develop a concrete community-building or capacity-building strategy • Clarify roles, expectations and protocols • Engage the broadest group of stakeholders in planning the community change process	• Work as a peer, not as an expert • Be community-driven • Co-design the community-building or capacity-building process and adapt it based on evolving needs • Be mindful of race, class and power dynamics at play in every organization and community	• Put the community first rather than yourself • Be transparent

As described in Chapter Five, the first principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change approach is to gather information and build trust by honoring and listening to the community's voice. This way of working firmly establishes the capacity builder as an ally and team member in helping to realize organizational or community change goals.

When working in the community, this listening process usually occurs during the initial orientation. It continues on into the next phase of the work with an organization – the co-design period. During the co-design process, capacity builders gain more clarity about why they've been asked to assist an organization or community and the specific job that they are being asked to do.

The second principle of Building Capacity for Social Change is to work with the community by co-designing the change strategy. The community's voice, perspectives, timing and insights are crucial to the learning process and to sustaining the community change work.

Reflecting on the Work

When one bolsters community-building work through capacity building, then that work is done not only more efficiently but in a more lasting way that can potentially be taken to scale.

Because the community needs to have the primary decision-making role for any capacity-building process to have the best and most sustainable outcomes, NCDI engages with organizational and community members in a variety of ways to ensure their voices are heard and understood. For this reason, a number of conversations take place before a final agreement is put in place for the work to be done, as described later in this chapter, and the process usually takes longer than what might occur during the initial phases of a typical consulting relationship contract.

WAYS OF WORKING

The main goals when implementing the second Building Capacity for Social Change principle – working with the community – are to develop a concrete community-building or capacity-building strategy; clarify roles, expectations and protocols; and engage the broadest group of stakeholders in planning the community change process.

At the beginning of the capacity-building process, you may have initial hunches about what the underlying issues are, the right components of an intervention strategy, how to proceed, key stakeholders you will need to talk to and how long the process will take. But an important departure from conventional practice takes place in this phase of the work: NCDI establishes working relationships in which people are treated as peers in the social change process – not just as clients.

WORK AS A PEER, NOT AS AN EXPERT

In traditional management consulting, the consultant is most often seen as the expert. In the Building Capacity for Social Change approach, the community is the expert and needs to be the driver, with the capacity builder stepping to the side and offering support as the vehicle for the process. This shift in the capacity-building role will almost always lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes when working with social change organizations and groups.

MY BEST IDEAS

By Manuel Pastor
Director, Program for Environmental and Regional Equity
University of Southern California

THE BEST IDEAS "I" HAVE AND THE BEST RESEARCH "I" HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO COMES FROM MY WORK WITH COMMUNITY-BASED GROUPS. NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS AND RESIDENTS ARE AWARE OF THE ISSUES THEY FACE, CLEAR ON THE STORIES THAT WILL MOVE PEOPLE, AND LOOKING FOR ACTIVE PARTNERS, NOT DETACHED DIRECTORS. AND WHAT A LEARNING EXPERIENCE IT CAN BE IF WE DECAMP OURSELVES FROM CENTER STAGE, LISTEN HARD TO THE INTELLECT AND HEART OF THE COMMUNITY, AND WORK TOGETHER TO DESIGN RESEARCH PROJECTS AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS. AS CONSULTANTS WITH SOME EXPERTISE, WE HAVE A ROLE - WE JUST DON'T HAVE THE ROLE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE UNIMPORTANT - WE OFTEN BRING UNIQUE SKILLS - BUT OUR GIFTS ARE BETTER APPRECIATED WHEN THEY ARE GIVEN WITH GRACE, HUMILITY, AND A TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY WISDOM.

A delicate balance hangs in this process. The capacity builder needs to understand and manage the dynamic tension of being a resourceful helper and/or partner while at the same time s/he may be expected to act like "the expert." To be a valuable resource to an organization or community, you have to bring and contribute your own voice to the discussion but not let your views dominate and drown out the voices of community members. Your opinions, ideas and experiences need to be voiced, but only in a supportive way that leaves room for community members to define, direct and determine how social change is to occur.

EXERCISE 6.1. CHECKING ONE'S EGO

- Think of a time when your ego got in the way when working on a community project:
- What happened?
- Who was harmed?
- What would you do differently?
- What are some internal "triggers" that will serve as reminders to you in the future?

Capacity builders working as peers play a dramatically different role than those working as experts. How an organization or community typically experiences the capacity-building process will depend on whether a "helper" or "expert" stance is taken with an organization or community. The following chart details the key characteristics of how working as a peer differs from working as an expert.

Chart 6.1. WAYS OF WORKING IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: Peer vs. Expert

THE WORK	WORKING AS A PEER	WORKING AS AN EXPERT
Engaging the community	• A facilitator • A connector • A resource broker • A learning catalyst • A cheerleader • A critical friend • A partner	• A content authority • A specialist • A hired gun • Leading with a degree • One with answers • A detached, objective advice-giver
Building organizational capacity		
Developing community relationships		
Implementing community development programs		
Advocating for systems change that benefits the community		
Documenting and telling the community's story		

The peer vs. expert traits appear along a continuum. Working as a peer does not mean you can just show up and be a friend. When working as a peer, there are times when it is necessary to draw on your own training and experience and share your capacity-building expertise, skills, competencies and social consciousness. You must keep up to date on research and literature. Working as a peer is not a license to be uninformed, casual or slipshod.

Because seeing the capacity builder as a peer and not as an expert is not what most people are familiar with, there may be some resistance to the capacity builder assuming this role. A peer relationship normally requires the partner organization or community group to do more work than it may have foreseen or expected. High value is placed on the knowledge and experience of organizational and community members, and they are asked to contribute their expertise. As learning occurs, there is more emphasis on how the community members themselves will apply new knowledge to the specific situation. Although the capacity builder may consult with or use outside technical resources, s/he doesn't position her/himself as the content expert, but rather as a knowledge broker and bridge to information and learning.

In traditional management consulting, the consultant is viewed as the knowledge expert and little emphasis is placed on enabling community members to take charge of their own destiny. The consultant's presence is defined by tasks and time, and s/he leaves and moves on when the project is over. Content expertise and an ability to deliver the final product are seen as primary responsibilities. This style of consulting is much more the norm in our society, where experts are seen to have the knowledge, and the role of organizational and community members is to listen and follow the expert's advice. Nowhere is this style exemplified better than by the medical model of our current healthcare system.

EXERCISE 6.2. WORKING AS A PEER OR AS AN EXPERT

- Look at the "Working as a Peer" and "Working as an Expert" styles in the above grid.
- Drawing on your own experience, discuss the difference between working as an expert and as a peer.
- Discuss what's hard about working as a peer.

BE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

In the Building Capacity for Social Change way of working, the capacity-building team looks to the community to deepen its understanding of social conditions, power relationships, cultural dynamics and complex, challenging issues. Community members are involved in defining and charting their own pathways to the future and engaged in co-designing the capacity-building process. They are an informed and empowered partner. In other words, they become active agents of their own social change process.

Having an organization or a community drive the capacity-building process seems intuitive and simple. In many excellent publications offering advice on how to consult with nonprofits, authors have written extensively on the contracting process, the importance of building relationships, and being mindful of the "stickiness" factor – namely that one's recommendations are more likely to be acted on – or to "stick" – when there is a certain level of readiness, internal capacity and a culture for change in an organization.

When the goal is social change, however, there is a significant difference in how capacity building occurs in a client-centered and community-driven process than in an expert-driven process. A community-driven process has the following goals:

- Identify and lift up indigenous community wisdom. In the NCDI approach, the aim of the capacity builder is to consciously uncover, connect and honor the innate wisdom and resources of the community. Community members are challenged to use their expertise not only to work on fixing problems, but also to have a broader view and work for social change. In contrast, valuing community wisdom and connecting community work to a social change process does not happen often in mainstream consulting.

- Broker knowledge and resources on behalf of and with the community. In the NCDI way, capacity builders research and share information on best practices and link community members to financial, human and technical resources that can be used to implement solutions. In contrast, mainstream consultants are less likely to view capacity building for community members as a basic and essential professional responsibility.

- Build bridges across cultural identity groups in the community. In the NCDI method, strengthening relationships among and across racial and cultural identity groups, especially in communities with rapidly changing demographics, is one of the most important roles of a capacity builder. No sustainable social change can happen without it. Traditional consultants, in contrast, often ignore or underplay sensitive and potentially explosive issues of race and culture until they surface, and then treat them as "unnecessary distractions" when they do not know how to address them.

- Use participatory and popular education methods to build community capacity. In the NCDI process, it is important to focus on transferring knowledge and developing leadership. In contrast, mainstream consultants typically bring their knowledge and expertise to the community and take it with them when they go. Short-term capacity may be enhanced in an organization or community, but over time it will dissipate without a clear and conscious emphasis on leaving capacity on the ground.

The following chart contrasts the community-driven NCDI way of working in communities of color with the typical mainstream consultant-driven way.

Chart 6.2. WAYS OF WORKING IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: Community-Driven vs. Consultant-Driven

THE WORK	COMMUNITY-DRIVEN	CONSULTANT-DRIVEN
Engaging the community	• Identify and lift up indigenous community wisdom • Broker knowledge and resources on behalf of and with the community • Intentionally build bridges across racial and cultural identity groups in the community by addressing these dynamics • Use participatory and popular education methods with a focus on transferring knowledge and developing leaders	• Rely on the consultant's knowledge and professional expertise • Building the capacity of community members is not a professional responsibility • Ignore or downplay race, class and power dynamics, except when these issues get in the way • Bring knowledge and expertise to the community and take it with you when the project ends
Building organizational capacity		
Developing community relationships		
Implementing community development programs		
Advocating for systems change that benefits the community		
Documenting and telling the community's story		

EXERCISE 6.2. REFLECTION

Reflect on a recent capacity-building experience you have had, either as a provider or a consumer. Thinking about the two ways of working in communities of color described in this section - being community-driven or consultant-driven – reflect on which method was present in that experience and what you learned from it.

CO-DESIGN THE PROCESS

Co-designing means jointly defining an overall community-building strategy or capacity-building process in partnership with an organization or community. Co-designing the work with the community involves taking into consideration local conditions, cultural context, resources available, languages spoken, leadership assets and other important factors – in other words, customizing the process.

In the co-design process, decision-making flows from the collective wisdom of community members who, if the capacity builder is successful, see themselves as peers with much to offer and teach as well as to receive and learn. Community members know their community better than a capacity builder ever will, and their voices and vision must guide the community change process.

There are usually six steps in the co-design process, described more fully below:

Step One: Hold initial meetings
Step Two: Assign a project team
Step Three: Interview key stakeholders
Step Four: Conduct community research
Step Five: Finalize the work plan and agreement
Step Six: Create an oversight committee to hold the process and parties accountable

Step One: Hold initial Meetings.
The goals of the initial meetings are to share information, initiate planning and start building relationships with the partner organization or community group as well as with other key stakeholders.

Step Two: Assign a Project Team.
The next step is to assemble a capacity-building project team that is as much like the partnering organization and community as possible, particularly taking into account the cultural dynamics at play, such as race and ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexual identity, faith practices, language and other cultural factors.

Step Three: Interview Key Stakeholders.
Beyond the initial meetings, it is important to talk with a number of individuals from different stakeholder groups. The purpose of these conversations is to gain a deeper understanding of the mission, structure and cultural dynamics of an organization or community group, its role within the community and how it is perceived by partners and community members. Tool 5.1, Gathering Community Information and Cultural Data, in Chapter Five is useful in this step.

Step Four: Conduct Community Research.
It may be necessary to conduct additional community research to learn more about an organization's history and its connection with the community. Narrative stories can be equally valid as primary sources of such information as research reports and articles.

Step Five: Finalize the Work Plan and Contract.
After the data-gathering period, the capacity builder is able to finalize the scope of work and complete an agreement with the partner organization. That agreement should be documented in a work plan that has clear outcomes, activities, success indicators, timeline, roles and responsibilities, and budget. The plan should be finalized in a memorandum of understanding or formal contract signed by the capacity builder and the partner organization.

Step Six: Create an Oversight Committee.
The last stage of the co-design work is to outline an accountability process by clarifying three key responsibilities:

1. **Organizational Accountability:** Work with the partner organization to define the protocols, methods and timetable for the accountability process.

2. **Community Accountability:** Reiterate the capacity-building philosophy and clarify the capacity-builder's accountability relationship to both the partnering organization and ultimately to the community at large. Note that the "client of conscience" is the broader community to whom the capacity builder is ultimately accountable for the quality and integrity of the work.

3. **Project Oversight:** Invite the partner organization to establish an oversight committee or task force that is diverse, representative and charged with ensuring that the community-building or capacity-building process stays on track and true to its intent.

The following tool describes the main outcomes, products and guide questions used during the six steps of the co-design phase.

Tool 6.1. Key Activities, Outcomes and Questions During the Co-Design Process

ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES/PRODUCTS	GUIDE QUESTIONS
1. Hold initial meetings with partner organization or community group	Information sharing, preliminary planning and relationship building with partner organization, community group and key stakeholders	• Why are you doing the project? Why now? • What do you want to accomplish? • Who needs to be involved? • When the project is completed, what will be different for the organization and community? • How many external consultants have you worked with in the past? On what types of projects? • Describe your best experience working with a consultant. Your worst experience.
2. Assign a capacity-building project team	A project team that takes into consideration the cultural dynamics of the organization and/or community.	• What are the main cultural dynamics that must be addressed to be most effective in this engagement? • To what extent does the project team reflect, embrace and understand the partner organization and/or community? • How will the gaps on the team be bridged? • How does this project fit in with the greater social change vision of the community? • What are the organization's main assets and contributions to the community? • How will the board, staff, constituents and/or community members be involved?
3. Interview critical stakeholders*	An initial understanding of the power dynamics within an organization, its role within the community and how it is perceived by partners and community members	• How will you bring diverse voices into the project? • Where do you anticipate the most resistance? From whom? Why? • Whom do you consult with when you're trying to answer the most important questions facing the organization and the community? • Who's considered to have power and influence (formal and informal) in the organization?
4. Research the history of the community and partner organization *	An understanding of the organization's history and its connection with the community	• Beyond the organization's hopes, what are your personal hopes for this project? • What are the key events in the history of the organization/ community? • In what ways have those events shaped the organization/ community? • Who in or outside the organization/community are its greatest champions? How did this happen? • If the organization ceased to exist, who'd be the most affected? Who'd be happy? Why?
5. Finalize the scope of work and complete an agreement	A written workplan for the project with clear outcomes, activities, success indicators, timelines, roles and responsibilities, and budget	• What are the desired outcomes? • How will you measure success? • What are the project activities, timeline and deliverables? • Who's responsible for what? • What are the decision-making/communication protocols? • What is the budget?
6. Create a project oversight group	A group of people who will take responsibility for making sure that the project stays true to its intent	• Who is the formal client of this project? Who is the larger community client? • What are the steps to be taken if and when either the partner organization or the capacity-building team feels that the project is off-course? • How shall communication occur if group agreements are not being honored?

* Please also see Tool 5.1 - Gathering Community Information and Cultural Data in Chapter Five.

Keep in mind that ultimately the capacity builder's job will be done, and s/he will leave and move on to the next project while the organizational and community members continue the work. During the co-design phase and throughout the entire project period, remember your greater social change purpose which, like a north star, guides you forward when your own or others' egos get in the way.

BE MINDFUL OF RACE, CLASS, POWER AND OTHER CULTURAL DYNAMICS

In the Building Capacity for Social Change way of working, race, class, and power dynamics are intentionally addressed as a normal part of working in communities of color. NCDI's approach creates safe spaces and facilitates dialogues where people are able to talk about issues of race, class, gender, age, sexual identity and other cultural identities.

Reflecting on the Work

Open discussions about race, class and power issues are always difficult to have. Attention must be given to managing the dynamic tensions that naturally arise when people have frank discussions about such issues.

If these conversations are not skillfully facilitated, then community members won't be able to build the type of bridges necessary to advance their social change work. The capacity builder's role is to help create a space for genuine dialogue to happen, facilitate the difficult conversations that need to be had about racial and cultural disparities, and help bring hope and vision of how an organization or community can begin to take a different path toward social change.

The Self that One Brings to the Work

What is the self that one must bring to the work in order to honor the second principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model and truly work with the community? The two main qualities needed by capacity builders serving communities of color are to put the community first and to be transparent.

Put the Community First

To "put the community first" means to suspend your own judgment, not push your own agenda and to use strategies that lift up the community voice and enable the community to express itself in appropriate ways. These are not simple tasks; they require a continual consciousness and evaluation of what is going on within the partnering organization or community, between the capacity builder and the partners, and within yourself as capacity builder in terms of working in a client-oriented and community-driven way. To honor the second principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model, one must know that the work of capacity building is about the community, not about the capacity-builder who has been invited to serve. The following story illustrates this point.

WHO'S REALLY IN CHARGE?

By Harry Snyder, Consumer Advocate, Former Peace Corps Director, Western Samoa

As the new Peace Corps Director in Western Samoa, I went on a visit to the island of Savaii to meet Samoan leaders and Peace Corps volunteers. As we drove around the island, I noticed that every village had a *malai* or village green surrounded by *fales*, traditional Samoan homes, and that in the middle of each *malai* was a small white statue. I asked my Samoan colleague to explain the significance of the statues. He responded, "Those are the *Fale Peaci Koa*." I asked what they were for and he replied, "They are toilets originally built in little shacks designed by volunteers to replace our traditional toilets. In English they are 'Peace Corps Houses,' but nobody used them. The shacks were torn apart so the lumber could be used to build cook houses. But the toilets were set in a lot of concrete and can't be moved."

After asking around, I found that Peace Corps volunteers had thought that Samoans could improve village sanitation and that it would provide a convenience to villagers to have an easily accessible toilet on their central green. This seemed like a logical infrastructure improvement to the U.S. staff and volunteers, who discussed the idea with village leaders and Samoan Public Works officials. The Samoan response to the question, "Would you like us to help you build Western-style toilet facilities in your villages?" was something like, "Sure, why not?" The project was approved and implemented using a great deal of Samoan and Peace Corps resources.

What the Peace Corps personnel did not understand was that our Samoan counterparts had a different approach to outside "expert" advice, discussion, problem solving and decision making than we did. After reflection and analysis of how this project design went wrong, I saw many areas to learn from for our future partnerships with Western Samoa.

First, I began to frame all of my project-planning actions as explorations of both strategy and mutual understanding. I learned to ask questions that are open ended, without "Yes" or "No" answers, such as, "Tell me some of the things the community sees as problems. Why is this a problem? Who thinks so? Who does not think it is a problem? What community tensions or politics might we be stirring up if we try to address this problem?" I also used this open-ended approach when doing site visits for grant making by asking, "What keeps you up at night about this project?" This method enabled me to get the most insightful and unexpected information, such as, "The budget really isn't big enough to do this." That is the start of honest collaboration and problem solving.

Second, I learned to make these and other inquiries in as unbiased a way as possible and in a manner that did not signal a particular answer. This lesson was brought home when I needed to make a decision about a request from two volunteers, the implementation of which could result in an offence to Samoans. I discreetly asked my Samoan friends and government officials for their advice. They told me to go ahead and grant the request, which I did. The result was a huge negative reaction from the Samoan village where the volunteers lived and the Ministry for which they worked. I rescinded the decision and went back to ask my advisors what went wrong. Each one told me that I had signaled the answer I wanted to hear, so that is what they told me. I now go back and double- or triple-check, asking, "What do you think is best? Why? What could happen if we do it that way? What is our goal in taking that action?" An objective investigative process of learning and questioning is essential for an effective working relationship.

A third principle I learned is to assure that the community's existing strengths and commitments are the bedrock for our actions together and that we are addressing the community's priority issue. I ask, "How important is this to you, to your community? Is it a priority? Who is involved? How heavily are they involved? What resources can we use? What successes in this area have you had so far? What process for community commitment, involvement and support did you use?"

Today, when I am asked to help a community with an advocacy campaign, I try to be sure that I am not selling my way of doing it. I have learned that the community's strength will only be brought to bear on their own priorities using a style with which they are comfortable.

I have also learned that, as important as reaching our goal is, it is equally important to make sure that in every project we are equally committed to building community capacity as we move forward.

Be Transparent

What is transparency? When someone is transparent, they are open, candid and straightforward. There are no hidden agendas, everything is on the table. As a result of being transparent, capacity builders can foster more open communication, engender more trust and build more bridges. To honor the second principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model, capacity builders are transparent with community members, partner organizations, funders and everyone else who has a stake in the community. The following statment helps explain what is meant.

Reflecting on the Work

A participant at the Knoxville Community Builders Leadership Institute, April 2007, noted: "[A capacity builder needs to] be honest with yourself and the group. If you know a decision has already been made about the project and the group only has power to decide how it's applied, come clean with that. Making the group go through the pretense of deciding what's already decided will only diminish their confidence and your own credibility."

SUMMARY

The second principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model is *work with the community by co-designing the change strategy.* To honor this principle...

> Work as a peer, not as an expert. Stay community-driven and co-design the community-building or capacity-building process. Be mindful of the race, class and power dynamics in organizations and communities. Put the community first and be transparent in all you do.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Chapter Seven

WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY TO FACILITATE ACTION AND LEARNING

Core Value: By linking action and learning together, community members can solve problems, build relationships and renew hope.

Building Capacity for Social Change Principle #3	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work in the Community to facilitate action and learning	• Bring community members together to solve problems • Build working relationships among diverse identity groups • Renew hope for the future	***For Action*** • Develop social change vision • Define the core capacity-building issues using the NCDI model • Facilitate action in the six capacity-building areas ***For Learning*** • Use a learning community approach in doing the work • Be a learning catalyst	• Be a co-learner in the capacity-building process and be willing to learn from mistakes • Be the best community servant possible

The third principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model is at the heart of the capacity-building engagement and is focused on action and learning. There are two parallel themes – taking action and learning from the process to take more informed action.

The main goals of this principle - working in the community for action and learning - are to bring community members together to solve problems, build working relationships among diverse identity groups and renew hope for the future.

Reflecting on the Work

We identify, inform, engage and connect community members to work together for positive change.

WAYS OF WORKING TO SUPPORT ACTION

A capacity builder's role is sometimes to be a jack-of-all-trades in nurturing, supporting and facilitating the social change process in communities of color. When working in the community to facilitate and support action, the capacity builder's main ways of working are to develop a social change vision and then work in specific areas to help build capacity to bring about the change the community wants to see.

DEVELOP SOCIAL CHANGE VISION

No single organization or community can realize its social change vision working alone. The process of bringing about social equity and economic justice requires that many leaders, organizations and communities, each playing their own part, be in alignment in order to accomplish a social change goal.

The challenge for capacity builders is how to facilitate a process where an organization or community can develop a shared vision of a thriving neighborhood, district or city to guide the social change work.

A thriving community consists of families that are economically successful and self-sufficient; children who are physically and mentally healthy, enter school ready to learn, and successfully graduate; and neighbors who know and care for each other across racial, ethnic and cultural differences, are involved in community change work and have social networks to tap into for information, resources and support. Affordable housing exists for various income levels; nonprofits and commercial establishments are viable and cater to community needs; cultural institutions reflect community diversity; and resident-driven organizations are effective in lifting up the people's voice so that the community's agenda is an integral part of any larger policy decision-making process. Community members have access to good information that informs how they work, play, serve and connect in ways that enrich their lives.

This vision of a healthy, multicultural community requires that each of six capacity-building areas be taken into consideration when working in communities of color.

FACILITATE ACTION IN SIX CORE CAPACITY-BUILDING AREAS

From working with communities of color around the country during more than two decades, the authors have observed that there are six types of work community builders do in both urban and rural areas: (1) organizing and engaging community members, (2) strengthening community organizations, (3) building relationships so that people work together, (4) implementing service programs or revitalization efforts to improve people's lives, (5) doing advocacy for systems change, and, one that has emerged in recent years, (6) documenting and disseminating information to build funder, legislative and community support.

In the Building Capacity for Social Change model, these six building blocks for developing thriving communities are the main focus of the work; they are the core capacities that must be developed if social change is to occur and take root in communities of color. They are the spokes of a wheel that, when functioning well, moves us all closer to a society that is more equitable and just. And they are the areas that must be taken into account when developing a vision of change.

The following chart shows these core capacities in communities of color. Chapter Eight describes in detail the capacity-builder's role when working with individuals, organizations and communities to build capacity for social change in each of these areas.

Chart 7.1. SIX CORE CAPACITIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

CORE CAPACITY	ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP THIS CAPACITY
Community Engagement	Informing, training, connecting and engaging people in the social change process
Community Organizations	Building strong organizations and networks and developing institutional capacity for social change
Community Relationships	Building relationships and forming viable partnerships across racial, social and cultural communities
Community Development	Improving the quality of life by changing material and social conditions in the areas of economics, education, health, housing, public safety, transportation, the environment and other areas of community life
Community Advocacy for Systems Change	Changing institutional policies, practices and modes of investment
Community Research and Evaluation	Documenting and telling the community-building story from the perspective of community members

EXERCISE 7.1 DEVELOP A COMMUNITY VISION

Alone or with others, describe your vision for building capacity in your own neighborhood/community in the six key areas:

- **Community Engagement:** What level and kind of community participation in civic affairs would give the community the capacity to make change?
- **Community Organizations:** What would stable community organizations or networks look like and what impact would they have?
- **Community Relationships:** What types of working relationships among diverse groups would most contribute to positive community change?
- **Community Development:** What improvements are most needed in the overall quality of life – e.g., in the areas of education, economic development, housing, health and well being, public safety, transportation and the environment?
- **Community Advocacy for Systems Change:** What public policy changes are desired and what type of community advocacy is needed to bring about these changes?
- **Community Research and Evaluation:** What would be the most effective ways to track and report on key community issues?

The challenge of building capacity in these six areas exists, in variations and degrees, in every community change effort. Each client organization or community may present its issues in a different way, and it may not have a holistic view of community building or see how capacity building is, in one way or another, intertwined with their main issues. However, successful social change efforts inevitably require an examination of and work in each of these six capacity-building areas.

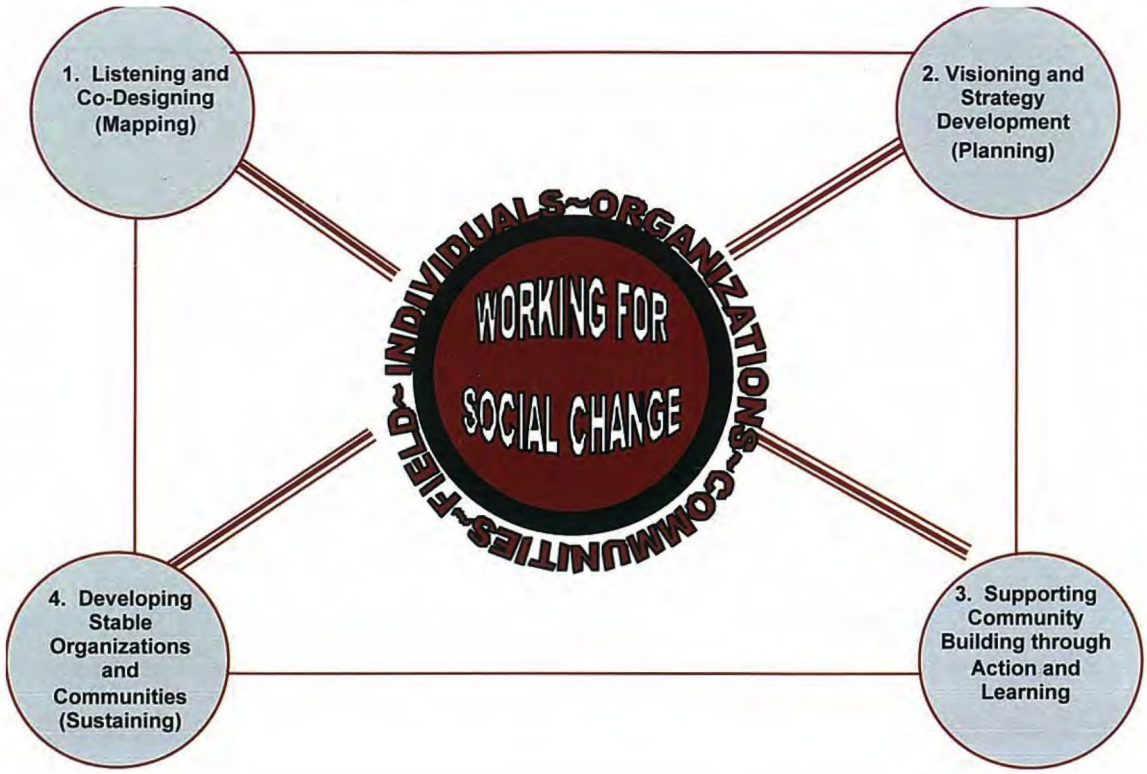
Thus, bringing about social change requires that capacity builders work in a holistic way with individuals, organizations, communities and, beyond that, the field, focusing on the six key capacity-building areas required to engage, strengthen, connect and empower communities of color. When using NCDI's framework, capacity builders work with organizations and communities in these six areas based on the organization's or community's particular assets, needs and circumstances. Thus, the capacity-building services are customized to each project and guided by the context and cultural norms of the community or organization being served.

The graphic below illustrates how the six capacity-building areas are linked together in a holistic way to bring about social change.

Figure 7.1. Six Capacity-Building Areas

The NCDI process helps individuals, organizations and communities to take action in these six capacity-building areas by guiding them through an intentional process that entails four major steps: (1) listening and co-designing a change strategy (mapping), (2) visioning and developing strategy (planning), (3) supporting community building through learning and action (implementing) and (4) developing stable organizations and communities (sustaining). In the following section we describe the flow of the capacity-building process through these four steps, from mapping to sustainability.

Figure 7.2. FOUR CAPACITY-BUILDING STEPS



STEP 1. MAPPING: LISTENING AND CO-DESIGNING

In Chapter Five we described the NCDI listening process and its goals to learn about an organization or community, form relationships and build trust. The listening period begins during the orientation phase of a project and continues through the co-design process and beyond.

In Chapter Six, we described the NCDI co-design process. Co-designing is working with a client organization or community to formulate a technical assistance and training plan that will support the community change process. Co-designing takes into consideration the local political, economic and cultural conditions, allowing the work to be customized for each organization or community.

As described in the previous chapters, the aims of the listening and co-design process when working with organizations or communities are to define outcomes for the community or capacity-building program, develop a planning schedule, create a resident engagement strategy, identify key partners and determine how to conduct user-friendly meetings for diverse community groups. Thus, listening and co-design set the stage for a deeper level of work to build capacity for social change.

STEP 2. VISIONING AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Visioning and strategy development is an important next step in the capacity-building process. In this phase of the work, the capacity builder co-designs and facilitates a series of organizational or community meetings to develop a succinct vision and implementation strategy that can serve as a blueprint for change. During these meetings, which take place in an open space such as an organizational retreat or a community-wide meeting, goals are set; a plan of action is developed with strategies, timelines and desired results; and capacity-building needs are identified to sustain the work over time.

For an organization, visioning and strategy development are normally one of the main steps in a strategic planning process, where the capacity builder conducts an organizational assessment and then helps to create an identity statement; develop a long-range plan with outcomes, measurement indicators, strategies, partners and an evaluation methodology; and outlines a resource-development strategy. In addition to these standard strategic planning elements, the Building Capacity for Social Change model takes the additional key steps of engaging organizational members in strategic dialogue about how to link their work to other social change efforts and how to improve the effectiveness of their work and sustain it over time through organizational capacity building. More detailed information about this organizational development approach is presented in Chapter Eight.

For a community, the visioning and strategy development process occurs after several co-design meetings with key stakeholder groups and extensive outreach efforts to engage a broad and diverse cross section of community members. In meetings that may involve up to several hundred people, the Building Capacity for Social Change model uses a unique community planning process in a six-meeting format:

Meeting 1: Introduce the community change initiative and engage community members in small-group dialogue to develop a list of key community issues.

Meeting 2: Share demographic data on the community, review community issues in small groups and poll all community members to choose three potential goals.

Whenever possible, an effort is made between the second and third meetings to meet with stakeholder groups to get feedback on the planning process so far.

Meeting 3: Share community assessment data for the three goal areas, review key issues and select one or two as the community goals to pursue at this time.

Whenever possible, an effort is made between the third and fourth meetings to hold as many sessions as possible with community groups to get different views on the best strategies to implement the community goal(s).

Meeting 4: Share community feedback about strategies, begin prioritizing strategies to reach the chosen community goal(s) and brainstorm a list of success factors for measuring results.

Meeting 5: Review strategy options, poll community members to select up to five strategies for reaching the community goal(s) and celebrate the community for a job well done.

Meeting 6: Form action planning teams for each approved strategy, develop a short-term plan of action in each strategy area and launch the implementation process.

The flowchart on the following page describes a prototype community visioning and strategy development process that is customized for each community. It shows (1) the typical goals of a community change initiative, (2) the co-design meetings with stakeholders before and during the planning process and (3) the six large community meetings where one or two community goal(s) are selected, strategies are identified and action teams formed to launch the implementation process. [16]

[16] This flowchart was adapted from a similar graphic developed by the University of Michigan Technical Assistance Center for the Good Neighborhoods Initiative sponsored by the Skillman Foundation in Detroit, Michigan.

Chart 7.2. Community Visioning and Planning Process

CORE CAPACITIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

1. **Community Engagement:** Informing, connecting and engaging community members in neighborhood planning and improvement
2. **Community Organizations:** Building stronger organizations and networks in neighborhoods.
3. **Community Relationships:** Building relationships and forming partnerships across racial, social and cultural communities.
4. **Community Development:** Improving the human, economic and physical conditions in neighborhoods for vulnerable children, youth and families
5. **Community Advocacy for Systems Change:** Changing institutional policies and practices and increasing public and private investments in neighborhoods
6. **Community Research and Evaluation:** Documenting the community-building story and providing long-term statistical evidence of community change

PRE-PLANNING

Identify and engage key partners in co-designing and guiding implementation of the community change initiative

STAKEHOLDER MEETING 1

a. Provide overview
b. Review proposed community meeting schedule
d. Describe roles of key stake-holder groups
c. Introduce key partners

STAKEHOLDER MEETING 2

a. Review community planning strategy
b. Develop community outreach strategy
c. Define communication strategy/protocols
d. Distribute materials for first community meeting

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING 1

a. Provide overview of community change initiative
b. Identify key community issues in small groups

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING 2

a. Share demographic information
b. Review key issues
c. Identify 3 possible community goals

STAKEHOLDER MEETING 3

a. Get feedback on the 1st two community planning meetings

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING 3

a. Share baseline data on 3 goals
b. Review key issues
c. Choose 1 or 2 community goals

SMALL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS WITH...

CBO's | Schools | Businesses | Faith Orgs | Etc.

a. Share Community Goal identified in Meeting #3
b. Identify success indicators – what does success look like?
c. Identify strategies to reach the community goal
d. Define community learning needs/issues

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING 4

a. Share community feedback about strategies, success indicators and learning
b. Begin prioritizing strategies
c. Develop list of success factors

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING 5

a. Review strategy options
b. Choose up to 5 strategies to reach community goal(s)
c. Celebrate the victory

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETING 6

a. Form action planning teams
b. Develop short-term action plans
c. Launch implementation process

STEP 3. SUPPORTING COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH ACTION AND LEARNING

The third implementation step is supporting community building through action and learning – this is, implementing projects in the key strategy areas to begin working toward the community goal. In this phase, capacity building focuses on developing leadership, strengthening organizations, forming or bolstering existing collaboratives and supporting community-wide planning and governance activities. In the capacity-building field, this is commonly called the readiness phase, where priority is given to launching projects and doing a wide range of capacity-building activities for individuals, organizations and the broader community.

Working with individual leaders, the capacity-builder's roles include training and coaching, planning for and coordinating peer exchanges and/or facilitating a range of leadership-development activities. They also include supporting community education and outreach efforts to fully engage the diverse groups in a community.

With organizations, the capacity-builder's roles are twofold: first, providing technical assistance, training and consultation services to individual nonprofits or community groups to help them become more stable or sustainable and, second, helping service delivery networks and other collaborative groups to overcome the normal pitfalls of collaboration. Once again, when working with organizations at any level, the capacity builder facilitates a dialogue on linking community-building work with other social change efforts and on improving organizational effectiveness through capacity building.

For communities, the capacity builder's roles in the readiness phase are to identify and support a core group of anchor organizations to play lead roles in implementing the community change initiative, develop an integrated community plan that links the various action plans created during the visioning and planning process, support the establishment of a community governance structure to provide oversight and direction for the initiative, and work on building capacity in the six core areas so that the initiative can be sustained after the funding that is supporting it is gone.

Developing community governance structures is one of the most challenging aspects of this work. NCDI's approach is first to engage in an extensive listening process with community members to get their diverse perspectives on community governance. Then, NCDI employs the following six-meeting process for community members to come together to form a governance entity, consisting of four task force meetings and two large community meetings:

GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE MEETINGS

Meeting 1:
Introduce the governance planning process, share research on community governance models and define purpose and role of governing body.

Meeting 2:
Discuss membership issues and develop preliminary recommendations on number, diversity, terms of office, eligibility requirements and selection process.

Meeting 3:
Discuss operating issues and develop preliminary recommendations on meetings, decision making, officers, committees, leadership development and accountability.

Meeting 4:
Develop recommendations on forming a governance structure and process and a strategy for presenting recommendations to the community for consideration and action

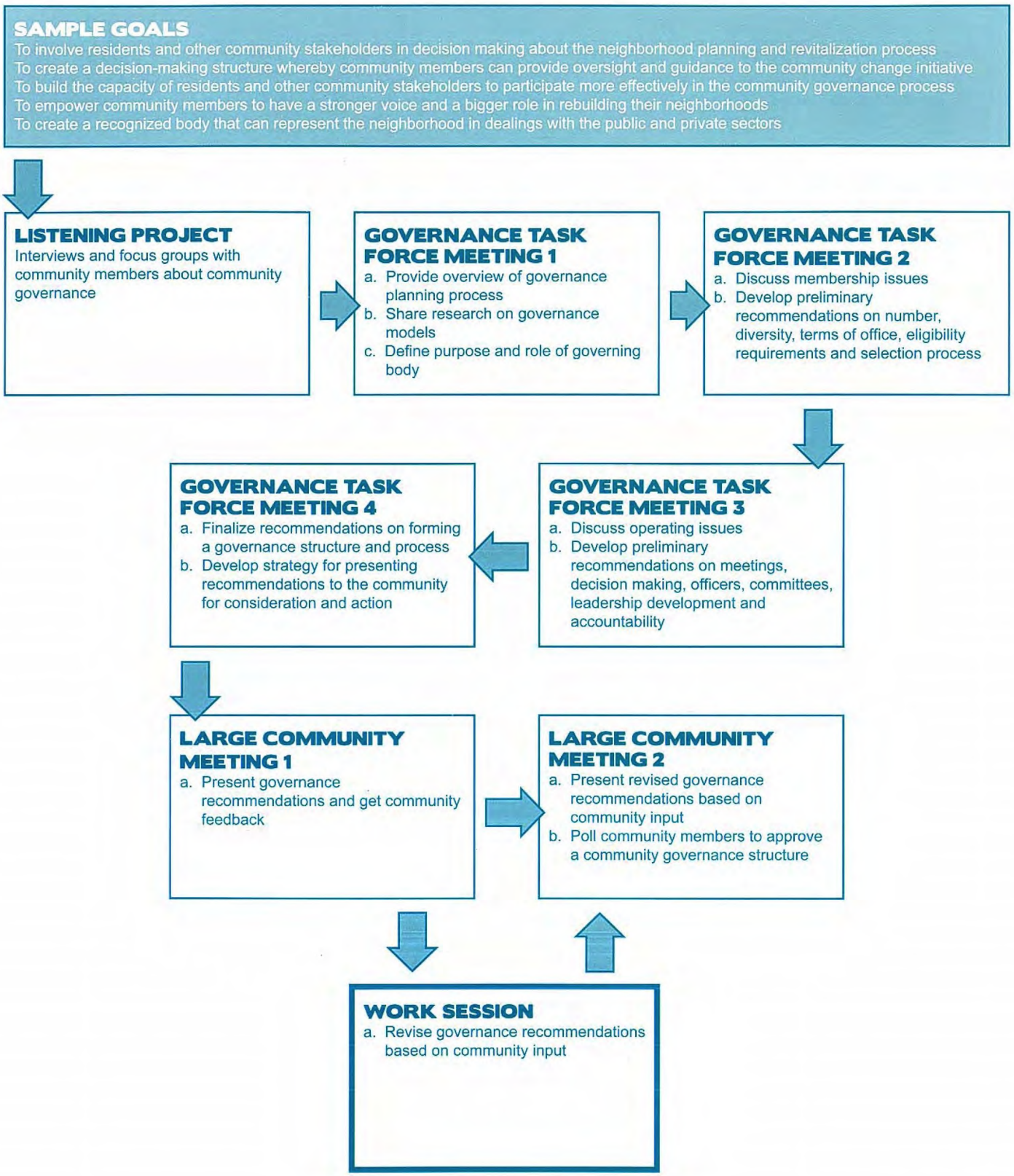
LARGE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Meeting 1:
Present governance recommendations and get community feedback.

Meeting 2:
Present revised governance recommendations based on community input and poll community members to approve a community governance structure.

The flowchart on the following page describes a prototype community governance planning process that is customized for each community. It shows the typical goals of community governance and key activities during the six-meeting process.

Chart 7.3. Governance Planning Process



STEP 4. DEVELOPING STABLE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

In the Building Capacity for Social Change model, there are four types of work involving four different audiences: (1) organizing and engaging people, (2) strengthening community organizations and networks, (3) improving communities and (4) influencing the field. Social change is more likely to occur when these distinct capacity-building activities are linked together into an integrated whole to achieve the goal of community transformation.

How to develop stable organizations and communities using NCDI's holistic method of building capacity for social change in low-income communities of color is the subject of the next chapter (Chapter Eight), We close this section with a summary description of the unique role of capacity builders in this phase of facilitating action in the capacity-building process.

FACILITATING ACTION: THE ROLE OF CAPACITY BUILDERS

The chart below shows the types of roles that capacity builders can play to facilitate action in the six capacity-building areas. These roles are further described in the next chapter.

Chart 7.4. ROLE OF CAPACITY BUILDERS IN FACILITATING ACTION

CAPACITY-BUILDING AREA	SUPPORTIVE ROLES
Community Engagement	• Promote leadership development • Involve residents in community improvement programs • Bring social change perspective to the work
Community Organizations	• Provide organizational development services • Work to change organizational culture • Create spaces for community voices/participation
Community Relationships	• Promote learning about diverse cultures • Connect diverse community groups • Develop mutual support networks
Community Development	• Promote learning about the community development process • Support development/implementation of revitalization programs • Identify and engage strategic partners
Community Advocacy for Systems Change	• Develop a policy agenda for the community • Develop community mobilization strategy for policy campaigns • Promote learning about the advocacy process
Community Research and Evaluation	• Promote learning about research and evaluation • Develop a research agenda for the community • Use participatory research/evaluation methods

Beyond these key activities, the capacity builder has another important role: being a bellwether who assesses progress along the way and shares findings with key stakeholder groups. Here, the role of the capacity builder is to ensure that there is a periodic review of the community change work with broad stakeholder participation. This review might include helping a group revisit its vision to make sure that it is still relevant, analyzing new information about the changing environment, reviewing group agreements to ensure that they are being honored or rethinking the overall plan of action. During this assessment process, the following types of questions may arise:

- Looking at the purpose and goals of the project, where are we? What's next?
- So far, what are our achievements and challenges?
- What are the key things we are learning?
- How does what we have done inform how we want to proceed? What kind of changes do we need to make to our action plan?
- How is our team functioning? Are there issues that need to be addressed?
- What have we learned about our partners and how best to work with them?

Throughout the assessment, the capacity builder's role is to celebrate the progress already made and work with the key players to change what is being done as necessary to optimize the results.

WAYS OF WORKING TO SUPPORT LEARNING

In capacity-building work, new ideas have the potential to influence behavior and practice, so learning takes on an additional value as a guide for action. Praxis – the interplay of reflection and action – is critical for individual, organizational and community growth.

In the Building Capacity for Social Change model, the capacity builder is a learning partner or catalyst for learning - someone who facilitates learning so that organizations and communities are able to make their own informed decisions. Capacity builders who work in this way see themselves as facilitators of a change process, not as "the expert" who drives the process.

One of the main methods to facilitate learning is forming peer learning communities that critically examine problems and issues.

USING A LEARNING-COMMUNITY APPROACH IN DOING THE WORK

Collective learning in a peer setting draws on the wisdom and power of the group versus that of any one individual, and it builds a community of like-minded change agents who generate ideas for joint programs or actions. Across the field, there is clear evidence that the power of peer-based learning is enormous.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation offers this description of what a learning community looks like:

A LEARNING COMMUNITY LOOKS LIKE PEOPLE EXHIBITING GENUINE RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER. IT LOOKS LIKE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE COMFORTABLE WITH SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES AND POSSESS AN UNFLINCHING CURIOSITY ABOUT "HOT" ISSUES. IT ALSO LOOKS LIKE A PLACE OF SAFETY, I.E., A PRACTICE FIELD, WHERE NEW IDEAS AND BEHAVIORS MAY BE "TRIED ON" IN THE PURSUIT OF WAYS THAT WORK RATHER THAN RIGHT ANSWERS.

The purpose of a learning community is to support participants' movement from individual knowledge and expertise to group wisdom. An essential part of this process is getting the participants to apply their learnings in real life situations and bring their enhanced individual knowledge back to the group to form a continuous learning loop, as shown in the following diagram. This learning loop happens through a series of facilitated, reflective dialogues about subjects that are significant to and have meaning for participants.

Figure 7.3. The Continuous Learning Loop of a Learning Community.

In a learning community, one is privileged to have exposure to a diversity of experiences, ideas, perspectives, backgrounds and orientations that expand and enrich the learning for each participant. Participants in learning communities go away with the following benefits and potential outcomes:

- A greater sense of belonging, empowerment, validation and connection ("I am not alone on this journey," "I do know this," and "I can do this!")
- Increased tools, know-how and ways of thinking to enrich their own continuous development
- Relationships that lead to collaborative work outside of the learning community
- Greater social capital and affinity with long-term value; once relationships are formed, as in planting seeds, the opportunity to reap can last a lifetime

BE A LEARNING CATALYST

The Leadership Learning Community – a national organization of people who run, fund, study and provide services to leadership development programs – has developed a framework for creating a learning community that includes five core factors: shared commitments, structure, environments, facilitation and applicability to real life.[17] Conscientiously addressing these factors in developing a learning community will provide the best environment for the evolution of learning. (See Chart 7.5)

Shared Commitments. Members of a learning community need to share a commitment to be fully engaged. Learning happens best when there is a passion for inquiry among learning-community members and trusting relationships are formed to establish a positive learning environment. Learning-community members have individual responsibility for their own learning and a shared responsibility to create a positive learning space with others that leads to new knowledge, understanding and practice. Collective wisdom can only emerge when individual knowledge and experience are valued and captured. As a learning catalyst, the capacity builder's job is to believe in the abundance of collective wisdom and to help it grow and flourish. The capacity builder does this by lifting up the individual knowledge of learning-community members, facilitating lively and interactive exchange among the members and creating a sense of commitment to the group's learning process.

Structure. Learning communities need to have guidelines defining how they are to be structured and outlining the expectations of group members. Basic agreements need to be reached on the purposes of a learning community, member roles and responsibilities, membership boundaries, decision-making and communication, the use of rituals, and how often, when and where the meetings take place. The job of a learning catalyst is to make sure that these process issues are addressed in the beginning and periodically reviewed over time.

Environments. There are social aspects to creating a conducive and supportive learning environment. People should feel welcomed and safe to share their thoughts, be open and honest with their peers, and respect different identities, perspectives, experiences and learning styles. As learning catalysts, capacity builders help a group to understand that intellectual, professional and cultural diversity among learning community members is necessary for complex, generative learning to take place.

The physical environment is also important. The best physical space allows for face-to-face interactions among group members in a setting that has natural light and outdoor space where participants can rest, relax and reflect. As learning catalysts, capacity builders arrange for meeting space that is most conducive to learning.

Facilitation. Learning-community discussions are enhanced with good facilitation methods that contribute to the learning goals, relationships, inquiry process and evolution of the learning community itself. Learning is enhanced when people are able to participate in equitable ways without regard to race, language, role, title, rank, authority or style of engagement. As learning catalysts, capacity builders foster a spirit of curiosity and inquiry, allow for structured reflection and feedback on both content and process matters and pay attention to the power dynamics in a group.

Application to real life. In learning conversations about social change, there is an intrinsic tension between the need for action and the usefulness of reflection. In an organizational environment, participants may question the utility of spending time on learning versus time on directly working in the community. The role of learning catalysts is to balance this tension between reflection and doing so the action doesn't truncate the learning process and the learning process doesn't become an end in itself.

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[17] Adapted from content that was generated in part by a think-tank on learning circles. Participants included Ceasar McDowell, Lisa Nashua, Deborah Meehan, Heather McLeod, Dorothy Meehan, Sue Vandiver, Laurien Alexandre, Bong Wan Kim and Bella Celnik. www.leadershiplearning.org

Chart 7.5. The Leadership Learning Community Framework

CORE FACTORS	DESIRED RESULTS	CAPACITY BUILDER'S TASKS

Shared Commitments	• Each participant takes responsibility for his/her own learning
	• Each participant commits to contribute to creating group knowledge
		• Ask each member to write down and then share his/her commitments around their
		  • Learning agenda and learning questions
		  • Purpose for being in the learning community
		  • Expectations for self and others
		• Periodically (quarterly, twice a year, annually), review and update these commitments
		• During updates, ask members to share how the learning community furthers the work of social change in her/his life
		• Ask each member to bring a journal and set aside 5 to 10 minutes at each meeting for everyone to review their commitments and write down reflections on how well they are meeting those commitments. These reflections may be shared or confidential

Environments	• Members of the learning community are mindful of diverse cultures, learning styles, language preferences, title/rank/ power, age, experience with content and other culturally based dynamics present in the group • Learning-community members feel welcome to express ideas, perceptions, feelings, that may be different from others • Learning-community members are aware of the effect that social and physical environments have on their ability to learn, engage and share	• Facilitate opening exercises that help members share their unique upbringing, backgrounds, assumptions and/or world view • Ask the group to take time to observe and reflect on the ways group members are similar • Ask the group to discuss areas where members are different and how those differences are appreciated • Facilitate both the process and content aspects of meetings. Pay attention to each person's expectations, perceptions and feelings • Encourage all participants to engage with "I" messages: I am/I feel/I hear/I need, etc • Pay attention to your own location in the group. Arrange yourself to be at eye level • Pay attention to the physical space and room set-up: the lighting, the seating arrangement, the breakout spaces for small-group work, including the outdoors • Check in with the group about the physical environment and how it enhances and/or detracts from the work
Facilitation	• Learning-community members feel a sense of equity in the group, that no one person is more important than another	• Pay attention to the most verbal people and those who are more quiet and introspective. Invite the quieter people into the conversation • Pay attention to individuals whose native language is not English and decide how to ensure everyone's full participation

Chart 7.5. The Leadership Learning Community Framework (Continued)

CORE FACTORS	DESIRED RESULTS	CAPACITY BUILDER'S TASKS

Facilitation (Continued)	• Participants come away from sessions experiencing that learning is fun, hard, complex, dynamic and not always linear.	• Use a variety of facilitation techniques to draw out ideas and voices
		  • Do brainstorming exercises using Post-Its for idea generation, followed by grouping and categorization
		  • Have participants spend 1 to 3 minutes writing before talking
		  • Ask members to share in pairs before reporting out
		  • Use art supplies to stimulate new thinking or map existing ideas
		• Periodically, think about what's going on in the group: observe, reflect, analyze and give feedback.

Structure	• Learning-community members are clear about roles, responsibilities and expectations. • Learning-community members each make a conscious decision to be a full participant and to honor the agreed-upon structure.	• Facilitate a discussion about the purpose, roles and expectations of the learning community. • What are the top three desired results that are most important for most, if not all, of the participants? • What are the roles and responsibilities of members and the facilitator in meeting the agreed-upon goals? • Are the meetings open? Can anyone come and go? Or is the membership closed? • What is the attendance expectation? Can a member send a representative if s/he can't make a meeting? If members miss a certain number of meetings, are they still welcome? • What is the duration of the learning community? Six months? A year? Two years? How often should meetings be held? For how long? • How will the group make decisions: Will it use a consensus model? Will it vote? How will the group hold members accountable to the decisions that are made? • How will members communicate between meetings? What is the role of the facilitator between meetings? • Who will take notes? What kind of notes are needed How will they be shared and used? • Will there be a group ritual at the beginning of each meeting? At the end? • Capture the group's agreements on structure in a simple summary document. Ask each member to symbolize his/her commitment by signing it in a group ritual. • Periodically review and update the structure agreements to ensure their relevance.

Application	• Balance the tension between learning and action so that the need for action does not truncate learning and reflections and learning does not become an end in itself.	• Pay attention to facilitating actions that the group wants to take.
		  • Document those actions
		  • Identify who's doing what, by when and how
		  • Develop a reporting back mechanism (Next meeting? Group email? Call?)
		• Help the group reflect on the action steps
		  • What worked? What didn't work?
		  • What was learned?
		  • What should be done next time?

NCDI LEARNING COMMUNITY APPROACHES

The NCDI framework uses two distinct learning community approaches, depending on whether the work is with a single organization or with a group of organizations. For single organizations, NCDI uses a process called reflective practice, which engages organizational members in a review and assessment process to examine the past, review the present and chart the future. For a group of organizations, NCDI uses a process called peer exchange to bring groups together to discuss specific topics, share learnings and highlight lessons for the field. Each type of learning approach is preceded by a listening and co-design process.

Typically, both these models – reflective practice or peer exchange gatherings – produce the following main outcomes:

Content Outcomes

- More insight about the common challenges and pathways to achieving organizational sustainability and community impact
- Deeper understanding of race, class, and power issues in communities of color
- Knowledge of techniques for working with different cultural identity groups
- More clarity about policy issues and policy advocacy opportunities
- More understanding of how to get measurable results in community change work

Process Outcomes

- Ground rules for conducting the learning community
- Participation in a co-design process
- Formation of action teams to engage in follow-up activity
- More optimism about the collective potential of the group to change communities
- Stronger personal and professional relationships with peers
- Learning how to use the reflective practice or peer exchange model
- Participation in an evaluation of the learning community

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Reflective practice is a process whereby a learning community is formed to examine strategic issues, identify key lessons and build a consensus about the future direction of an organization or place-based initiative. Perhaps the main benefit of a reflective practice process is the consensus building that occurs about the lessons of the past, the current program strategy and especially the strategy for moving forward to carry out the mission and have the most enduring impact on a community.

A reflective practice process involves eight main steps:

1. Establishing a co-design team to plan the reflective practice process, including identifying the learning topics, learning teams, participants and meeting schedule
2. Polling organizational members (board, staff, partners and volunteers) to get input on the learning agenda and reflective practice process
3. Convening organizational members to review the reflective practice plan, define group protocols and form learning teams of group members who will conduct research and organize discussions for each learning topic

4. Charging and engaging the respective learning teams in fulfilling their responsibilities to carry out historical analysis, best practice research, key informant interviews and other fact finding that will go into a written framing paper with recommendations
5. Convening the co-design team to develop an agenda with each designated learning team
6. Holding a series of one- or two-day seminars for in-depth dialogue and consensus-building about each learning topic to reflect on the issues raised in the framing papers and develop next steps. The typical agenda for a reflective practice meeting includes the following:
   - Check in: introductions, personal reflections and setting the tone for the meeting
   - Defining issues: learning team presentation on learning topic to frame the discussion
   - Dialogue: sharing perspectives and problem solving in small/large group discussions
   - Moving forward: outlining a post-meeting strategy for follow-up activities
   - Check out: review, reflection, next steps and assessment
7. Forming action teams to carry out the follow-up activities formulated during the reflective practice meetings
8. Writing a detailed report on each seminar to document the learning process

PEER EXCHANGE

Peer Exchange is an approach to group learning developed by NCDI where participants are able to critically examine important issues in a safe learning environment. Peer exchange can be used for many different purposes – including planning and problem solving, skill building and conflict resolution. In our experience, the peer exchange model is one of the most helpful tools to build trust and foster collaboration among organizations with common interests. Peer exchange is most effective when carefully designed and implemented.

A peer exchange involves five main activities:

1. Establishing a co-design team to plan the peer exchange
2. Polling the participating organizations to get input about the learning topics and peer exchange process
3. Before each peer exchange meeting, convening the co-design team to develop the goals and agenda for the peer exchange
4. Holding a series of one- or two-day seminars for in-depth dialogue and consensus-building about each learning topic. The typical agenda for a peer exchange meeting includes the following:
   - Check in: introductions, personal reflections and setting the tone for the meeting
   - Defining issues: surfacing key issues and outcomes/challenges to frame the discussion
   - Dialogue: sharing perspectives and problem solving in small/large group discussions
   - Mutual support: outlining potential follow-up activities and how to use peers as resources
   - Check out: review, reflection, next steps and assessment
5. Writing a detailed report on each seminar to document the learning process

Tool 7.1 Provides examples of some questions to guide the learning community process. You will want to add or substitute your own questions depending on the topics you are considering.

Tool 7.1. Guide Questions for Reflective Practice and Peer Exchange

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE	
TOPIC	**GUIDE QUESTIONS**
Lessons From The Past	• What have we learned from our past work in this area? • What are the main issues that arose during the work, how were they addressed and what are the lessons for how we work in the future? • What have been the main consequences of our work in this area on different groups and how do we continue to engage these constituencies in moving forward? • What was the value of specific activities we undertook? • What were the challenges/the missed opportunities?
Current Program Strategy	• What is the community's perception of our work? Why? • What are the key issues and challenges of involving the community? • How can we be a truly community-based organization? • How can we build stronger working relationships across different communities? • What should be our process for doing community leadership development? • How can we operationalize a common approach for doing community work?
Strategy For Moving Forward	• How do we address the issue of pace and scope of our work? • How can we be innovative/entrepreneurial and apply these principles in a practical way in our organization? • How do we get to the place where we function as one entity with avenues for input from our multiple constituencies? • How can we organize in different communities to get everyone to work with each other? • How can we do more effective cross-cultural organizing? • How can we use resources to get long-term results for the community? • How do we balance the demands of different stakeholder groups?
	PEER EXCHANGE
Guide Questions	• How can we best learn from each other and share information about our work? • How do we: - Meet the growing needs in our communities - Meet our organizational infrastructure needs - Engage our boards to be responsive and represent the organization - Support executive directors who have to wear many different hats and are being pulled in many directions - Keep up and respond to changing trends - Find capable, experienced staff to work with our constituent groups - Address the challenge of finding funds - Help those who are bypassed by the existing safety net - Create genuine opportunities for collaboration - Develop common language and terminology to support collaborative efforts - Support collaboration through facilitated processes - Allay fears and share the work - Take care of ourselves (i.e., mind, body and spirit)

FACILITATING LEARNING: THE ROLE OF CAPACITY BUILDERS

Being an effective learning catalyst requires a practical understanding of three basic functions: how to create and maintain a positive, welcoming learning space; how to facilitate meaningful learning conversations; and how to be a knowledge broker for learning-community members. The learning catalyst role involves a combination of facilitation and knowledge-brokering activities.

In the Building Capacity for Social Change method, the learning catalyst uses a co-design process to create the learning environment with the participants. This process involves working with learning-community members to set the framework for meetings, define member roles and responsibilities and participation guidelines, create the learning agenda and content priorities, and handle logistics such as securing a physical space, equipment, translation, food and other details.

There are many articles and books describing the roles and responsibilities of a good facilitator. Here we lift up the essential elements of good facilitation techniques that foster participation, positive group dynamics and shared learning.

The learning catalyst as facilitator works with the participants to define the purposes and expected outcomes of the learning conversations as well as the core values and shared interests of group members. S/he facilitates the growth and development of the learning community through the stages of "forming, storming, norming and performing"[18] while addressing the group tensions that normally arise as a result of the different perspectives. S/he has the lead responsibility for managing the meeting process from pre-planning and convening to documentation and dissemination of reports. Throughout the learning process, s/he gives high priority to building relationships within the group and creating space for diverse perspectives to be heard on an equitable basis.

The learning catalyst is also a knowledge broker who assesses and builds on the existing strengths and assets of group members to enhance learning for everyone. S/he facilitates ongoing learning by:

- Connecting group members to outside resources via coaching, gatherings, web linkages and/or peer exchanges to transfer knowledge about similar social change work around the country
- Documenting the learning process in a real-time way so the notes are useful and inform practice
- Reviewing the process with participants periodically to measure progress toward learning community goals
- Building a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for learning within the entire group

[18] In 1965 Bruce Tuckman, a psychologist who researcher group dynamics, described a team-development model that identified the four stages that groups go through to become effective teams. In summary, these stages are getting started (forming), dealing with conflict (storming), developing common aims and strategies (norming) and functioning more effectively (performing). Accessed May 9, 2009 from http://www.businessballs.com/tuckmanformingstormingnormingperforming.htm

THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK

What is the self that one must bring to the work to honor the third principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model and truly facilitate action and learning? The two main qualities desired are to be a co-learner in the capacity-building process and be willing to learn from your mistakes and to sharpen your skills, check your attitude and provide the best capacity-building services that you can.

BE A CO-LEARNER AND WILLING TO LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

What does "be a co-learner" mean? When someone is a learner, that person is willing to ask questions, challenge assumptions, conduct research, investigate rumors, analyze facts, reconsider options and rethink choices. When someone is a co-learner, the person is a partner, colleague, collaborator and ally of others who are involved in the learning process. And when someone is able to learn from his/her mistakes, then that person takes the time to assess what went wrong, why it went wrong and what will be done differently in the future.

EXERCISE 7.1. REFLECTION

Think about and write down your responses to the following questions:

- What does being a co-learner mean to you?
- How are you currently a co-learner in your capacity-building work?
- What is the biggest mistake you have made in capacity (or community) building in the last two years?
- What did you take from the experience and how have you changed what you do as a result?

SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS, CHECK YOUR ATTITUDE AND BRING YOUR BEST SELF TO THE WORK

Why do we have to improve our skills, watch our attitude and do our very best work with every organization and community that we serve? Why set the bar so high?

As noted in Chapter Two, the capacity builder's first duty is to "honor the work." Honoring the work means listening to and respecting community voices, being client-centered and community-driven, co-designing the change process and being a peer, not an expert. It also means being humble, transparent and willing to learn.

When working with hundreds of community groups, it's easy to slip back into being just a consultant, putting your needs first and just getting by. Read the following story to see what is meant by checking your attitude and bringing your best self to the work.

GABOA THOUGHT IT WAS AN EASY GIG

By Kelley Gulley, NCDI President and CEO

Gaboa thought it would be an easy gig. He knew that he was a good consultant, he was somewhat familiar with the community and was generally considered a housing expert by his peers.

When Mrs. Payne, the resident elder who was the matriarch of the community and the leader of a housing project, called, she said, "We already have the money and just need someone to tell us what to do so we can start the project. Can you help us?" Gaboa obliged and the meeting was set. He was so thankful that he had gotten the call, because he really needed this gig to help pay some bills and knew he wouldn't have to work too hard. "I'll just show up with the plan that I helped Youth Build develop back in 1996," he thought. "They will love it!"

The evening finally arrived for the meeting. Gaboa had spent his day preparing the agenda and copying materials. He arrived early and met Mrs. Payne for the first time. She came in with an agenda and materials of her own. She too had been working hard all day preparing for the meeting.

Gaboa said, "Mrs. Payne, I hate to disappoint you, but I already developed the agenda and materials for the meeting. If you don't mind, I'd like to follow my agenda to make sure that the meeting flows smoothly and that we get done on time. We don't want to keep people too late, you know, with the criminal activities in the neighborhood and all."

Mrs. Payne stopped in her tracks. She couldn't believe what she just heard. She knew that she was a 77-year-old activist and that this young "consultant'" may know some things that she didn't know, but he couldn't possibly have just said that she couldn't pass out her materials and then insinuated that it was a "bad" community.

She very gently said to Gaboa, "Young man, let me see your agenda." Gaboa pulled out a one-page agenda from his briefcase. He tried to explain it to her, but she quickly threw up her hand to shush him while she read it.

"Mr. Gaboa, there's a question that I forgot to ask you when we first talked. Have you ever worked in this neighborhood before?" "No ma'am, I haven't," he said.

"Well, who helped you develop the agenda for the meeting? Did one of my committee members call you?" "No ma'am," he said. "I went off of my own experience. You know I used to do this kind of work with Youth Build and you said you wanted me to come and tell you what to do, so here's what I've done. Let me show you the..." She held up her hand again and said, "Stop. Just stop, Mr. Gaboa."

Then she went on to say, "Let me first apologize for being so excited about our grant that I didn't ask you all of the questions that I usually ask before hiring people to work for us. You seem a bit nervous today for some reason and that ain't gon' go over well with the folks on this committee, especially the youth. We are expecting 8 seniors and 12 kids to come to this meeting, and they are ready to work so that we have a plan by the end of the meeting. We don't care if it takes until midnight!"

Gaboa was really nervous now, he couldn't believe that he started out by making Mrs. Payne mad. He started packing his things when Mrs. Payne said, "And where do you think you are going?" He replied, "Well ma'am, you and I haven't started off right, so I'm sure you want me to leave before everyone gets here."

She said, "Oh no, you are not leavin'! Look, you have been hired to facilitate a process for us that we can't do ourselves or we would never have called you. Yes, we know you know something about this type of project, but we don't care about what you did with kid-build or youth-build or whatever build you called it. What we care about is having someone who will listen and help us think through and write up the process. We all have great ideas, but we can't do them all. We gotta figure out where to start and how to get there. Do you think you can help us with that?"

Gaboa humbled himself and said, "In all honesty Mrs. Payne, I took this gig for the wrong reasons. I showed up like this was a job where my expertise would lead to me getting paid. I thought this would be easy, but it isn't starting so easy. I apologize. And you're right; I let the recent stories on the news about this neighborhood make me nervous about being here at night. I am sorry, but I do think that I can help you reach your goal. Would you like to walk through your agenda and materials with me?"

Mrs. Payne smiled her wide smile and her gold tooth sparkled in the light. She walked over and gave Gaboa a great big grandmotherly hug and said, "I don't mind teachin' you young, educated whippersnappers how to work in the community and with the community. We don't never need ya'll to come work on the community."

She continued, "I've fired many, young and old, who have showed up wrong in my community. But I think the Lord sent you here for me to give you a life lesson that'll help you be successful in any community you work in. Are you ready for me to drop my wisdom on you now, baby?" "Yes ma'am. I'm ready," he said.

"Well, here it is...a very simple formula. Become one of us. Don't talk down to us and don't talk at us, but be one of us. When you're talkin', don't say things like you-all should do this or that; use we-words, so people feel like you're speakin' from the heart and includin' yourself. Also, don't stand over us durin' the whole meeting...become a part of our community by walking between the tables and making eye contact with the people. Finally, make sure that you listen and listen well, because we are the real experts in the room. You bring expertise, but we're the experts. Do you get it?"

She finished by saying, "Oh, and finally, don't believe everything you hear on the news. We've got some challenges in this community with crime and violence, but that's everywhere. Young man, there ain't no need for you to be afraid to be here, but if you are still afraid, you better leave now. The people will know it and you won't do anything but waste our time and yours."

As the people began coming into the room, Gaboa picked up the agenda and materials that Mrs. Payne had developed and began placing them on the tables and genuinely greeting the people. The meeting didn't end until 12:30 a.m., but at that time the community had a plan, was motivated and inspired to implement the plan and had solidified a positive relationship with a consultant who could guide them along the way.

SUMMARY

The third principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model is *work in the community to facilitate action and learning*. To honor this principle...

> Develop a shared social change vision with the organization/community. Define the capacity-building needs and facilitate action in each of the six key capacity-building areas. Use a learning-community approach in doing the work and serve as a learning catalyst. Throughout the process, be an eager co-learner, willing to learn from your mistakes, sharpen your skills, check your attitude and be the best community servant that you can.

Chapter Eight

WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY TO BRING ABOUT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Core Value: Building capacity for social change empowers and transforms communities.

Building Capacity for Social Change Principle #4	GOALS	WAYS OF WORKING	THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK
Work for the community to bring about social transformation	• Organizing and engaging people • Strengthening community organizations and networks • Improving communities • Influencing the field	• Implement capacity-building strategies in six key areas for individuals, organizations and communities	• Be a neutral facilitator and a people connector • Practice tough love… challenge people to do the right thing

As indicated in Chapter Seven, to develop stable organizations and communities requires attention to four main goals, each focusing on a different audience, with capacity-building activities linked together into an integrated whole to foster community transformation.

The main goals of this fourth principle – working for the community to bring about social transformation – and the audiences they address are organizing and engaging people, strengthening community organizations and networks, improving communities and influencing the field.

This chapter discusses the role of capacity builders when working with the first three audiences – individuals, organizations and communities – in the six core capacity-building areas discussed in Chapter Seven (see chart 7.1).

In this chapter, we discuss the ways of working and the roles of the capacity builder to implement capacity-building strategies with each of these audiences – individuals, organizations, and communities – across each of the six core capacity-building areas. The section on "working with communities" includes case studies from NCDI's experience in the field to illustrate working in each of the core areas from an on-the-ground perspective.

A chart at the end of the chapter (Chart 8.3) provides a summary of the roles of capacity builders in supporting individuals, organizations, and communities in building capacity for social change.

WAYS OF WORKING

Working with Individuals

Supporting natural leaders in communities of color to discover, articulate, hone and practice their leadership requires a combination of three elements: intentionally designed leadership development and skill-building programs to inform community members, peer learning spaces to connect them, and action-oriented activities to engage them.

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS TO...

INFORM + CONNECT + ENGAGE

Too often, the good intentions of people supporting the development of community leadership translates into a series of workshops that are one-shot events with little or no sustained impact on participants. Often, individual leaders are plucked out of their natural environments and put into training programs that are not connected to the real-life situations in their communities.

Although leadership programs are needed, they cannot exist in a vacuum. Training and development opportunities alone are not enough. For community members to step into their full leadership potential, they need specific types of learning opportunities: knowledge development or skill-building with relevant information, collective learning activities with peers so they get connected to and learn from each other, and action-oriented activities that further develop their skills as changemakers, as shown in the following chart.

Chart 8.1. Supporting the Development of Individuals

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	ACTIVITIES	DESIRED OUTCOMES
Inform	• Forums, seminars and other educational events • Trainings in specific skill areas • Readings • Research activities	• Gaining new and useful information • Increased awareness of possibilities and best practices
Connect	• Learning communities • Discussion groups • Collaborations/joint actions • Resource and support networks • Celebrations	• More social networks • Decreased sense of isolation
Engage	• Community outreach • Community visioning • Project planning/implementation	• Deeper understanding • More confidence • Stronger commitment to community building and social change

Informing Community Members

Community members want to deepen their understanding of community issues, hone their skills, build their confidence, and perfect their natural talents and assets. They also want to connect their day-to-day experiences to broader community-building and social-change efforts to have more impact in their communities. Capacity builders intentionally work to increase the knowledge and skills of community members to take on bigger challenges and greater causes. This work might include providing trainings in a number of areas, such as facilitation, teambuilding, cultural competence, public speaking, multi-stakeholder negotiations, community organizing, power mapping, appreciative inquiry and community-building models.

These trainings will yield the best results when they use an asset-based approach – that is, when they do not emphasize "what community members need to know" but rather focus on "what community members already know and what they have identified they would like to know to enhance those strengths." As part of the co-design process, it is appropriate for the training team to propose topics deemed essential for mastery of a subject that may not have been considered by community members. This, of course, is a fundamental shift from how leadership training for community members is usually approached.

Connecting Community Members

Often, people working in their communities feel isolated and alone. Trainings are a good first step in lessening this sense of isolation. However, it is also important to connect community members in other ways -- for example, through cross-site visits, discussion groups, joint actions, celebrations and linking them with existing resource and support networks in the neighborhood.

Engaging Community Members

The best training happens when there are structured opportunities to apply what has been learned to real-life situations. When community members are able to apply learnings in structured settings with their peers, they are more apt to deepen their understanding and improve their work in direct and measurable ways.

ROLE OF CAPACITY BUILDERS

One of main goals of the capacity-building process is increasing the capacity of individual community members so that they can be more effective agents of change in the community transformation process. The following is a description of "ways of working" as a capacity builder in the six core capacity areas with individual community members.

Community Engagement

Engaging a broad cross section of residents and other stakeholders is an important aim of the community change process. When this happens, there tends to be a stronger sense of identity, connectedness, pride and trust among diverse community groups. As important, communities are able to reclaim and exercise their democratic voice. To foster higher levels of engagement by community members, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Leadership Development:** Provide leadership development programs for community members focusing on community engagement strategies
- **Community Involvement:** Involve residents in working on local community improvement projects with other like-minded community members
- **Social Change Framework:** Assist residents to frame their personal stories and define their community issues in a larger social change context

Community Organizations
The vitality, effectiveness and sustainability of organizations and institutions in communities of color determine, to a great extent, the quality of life in these communities. Thus, community organizations play crucial roles in communities of color. For this reason, they must not only offer effective services but also have strong resident engagement programs to remain connected, responsive and accountable. To develop individual capacity in this area, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Capacity Building:** Provide leadership development programs for community members focusing on organizational development issues

- **Community Voice:** Promote opportunities for community members to play meaningful volunteer roles with organizations

- **Organizational Culture:** Work to establish an organizational culture that values resident input and is open to community participation

Community Relationships
Many communities of color are undergoing rapid and perhaps unexpected demographic changes today. Too often, tensions flare up between African Americans and Latinos, between Latinos and Asians, between Asians and African Americans, between Latinos and American Indians and so on. These dynamics highlight the critical role that capacity builders can play to promote and facilitate cross-cultural bridge-building efforts in communities of color. To build new bridges among diverse community groups, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Learning:** Provide opportunities for community members to meet each other, share information and engage in social networking

- **Connecting:** Assist community members with developing strategies to connect neighbors who don't naturally mingle and socialize together

- **Supporting:** Assist community members to establish block clubs and other social networks

Community Development
Community development is about improving the quality of life in neighborhoods. To play effective roles, community members need to know about various governmental functions such as land use and zoning, public health, environmental review, community services, public safety and workforce development, to

name a few. A good model is the work of environmental justice groups around the country that have educated their constituents about highly complex scientific terminology and health issues and made them informed players in the decision-making process. To expand participation in community improvement programs, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Revitalization:** Inform residents about community-building programs – the why, what and how, and identify volunteer opportunities for residents to meaningfully participate in the community revitalization process

- **Partnerships:** Link residents from different neighborhoods so that they develop a city-wide or regional perspective in their work

- **Learning:** Develop opportunities for community members to further their education, develop more job skills and advance their own careers

Community Advocacy for Systems Change

Typically, the residents of low-income communities of color have limited knowledge about the public policy process and no voice in shaping policy decisions. To address this problem, community members have to come together to develop a common policy agenda for change and work together for their common cause. To support efforts aimed at policy or institutional change, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Learning:** Provide advocacy training for community members in the areas of research, planning, organizing, communications and other critical advocacy skills

- **Defining Policy Agenda:** Assist residents to develop a policy agenda and advocacy strategy for their neighborhood

- **Community Mobilization:** Assist residents to mobilize a critical mass of their neighbors to work on advocacy issues

Community Research and Evaluation

Of all the six capacity-building areas, research and evaluation is the one where low-income communities of color tend to have the most limited capacity and the most limited role. Normally, important community issues get decided based on strong evidence and powerful stories that sway public opinion and influence decision makers. Few low-income communities of color have the capability to document and tell their own stories in ways that will influence public policy.

To build the capacity of community members to frame and participate in research and evaluation activities, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Learning:** Demystify research and evaluation by making it fun, engaging and meaningful and provide training for residents on participatory research and evaluation methods

- **Defining Research Agenda:** Engage residents in developing a research and evaluation plan for their neighborhood

- **Participatory Methods:** Provide opportunities for residents to play active roles in research and evaluation activities for their neighborhood

WORKING WITH ORGANIZATIONS

The quality of life in a community is directly related to the capacity of social institutions to provide basic goods and services that are responsive to human needs. Practically, this means that neighborhoods with strong economic, political, social and cultural institutions have a significantly better quality of life than those where this is not the case.

Reflecting on the Work

For NCDI, building the capacity of organizations in communities of color is one of the major imperatives of our time. Why? Because there can be no enduring social change in communities of color until they have the organizational or institutional capacity to lead govern, educate, provide for, renew and protect themselves. In other words, no organizational capacity, no enduring social change.

The NCDI model gives high priority to building strong organizations so that communities of color can become more stable and self-reliant over time. When building the capacity of small to mid-size community organizations, NCDI focuses on six key elements that are generally accepted in the capacity-building field as the basic qualities of a stable organization: leadership, governance, finance, programs, public relations and management. These areas of operation and the related activities are detailed in the following chart.

Chart 8.2. The Basic Qualities of a Stable Organization

ELEMENTS	AREA OF OPERATION	ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES/RESPONSIBILITES
Leadership	• Organizational Identity (Vision, Mission, Values, Strategies and Niche) • Organizational Planning	• Defining the basic purposes, strategic aims, operating principles, core functions, unique role and market value of an organization • Developing long and short-term plans to achieve the strategic goals of an organization
Governance	• Board of Directors	• Developing effective boards that govern with vision, competence, and compassion
Finance	• Fiscal Management • Resource Development	• Implementing sound fiscal management policies and procedures • Implementing a comprehensive resource development strategy to increase revenues and diversify funding sources
Programs and Services	• Program Development/ Management/Evaluation • Policy Advocacy • Partnerships	• Implementing program planning, management and evaluation systems to maintain quality services and have broad program impact • Promoting a policy agenda that is strategic, compelling, popular and attainable • Developing or strengthening partnerships with a select group of organizations, policymakers, funders, academicians and others who are key decision-makers and changemakers.
Public Relations	• Marketing and Branding • Positioning	• Implementing a strategic communications plan to inform key audiences and build a stronger base of public support • Assuming a leadership role in a select group of regional, statewide or national groups to elevate an organization's visibility and voice
Management	• Human Resources • Operations	• Recruiting, training, maintaining and supporting an effective staff team • Establishing sound policies and operating systems to maintain a healthy organization including use of technology

A second key goal of the capacity-building process is improving the effectiveness of community organizations to carry out their missions, connect their work and be part of community-wide efforts to bring about social change. The following is a description of how capacity builders can work with organizations in the six core capacity-building areas.

Community Engagement

Typically, the more a community organization is connected to its clientele and community, the more it will be seen as an indispensable partner for community improvement and empowerment by residents, funders and other stakeholders. Thus, it is important for community organizations to be intentional about engaging community members and have a feedback mechanism for getting input from consumers and other residents. To promote higher levels of engagement by community members, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Leadership Development:** Provide leadership development programs for organizational leaders and members (board and staff)
- **Community Involvement:** Expand opportunities for community participation in program planning, delivery and assessment
- **Social Change Framework:** Assist organizations to develop a social change vision for the community and align their work with that vision

Community Organizations

When working with organizations, perhaps the most important tasks of capacity builders are to provide good technical support, lift up the community's voices and nurture a passion for organizational excellence and continuous organizational learning. An organizational culture where learning and capacity building are the norm is necessary to achieve a level of operational effectiveness for long-term community transformation. To foster deeper organizational capacity in these ways, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Capacity Building:** Provide technical assistance, training and consultation services to improve the effectiveness of community organizations, and assist organizations to make capacity building a normal part of their work
- **Community Voice:** Assist organizations to bring community members onto boards, staff, and advisory groups and into leadership pipelines
- **Organizational Culture:** Work to establish an organizational culture that is inclusive, open to learning and results-oriented

Community Relationships

As part of their normal mode of functioning, community organizations should cross traditional boundaries and consciously build bridges at all levels: among clients of different cultural backgrounds, among parents who speak different languages, among board members of different organizations and among leaders of different programs. Working in this way, community organizations can take advantage of the myriad opportunities to build lasting relationships for enduring social change. To support organizations in building a kaleidoscope of new relationships among diverse community groups, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Learning:** Promote respect for cultural diversity and work to improve cultural competence
- **Connecting:** Work to develop positive working relationships and a team spirit among organizational members
- **Supporting:** Strengthen relationships among organizations involved in similar work to create opportunities for collaboration

Community Development

Many community organizations are working hard to improve neighborhood conditions through organizing, service delivery, advocacy and community development programs. The effectiveness of this work is greatly enhanced when there is cultural competence, a focus on results, strong partnerships and the use of evidence-based strategies. To effectively support community development programs, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Revitalization:** Assist organizations to develop linguistically and culturally appropriate services and to implement results-based programs with measurable impact
- **Partnerships:** Assist organizations to do joint planning and develop strong service delivery networks and to recognize and celebrate organizations doing cutting-edge work
- **Learning:** Work to increase organizational knowledge and use of best practices in community change work

Community Advocacy for Systems Change

Community organizations have an important job in identifying and pursuing advocacy efforts for systems change on behalf of the clients they serve and the greater community in which they work. These organizations can be instrumental in mapping public and private practices and identifying levers and pressure points that can lead to short- and long-term policy change. In supporting organizational advocacy activities, the capacity builder has the following key roles:

- **Learning:** Provide advocacy training for organizational members (board and staff) focusing on policy development and advocacy campaigns
- **Defining Policy Agenda:** Assist organizations to develop a policy agenda and campaign strategy to address key policy issues
- **Community Mobilization:** Assist organizations to develop a community education and outreach plan to mobilize community members around advocacy issues

Community Research and Evaluation

Of the many tools available for organizations to enhance capacity, research and evaluation are probably the most underutilized. Strengthening an organization's ability to document and tell its own and the community's story is critical to pursuing social change. A wide range of activities in this area include asset mapping, needs analysis, organizational and program assessment, and tracking client outcomes and neighborhood indicators. To build organizational capacity in this area, the capacity builder has the following roles:

- **Learning:** Provide training for organizational members on participatory research and evaluation methods and how to use these tools to support organizational planning and decision making
- **Defining Research Agenda:** Engage board, staff and community members in developing a research and evaluation plan for their organization
- **Participatory Methods:** Develop strategies to involve a broad cross section of organizational members (board and staff) in research and evaluation activities

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Often, an invitation to work with a community is initiated by a coalition of groups, an intermediary organization, a formal or informal resident-driven group, a funder or a collaborative made up of multiple stakeholders. In this context, capacity builders must be very clear on the question of "Who is the client"; be responsive to and balance the needs and interests of multiple stakeholders; and, most important, always be clear that the "client of conscience" is the community as a whole.

Increasing the capacity of communities to envision and guide their own transformation process is an essential role of capacity builders. The following is a description of how to work with communities as a capacity builder in the six core areas.

Community Engagement

For social change to occur, communities need fluid, efficient and reliable community outreach and education channels. Often, community organizers, outreach workers or promotores (community health promoters) are the main vehicles through which community engagement work is carried out. They help develop a community change agenda that empowers residents, builds leadership and defines a social change vision for the community. Community-based, constituent-led engagement methods need to enable residents to assume natural leadership roles in working to change their communities. To foster higher levels of community engagement, the capacity builder has the following main roles:

- **Leadership Development:** Provide leadership development programs for natural leaders, including site visits and peer exchanges with other communities
- **Community Involvement:** Implement strategies to attain high levels of resident involvement in the planning, readiness and transformation phases of community change initiatives or similar efforts
- **Social Change Framework:** Engage residents in developing a shared vision and goals and actively participating in community change initiatives or similar efforts

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Skillman Foundation Good Neighborhoods Initiative: Detroit, Michigan

NCDI has been working with the Skillman Foundation to develop and implement a ten-year program called the Good Neighborhoods Initiative (GNI) in Detroit, Michigan. The GNI is a community-change initiative to transform six culturally diverse neighborhoods into "healthy, safe and supportive environments for children, youth and their families." [There are a number of partner organizations working with the foundation to implement this initiative along with NCDI. One of NCDI's primary roles has been to co-design and facilitate the community engagement process for the GNI initiative.

To carry out these tasks, NCDI worked with partner organizations to bring together hundreds of residents from each of the neighborhoods to engage in two rounds of community visioning and action planning for their neighborhoods. During the first phase, hundreds of people came together in a six-meeting process to choose a community goal and identify four priority strategies to implement that goal. In the second phase, community members developed action plans for each strategy area, which led to the creation of an overall improvement plan for their neighborhood.

Community Organizations

For social change to occur, community organizations have to work together across sectors, audiences and cultures; they have to expand opportunities for community members to take on leadership roles in neighborhoods, with the city and on regional decision-making bodies; and they have to convene multiracial and/or multisector gatherings where residents and community groups share information and listen to community voices. To develop organizational capacity to stabilize communities, the capacity builder has the following main roles:

- **Capacity Building:** Support the development of strong collaboratives within and across communities
- **Community Voice:** Encourage, train and support community members to serve on community boards, civic commissions and in other leadership positions
- **Organizational Culture**: Work to establish a culture of accountability within and throughout the community

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Asian Immigrant Women Advocates: Oakland, California

For more than a decade, NCDI worked with Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates (AIWA) in Oakland, California. AIWA is an advocacy organization whose mission is to empower low-income, limited-English-speaking Asian immigrant women workers to stimulate positive changes in their workplaces, communities and broader society.

AIWA works with women employed in the garment, hotel, restaurant, electronics assembly and other low-wage industries in Oakland and San Francisco and in Santa Clara County's Silicon Valley. In the mid-1990s, one of AIWA's main challenges was how to develop a program strategy that integrated service delivery and organizing. NCDI helped AIWA redefine its program model and implement a new leadership program called the "Community Transformational Organizing Strategy" (CTOS).

CTOS is a process for building community awareness, recruiting women, providing services, doing leadership training and providing leadership opportunities inside the organization and within the community. The process leads the women through seven levels of involvement that mesh services and organizing:

- **Level 1: Learning about AIWA projects.** AIWA shares information with immigrant women and youth about its projects, activities and services.

- **Level 2: Participation in AIWA projects.** Immigrant women and youth participate in AIWA's workshops, social events, outreach activities and AIWA's Youth General Meeting.

- **Level 3: Self-education.** Immigrant women come together, share information and experience, and learn about their rights as workers, as women and as immigrants through AIWA's Literacy Program. A similar process occurs with youth participants.

- **Level 4: Leadership training.** Immigrant women and youth acquire leadership and advocacy skills through participation in AIWA's Introductory Leadership Training, Peer Training Program and Asian Youth United Program.

- **Level 5: Active involvement in AIWA activities.** Immigrant women and youth strengthen their leadership by participating in planning and implementing AIWA projects through committees and internships.

- **Level 6: Leadership in AIWA.** Immigrant women and youth exercise their leadership skills as board members, peer trainers, peer teachers, peer coordinators and youth core leaders.

- **Level 7: Involvement in community activities and other social and economic justice work.** Immigrant women and youth become involved in and demonstrate their leadership in social and economic justice at the workplace and in their ethnic communities and larger society.

Today, CTOS is a nationally recognized program model that offers many lessons for other organizations facing similar challenges in their work.

Community Relationships

For social change to occur, intentional efforts must be made to promote understanding of the cultural practices and values of diverse groups that are important to the life of a community and to instill a community spirit that celebrates, embraces and honors the cultural traditions, preferences, beliefs and achievements of others. As important, there is a need to bring people out of their silos to support social justice causes other than their own. To build stronger bridges among various identity groups in a community, the capacity builder has the following main roles:

- **Learning:** Provide opportunities for community members to learn about other cultures and about best practices when working with other cultural (identity) groups
- **Connecting:** Build partnerships among diverse community groups
- **Supporting:** Encourage community members to support justice causes that are seen as belonging to other identity groups

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD: COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

One East Palo Alto: East Palo Alto, California

East Palo Alto, California is a small city on the San Francisco peninsula with a diverse, multi-ethnic population. Before the 1960s, East Palo Alto had a majority white population; from the 1960s to the mid-1990s African Americans were the majority; currently there is a majority Latino population. The city is a striking example of an African American community where new immigrants have become the majority group. The East Palo Alto story mirrors that of many communities that are going through a radical demographic shift.

In 1999, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation included East Palo Alto as one of three Bay Area cities in its Neighborhood Improvement Initiative (NII). The Foundation chose the Community Development Institute (CDI—the precursor and sister organization to NCDI) to serve as the "Community Partner" to launch the initiative in East Palo Alto.

CDI's primary role was to engage a broad cross section of the residents in jointly developing a community plan for the initiative and forming a governance structure to oversee it. This was quite a daunting task in a community where the political and social services structure was controlled by African Americans, and the new Latino majority population was demanding a voice.

As one would expect, African Americans felt a sense of entitlement because they were long-time residents and had struggled hard for several decades to get what they had. They didn't think it was right if Latinos were to have the majority voice on the governing body. Of course, the Latinos had the opposite view. They knew that they were the majority group and that in a democracy they should have the majority vote on the new governing board. Other voices from the Pacific Island community and the white community also demanded seats at the decision-making table.

Over a five-month period, a very active and multicultural planning process took place, with an average of about 150 residents speaking at least four languages attending weekly meetings. When the community plan was near completion and trusting relationships had begun to be built, CDI turned to the governance question, which everyone knew was the unnamed "elephant in the room."

The consensus-building process began with an open invitation to the entire community to come to a "governance planning meeting" to plan the strategy for developing a governance structure. In each of three such meetings, there was an overflow crowd of people who had been involved in the community planning process as well as other people who had been recruited by them to increase the voting power of their group. During the meetings, there were spirited – sometimes heated – discussions by community members to define the decision-making process, set ground rules and create an outreach plan to ensure broad participation.

At the beginning of the first meeting, the Latinos were lined up on one side of the room and the African Americans on the other. There were also strong Pacific Island leaders in the crowd who were outspoken about the governance issue and some white people who had a history of participating in community activities.

The first meeting began with the normal activities – a welcome from individuals representing each ethic group, a review of the meeting purpose, a summary of the NII planning process and an overview of the agenda for the meeting. Then, everyone in the room was asked to join a small-group discussion that included community members from different backgrounds. In the small groups, they were asked to talk about two things: first, their vision for the East Palo Alto they wanted to see;, and second, their views about how to have a fair and just governance structure where all groups in the community had equitable seats at the table. A remarkable thing happened. As people talked about their vision for the community rather than their own self-interest and about how to be fair and just with each other rather than about their own voting power, the mood shifted. By the end of the first meeting, people had shared many ideas about what the governance process could be. They left feeling that they belonged to one unified community rather than being from disparate groups with no common interests. In the second meeting, they continued to bond as a community and selected a few options for discussion at the third meeting. In the final meeting, the community reached unanimous agreement on a governance structure that stands to this day.

Out of this dialogue, a nonprofit, community-based intermediary was formed called One East Palo Alto. This name was chosen because everyone realized the importance of working together as one community. One East Palo Alto is one of few organizations that have mastered the art of bringing together diverse groups to work on common community goals.

Community Development
Community development has been defined as the process of working to improve the social conditions of a community, primarily in the areas of economic development, housing, public safety, education, public health, transportation and the environment.

Many community organizations work diligently to improve neighborhood conditions, but they have only mixed results because they are often working alone and focusing on a specific, narrowly defined set of community problems.

For social change to occur, community building work must flow from a shared vision, a results focus, strong partnerships and evidence-based strategies buttressed by cultural competency. To support community development programs in achieving this outcome, capacity builders have the following roles:

- **Revitalization:** Form community-based structures where residents have a say in redevelopment, land use and other community planning activities; leverage private, public, and other community resources including money, knowledge, networks and skills

- **Partnerships:** Assist communities to develop strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors

- **Learning:** Assist communities to engage a critical mass of residents in a visioning and action planning process

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Chinatown Jobs Center: San Francisco, California

NCDI provided capacity-building services to Chinatown Jobs Center in San Francisco, an employment and training organization that evolved from its roots in the Chinese immigrant community to one that addressed employment issues citywide with a multicultural constituency.

By helping Chinatown Jobs Center look at its strategy, audiences, identified community needs and internal cultural-competency issues, NCDI contributed to the organization's ability to make a shift from a single- to multi-constituent group. The group retained its set of core skills and technical competencies of employment and training while successfully transitioning its strategies and internal culture to serving a multicultural community.

Specifically, the organization continued to provide Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language courses to its immigrant Chinese constituents and expanded this program to include Latino immigrants. It hired Hispanic bilingual and bicultural staff to work alongside Chinese American staff. For its African American constituents, the group incorporated micro-enterprise training and development and adapted its life skills curriculum to address the particular issues this constituency faced. It reached out to the Native American community and collaborated on a series of employment trainings that also increased its staff capacity to work with the Native community.

This transition and evolution process took about three years. The board and the senior staff led the process by providing a clear vision and by tracking and monitoring progress. The staff had to be willing to participate in the vision and strategy-development process and share their insights and experience. Program participants provided the best insights to what worked and what didn't, and they were the best ambassadors in the outreach process.

By the organization building its capacity to take stock of its core competencies, adapt them to meet the needs of a broader multicultural community, build the internal capacity of the board and staff to think and work beyond its traditional boundaries, everyone gained in the end.

Community Advocacy for Systems Change

As mentioned, the residents of low-income communities of color have limited knowledge and no voice in shaping public policy. For social change to occur, the three main priorities in community advocacy work are knowledge development, consensus building and community mobilization. To support policy or institutional change activities, capacity builders have the following primary roles:

- **Learning:** Share best practice models on how other neighborhoods have addressed similar problems
- **Defining Policy Agenda:** Build consensus for a policy agenda and campaign strategy that is based on a shared vision and priority issues defined by community members
- **Community Mobilization:** Develop strategies to mobilize the community at large to support advocacy campaigns

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD: COMMUNITY ADVOCACY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

The Ron Dellums Mayoral Transition: Oakland, California

In July 2006 Mayor-elect Ron Dellums of Oakland, California decided to implement a different kind of mayoral transition process. Rather than just tapping a few leading experts to advise his transition team, he wanted to engaged hundreds of community members in developing policy recommendations to guide his administration's four-year term of office. The Dellums Transition Team called on NCDI to co-design and support the facilitation of this community-driven transition process.

The Dellum'sTeam created 42 task forces, each charged to answer a specific policy question. For example, the question for the Green Industry Task Force was, "What city policies and actions could help to make Oakland a center for Green industry?" The task force on housing faced the question, "How can we see that Oakland residents at every income level have decent, affordable housing?" There was a total of more than 1,000 task force members. At the beginning of the process, Mayor-elect Dellums advised everyone that the task forces "are not debating societies. Their purpose is to propose policy and action."

The 42 task forces were grouped into four cluste s defined by the day of the week on which their meetings were held; they met for 10 weeks to complete the following planning process:

Week 1: Orientation meeting for task force co-conveners
Week 2: Orientation meeting for task force co-conveners and members
Weeks 3-8: Weekly planning meetings to frame the task, conduct research and develop recommendations
Weeks 9-10: Preparation of a report with recommendations for the Mayor-elect

In the middle of the overall process, the Dellums Transition Team convened a series of "Neighbor to Neighbor" community meetings to get residents' input on the topics being addressed by the various task forces. Five months after the task force process began, each of the task forces submitted a comprehensive array of policy recommendations to the new mayor.

The Dellums transition process is a good example of how communities can be mobilized and empowered to effect policy change and promote government accountability.

Community Research and Evaluation

As mentioned, community research and evaluation is the area where the most limited capacity exists in communities of color. To meet this challenge, the three main activities are to promote learning about participatory research and evaluation methods, develop a research and evaluation agenda based on community voices and involve community members in the evaluation of community change efforts.

- **Learning:** Collect baseline information on the community's history, demography, organizations, leadership groups, social networks, planning projects, advocacy campaigns and capacity-building programs and other factors; provide training for community members on participatory research and evaluation methods for community change initiatives or similar efforts

- **Defining the Research Agenda:** Engage community members in developing a research and evaluation plan for community change initiatives or similar efforts

- **Participatory Methods:** Provide opportunities for community members to be involved in research and evaluation activities linked to community revitalization efforts and to tell the story of this work

EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD: COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Women Against Rape: San Francisco Bay Area

NCDI helped build the research and evaluation capacity of Women Against Rape (WAR), which works with women rape survivors and uses a peer-to-peer model of training, data gathering and analysis, and storytelling. NCDI worked with a Research and Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee to identify what WAR wanted to learn and the audience(s) for the project. Then the Committee and NCDI formulated a step-by-step overview and co-designed a workplan.

As determined in the work plan, WAR recruited a group of peer crisis counselors, many of whom were rape survivors, to be the researchers. NCDI worked with this group to develop a set of questions to use in surveying women with whom WAR had worked over the previous two years. The

purpose of the survey was to assess WAR's program quality, including counselor responsiveness, on-site support (at the police station, at the hospital, at home, etc.) and post-event support group and counseling. An overwhelming 87% of the women contacted agreed to participate in the 20-minute survey. The women interviewed shared great insights about additional programs WAR could sponsor and provided ideas to strengthen the practices of public agencies and hospitals.

From this initial round of data gathering, NCDI analyzed the similarities and differences in responses along four demographic factors: age, economic background, ethnicity, and primary language. The Evaluation Committee decided to add depth and texture to the responses by asking The peer counselors to conduct in-depth interviews with a selected subset of women. These women generously and courageously shared their stories in one- to two-hour interviews. With their permission, these interviews were video- or audio-taped.

The project eventually published the results, including a version with a set of the women's stories. The women who participated in the interviews and surveys felt it was their way to give back to WAR, and the retelling of their stories had a positive, therapeutic impact on their healing process.

For WAR, the project served to document the impact of its programs from the point of view of its constituents. WAR shared the report with peer organizations in the rape counseling field as well as with funders, policy makers and community partners. In the process, WAR's peer counselors built their own capacity to gather and analyze data and developed their skills to conduct surveys and interviews.

THE SELF THAT ONE BRINGS TO THE WORK

What is the self that one must bring to the work to honor the fourth principle of the Building Capacity for Social Change model and bring about social transformation? The two main qualities are to be a neutral facilitator and a people connector and to practice tough love and challenge people to do the right thing.

BE A NEUTRAL FACILITATOR AND A PEOPLE CONNECTOR

What does it mean to be a neutral facilitator and people connector? A facilitator is one who plays a special role in helping organizational or community members work together for a common goal. Good facilitators do more than manage meetings – they help to design the capacity-building strategy, play a key role in guiding the process and keeping things on track, and document the process to capture the lessons along the way. A facilitator's most important role, however, is connecting people and building trusting relationships among diverse individuals and groups.

When using the Building Capacity for Social Change method, a capacity builder must be a neutral facilitator – someone who is able to hold the group's interest at the core and act with fairness and evenhandedly with everyone involved. Why? Because when a capacity builder chooses sides and aligns with one group in a community, s/he is embraced by the favored group and rejected by just about everyone else. If certain groups are not willing to trust or work with you, then you cannot be the catalyst who gets these groups to come together and work for social change in the community.

EXERCISE 8.1 REFLECTION ON FACILITATION

Think of a situation when you have had to facilitate a diverse group. How did you remain "neutral?" What did you do? What did you learn?

Practice Tough Love...Challenge People to Do the Right Thing

What is tough love? Why is it necessary to challenge community members to do the right thing? In the context of building capacity for social change, tough love is the kind of caring affection and devotion that expects people to put the community ahead of their own self-interest, see the big picture, work together for the common good and do their very best in serving the community. Tough love recognizes dishonesty, deceit and deception and has the courage to challenge people in a nurturing way to bring their best selves to the work. It's important to note that the capacity builder is not an enforcer or a traffic cop, but rather has to hold the vision and serve as a moral compass for the community-building process.

EXERCISE 8.2 REFLECTION ON ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Think about and write down your own ethical principles for working as a capacity builder in communities of color.

SUMMARY

The fourth principle of Building Capacity for Social Change is *work for the community to bring about social change*. To honor this principle...

> Focus on implementing capacity-building strategies in six core areas for individuals, organizations and communities. Be a neutral facilitator and people connector, practice tough love and challenge people to do the right thing.

Chart 8.3. The Roles of Capacity Builders in Supporting Individuals, Organizations and Communties

SIX CAPACITY-BUILDING AREAS	SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE ACTION	SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS TO TAKE ACTION	SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO TAKE ACTION
Community Engagement Support indigenous leaders and inform and engage constituents and key stakeholder groups in the social change process	**Leadership Development** • Provide leadership development programs for community members focusing on community engagement strategies **Community Involvement** • Involve residents in working on local community improvement projects with other like-minded community members **Social Change Framework** • Assist residents to frame their personal stories and define their community issues in a larger social change context	**Leadership Development** • Provide leadership development programs for organizational leaders and members (board and staff) **Community Involvement** • Expand opportunities for community participation in program planning, delivery and assessment **Social Change Framework** • Assist organizations to develop a social change vision for the community and align their work with that vision	**Leadership Development** • Provide leadership development programs for natural leaders including site visits and peer exchanges with other communities **Community Involvement** • Implement strategies to attain high levels of resident involvement in the planning, readiness and transformation phases of community change initiatives or similar efforts **Social Change Framework** • Engage residents in developing a shared vision and goals and actively participating in community change initiatives or similar efforts
Community Organizations Build effective organizations and sustain institutional capacity for social change	**Capacity Building** • Provide leadership development programs for community members focusing on organizational development issues **Community Voice** • Promote opportunities for community members to play meaningful volunteer roles with organizations **Organizational Culture** • Work to establish an organizational culture that values resident input and is open to community participation	**Capacity Building** • Provide technical assistance, training and consultation services to improve the effectiveness of community organizations • Assist organizations to make capacity building a normal part of their work **Community Voice** • Assist organizations to bring community members onto boards, advisory groups and into leadership pipelines **Organizational Culture** • Work to establish an organizational culture that is inclusive, open to learning and results-oriented	**Capacity Building** • Support the development of strong collaboratives within and across communities **Community Voice** • Encourage, train and support community members to serve on community boards, civic commissions and in other leadership positions **Organizational Culture** • Work to establish a culture of accountability within and throughout the community

(CONTINUED)

SIX CAPACITY-BUILDING AREAS	SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE ACTION	SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS TO TAKE ACTION	SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO TAKE ACTION
Community Relationships Establish relationships and forge strong partnerships across racial and cultural communities	**Learning** • Provide opportunities for community members to meet each other, share information and engage in social networking **Connecting** • Assist community members with developing strategies to connect neighbors who don't naturally mingle and socialize together **Supporting** • Assist community members to establish block clubs and other social networks	**Learning** • Promote respect for cultural diversity and work to improve cultural competence **Connecting** • Work to develop positive working relationships and a team spirit among organizational members **Supporting** • Strengthen relationships among organizations involved in similar work to create opportunities for collaboration	**Learning** • Provide opportunities for community members to learn about other cultures and about best practices when working with other cultural (identity) groups **Connecting** • Build partnerships among diverse community groups **Supporting** • Encourage community members to support justice causes that are seen as belonging to other identity groups
Community Development Improve the quality of life by changing material and social conditions in the areas of economics, education, health, housing, public safety, transportation, the environment and other areas of communty life	**Revitalization** • Inform residents about community-building programs – the why, what and how, and identify volunteer opportunities for residents to meaningfully participate in the community revitalization process **Partnerships** • Link residents from different neighborhoods so that they develop a city-wide or regional perspective in their work **Learning** • Develop opportunities for community members to further their education, develop more job skills and advance their own careers	**Revitalization** • Assist organizations to develop linguistically and culturally appropriate services • Assist organizations to implement results-based programs with measurable impact **Partnerships** • Assist organizations to do joint planning and develop strong service delivery networks • Recognize and celebrate organizations doing cutting-edge work **Learning** • Work to increase organizational knowledge and use of best practices in community change work	**Revitalization** • Form community-based structures where residents have a say in redevelopment, land use and other community planning activities • Leverage private, public, and other community resources including money, knowledge, networks and skills **Partnerships** • Assist communities to develop strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors **Learning** • Assist communities to engage a critical mass of residents in a visioning and action planning process

(CONTINUED)

Community Advocacy Mobilize and empower the community to achieve policy change and institutional accountability	**Learning** • Provide advocacy training for community members in the areas of research, planning, organizing, communications and other critical advocacy skills **Defining Policy Agenda** • Assist residents to develop a policy agenda and advocacy strategy for their neighborhood **Community Mobilization** • Assist residents to mobilize a critical mass of their neighbors to work on advocacy issues	**Learning** • Provide advocacy training for organizational members (board and staff) focusing on policy development and advocacy campaigns **Defining Policy Agenda** • Assist organizations to develop a policy agenda and campaign strategy to address key policy issues **Community Mobilization** • Assist organizations to develop a community education and outreach plan to mobilize community members around advocacy issues	**Learning** • Share best practice models on how other neighborhoods have addressed similar problems **Defining Policy Agenda** • Build consensus for a policy agenda and campaign strategy that is based on a shared vision and priority issues defined by community members **Community Mobilization** • Develop strategies to mobilize the community at large to support advocacy campaigns
Community Research and Evaluation Document and disseminate community-centered lessons learned and best practices	**Learning** • Demystify research and evaluation by making it fun, engaging and meaningful • Provide training for residents on participatory research and evaluation methods **Defining Research Agenda** • Engage residents in developing a research and evaluation plan for their neighborhood **Participatory Methods** • Provide opportunities for residents to play active roles in research and evaluation activities for their neighborhood	**Learning** • Provide training for organizational members on participatory research and evaluation methods and how to use these tools to support organizational planning and decision making **Defining Research Agenda** • Engage board, staff and community members in developing a research and evaluation plan for their organization **Participatory Methods** • Develop strategies to involve a broad cross section of organizational members (board and staff) in research and evaluation activities	**Learning** • Collect baseline information on a community's history, demography, organizations, leadership groups, social networks, planning projects, advocacy campaigns, capacity-building programs and other factors • Provide training for community members on participatory research and evaluation methods for community change initiatives or similar efforts **Defining Research Agenda** • Engage community members in developing a research and evaluation plan for community change initiatives or similar efforts **Participatory Methods** • Provide opportunities for community members to be involved in research and evaluation activities linked to community revitalization efforts and to tell the story of this work

CONCLUSION

Capacity Building as an Indispensable Component of Community Change Work

When we travel the country working with diverse communities , it has been our experience that many people who are deeply involved in community-building work have a hard time differentiating what they do on a daily basis to improve the community from building capacity for social change. Why is that? We think that it's because they are so committed and engrossed in solving immediate community problems that they give very little attention to doing the things necessary to sustain their work over time and take it to scale.

Capacity building is a basic requirement for enduring social change to occur in communities of color. It requires community builders to understand the interplay of the various seemingly discrete and independent elements of community life and to think and work in connected and interdependent ways. It challenges community builders to emerge from our comfort zones, nestled in our niches and silos, and step out and look up at the whole forest that contains our precious trees.

Those working in juvenile justice need to look at and understand mental health issues and be able to work with mental health professionals. Those working to combat childhood obesity need to build alliances with those who are working to enhance outdoor play spaces, neighborhood safety and good-paying jobs for parents. Those working on affordable housing need to link up with allies who are working on literacy, educational outcomes, and advocacy and political power. The list goes on.

This shift in how time and resources are invested is not an easy one to make. It is a fundamental paradigm shift that many will resist for a number of understandable reasons. But the work to build capacity must be done for community builders to sustain their work beyond the current situation and to have a chance at seeing lasting impact.

As capacity builders we need to urge those doing community-building work to reach across issues and cultures to build strong working relationships with potential allies. We need to raise expectations, inspire hope and imagination, and be optimistic about what a group of people can accomplish. We need to ask tough questions and talk about things that are not comfortable to talk about—like race, culture, and equity of results. Most of all, we need to be intentional about how we do our work and understand the practical connection between capacity building and the large-scale social change goals we seek to achieve.

To advance the cause of eradicating poverty, racism, gender discrimination and other forms of oppression in our society, community stakeholders must come together to define and implement social change strategies. In this process, capacity builders can play an important role by bringing together the diverse voices to develop a common agenda; offer a safe, neutral container in which the dialogue can take place; and remind the group of their social justice goals when things bog down and personal egos get in the way.

Getting to social change is a long journey. Capacity builders can act as guides, keeping the destination front and center for all to see when the road gets tough. Working in this way requires us to have our eyes at two levels - on the ground, aware of the day-to-day community-building work , and on the balcony, from where we can see what else needs to happen to engage in a genuine social change process. We also need to see the work through the lens of structural or institutional racism so that we can strive toward racial equity and justice for all.

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