

power, participation, & state-based politics

An Evaluation of the Ford Foundation's
Collaborations that Count Initiative



APPLIED RESEARCH CENTER
APRIL 2004

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Introduction

*i*n 1998, the Governance and Civil Society Unit of the Ford Foundation embarked on a six-year initiative called Collaborations that Count: Working for Democracy in Devolutionary Times, designed to encourage collaboration between civil society groups working on public policy issues in the American states. This report provides an account of that experience, identifies areas in which the collaborations succeeded, and draws attention to the ways in which support to collaboration might be more effectively provided in the future.

Why Collaborations that Count? As federal funds and decision making authority were devolved to the state level during the 1990s, increasing numbers of civil society organizations at the local and state level requested Ford Foundation assistance to help them address these shifts. Groups needed to develop a deeper understanding of the implications of devolution, forge new ties with each other, and develop the capacity and expertise to engage with a new and changing public policy environment.

Collaborations that Count was a response to this situation, and in particular to three key questions highlighted by state-level experience. First, although the Foundation was supporting a wide range of activities that sought to end poverty, challenge injustice and increase civic participation at the state level, our experience revealed that the projects we supported often did not work together effectively across the divide between policy groups and community organizing groups. What would it take to encourage grassroots groups, state-level policy organizations, and intermediary support groups to develop stronger ties and coordinate their efforts in the service of some greater impact?

Second, the drumbeat for smaller government that became louder during the 1990s was making it increasingly difficult for advocates of social justice in the states to hold on to hard-won gains, and to continue to deliver on America's promise of equity and opportunity for all. Advocates for social programs

found themselves competing with other policy advocates for scarce public funds, and fighting against ever-greater reductions in public spending for social services. Could social policy advocates working together across their specific issue areas champion a strong role for the public sector in economic and community development, environmental preservation, social justice and human rights?

Third, although groups working at the state level produced remarkable results with their small staff and budgets, their access to capacity building support was limited. Few national or in-state funders invested in critical capacity building efforts like organizational development, leadership and membership training, fundraising, advocacy skills, and research. Differences in strength between policy and organizing groups in the states also led to tensions and a cultural divide between the two in their approaches to the same problems. Could increased resources for capacity building and collaboration enable state-level policy groups and community-based organizations to bridge these divides and grow in their collective influence?

In response to these questions, support was provided to collaborations in eleven states. Although each state presented very different circumstances and opportunities, the overall results of the initiative have been to deepen connections within each state, build a more visible movement for economic justice, and strengthen individual and collective leadership.

The experience of Collaborations that Count has taught us several things, chief among them the fact that money alone is not the key to a successful collaborative. Among the factors that matter are prior relationships, a thoughtful analysis of the changes sought and the constituencies served by each collaborative, conscious attention to the dynamics of race and differences in budgets and capacity within and between organizations, and strong leadership throughout the process.

This report also reveals that as grantmakers we still have much to learn about how best to support the work of state and local civil society organizations, and how best to build capacity and foster collaborative action between them. The findings of the evaluation reinforce the value of making additional resources available to build the capacities of groups working at the state and local level because the opportunities for leadership development, capacity building and impact are so tangible. They also confirm the willingness of grassroots activists, policy advocates and civic leaders to work more closely together, given the resources to facilitate collaboration.

This report is the culmination of a two-year participatory evaluation process skillfully executed by the Applied Research Center (ARC) of Oakland, California. We are grateful to the ARC staff for their work and for seeing each collaboration in its own terms, while at the same time identifying some common lessons from across the states. We are also grateful to our extraordinary grantees—the more than sixty organizations in eleven states, the eight national and regional partners and the scores of individuals who make up the daily lives of these institutions. Their work attests to the creativity and resilience of ordinary people struggling to achieve a society that is just, equitable and free. Our own engagement in this initiative has taught us far more than our funding has enabled, including invaluable lessons about honesty and truth-telling as guiding principles in civil society, the strength of those most deeply touched by poverty and social injustice, the courage it takes to create change at the local and state level, and the importance of cross-racial leadership and organizing.

We are pleased that ARC will be disseminating this report and share their hope that it will spark discussion among those who fund state level work and lead to more support for collaboration. We hope that this evaluation will make visible the dedication and tireless efforts of the thousands of organizers, leaders, advocates and volunteers who make U.S. civil society a diverse and dynamic arena that, in the words of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr, “bends towards justice.”

Michael A. Edwards

Director, Governance and Civil Society

The Ford Foundation



CHAPTER 1

Origins of the Collaborations that Count Initiative

“Devolution will eventually force most states to choose between raising taxes and reducing services. The effects will grow steadily over the years, [and] states will really feel the effects of block grants when a recession occurs....”

STEVEN D. GOLD, FORMER CO-DIRECTOR, NEW FEDERALISM PROJECT, URBAN INSTITUTE

in 1998, the Ford Foundation established an experimental initiative called Collaborations that Count (CtC), a six-year effort to build and strengthen collaborative work between policy and grassroots groups in 11 Northwestern and Southern states. The initiative’s major goals were: (1) the creation of new, more inclusive models for collaboration, and (2) the development of equitable policies at the state level for economically and socially vulnerable populations.

Multi-issue, state-based collaborations in nine states—Alabama, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington—were selected to receive three-year grants. Two collaborations in formation in North Carolina and Tennessee were awarded planning grants for up to 18 months. Over six years, the Ford Foundation would spend \$1 million in each of these 11 states. An additional \$7

million was allocated to: strengthen networks of existing state organizations and key national organizations; provide technical and regional support; enhance the communications capacity of a number of the groups; and provide grantees with an opportunity to reflect on and improve their work. (Ford Foundation Press Release, 1998)

The Collaboratives that Count (CtC) initiative was motivated by a dramatic shift in responsibility for social programs from the federal government to the states. Yet, the ability of social change organizations to influence state-level policies varied widely from state to state, and many state and local organizations lacked the infrastructure to mobilize support for state-level reforms.

By supporting collaboration among different types of organizations working together for social and economic justice, the CtC initiative was envisioned as an innovative opportunity to strengthen these state infrastructures. The initiative represented not only a significant commitment of Ford Foundation resources, but also a change in the way many Foundation staff were thinking about philanthropy. It also marked the beginning of an unusually high level of cross-programmatic funding and ongoing cooperation within the Foundation. Several factors contributed to the Foundation's willingness to recast its funding emphasis:

- The effects of devolution, or the decentralization of policy and funding control from the federal government to the states, were being felt by low-income constituencies in the United States, as well as around the world.
- There was dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the Foundation's funding emphasis on national policy groups.
- Foundation staff realized that state-level agendas were being dominated by a growing infrastructure of conservative think tanks.
- There was an interest in leveraging a number of Foundation funding strategies by encouraging cooperation both on the ground and among Foundation staff.

Focus on Devolution

For the Foundation staff, devolution posed a number of challenges and opportunities. "The opportunity," remembers CtC grants administrator Celeste Dado, "was the Foundation's identification of devolution as one of the themes

it wanted to pursue on a worldwide basis.” In an Inter-Office Memorandum written by former Director of the Governance and Civil Society (GCS) Unit June Zeitlin in February 1998, staff members noted a number of trends related to devolution, including: increased authority in the states for making critical policy decisions; decreased federal funding in several critical policy areas, particularly affecting the disadvantaged, with the prospect of additional decreases in the future; continuing anti-tax sentiments that limit the extent to which states can replace lost federal revenues; and ongoing pressures to privatize many government functions.

“The initiative represented not only a significant commitment of Ford Foundation resources, but also a change in the way many Foundation staff were thinking about philanthropy.”

The 1996 passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was one of the first instances where the implications of devolving the structure, financing, policies, and procedures of a national program became clear to both community activists and members of the philanthropic community. Welfare reform was redefining the state’s relationship to people in economic need, affecting both single and married women and their children, immigrants, fathers of dependent children, linguistic minorities, and other groups.

Funding Philosophy

“This relative divide between policy, advocacy, and grassroots organizing is responsible for a significant part of the weakness in the outcomes of the movement.”

MICHAEL EDWARDS, DIRECTOR, GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY UNIT, FORD FOUNDATION

Recognizing the weak infrastructure for amplifying the voices and needs of those most affected by the changes, a number of funders had already supported the “State Welfare Redesign Pool,” an effort initiated by the Center for Community Change to support alliances of state policy analysis organizations and groups representing low-income communities. Reflecting on the devastating effects of the new Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) welfare program, the Foundation noted that the ad hoc, rather than systematic, rela-

tionships between groups organizing around particular issues or constituencies were “increasingly recognized as inadequate and not sustainable.” (Zeitlin 1998)

Some of the deficits experienced on the ground were, in fact, a byproduct of foundation funding patterns. Since the 1960s, foundations have created and supported centralized Washington, DC-based organizations to give voice to the concerns of underrepresented constituencies. However, interviews with Ford staff confirmed a growing concern about the Foundation’s practice of funding national advocacy and policy groups. As Marcia Smith, a former program officer in the GCS unit, observed, “We’d been supporting groups that do not have

relationships with people they need to have relationships with. They become liberal lobbyists, they produce information that can be useful to someone, but they also become bifurcated organizations that need to create a narrow niche to survive.”

“With rapid decentralization, national policy organizations cannot adjust to the state and local levels.”

Tani Takagi joined the Ford CtC initiative in 1998 as a general consultant and remained for four years to facilitate program development. She remembers that “Ford poured millions into policy groups in DC and got very little back. For years, these groups would say that they had state partners and were branching out and creating networks with our affiliates, and it was just not true.”

As Zeitlin sums up these concerns in her 1998 memorandum, “Few of these organizations had local affiliates, and local capacity has tended to decline for those that did. With rapid decentralization, national policy organizations cannot adjust to the state and local levels.”

Encouraging Cooperation: Forging the Initiative

For approximately five years prior to the CtC initiative, the Ford Foundation’s GCS unit had supported three distinct approaches to address the challenges presented by the growing influence of monied interests, the patchwork of state regulations surrounding campaign finance, and an upsurge in the use of ballot initiatives to promote a host of conservative causes:

- The State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, created in 1993 by GCS Program Officer Michael Lipsky in collaboration with the former Urban Poverty Program, supports state-level organizations in addressing issues of tax equity, revenue adequacy, and overall budget priorities.

- Former GCS Program Officer Lance Lindblom supported the development of a number of regional and national organizations advocating for policy at the state level. These included the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, the Tourism Industry Development Council in Los Angeles, the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.
- Former GCS Deputy Director Marcia Smith targeted efforts to support grassroots community organizing and make both organizing and issues of race more prominent within the Foundation. Grantees included the Southern Organizing Training Collaborative, a consortium of 15 organizations based in the South; Northeast Action; Western States Center; and the Applied Research Center, which provided research, training, and technical assistance to community-based organizations.

Based on their experiences, these three GCS program officers began to discuss the possibility of developing a joint project to address the challenges presented by devolution. Recalling the group's first discussions, Michael Lipsky says, "Our working together was somewhat unprecedented, in that there were hardly any cases of people in the same division pooling funds and making collective decisions. It was our hope that we could find a way to bring our ideas together, rather than doing three separate things."

One of the first decisions the group made was to target their funding in two regions of the country—the South and the Northwest. The regional foci were chosen, according to former Ford program associate Rusty Stahl, "because these were two regions of the country that you could arguably say are the least resourced in terms of foundations. There was and is the realization at Ford that there is no philanthropic base for progressive work in the South." Moreover, Lipsky was already funding the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, which had grantees in the South and the Northwest.

In the Northwest, particularly in Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada, state ballot initiatives emerged throughout the 1990s attacking the rights of gays, lesbians, and immigrants, and challenging affirmative action. Many organizations in the Northwest were actually created in the 1990s in response to such initiatives. Foundation staff thought that grants to a wider mix of groups in the region would strengthen progressive efforts overall.

There were also important reasons to fund in the South. Despite the booming economy of the 1990s, families in the South were still more likely to live in

poverty. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998) Moreover, although racial discrimination in sectors such as public schools, employment, housing, and criminal justice permeates the nation, it remains more prevalent, and more overt, in many parts of the South. As Lipsky reflects, “It was a concrete way for the initiative to demonstrate a commitment to issues of race. The South is the place where issues of racial cooperation are most problematic. We wanted to make sure the grantees were racially and ethnically diverse, as well as having a multi-issue focus.”

“Our working together was somewhat unprecedented, in that there were hardly any cases of people in the same division pooling funds and making collective decisions.”

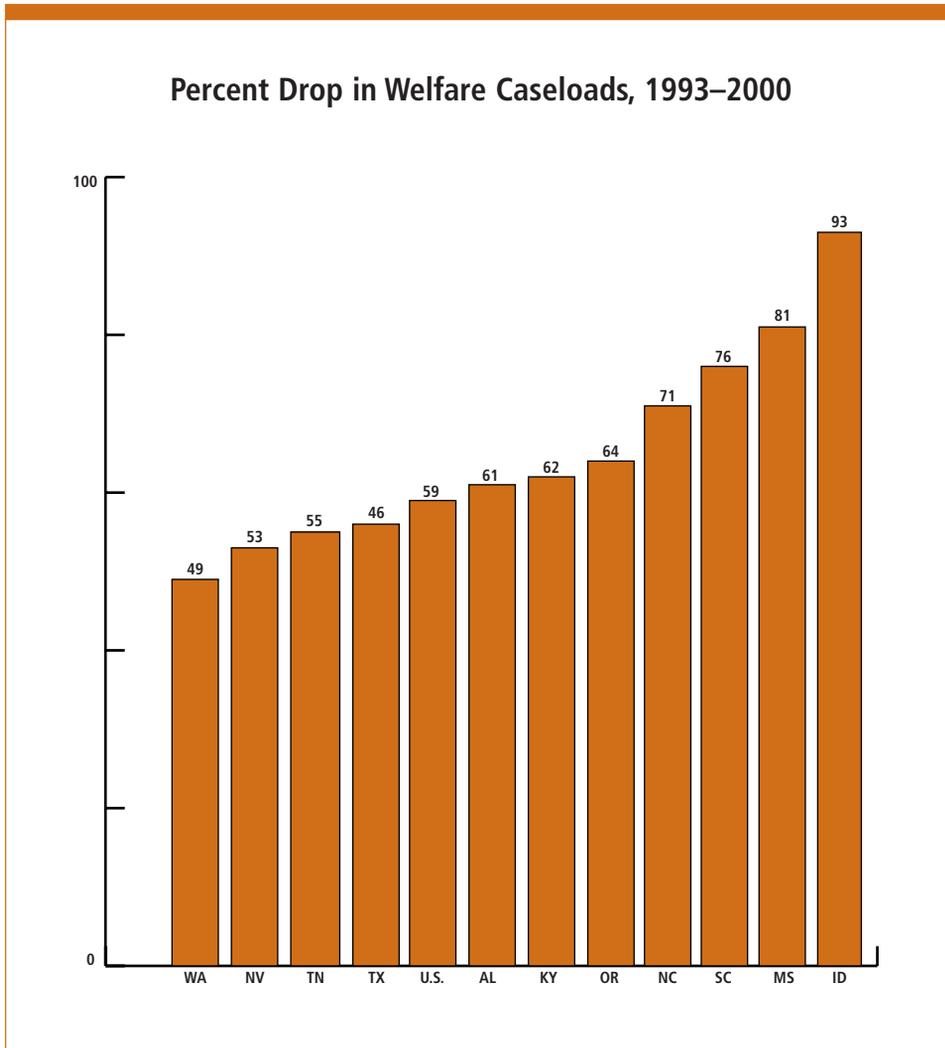
As they began their planning in early 1998, the Ford devolution team also considered the mix of threats and opportunities facing low-income families. Despite the economic boom of the 1990s, real wages had been declining for nearly two decades. As the Economic Policy Institute notes, “Wages became more

unequal between 1979 and 1999—the rich got richer and the poor became poorer.” By 1998 the number of jobs paying poverty-level wages—wages so low that an employee working full-time cannot pull a family of four above the poverty line—had increased to 29 percent of all jobs. (2003) Adding to the burden of poor and working families, millions of Americans still lacked health insurance.

At the same time, there were signs that political support for low-income families and immigrant communities was weakening. Welfare reform had undermined income support for thousands of families. Due in large part to strict sanctioning policies and time limits for receiving benefits, welfare caseloads dropped by an average of 71 percent in the states funded by the Ford CtC initiative between 1993 and 2000. The drops ranged from 49 percent in Washington to 93 percent in Idaho. (See chart on the following page.)

The 1996 welfare law also eliminated federal low-income job training and childcare programs, substituting block grants to states and creating a “race to the bottom,” as states looked for ways to use the block grants to chop existing programs and save state funds. (Applied Research Center, 1996)

Immigrants were in double jeopardy. Most recent immigrants were denied welfare benefits under the new law, while the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 created law enforcement policies that threatened the liberty of thousands of immigrants and their families.



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
UPDATED DECEMBER 14, 2000

Yet there were some hopeful signs as well. Social justice organizations were taking advantage of budget surpluses to win local living wage ordinances and expand healthcare coverage for low-income children. Immigrant rights organizations advanced drivers' license campaigns for Latino workers. Organizations of low-income people were stunned by the adverse affects of the 1996 welfare reform but maintained hope that the next iteration of the law would reintroduce some crucial services and benefits.

It was this mixed policy context that served as the backdrop for the development of the devolution initiative. “There were divergent views on how to make social change among the groups and at the Foundation,” recalls Marcia Smith, “and some members of the Foundation’s staff were nervous about community organizing. Nonetheless, we decided to propose a joint project that supported collaboration between two types of groups—organizing and analysis—that had developed separately, in large part because of philanthropy.”

“We decided to propose a joint project that supported collaboration between two types of groups—organizing and analysis—that had developed separately, in large part because of philanthropy.”

community organizing. Nonetheless, we decided to propose a joint project that supported collaboration between two types of groups—organizing and analysis—that had developed separately, in large part because of philanthropy.”

In addition to addressing the “what to do” question, the proposed initiative had to survive a competitive internal process. “The GCS Unit had to apply for

the money to fund their specific programmatic goals, and there were other program officers and units competing for a new pool of money [focused on issues of devolution],” says Takagi. To advance the process, Takagi wrote a concept paper describing the initial thinking of the three program officers on the newly formed team. It suggested that: funding for statewide collaborations to address devolution would include both policy and grassroots groups; initial funding would be \$200,000–500,000 per state for three years; and the Foundation would focus its funding in the Northwest and the South. The objectives of the initiative would include efforts to:

- strengthen the skills and expand the capacity of key policy and community organizations in these two traditionally underfunded regions of the country;
- strengthen links between policy analysis and citizen mobilization to build sustainable relationships at the state level that encompass multi-issue agendas; and
- help insure that the voices and perspectives of low-income and other vulnerable populations are represented in the state arena.

As Lipsky remembers, “The original framing was to encourage grassroots organizing and popular outreach, and blend that with analysis and more focused policy work at the state level.”

The Request for Proposals

The Request for Proposal (RFP) process was also a departure from previous Foundation practice, in that it was more interactive than usual for the solicitation and evaluation of funding proposals.

First was the question of who would receive the RFP. Early in the process, California and New York were eliminated as possible sites, both because they lacked appropriate statewide formations and because organizing and resources for social justice activism already exceeded the level the experimental initiative was designed to promote and support. Some states were not invited to participate in the application process because Ford staff lacked familiarity with local groups.

In order to be eligible to apply, applicants needed to show a demonstrated multi-issue approach to social change; a commitment to the values of justice, equity, democracy, and inclusiveness; an organizational commitment to work in partnership; a track record of building relationships and alliances; and the ability to manage grant funds.

Ultimately, the RFP process generated a response from 33 applicants in 14 states. While applications were solicited from groups in Arkansas and Louisiana, Foundation staff determined that they “did not have sufficient confidence in those groups to include either state.” Takagi notes, “There were only a handful of states where we received one application. In most, there were at least one or two other responses to the RFP. We got five proposals from Louisiana, and all the cover letters had something negative to say about the other groups who were applying. It didn’t seem very promising to go into a state under those circumstances.”

When asked about criteria for funding, Smith recalls, “Two things guided us. We looked for a critical mass of activist organizations within particular states, as well as possibilities for regional interaction. Second, single-issue groups didn’t get funded. If two groups came together and said they wanted to do education, they didn’t get funded. We insisted that they have a multi-issue perspective. We understood that they had to pick an issue to work on initially, but they couldn’t be a single-issue group. They had to be more interested in structural and base-building concerns.” In addition to these

“We looked for a critical mass of activist organizations within particular states, as well as possibilities for regional interaction.”

State-Based Collaborations that Count (CtC) Grantees

STATE	COLLABORATIVE	KEY ISSUES	ORGANIZATIONS
AL	Alabama Organizing Project (AOP)	Welfare Reform and Tax Justice	Alabama Coalition Against Hunger, Arise Citizens' Policy Project, Campaign for a New South, Federation of Child-Care Centers of Alabama, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, and Greater Birmingham Ministries
ID	Idaho Collaborative	Farmworker Minimum Wage, Immigrant Rights, Healthcare Access, State Spending Priorities	Idaho Community Action Network, Idaho Women's Network, and United Vision for Idaho
KY	Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA)	Industrial Agriculture, State Fiscal Policy, and Tax Reform	Appalshop, Community Farm Alliance, Democracy Resource Center, The Kentucky Coalition, and Kentucky Youth Advocates
MS	Mississippi Education Working Group (MEWG)	Anti-Racist work focusing on Education and Environmental Issues	Citizens for Quality Education, Drew Community Voters League, Indianola Parent Student Group, Tallahatchie Housing, Inc., Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County, and Southern Echo
NV	Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN)	Economic, Environmental and Racial Justice, and Human Rights	PLAN is an established statewide progressive coalition of over 40 community organizing, policy, and smaller coalition-based organizations.
NC	North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice (NCAEJ)	Living Income and Preventing Budget Cuts to Social Programs	North Carolina Council of Churches, North Carolina Community Development Association, Common Sense Foundation, North Carolina Fair Share, North Carolina Justice & Community Development Center, and Southerners for Economic Justice. (Former Members: Institute for Southern Studies, Jubilee, and North Carolina Equity)
OR	Oregon Campaign for Economic Justice	Food Stamp Reform, Workers' Rights, Immigrant Rights, and Tax and Budget Justice	CtC Grantees: La CAUSA, Oregon Action, Oregon Center for Public Policy, and Rural Organizing Project. New Members: VOZ, Ecumenical Ministries, Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network, and Portland Jobs With Justice
SC	South Carolina Policy and Organizing Project (SCPOP)	Redistricting and Local Issue Development	Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment, Movement of the People, and South Carolina Environmental Watch (Former Members: South Carolina Fair Share and South Carolina United Action)

CONTINUED ON OPPOSITE PAGE

STATE	COLLABORATIVE	KEY ISSUES	ORGANIZATIONS
TN	Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy (TPOPP)	Tax Reform and Healthcare	Just Organized Neighborhood Area Headquarters, MANNA, Save Our Cumberland Mountains, Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvillians, Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, Tennessee Health Care Campaign, Tennessee Citizens' Alliance, Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, and Tennessee Justice Center
TX	ProTex: Network for a Progressive Texas	Criminal Justice, Healthcare, Education, Tax Fairness, and Fair Employment	ProTex is a network of organizing and policy groups. Two major coalitions organized by ProTex are the Texas Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (TCJRC) and the Texas Health Access Network (THAN).
WA	Living Wage Movement	Economic Justice, Farmworker Housing, and Labor Issues	Washington Association of Churches, Washington Citizen Action, and Washington State Labor Association

general criteria, Lipsky and Smith note that they decided to stretch their definition of the Southern region to include Texas, where the Foundation had helped to establish a statewide organization that could help lead the new collaborative effort.

The RFP process in the Northwest included site visits of Ford staff with prospective grantees, organized by Western States Center, a regionally based training intermediary. In addition, staff and some Foundation trustees visited Alabama and Mississippi, and Foundation staff participated in numerous discussions with groups in Washington State. In September 1998, after an extensive back-and-forth process, and just eight months after the devolution team was organized, funds for core support were awarded to 11 state-based collaboratives in the Northwest and the South. Three-year grants of \$500,000 were made to nine collaboratives—Alabama, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington. Tennessee and North Carolina each received planning grants of \$150,000. These were later supplemented with additional grants of \$350,000 each. The initial three-year grants were to be used for developing relationships inside the collaboratives; the second three-year grants would be made to facilitate external outcomes. (See chart on page 14.)

Grantmaking Strategy

The grantmaking strategy for the initiative included several layers. The core three-year grants of \$500,000 to 11 organizations were projected for renewal after three years for a total of \$11 million. “There was,” recalls Smith, “a sense that if we were going to experiment with this model, we ought to give the

“It was an opportunity to support different kinds of groups, especially ones that were led by and serving people of color.”

groups a long enough timeline to succeed.” Support for the CtC initiative tapped a number of sources in the Foundation, including the special GCS Unit’s Devolution Pool (\$12,661,000), funds from the Office of the Vice President (\$4,650,000), core budgets of the GCS program officers (\$730,000).

Although grants to the state collaboratives comprised the largest part of CtC funding, the Foundation made a number of other grants to augment the state efforts and increase the policy impact of underrepresented constituencies. This additional funding was allocated to: (a) provide technical assistance to the state collaboratives; (b) support regional-level work; (c) enhance media capacity; (d) strengthen networks between state organizations and key national organizations to respond to issues of devolution; and (e) provide grantees with an opportunity to convene and learn from both each other and a variety of outside experts. (See chart on page 14.)

Broadening the Scope

After the sites had been selected and the program was underway, Ford staff began to expand the original devolution frame for the project. Recalls Lipsky, “It really gave a false impression of what it was all about to suggest that our primary focus was on how states were going to respond to devolution. The primary focus was really collaboration on a statewide basis.”

Urvashi Vaid, who joined the CtC team as a program officer in January 2001, reports, “The messages I got most clearly when I came into the project were: (1) that the program officers wanted to fund groups at the state and local levels; and (2) that it was an opportunity to support different kinds of groups, especially ones that were led by and serving people of color.”

Unit Head Michael Edwards suggests, “The frame really didn’t change. We just became more clear about what we were doing and why we were doing it.”

To reflect this reconceptualization of the project, the name of the initiative changed in 2000 from “Devolution Initiative” to “Collaborations that Count.” The initiative’s July 2000 report, “Collaborations that Count: Working for Democracy in Devolutionary Times,” describes the project as an effort to “promote a more inclusive democratic process and achieve equitable policy outcomes at the state level by building the capacity of key organizations and strengthening the links between policy analysis and community organizing.”

Internal Foundation Dynamics

While many of the factors shaping the initiative reflected a careful assessment of the external political environment, others reflected an accommodation of the internal dynamics of the Foundation itself. This is particularly true in terms of the size of the initiative and the breadth of grantees.

Regarding size, the decision to fund efforts in 11 states had as much to do with the Foundation’s internal competitive process as with external strategic considerations. In order to succeed in securing the resources to launch the initiative, according to one Foundation program officer involved in designing the initiative, “It had to be big, and it had to look like we were going to have significant impact.”

This decision was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the Foundation was able to fund some groups that ordinarily would have been deemed too small and localized to receive Ford funding. On the other hand, although the funding was steady for six years, the actual amount (approximately \$166,000 per year per state) was relatively small to support a statewide initiative.

The need to garner widespread support within the Foundation also influenced the breadth of grantees. Program officers saw the devolution initiative as an opportunity to give grants to organizations that they had previously supported and that fell within the broad mission of advancing state-based social change work. As a result, some of the ancillary grantees that received CtC funds conducted work that was somewhat peripheral to the focus of the state collaboratives.

“The Foundation’s legitimization of grassroots groups by making a local organization the lead group in seven of the 11 states was an important vote of confidence for these groups.”

Allocation of Ford Foundation Funding for Collaborations that Count

ORGANIZATIONS	TOTAL FUNDS	ASSISTANCE PROVIDED
STATE COLLABORATIONS		
11 State Collaboratives	\$11,000,000 (6 years)	In total, \$500,000 per state collaborative over three years beginning in 1998, renewed for 3 years in 2001 (includes \$150,000 each for two initial planning grants in North Carolina and Tennessee).
REGIONAL INTERMEDIARIES		
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations	\$ 300,000 (4 years)	Support for training, capacity-building, and research activities for community organizations in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.
Southern Partners Fund	\$ 200,000 (22 months)	To convene and coordinate organizational development training for CtC grantees in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.
Western States Center	\$1,000,000 (4 years)	To provide general training and technical assistance to promote civic participation to groups in Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		
Alliance for Justice	\$1,182,000 (6 years)	To provide direct training on nonprofit legal issues and lobbying regulations to the collaboratives, training for professionals in the accounting and legal communities in states in which the CtC grantees worked, and supplemental support for the Nonprofit Advocacy Project.
Progressive Technology Project	\$ 650,000 (Two years)	To provide grantee support for equipment purchases, technological training, and financial system assessments.
NATIONAL POLICY GROUPS		
Center for Policy Alternatives	\$1,000,000 (4 years)	General support for the groups' educational work and support to link public policy leaders with community groups.
Economic Policy Institute	\$281,000 (4 years)	Support of the Economic Analysis Research Network and to provide policy expertise and data to state-based collaborations.

ORGANIZATIONS	TOTAL FUNDS	ASSISTANCE PROVIDED
MEDIA INNOVATION		
Creative Communications	\$550,000 (4.5 years)	To enhance the media representation of underrepresented constituencies in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.
MANAGEMENT, CONVENING, AND EVALUATIONS		
Foundation Expenditures	\$878,287 (6 years)	Annual CtC participant convenings (\$414,625), consultations to help coordinate the program in the first four years of the initiative (\$227,680), audits for several statewide collaboratives (\$85,241), participatory evaluation retreat (\$60,000), publication and brochure on the initiative (\$78,473), administrative costs (\$12,268).
Educational Resources Group	\$362,341 (3 years)	Documentation project of state work in the first three years of the initiative.
Applied Research Center	\$527,200 (1.5 years)	Full evaluation during the last two years of the initiative.
CtC Collaboratives	\$110,000	Regrants to state collaboratives for participation in the evaluation.
Total CtC Funds	\$18,040,828	
RELATED FORD INITIATIVES		
State Fiscal Analysis Initiative Enhancement	\$2,820,000	Originally proposed to develop the capacity to provide analysis on a regional basis, encourage regional development of state fiscal analysis, and pioneer approaches to provide key data at a local level of analysis, these grants to the North Carolina Justice Center (\$850,000 over eight years), Arise Citizens' Policy Project in Alabama (\$600,000 over six and three quarter years), Oregon Center for Public Policy (\$300,000 over six years), and the Texas-based Center for Public Policy Priorities (\$1,070,000 over six years), increased the capacity of these organizations to participate in the CtC work.
Strengthening Existing State Organizations	\$2,550,000	Grants in this category were made to organizations predominantly in the Southern region. They included \$1,000,000 to the Southern Organizing Cooperative, \$500,000 to the Kentucky Coalition, \$1,000,000 to Southern Echo in Mississippi, and \$50,000 to CAFÉ, the lead organization in South Carolina for capacity-building during its leadership transition. In addition, Southern Partners Fund received \$1,500,000 as part of a community organizing regranting initiative in the seven Southern states of the CtC initiative, although the grant was not part of the CtC initiative.

A number of additional factors ultimately affected program outcomes:

- Funding for CtC was actually a significant stretch. Not only was Ford bypassing the normal either/or approach to funding policy and grassroots groups, but the both/and method chosen by Ford staff held possibilities for being more successful and more unpredictable. Thus, CtC was a truly innovative experiment.
- Support for ancillary assistance to address the administrative, legal, and technology needs of the groups demonstrated the Foundation's commitment to helping the collaboratives succeed. However, while Foundation staff also expressed interest in groups' tackling issues of race and racial justice, and in developing working relationships between policy and organizing groups, they did not explicitly fund ancillary organizations to address these issues.
- The initial commitment of \$500,000 to each statewide collaborative, while relatively small, was nonetheless significant. Ford's six-year commitment to states where there had not been significant philanthropic investment was even more important. On the other hand, some of the member groups in the state collaborations resented the disproportionately larger size of grants to some of CtC's ancillary organizations.
- The Foundation's legitimization of grassroots groups by making a local organization the lead group in seven of the 11 states was an important vote of confidence for these groups.
- Because the RFP was couched in terms of collaboration, some of the groups whose primary interest and need was capacity-building came together solely for purposes of receiving funds.
- Hiring a Foundation-based coordinator for the project was an important component for both Foundation staff and grantee groups. It made problem-solving timelier and easier.

Collaborative Outcomes

Over six years, the Ford Foundation expended approximately \$20 million to affect the ability of policy and organizing groups to work together effectively. Given the goals established by the Ford Foundation—and the challenges inherent in drawing comparisons across diverse collaborative efforts in states with different organizational and political contexts—it is difficult to assess the work of each collaborative with the same measuring stick. Outcomes, both external and internal to the collaborative, varied.

The chart that concludes this chapter provides a snapshot of the general accomplishments of each state collaborative distilled into three categories:

- **infrastructural outcomes** within communities of grassroots and policy organizations, including new structures or processes created, and groups leaving, added to, or incubated by the collaborative;
- **developmental outcomes**, including key leadership training, expanding a group's membership, developing research and analytical frames, and constituent popular education;
- **policy reforms**, including successfully winning new policies or modifying or blocking policies that did not advance the interests of the collaborative's constituents.

While this report does not suggest that every effort in every state was successful in achieving significant outcomes in all arenas, our evaluation demonstrates that there is something to be learned from each state's achievements and disappointments. It is our hope that all the readers of this report from Ford to the grantee groups and intermediaries to other funders and advocates of social change will attain a concrete sense of the complexities of collaborating in a meaningful and productive manner; an idea of the benefits and challenges of collaboration; some guidance on "do's" and "don'ts" for starting collaborative efforts; and a clear understanding of how grantmakers and ancillary organizations can best support on-the-ground collaborative efforts to build a more equitable society. ●

Outcomes of State-Based Collaborative Work

STATE	INFRASTRUCTURE OUTCOMES	DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES
AL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incubated new organization: Campaign for a New South ● Created internal accountability processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formally added popular education, media and power analysis to Grassroots Leadership Development Training program ● Conducted workshops to recruit key allies
ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incubated new organizations: Idahoans for Fair Elections, Idaho Interfaith Alliance, Idaho Progressive Student Association, Fund for Idaho 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducted anti-racist trainings, issue education, and leadership development ● Strengthened partnerships with Latino community
KY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed process to articulate vision/mission, primary strategies, secondary strategies, job descriptions for partner organizations, and budget allocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hosted conferences on economic justice ● Held media trainings for constituents ● Developed educational materials
MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helped form Citizens for Quality Special Education, a group focusing on disability issues ● Formed multi-issue Rural Education Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Built a network of grassroots Black leaders ● Developed accountability measures for Black public officials ● Delivered issue, theory, and organizing training
NV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established the Nevada Young Activists Project, Nevada Conservation League, Nevada Empowered Women's Project, Latinos For Political Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participated in dismantling racism trainings ● Participated in media trainings
NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provided technological support for member groups ● Developed website, database, email, and mailing list in order to expand distribution and mobilization capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co-sponsored capacity-building workshop ● Sponsored Living Wage Conference ● Co-sponsored Women's Advocacy Day
OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Added one faith-based organization, two labor/community coalitions, and one day labor organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Held cross-constituency issue education workshops ● Created joint-membership congress and 2003 issue agenda
SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established organization development funds for groups ● Expanded to include Latinos and youth groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthened presence in 26 targeted counties ● Trained 6 grassroots leaders on GIS and redistricting demography
TN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expanded leadership roles of people of color ● Provided technology support for groups and low-income leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participated in dismantling racism workshops ● Held regional power-building meetings ● Conducted trainings on tax reform and healthcare
TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changed structure from regional to state-wide, issue-based coalitions focusing on: criminal justice, health-care, tax fairness, and fair employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Popular education trainings focused on tax fairness ● Sponsored annual statewide conference
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formation of WA tax fairness coalition (over 70 organizations) ● Created statewide poverty action network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased low-income constituent participation ● Held over 100 workshops on tax fairness ● Developed local living wage committees

POLICY OUTCOMES*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State felony re-enfranchisement reform ● Collaborative's tax reform principles moved front and center in state legislature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farmworker minimum wage and labor contract bonding reforms ● Increased access to healthcare and childcare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrator liability regulations to require industrial agriculture to share environmental responsibility with small farmers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding for Mississippi Adequate Education Program ● Investigation of discipline policies and increased training of "special needs" teachers ● Blocked construction of virtually all-white public school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment non-discrimination reform ● Voting rights for ex-felons restored ● Budget increases for basic human services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget cuts to social programs were limited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food stamp program reform: eligibility levels raised, time limits exempted for labor surplus areas, application process simplified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Defended rights of 1.4 million workers against unlawful workplace termination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevented increase in sales tax on food ● Minimized restrictions in healthcare access and cuts in benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Racial profiling reforms ● Medicaid application process simplified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local living wage ordinance in Bellingham ● Family care package passed ● State minimum wage preserved

*Foundation funds were not used for direct or indirect legislative activity. Funds could be used for:

- Public communications that did not explicitly or implicitly encourage people to contact elected officials.
- Advocacy campaigns that focused on non-legislative issues, such as an administrative rule change or a lawsuit.
- Media work that did not encourage people to contact elected officials (e.g. press releases, op-eds, letters to the editor).
- Substantive reports that fully discussed one or more legislative proposals and that did not explicitly encourage people to contact elected officials.
- Issue education for public officials that did not discuss a specific legislative proposal, such as a paper or briefing.



CHAPTER TWO

Assessing the Impact of Collaborations that Count

Someone calls and says, "We can get a much stronger impact if we collaborate on this project."

"Great, let's meet," is the response.

After three meetings, our colleague is talking about the mission for the collaboration and all we can achieve together in the next year.

Some of us are thinking, "Year? All we ever planned to give this was half a dozen meetings at the most."

MICHAEL WINER & KAREN RAY, COLLABORATION HANDBOOK

*t*he Collaborations that Count initiative was designed to strengthen grassroots organizing and to integrate the work of grassroots and policy organizations into effective state-level collaborations. The framework of the initiative acknowledged the complexities of race and the difficulties of communication across geographic and cultural boundaries. It also acknowledged the importance of the processes of leadership development and building organizational relationships and recognized the need for products that promote public policies to benefit underserved constituencies.

The vision for CtC was ambitious and multi-layered. Yet the process of collaboration itself can be delicate, complex, and uncertain. This chapter elucidates

some dynamics inherent in collaborative work and outlines the particular complexities of this initiative that posed challenges for evaluating its impact. It also articulates the research methodology employed by the ARC Evaluation Team. Finally, this chapter delineates six evaluative variables that represent common, cross-cutting themes to provide a framework for the analysis of the successes and challenges of the state collaboratives.

What Is Collaboration?

Evaluating the CtC initiative requires both an assessment of the many internal and external factors affecting each state's effort, and an appraisal of the project overall. Critical to both tasks is to understand what it means to engage in real collaboration. Barbara Gray's *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems* describes collaboration as "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can explore constructively their differences and search for (and implement) solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible."

More specifically, collaborative projects are often viewed by grantmakers and participants as opportunities to address a number of interrelated dynamics,

including: (1) enhancing the ability of a wide range of organizations to address complex problems by building social infrastructure and realigning organizational relationships; (2) making more efficient use of scarce resources; (3) engaging and empowering disenfranchised community residents; and (4) providing a process and structure that can address

sweeping changes in a political context, while affirming group identities and promoting interdependent problem-solving. (*Evaluating Collaboratives*, 1998)

These descriptions emphasize the potential of collaboration, but they miss some of the dynamics that make collaboration difficult. As Karen Ray observes in *Nimble Collaboration* (2002), "When your organization becomes a partner in a collaboration, you expect to change some other organization, or some system or problem other than your own organization."

The *intent* of building the collaborative may be to strengthen collective work among a number of groups, increase intergroup coherence, and produce

"Collaborations change the organizations that participate in them, often in unanticipated ways."

FACTORS THAT ENHANCE SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION	BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collectively perceived need for collaboration ● Positive attitudes toward collaboration among stakeholders ● Partners see others as a valuable resource ● Adequate funding and resource allocation ● Common commitments to a goal ● Existence of prior relationships ● Environment of honesty and accountability ● Clear and open communication ● A complementary diversity exists among staff, leadership, and constituency ● Leadership styles favor collaboration ● Regular opportunities for exchanges among organizations and across constituencies ● Respect for diverse organizational structures, capabilities, and needs ● Support from multiple constituency bases ● Willingness to invest resources of time, personnel, materials or facilities ● Availability of technical assistance ● Willing to assess collaborative's internal dynamics and external outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Costs outweigh actual benefits ● Bureaucracy inhibits communications ● Failure to address power dynamics and internal tensions ● High staff and leadership turnover ● Lack of geographic proximity ● Lack of resources/insufficient funding ● Lack of support for staff work ● Frequent and unwarranted interventions by funders ● Sense of competition for resources among participating organizations ● Differing approaches to leadership and decision-making ● Organizations fear a loss of program, identity, prestige, or authority ● Inability to address conflict ● Unwillingness to address structural inequities (isms) within the collaborative ● Different organizational priorities, ideologies, outlooks, or goals ● Lack of common "language" ● Historically poor relations between organizations ● Inability to execute program objectives ● Inappropriate allocation of resources

Source: "Evaluating Collaboratives," University of Wisconsin Cooperative-Extension 1998

results that are greater than the sum of the parts. However, the *reality* of the collaborative process, as the chart above illustrates, can be time-consuming, frustrating, and often quite contentious. Collaborations change the organizations that participate in them, often in unanticipated ways. They are easy to claim but difficult to maintain.

Collaborations between funders and grantees also present opportunities for innovative relationships, as well as challenges to achieving those goals. As David La Piana writes in *Real Collaboration* (2001):

The most common response is for the grantees to create the "appearance of collaboration" by forming what we call a Collaborative. The Collaborative then holds a series of

meetings leading to the members jointly writing a grant proposal to the funder. This often masks the fact that parties have little stomach for integrating or even coordinating their services, and intend to use the jointly raised money to continue working separately. Collaboration may simply be another way of gaining grant support.

La Piana's observation may be somewhat cynical, but there is a dimension of his claim that is irrefutable: the points of entry and perception of grantmak-

“The points of entry and perception of grantmakers and organizations seeking funds are very different.”

ers and organizations seeking funds are very different. A grant to a collaborative—a collective entity made up of several member organizations—may further complicate communications between funders and grantees.

Like other collaborative efforts, the state collaboratives in CtC faced these common barriers to successful collaboration and had to navigate complicated funder-grantee relationships. Moreover, the goals, scope, and design of CtC introduced additional and particular levels of complexity. Collaboration and coordination had to occur on at least five levels for the state collaboratives to be successful. Collaboratives had to:

1. Balance the capacity-building needs of partner organizations—many of which are small groups that work on local issues—with the capacity needs of the collaborative itself;
2. Define roles and communications between the lead organization and other partner organizations;
3. Bridge differences in styles and cultures of different organizational types, i.e., policy and organizing groups, and differences related to the race, class, and gender composition of the leadership and/or constituencies of partner organizations;
4. Consolidate a political vision and implement a plan of action across (a) the staff and leadership of organizations and (b) the constituencies and members of those organizations; and
5. Negotiate external relationships with national networks, other coalitions or formations, funders, and ancillary organizations.

Comparability Across States

While an evaluation of collaborative outcomes must incorporate an analysis of the challenges of collaboration, another integral question relates to comparability—the assessment of two or more similar efforts or objects with the goal of discovering resemblances and differences. In the case of this evaluation, it is the term “similar efforts” that presents the thorniest problem. While each of the state efforts was called a collaborative, there was wide variation in how states actualized their work. Differences across states included:

“Collaborations are easy to claim but difficult to maintain.”

- **External political climate:** The economic downturn and wave of conservatism that have swept the country have affected the political climate in each of the state collaboratives. The effects, however, have not been uniform, and the opportunities for success vary sharply by state and issue.
- **Structure of the collaboratives:** The organizational structure of the collaboratives also varied. Some were independent 501(c)(3) organizations with formal structures, boards, and staffs. Others were unstaffed, coalition-like formations focused on specific campaigns. A few were partially staffed, more internally-focused efforts to develop organizational structure and build a collective political analysis. While all of the collaboratives had lead organizations, the role of these, too, varied from state to state.
- **Participating groups’ experience working together:** The ability of a collaborative to accomplish its goals is partially dependent on where and when it starts. The starting points for some of the collaboratives were rooted in more than five years of work prior to their CtC funding in 1998. For others, 1998 marked the first opportunity for the participating organizations to begin to think together about advancing collective work.
- **Resources available for the collaborative effort:** While the Ford Foundation grant to each of the 11 states was \$1 million over six years, the funding was allocated differently in each state and was supplemented in some states, but not others, with additional funding from Ford and other grantmakers. There are also large differences in the budgets and capacities of participating organizations, both within and across states.

For instance, groups participating in the Kentucky collaborative have budgets ranging from \$145,000 to \$3 million, averaging \$900,000, while in Mississippi the average budget size, including the lead organization, is \$527,000.

- **Racial dynamics:** Although all of the collaboratives attest to racial justice as a shared value, the way in which this value was actualized varied. In terms of racial composition and leadership, some of the collaboratives were predominantly white, others were predominately African American, and still others were racially mixed. Issues of racial justice were central to the work of several collaboratives, peripheral in some, and not evident in others.
- **Organizational mix/constituency:** State efforts varied in the kinds of organizational skills that individual groups brought to the table. Some state initiatives included established coalitions, while others used the collaborative structure as an umbrella to form new coalitions. Some collaboratives included larger, more established organizations, while others relied principally on newer and/or smaller groups. Some partnered policy and grassroots organizations, while others had no explicit policy partners.

These differences are significant. Like the proverbial apples and oranges, whose similarity is that they are both fruit, the various state collaboratives may have many more internal differences than similarities, with CtC participation as their only common ground. The diversity of approaches employed by these collaborations, the mix of groups, and the range of organizational structures that groups used to define their working relationships demand a more flexible evaluative method to measure success. A comparative study of the state initiatives also requires the identification of common concepts and categories that transcend divisions among the states and make some overall conclusions possible.

Other Evaluation Considerations

501(c)(3) COMPLIANCE

One of the most significant initial concerns at the Ford Foundation was that CtC collaboratives comply with 501(c)(3) lobbying regulations. Members of the GCS team addressed the lobbying concerns of the Foundation's legal staff in a number of ways. As with all Ford Foundation grantees, the CtC collaboratives received initial grant letters explicitly stating that grant funds "could not be used

to influence any legislation through an attempt to affect the opinion of the general public, or through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body.” Furthermore, groups could not use Foundation funds to “influence the outcome of any specific public election or carry on, directly or indirectly, any voter registration drive.” (Foundation grant award letter to Idaho Woman’s Network Research and Education Fund, July 30, 1998) Underscoring this point in a follow-up letter to groups (August 19, 1998), Former Governance and Civil Society Unit Director June Zeitlin wrote that, “no Foundation funds will be spent on lobbying activities nor given to or spent by 501(c)(4) organizations,” and that in order to insure that groups did not engage in these prohibited activities, annual payments of the three-year grants would be released after collaboratives’ workplans and activities were reviewed “by Foundation staff and general counsel.”

“No Foundation funds will be spent on lobbying activities nor given to or spent by 501(c)(4) organizations.”

In addition to the grant letter and review process, the Foundation also contracted with the Alliance for Justice to provide training and advise each collaboration about activities legally permissible to 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) organizations.

While 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations are legally permitted to conduct lobbying activity with a small percentage of their budgets, the Ford Foundation restricts the use of its grant funds to non-lobbying activities. This posed some challenges for groups that were trying to influence state-level policy. Says Brian Miller of Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, “With the Ford money we could do trainings on Tennessee’s tax structure, but we were not allowed to advocate for or against a specific bill or proposal in either our trainings or our written materials.”

This requirement was also a consideration for the evaluation of the project. Many of the Foundation’s indicators of success were related to policy outcomes, and as a result, this evaluation, particularly the state case studies, mentions collaborative-related policy advocacy. While no Ford Foundation funds were expended on lobbying and policy advocacy, organizations within collaboratives employed non-Ford resources to engage in policy work. CtC funds supported other activities, such as issue education and leadership development, that enhanced these efforts.

ROLE OF THE APPLIED RESEARCH CENTER AND FORD FOUNDATION

Other considerations in the evaluation process include the Applied Research Center's mission, the familiarity of the ARC Evaluation Team with different regions and organizations prior to the evaluation, and the role of the

Ford Foundation itself in the initiative.

While a number of participants noted that ARC's experience with community organizing and issues of social justice enabled the evaluators to understand the collaboratives' work, others pointed out that the evaluators' lack of experience in

"We were not allowed to advocate for or against a specific bill or proposal in either our trainings or our written materials."

the South may have made them less insightful about that region's particular issues and dynamics. Meanwhile, unlike many traditional grantmaking initiatives, CtC included a high level of engagement by Ford staff in the work of the collaboratives. They convened regional and national meetings, intervened at various points in collaborative decisions or activities, and maintained close relationships with collaborative leaders. Because of this involvement, interactions with the Ford staff became a component of the general assessment of CtC outcomes.

Research Methodology

Given that equitable policy outcomes and synergistic work between organizations are both relatively rare commodities, and given the vast differences across states, how did the Foundation envision evaluating this project? An internal memorandum from GCS Unit Director Michael Edwards to Foundation Vice President Brad Smith in December 1999 describes a number of success indicators, including:

- increased use of policy analysis and research;
- increased effectiveness of funded organizations in state policy debates;
- improved communications with the public and the media;
- enhanced relationships among collaborative member organizations and between community and public policy organizations;

- added and significant representation of low-income/low-wage constituencies in decision-making; and,
- enhanced capacity of key community-based organizations.

This interest in assessing both product and process was evident in discussions with current Foundation staff funding the initiative. Michael Lipsky spoke about the importance of “thickening relationships” as a key outcome, while Audrey Robinson described concrete policy wins in the areas of farmworker minimum wage (Idaho) and educational equity (Mississippi) as significant.

This evaluation is primarily an assessment of the degree to which grantees and the Ford Foundation attained their respective, stated process and product goals. In addition, the evaluation reviews the Ford staff’s design and management of the initiative, the impact of Foundation-supported ancillary organizations, and how changes in the external political environment have affected the ability of the collaboratives to reach their goals. However, as a participatory evaluation, it had another goal: to be a shared process among evaluators, collaborative members, the Foundation, and other key stakeholders—one that fosters learning, helps guide decisions, and enhances communication.

The Foundation contracted for this evaluation in the fifth year of two three-year funding cycles, when both grantees and the Foundation had already experienced a less-than-satisfactory relationship with a previous documentation process. Both the timing and the prior documentation experience had implications: (1) the past documentation experience left both the Foundation and grantees anxious about the evaluation process and its product; and (2) the 15-month timeline to collect data and provide an interactive assessment was relatively short for an initiative of this scope.

Factoring in these dynamics, the ARC Evaluation Team developed a methodology that began with the local organizations that comprised each state collaborative. The ARC researchers examined the goals and context of each state effort, assessing strengths, difficulties, and drawbacks, and exploring similarities, differences, lessons, and crosscutting themes. The evaluation approach was participatory, interactive, and included current and former Foundation staff,

“The evaluation approach was participatory and interactive and included Foundation staff and former staff, statewide collaborative grantees, and funded ancillary organizations.”

The Evaluation Process

METHODS	SOURCE/PERSONNEL	PRODUCTS	TIMEFRAME
COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT			
Initial Document Analysis	Grant Proposals, Work Plans, and Reports	Interview Questions	Months 1-2
On-Site Collaborative Interviews (11 States)	Collaborative Members/ Staff, Ally Organizations, and Key Informants	216 Interviews 11 State Draft Overviews	Months 2-4
Collaborative Observations	Collaborative Events in 8 States, 2 Regional Gatherings, 1 National Gathering	Photographs, Testimonials	Months 2-9
Collaborative Assessments	Members of Collaborative	State Evaluation Mtgs. and Feedback on Draft Overviews	Months 6-9
Organizational Surveys	Members of Collaborative	Organizational Profiles	Months 9-11
Collaborative Data Collection & Assessment	Contracts with Each Collaborative to Conduct State Research and Self-evaluation	State Self-Assessments, Photographs, Testimonials	Months 9-11
ANCILLARY ASSESSMENT			
Document Analysis	Grant Proposals, Work Plans, Reports	Interview Questions	Months 1-2
Initial Phone Interviews	Ford and Ancillary staff	Interview Summaries	Months 2-4
Collaborative Interviews	Members of Each Collaborative	Summary of Collaborative Experiences	Months 2-4
On-Site Interviews	Ancillary Staff	Transcribed Interviews	Months 4-9
FOUNDATION ASSESSMENT			
Document Analysis	Ancillary Documents and Reports to Ford	Interview Questions	Months 1-2
Interviews	9 Current and Former Ford Staff, Collaborative Members, Ancillary Organizations	Interview Summaries	Months 2-9

METHODS	SOURCE/PERSONNEL	PRODUCTS	TIMEFRAME
EVALUATION DEVELOPMENT			
Preliminary National Evaluation Meeting (CA)	2 Collaborative Representatives per State, Ford Staff, ARC Evaluation Team, Peer Experts	Collaborative Assessments, Key Lessons	Month 8
Case Studies	Compilation of Data	Draft Case Studies	Months 10-12
Collaborative Review	Collaborative Members	Review Case Studies Drafts	Months 10-12
ARC Iterative Review Process	ARC Staff Review of Cross-collaborative Themes and Lessons	Draft Evaluation	Months 10-12
Peer Review	ARC Evaluation Team	Revised Draft Case Studies	Months 10-12
Final National Evaluation Meeting (DC)	2 Collaborative Representatives per State, Ford Staff, Ancillary Representatives, Peer Experts, ARC Evaluation Team	Revised Case Studies and Evaluation	Month 13
Final Revisions	ARC Evaluation Team	Final Drafts of Evaluation	Months 14-15
Final Edit	Copyeditors and Designers	Final Report	Month 15

statewide collaborative grantees, and funded ancillary organizations. These different stakeholders worked with ARC staff to conduct organizational surveys, convene statewide gatherings, and review and refine the written products of the evaluation prior to the submission of a final report to the Ford Foundation.

Data Sources and Data Gathering Techniques

The evaluation utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather various types of data from multiple sources. This process is based on the assumption that any “way of knowing” has its own inherent biases. (Denzin, 1978, quoted in *Evaluating Collaboratives*) Data was gathered from the Ford Founda-

tion, participating organizations in each state collaborative, ancillary organizations, newspaper archives, and key actors outside the collaborative in each state.

FORD FOUNDATION: Data collection methods included: (1) Document assessment. Research methods included a thorough examination of all funding documents for the collaboratives, an appraisal of all reports submitted by collaborative team members, and an assessment of current documentation materials; (2) Staff interviews. Evaluators interviewed nine current and former staff members to determine: how key decisions were made; the staff’s assessment of strengths and weaknesses of initial and current approaches; unanticipated consequences of the initiative; and the role of ancillary grantees.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Six methods were used to collect data about the work of participating organizations: (1) Baseline surveys. Surveys were conducted on the size and scope of each CtC organization, its governance, financial data, leadership structure, and key accomplishments; (2) On-site interviews. These were conducted with key actors within each state collaborative, as well as with allies and opponents of the activities of the collaborative; (3) Document assessment. Key organizational documents were collected from all organizations by members of the advisory team; (4) Gatherings and events. ARC staff attended three regional gatherings and five statewide events; (5) Evaluation meetings in each state. The ARC Evaluation Team conducted a day-long, statewide evaluation

meeting with CtC participants in each state; (6) National evaluation meetings. ARC conducted two national evaluation meetings. The first included advisors from 10 of the 11 state collaboratives, ARC’s Evaluation Team, Ford CtC staff representatives, and peer experts to discuss preliminary findings and determine key themes for the evaluation report. The second national evaluation

“Thorough analysis of the research data led to the identification of six variables that directly relate to a collaborative’s ability to produce external outcomes.”

meeting —which included multiple representatives from each state collaborative and the ancillary grantees, peer experts, representatives from the Ford Foundation, and the ARC Evaluation Team—was designed to review written drafts of the final report, critique the framing of the evaluation, and suggest additional lessons and themes.

ANCILLARY GRANTEES: Four methods of data collection were utilized: (1) Document review. ARC researchers conducted a review of all Foundation documents and funding reports generated by the ancillary organizations; (2) Interviews. An initial phone interview was held with key staff of each ancillary organization, followed by face-to-face interviews with leaders from those groups; (3) Statewide evaluation meetings. The contributions of the ancillary grantees were discussed at the statewide collaborative evaluation meetings; (4) Survey of collaboratives. Feedback was solicited from collaborative grantees through a survey instrument; (5) Feedback from ancillary grantees. Feedback was solicited from ancillary grantees at a national evaluation meeting.

“Campaign leadership is the ability of the collaborative to make periodic assessments and, if needed, make the appropriate adjustments to the campaign strategy.”

ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES: To round out the data, ARC researchers also reviewed newspaper archives and conducted interviews with key actors (non-grantees) in each state. Newspaper archives were reviewed to help determine how the issues that collaboratives worked on were reported. In addition, two to five open-ended interviews were conducted in each state with a mix of legislators, leaders of organizations not involved in the collaborative, political reporters, and/or local academics to assess the strategic efficacy and overall impact of the collaborative’s work.

ARC’s Evaluative Criteria: Six Variables

The evaluation process revealed that the collaboratives experienced varying degrees of success at achieving different types of internal and external outcomes. Clearly, not every effort in every state was successful. However, numerous lessons can be learned from exploring each state’s achievements and disappointments. Given the complexity of both the internal and external collaborative dynamics, the ARC Evaluation Team worked to select common, crosscutting themes that were also analytic and informative. Ultimately, thorough analysis of the assembled research documents, coupled with an assessment of over 260 interviews conducted, led to the identification of six variables that encompass critical collaborative challenges and processes, and directly relate to a collaborative’s ability to produce external outcomes. Each variable is defined below.

- **Prior Relationships:** The level and intensity of formal linkages and informal relationships across all groups in each state before the start of the CtC initiative in 1998. Groups had varying degrees of prior interaction with one another. In some states, all collaborative partners were already working jointly on a campaign or were already engaged in formal collaboration. Other states were bringing together groups that had not worked together formally, and still others used the initiative to advance the development of a formal institution.

- **Political Vision:** How different articulations of a shared political vision affected the collaboratives' work. This multi-dimensional concept

includes: (a) common political analysis of the problems, opportunities, and challenges that groups face; (b) a shared picture of the solutions and changes that groups want in both the short and long term, and a concrete sense of how the groups' efforts will achieve these changes; and (c) the ability to internally ground the shared analysis and the vision for the future in the experiences

of the constituent members of the collaborative, and to then communicate them effectively to potential allies and the broader public. Some groups had formally defined, written platforms outlining their goals, others wrote sophisticated analyses of problems and opportunities, and most grappled with ways to ground the analysis and vision in the experiences of their constituents.

- **Power Dynamics:** The ability of the collaborative to negotiate the complex internal relationships that emerge from structural hierarchies of race, gender, and class. Other power dynamics include the differing cultural and political practices, resources, and standards of accountability that diverse organizations—especially policy groups versus grassroots organizations—bring to the collaboration.

- **Internal Process:** How each state collaborative evolved and functioned, and how that affected external outcomes, exploring the interwoven relationships, mechanisms, structures, and capacities that transform inputs into product. Some groups developed formal internal processes to facilitate decision-making and maintain accountability to

“Power dynamics include differing cultural and political practices, resources and standards of accountability that diverse organizations bring to the collaboration.”

collaborative work. For other groups, the process of collaborative work consisted of informal communication among organizational leaders.

- **Campaign Strategy and Leadership:** The development of a coherent strategy that gives the collaborative a plan for making concrete changes in the political landscape. Strategy incorporates an analysis of the political terrain, opportunities for successful policy intervention, a sober assessment of potential allies and opposition, and a realistic inventory of internal resources that can be marshaled into the effort. An important characteristic of campaign leadership is the ability of the collaborative to make periodic assessments and, if needed, make the appropriate adjustments to the campaign strategy to respond to shifting political terrain.
- **Stages of Collaborative Development:** The stage of collaborative development frames the internal issues that collaborative members must address, which in turn affects external outcomes. There are five identifiable phases in this process, each characterized by a set of tasks and series of developmental challenges. Collaborative development is not linear, and collaboratives move back and forth between different stages and must address different internal questions at various points.

The table on the following page provides a quick state-by-state synopsis of these variables, with the exception of stage of collaborative development. (A more in-depth chart of stages of collaborative development is included in Chapter 7.)

Examining the Variables: A Case Study Overview

The case studies of the collaboratives are designed to provide a deep, rich texture to the application of these six evaluative variables. Each chapter focuses on one or two of the six criteria as a lens to analyze the experiences of two or three state collaboratives. They all include an exposition of the political environment in each state, a description of the genesis and evolution of the collaborative, a comparison of how the specific variables affected each state's work, and a summary of key lessons.

These chapters provide snapshots of the collaboratives taken at a particular moment and are not intended either to summarize their net worth or to

“The stage of collaborative development frames the internal issues that collaborative members must address.”

An Examination of Key Variables by State

	PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS	CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP	POLITICAL VISION	INTERNAL PROCESSES	POWER DYNAMICS
ALABAMA	Pre-existing collaboration	Modest	Formally articulated	Extensive	Race, policy vs. grassroots
IDAHO	Extensive prior campaign work	Strong	Informal	Informal	Race
KENTUCKY	Newly created collaborative	Modest	In the process of becoming formal	Extensive	Race, uneven capacity, constituency competition
MISSISSIPPI	Extensive prior campaign work	Strong	Formally articulated	Informal	Uneven capacity among groups
NEVADA	Pre-existing institution	Strong	Formally articulated	Modest to Extensive	Race, reproductive rights
NORTH CAROLINA	Newly created	Minimal	Formally articulated	Modest	Race, uneven capacity, policy vs. grassroots groups
OREGON	Newly created	Modest	Formally articulated	Extensive	Race, policy vs. grassroots groups
SOUTH CAROLINA	Newly created	Minimal	Informal	Modest to Extensive	Race, gender, uneven capacity
TENNESSEE	Newly Created	Modest	Informal	Extensive	Race, uneven capacity, policy vs. grassroots groups
TEXAS	Emerging institution	Strong	Informal	Modest	Race, group's location in state capital, uneven capacity, policy vs. grassroots groups
WASHINGTON	Prior campaign work	Strong	Formally articulated	Informal	Inclusion of marginalized groups in leadership

account fully for shifts in each group’s development. For example, the Oregon Campaign for Economic Justice (OCED) exhibited strong campaign leadership characteristics during its food stamp effort but has since taken on a more internal and reflective process. The Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA), on the other hand, is poised to move from a period marked by extensive organization-building processes to a more external campaign phase. Starting out primarily as a campaign effort to affect redistricting in the state, the South Carolina Policy and Organizing Project (SCPOP) was forced to take a step back and focus more on internal processes to address inter-group tensions and personality conflicts. Growth is always dynamic, and as the work unfolds, collaboratives face new demands. Within this framework, chapters three through nine are organized as follows:

“Even with similarities in political goals, organizations have different capacities, infrastructure, missions, constituencies, and leadership.”

Chapter Three: Prior Relationships and Political Vision (Washington and Mississippi). Washington State’s Living Wage Movement (LWM) and the Mississippi Education Working Group (MEWG) share key characteristics that assist in creating strong and effective partnerships. First, the relationships among groups in the collaborative were forged years before the CtC initiative was formulated. These groups came together primarily out of political necessity, rather than in response to the Foundation’s RFP. Second, their signature issue campaigns—passing minimum wage and farmworker housing legislation for LWM, and reforms in public education that address racial inequities for MEWG—were framed with a clearly articulated political vision based on promoting economic and racial justice. This chapter examines how these two factors shaped the work of the Mississippi and Washington collaboratives.

Chapter Four: Addressing Power Dynamics (Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina). Even with similarities in political goals, organizations have different capacities, infrastructure, missions, constituencies, and leadership. As a result, collaboratives must learn how to manage complex internal power dynamics, often emerging from differences between policy and organizing groups, and from tensions rooted in the sociopolitical hierarchies of race, gender, and class. This chapter examines the experiences of Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA), North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice

(NCAEJ), and the Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy (TPOPP) and explores their attempts to manage these power dynamics in building effective relationships and campaigns.

Chapter Five: Internal Processes (South Carolina and Alabama). Many collaboratives spent considerable time and resources creating workable organiza-

“Many collaboratives spent considerable time and resources creating workable organizational structures and crafting democratic decision-making processes.”

tional structures and crafting democratic decision-making processes. The Alabama Organizing Project (AOP) and South Carolina Policy and Organizing Project (SCPOP) undertook these efforts seeking to create an atmosphere conducive to power-sharing across organizations and to build an environment of trust.

This chapter describes the experiences of these collaboratives and analyzes the correlation between a developed internal structure and achieving external policy outcomes.

Chapter Six: Campaign Strategy and Leadership (Idaho and Oregon). Both the Idaho and Oregon collaboratives exercised strong campaign leadership in winning significant policies to benefit low-income constituents. In Idaho, CtC initiative partners were able to develop a winning strategy to promote a farmworker minimum wage in the state legislature. The Oregon collaborative focused on reforming the food stamp program and helped to expand the eligibility criteria, which resulted in an increased program enrollment of tens of thousands of Oregonians. This chapter analyses the organizing strategy of each collaborative and assesses the impact of having a clear policy change plan on forging an effective collaborative.

Chapter Seven: Stages of Collaborative Development (Texas and Nevada). While each collaborative is not the same “and does not follow a predictable step-by-step process, a growing body of evidence indicates that the collaborative journey moves through loose chronological phases.” (Florin, Mitchell, and Stevenson, 1993) This chapter examines how the Texas and Nevada collaboratives made decisions about strategies and resource allocation in relationship to their respective stage of collaborative development.

Chapter Eight explores the role of the ancillary organizations, and **Chapter Nine** offers final observations, lessons, and recommendations.

Toward Shared Lessons

The ARC Evaluation Team chose this method of analysis to provide sharp insights into the dynamics of developing collaboratives. However, there are also disadvantages to this analytical approach. Looking more deeply into one or two variables runs the risk of missing the key dynamics within the collaborative. The approach may also fail to capture the peaks and valleys of the intense interactions that characterize this work. However, we have chosen this approach because the variables explored in each of these chapters examine issues common to every collaborative. It is both that commonality and the cumulative analysis provided through all of these chapters that make this approach useful.

An especially challenging dimension in the evaluation of collaboratives is their dynamic nature—they change as they develop from one stage to the next. Membership and key personalities may change, bringing new emphases and dynamics to the group. The roles of individual groups also change over time, depending on their capacity and health. And, as Chapter One illustrates, during the first five years of the CtC initiative, the political and economic contexts in which all of these groups work radically shifted to an environment less conducive to progressive change.

In *The Nimble Collaboration*, author Karen Ray suggests that collaborative efforts be “nimble”:

The American Heritage Dictionary defines nimble as “Quick in movement or action, deft.” The word nimble also implies cleverness in understanding, being flexible, and being responsive. The nimble collaboration is based on results that are clearly defined, relationships that are deft, and a structure that is resilient, leading to productive action.

The case studies provide a measure of the collaboratives’ collective nimbleness as they crafted innovative strategies to respond to increasingly difficult and complex political challenges. ●

“The nimble collaboration is based on results that are clearly defined, relationships that are deft, and a structure that is resilient.”



CHAPTER THREE

Political Vision and Prior Relationships: Washington and Mississippi

*t*his chapter explores and compares the Ford Foundation's choice to support a small cohort of relatively established organizations for the Collaborations that Count effort in Washington State and a statewide grassroots organizing effort in Mississippi grounded in the African American community. Although the work of both collaboratives falls within the broad parameter of social justice, their respective efforts reveal a great deal of difference in thinking, strategy, key constituencies, issue selection, and framing.

Many of these differences are grounded in the disparate economic and political contexts in which the collaboratives operate. Even a cursory comparison of the efforts in Washington and Mississippi reveals major contrasts. The three founding members of the Washington State collaborative have an average organizational age of 32; the oldest, the Washington Association of Churches, was formed in 1947, while the youngest is the 13-year-old Washington Fair Share. Staff sizes range from five to 22, and two of the organizations have annual budgets over \$500,000. In contrast, all the Mississippi groups are less than 15 years old. And, while Southern Echo, the lead organization, has an 11-member staff and a \$2.1 million budget, five of the six participating organizations—

including the Mississippi Education Working Group, the vehicle for conducting the statewide work—have budgets of less than \$250,000.

In Washington, families in the lowest-earning quintile pay 18 percent of their income in state and local taxes, while the top quintile pays only three per-

cent; and 35 percent of the workforce is part-time, temporary, or contingent. As a Washington collaborative leader says, “When it comes to the state legislature, even our friends have no backbone.” In this context, the collaborative’s work has focused on the bread-and-butter issues of living wages and tax reform. In Mississippi, where eight of 10 Black students attend segregated schools, the Mississippi

“The political situation is very tenuous. There is a growing split between the left and the right and a tax revolt in the form of a bunch of citizen initiatives that have cut taxes and decreased revenue.”

Education Working Group focuses its efforts on empowering the Black community to address the inequities of the state’s discriminatory and racially stratified educational system, which the group believes is central to addressing “the emerging colonial system of control and dependency.” (*Mis-Education in Mississippi* at www.southernecho.org/mewg/mis-education.pdf)

General measures of successful policy implementation and internal capacity development suggest that both efforts were notably successful. This comparison of initiatives in Mississippi and Washington elucidates two important factors in collaborative development and outcomes: (1) **Prior Relationships:** The level and intensity of formal linkages and informal relationships among groups in each state before the start of the collaborative; and (2) **Political Vision:** A multi-dimensional concept that includes: (a) common political analysis of the problems, opportunities, and challenges that groups face; (b) a shared picture of the solutions and changes that groups want in both the short and long term, and a concrete sense of how the groups’ efforts will achieve these changes; and (c) the ability to ground the shared analysis and the vision for the future *internally* in the experiences of the constituent members of the collaborative and to communicate them effectively *externally* to potential allies and the broader public.

The Washington State Living Wage Movement (LWM): Strong Groups Build Shared Platform

"The signals are faint. The signs vague and uncertain. Like watching Ray Allen and the Sonics or the Mariners at spring training, there is hope better days lie ahead for the economy."

**STEPHEN H. DUNPHY. "GROUNDWORK FOR RECOVERY,"
SEATTLE TIMES, MARCH 16, 2003**

Despite these optimistic yearnings expressed by a business columnist in the Sunday *Seattle Times*, Washington's economy is down and, according to a March 2003 report by the state's Office of Forecast Council, unlikely to improve in the near future. The state's employment decline of 2.4 percent over the past two years is more than twice the national average, with a cumulative decline in the manufacturing and aerospace industries of 17.3 percent since September 11, 2001. Overall wages have fallen for two years running, and forecasters now predict that aerospace layoffs in the second half of 2003 and 2004 "will be more severe than expected." Housing starts, one of the few areas to demonstrate strong growth in many states, are expected to subside significantly in Washington. In short, economic forecasts are that "the recovery in Washington is expected to be unusually slow." (Executive Summary, Office of Forecast Council, March 2003)

The effects of a weakened state economy are widespread. Rick Bender of the Washington State Labor Council observes, "The economy up here has depended a lot on Boeing and Microsoft, and both the aerospace and the software industries are hurting." Jean Colman of the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition agrees. "The largest problems for Seattle and King County are economic. Unemployment is up, and so are the costs of living, childcare, medical expenses, food, and gasoline. The need for emergency services is increasing." Adding another layer to the analysis, Chip Tan of Asian Counseling and Referral Services notes, "It's not just Boeing that has been laying people off, it's also all their subcontractors and affiliates. Many of those who have not been laid off have had their hours cut due to a combination of a general recession and a decrease in travel since 9/11."

How has the state of Washington responded to economic recession? According to social justice advocates, not too well. "In Washington, there is a liberal appearance with a vicious streak of real conservatism underneath," observes

Colman. Robby Stern, Special Assistant to the President of the Washington State Labor Council, notes, “The political situation is very tenuous. There is a growing split between the left and the right and a tax revolt in the form of a bunch of citizen initiatives that have cut taxes and decreased revenue.” Council President Rick Bender elaborates, “We’ve had real difficulty moving anything... [and] there is a very motivated right.”

THE PARTNERS

Given active political opposition from conservative forces, the difficulty in achieving political traction in the state legislature, and the context of a formidable economic downturn, how was the Washington Collaborative able to achieve success? Part of the answer lies in the experience and social capital of the three lead organizations:

- **The Washington Association of Churches (WAC)**, the collaborative’s lead organization, is a 27-year-old association with nine member organizations from various Christian denominations and an additional 14 “cooperating” affiliated religious formations, including other ecumenical groups such as the Church Council of Greater Seattle and the Interfaith Alliance of Washington State. WAC literature describes it as “providing the common ground to search for the common good.” WAC members work with community partners on social and economic justice issues because, Executive Minister John Boonstra says, “Our theology is that the mission of God precedes the mission of any particular church.”
- **Washington Citizen Action (WCA)**, organized in 1990, is a 50,000-member consumer advocacy group. The second leg of the collaborative’s tripod, WCA grew out of a number of predecessors, including Washington Fair Share and the Seattle Light Brigade. The organization has a 10-year history of successful campaigns on healthcare reform, including the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and a patients’ bill of rights. Executive Director Barbara Flye describes WCA as “a multi-issue economic justice organization.” Its organizing work includes grassroots organizing, targeted outreach based on campaigns, and professional field and phone canvases. “With our field canvassing,” explains Flye, “we have a real door-to-door presence. We canvas key legislative areas and districts.”

- **The Washington State Labor Council (WSLC)**, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, is the collaborative member with the deepest membership base. The state has the fourth highest union membership density in the country, and the WSLC brings 600 affiliates and 435,000 members to the Washington collaborative. “Some people don’t like us, but here, labor is always a factor,” states Rick Bender, WSLC President. The WSLC’s work includes lobbying, electoral endorsement, communication and networking with affiliates, and policy development and implementation.

Each organization brings a large constituency to the collaborative process. It also provides strong relationships with a number of other local organizations, like the State Poverty Action Network, Welfare Rights Organizing Collaborative (WROC), state and regional organizations (e.g., the Institute for Washington’s Future and Northwest Federation of Community Organizations), and researchers at the University of Washington, who assist on policy and research work.

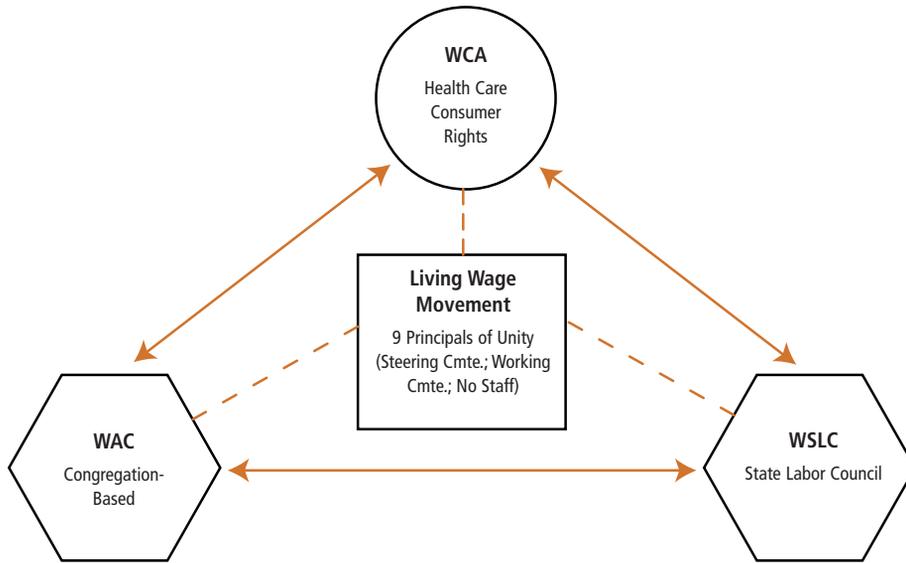
A steering committee serves as the collaborative’s final decision-making body. Each organization has four or five representatives on the steering committee, which meets every two months. Within the collaborative, funds are split between the Washington Association of Churches (60 percent) and Washington Citizen Action (40 percent). The WSLC chose to forgo receiving a portion of the funds, acknowledging that they had an extensive membership and funding base and could afford to opt out of the monetary support provided by Ford.

“In Washington, there is a liberal appearance with a vicious streak of real conservatism underneath.”

PRE-COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The skillful interplay of the strengths of these organizations has made the Washington collaborative a formidable force for progressive change in the state. However, the collaborative’s effectiveness is grounded, at least in part, in past campaign work. As WCA’s Flye explains, “The collaboration of our groups is based on pre-existing relationships. But, before the collaborative was formed we worked on a reactive basis to prevent bad things from happening. As a result of the collaborative, we come together around common principles. It’s an opportunity to think and act proactively.”

Washington's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

Living Wage Movement: The Living Wage Movement is an informal collaborative involving the state labor council, a congregation-based association, and statewide consumer rights organization. The LWM steering committee meets on an as-needed basis; its membership includes Directors of each member group plus three representatives from each group. A Policy Working Group was also established to engage ally organizations. A nine point "Principles of Unity" was developed to articulate the LWM political vision. The Northwest Federation of Community Organizations and the University of Washington provided additional research support.

KEY ISSUES

Economic Justice and Labor Issues

ORGANIZATIONS

WAC: Washington Association of Churches

WCA: Washington Citizen Action

WSLC: Washington State Labor Council

LEGEND

-  Collaborative
-  Community Organizations
-  Coalition-Based Organizations

In 1998, the three core Washington organizations, in coalition with a number of other groups, successfully worked to pass a progressive, statewide minimum wage law. The law was unique in that it included agricultural workers and was indexed to inflation. The minimum wage has increased from \$6.50 an hour in 2000 to the current rate of \$7.01, the highest rate in the country.

The Minimum Wage Campaign was led by the Washington State Labor Council and resulted in a substantial victory. However, as Washington Association of Churches staffer Mike Ramos points out, “We’d had a major success. But in order to really build on that success, we needed to move forward on a broader array of issues.” Enter the Living Wage Movement.

THE POLITICAL VISION OF THE LIVING WAGE MOVEMENT

The Washington Living Wage Movement grew directly out of the successful coalition work of the minimum wage campaign. In most states, living wage campaigns attempt to increase hourly wages paid by employers who receive service contracts, operating grants, or tax abatements from local governments. There are now 104 living wage ordinances in place in 31 states. With an average wage of \$10.10 per hour, nearly double the current federal minimum wage, these ordinances are being adopted at a rate of one every month. (EPI Living Wage Website. at www.epinet.org)

“As a result of the collaborative, we come together around common principles. It’s an opportunity to think and act proactively.”

In Washington, the Living Wage Movement (LWM) developed Nine Principles of Unity, a broad political vision that addresses both economic and social issues. Organizer Mike Ramos elaborates, “The living wage is not just about the wage, it includes our Nine Principles of Unity. These principles recognize how wages are related to quality healthcare, access to education, affordable housing, training for workers who are ‘downsized,’ transportation, protection from discrimination, the right to organize, and sufficiency standards. LWM is about the restoration of a more genuine economic and political democracy.”

LWM’s broad reconceptualization of living wage to include a right to housing, healthcare, childcare, accessible and affordable transportation, and protection from discrimination—as well as the more traditional worker rights to economic security, training and education, and the right to organize and join unions—legitimizes the participation of collaborative members in a wide array of sub-

stantive issues. Flye points out that the broader definition of living wage has grounded collaborative members “in a common vision, which is very necessary to building a successful movement. So far, we’ve been successful.”

The Washington Living Wage Movement functions on three levels. The organizations work locally and regionally, using local branches of their larger organizations and networks; they conduct statewide campaigns; and they work collaboratively on campaigns led by one organization and supported by the larger group.

Examples of these efforts can be found in the initial work of the collaborative to follow up on the successful state minimum wage campaign. After its passage, the Washington Association of Churches began to work with a dozen congregations in the Seattle and King

County region to build support for the unionization efforts of hotel and food concession workers. The collaborative also worked to create a local coalition in Yakima to support a living wage for farmworkers. In addition, collaborative

“The Living Wage Movement is about the restoration of a more genuine economic and political democracy.”

members have initiated discussions with childcare providers and religious and community leaders in Spokane about the potential for developing a “childcare wage ladder” in the city. WAC’s Ramos explains, “A lot of people who claim to be working for a living wage focus on passing city ordinances, but our concern is building a broad base of support for the long term. We want to build a community based on the principles of economic justice.” Ramos goes on to say that it is fine to do living wage work any way you can, including passing local ordinances, but frankly states, “Since labor is so organized here in Washington, we can do better.”

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

What has the Washington Collaborative accomplished? Since the founding of the Washington Living Wage Movement, the collaborative has won a number of campaigns:

- It successfully defended its state minimum wage package from attempts to weaken the law. An initial attack was an attempt to exempt agricultural workers, who are primarily immigrants, from coverage. A second effort was to exempt tipped workers, and a third attack sought to create

Principles of the Washington Living Wage Movement

- 1. Everyone has the right and the opportunity to work at a livable wage with the assurance of economic security in their retirement years. Those unable to work also have a right to an income sufficient to meet their basic needs.** Too many workers do not earn a sufficient income to support themselves and their families. Many of those workers are unable to put aside any money for old age beyond social security.
- 2. All people have a right to quality health care.** The United States is the only country in the industrial world that has failed to achieve universal health care coverage. It is an essential feature of a civilized society that we take care of those who are sick or injured, and that we do all we can to avoid the spread of infectious diseases. Quality health care coverage should be available to all residents as a basic right.
- 3. All children have the right to the education and training necessary to afford them the opportunity to earn a livable wage.** The world of work continues to change dramatically. Our children must be provided the resources to develop the skills necessary to be productive and fulfilled when they become wage earners.
- 4. Workers have a right to needed re-education, training and re-employment assistance when their jobs are lost as a result of downsizing, the movement of jobs to lower-wage markets, new technology, or reasons related to industrial injury or illness.** The on-going dislocation of workers is a national tragedy. Families are in crisis as new jobs are paying a fraction of what they previously earned. It is essential that workers who have been struck by this growing trend be provided with the training and re-education they need to obtain livable wage jobs again.
- 5. Workers have a right to the assurance that our children and our elders are safe and well cared for while we work.** The growing insecurity that exists in the care of our children and elders must be reversed. A person cannot make their strongest contribution at work if they cannot be assured of an affordable, safe and nurturing environment for their loved ones.
- 6. All people have a right to safe, affordable housing.** An essential aspect of our life in society is the ability to provide safe, adequate shelter for ourselves and our loved ones. The rise in homelessness in our state and nation is a scandal of outrageous magnitude. It is not realistic to expect a person to hold down a job while without safe, adequate shelter.
- 7. All people have a right to affordable and accessible transportation.**
- 8. All people are entitled to full civil rights and protection from discrimination based on race, gender, religious belief, country of origin, or sexual orientation.** All too frequently people are judged on characteristics other than their capability or the quality of work they produce. All people must be given equal opportunity and access to a decent life.
- 9. Workers have the right to join democratic organizations whose goals are to promote the economic, social and cultural interest of working people.** There is a direct correlation between unionization and earning livable wages and benefits. Unions provide a democratic voice for workers at the workplace and a vehicle for achieving an increased just share of society's wealth. Workers need and must have the unfettered right to organize and participate in democratic worker organizations.

a “training wage” for youth. Through the efforts of collaborative members, all of these anti-worker measures were defeated.

- A second set of victories relates to contracts for specific union organizing efforts. Exhibition Center workers won a wage increase and benefits in a campaign led by the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. After winning recognition by the state, homecare workers are very close to reaching a contract with wage increases and benefits, and workers have recently signed a contract with downtown hotels.
- In 2000, Washington farmworkers, who produce 60 percent of the nation’s apples, went on strike 22 times during the harvest, winning six wage increases. Supported by the Washington Association of Churches, the Movement’s Fair Trade Apple Campaign secured an agreement with growers and fair trade apple producers to market fair trade apples in a number of organic supermarkets. Late crops prevented the marketing of the apples in 2002, but organizers expect to “have apples in the market that are grown and harvested under humane conditions by fall 2003.”
- The Washington Living Wage Movement led a successful campaign to pass a Family Care Package that gives workers time off to care for their sick adult relatives, not just children.
- The infrastructure created by the Living Wage Movement, in collaboration with the United Farm Workers (UFW), provided the farmworkers

“Our concern is building a broad base of support for the long term. We want to build a community based on the principles of economic justice.”

with additional constituent support and access to key elected officials in state government, including the governor. The campaign mobilized a broad coalition of students, religious organizations, and community groups to take over the state capitol and sleep on the capitol steps.

The campaign not only forced the governor to veto a bill for inadequate (tent) housing, it also achieved passage of a counter measure that budgeted \$8 million for farmworker housing.

- The first living wage ordinance covering city contractors in Washington was passed in Bellingham in November 2002. The ordinance mandates a wage of \$10 per hour for employees who receive health benefits and \$11.50 for those who do not.

As this list indicates, the Collaborative’s victories include both statewide and local successes on economic and social issues, in addition to a mix of initiatives initiated by LWM itself or by one of its lead groups. In addition to concrete victories, members of LWM argue that the strengthening of the relationships among the participant organizations is a significant accomplishment in and of itself. “There is constant communication among the key players of the collaborative,” says Bender of the Washington State Labor Council. “I know a lot more religious and community folk than I did three years ago, and that’s a big plus for my work.” Barbara Flye points to the ability to “proactively strategize” as an important benefit of the collaboration.

“The campaign not only forced the governor to veto a bill for inadequate (tent) housing, it also achieved passage of a counter measure that budgeted \$8 million for farmworker housing.”

John Boonstra, WAC’s executive minister, observes, “We have to be strategic. We have to deal with living wage issues that exert maximum pressure at the state level.” Over the next two years, the Living Wage Movement will work in four main areas: wage campaigns; employment standards; community standards; and progressive fiscal and tax policies. Currently, the collaborative is working on issues of tax justice, corporate accountability, healthcare, prescription drug pricing, affordable housing, transportation, and the Fair Trade Apple Campaign.

Key Challenges

After five years of operation and a number of significant successes, LWM also faces a number of challenges that it must address to meet its ambitious agenda for the future. These include enhancing its research capacity, refining issues of constituency and priorities, and deepening its racial justice perspective.

RESEARCH CAPACITY

In the Washington statewide evaluation, participants pointed to the need for deepening the collaborative’s ability to “conduct ongoing research” and extend its “fiscal analysis capacity.” Unlike a number of state collaboratives funded under the CtC initiative, LWM did not have an anchor policy organization. Instead, it was composed of three constituency-based organizations that mobilized community, religious, and labor networks to win significant policy support. While

the Washington State Labor Council provided some research reports, the collaborative participants noted that the initiative significantly stretched their overall research capacity. “We have an opportunity to set the policy bar higher than many other states, but research/analysis capacity that’s tied to an organizing agenda is a real barrier,” says labor organizer Secky Facione.

The Washington Collaborative found that it needed more research assistance than WSLC could provide. The Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO), for example, contributed significant tactical research and fiscal analysis, even though it was not specifically funded to provide ongoing research. The collaborative also took advantage of the Self-Sufficiency Standard

“We have to be strategic. We have to deal with living wage issues that exert maximum pressure at the state level.”

research developed by Dr. Diana Pearce at Washington State University. “The Self-Sufficiency Standard has become a national model for developing local and state living wage budgets,” says Boonstra. “We were fortunate to have Dr. Pearce and NWFCO in our home state.”

Free research assistance, however, does not address long-term research needs, and a number of participants in the statewide evaluation pointed to research capacity as their top priority. “Our tax fairness initiatives would be much more effective if we could hire full-time staff to take our research to the next level,” says WCA Director Flye. “This requires a significant resource investment.”

CONSTITUENCY AND ISSUE PRIORITIES

While the LWM has worked on a number of key issues that affect people of color, including farmworker housing and the Fair Trade Apple campaign, the lead groups are well-established and predominately led by whites. How important are these factors in assessing LWM’s willingness to address issues raised by groups with less powerful voices? As activist Chip Tan points out, “One thing you’ve always got to ask is, ‘who’s calling the shots?’”

Although the collaborative’s nine guiding principles are broad-based and far-reaching, the primary focus of their efforts has been on labor-related issues. This focus, however, may have limited the collaborative’s ability to work with direct service, advocacy, and community organizations with low-income and underserved communities as their constituencies. “I agree with all of the work

that LWM focuses on, but the big three do have different priorities than the women in the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition,” says WROC Executive Director Jean Colman. WROC is the only member of the Seattle Human Services Coalition engaged in the collaborative’s efforts.

Flye disagrees with Coleman’s assertion that the LWM doesn’t focus on low-income issues. She points to WCA’s direct organizing work in welfare offices, food banks, and community health clinics, and cites the LWM’s “strong positions against the dismantling of the Medicaid program and considerable opposition to state budget cuts in healthcare and human services.”

RACE AND REPRESENTATION

LWM’s work on issues of race and racism is another area that, according to friendly critics, could be strengthened. Eric Ward, former director of the Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity, points out that while LWM’s nine principles cover a lot of good ground, they may limit the collaborative’s ability to engage in racial justice work. “They are basically economic demands,” says Ward. “It’s not that the members of LWM don’t believe in the anti-discrimination work, it simply has not been their thrust.”

The collaborative acknowledges the need to address these concerns. “Immigrant rights is a major challenge area,” says Boonstra. In 2001, the Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice, the only statewide immigrant rights coalition, closed its doors. Boonstra’s perspective is that, “There’s a lot to do, and we need to reestablish connections in the immigrant community.”

Jane Villanueva of the Yakima Archdiocese Office of Social Justice also sees a need for more action on issues affecting immigrants. “There is a tension and a resentment because the central valley is in a transition from being majority white to being majority Hispanic.” This population shift has caused resentment among the white communities in these areas. “The dominant population seems to have this feeling of, ‘We’re going to put you in your place,’” says Villanueva, “and it’s gotten much worse since September 11.”

Last November, for example, the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington held a hearing to create a public record of abuses of immigrant communities since Sept. 11. Organizers of the hearing expected 600 people; over 1,100

“One thing you’ve always got to ask is,
‘who’s calling the shots?’”

showed up. The state AFL-CIO, however, refused to endorse the hearing. And, while LWM is working more closely with unions whose membership comprises a higher percentage of immigrants, an explicit immigrant rights agenda is not a current collaborative priority.

While people of color make up only 12 percent of the state, the interplay between race and poverty is becoming increasingly evident in Washington. Mike Ramos of the Washington Association of Churches wrote in one newsletter

“There is a tension and a resentment because the central valley is in a transition from being majority white to being majority Hispanic.”

“Approximately one-fifth of all residents of the Pacific Northwest live in households that do not have enough income to be self-sufficient. They cannot afford adequate food, housing, childcare, transportation, or healthcare, [and] they are 49 percent of the Hispanic households, 41 percent of the American Indian, and 40

percent of the African American households in the region.”

According to Ramos, “These are the very conditions that LWM is set up to address.” The collaborative has worked to build relationships with the African American community through religion/labor breakfasts and through the involvement of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute Seattle Chapter in the living wage efforts. In the Latino community, the collaborative sponsored a ‘walk-with-workers’ program, which they believe developed an “intensive connection between Spanish and English faces of the Catholic community by bringing Spanish-speaking Catholic domestic workers to meet with church representatives.”

The efforts that the collaborative has made to engage issues of race are an important beginning. However, to address these issues effectively, the LWM must deal with the composition of its leadership core and be willing to address issues of race and immigration with the same tenacity and strategic acumen with which it has focused on worker rights.

The Mississippi Education Working Group (MEWG): Changing the Racial Equation in Education

“When I first came to Mississippi, most black people were living in... serfdom on plantations. They had no control over their lives, their political lives, their economic lives, their educational lives.”

BOB MOSES, RADICAL EQUATIONS

Images of Mississippi’s civil rights history bring to mind Black voter registration drives, Freedom Summer, the assassination of Medgar Evers, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and Fannie Lou Hamer, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the fight to integrate the University of Mississippi, and the murders of civil rights activists Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman. The civil rights struggles of Mississippi activists are immortalized in a number of classic movement studies, including the “Eyes on the Prize” film series, Taylor Branch’s *Parting the Waters*, Charles Payne’s *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom*, Fred Powledge’s *Free At Last?*, and Howell Raines’s *My Soul is Rested*.

Given this rich history, the Mississippi of 2003 is a relative surprise. Despite the enormous amount of work to desegregate schools and public institutions, race and racism are still the most powerful factors in determining the life chances for both Blacks and whites in the state. Walking through the capital city of Jackson today, one finds civil rights landmarks and a post office renamed for Medgar Evers. However, the city is still segregated, with a largely Black population living in substandard houses just a few blocks away from the state capitol and the governor’s mansion.

“Mississippi is south of South America,” says Leroy Johnson, executive director of Southern Echo. “We didn’t ratify the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery until 1995. Mississippi is the one state that never made the declaration to rejoin the union. That’s the mentality of the state.”

Education in the state reflects the legacy of slavery and the tenacity of segregation. Black students comprise 55 percent of the statewide enrollment in public schools (the highest in the United States), and 80.3 percent of Black students attend segregated public schools (third highest in the nation). (Mis-Education in Mississippi, www.southernecho.org/mewg/miseducation.pdf) The Delta region, where much of the Mississippi Education Working Group’s (MEWG) work is focused, remains the most intractable. It is within this environment that MEWG has emerged.

THE PARTNERS

Southern Echo has initiated and supported much of the new organizing in Black communities in Mississippi, and the Mississippi Education Working Group (MEWG) is no exception. The work that Echo undertook on voter

“The struggles into which MEWG member groups enter are both concrete fights against the educational system’s systematic racism and a point of entry to a larger vision for social change.”

redistricting in the early 1990s brought it into contact with the other organizations across the state laboring for racial and economic justice, and surfaced many interrelated issues of inequality. When the Ford RFP was issued, MEWG had been in existence for two years and the Collaborations that Count Initiative was a timely opportunity to elevate the group’s work to the next level.

The struggles into which MEWG member groups enter are both concrete fights against the educational system’s systematic racism and a point of entry to a larger vision for social change. MEWG is the model for the realization of Echo’s goal to create many local organizations that learn from each other and influence local and state education programs and policies. Two voting members from each organization, including Southern Echo, govern the collaborative.

There are six organizations in MEWG, five local groups plus Southern Echo:

- **Citizens for Quality Education (CQE)** is a rural membership organization in Holmes County, where the population is 76 percent Black and the school district is 100 percent Black. CQE’s Youth Governance Initiative is examining the direct correlation between the excessive suspension and expulsion rates in the county schools and the building of new prisons in the Mississippi Delta.
- **Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County** works with Black residents in what the 1990 census identified as the second-poorest county in the nation to address issues of racial inequity in the public schools. In November 1999, Concerned Citizens—in collaboration with Southern Echo, other MEWG members, the Advancement Project, and the Skadden Arps law firm—successfully prevented the building of a new elementary school that would have in effect excluded Black and low-income children and perpetuated a segregated school system.

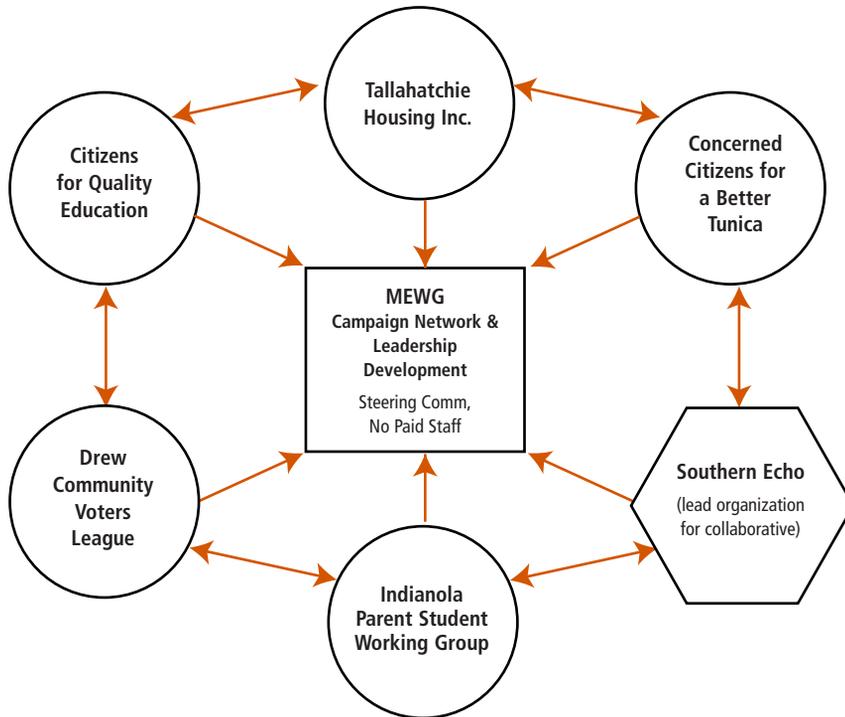
- **Drew Community Voters League** works in Sunflower County in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. It operates in a school district where almost all of the white children attend a private academy, and the public school system is 85 percent Black. The organization works with parents, students, and community leaders to address racial inequities in the operation of the GED and Alternative Education programs, student discipline, and parental access to school meetings and officials.
- **The Indianola Parent Student Working Group**, which organizes in a county that is 65 percent Black with a public school system that is 93 percent Black. The organization has worked on issues of environmental justice, stopping the spraying of aerial pesticides, and on racial disparities in the availability of science equipment in elementary schools.
- **Southern Echo**, which was founded in 1989 by civil rights veteran Hollis Watkins, uses training, analysis, and technical assistance to develop organizations that empower intergenerational, indigenous leaders of the Black community to fight for political, civil, and human rights. It is the lead organization for the CtC initiative and has assisted in the development of the other collaborative partners.
- **Tallahatchie Housing Inc. (THI)** is an economic development organization that grew out of county redistricting work in 1993. The organization has worked with both Black and white public officials to secure land and construct more than 200 units of affordable housing.

A POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ENDURING RACISM

Although the work of the Mississippi collaborative affects educational policy for students all over the state, much of the on-the-ground work takes place in the Delta. Historically, this region holds the most virulent legacies of slavery. Actually, the region defined as the “lower Mississippi Delta” includes 219 counties and parishes in portions of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

The Delta was cotton country, where wealthy, white landowners brought African slaves to cultivate their crops. For enslaved Africans, the Delta was notorious as the worst place in America to be a slave, and getting “sold down the river” became synonymous with receiving a death sentence. The anxiety of coexistence with people that they simultaneously fear and depend upon to pro-

Mississippi's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

MEWG: Mississippi Education Working Group is comprised of five community organizations in addition to Southern Echo, the lead organization. Meetings are held as needed, and although each member group has two votes, the collaborative works toward consensus decision-making.

KEY ISSUE

Organizing and Advocating against Racism in the Public Schools

ORGANIZATIONS

- Southern Echo
- Citizens for Quality Education
- Drew Community Voters League
- Indianola Parent Student Group
- Tallahatchie Housing, Inc.
- Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County

LEGEND

-  Collaborative
-  Community Organizations
-  Coalition-Based Organizations

duce their wealth still exists for the economically privileged members of the Delta's white population.

The African American population in the Lower Mississippi Delta is 31 percent, more than twice the national average of 12 percent. And whites, although a majority in the region, are a minority in some Delta counties. In Tunica and Claiborne counties, for instance, African Americans constitute 70 percent and 84 percent of the population, respectively. (Housing Assistance Council, 2002)

Mississippi is an economically distressed state, and the Delta contains the majority of the state's most economically vulnerable residents. The federal government has designated every county in the Mississippi portion of the Delta as a medically underserved area. Over one-third of the Delta's African American population lives in poverty; in the most rural areas, the poverty level is 40 percent and higher.

Public education in the Delta is still geared to support racial hierarchy. Over a third of the region's African American residents have not completed high school. *The Clarion-Ledger*, Jackson's largest newspaper, has reported that, "White flight to private schools in the 1960s and 1970s and to predominantly white bedroom communities in the 1980s and 1990s has left the public systems not much more racially diverse than they were before desegregation." (July 9, 1995) In 1995, Holmes county had a school district population that was 21.9 percent white, but the public school enrollment was 0.1 percent white. (Housing Assistance Council, 2002)

The state's public education system, which is still struggling with federal desegregation orders dating back to 1971, suffers from inadequate funding. Mary Ann Graczyk, president of the Mississippi chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, acknowledges, "We are at the bottom of the pay scale, don't have enough certified teachers, and don't have the money to meet unfunded mandates like class-size limits, or to add classes in areas like art and physical education."

The situation demanded action. Southern Echo and its local partners moved to take on the challenge—a commitment that took shape in MEWG.

"In 1995, Holmes county had a school district population that was 21.9 percent white, but the public school enrollment was 0.1 percent white."

RELATIONSHIPS PRIOR TO FORMING THE MISSISSIPPI COLLABORATIVE

When Hollis Watkins founded Southern Echo in 1989, he envisioned a combined training institute and strategy center—an entity that could develop leadership and local organizations and link local efforts to organizing on the state level. It was an attractive idea to Echo’s first recruits: Leroy Johnson, who had been an organizer for the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center (ROCC), and SNCC veteran Mike Sayer. Plans for Echo emerged over 18 months, and, according to Johnson, “at least 1,000 hours of discussion.” Beginning slowly and working the contacts that Watkins, Johnson, and Sayer had through the old SNCC network, the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, the Rural Organizing Committee, and Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE), the three began laying the groundwork for Echo.

Recognizing that the election of progressive Black candidates was a key element in building Black political power in the state, Echo conducted a tour of 14 counties that enabled the organizers, according to Mike Sayer, to “listen and learn where people were at, build trust, and make sure our program work was accountable to the needs of the people and sensitive to the ways they saw their own reality.” This work led to the organization’s first campaign in 1990, redistricting. Watkins recalls, “We began by conducting a few trainings. Pretty soon we had sessions in 20 communities around the state.”

Echo’s training curriculum is unlike the approaches of other organizations advocating for fair redistricting. The sessions, aimed at both community resi-

dents and elected officials, not only reflect on the racial discrimination in the electoral system, they also ask a whole new set of questions about Black elected leadership. “We asked,” recalls Leroy Johnson, “what did it mean to be a public servant? How can you actually serve the community? Who are the Black leg-

“We asked, what did it mean to be a public servant? How can you actually serve the community? Who are the Black legislators modeling themselves after?”

islators modeling themselves after?” The group’s educational work contributed to successful results. Echo’s Training Director, Mike Sayer pointed out that “the number of Black legislators increased from 21 in 1991 to 42 in 1993. In 1995, Black elected officials held onto every one of the 42 seats and added three more to increase the total to 45.”

Echo’s redistricting work put the group in contact with activists all over the

state. Despite the organization's progress, by the end of 1995 Echo still maintained a low profile. "We wanted local groups to get the credit [because] they were doing the work," recalls Johnson, who adds, "We thought that we needed to be an organization that stayed beneath the radar because we'd be a lot safer if folks didn't know who we were. We wouldn't take credit for anything. We said in '89 that if we still existed in '95, that we would have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. We never really thought about the perpetuation of the organization."

"We began by conducting a few trainings. Pretty soon we had sessions in 20 communities around the state."

By the end of 1995, Echo had worked with leaders in more than half of the counties in Mississippi. Not only did the organization "still exist," it was getting to be very good at developing local leaders, building the capacity of community based organizations, and winning battles. In the spring of 1996, Echo, Concerned Citizens of Tunica County (which Echo helped build), and organizers and leaders from Tallahatchie County, Drew and Indianola in Sunflower County, and Holmes County became embroiled in a fight to prevent state officials from creating a virtually all-white public elementary school in an area scheduled for a new housing development. It was in the midst of this unfolding battle, in July 1996, that the Mississippi Education Working Group (MEWG) was formed.

"We wanted to work on an issue that would have significance for people all over the state, and we thought that communities were ready to come together," recalls Sayer, "so we convened a training to talk about education issues across the state." Johnson adds, "As a part of the training, we laid out a model of folks working together across county lines to create capacity at the state level by focusing on building power locally. Our argument was that the work needed to be supported at the ground first, before we could have power at the state. It was turning the pyramid on its head."

Southern Echo invited 60 people to this first meeting and was taken aback when the room overflowed with more than 100. "There were 113 people from 21 counties," Johnson recounts. "We talked about education issues and how to get at remedying the types of problems we have. On the last day, we created the Mississippi Education Working Group (MEWG). We wanted to call it a working group because this was about work, not about networking, not about alliances. It was about folk who wanted to work together around education."

Although MEWG was not formed until 1996, the organization's roots are in Echo's first tours of the state in 1990. Prior relationships among local leaders included extensive contact with Echo and each other. Collective leadership had been honed in successful redistricting work, and Echo's efforts in the Mississippi Delta had incubated a number of new local organizations. Like Washington's Living Wage Movement, MEWG was grounded in the experience of concrete, collective struggle. The relationships were both personal and political.

The formation of MEWG came at a fortuitous time. Shortly thereafter, the Ford Foundation issued a Request for Proposals to fund statewide collaborations working on issues related to the devolution of federal monies and policy authority to the states. Southern Echo applied on behalf of MEWG. "They told us that we didn't meet the criteria, because we didn't have labor unions, we didn't have a real policy group, we didn't have 'stakeholders' that should be a part of the process," says Johnson. Nonetheless, Ford staff agreed to visit Mississippi to meet with some of the groups Echo thought should be a part of the new state collaboration. Eventually, Foundation staff agreed with Southern Echo's assessment of the situation: real policy change in Mississippi would have to come from grassroots communities themselves. Hence, MEWG received the CtC grant in Mississippi.

MEWG'S POLITICAL VISION

Why was education the issue that galvanized so many activists in the state? MEWG's assessment points out that, "The education system in Mississippi is central to the maintenance of domination and control of the Black community by the white community. The education system in majority-Black areas of the state is built around an all-white, *private* academy network, supported by the economic resources of the white community, and predominantly Black *public* schools are starved financially by public officials. White parents keep their children in segregated, private academies to ensure that they internalize the principles of separation by the time they are of age to be on their own." (*The Context of MEWG's Work*) Echo's Assistant Director Brenda Hyde elaborates, "Even though demographics have changed, Mississippi is still essentially a Black/white state. It used to be a crime for Blacks to read and write. As long as they keep control of education, our children will never be able to think beyond the way things are now."

Hyde's point is elaborated in *Mis-Education in Mississippi*, a Southern Echo publication that includes the information in the box below.

Techniques to Implement the Strategic Goals of Segregation

- Separating children by race through the maintenance of private, white academies wherever the Black student population exceeds 25 to 35 percent;
- Inadequate financial and physical resources in predominantly Black schools;
- Discipline policies that push Black students out of school;
- Misdiagnosing Black children as learning disabled, or, when that diagnosis is accurate, failing to provide adequate teaching and learning resources;
- Keeping control of the decision-making for the school systems as a whole in the hand of whites, or Blacks who are selected by whites;
- Hiring white administrators or teachers, or ineffective Black administrators and/or teachers;
- A curriculum that does not reflect the true history of the state (many state history curricula start in 1877, after slavery) and has little or no history of the state's Black residents;
- Insufficient and inadequate school buildings, laboratories, gymnasiums, playing fields, curricula, textbooks, and extra-curricular activities in the predominantly Black schools;
- Using the State Board of Accreditation to intimidate local majority-Black school boards from making serious demands for increased state funding by threatening state takeover of local school boards; and
- Use of magnet school strategies and tracking to ensure that if white students re-enter desegregated public schools they will have a separate and superior educational opportunity within a nominally racially mixed public school.

MIS-EDUCATION IN MISSISSIPPI www.southernecho.org/mewg/mis-education.pdf

For Black students, the day-to-day experience of Mississippi's educational system is brutal, according to Kim Galvin, one of MEWG's youth leaders. "The connection between school and jail is very real. Right now in Indianola if a young person is 'acting out,' the principal can call a youth court referee and get a bench warrant issued over the phone. No court, no trial, no nothing. Straight to the juvenile detention center." Johnnie Johnson, director of the Drew Voters League and winner of a contentious city council election, points out that, "We

had a teacher in our school in 1998 who told our organization that there was no such thing as Black History Month. During her planning period, she put an 11 x 14 picture of Hitler on the bulletin board. In 1999, this same teacher suspended three students who refused to stop reading books on the Civil Rights Movement during their reading time in class. The school board supported her decision. *That's why we have to focus on education.*"

MEWG'S APPROACH TO SOCIAL CHANGE

Because MEWG operates at both the local and state levels, the work is necessarily multifaceted. For example, the collaborative has successfully trained parents to be advocates, both to benefit their own children and schools and to advance racial equity in the state. At both the local and statewide levels, MEWG has developed and advocated for alternative policy proposals on public education, engaged in direct negotiations with elected officials and trained new leaders in this skill, and developed criteria and mechanisms for holding public officials accountable to the varied constituencies that MEWG both represents and supports.

Echo staff have also provided the means by which different constituent groups in Mississippi have gained access to peer support for some of their local campaigns. As training director Mike Sayer reports, "As had always been projected in our experiment, some of the older groups—such as the ones in

Holmes, Montgomery, Tunica, and Sunflower—are now also providing training and technical assistance to other member groups and to outside organizations. This is the ultimate fulfillment of our vision of empowerment: the democratization of capacities that will leaven the organizing work and prevent Echo, or any other single organization, from gatekeeping the process."

"Right now in Indianola if a young person is 'acting out,' the principal can call a youth court referee and get a bench warrant issued over the phone. No court, no trial, no nothing. Straight to the juvenile detention center."

All of MEWG's work stems from a common analysis of how racism operates in Mississippi. In its statement of organizational philosophy, Echo writes, "Racism is at the root of the problems facing the Black community. Therefore, the community must acknowledge that an integral part of the empowerment struggle is fighting racism." Truth telling—the practice of "being honest with

oneself and with the community”—is key to the organization’s strategy of directly confronting racism. In addition to working with Southern Echo, member groups also support each other on local campaigns. Betty Petty, a veteran leader of the Indianola Parent Student Working Group, points out that, “We are all pretty isolated. So, we’ve had to figure out how to depend on each other.”

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: PRODUCT AND PROCESS

The approach taken by MEWG has yielded a range of accomplishments, encompassing both external outcomes and internal development. Among the successes in the public arena are:

- **Passage of Key Education Legislation:** In 1998, the Mississippi legislature passed the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP). MEWG leaders were responsible for developing a policy proposal that became the basis for the bill, a proposal they wrote on a 36-hour deadline. The legislation appropriated \$650 million over five years to improve land, buildings, technology, textbooks, and teacher salaries, and to provide a participatory role for parents and grassroots organizations in every phase of the process. Under the leadership of the Black Caucus and with support from the community, the legislature overrode the veto of the Republican governor, who wanted to cut the appropriation by at least half. MAEP is now the primary funding vehicle for public education in the state.
- **Initiation of Administrative Complaints:** In 2001, with MEWG’s assistance, the Drew Community Voters League brought a comprehensive, 137-page complaint, which it styled as an indictment, to the State Department of Education to demand an investigation of physical and mental abuse of students. Its goals were to: (1) require the district to give students the support services to which they are entitled under federal and state regulations; (2) stop the arbitrary suspensions and expulsions of students; and (3) halt the “direct pipeline” to the Youth Court through which the district was moving children into processing by the criminal justice system. The state Department of Education ordered a comprehensive investigation of the school district in response to a complaint from the community, a first in state history.

The Indianola Parent Student Group (IPSG) also filed a complaint with the Department of Education, citing their school district for abusive treatment of children with special needs. After intense negotiations, state

officials ordered local school district officials to attend local public hearings. The state found that the school district's teachers were untrained and unqualified to work with children with special needs. It ordered the district to train teachers to do this kind of work, assign only trained teachers to work with these children, and set up a monitoring process that included IPSTG as part of the review mechanism.

- **Coalition Advocacy on Disability Rights for Students:** MEWG members, especially CQE, working with the Southern Disability Law

Center developed alliances with existing, predominantly white organizations to form Citizens for Quality Special Education (CQSE). The group's purpose is to get the state to force local school districts to comply with federal and state laws and regulations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). CQSE has held joint training workshops with state education officials

"Some of the older groups are now also providing training and technical assistance to other member groups and to outside organizations."

and cosponsored legislative hearings with the chair of the Senate Education Committee, a former schoolteacher who is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus.

- **Stopping the Building of a Racially Segregated School:** Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County, with support from MEWG, led a successful fight to prevent state officials from creating a virtually all-white public elementary school in an area scheduled for a new housing development. The proposal to build the school followed the state's tradition of offering private, segregated academies to white residents, but this school was to be supported with public monies. The goal, MEWG reports, "was to create an apartheid-like model that could be copied in other parts of the state, and in other states, since efforts to create publicly-funded, white-only schools had floundered because of the growing capacity of the Black community to impact public policy."

When the state went to federal court to obtain permission to build the school under the existing desegregation order, MEWG's members took the lead in pressing for negotiations in order to get the parties to move the proposed site to a location proposed by the Black community. Ultimately, the state agreed to move the site sufficiently close to an existing Black subdivision so that the scheme collapsed. Hundreds of homes on

the drawing board were never built, and similar plans collapsed in the towns of Drew and McComb, where the white communities were awaiting the outcome of the struggle in Tunica. (Southern Echo, 2003)

BUILDING FROM WITHIN

In addition to victories in these key policy battles, MEWG has been instrumental in a number of developmental milestones:

- **Developing new leadership.** The MEWG project is the only CtC collaborative that has collectivized and developed indigenous, low-income, Black community residents as the lead organizers in local projects.
- **Consolidating Black leadership.** Johnnie Johnson, who was elected to the Drew Board of Alderpersons in 2001 in a hotly contested special election, points out that she “had two Black state senators and Congressman Benny Thompson show up to help get the Black vote out and ensure a fair election.” The election is one of many examples of MEWG’s work to develop and call upon “principled” Black leadership to act in concert with the African American community.
- **Mitigating the fear factor.** Melvin and Marilyn Young of Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County point out, “In the Delta, white communities have controlled everything for the longest. They’ve done it through their money, and they’ve done it through fear. When you head down to the state capitol in Jackson, you see the ‘good old boys’ in the judicial system and in the legislature.” Not only has the work of Echo and MEWG decreased the white majority in the legislature, it has had an important effect on leaders in grassroots organizations. As Indianola leader Betty Petty says, “We are not afraid any more to speak our mind.”

INDIGENOUS CONSTITUENCY

Riding through the Mississippi Delta, it is easy to find a sign that designates a route number and three different directions. Hollis Watkins tells the story of an out-of-state recruit who declined the offer of directions from group members, assuring them that he could follow a map. “He was lost for almost seven hours,” recalls Watkins. Leroy Johnson remarks with an enigmatic smile, “Signs and maps are just out here to confuse (non-local) folks. Here, you’ve got to have a local guide.”

In line with this allegorical tale, MEWG has taken the notion of indigenous leadership to heart. Although the project has been very successful in working with a wide range of external advocacy and intermediary organizations—including the Advancement Project, Harvard Civil Rights Project, Southern Disability Law Center, and the Southern Partners Fund—the organization’s

strength continues to be in developing community leaders and incubating new organizations. “Do we fight with each other?” reflects Melvin Young. “Sure, sometimes we get into shouting matches, but in the end there has to be some consensus. We’re all that we’ve got.”

“White communities have controlled everything. They’ve done it through their money, and they’ve done it through fear.”

Have there been problems with developing indigenous leadership as the mainstays of the organization? “There are problems with any model,” acknowledges Hollis Watkins. “With MEWG, we’ve had to cancel meetings because folk had to deal with their own kids in the school system. That’s real. After driving for two and a half hours to get to a meeting, you’re not necessarily happy about it at the time, but we understand it. People are really engaged in their own struggles.” Johnnie Johnson points to another perspective: “When I first started doing this work, everyone was afraid. My parents were afraid for me. Now, people are really in it. And we’re *in* it to make some real changes for our children.”

Key Challenges

Clearly, MEWG has become an influential actor in state education politics, and many of its constituent organizations have come of age. They are independent formations with budgets, staffs, boards, and their own internal dynamics. However, this relatively new level of success brings with it a number of organizational challenges:

Need for trained, full-time organizing staff: Southern Echo and MEWG have done an excellent job in developing new indigenous organizations and leaders. However, there is a difference between starting organizations and maintaining them. When organizations begin, they often run on a combination of personal relationships, the deep emotions generated by the issues, and the personal dedication and charisma of the initial leaders. As groups mature,

they often need additional skills to survive. Record-keeping, systematic outreach, and methodical ways to orient and involve new members are all necessary organizational functions, but they are not necessarily the skills or interests of founding leaders. Therefore, in order to stabilize and expand MEWG's organizational base, these functions will have to be performed either centrally—through Echo—cooperatively through MEWG, within each organization, or, optimally, by some combination of these approaches.

Research and legal capacity: It is important to have the capacity both to give organizational supporters accessible analyses of key issues and state agencies and to document public policy positions before the state legislature. In addition, since much of MEWG's work has included filing lawsuits and administrative complaints, it is important to have these resources readily available to deepen and enhance these efforts. Thus far, MEWG has managed to organize support in these two areas by seeking external resources. However, the group does not have a guarantee of these services on a regular basis.

“When I first started doing this work, everyone was afraid. My parents were afraid for me. Now, people are really in it. And we’re in it to make some real changes for our children.”

Managing organizational scope: Southern Echo is the backbone organization of MEWG. To advance the collective work, Echo conducts trainings, helps develop campaigns, identifies and organizes external resources, manages the financial resources of local organizations, recruits external staff, arranges for local leaders to represent MEWG nationally, provides campaign and leadership training in other states, and participates in national projects—all with a staff of fewer than 15. The pressures of internal organizational development for Mississippi groups will only become more pronounced. An important challenge for Southern Echo will be to allocate organizational resources in a way that promotes organizational stability in Echo, as well as in MEWG's member groups, and that does not overtax its staff.

Collaborative Comparisons: The Driving Force of Relationship and Vision

POLITICAL VISION

“Vision—it reaches beyond the thing that is, into the conception of what can be. Imagination gives you the picture. Vision gives you the impulse to make the picture your own.”

ROBERT COLLIER

Both Washington’s Living Wage Movement and the Mississippi Education Working Group have developed clear visions of what their constituents face, the wide-ranging societal changes they would like to realize, and the strategic steps necessary to achieve their aims. That said, the scope and texture of each group’s vision is very different, as are their choices of strategies and tactics.

CLASS AND RACE

Washington’s Living Wage Movement contains two key components of political vision. First, its Nine Principles of Unity clearly project a picture of the solutions and changes that the group wants to achieve. Barbara Flye believes that, “If you are really trying to build a movement, you have to have a vision, and our Principles are the beginning of a vision.”

Second, unlike living wage campaigns in most states, where the passage of a single ordinance was the end goal, the Washington collaborative’s goals have given organizers a way to involve several constituencies in different dimensions of the work. WAC organizer Mike Ramos observes, “Getting buy-in to the Principles allowed us to have many different conversations. We were able to address workers’ right to organize, as well as issues related to health, fair treatment, and livable wages.”

LWM’s “big tent” frame enabled the Washington Association of Churches to have members of religious institutions participate in walk-with-workers actions in Seattle and to include growers and agricultural workers in discussions about Fair Trade apples. “I don’t want to imply that these were always easy discussions,” says John Boonstra, “but we were able to have them and to gain some support for the campaign.” In addition, the universal healthcare principle solidified the work with Washington Citizen Action members, who had been working on

healthcare issues, and the housing plank provided an opportunity to work with the UFW to secure farmworker housing and to take the campaign into religious institutions in eastern Washington. Thus, the frame provided by the principles allowed a number of constituencies to participate in the broader campaign and to enter it for individual reasons.

However, while LWM’s principles are grounded in an analysis that locates the basis of societal inequality in social class—the relationship between owners and workers—this analysis of the macro-problem is not explicit. There is an advantage to keeping the analysis implicit: it allows the LWM to recruit primary support from constituents who would directly benefit from attainment of the nine principles and also cull secondary support from middle- and upper-class attendees of religious institutions, based on values of justice and fairness. As noted earlier, a disadvantage is that, although LWM’s nine principles include “protection from discrimination based on race, gender, religious belief, country of origin, and sexual orientation,” the implicit nature of the class analysis makes it all the more difficult to point to the political intersection of class, country of origin, sexual orientation, race, and gender.

MEWG’s work includes all three elements: a political vision; an analysis of the problem, solutions, and goals, and a way to achieve them; and the ability to ground analysis in the constituency’s experience and to share the analysis externally. The collaborative’s analysis is grounded in an assessment of how racism works to oppress Black people in general, and specifically how the educational system is used to oppress Black children. Reexamining MEWG’s work, it is important to note that while the focus was on public schools, its efforts actually covered a range of issues, including the misallocation of resources to white enclaves, abuse of students, access by parents to administrators and teachers, elected representation, and teacher quality.

In addition, racist practices, both subtle and blatant, were publicly named as such in all of the campaign work. As Melvin Young, director of Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County, points out, “One of the things we found working with MEWG was that this [racism] is not just a Tunica problem. It’s a problem all over the state.”

“Getting buy-in to the Principles allowed us to address workers’ right to organize, as well as issues related to health, fair treatment, and livable wages.”

In terms of crafting solutions, although the group's work focuses on racist education practices, the educational arena is only one dimension of what the leaders of MEWG see as their work. As Echo training director Mike Sayer points out, "MEWG focuses on education as a means to address the funda-

"MEWG focuses on education as a means to address the fundamental goal of empowering the African American community."

mental goal of empowering the African American community. Our goals are not merely to address the substantive objective of creating a quality, first-rate educational opportunity for all children. The *process* by which we get there is just as important. The work around education,

for it to be effective in our terms, must enable the grassroots community to build effective, accountable new leadership and organizations through which they can develop the skills and tools needed to impact the formation of education policy."

The process that Sayer describes is the third dimension of political vision—a group's ability to ground the analysis internally in the experiences of its constituency and to share it externally. MEWG's political analysis, grounded in a historical fight against racism, resonated with many Black community residents in the Mississippi Delta. However, for some, the ongoing effects of racial oppression were so deeply felt as to generate fear. That fear had to be surfaced, faced, and overcome. MEWG's approach included a combination of training and analysis with action. It provided workshops and two- to five-day residential schools for the group's parent and student leaders, focusing on nuts and bolts organizing, organizational development, and political analysis. That dovetailed with opportunities for community people to confront the system and the people who were actively oppressing them.

Externally, the salience of MEWG's political vision and on-the-ground work enabled the group's members to reach out to, and work with, Black elected officials, simultaneously making them campaign partners and holding them accountable to MEWG's constituencies. In addition, in 2000, leaders of MEWG worked with Black parents' groups in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina to form the Rural Education Working Group, modeled after MEWG.

The Washington and Mississippi case studies illustrate how political vision can have a number of effects:

- It can determine how issues are named and framed in public discourse and in the media;
- It can influence decisions on how groups take action;
- It can determine which groups feel that they have an important stake in the outcome of the campaign and which will opt out of a collaborative effort;
- It can solidify connections with partners already committed to the vision's general goals and be useful in recruiting unlikely partners to campaign efforts; and,
- It can either polarize or soft-pedal political differences with oppositional forces.

PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS

The Washington and Mississippi collaboratives are examples of two different ways that social change initiatives address the question: “With whom do you work to achieve social change?” This debate in community and labor organizing has a long history. Those who argue that change must come “from the bottom up” tend to organize the economic “have-nots.” Others focus on the “have-a-little-and-want-mores,” a group that comprises the majority of voters and is a more working- to middle-class constituency. Activists who argue that it is most important to organize the most socially, culturally, and politically oppressed may work with a constituency that is defined by race, gender, physical ability, or sexual identity; those who argue that change should be rooted in “shared Judeo-Christian values” recruit their membership through religious institutions.

Choices of constituencies with which to work, if one has the luxury to make them, are often loaded with a multitude of theories and assumptions about how change happens. Most social change activists operate with a notion of dual constituencies. That is, they work directly for and with a primary constituency and seek support from or attempt to neutralize secondary constituencies.

As discussed earlier, the organizations in the Washington Collaborative have worked together on a number of issues over the past nine years. Much of the

experience of the collaborative is collective. The prior relationships of these three groups give the Washington Collaborative the following advantages:

- **Collective legitimacy.** The collaborative has the credibility of the state's largest citizen group, the only statewide social-justice-oriented, multid denominational religious formation, and the state AFL-CIO.
- **Reach and political clout.** All three organizations have membership bases, experience in mounting legislative reform efforts, and the ability to mobilize not only their own constituency but also the constituents of allied organizations. Even one detractor who wishes that LWM would directly address issues of discrimination in the immigrant and refugee communities admits, "They really are able to put issues out in the public view. The piece on self-sufficiency [which the campaign worked on in collaboration with Dr. Diana Pearce of the University of Washington's School for Social Work] really grabbed media attention. We need a group with the ability to do that in this state."
- **A well-defined division of labor.** Experience in working together and a high degree of trust also enabled members of the collaborative to be confident that work assignments distributed among participating organizations would actually get done.

In Mississippi, constituency definition preceded issue selection. Core to the mission of Southern Echo is increasing the power of the Black community. Many of Echo's relationships across the state existed prior to the formation of MEWG. Several leaders of the organizations that now make up MEWG were originally recruited as part of Echo's redistricting work.

The next step of solidifying and consolidating the relationships was a period of development. As Training Director Mike Sayer points out, "For three years (1993–96), Echo staff provided technical assistance to local community groups to give them sufficient time to build their capacity and broaden their base of support around their local education agendas." The training sessions would often lead to local action, perhaps challenging a school's policy, or proposing a change in the meeting time for a school board meeting so that parents could actually attend, or even an action as simple as a parent requesting a copy of the child's school records. "We learned a lot in that period," recalls Sayer. "We learned who was strong and ready, who was weak and reluctant, who couldn't see any hope, and who was ready to walk from the dark into the light. We also

learned much about how people identified their priorities and how they talked about achieving change.”

In MEWG’s case, the development of relationships among new leaders also meant creating a new organizational structure from scratch. “We had to basically develop everything,” says organizer Betty Petty, adding that most organizers worked out of their homes, and MEWG had to equip people with cell phones and cars to travel the distances involved in working as a collaborative. In addition to adult leaders, MEWG is also committed to an intergenerational approach and to allowing young people to make their own decisions. Hollis Watkins comments, “It’s important to have the next generation involved, but it does add some work.”

Developing strong leadership took top priority, along with meeting practical challenges. “It took us a little while before we were comfortable speaking in public,” recalls Johnnie Johnson. “Then, when we started telling our stories in other parts of the country, people didn’t believe us. They didn’t believe that things were still this bad in Mississippi.”

Has the developmental work produced results? Johnson, herself the survivor and winner of a tough, racially polarized local election, says, “Now, more people are willing to take the system on.”

There are other cumulative effects of MEWG’s “bottom-up” work. As Mike Sayer observes, “Power is not only the capacity to make things happen or not to happen. It is also the perceived capacity. This shift in perception on the part of state officials, especially white officials, is in itself transformational. It helps to explain why state education department officials now seek out MEWG leadership to consult on new strategies, even where there may be fundamental disagreements.”

Although both MEWG and the LWM began their collaborative efforts with strong intergroup relationships and common campaign experience, the infrastructures of the collaboratives were very different. MEWG was simultaneously building a base constituency and creating the collaborative’s primary structures and interconnections. Although LWM was attempting to expand its base, it was able to use the established legitimacy of member groups to command public

“We learned who was strong and ready, who was weak and reluctant, who couldn’t see any hope, and who was ready to walk from the dark into the light.”

attention for its positions and motivate external allies to join the collaborative's efforts. Each constituency choice has implications. The choice to include established groups often excludes emerging groups with important, but sometimes less powerful, constituencies. On the other hand, the choice to work with predominately new grassroots groups is resource-intensive and may not give a new collaborative the ability to trade on the already established relationships of existing groups.

Which approach is better—LWM's choice of established groups and a vision of social change grounded in challenging economic barriers, or MEWG's use of a political vision of racial equality to increase the power of an African

"Power is not only the capacity to make things happen or not happen. It is also the perceived capacity."

American population that is subjected to current and historical discrimination? The answer, of course, is: "it depends." The approaches worked well in their respective states. The broad living wage principles articulated in Washington would not have been effective in Mississippi, a right-to-work state with a mini-

mal organized labor presence. Conversely, MEWG's race analysis, grounded in the Southern experience, would not have generated broad solidarity in Washington, where the populations of people of color have different experiences, and where African Americans are only 3.2 percent of the population. In order to be successful, collaboratives must have the ability and flexibility to develop the analysis and employ the strategy that best fits their situation.

Summary of Key Lessons

Strong Vision, Strong Action: Political vision is an important prerequisite to defining the work of a collaborative. The vision can solidify connections among the collaborative's participants and determine how issues are framed and how groups will take action. It can also affect the level of participation of member and non-member groups in the activities of the collaborative.

Prior Relations, Future Benefits: The quality of prior relationships that groups have before entering into a collaborative will be a prime determinant of the collaborative's ability to succeed. A prior relationship that includes campaign work will especially serve as a basis for the trust necessary to get organizations

through the tough questions of resource allocation, sharing credit, and mutual accountability and respect that all collaboratives must face.

Foundations for Success: These two variables—political vision and prior relationships—are important considerations for building a successful collaboration. While groups can forge short-term coalitions to advance issue work without a political vision, if the intent is to build long-term power, groups will inevitably have to face the question: “Power for whom and for what?” Similarly, if groups come together to advance a political agenda, they must trust each other to conduct the collaborative’s work in a timely, responsible manner. The most effective way to build that trust is for groups to gain experience working together on a specific set of activities to achieve collectively agreed-upon results.



*Foundation funds were not used for direct or indirect legislative activity.



CHAPTER 4

Addressing Power Dynamics: Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina

One of the central goals in the Collaborations that Count experiment was to coalesce different types of progressive organizations—including both grassroots organizations and policy organizations—around a common fight for social and economic justice. Most policy organizations acknowledge that grassroots support is a critical element to policy change, while many organizing groups can benefit from policy expertise and research capacity. In addition, most of the organizations represented in CtC already shared some values and issues; many had interacted with each other in the course of their work. These commonalities and the potential for enhancing each other's efforts and building power together are the impetus behind collaborative work.

Even when organizations share a common set of overall objectives, however, inter-organizational collaboration poses potential for conflict. In *Developing Management Skills*, the authors explain that, with increased interdependence and interactions across organizational borders, multiple opportunities exist not only for improved decision-making and innovation, but also for miscommunication, misunderstanding, misperceptions, and loss of productivity. (Whetton & Cameron, 1998) Meanwhile, as Taylor Cox, Jr. demonstrates in *Cultural Diversity in Organizations* (1994), conflict is an overt expression of tensions that arise out

of the opposing interests of the involved parties. For the Ford collaboratives, natural allegiances sometimes veiled challenges to building collaborations across policy and organizing groups with different constituencies, measures of success, decision-making structures, and resource bases. Moreover, how organizations addressed internal tensions—particularly tensions related to race, gender, and education—influenced how effective they will be at preventing or addressing conflict.

This chapter focuses on an analysis of three collaborations—the Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA), the North Carolina Alliance for Economic

“The first grant was for us to decide what we wanted to be.”

Justice (NCAEJ), and the Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy (TPOPP)—and reveals how these collaboratives negotiate complex relationships between grassroots and policy

groups. Further, this analysis explores the tensions that emerge within a collaborative from social hierarchies of race, class, and gender.

The Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy (TPOPP): Mobilizing the Strengths of Policy and Organizing

Tennessee is often referred to as three states in one, with the three largest cities—Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis—as the capitals of each. Stretched from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River, Tennessee’s geography mirrors the diversity of the state’s political, cultural, and economic terrain.

In 1998, several Tennessee progressive organizations received letters from the Ford Foundation requesting proposals for creating a statewide collaboration of policy and grassroots organizations that could increase civic participation and affect statewide public policy on the issues most critical to low-income Tennesseans. Maureen O’Connell, director of Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) in Knoxville and one of the first to receive the letter, immediately saw both the potential and the challenges it posed. “These groups had never been in a room talking about what we wanted to do together,” O’Connell recalls. “But I thought, this could be some infusion of money for things we care about.” Other groups agreed, and together the organizations wrote their first grant request. The Ford Foundation responded with a one-year planning grant, which laid the groundwork for the Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy (TPOPP). “It was very fuzzy at the time,” recalls Brian Miller of Ten-

nesseans for Fair Taxation (TFT), a broad-based coalition working on tax reform. “The first grant was for us to decide what we wanted to be. We already had a lot of coalitions in the state working on various issues. So after several meetings, the idea was that we would focus on resources, networking, and capacity-building to strengthen the progressive movement.”

THE PARTNERS

With these goals in mind, the organizations invited other progressive allies to include a broader range of groups and issues. TPOPP now has nine partners, including grassroots organizing groups, policy groups, and statewide, issue-based coalitions.

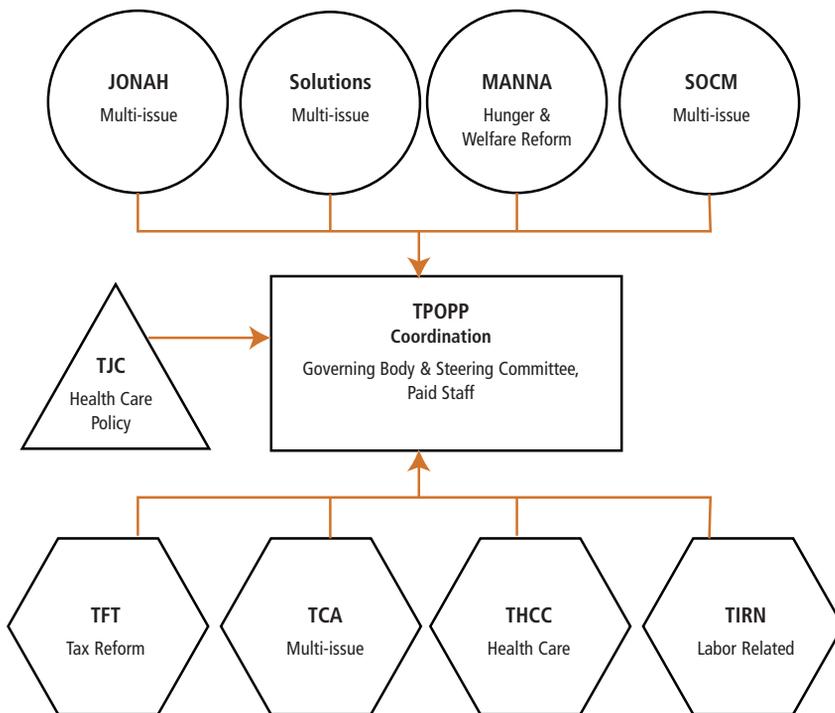
- **Just Organized Neighborhood Area Headquarters (JONAH)**, located in the West Tennessee city of Jackson, is a rural, multi-issue community organizing group with 700 members, predominantly low-income African Americans. In its 24-year history, JONAH has worked on a broad range of justice issues, as well as social, political, and economic empowerment.
- **MANNA** began in 1975 as a local grassroots group working to end hunger through education, empowerment, and advocacy. MANNA typically works with churches, community activists, and clients of food programs to mobilize people to work on various hunger-related issues, including welfare reform.
- **Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM)**, based in Lake City in Eastern Tennessee, is a 30-year-old grassroots community organization formed to address injustices in rural communities. With 2,500 members in chapters across the state, SOCM emphasizes leadership development and works on a range of environmental, economic, and social justice issues at both the local and state policy levels.
- **Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvillians (Solutions)** was formed in 1982, when 13 organizations joined forces in an effort to protect Knox County’s Indigent Health Program. Since then, Solutions has become a multiracial, multi-issue organization focusing on leadership development, organizing, and direct action to promote racial, social, political, and economic equality.

- **Tennessee Citizens' Alliance (TCA)** is a multi-issue progressive coalition that works on state-level policy issues, particularly healthcare, environment, workplace health and safety, and governmental ethics, including campaign finance and lobbying reform.
- **Tennesseans for Fair Taxation (TFT)** was formed in 1984 as a statewide, grassroots coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to economic justice, with a particular focus on the state's regressive tax system. The coalition is working primarily on implementing a statewide income tax and has local organizing committees across the state.
- **Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network (TIRN)**, located in Knoxville, is a statewide coalition of workers, unions, community organizations, religious groups, and individuals. Its primary focus areas include plant closings, job creation and living wage issues, global economic issues and trade agreements, and supporting progressive change in Tennessee's welfare program.
- **The Tennessee Health Care Campaign** works for affordable, accessible, quality healthcare, through education, research, and advocacy. THCC has been involved in healthcare advocacy since 1987 and is the lead organization for TPOPP's healthcare work.
- **Tennessee Justice Center** is a nonprofit, public interest law firm established in 1996 to advocate for the health and welfare of low-income people. The Center focuses on Tennessee's healthcare and welfare systems.

This combination of groups “includes all the right people,” says Carol Westlake, a prominent advocate for people with disabilities, who is not a member of the collaborative. “The largest and most effective community organizers are right in there with the people who are at the capitol every day, monitoring policies that affect poor people in this state.”

Westlake, like many other advocates in the state, can see the potential of TPOPP to bring together a progressive voice for low-income Tennesseans. They also recognize, however, that “Tennessee is a conservative state run by an ‘old boy network’ that doesn't respond quickly to progressive reforms.”

Tennessee's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

TPOPP: Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy is working to increase civic participation and affect statewide public policy. Formed in 1998, the goals of TPOPP include strategic focusing of resources, networking of progressive organizations, and capacity building.

KEY ISSUE

Tax Reform and Health Care

ORGANIZATIONS

JONAH: Just Organized Neighborhood Area Headquarters

MANNA, Inc.

SOCM: Save Our Cumberland Mountains

Solutions: Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvilleans

TCA: Tennessee Citizens' Alliance

TFT: Tennesseans for Fair Taxation

THCC: Tennessee Health Care Campaign

TIRN: Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network

TJC: Tennessee Justice Center

LEGEND

-  Collaborative
-  Community Organizations
-  Coalition-Based Organizations
-  Policy Groups

POLITICAL CLIMATE

An analysis of this climate is critical to understanding the potential and the challenges that face TPOPP. In Eastern Tennessee, tight-knit, predominantly white communities have survived for generations through the extraction of natural resources from the coal and timber-rich mountains. Nashville, the capital city and the state's industrial center, sits in the middle of the state. Western Tennessee is home to the majority of the state's African American population, and its historically cotton-based agrarian economy overshadows the big-city culture of Memphis, the state's largest city. Memphis bears the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and is still deeply segregated residentially and economically. Nevertheless, there is strong African American political leadership in Memphis, including the statehouse speaker pro-tem and an African American mayor.

Racial divisions define much of the context for politics and coalition work within the state. Tennessee is 79.2 percent non-Hispanic white and 16.4 percent African American, both slightly above the national averages. (U.S. Census, 2000) Excluding those from Memphis and West Tennessee, however, there are few African American representatives in the legislature. Throughout the state, the Ku Klux Klan is present. "Two months ago, there was a Klan march in Newport, just 45 minutes from Knoxville," recalls Vickie Creed, long-time Tennessee resident and nonprofit consultant, "and when a local grassroots group was taking on racism in schools, the Klan showed up. Some of our organizing groups have lost staff because of death threats and harassment." In the mountains in East Tennessee, says Carol Westlake, "There are many white communities where African Americans aren't welcome."

The recent surge in the state's Latino immigrant population adds a new dimension to these racial tensions. Tighter border restrictions in recent years have led many migrant workers to settle their families permanently in the region. According to the 2000 census, 2.2 percent of the state's population is Latino, although advocates argue that this dramatically underrepresents a population that has tripled since 1990. The infrastructure for social services and organizing to support these new residents is emerging but underdeveloped. As in many other states in the region, Latino workers in Tennessee constitute the low-wage labor base for agriculture, poultry and meat factories, and the construction industry.

Tennessee's economic base is as diverse as its landscape but is increasingly focused on low-wage labor. Agriculture and forestry is a \$53 billion industry, responsible for 21 percent of the state economy and 293,000 jobs. (Matthews, 2002) Western Tennessee's cotton economy was historically based on slaves and sharecropping, and the beleaguered tobacco industry has long been the stable income source for many East Tennessee farmers. Manufacturing in Tennessee has a shorter history. "The South was a way station on the transition of the American economy away from industrialization," says Bob Becker of the Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network (TIRN). "Factories up north shut down when they got outdated, moved here, set up shop, and quickly moved on. You didn't have the long-term generational benefits to the working class that you might have in Chicago or Pittsburgh, and you didn't have unions because there was no 30-year struggle to organize. And now people are being hurt because jobs are moving on."

"As in many other states in the region, Latino workers in Tennessee constitute the low-wage labor base for agriculture, poultry and meat factories, and the construction industry."

Middle Tennessee is reaping the biggest benefits from manufacturing, but enormous corporate tax incentives have eroded the infrastructure for schools, roads, and other public services. Many parts of the state have become increasingly reliant on tourism and recreation. The Smoky Mountains draw many people into the southeast part of the state, while country music brings a steady flow of tourism to Nashville. These are industries that produce mostly low-wage jobs without benefits. "There are parts of this state where people are begging for a prison to be built so they can have jobs," says Becker.

THE TAX REFORM CAMPAIGN

In September 2000, recognizing that state budget woes were hindering efforts to support social programs, TPOPP decided that its first issue would be tax reform. Because Tennessee does not have an income tax, the current tax system relies heavily on a sales tax. This places a disproportionate burden on low-income residents. Tennessee loses millions in tax revenue as local shoppers cross into border states that, because they have income taxes, have much lower sales taxes. Meanwhile, low state revenues have led to shortchanging state services. The state is 49th in education spending and near the bottom in funding for

home and community-based healthcare, higher education, high school graduation rates, and libraries. (Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, fact sheet) While incentives for businesses are a common practice in Tennessee, spending money on social services isn't a priority for the state's conservative political leadership.

"There are parts of this state where people are begging for a prison to be built so they can have jobs."

"When you look at our dropout and literacy rates and understand that we don't value or spend money on education, it is not then very surprising that our poverty rate is so high," Westlake says. "We're a low tax state, a low service state, so people who are poor stay poor, and the power relationships stay where they are."

Few progressive changes in social services have come about through state government. Rather, it has been class action lawsuits that have driven many of Tennessee's social services reforms. As Westlake elaborates, "We have had class action lawsuits about prisons, nursing homes, schools, institutions for mentally ill people, foster care, and all of the changes in those systems have happened as a result of lawsuits. That's happened because the state has been so negligent in its provision of social services dollars."

TPOPP partners chose tax policy as their primary issue for two reasons: the barriers that Tennessee's regressive tax structure imposed and because most TPOPP partners, including both grassroots and policy groups, were already in support of tax reform. All but one of the TPOPP partners were already members of Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, a coalition that would provide the leadership on the campaign. As Sarah Scott of Solutions says, "We're divided on the issues that affect East, West, and Middle Tennessee. There are things like SOCM's work on clear-cutting and our work on childcare that are too specific to our area. So in TPOPP we tried to pick out things like taxes that are statewide."

TPOPP's opportunity to focus on the tax reform fight occurred in 2002, when the issue became particularly heated in the legislature. The government was looking for ways to meet a state mandate requiring a balanced budget, and the governor was supportive of an income tax as a means of increasing revenue. While the income tax came closer to passing than at any other point in the state's history, in July 2002 the state legislature voted it down in favor of another increase in the sales tax. At 9.35 percent, the sales tax in Tennessee is the highest in the nation. However, the work of progressive organizations, coalitions, and collaborations like Tennesseans for Fair Taxation and TPOPP prevented the

increase from including food, which marks the first time the state has had separate tax rates for food (which remains at 8.35 percent) and for other goods.

Despite the 2002 vote, the fight for tax reform is far from over. Economists estimated that the sales tax increase might last the state two to three years, but since then the budget has sunk deeper into deficit. In addition, the state Supreme Court ruled for teacher pay equity across urban and rural schools, which will cost the state an estimated \$450 million. This suggests the state will have to revisit its revenue structure sooner rather than later.

Both this budget crisis and the 2002 elections have provided a political opportunity. During the election, both gubernatorial candidates were opposed to an income tax, but now-governor Phil Bredesen appears to be more movable. “Bredesen said he’s opposed to it personally and won’t support it in his first term,” says Brian Miller of Tennesseans for Fair Taxation. “But he leaned toward one of our members after a debate and said, ‘what we really need is good public education.’”

The income tax fight focused on mobilizing key constituents and educating different sectors of the public. This education effort has been critical to the progress of tax reform efforts, and TPOPP contributed to that success. “The perception that you can’t get elected in Tennessee on a pro-income tax platform is partly based in fact, partly myth,” explains Miller. “There is far more support for an income tax than for the increased sales tax, so when you tie an income tax to reduced sales tax, you start getting majority support.” Weighing this balance is something elected officials will be forced to do as they continue to face the realities of the recession and the budget shortfall.

THE DYNAMICS OF POLICY AND ORGANIZING

When TPOPP first came together in 1998, many of the partner organizations knew of each other and had worked together in some capacity, but becoming a formal collaboration posed new challenges. TPOPP spent its first year developing a decision-making structure and building trust among organizations. “It was kind of like a marriage with someone you know, but not really that well,” says Carolyn Washington of MANNA. The potential for the expertise of policy groups and issue-based coalitions to advance organizing efforts and for organizing groups to provide the additional leverage that a membership base brings were primary reasons that many groups were at the table. “When I first heard about the collaboration and learned that one of the groups was SOCM,

I thought, ‘I’ve always tried to get them involved in the healthcare campaign, and maybe now it will happen,’” recalls Tony Garr of the Tennessee Health Care Campaign. “But I was also aware of the frustrations that I’d had in trying to get member-based organizations involved in the healthcare campaign and with legislative issues.”

“There was a real difference in the way the organizing groups and the policy groups approached issues. Some of us wanted to move fast on things, while the organizing groups were telling us to move slow and bring along the base.”

The frustration Garr experienced is based in differences in organizational cultures, constituencies, and decision-making structures—differences illustrated by the groups’ experiences trying to preserve TennCare.

In 1994, Tennessee applied for a waiver from the federal government to gain flexibility with its Medicaid program. The program, known as TennCare, began under that waiver and grew to cover not only the 850,000 Medicaid-eligible Tennesseans, but also 450,000 non-Medicaid-eligible uninsured residents. “For a lot of consumers, TennCare was the best thing that ever happened to them,” says Susie Putz-Drury, former coordinator of TPOPP. “People had an insurance card and, if they pursued it, they could get access to care that they couldn’t get before. The state went from last in the number of insured children to first.”

However, TennCare’s expanded access also provided an easy target for politicians, like former Governor Don Sundquist, who were eager to balance the budget without raising taxes. The federal waiver gave the state’s executive branch primary control over the program, meaning that critical changes in TennCare could be made quickly, with little more than a pen stroke and no legislative oversight. When conservatives called for cuts in TennCare, community organizing groups were not equally quick in their responses. “I’d be at Legislative Plaza, and the governor says he’ll cut a million dollars out of Medicaid, and member organizations like Solutions could not give me a quick answer,” says Garr. “They had to work everything through the membership when we needed a decision to oppose those cuts today.”

Solutions’ reaction to cuts in TennCare illustrates some common barriers to collaboration between grassroots groups and policy organizations. Because of their policy expertise and close contact with the legislature, organizations like the Tennessee Health Care Campaign react quickly to policy proposals and

opportunities within their range of expertise. Meanwhile, groups like Solutions, Save Our Cumberland Mountains, and JONAH choose and react quickly to issues that emerge out of the priorities of their grassroots base. As Eric Cole of Tennessee Citizens' Alliance explains, "There was a real difference in the way the organizing groups and the policy groups approached issues. Some of us wanted to move fast on things, while the organizing groups were telling us to move slow and bring along the base."

For TPOPP, bridging this gap meant that organizations had to get to know and trust each other, while creating a process that would facilitate group decision-making, issue selection, and resource allocation. To make sure all groups had input into the decision-making process, TPOPP chose to use a consensus model. Eventually, spending time to work through tough decisions brought the organizations closer and fostered understanding across groups. As Tony Garr reports, "We have really come around in terms of understanding each other's perspectives and positions."

In 2002, former Governor Sundquist sought and received a new federal waiver that required all non-Medicaid-eligible enrollees to reapply and to meet more stringent eligibility criteria. Under these new criteria, enrollees must provide material proof of residency, health status, private insurance availability, income, and assets. As a result, more than half a million TennCare recipients, mostly the "working poor," had to "re-verify" with the Department of Human Services, but many people couldn't make appointments because of the bureaucratic quagmire. "It is extremely difficult to make an appointment by phone," says former TPOPP coordinator Putz-Drury. "People have tried for days to get through, unsuccessfully."

TPOPP responded to this crisis by maximizing the combined expertise of both its policy and grassroots partners. Their response included rallies in several cities, a media campaign including radio stories, and translating TennCare policy into accessible educational materials. These efforts, however, proved to be too little and too late for many health care recipients. By January 2003, 160,000 Tennesseans—children, low-income residents, elderly and disabled, and people with serious medical conditions—lost their health care. (Wade, 2002)

"We have really come around in terms of understanding each other's perspectives and positions."

Some Achievements to Build On

In its continuing efforts to preserve healthcare benefits and secure an income tax, TPOPP must overcome political opposition and severe budget shortfalls. Their accomplishments and potential stem largely from the strengthened relationships between organizing and policy groups. Two areas where this success is evident are popular education and influencing public opinion.

POPULAR EDUCATION

TPOPP worked with Tennesseans for Fair Taxation and the Tennessee Health Care Campaign to produce simplified educational materials and training sessions on tax reform and TennCare. These were distributed among the partners and shared with membership. “What TPOPP has been able to do is to break down some of these complex issues into language and messages that all of the people who are affected by them can understand and organize around,” says Carolyn Washington of MANNA. “This has been enormously helpful to our organization and to many of the others.”

Tennesseans for Fair Taxation has anchored its campaigns around the message “49th and Sinking,” using the imagery of a sinking ship to connect Tennessee’s regressive tax policies to its ranking of 49th in the nation in total per capita spending for education. TPOPP has echoed this message through a commitment among partner organizations to educate their board members and constituents.

SOCM alone conducted 20 training sessions with its member groups on tax reform and TennCare; organizations without memberships held trainings for their boards of directors and included information about the campaigns in their newsletters.

Popular education, using the tools jointly developed by policy and grassroots groups,

has reached beyond the staff and membership bases of TPOPP partners. “TPOPP has helped us organize regional and county-wide meetings around tax reform and TennCare,” says Tony Garr.

As part of that process, TPOPP held a series of power-building convenings throughout the state. A statewide convening had 70 attendees, and the two

“We are doing something that both grassroots people and policy people need and no one else is doing—skill development and issue education of members.”

regional meetings drew 30 and 50 attendees. “We are doing something that both grassroots people and policy people need and no one else is doing—skill development and issue education of members,” says Putz-Drury. “We’re getting out the message that TennCare may be poorly managed, but it is still the cheapest and best health coverage available in the country.”

These meetings have been successful in engaging and educating participants. “The last couple of convenings have been really beneficial for some of our board members to feel some solidarity with other organizations,” says Cole of TCA. Maureen O’Connell of SOCM agrees. “The convenings have been very participatory and leadership-building. They are oriented toward increasing capacity and bringing together culturally diverse groups of people.”

“Participation probably wouldn’t have happened if tax reform hadn’t been highlighted in their organizations.”

INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION THROUGH MEDIA AND MOBILIZATION

TPOPP also brought another benefit to the campaigns—the money to advance media messages. While unable to target a media campaign directly at the legislative fights over TennCare or tax reform, TPOPP was able to disseminate messages around core issues, primarily through radio press releases. “You can buy time from 80 to 90 radio stations in small markets and run a story for \$1,500 or \$2,000,” says Cole of TCA. “That’s something that the Health Care Campaign or another group probably couldn’t afford to do on an individual basis, but TPOPP was able to do it for TennCare.”

This support is critical, especially in a radio market that is dominated by two ultra-conservative talk show hosts who not only attack TennCare and tax reform but also mobilize anti-tax reform demonstrators to the capitol. “The talk show hosts spend their lives stirring up people to oppose an income tax,” says Carolyn Washington of MANNA. “But the TV news and local newspapers usually do a good job covering our issues.” Says Putz-Drury, “We’re doing media events around TennCare to highlight the depth of the problem to the general public, and that’s important.”

Collaboration among the nine partner organizations has also contributed to, and in some cases initiated, mobilizations across the state in defense of TennCare and in favor of an income tax. During the height of the tax reform fight, Ten-

nesseans for Fair Taxation established Camp Tax Reform, a nine-day, 24-hour demonstration in front of the capitol. Members and staff of several of the partner organizations took part in this mobilization effort, which was a critical element of the campaign to demonstrate popular support for an income tax. TPOPP also organized multiple rallies to alert the media and the public about the TennCare crisis. Because of the participation of grassroots organizations, TPOPP added an organizing element into the TennCare fight that was almost non-existent prior to TPOPP's leadership. As O'Connell of SOCM says, "That participation probably wouldn't have happened if TennCare hadn't been highlighted in their organizations."

Key Challenges

Working together on issues has not come easily. As in other states, the power dynamics inherent in resource allocation, race issues, and decision-making have posed challenges to smooth collaboration.

Resource Allocation: One of the tough decisions that TPOPP faced early on was how to allocate money to the groups. TPOPP's initial proposal was to divide Ford money among the groups for capacity-building and retain a small amount for joint work. Ford rejected this first proposal because it seemed to reflect a desire of the groups to get separate funds for their individual work, without paying adequate attention to how they were going to work together.

They then decided to decrease the financial incentive for participation and retained most of the money for convenings and joint campaign work. "The money helps with the psychological commitment," says Gordon Bonnyman of the Tennessee Justice Center. "It keeps

"Often in collaborations, the low-budget organizations do just as much work but get so much less money."

people at the table. But for an organization like ours, and for any of these organizations, it's not a lot of money."

Still, the equal allocation of money prevented some of the potential tensions that often emerge when groups with few financial resources work with groups that are larger and better funded. "The fact that the money was allocated evenly, regardless of budget size, makes a big difference for us," says Sarah Scott of Solutions. "Often in collaborations, the low-budget organizations do just as much work but get so much less money."

While the equal allocation of funds has helped to maintain commitment and participation, TPOPP has also had to determine how to allocate money for joint campaign work. Because partner organizations are already working on the campaign issues that TPOPP has chosen to pursue, there have been some questions about whether these organizations should receive funds for their individual efforts. TPOPP resolved this question by retaining funds for work that is decided upon by the governing board, as opposed to individual organizational leadership.

Decision-making Structure: While a consensus model helped TPOPP partners move forward together, the time required to come to consensus around small issues was a barrier to progress. As a result, “We eventually decided to create a steering committee that could make smaller decisions between meetings without the consensus of the entire body,” says Eric Cole. The steering committee consists of five people, one representative from each of five different partner organizations. The steering committee makes recommendations to a governing board, which consists of up to three members of each of the nine organizations, with each organization having one vote. “This approach helped us move faster,” according to Cole. It is within this committee structure that TPOPP has found ways to address internal issues of race and power.

Racial Power Dynamics: From the onset, TPOPP recognized that effective partnership between membership organizations and policy groups would require dealing with issues of race, both internally and externally. Each of the policy groups and coalitions had white staff leadership. Of the organizing groups, JONAH, Solutions, and SOCM had significant representation of people of color in their memberships, but only JONAH and Solutions had African Americans in staff leadership roles. This disparity led to initial tensions. “TPOPP was primarily white people around the table,” says Bob Becker of Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, “and all this subtle institutional racism and personal racism was playing out. We’ve had a lot of dismantling racism sessions to try to address it.”

TPOPP’s processes to address racial tensions within the collaborative had mixed responses. “I think TPOPP did a lot on dismantling racism, in changing the culture of how we operated, not just the diversity around the table,” says Becker. “We actually had honest discussions about what some of the white guys were doing and how it came across.” Despite some ambivalence about the dismantling racism sessions themselves, they did lead to institutional changes.

TPOPP meetings now include as many African American members as whites. On the steering committee, TPOPP requires that three out of the five positions be filled by people of color. In addition, governing board meetings include time for separate caucuses for people of color and for white people. Still, power dynamics are complex, especially since the white people are executive directors or staff members of their organizations and carry institutional power with them, while most of the African Americans are members of their organizations who are less connected to daily operations or decision-making. “That creates a power imbalance,” recognizes O’Connell of SOCM.

Addressing race among the existing partners also led to questions about inclusion in TPOPP. O’Connell reflects that the predominance of white-led organizations within the collaboration has “led to almost an embarrassment about who’s in and who’s out.”

While the majority of Tennessee’s African American population lives in West Tennessee, there is only one group from West Tennessee in TPOPP. During its

planning year, including African American representation from Memphis-based groups was identified as an explicit goal of the collaborative, but this goal has not been realized. TPOPP members attribute this to a lack of groups in West Tennessee that work on non-localized issues, as well as that TPOPP itself isn’t ready to expand to include new groups. “We’ve been very involved in dismantling racism within the

“TPOPP was primarily white people around the table, and all this subtle institutional racism and personal racism was playing out. We’ve done a lot of dismantling racism sessions to try to address it.”

collaborative. We have to get ourselves together before bringing in new groups. But we’re getting close to the point where we will expand,” says O’Connell.

The question of expansion goes beyond equalizing the representation of the African American community. Despite the growing presence of Latinos in the state, there are no Latino organizations within TPOPP. TPOPP has begun to take proactive steps to reach out into the Latino community by inviting Latinos to power-building convenings around the state. As O’Connell says, “The question is, what do we need to do so that Latinos see it in their self-interest to join? TPOPP will have to be open to rethinking the range of issues that we’d want to work on.” They have recently invited a Latino coalition to join. How TPOPP will move forward on this issue will be a topic of much discussion as it considers expansion and future campaign work.

The Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA): Shifting the Economic Justice Debate

Like its neighbor to the south, Kentucky's political and economic climate poses significant barriers to progressive change. Members of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC), the state's largest grassroots organization, and Ford Foundation grantee the Kentucky Coalition (KC) know this all too well. Organizing against mining corporations in Eastern Kentucky has been met with death threats, and one member woke up to find her car burned up in her front yard. This opposition, however, has not deterred the 20-year-old social justice organization from educating and organizing, and when KC first heard about the Collaborations that Count initiative, its leadership saw opportunity.

A myriad of organizations and activists have participated in KC's efforts, but it was the enduring alliance with four organizations in particular that brought about the formation of the Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA). In 1998, the Kentucky Coalition, the education and research arm of KFTC, joined forces with the Appalshop, Democracy Resource Center (DRC), Community Farm Alliance (CFA), and Kentucky Youth Advocates (KYA) to build a strategic collaboration. In the face of a conservative climate, KEJA has been able to advance a progressive agenda by leveraging the strengths of all of the KEJA partners. At the same time, they have created greater internal capacity for each of the participating groups.

In the process of forming KEJA, people agreed that the purpose of the collaboration was not to build an entirely new organization, but rather to offer KEJA partners opportunities to work together on key issues and to enhance the strategic and political work of the individual organizations. The goal of KEJA was to develop a new vision of what constitutes economic justice and to shape public discourse to reflect this vision. Mimi Pickering of Appalshop recalls, "We were pretty clear from the start that we didn't want to create another institution. We already had a lot of expertise within the different groups." Says Jerry Hardt of KC, "We wanted to be more deliberate in our work with the other partners, to create and work on a common agenda, not just respond to what was happening." As KC Director Burt Lauderdale described the reasons for forming KEJA, "The notion was to have a strategic alliance that brought together organizations that use different approaches to social change but share a common commitment."

THE PARTNERS

KEJA partners bring a strong combination of research, policy, media capacity, and connections to a large grassroots base. They include:

- **The Kentucky Coalition** is the education and research affiliate of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, a membership organization of 2,500 participants in 90 of the state's 120 counties. Most of the membership is concentrated in 12 county-based chapters (two in western Kentucky, one each in Lexington and Louisville, and eight in eastern Kentucky.) Their focus is on environmental, economic, and social justice.
- **Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a statewide public policy organization with offices in Frankfort and Louisville that focuses on issues affecting Kentucky's youth and their families, including juvenile justice, health, and welfare reform.
- **Democracy Resource Center**, based in Lexington, is an action research organization whose work supports grassroots organizing and social justice work in Kentucky. Its strategies include research assistance to grassroots groups, policy analysis and advocacy, political education, and coalition and alliance building.
- **Community Farm Alliance** is comprised of 1,600 farmers and their families who live in 87 counties in central and eastern Kentucky. Its headquarters are in Frankfort.
- **Appalshop** is a 30-year-old organization in the Appalachian town of Whitesburg that produces media on the issues, history, and culture of Appalachia and other rural or underserved communities. Underlying the group's work is the premise that local people can best tell their own stories and find solutions to their problems.

Each of the KEJA partners brings different skills and experiences to the mix: community organizing and member leadership development (KC and CFA); media analysis and message development (Appalshop); and research and policy analysis (DRC and KYA). Throughout KEJA's work, the strengths of each of these organizations have played a significant role.

BRIDGING POLICY AND ORGANIZING: THE EITC CAMPAIGN

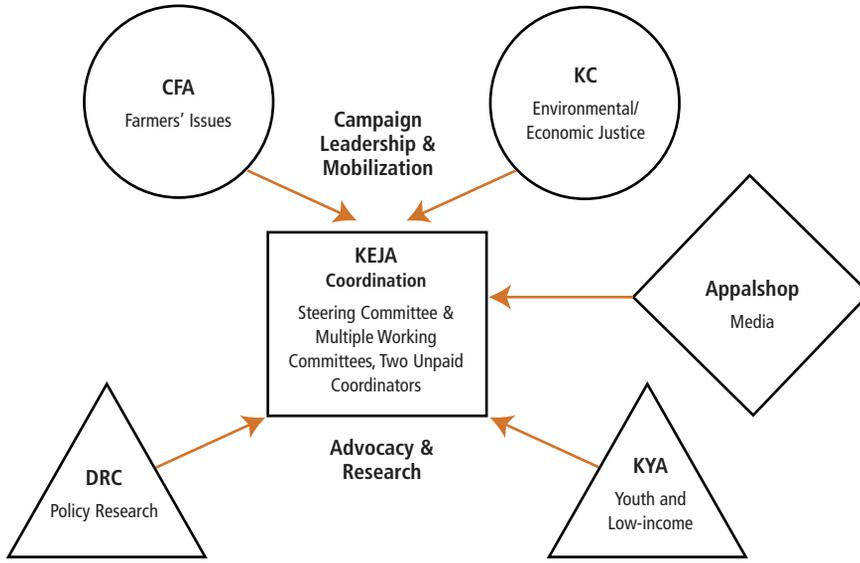
KEJA's ability to leverage the different strengths of its partners was perhaps most evident in its campaign to create a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). According to a fact sheet developed by KYA and KC, Kentucky places one of the highest tax burdens in the country on its low-wage workers. Kentucky's families start paying income tax at just over \$5,000, which is less than one-third of the poverty level for a family of four.

In the 2002 Kentucky General Assembly, KEJA worked with the Coalition for Tax Fairness (comprised of labor and advocacy organizations) to institute a state EITC that would equal 15 percent of the federal EITC level. This would be a significant income support for many of the 80,000 Kentucky families, including 138,000 children who live in poverty despite the presence of a working parent. In 2002, a Kentucky worker with two or more children who received the maximum EITC of \$4,140 from the federal government would receive an additional \$621 EITC from the state.

"KEJA picked the EITC campaign mostly because KFTC had worked on it within their membership, so we knew we had an extra draw with that membership support," recalls Debra Miller of Kentucky Youth Advocates. "We had been working on an EITC for a long time. What we could do with membership support illustrates perfectly the combination of our analytical research work and their people base work." KYA prepared web pages outlining how many people would benefit from the EITC in each county. The web pages were co-designed with a KEJA committee that included grassroots people and researchers. Appalshop trained members of KFTC to be spokespeople and to frame media messages. As Mimi Pickering of Appalshop states, "We're usually waiting for KC to make a decision as to what it sees as its goals and agenda, and we see how we can help move that along. We wouldn't come with our own agenda, but KC has that power. That comes out of a respect for the membership organizations, and some understanding of the dynamics of membership organizations." KEJA was able to address tensions between policy and organizing groups in part by insuring that the KEJA agenda reflected the priorities of the membership-based organizations.

"KEJA was able to address tensions between policy and organizing groups in part by insuring that the KEJA agenda reflected the priorities of the membership-based organizations."

Kentucky's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

KEJA: Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance: Comprised of five member groups (two community organizing, two policy, and one media organization) with two unpaid coordinators (currently directors of KC and DRC). KEJA's extensive collaborative structure includes quarterly steering committee meetings and multiple working groups, which are primarily composed of organizational staff.

KEY ISSUE

Industrial Agriculture & State Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform

ORGANIZATIONS

Appalshop

CFA: Community Farm Alliance

DRC: Democracy Resource Center

KC: Kentucky Coalition

KYA: Kentucky Youth Advocates

LEGEND

- Collaborative
- Community Organizations
- Media
- Policy Groups

KEJA partners consider the EITC campaign the best example of leveraging the strengths of different organizational types and integrating members of grassroots groups into state-level organizing efforts. As part of the campaign, KEJA initiated leadership development activities such as media and message training, and taught grassroots participants how to effectively use the fact sheets and research developed by KYA. “The fact that we had not just KYA, but KFTC membership that changed from day to day, with different leaders and different members at different times, there were a hundred people talking about EITC,” recalls Debra Miller of KYA. In December 2001, KEJA hosted an educational conference on the EITC, with the Democracy Resource Center taking a key role in organizing the event. The educational event encouraged 42 cosponsors to support the proposed EITC legislation.

“The hardship created by low wages is compounded by working conditions that are responsible for numerous deaths each year.”

The EITC campaign corresponded with a shift in state politics. While long a traditional Southern Democratic state, two state senators recently switched party affiliations, resulting in a Republican majority in the state Senate. The House remains majority Democratic. “Obviously, this presents a problem if every senator votes along party lines, and if there isn’t much bipartisan support on issues,” observed Chris Sanders, an official with the state’s AFL-CIO. “For the first time in years either party could block legislation or budget proposals, as evidenced by the legislature’s failure to approve a budget for fiscal year 2002–2003.” In the midst of this legislative gridlock, EITC did not pass.

SHIFTING THE TERMS OF DEBATE

Despite EITC’s failure, KEJA’s most important contribution to social change in Kentucky has been in shifting the debate toward economic justice issues. One of KEJA’s primary issues was industrial agriculture, a burgeoning industry in the state that is responsible for low-wage, high-risk employment, particularly in chicken plants and hog farms. “Not only were we seeing the development of this corporate agriculture infrastructure that was devastating small towns and small family farms, but we were paying for it,” says KC’s Burt Lauderdale. “We were giving money to corporations to come in and do that to us.” Because KFTC and CFA—Kentucky’s two largest grassroots organizations

—were working on these issues, and both were also members of KEJA, industrial agriculture seemed like a logical target.

Agriculture is also central to Kentucky's economy, responsible for thousands of jobs. "Kentucky walks the edge between Southern and Midwestern," says Miller of KYA, "but one aspect common to both the Midwest and South is the centrality of agriculture." Despite its relatively small size, Kentucky has 91,000 farmers and ranks fourth in the nation in the number of farms. Kentucky's number one export is tobacco, and agriculture is the state's number one source of income. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2001) Not much of that wealth, however, is spread to the labor force working in the tobacco fields.

More recently, corporate tax incentives have contributed to a proliferation of food processing plants and their low-wage and high-risk jobs. African Americans have been increasingly replaced in this work force by Latinos, who now constitute the majority of food processing workers while making up less than two percent of the state's residents. (U.S. Census, 2002) The hardship created by low wages is compounded by working conditions that are responsible for numerous deaths each year, including the gruesome story of two workers who suffocated in a vat of chicken parts at a poultry processing plant in 1999. (Associated Press, 2002) Few services exist to address these unsafe working conditions or to support the families who rely on these jobs.

"Tyson Chicken will come to the state and set up a processing plant and will contract with small farmers....They have to buy their feed from Tyson and end up completely controlled by Tyson."

KEJA's first industrial agriculture fight focused on integrator liability—a mechanism to make corporations share responsibility for environmental damages caused by the practices of the small farmers they control. This was a major issue for members of the Community Farm Alliance, nearly all of whom are small farmers. "Tyson Chicken will come to the state and set up a processing plant and

will contract with small farmers, who build big chicken houses with hundreds of thousands of chickens in them. They have to buy their feed from Tyson and end up completely controlled by Tyson," explains Lauderdale. "The corporate integrator liability says that if there are environmental problems on those farms, Tyson shares responsibility."

Partly as a result of KEJA's organizing efforts, the state adopted emergency regulations on corporate farms that include a provision for integrator liability.

While these regulations were important because they have “prevented the state from being overrun by hog farms,” says Lauderdale, they have to be renewed every year, which requires an ongoing fight against the well-funded Farm Bureau and corporate lobbies. “We need to effectively approach the question, ‘What would it take to really deal with the threat of corporate agriculture and really maintain the culture of small farmers?’”

This question pushed KEJA toward a broader analysis of economic development policy in the state. KEJA hosted a conference with economic development experts and members from KFTC and CFA and other groups. Kentucky’s main strategy for economic development was

to use tax incentives to bring industries into the state, with little regard for the impact of those industries on workers or the effect of the tax incentives on the local and state tax base. The DRC provided the research and analysis to create KEJA’s signature report, *Kentucky’s Low Road to Economic Development*, released in December 1999. The *Low Road* explores the use of tax incentives in the state and examines how they are distributed, what they cost, and how they are being used. The report also offers an alternative way of approaching development, including specific, immediate steps to move toward a more equitable economic development policy.

KEJA used the conference and the report to start a public discussion about disclosure on economic development deals and accountability for corporations receiving economic incentives. “We discovered that there are a lot of legislators who are not happy with the way the state spends its money,” recalls Lauderdale. The discussion struck a nerve with some members of the administration. “In 2000, the Secretary of Economic Development wanted to come and testify against a bill to require companies who receive incentives to pay a decent wage,” recalls Miller of KYA. That bill did not garner much support. However, two years later, “The governor essentially said we’re not going to give any more economic incentives unless you’re paying and giving good jobs,” Miller says. “I think that’s been our biggest success—while we may have different interpretations of where the governor came from on economic development, we certainly shaped the debate and helped to set the context.” Building upon this work to further develop a cohesive multiconstituent base is central to the next phase of the collaborative’s efforts.

“We discovered that there are a lot of legislators who are not happy with the way the state spends its money.”

Key Challenges

KEJA's success in advancing an economic justice agenda is directly related to its ability to bring policy and organizing groups together around common issues and strategies. The collaborative has also been successful because many partners have contributed their own strengths to the campaigns, whether it was media savvy, policy expertise, research capacity, or mobilization of grassroots people.

Nevertheless, it has been difficult to develop a process that enables this cohesion, and organizational structure and resource allocation have been intertwined issues at the heart of the challenge. In June 2002, KEJA held a retreat to redesign the structure of the collaborative to address a central question of partner accountability in collaborative work. This issue emerged during the EITC campaign, when the Community Farm Alliance was immersed in its own efforts to push a state bill that would bring new revenue from tobacco settlement money.

As CFA's Amy Carpenter notes, "The tobacco campaign was the biggest thing in our 15-year history, and we saw a way to promote positive economic development, but other KEJA partners didn't want to get into the issue of tobacco." The Community Farm Alliance's focus on the tobacco campaign "really took away from their ability to participate in KEJA's work," says DRC's Jason Bailey. The prioritization of the tobacco campaign within CFA raised concerns about the roles and work responsibilities of partners. As KC's Lauderdale says, "We got to a crisis and almost lost one of our groups because we hadn't dealt enough with the issue of lack of participation and accountability."

Participation was a central issue for KEJA because of the way the Ford money was initially allocated among the groups. Many Ford collaboratives in other states created a large central pool of funds that could be used to hire staff or to pay for joint campaign work. KEJA, on the other hand, divided the grant to increase capacity of the individual partner organizations. KEJA set aside \$50,000 of the \$500,000 three-year grant for shared strategic use. The remaining \$150,000 per year was divided in half between the organizing groups and other groups. "What was really lacking in KEJA was an accountability mechanism. If you allocate funds the way we did, people have different assumptions. Depending on circumstances, you view the collaborative as somewhere on the spectrum between an alliance and a funding mechanism," says Lauderdale.

Learning from this experience, KEJA created a process to address the issue of accountability, while focusing the collaborative toward a shared analysis and clearer strategies. The group created a design that allows for varying levels of participation by developing articulated roles for each group through job descriptions. Called the “pentastar” because of its five points—vision/mission, primary strategies, job descriptions for each partner, secondary strategies, and budget—the redesign focuses collaborative work away from capacity-building and toward issue work. The primary strategies include developing a shared economic and political analysis of the state, message development and media oriented toward base-building, and campaign work. While the redesign includes some come-to-the-table money, most of KEJA’s resource allocation is determined based on responsibilities for campaign, capacity-building, and coordinating work. “This way, the money is tied to a shared vision and to the work that each group does to contribute to it,” says Heather Mahoney of DRC. The strategy teams include directors and/or lead staff from all five partners. It is the group’s hope that the work teams will allow for all partners to take an active role while delegating the work outside of the steering committee, which includes members of all partner organizations, with two also acting as coordinators.

The redesign has eased tensions related to participation and accountability, but KEJA still faces some significant challenges. While tobacco settlement money is an issue exclusive to the Community Farm Alliance, Appalshop and the Kentucky Coalition are focused on the impact of mining on workers and the environment. Large coal holdings owned by corporate conglomerates outside of the state, valley fills, and mountain top removal affect the health and well-being of many of Kentucky’s poorest residents. Despite the importance of these issues, they are outside of the scope of other partner organizations. “This cuts some groups’ strength in half,” says Mimi Pickering of Appalshop. Meanwhile, although the new design allows groups to create their own job descriptions, if a group chooses not to participate in campaigns there are questions about what their role in KEJA should be. One option is to create an advisory group of organizations that are connected to the collaborative but are not active at the same level as other partners. As this is being discussed, CFA is concerned about its long-term role in KEJA, considering the divergent issues it addresses.

“We got to a crisis and almost lost one of our groups because we hadn’t dealt enough with the issue of lack of participation and accountability.”

The North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice (NCAEJ): Struggling for Unity

Like KEJA in Kentucky and TPOPP in Tennessee, the North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice (NCAEJ) is attempting to strengthen the progressive statewide voice for the poor and underserved by building cohesion across policy and organizing groups. A report by the Common Sense Foundation, *The State of the Worker in North Carolina*, tells the story of Angela, a convenience store clerk who “makes \$7.00 an hour, works 40 hours a week, and receives no benefits—no paid holidays, no vacation, and no health insurance. Since she must close the store at night by herself, Angela worries about getting robbed or assaulted. But Angela stays in the job because she’s a single mother who needs to provide for her children.” Angela’s story is a common one, and economic shifts and governmental negligence have made life harder for thousands of low-income residents in North Carolina.

In 1998, with a one-year planning grant from the Ford Foundation, several North Carolina progressive organizations came together to discuss collaborative work to address these critical issues. All the groups had some prior experience working with each other, and eventually they emerged with a successful grant proposal to Ford and began to work toward supporting local living wage initiatives.

The recession’s impact on state budgets and a conservative political climate have, however, posed significant barriers to such work. In addition, the collaborative has had to confront major financial struggles and changes in leadership within many of its partner organizations. Faced with the need to focus on internal consolidation, the collaborative’s external accomplishments thus far have been less tangible.

THE PARTNERS

Unlike Kentucky, where the largest grassroots organization has taken the lead role in the collaborative, a policy group—the North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center—was the original lead organization for NCAEJ. Currently, partner organizations include a mix of policy groups, organizing groups, and statewide coalitions and associations. With the exception of Southerners for Economic Justice, each of the organizations has its headquarters in the capital of Raleigh.

- **North Carolina Fair Share** was founded in 1987 to work with low-income, unemployed, and underemployed North Carolinians to bring about a fairer state through community organizing, public policy advocacy, and leadership development. NC Fair Share has stopped the privatization of four public hospitals, gained a new county health department and a new public hospital maternity ward in an underserved rural area, and won a \$3.2 million rural clean water and sewer project. While based in Raleigh, Fair Share has chapters throughout the state.
- **Southerners for Economic Justice (SEJ)**, based in Durham, has been organizing for social and economic justice for more than 25 years. SEJ works to strengthen the voices and improve the quality of life for the most economically vulnerable North Carolinians, through local grassroots organizing, coalition-building, supporting progressive public policy, research, and public education. In recent years, SEJ has worked to secure assistance for flood survivors from Hurricane Floyd, promote awareness about the impact of welfare reform on low-income families, and secure a living income for working people.
- **North Carolina Council of Churches**, founded in 1935, includes members of 15 Christian denominations joined by the dual mission of encouraging Christian unity and working for social and economic justice. The Council has worked on issues from farmworker conditions to environmental protection to exposing racism in the criminal justice system. Most of the Council's work is accomplished through program committees and groups, many of which include members from non-Christian religious communities.
- **North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center** was founded in 1996 as a merger of two legal services organizations, with the mission to ensure that low-income individuals and communities have the resources and services they need to move from poverty to economic security. Its primary strategies include impact litigation, research and policy development, public policy advocacy, grassroots empowerment, and community capacity-building. With 24 staff, the Justice Center is the largest of the organizations in the collaborative.
- **Common Sense Foundation** is a nonpartisan, progressive, activist think tank dedicated to securing equal opportunity for all North Carolinians. Since it was founded in 1994, the Common Sense Foundation has been broadcasting the views and voices of individuals traditionally

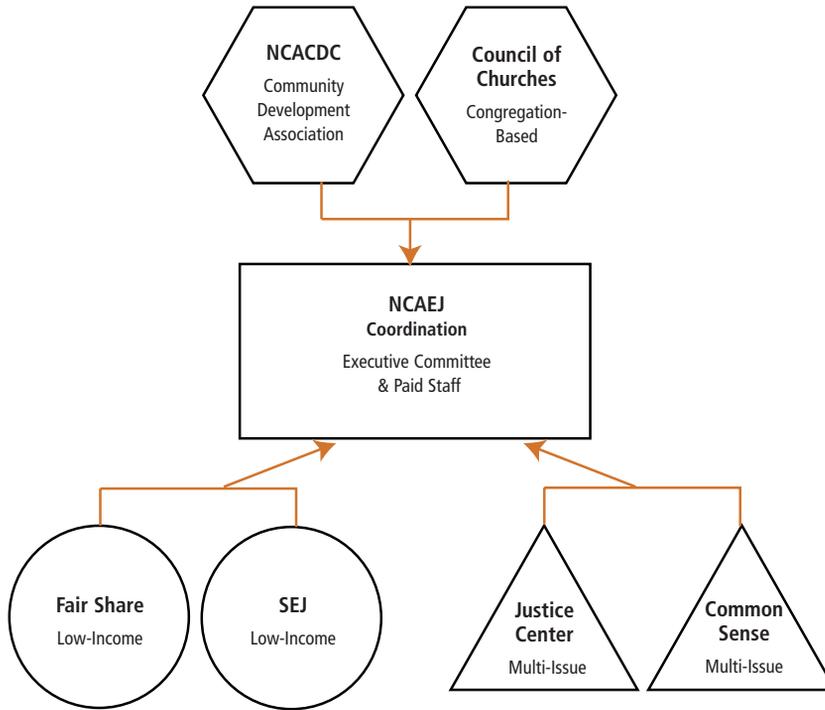
locked out of the state's public policy debate—including people of color, women, the gay and lesbian community, and the poor. The Common Sense Foundation produces several regular publications and legislative updates, while conducting research on important policy issues including race and the death penalty, education and high-stakes testing, and living wages and workers rights.

- **The North Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations (NCACDC)** works to strengthen local community development corporations statewide to empower low- and moderate-income North Carolinians to improve their quality of life. Since its founding in 1989, the NCACDC has grown from 11 groups to more than 70 member organizations in 44 of North Carolina's 100 counties. NCACDC provides technical assistance to member organizations and sponsors workshops and forums on topics like organizational development, executive leadership, fiscal management, and diversity in the workplace, while also offering opportunities for grassroots training and leadership development. Economic justice is part of a larger approach to building a network and infrastructure to support a progressive movement and increase the focus on economic issues.

A CLIMATE OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

NCAEJ's efforts to address economic inequality are intertwined with North Carolina's long history of racial strife and its persistent racial inequities. North Carolina's racial divisions are rooted in its historical dependence on slave labor for tobacco and cotton production. Nearly a century after the end of the Civil War, the state became a focal point of the civil rights movement when four Black students in Greensboro launched the first sit-in at a segregated lunch counter. Still today, the disenfranchisement of the Black population is reflected in the state's economy. Blacks constitute 21 percent of the population but are the majority in many poor rural counties in the state's east and northeast regions. Research conducted by NCAEJ partners reveals that 47 percent of the state's working poor families with children are Black. Fifty-nine percent of Black workers earn below a sufficiency wage of \$8.50 an hour, and Blacks own only seven percent of the state's businesses. Moreover, Black men and women are three times as likely as white North Carolinians to be unemployed. (Schmidt & Gerlach, 2001)

North Carolina's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

NCAEJ: North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice is a collaboration attempting to strengthen the progressive voice of low-income families. The collaboration has six members, and their directors meet monthly as the Executive Committee.

KEY ISSUE

Living Wage & Preventing Budget Cuts in Social Programs

ORGANIZATIONS

Common Sense

Council of Churches: North Carolina Council of Churches

Fair Share: North Carolina Fair Share

Justice Center: North Carolina Justice & Community Development Center

NCACDC: NC Association of Community Development Corporations

SEJ: Southerners for Economic Justice

FORMER MEMBERS

Institute for Southern Studies, Jubilee, and North Carolina Equity

LEGEND

	Collaborative
	Community Organizations
	Coalition-Based Organizations
	Policy Groups

While some would argue that African Americans have representation in the collaborative but have less power than whites, Latinos have no representation. Like many states in the South, North Carolina is home to a small but rapidly growing population of Latino immigrants who come to work in low-wage jobs on farms and in factories. As of Census 2000, almost five percent of North Carolinians were Latino; since 1990, there has been a 655 percent increase in the number of Mexican immigrants living in North Carolina. Like African Americans, Latinos are also far below whites in terms of economic position. Seventy-two percent of Latino workers earn less than \$8.50 an hour. The majority of these immigrants are undocumented workers, which makes them particularly vulnerable to abusive employer practices. *The State of the Worker in North Carolina* cites widespread violations of state and federal labor laws, including failure to pay wages and workers' compensation.

Economic inequality in North Carolina is also closely tied to declining productivity and wages in the state's rural sectors. The proportion of North Carolina's population living in rural areas is 50 percent higher than the U.S. average, and poverty rates for rural counties exceed the state average. Moreover, 14 rural counties face over 10 percent unemployment. While the state has been reliant on rural production of textiles and furniture for most of the 20th century, most of these formerly bustling industries have either gone bankrupt or moved out of the United States. Meanwhile, the state's agricultural staple, tobacco, has been struggling, which has worsened conditions in rural, predominantly African American counties in the east.

"While some would argue that African Americans have representation in the collaborative but less power than whites, Latinos have no representation."

The prevalence of hog and poultry factories has offset some job losses, but these jobs, frequently filled by Latino workers, are dangerous and pay low wages. Meanwhile, North Carolina's mountains and coastline have become major attractions for tourists and retirees, providing a thrust for the low-wage serv-

ice industry. Between 1990 and 1997, there was a 2.4 percent decrease in manufacturing jobs and a 51.6 percent increase in service jobs. Real wages in the state are lower than they were 20 years ago, largely as a result of this shift.

The tilt toward lower-paying industries has led to hardship for North Carolina families of all races. As of 1997, 35 percent of North Carolina households—1.1 million families—earned below the amount needed to achieve a mini-

mally sufficient standard of living. These low wages lead to housing and health-care difficulties—36 percent of renters are unable to afford a two-bedroom unit, and 137,000 low-income families do not have health insurance.

The data on these hardships comes from research done by two members of the North Carolina collaborative, the Justice Center and NC Equity (which has since closed its doors), who produced a joint report, *Working Hard is Not Enough: How and Why More than a Million North Carolina Families Are Not Sharing in the Current Prosperity and What Can Be Done About It* (2001). “That report was really a turning point for us,” comments Bill Rowe of the Justice Center. “It shifted the debate toward work and the inadequacy of wages.”

“These meetings were notable because they were all with people who had never before been exposed to how policy that affected their lives was made.”

ADDRESSING ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

In 2000, the worsening economic situation spurred NCAEJ to hold community meetings around the state to determine issues of primary importance to low-income families. Subsequently, the coalition decided to focus on living wages, a crosscutting issue relevant to the work of each of the groups. “When we discussed the state of our state, one of the highest priority issues was wages and jobs,” recalls Lynice Williams of Fair Share, “so we decided to make this a major part of our work.”

NCAEJ hoped to help local organizers push for living wage ordinances in their communities. The work began with four regional gatherings across the state. “These meetings were notable because they were all with people who had never before been exposed to how policy that affected their lives was made,” says Chris Fitzsimon of the Common Sense Foundation. “We would have someone talk about media, welfare policy, and how community folks could work with policy groups.”

The next step for the NCAEJ was to host two statewide gatherings of living wage advocates and activists from the faith community, labor, and community-based organizations. These one-day events, held in 2001, included workshops on running local campaigns, media strategies, community organizing, and education on economic justice issues. More than 125 people were in atten-

dance. “People were very optimistic about the living wage then,” recalls Susan Perry-Cole of the Association of CDCs. “The big cities were working toward a living wage. Durham actually won, and Charlotte and Greensboro had tried but failed.”

As NCAEJ prepared to build on the momentum from the regional meetings and the gatherings, the economic downturn pushed North Carolina into a \$1.7 billion state budget deficit. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2002) Like every other state in the U.S. with the exception of Vermont, North Carolina’s constitution requires a balanced budget each year. With all state programs facing budget cutbacks, winning wage increases became impossible and, as Williams of Fair Share recalls, “The living wage issue never got out of committee.” Prospects for living wage ordinances weren’t the only casualties of the budget crisis. “The state was deciding to cut education, mental health, and medical benefits,” says Marie Hill-Faison of SEJ, “but they were making no adjustments to help people like myself, who lost their jobs when businesses closed.”

Relative to its neighbors, North Carolina had previously prioritized social spending, particularly in education, including expanding early childhood education and creating a top-tier state university system. Yet during the current budget crisis, says Fitzsimon of the Common Sense Foundation, “Corporate loopholes and corporate welfare increased, even as human services and other budgets were cut,” placing the greatest burden on low-wage workers and the poor.

“Things haven’t changed that much,” says Debra Tyler-Horton of the North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center. “We have some Black

politicians, but Raleigh is still run by the white, good old boy network.”

The prevalent role of race in North Carolina politics is epitomized by the 20-year presence of Senator Jesse Helms, an ardent conservative infamous for playing to racist fears of white voters. A well-

known example of Helms’ manipulation of race comes from his 1990 reelection campaign, where he faced stiff election competition from Black opponent Harvey Gantt. In a Helms television advertisement, a white man’s hands crumple a rejected job application while a voiceover intones, “You needed that job...but they had to give it to a minority.” (FAIR, 2001) Helms’s positions on race, opposition to homosexuality, virulent stand against abortion, and support of Christ-

“There had been all this noise about cutting taxes but we were saying, ‘no.’ We need taxes because we need programs.”

ian prayer in schools have been a winning formula in North Carolina. They successfully appealed to the white, working-class voter, overshadowing the negative impacts of inadequate social spending and pro-business economic policies. Meanwhile, the state's wealthy elite tends to remain quiet on issues like abortion or school vouchers but speaks loudly on economic issues. As a result, while North Carolina is often considered less conservative than its neighbors, state policies still tend to exacerbate disparities between rich and poor.

In the face of budget cuts and ever-present political opposition, NCAEJ decided to reprioritize its work toward the defense of social programs that were

most critical to their constituents. While not a radical departure from the living wage mission, "It came down to a philosophical question of whose responsibility it is to make sure people have enough to live," says George Reed of the Council of Churches. "Is it about employer-based wages plus benefits, is it a joint venture between the employer and the state, or is it another safety net?"

NCAEJ's living income platform encompassed not only living wages but also access to public benefits, healthcare, educational opportunities, and affordable housing, while opposing harmful tax cuts and protecting consumers from abusive or predatory lending practices. This frame allowed the collaborative to focus on budget and tax decisions at the state level. "There had been all this noise about cutting taxes," says Fitzsimon, "but we were saying 'no.' We need taxes because we need programs."

To fight against cuts to social services and other programs, NCAEJ organized its biggest and most successful event—a dinner, followed by a march, rally, and demonstration—on the convening day of the state General Assembly. More than 250 people marched to the legislature, where they were joined by more people. NCAEJ committed some funds to provide transportation and housing for people from outside of Raleigh and paid for a large newspaper advertisement. "It was a very diverse group of people, from activists and grassroots people to professionals, students, everyone who was going to be affected by the budget cuts," recalls Reed.

The rally pressured the legislature to consider the impact of budget cuts on low-income families. "We were able to surface our issues in a visible way and

"The prevalent role of race in North Carolina politics is epitomized by the 20-year presence of Senator Jesse Helms, an ardent conservative infamous for playing to racist fears of white voters."

establish a presence,” says Perry-Cole of the Association of CDCs. “It was so integrated into what NCACDC and SEJ needed to do but could never have accomplished on our own.”

It also captured the attention of the media. The rally was covered on the nightly news and earned an in-depth story on National Public Radio. “The news coverage was very positive,” recalls Marie Hill-Faison of SEJ, “especially considering no one had been talking about anything except September 11 and Afghanistan.”

The rally brought together a unified voice in defense of critical programs and services at a critical time. “The budget ended up being not as bad as it could have been,” says Fitzsimon. “North Carolina was one of the few states in the country that decided to raise taxes to pay for services.” The ability to move the legislature had to do with the influence that individual groups had with particular legislators, as well as the timing of the rally. “We were trying to change the whole tone, trying to produce numbers of people saying a different message,” says Bill Rowe of the Justice and Community Development Center. “What the rally did was it made people less afraid to be vocal about a different point of view and helped show budget cuts affect real people.”

“At the beginning, there was also some frustration about working together and issues about turf and how money would be divided.”

Other organizations followed NCAEJ and held rallies of their own later in the legislative session. “We feared that the budget would be balanced by cutting healthcare, human services, and flood relief money,” recalls George Reed. “We’re glad the cuts weren’t worse.” With

the continuing economic decline, NCAEJ is braced to reenter the fight for basic services during the next legislative session.

TACKLING THE POLICY-ORGANIZING DIVIDE

Working together to make the rally succeed was the result of a long and often challenging internal process. While the NCAEJ partners “ultimately shared a common vision, there was a period of arduous and sometimes painful trust-building,” recalls Chris Fitzsimon. Institutional differences between membership organizations and policy groups, as well as funding and resource disparities, led to difficulties. “Grassroots organizing is central to this work,” says Susan Perry-Cole, “but there are no quick victories when you focus on building a sup-

port base, so there was tension. At the beginning, there was also some frustration about working together and issues about turf and how money would be divided.”

In its first year, NCAEJ hired a facilitator to help develop relationships among groups. “At the end of year one, we got close,” recalls Debra Tyler-Horton of the Justice and Community Development Center, “but then individual organizations started to struggle, and then we started falling apart.” SEJ was struggling to stay open, the Council of Churches changed staff, and the Institute for Southern Studies (no longer a member) lost a director. In the following three years, the Justice and Community Development Center lost its director, and NC Equity closed its doors. “There was a 12-month period of time when more than half the executive directors in the Alliance had turned over,” recalls George Reed. Since then, another original collaborative partner, Chris Fitzsimon, has left his position as director of the Common Sense Foundation. “Those personal connections were lost,” Reed continues. “It’s taken work to bring us together and keep us together, and that’s significant.”

In the face of these transitions, partners have remained committed to the collaborative. “The folks who were part of the Alliance never missed a meeting, and we’ve never canceled a meeting in four years,” says Tyler-Horton. “That shows that people are determined to make it happen, to make it work.” Nevertheless, the level of turnover and transitions within organizations has taken an inevitable toll on the collaborative’s ability to maintain the trust and working relationships that develop over time.

While NCAEJ has been able to keep groups at the table, determining the mix of organizations has posed challenges. “In the first few months after we announced the Alliance, it stirred up things in North Carolina,” recalls Tyler-Horton. “Groups who were not a part of it were calling, angry, thinking they were being left out of a lot of Ford money.”

These tensions eventually subsided, but rifts surfaced among partners in the Alliance, particularly between policy groups and grassroots organizations. “At the first meeting I went to, there was debate between grassroots people and pol-

“In the first few months after we announced the Alliance, it stirred up things in North Carolina. Groups who were not a part of it were calling, angry, thinking they were being left out of a lot of Ford money.”

icy people,” recalls Reed. “At the time, it did not appear to be as big of a conflict as I’ve since come to realize that it was.”

Reed describes the flashpoints of that conflict as allocation of resources and how and when to move on issues. “Those of us in the policy field said we needed to have a legislative agenda, to be doing educational and promotional work and research around why living wage was important. And we needed bills introduced and legislative debate. Meanwhile, the grassroots folks were saying, ‘not so fast, this work is slow, methodical, and you can’t short-circuit the organizing process.’”

This contrast is in part due to the ways that different organizational types engage in policy work. Policy groups analyze legislation and react quickly to either support or combat bills that are proposed by elected officials. Meanwhile, grassroots organizing groups are often trying to propose and push alternatives to the policy options that are being discussed at the capitol, and that can be a longer-term process. For policy groups, research and analysis are central. For grassroots groups, research plays a big role, but the primary focus is on organizing. Reed recalls that for NCAEJ, “One of the questions was around how much money to put into local organizing and how much into research.”

While NCAEJ has focused energy and resources on relationship-building, tensions still exist between grassroots and policy groups. Grassroots partners feel that their voices are less likely to be heard. “A lot of times, the larger organiza-

tions engulf us. We still struggle somewhat around that—making sure voices at this table that need to be heard are heard,” says Lynice Williams of Fair Share.

Perry-Cole, who is a member of SEJ as well as the director of the Association of CDCs, points to a debate on SEJ’s membership status in the collaborative as an example of conflict between policy and grassroots groups. NCAEJ member-

ship criteria state that organizations should have a statewide focus and a paid staff person to represent them at NCAEJ meetings. During NCAEJ’s annual retreat, the collaborative determined that SEJ did not meet the membership criteria because fiscal challenges made it difficult for the organization to maintain full-time staff support. Some members of the collaborative felt that the decision to exclude SEJ was based solely on the fact that it didn’t meet the criteria; oth-

“At first, we thought that for the larger organizations, it would be more of a sacrifice because the money doesn’t mean as much. But in retrospect, it is harder for the smaller organizations to be here.”

ers felt that the exclusion of SEJ was a reflection of power dynamics between policy and grassroots groups. For example, Perry-Cole felt that, “They had a meeting without us to develop criteria to be in the Alliance that specifically excluded Southerners for Economic Justice.”

Eventually, NCAEJ decided to allow SEJ to remain, despite the membership criteria. NCAEJ also provided a computer and internet access to help Marie Hill-Faison, the representative from SEJ, participate fully in collaborative communications and activities. However, the tension between grassroots and policy organizations has not fully subsided. Says Hill-Faison, “The way I’d like to see it, there would be more grassroots folks on this board.”

Key Challenges

As described in the section above, for the North Carolina collaborative, the tensions between policy and organizing groups were explicit and challenging, as were the questions about who should be included and the instability caused by staff transitions in the member groups. These dynamics intersected with issues of resources and race.

RESOURCES

Like the Ford collaboratives in many of the 11 CtC states, the allocation of resources was one of the primary questions among groups. While the money from Ford created an incentive for people to come to meetings and maintain their participation, “It wasn’t enough that my organization could do anything different because of it, such as conduct research or hire a part-time person,” says George Reed of the Council of Churches.

The Alliance decided to create a small stipend for each of the groups to encourage participation but chose to pool the bulk of the grant to hire staff and pay for joint campaign work. NCAEJ partners feel this decision was a critical step toward effective working relationships, especially across the better-funded policy groups and the smaller organizing groups. “We gave every organization the same amount of money regardless of budget,” says Chris Fitzsimon of the Common Sense Foundation. “At first, we thought that for the larger organizations, it would be more of a sacrifice because the money doesn’t mean as much. But in retrospect, it is harder for the smaller organizations to be here.”

After a period of time without a director, NCAEJ recently hired a new executive director to help them move forward. Still, questions of time and

money loom large. “The partners have committed to not tap our existing funding sources, so I’m not sure where the money is going to come from,” says Reed. “If we can’t find a few really big outside funders, we’ll have to decide if the Alliance is important enough to tap our donor bases for it.”

Considering the effect of the economy not only on state budgets but also on funding sources for nonprofit organizations, tapping existing sources may not

be an option. Not everyone thinks that money issues are determinative, however. “Money might play a role in who sits at this table, with the kind of commitment it takes. But I think, because we’ve gone through this process, the future looks pretty good,” says Williams of Fair Share.

“Around issues of race, class, and gender, everyone has been polite. But we haven’t dealt with these issues as a collaborative.”

“Our people, we’ve always organized without having any money. The organizing we used to do, we bootlegged fliers, made them at night. The Civil Rights Movement was the same. People did it because it was the right thing to do.”

RACIAL POWER DYNAMICS

Power dynamics between policy and organizing groups in NCAEJ are connected to racial dynamics. Some members of the collaborative, including past members, feel that race has played a role in who has a voice in the Alliance. “It’s still about that power,” says Geraldine Blackston, director of Project Rescue and a former collaborative partner representing SEJ. Blackston connects racial dynamics with the conflict between grassroots organizing and policy work, pointing out that African Americans throughout the state are disempowered even within social justice organizations. Within NCAEJ, the organizations with a policy focus—the Council of Churches, the Justice and Community Development Center, and the Common Sense Foundation—have white, male leadership. In contrast, the organizations with a grassroots base—North Carolina Fair Share and Southerners for Economic Justice—are represented by African American women, and the Association of Community Development Corporations is led by an African American woman who is also a member of Southerners for Economic Justice. The imbalance in power that exists between better-funded policy groups and grassroots organizations can be exacerbated by these race and gender dynamics. Debra Tyler-Horton, Deputy Director of the Justice and Community Development Center and an African American woman

who represented the policy perspective in NCAEJ, acknowledges, “Around issues of race, class, and gender, everyone has been polite. But we haven’t dealt with these issues as a collaborative.”

For some, it is difficult to distinguish whether the power dynamics in NCAEJ are related more to race or to organizational differences. “Much of the breakdown we’ve had has been about grassroots versus policy,” says new Alliance director Jennifer Bumgarner. “For us, those breakdowns haven’t always been along racial lines. But sometimes issues have come up regarding race and class, and they haven’t been dealt with. That makes it harder to bring it up the next time, and it decreases people’s comfort level.”

The Alliance itself has not adequately addressed race within its own organizational structure, according to some members. “During the first few years, there were facilitated meetings where working through interpersonal issues, race would become a big part of the agenda,” says Bill Rowe of the Justice and Community Development Center. “The group agreed at the time to deal with the issues as they came up.” But as Bumgarner noted, some feel that this approach hasn’t offered sufficient opportunities to address racial tensions that exist.

The Alliance is also grappling with the lack of representation of Latinos within the collaborative. “The Latino community is not at the table, and it should be,” says Fitzsimon of the Common Sense Foundation. “Many of us publish materials in Spanish, but that’s not enough. We’re trying to figure a way to quantify the economic benefit North Carolina gets from Latino immigrants, to counter people who scream about ‘illegal aliens’ on talk radio and media.”

Another population that NCAEJ has not reached is the white working class, a major base of support for archconservative politicians like former Senator Jesse Helms. “It’s hard to get into those communities,” says Fitzsimon. “And that’s why Jesse Helms has such big appeal. He goes on TV and says ‘your problem is the Black guy who’s taking your job.’ Unfortunately, it works.”

As NCAEJ looks to the future, it is considering ways to expand its membership to build a broader base of support across lines of race and class. “The challenge is, do we build a tier, or do we widen the core and bring in more grassroots groups?” asks Tyler-Horton of the Justice and Community Development Center.

Voices within the collaborative have different perspectives. “There are lots of local community folks working on living wage ordinances. I think the key is to figure out folks who are talented, vibrant community leaders,” says Fitzsimon.

“It’d be great if we can find some of those folks in the Latino community or the white working class.”

There are also questions about whether or not groups should be brought in as equal partners and how to deal with groups that may have to drive five hours to get to Raleigh. “We need to figure out a way to help them without them using resources,” Fitzsimons says. “And we need to overcome the understandable sense of distrust between a Ford Foundation-funded Raleigh group and a small-town group.”

Still, Marie Hill-Faison of SEJ believes that overcoming these challenges is worth the effort. “You’re dealing with people’s rights and lives,” she says. “It’s nothing to take lightly.”

Collaborative Comparisons: Lessons about Organizational Differences and Internal Power Dynamics

The work of the Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy (TPOPP), Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (KEJA), and the North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice (NCAEJ) illustrates the power and leverage that groups of different types can achieve when they form effective alliances, as well as the formidable challenges to success they face.

TPOPP has, as yet, been unable to produce significant policy wins through its work on tax reform or healthcare. However, in working toward these goals, TPOPP has built capacity among social change organizations for future campaign work, largely by connecting organizations and coalitions that have issue-specific expertise with Tennessee’s largest membership organizations. KEJA has been successful because of its ability to make the most of a strong combination of the two largest grassroots groups in the state, the strongest progressive policy analysts and researchers, and a well-established media center. Its ongoing focus on bringing progressive organizations together to develop a shared analysis has helped these organizations speak with a common voice. With activities that included statewide conferences, a report on the “Low Road to Economic Development,” and grassroots organizing, KEJA was able to shift the debate around wages and industrial agriculture. Meanwhile, NCAEJ rallied diverse statewide constituencies to oppose cuts in critical social programs. NCAEJ’s work was hampered by numerous transitions that have affected the capacity of individual organizations to participate in collaborative work and altered the composition of the collaborative’s governance body. The experiences of all three

states provides insight about the role of internal tensions and power dynamics in building working relationships between organizing and policy groups.

BRIDGING ORGANIZING AND POLICY

As North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky exemplify, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach for successful decision-making in collaborations that include policy and organizing groups. Take, for example, the process of issue selection:

- In Tennessee, TPOPP partners include issue-based coalitions with both policy expertise and campaign experience. Most of the collaborative partners were part of these coalitions prior to the Ford grant, which made the coalitions natural leaders on issue selection and strategy;
- In Kentucky, a steering committee with participation from all partner organizations selects the issues for joint work. A requisite criterion is that the issue has been adopted by the membership base of one or both of the collaborative’s organizing groups;
- In North Carolina, not all collaborative partners had working relationships with each other prior to the collaborative. Rather than adopt the issues of a particular lead organization or organizations, they utilized a model of issue selection that involved a series of community meetings throughout the state to determine issues of primary importance to low-income families.

These different approaches reflected negotiations between grassroots and policy organizations and were influenced primarily by the particular composition of groups in each state, as well as the preexisting relationships among them. Each of these collaboratives used convenings, issue-based conferences, and media trainings to build cohesion around selected issues and develop new leaders. When collaboratives were able to anchor their work in a shared political analysis, they developed cohesive media and campaign messages.

Collaboration between policy and organizing groups poses potential for mistrust and competing agendas, due to differences in constituency, measures of success, and decision-making structures. In terms of the constituency to which they are primarily accountable, comparing a typical policy group’s mission statement to the mission of a community organizing group reveals the distinction. On the policy side, Kentucky Youth Advocates’ mission is “to be a strong voice

for all of Kentucky’s children by promoting positive public policies.” KYA’s role is to be a voice for children, and the way that it measures success is by promoting good policy.

Meanwhile, Tennessee’s Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvilleians (Solutions) says, “Our primary mission is to organize low- and moderate-income people to get our voices heard and win changes in the policies of governments and businesses.” While Solutions wants to change policies that affect low-income people, it measures success largely by its ability to empower members of the community to speak out on behalf of their own interests.

Many of the tensions that arise between different organizational types are rooted in this difference in mission and constituency. Organizing groups pursue victories that will be meaningful to, and galvanize, the grassroots base; this can clash with the interests of policy groups, for whom effecting policy change is an incremental, give-and-take process. For example, in order to pass legislation, policy leaders may compromise on issues that grassroots leaders would consider non-negotiable, which generates conflict and mistrust.

As the chart below illustrates, differences in decision-making processes can also generate tensions between organizing and policy groups. Grassroots groups

Contrasting Approaches: Policy and Organizing Groups

	ORGANIZING GROUPS	POLICY AND RESEARCH GROUPS
PRIMARY CONSTITUENCY	People who are affected by public policies	Legislators and policymakers
MEASURES OF SUCCESS	Empowering low-income people to solve public problems	Passing good legislation, blocking bad legislation
STRENGTHS	Base-building, leadership development, political education	Relationships with legislators, policy expertise, research and writing capacity
DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE	Democratic governance with a chapter structure, decisions driven by membership	Expertise of staff and board members
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND SCOPE	Based in chapters across the state; work on local, regional, and statewide issues	Based near capitol; tend to work on statewide issues
BUDGET AND RESOURCES	Smaller budgets (CtC participants have a mean budget of \$254,561)	Larger budgets (CtC participants have a mean budget of \$770,955)

respond quickly to changing and sometimes urgent community needs. Adopting new campaigns or platforms that are not overtly connected to these needs takes time and constituency education.

Policy groups respond quickly to proposed legislation that is within their range of expertise. When grassroots campaign issues are outside of that scope, policy groups that wish to support those efforts need time for research and analysis. One reason policy groups can respond to legislative opportunities more quickly than grassroots organizations can is that they are connected to a national infrastructure that delivers information, analyses, and critiques about past and upcoming policy proposals. No parallel formation exists for community groups who work for social justice. These disparities make it difficult to achieve cohesion around issues unless the analysis takes into account the experience of the grassroots base.

INTERNAL TENSIONS AND POWER DYNAMICS

In the face of these resource disparities, collaboratives must consider how the allocation of resources affects organizational capacity. The infusion of outside funding can enable joint work, and different allocation models will emerge depending on the collaborative structure and make-up of partner organizations. Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina have experimented with different models of resource allocation, from capacity-building grants to member groups (early KEJA) to funding a staff person to coordinate work (North Carolina and Tennessee). Resource allocation questions can become a barrier when considering the inclusion of new members.

To develop working relationships, each of the collaboratives engaged in a process of trust-building, which is particularly important when partner organizations do not already have formal working relationships. Leadership transitions within individual organizations can have a significant impact on these working relationships by disrupting the personal and organizational ties that have been nurtured.

However, effective decision-making within collaborations requires more than building organizational and personal trust. It also requires addressing

“When collaboratives were able to anchor their work in a shared political analysis, they developed cohesive media and campaign messages.”

dynamics of race and education. Community organizing groups are among the few organizational types that value and validate the experiences, leadership, and problem-solving abilities of indigenous leaders. When these organizations come into contact with other types of organizations that (a) validate formal education

“Grassroots organizations, more than other types of organizations, tend to validate the experiences, leadership, and problem-solving abilities of indigenous leaders.”

and (b) place less value on the experiences of indigenous leadership, the result is conflict. In the case of policy and organizing groups, the conflict is often intertwined with race, as nearly half (43 percent) of the paid staff of organizing groups surveyed in this evaluation are people of color, compared to a quarter (24 percent) of staff in policy groups.

Effective collaborations acknowledge that different organizations bring different levels of internal capacity and resources, and that dynamics of race, gender, and educational level affect internal power relationships. For TPOPP, questions about connecting with a Latino constituency and deepening its relationship with the African American community loom large. TPOPP has demonstrated a willingness to address these issues and has implemented structures to address internal dynamics of race and power. In North Carolina, collaborative members are also hoping to expand their constituency and representation to include Latinos. In Kentucky, there are no groups or representatives from communities of color within the collaborative, and this non-participation is an issue for KEJA.

Due to resource constraints that all states face, expansion to new groups and constituencies has been a challenge across the board. The collaboratives that have most successfully included groups that represent, and are led by, members of constituencies and communities that are traditionally disenfranchised have included those groups from the onset.

Summary of Key Lessons

Policy-Organizing Partnerships: Collaborations between policy and organizing groups can have a powerful influence on state-level policy when they utilize the different strengths of each organizational type. At the same time, such collaborations pose potential for mistrust and competing agendas due to differences in constituencies, measures of success, and decision-making structures.

Trust-Building: Collaboratives will need to allow space and time for building trust, particularly when individuals and organizations do not have formal or extensive relationships prior to the collaborative.

Acknowledging Power Disparities: Effective collaborations acknowledge that different organizations bring different levels of internal capacity and resources, and that dynamics of race, gender, and education affect internal power relationships.

Equal Roles from Inception: Building collaboratives across diverse constituencies poses challenges both in terms of issue selection and internal power dynamics. These challenges are minimized when different constituencies and groups have equal roles from the inception of the collaborative, but they are heightened when constituencies of color are included or invited after the collaborative has already formed and developed an internal culture and structure.

Critical Role of Race: Racial tensions are often intertwined with and reinforced by the differences between organizing and policy groups. One of the unique characteristics of grassroots organizations is that, more than other types of organizations, they tend to validate the experiences, leadership, and problem-solving abilities of indigenous leaders. When these organizations come into contact with other types of organizations that place less value on the experience of indigenous leadership, the resulting dynamic may be conflict. In the case of policy and organizing groups, that conflict is often intertwined with race. Unless these tensions are addressed, they can compound the difficulties of these two organizational types in working together effectively. ●

*Foundation funds were not used for direct or indirect legislative activity.



CHAPTER FIVE

Internal Processes and External Outcomes: South Carolina and Alabama

*i*n a collaborative, organizations enter into a new relationship for the purpose of collectively accomplishing what neither can do separately. The promise of more significant changes for broader sets of constituencies entices organizations to come together, marshal their disparate skills and resources, and influence the external political environment. However, as the experiences of South Carolina Policy Organizing Project (SCPOP) and Alabama Organizing Project (AOP) illustrate, negotiating these new relationships is often as complicated as affecting the external policy landscape. Balancing internal dynamics while pursuing external policy changes requires skilled facilitation, a good plan, and the time and space to grow.

This chapter profiles how internal processes—interwoven relationships, mechanisms, structures, and capacities—can affect the ability of a collaborative to produce successful outcomes. The experiences of these collaboratives demonstrate the challenges of building a cohesive organization that can significantly influence, or even transform, the terrain in which policies are crafted, debated, and won.

South Carolina Policy and Organizing Project (SCPOP): Overcoming Internal Challenges

“From Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to voter education, SCPOP has educated rural communities in the processes that can bring about change for a better South Carolina.”

FRANKLIN BRIGGS, NAACP, FLORENCE CHAPTER

The seeds of the South Carolina Policy and Organizing Project (SCPOP) were sown just before the Ford Foundation issued its RFP. In early 1998, staff and leaders from key grassroots organizations in South Carolina met with representatives from Mississippi-based Southern Echo to learn from the latter’s experience in developing grassroots organizing strategies to change public policy in their state. In early April of the same year, 75 members of local groups attended a workshop conducted by Southern Echo, and the SCPOP process of building a statewide collaborative began to take root. One of SCPOP’s early documents expresses the founders’ newfound vision: “South Carolina Policy Organizing Project (SCPOP) offers the best hope for fundamentally changing historic power relationships and transforming politics in South Carolina.”

THE PARTNERS

The four organizations that came together to form SCPOP and transform their vision into reality were:

- **Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment (CAFÉ)** is a grassroots group formed in 1980 to empower workers not represented by unions. CAFÉ is based in Greenville, with 14 chapters located strategically throughout the state. Using community organizing techniques to expose and correct unfair employment policies, CAFÉ has grown from a small local group to a statewide organization with over 1,100 dues-paying families. CAFÉ functions as the fiscal sponsor and lead organization of SCPOP.
- **South Carolina United Action (SCUA)** was formed in 1989 to provide support to members working to bring about political, social, and economic changes in their communities and in the state of South Carolina. Recently, SCUA worked with members of the Sunnyside community in Orangeburg to improve their community by having

abandoned houses torn down, other houses repaired, trees planted, and the local neighborhood park rehabilitated. Based in Orangeburg, most SCUA members reside in the southern portion of the state.

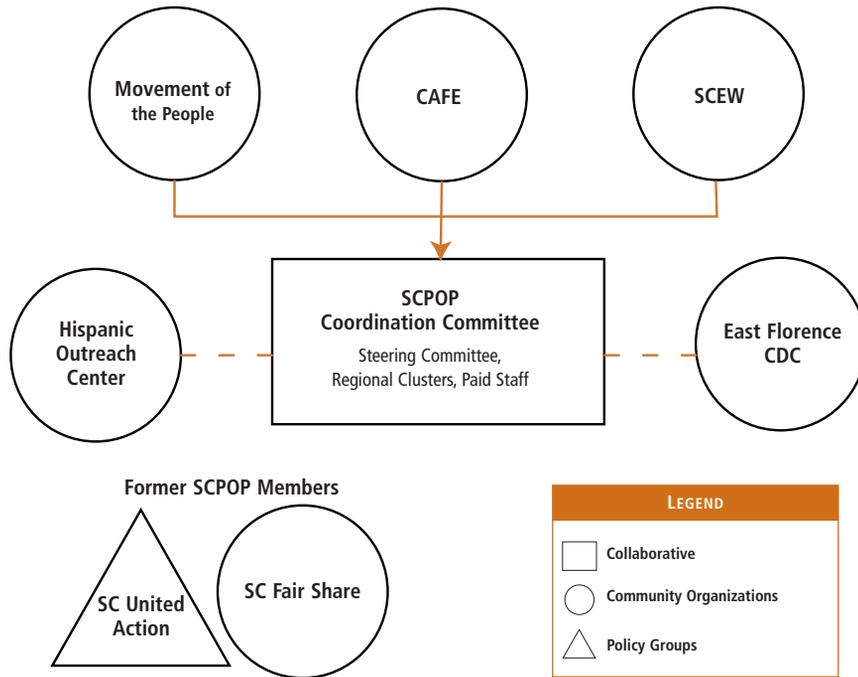
- **South Carolina Environmental Watch (SCEW)** was started in 1992 to respond to numerous environmental problems that face the state. SCEW is a membership network of communities across the state and is the only statewide, predominantly African American environmental justice group in South Carolina. Of particular concern to SCEW members is the propensity of private companies to place environmentally hazardous sites in communities of color. SCEW is based in Gadsen, South Carolina.
- **South Carolina Fair Share (SCFS)** is a statewide organization created in 1986 to advance the health, safety, and well-being of people in South Carolina. SC Fair Share provides individuals and organizations with the tools they need to affect public policy in the areas of consumer protection (e.g., utility deregulation, auto insurance, wage garnishment), access to quality health care, welfare reform that strengthens the safety net for all families, and redistricting and political empowerment.

SCPOP's mission is to improve the infrastructure for progressive policy change in South Carolina, and the initial strategy stressed bolstering "the capacity of everyday grassroots citizens to make public officials aware of the decisions they make that affect communities of color." (SCPOP mission statement)

Both the structure and form of participation in SCPOP changed over time. In December 1999, after almost a year of advertising and recruiting, SCPOP hired a lead organizer and administrative staff. Central staff was complemented by part-time "cluster coordinators" recruited from the membership of participating groups. The coordinators were to make sure that the work of the collaborative was staffed and supported. During this period, SCPOP maintained a coordinating committee comprised of two representatives from each organization.

But by the spring of 2002, both the lead organizer and the administrative staff left SCPOP for personal reasons, within months of each other. Instead of replacing departed staff, SCPOP adopted new operational processes and shifted to a more decentralized structure. First, a new executive committee was established, with one representative from each organization; the committee met monthly to oversee the collaborative's operations. Second, each organization

South Carolina's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

SCPOP: South Carolina Policy and Organizing Project is dedicated to increasing the capacity of and strengthening relationships between progressive grassroots groups and policy organizations. SCPOP is governed by a steering committee and has coordinating and regional paid staff. Their strategy includes mapping statewide grassroots organizations and policy groups, as well as targeted issue identification and developing organizational leadership.

KEY ISSUES

Redistricting and Local Issue Development

ORGANIZATIONS

CAFE: Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment

SCEW: South Carolina Environmental Watch

Movement of the People: Youth Group, New Member

Hispanic Outreach Center: Latino Group, Potential New Member

East Florence Community Development Corporation: African American, Potential New Member

FORMER MEMBERS

SCFS: South Carolina Fair Share

SCUA: South Carolina United Action

took responsibility for delivering programmatic work for the collaborative, in turn receiving \$25,000 of the allocation for the year. This latter decision qualitatively shifted the relationship among groups from “collaborative partners” to “collaborative contractors.”

All these adjustments, however, were not enough to keep the collaborative intact. South Carolina Fair Share, the lone policy group that helped found SCPOP, left in 2001. SCUA left in early 2003, leaving SCPOP with only two of its four original partners. SCPOP, while still active, has not succeeded in its effort to build links between policy and organizing groups or to create cross-issue alliances that can substantially affect the political discourse in the state. As SCUA Director Corry Stevenson wrote in his letter of withdrawal from the collaborative, a thorough examination of SCPOP’s successes, mistakes, and struggles may uncover the “deeper truths...lessons, and recommendations for future ventures.”

“A thorough examination of SCPOP’s successes, mistakes, and struggles may uncover the ‘deeper truths...lessons, and recommendations for future ventures.’”

POLITICS OF RACE

A statewide collaborative effort to strengthen the voice and power of poor, underserved, and vulnerable populations is desperately needed in South Carolina, where a tradition of racism has permeated state politics for centuries. On December 5, 2002, Senator Strom Thurmond used the occasion of his 100th birthday celebration to mark the end of his reign as South Carolina’s most favored son. A lightning rod for conservative policies, he had served in the state legislature, as governor of South Carolina, and as a United States senator for almost 70 years. Although Thurmond has since died, the policies he championed continue to shape the terrain of South Carolina politics. His successor, 47-year-old Lindsey O. Graham, makes sure that those politics hold sway. A staunch proponent of conservative fiscal and social policies and an avid supporter of increased military spending, Sen. Graham is considered by many to be as conservative, if not yet as formidable, as Thurmond.

One of the most contentious issues for South Carolina in recent years has been whether the Confederate flag should remain atop the statehouse. In 2000, the South Carolina legislature voted to continue flying the Confederate flag and to allow state employees to choose between taking off the newly named “Civil

Rights Day” or one of three Confederate holidays. Some—mostly whites—see the flag as a symbol of a proud antebellum past that many gave their lives to protect. Others—mostly African Americans—equate it with the shameful past marked by slavery. Bitter debates and deep acrimony have festered from the statehouse to supper tables across the state, with marches, mobilizations, and even fisticuffs marking each turn. The deep racial discord at the heart of these debates has existed for centuries.

Other, less overtly racial issues have also preoccupied legislators and advocates alike in the past few years, including housing shortages, decline of agricultural jobs, decline of health coverage for poor people, resegregation of public schools, and protecting workers in a right-to-work state.

There are also a few bright spots. Darlington County residents boast two historic accomplishments. They elected their first African American representa-

tative, Gerald Malloy, to the state Senate. Malloy ran a grassroots campaign involving young people in the African American community and leaders from the emerging Latino community. Thelma Dawson also became the first African American woman to be elected school board chairperson for Darlington County. At the state capitol, social justice advocates are close to winning a cigarette

“In 2000, the South Carolina legislature voted to continue flying the Confederate flag and to allow state employees to choose between taking off the newly named ‘Civil Rights Day’ or one of three Confederate holidays.”

tax increase that could potentially funnel \$150 million of new revenue into expansion of Medicaid and other healthcare services for the state’s low-income citizens.

The additional revenue would certainly help, since the state’s 2003 budget deficit was projected at \$400 million. Allocations for education and Medicaid are especially hard-hit, with 10–15 percent budget cuts, and analysts are projecting an additional 10 percent in cuts to other state services. The legislature ended lottery-funded scholarships for South Carolina students attending four-year colleges, and a state official quoted in the *South Carolina Statehouse Reporter* (February 23, 2003) quipped, “We’re beyond cuts to the bone and are siphoning off blood.”

At the statehouse in Columbia, partisan bloodletting accompanied legislative efforts to redraw congressional and legislative lines in time for the 2002 primary elections. Governor Hodges (Democrat) vetoed the proposed redistricting

lines in early September 2001. The Republican-controlled body overrode his veto in a special session on September 4, which led to a lawsuit, inducing a three-judge federal panel to end the gridlock. In March 2002, the panel released the final redistricting plan, which is very similar to the one drawn a decade earlier. Both Democrats and Republicans claim victory.

The ink has not yet dried on the court-approved document, and state Republicans in the legislature are already seeking to revise the plan in anticipation of the 2004 elections, where they could pick up as many as three Senate seats.

This move has raised the level of acrimony in the capitol. “We’re firing people in state government, and we’re going to spend the equivalent of 20 or 30 or 40 state jobs in redistricting expenses?” the *Statehouse Report* quotes Sen. Phil Leventis (D-Sumter) as asking. “There’s only one reason to redistrict, and that’s for partisan political purposes.”

While politicians bicker about these and other state policy issues, community organizations continue their campaigns for local school reform, neighborhood improvement, more responsive environmental protections for rural residents, and police accountability, to name a few. It is from the work of these grassroots organizations, rooted in the experiences of poor and mostly rural African Americans, that SCPOP emerged.

“The goal was to develop leaders in their own communities, include everyday, grassroots people in the political process and, as a result, build capacity statewide.”

SCPOP’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As its first collaborative project, SCPOP chose to focus on the impact of the 2000 Census on the redistricting process in South Carolina. It began with a statewide mapping of grassroots organizations and civic groups, identifying key players and indigenous leadership in predominantly African American and Latino counties. “The goal was to develop leaders in their own communities, include everyday, grassroots people in the political process and, as a result, build capacity statewide,” says Carol Bishop, executive director of Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment. This new leadership would be capable of analyzing policy and mobilizing state residents on a larger scale.

Taking its cue from the model developed by Southern Echo in Mississippi (see chapter 3) around the 1990 Census and redistricting, in which community

residents played a pivotal role, SCPOP's strategy was to convene regular meetings in these counties, set up "redistricting committees," identify local issues around which people were mobilizing that might have state policy implications, and conduct cluster trainings on the policymaking process, the Census, and redistricting. By the middle of 2003 SCPOP had:

- Researched and monitored the redistricting process in 26 targeted counties by going to city council meetings, school board meetings, and weekly legislative meetings. SCPOP research identified the highest concentration of Latinos in the state (Spartanburg, Columbia, Charleston, and Greenville counties) and areas where fair representation is most problematic (e.g., Williamsburg and Marion counties, which have at least two thirds majority Black districts but no Black elected officials). More recent outreach efforts have resulted in the formation of subcommittees in eight additional counties.
- Trained grassroots leaders in the skills of demography. Two representatives from each grassroots organization went to Mississippi to get hands-on training facilitated by Southern Echo. Upon returning to South Carolina, these leaders conducted similar trainings for SCPOP member organizations in Lowcountry, PeeDee, and Midland counties.
- Held statewide and county meetings that educated more than 3,500 people about the political process in South Carolina, urged the importance of political participation, recruited elected officials to visit rural communities, and provided bilingual information (English/Spanish).

SCPOP engaged in other policy related activities as well, though without the use of Ford Foundation Funds. Most notably, SCPOP was able to conduct a public education effort that pointed to flaws in House Bill 3448—a bill that would have legislated "termination without recourse" for 1.4 million workers. Freddie Jollie of the PeeDee County subcommittee pointed out that the bill "would have taken South Carolina workers back to the days of the plantation." SCPOP's public education work shifted public awareness about the potential impact of the legislation and the bill did not pass.

SCPOP is also exploring the formation of an Afro-centric charter school. "Currently, there is not a charter school in South Carolina operated by African Americans," notes the SCPOP Newsletter (Summer 2003). Since the state adopted its charter school policy in 1996, much of the conversation has centered on whether charter schools would become white-flight academies, leav-

ing behind students of color. A delegation of SCPOP representatives visited the Malcolm X Academy in Detroit, Michigan in 2002 to get an up-close experience of a successful Afro-centric school.

SCPOP's most significant contributions as a collaborative, however, are exemplified in how it brings new constituents to the policy table and its effort to increase the capacity of grassroots groups to participate meaningfully in the process.

BRINGING NEW CONSTITUENTS TO THE POLICY TABLE

From the start, SCPOP intended to develop a grassroots network at the county level by bringing in groups that had not previously been involved in policy work. The "Key Players" research conducted in 1998-99 has guided the outreach and organizing of county-level meetings and cluster trainings. Systematic work with the East Florence Community Development Corporation/New Visions, Hispanic Outreach Center, and various religious, youth, and community organizations has broadened the scope of the project.

A primary commitment of the project was to bring the Latino community into the collaborative. Towards this end, SCPOP commissioned a research project with Deborah Para-Medina at the University of South Carolina to document the Latino community's demographics, key issues, and organizations. A report released in July 2000 provided data that helped the collaborative decide in which counties to focus its work. The collaborative's initial efforts led to the formation of a strategic relationship, albeit in its initial stages, with the Hispanic Outreach Center, based in Columbia but with a statewide reach. "SCPOP has empowered and educated the Hispanic community," observes Marcelo Lopes of the Hispanic Outreach Center, "to become more knowledgeable of the political process by including Hispanic members in redistricting and voter education trainings."

Greater appreciation of, and commitment to, the involvement of Latinos has led SCPOP to hold bilingual meetings in some county clusters. Much of SCPOP's materials are translated into Spanish, including a pamphlet entitled, "Knowing Your Rights If You Are Stopped by the Police, FBI, and INS."

"Since the state adopted its charter school policy in 1996, much of the conversation has centered on whether charter schools would become white-flight academies, leaving behind students of color."

SCPOP and Hispanic Outreach continue to co-sponsor workshops on domestic violence, employment issues, and redistricting.

These efforts have strengthened the base of the collaborative and stretched the political framework of SCPOP. In August 2002, SCPOP invited Carolina Zaragoza from the Mexican Consulate to engage the community on issues of

“SCPOP has empowered and educated the Hispanic community to become more knowledgeable about the political process by including Latino members in redistricting and voter education trainings.”

employment, worker rights, education, and redistricting. More than 2,500 Latinos attended the event in Charleston, traveling from as far as Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. The event was repeated in 2003, this time in conjunction with the International Longshoreman’s Association, and included Mexican officials assisting their nationals

in applying for a *matricula consular*, a Mexican government-issued identification card verifying proof of local residency in the U.S..

INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF GRASSROOTS GROUPS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COLLABORATIVE

Before the SCPOP collaborative was initiated, the relationships among many of the groups involved were largely bilateral and ad hoc. “We saw each other at each other’s events, and in a few statewide actions,” says CAFÉ’s Carol Bishop, “but we didn’t have the intensity of relationships until the CtC collaborative started.”

This situation provided the context for SCPOP’s organizational development strategy. Each of the SCPOP partner groups was at a different level of capacity and resources. CAFÉ, the most developed of the groups, had 14 statewide chapters, multiple staff, and a half-million dollar budget. South Carolina Fair Share had a long and stable presence in the legislative corridors in Columbia and was known for combining strategic research, policy work, and coalition-based organizing. South Carolina Environmental Watch and South Carolina United Action were much smaller in size and infrastructure; at the beginning of the collaborative, SCEW had two organizing staff, and SCUA had one organizer and an administrator on payroll.

Knowing that the collaborative would only be as strong as the capacity of its member organizations, the SCPOP founders decided early in the process to

invest in strengthening the groups. Two strategies were adopted to address capacity-building needs of member groups: (1) reimbursing member groups for staff time spent at monthly SCPOP meetings; and (2) making an annual allocation of \$7,500 per member group for organizational development. The first strategy was initially targeted for the two smaller groups, SCEW and SCUA. As a report to the Ford Foundation in June 1999 reads, “Having agreed initially that United Action and Environmental Watch were most in need of this support, one staff person from each of the two groups was reimbursed [at the rate of \$13.25/hour] for participation in each SCPOP Coordinating Committee meeting and in some other official meetings.” After the first year of the collaborative, this reimbursement policy was extended to all organizational representatives of SCPOP.

These allocations made it easier for groups to participate in SCPOP activities. However, it also became clear that, while these strategies increased the capacity of member groups to participate in SCPOP, they were not sufficient to substantially strengthen the organizations. Given the other internal issues SCPOP had to address, a much more comprehensive approach was needed to ensure the smooth functioning of the collaborative.

Key Challenges

Interviews conducted with key stakeholders and allies show that the most significant challenges SCPOP faced were internal and organizational. All interviewees agreed that the aims of the project, “developing a voice for grassroots organizations based in Black and Latino communities to be at the statewide policy table, development of youth leadership, and aligning grassroots and policy groups along a progressive agenda” (SCPOP Proposal to Ford, 1998) were still very important. However, a number of factors prevented the collaborative from reaching its goals and ultimately led to the departure of South Carolina Fair Share and South Carolina United Action. These factors included stunted internal development exacerbated by a leadership transition, mismatch of internal capacity to the demands of external policy objectives, and a collaborative structure defined by contractual relationships.

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

A number of internal development issues, including race, gender, and personality differences, undercut the ability of SCPOP to function effectively. The

inability to identify and address these issues ultimately led to the deterioration of the collaboration. While perspectives on these issues differ, there is an almost unanimous consensus that a number of these unspoken tensions began to emerge in late 1999 when Charles Taylor, executive director of CAFÉ, announced his intention to leave by the end of 2000. Taylor's departure was a significant loss to the project on a number of levels:

- Taylor was one of the initiators of SCPOP. He had worked with each of the founding groups in prior campaigns and was instrumental in initiating the collaborative;
- Through his work at CAFÉ, Taylor had developed relationships with both regional and national funders (including the Ford Foundation). As one participant in the collaborative recalls, "For most of us, it was our first contact with Ford...and it definitely came through Charles;"
- Taylor was one of the founders of CAFÉ and worked there for 20 years, where he honed his expertise in building organizations. He also supervised the work of the SCPOP lead organizer, Gabriella White, from December 1999 until his departure from SCPOP as a consultant in mid-2001; and
- Taylor was a progressive, white male in a conservative state where race and gender are pivotal in issues of political access.

When Taylor left CAFÉ and SCPOP, the staff directorship changed from a white male who founded the collaborative to Carol Bishop, a Black woman who worked her way up from the rank-and-file leadership of CAFÉ. CAFÉ organizer Penny Henningan notes that since the mid-'90s the board has also "changed from predominantly white to predominantly Black, with some Latinos." Because CAFÉ was the collaborative's lead organization, before the end of SCPOP's second year Bishop's role changed from being a staff attendee at the collaborative's meetings to its key organizer. She had to simultaneously assume leadership roles in both CAFÉ and SCPOP. "I was trying to juggle so many different things at the time," recalls Bishop. Corry Stevenson of SCUA agrees. "As CAFÉ director, and with CAFÉ being the lead partner and fiscal agent for SCPOP, we now had an individual who had to provide leadership for not one, but two major statewide organizations."

The Ford Foundation provided an additional \$50,000 to support the collaborative's leadership transition, but the intervention did not succeed in

addressing the many tensions that the members of SCPOP were experiencing. These included not just the obvious issues of organizational direction and leadership, but also some unarticulated issues, including race and gender. “Race was not directly addressed from the beginning internally, when it came to power relationships and decision-making,” says Mildred Myers of SCEW. “The white folks were always right and unquestioned.”

In addition to the structural issues of dealing openly and effectively with race and gender, issues of internal development have been a major preoccupation of the SCPOP collaborative since the beginning, causing considerable tension among organizational representatives. The issues include:

“We saw each other at each other’s events, and in a few statewide actions, but we didn’t have the intensity of relationships until the CtC collaborative started.”

- **Intra-Collaborative Communications:** Group members repeatedly pointed to the lack of “transparency” of the collaborative. SCUA and SCEW representatives report that they never received copies of Ford grant reports and detailed financial statements from CAFÉ. Second, members from SCUA and SCEW pointed to the lack of communication in preparing for the Malcolm X Academy visit in Detroit. “We didn’t receive any information about where to go, who’s putting us up, or anything,” says Michael Bennett of SCEW. “It was as if they didn’t want us to be there.”
- **Gender Domination:** Several of the women participants point to instances in which male members of the collaborative dominated discussion and escalated the level of conflict between groups.
- **Imbalance of resources:** Small groups in the collaborative, like SCUA and SCEW, have budgets of under \$100,000, and no more than two full-time staff members at a time. Consequently, balancing individual organizational activities with the demands of the collaborative was quite difficult.

These and other internal challenges in the collaborative led South Carolina Fair Share to formally depart from SCPOP. “The development of the collaborative became stagnant,” states John Rouff, policy director of Fair Share. “We spent a lot of time in unproductive meetings, and the work wasn’t moving for-

ward.” With Fair Share’s departure and Charles Taylor’s transition, the center of leadership and relationships among groups shifted dramatically, and the collaborative was faced with an organizational balancing act. SCPOP had to respond to the political opportunities brought about by the policy deliberations on redistricting, while attempting to mend organizational fissures.

“If the collaborative had started with an issue with which member groups had more familiarity, the demands on groups would have been different and, perhaps, more manageable.”

In the statewide evaluation meeting conducted in January 2003, groups in the collaborative demonstrated a willingness to talk about the tensions. Remarked one participant, “We know that it’s going to take a commitment to work through these issues, and we are committed.”

South Carolina United Action, however, was unwilling to wait for resolution of

these internal problems. In a letter explaining why SCUA was leaving SCPOP, Corry Stevenson writes, “I do believe that constructive conflict generates growth and success...but we couldn’t even ‘agree to disagree.’ The challenge in my opinion is that in SCPOP we have institutionalized a commitment to stifling the conflict without resolution.” In the letter, Stevenson sums up SCUA’s experience in SCPOP: “I do not feel that we ever achieved appropriate cooperation between the member groups in this venture. SCUA has been working for CAFÉ since the beginning and has not been permitted to be a partner in any real sense of the word...I cannot say at this time that it is truly with regret that SCUA withdraws from SCPOP.”

In more recent communications between Stevenson and the Ford Foundation, SCUA seems to have softened its stance and is open to rejoining the collaborative after an honest airing of the issues raised in the letter.

INTERNAL CAPACITY AND EXTERNAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

The collaborative chose an issue—redistricting and the 2000 Census—that none of the grassroots organizations had worked on before. Choosing redistricting as the collaborative’s key initiative had a number of ramifications:

- **Capacity Mismatch:** It created an additional area of knowledge and expertise to master. Capacity to absorb additional organizational work was easier for the larger groups in the collaborative (CAFÉ and Fair Share), but much harder for SCUA and SCEW. If the collaborative had

started with an issue with which member groups had more familiarity, the demands on groups would have been different and, perhaps, more manageable;

- **Legislative vs. Grassroots Approach:** Historically, South Carolina Fair Share had approached redistricting from a statewide, legislative perspective. The grassroots approach advanced by SCPOP created tensions between Fair Share and the rest of the collaborative on strategy, direction, and pace of campaign development. This tension was another reason Fair Share decided to leave the collaborative; and
- **Statewide Policy Agenda:** While the redistricting work surfaced local issues and mobilized the involvement of African American and Latino communities, it did not result in the anticipated statewide, progressive policy agenda or improved connections between policy and grassroots groups. Nonetheless, one positive outcome was an increase in inter-group connections and steps toward consolidation of the political frame and goals of the state's African American and Latino communities.

COLLABORATIVE BY CONTRACT

The First Year Report to the Ford Foundation from the collaborative in June 1999 states, "The four member groups had worked with each other in various combinations over the years, and there was a general assumption that we generally know each other fairly well. What's become clear, however, is that none of the groups had worked together on a project of this scale and importance, and at this level of intense interaction."

This unfamiliarity led to some innovative organizational decisions: the formation of the organizational development fund; the staff reimbursement system to compensate smaller organizations for their time; and the pursuit of an organic process of arriving at agreement about governance issues, modeled after the Southern Organizing Coop experience. During these early years, up until the departure of project staff in mid-2001, there was still a sense of a collective undertaking of something larger than the sum of the organizational parts. However, SCPOP's decision to not replace the staff but instead to divide the work among the participating organizations qualitatively changed the relationships among the groups, specifically between CAFÉ (as the fiscal sponsor) and SCUA and SCEW. The latter organizations began to function as contractors responsible for delivering specified outcomes for the collaborative, which placed CAFÉ

in the unenviable position of enforcing the contracts. Organizations had to produce periodic reports, including sign-up sheets from their meetings and a detailed financial statement, before disbursements were made for work done. By the end of 2002, the spirit of the collaborative, tenuous from the start, had become subsumed by a contractual relationship that created bitterness among collaboration partners.

SCPOP's internal difficulties are certainly not unique. The issues raised by staff transition and a mismatch of issues with organizational capabilities, as well as unacknowledged issues of race and gender, are all fairly common in nonprofit organizations. Most organizations have internal problems, and executive directors are becoming increasingly aware that if they do not address these issues, they will stymie and impede the progress of the organization. It is therefore important to note that *these internal issues are compounded within collaboratives*.

Local organizations tend to have unique cultures, friendship networks, and collective political experiences that help bond them. Group members see each other more regularly, so there are opportunities to gain deeper understandings and to move past, or forgive, grievances. A collaborative like SCPOP, where there are few ongoing social relations and little collective political history, and where, in a very real sense, members may be competing for scarce resources, can become a growth medium for conflict. Because there are few informal opportunities for collaborative members to address areas of conflict, it is even more important that a collaborative allocate significant time and resources to attend to these issues in a timely and productive manner.

Alabama Organizing Project (AOP): Experimenting with Relationships

At the 1901 Alabama Constitutional Convention, John Knox, the president of the Convention, opined, "If we would have white supremacy, we must establish it by law." Written and adopted by the state's wealthy landowners and industrial leaders, the constitution promoted their common interests, such as low taxes, cheap labor, and less government regulation. Wayne Flynt, a history professor at Auburn University, notes that the constitution was designed to do two things: "strip local government of the ability to govern...and strip Blacks and poor whites of an opportunity to vote." Many activists believe that Alabama spent the entire 20th century suffering from the effects of the racist constitution that continues to privilege white residents over people of color.

Against this backdrop, a few hardy organizations have struggled to make a difference, both in policy and in the lives of people of color, low-income residents, and other disadvantaged populations in the state.

In 1988, three of the six present members of AOP—the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL), the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, and the Coalition Against Hunger—formed the Alabama Community Development Company in an effort to expand their base of knowledge and effectiveness. As Sophia Bracy-Harris of FOCAL puts it, “We decided that we didn’t want to have to keep going to New York to find out what was going on in Alabama.” The AOP was started in 1994, several years prior to the Ford Foundation’s Collaboratives that Count initiative, with funding from New World Foundation and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock. AOP’s stated purpose is to “find policy, program, and development solutions to the problems of poverty in Alabama.”

In response to the Ford Foundation’s RFP for the Collaborations that Count initiative, Scott Douglas, executive director of Greater Birmingham Ministries, which acts as the fiscal sponsor for the state collaborative, writes, “Our response flows out of our commitment to help Alabama enter the 20th century before the 21st gets too far underway.”

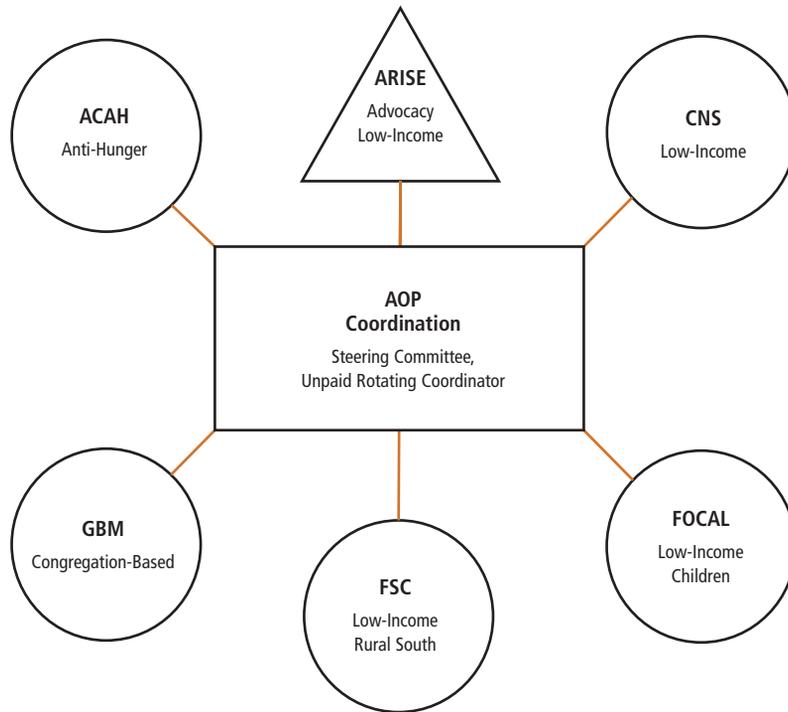
“Our response flows out of our commitment to help Alabama enter the 20th century before the 21st gets too far underway.”

THE PARTNERS

The introduction of AOP’s initial proposal to the Ford Foundation states that it “brings leaders and members of six organizations together in a creative and synergistic effort to organize and advocate for fundamental, long-delayed policy and program changes in a state where underlying conditions of racial, economic, and social fragmentation have frustrated attempts at democratic empowerment.” The six organizations include advocacy and service groups, many with a history of organizing around their issues.

- **Alabama Coalition Against Hunger** is dedicated to addressing issues of food access and security. The Coalition conducts food stamp and other advocacy work, distributes information, provides referrals to places where food can be obtained, and runs a community garden.

Alabama's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

AOP: Alabama Organizing Project is comprised of six member groups (five community organizing and one policy group) and a full-time coordinator. AOP is governed by a steering committee comprised of the director and a staff member from each group. The steering committee meets monthly, and the groups take turns convening the collaborative and handling administrative tasks.

KEY ISSUES

Welfare Reform and Tax Justice

ORGANIZATIONS

ACAH: Alabama Coalition Against Hunger

ARISE: Arise Citizens' Policy Project

CNS: Campaign for a New South

FOCAL: Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama

FSC: Federation of Southern Cooperatives

GBM: Greater Birmingham Ministries

LEGEND

-  Collaborative
-  Community Organizations
-  Policy Groups

- **Arise Citizens' Policy Project (Alabama Arise)** was founded in 1988. Alabama Arise is an interracial organization, now comprised of 145 community and religious member groups whose focus is advocacy and the passage of legislation that will benefit low-income Alabamians.
- **Alabama New South Coalition**, organized in 1986, has as its mission to increase the policy-making capacity of Black elected officials and to promote the general welfare of Alabama's low-income residents through progressive, independent political organizations.
- **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund** is a regional organization that promotes and assists the development of cooperatives, credit unions, and other forms of economic development among low-income individuals, primarily in the rural South.
- **Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL)** is primarily devoted to improving childcare conditions for low-income children. It is a statewide organization, with centers in 44 of Alabama's 67 counties, presently serving the needs of nearly 10,000 children each year.
- **Greater Birmingham Ministries (GBM)** is an interfaith, interracial urban organization that provides direct assistance to low-income families in the form of rent and utilities funds, food, medicine, and clothing. In its 30-year existence, GBM has also been involved in creating various service, policy, and advocacy organizations in Alabama that are aimed at improving the conditions of its low-income and disenfranchised residents.

The key elements of AOP's strategy are grassroots organizing and leadership development. The organizers, based in six AOP groups, spend half of their time supporting the organizing efforts of the member organization and the other half working as a team on the statewide organizing agenda of AOP. Another element of AOP's strategy is training emerging leaders from organizations in the collaborative. The goal is to develop the ability to translate organizing knowledge into effective plans to influence the terms of policy debates within the state. AOP's strategy of influencing public policy from the ground up is designed to shift the balance of power towards Alabama's poor.

Senior staff from each of the six AOP groups comprise the AOP steering committee, which meets monthly (one month by telephone conference, the

next month in person) and in an annual retreat to democratically determine the direction and priorities of the collaborative. The collaborative is staffed by a full-time coordinator. AOP's "Principles for Being Together" detail the tenets by which internal relationships are guided. The convener role is rotated among the six groups every four months. However, the control and decision-making within AOP are shared equally by each of the six collaborators.

POLITICS AND HISTORY

A history of racism continues to shadow current Alabama politics, although many of the most objectionable provisions of the Alabama Constitution have been declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court or have been specifically negated by amendments to Alabama's constitution. In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court mandated that every vote have equal weight by compelling

reapportionment in Alabama—something the state legislature had refused to do for six decades. Passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 finally enfranchised Alabama's Blacks, and the Supreme Court's 1966 ruling against the poll tax secured the right to vote for the state's low-income residents. Alabama, therefore, has only 37 years' experience with

"The goal is to develop the ability to translate organizing knowledge into effective plans to influence the terms of policy debates within the state."

formal democratic access to governance. Awaiting attention from these voters is the accumulated political debris of 90 years of neglect, dating from the end of Reconstruction.

Vestiges of the racially biased state constitution are still evident today. As recently as November 2000, when voters in Alabama were presented with a referendum to repeal the ban on interracial marriage, *more than 525,000 voters—some 40 percent of the total electorate—voted to keep this provision as part of the fundamental law of the state.*

In addition to the state's troublesome views on race, Alabama's tax policy and revenue base are also framed by the 1901 Constitution. Since the early 1990s, tax collections in Alabama, measured on a per capita basis, have been lower than those of any other state. Whereas in 1920 property taxes provided 63 percent of the state's revenue, by the year 2000 they provided only two percent. The extremely low property taxes have compelled authorities to seek sales taxes

and other direct taxes. These taxes are now among the highest in the nation, shifting the tax burden from the wealthiest to the poorest Alabamians.

These factors, plus a strong conservative movement, have placed the state in a fiscal crisis. “If we continue the policies of the past,” said Governor Bob Riley in his 2003 State of the State address, “seven of the 14 inpatient mental health facilities will be closed...450,000 citizens will lose access to health-care...800,000 meals for the elderly will be eliminated...60 senior centers will be closed, and employees in the judicial system will be laid off and jury trials suspended indefinitely.”

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the hostile political landscape of present-day Alabama, AOP has been successful in crafting an intensive internal strategy (i.e., developing the skills and analysis of leaders and organizers) with the purpose of influencing the terms of the policy debate. The collaborative’s emphasis—“going deep” within the constituent base and staff of participating organizations, and then “going wide” to influence key players and policy decision-makers—has been effective in holding the line against potentially harmful legislation, while also proposing progressive policy alternatives.

“In November 2000, 525,000 voters—40 percent of the Alabama electorate—voted not to repeal the ban on interracial marriage.”

“GOING DEEP”—DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE LEADERS AND ORGANIZERS

The Grassroots Leadership Development (GLD) program is the vehicle established by AOP in 1999 to help individuals learn new skills that will enable them to become more effective leaders in their communities. “Having organizers at each of the groups and getting them to work together is at the very heart of what we are doing,” offers Toni Small of the Alabama New South Coalition. The program serves as an opportunity for individuals to enhance their leadership skills and apply their skills and knowledge in their own communities and organizations. Below is a brief description of 2003 AOP trainings:

- **Advocacy and The Legislative Process:** Overview of the legislative process and skills training on effective advocacy strategies.

- **Media Workshop:** How community organizations can use media outlets—newspaper, radio, TV, internet—to advance critical issues.
- **Internalized Oppression:** How racism (and other types of oppression) hinders the work of organizations, and tools for building stronger, more diverse groups.

Additional trainings planned for 2004 include power analysis (to plan strategies for working on issues), popular education (methods of educating members on important issues), and organizing skills development (methods of organizing around issues).

The GLD program initially projected a minimum of 36 trainees (six per member group) in its classes. Over the past five years, over 150 participants from across the state have undergone eight to 12 days of training. Collaborative mem-

bers view the program as one of their greatest accomplishments. One graduate of the program, for example, utilized the techniques to organize a successful movement to remove a school superintendent in her county; another has been instrumental in stopping the construction of a landfill. Tony Haygood, a GLD participant, describes her experience as follows:

“I saw the balance of power shift from those who would profit from the landfill—the rich and powerful—to those whose voices aren’t usually listened to.”

As a result of my participation in the AOP Leadership Development training, I had the opportunity to employ the tools learned in the popular education and power analysis sessions to successfully defeat a proposed “mega-landfill” in Macon County. By using Popular Education, I was able to inform the citizens in the county about the impact the landfill would have on them and generate broad-based opposition. We were also able to get the Rev. Jesse Jackson to come to our city to help fight against the landfill. I saw the balance of power shift from those who would profit from the landfill—the rich and powerful—to those whose voices aren’t usually listened to.

In addition to leadership trainings, AOP provides support for staff organizers in the collaborative to enhance their skills and share lessons. Organizers meet five or six times a year and are responsible for planning and conducting the organizing skills development workshop for leaders at the GLD.

“GOING WIDE”—EXTENDING THE VISION TO KEY PLAYERS

AOP’s internal strategy serves its external policy agenda. Over the last six years, AOP has convened key players around the state—community organizations, congregation-based groups, policymakers, and others—for a “Quality of Life” Day. The idea is to bring together a broad cross-section of Alabamians to focus on a variety of issues—such as education, tax reform, environment, employment, and healthcare—and expose them to AOP’s analysis and strategies in dealing with these important policy agendas. More than 700 individuals have participated in these half-day meetings and have been exposed to AOP’s comprehensive “Alabama Quality of Life Agenda” process. Central tenets of this agenda are:

- Working collaboratively on a set of major policy issues, targeting reforms in healthcare, tax structures, welfare, and equitable economic development;
- Involving new organizations in the policy arena that have previously not been active;
- Broadening the base of membership, friends, resources, and influence of each of the individual organizations to accomplish their own objectives, as well as those of the collaborative; and
- Working creatively and synergistically through the collaborative to evolve new plans, tactics, strategies, and activities to advance the cause of poor and working-class people in the state of Alabama (AOP Proposal to Ford, 2001).

Representatives from the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama attended the Quality of Life Day gathering in 2000 and were impressed with AOP’s analysis and proposal for tax reform in the state. With the help of AOP staff, the 170th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama passed a resolution on February 10, 2001 supporting AOP’s tax reform agenda:

Whereas, our concern for the poor, the elderly and children at risk is deeply rooted in Holy Scripture where we are instructed to show concern for the poor and to promote proactive ministries to relieve both the effects of poverty and its causes...Be it Resolved that this 170th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama urges in the strongest terms immediate action by the Governor and the State Legislature to provide relief and hope

especially for our most vulnerable citizens and our poorest counties and that they provide leadership during the 2001 Legislative Session by adopting legislation effecting meaningful tax reform.

The Diocese joins the United Methodist Church (North Alabama Conference) and the Alabama Baptist State Convention in supporting AOP's call for tax reform in the state.

POLICY WORK

AOP's "going deep/going wide" strategy has been able to assist in publicizing the effects of regressive legislation, including proposals that would allow payday loans, draconian welfare policy provisions, and a "super sewer" project. "We succeeded in making sure that a lot of things didn't get worse," says Greater Birmingham Ministries Director Scott Douglas. Aside from making sure that anti-poor policies do not become law, AOP also has been able to propose and support progressive policies that continue to be debated and negotiated by decision-makers. These include:

- **Landlord/Tenant Law.** Alabama is one of only two states in the country that has no landlord/tenant statute. Efforts to reach agreement on one have been resisted, primarily by the Alabama Realtor's Association. AOP and the Association have been at loggerheads since 1999, each proposing their own policy version to be adopted by the House. The Association wants a streamlined eviction process and weakened enforcement mechanisms in return for a strong definition of habitability. AOP is unwilling to make this compromise and demands better tenant protection against evictions. In 2001, neither the Association's bill nor AOP's made it to the House floor. Negotiations continue.
- **Transportation.** Alabama's Department of Transportation is almost exclusively under the control of the road and bridge builders. Many urban legislators see roads and bridges as "pork" they must bring home to their districts, while some see public transportation as a benefit directed solely at poor, urban Blacks. The primary policy proposal that has been developed through popular education processes with AOP's constituent base seeks to remove the provision in the Alabama Constitution that prohibits spending taxes or license fees on anything but roads and bridges. AOP also proposes the use of regional transportation coordination centers in six rural communities.

- **Tax Reform.** AOP has developed tax reform workshops and has written and advanced proposed tax reform legislation designed to shift the public debate in the direction of equitable relief for low-income/low-wage families. In June 2003, a \$675 million budget deficit prompted Governor Bob Riley to propose a \$1.3 billion tax increase that would have raised individual and corporate taxes by \$461 million and local and state property taxes by \$465 million. The money would have gone into the Alabama Excellence Initiative Fund, to be spent by the governor and lawmakers on revamping the state's educational system and filling budget shortfalls. (www.stateline.org/state.do?state=AL)

Kimble Forrister, director of Alabama Arise, characterizes AOP's policy work as "mostly fighting uphill battles and losing them." Forrister and others thought that the state "had a good shot at tax reform" in 2003. As John Zippert, director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives observed, "the Alabama State Senate is still controlled by Democrats, who at least look at progressive ideas. Things are so terrible that there may be no choice other than to make some meaningful tax reform decisions." However, despite the efforts of many organizations and Governor Riley, Alabama tax reform efforts were again stymied in the fall of 2003.

INTERNAL PROCESSES

AOP has four primary objectives: (1) developing local grassroots leadership that will impact state-level public policy and shift the balance of power in favor of the poor; (2) promoting policies that will improve the quality of life of all Alabamians; (3) building the capacities of collaborative members, enabling them to expand their base of members for organizational work; and (4) creating systems that will support and maintain the AOP collaborative. It is significant that three of the collaborative's four major objectives are developmental—focusing on enhancing leadership, extending organizational capacity, and building and expanding internal systems. The collaborative members have elected to pay as much attention to process as to product.

When asked about the dual emphasis, Scott Douglas remarks with a laugh, "I really am a 'get it done' kind of guy. This was new for me, so I resisted a little." According to John Zippert, "Everybody agreed that we didn't want outside funders coming into Alabama and pitting one group against the others, but we needed to figure out a way to work together productively."

The impetus for addressing issues of how to act collectively came from

Sophia Bracy-Harris at FOCAL, which had worked extensively with a constituency of African American women and had developed both a theory and a practice of how to collaborate in a mutually respectful manner. AOP members spent a number of months writing guidelines and principles of working together, which the steering committee adopted in 1994, four years before the CtC collaborative began. The principles of AOP's "Cooperative Mode" are very similar to the operational principles in many feminist organizations, says Bracy-Harris, who explains, "It is based on the assumption of abundance as opposed to scarcity, and cooperation as opposed to competition. Consideration will always be given to a 'both/and' approach, rather than an 'either/or' approach. AOP is committed to the concept that enough resources exist to meet the needs and wants of all."

Since 1994, the operational document has been revised four times and now includes encouragement for "space for disagreements, full disclosure regarding funding," and nine key guidelines for working together:

- No power plays (attempting to force someone to do what they don't want to do)
- No rescues (doing for someone what they can do for themselves)
- No secrets or lies (withholding or misrepresenting one's feelings, motives, or position)
- Giving strokes (giving and receiving compliments freely)
- Check out paranoid fantasies (often there's a grain of truth in every paranoid fantasy)
- Offer resentments (should be shared only if the other person agrees to hear them)
- Confidentiality (discussions not used in future without agreement of those involved)
- Accepting responsibility and accountability (for commitments and actions agreed to)
- Using time and resources (developing trust and appreciation are resources well-spent)

The rotation of the project convener and the explicit process guidelines may appear to some to represent excessive attention to the interpersonal dimensions of the work. “But,” says Douglas, “it does work.”

Key Challenges

AOP members agree that the extensive amount of time that must be spent on the collaboration is a challenge. In individual interviews, a number of leaders said that their time “was not used well” and that time spent on collaborative work competed with the time they needed to spend working on their own organization’s agenda and priorities.

Another challenge is directly related to internal process. It is clear that the collaborative’s deliberately inclusive process encourages participation. But can it address real conflict? Two undercurrents relate to core issues: funding and group accountability.

Funding: The fact that Arise Citizens’ Policy Project received a larger share of the CtC grant than other members of the collaboration was an issue for some members of the AOP. The Ford Foundation denies any efforts to influence collaborative members to allocate a larger share of funds to Arise, but Scott Douglas recounts a sequence of three successive proposals where, at each juncture, the Foundation’s program assistant suggested “a little more for Arise.” Douglas continues, “I should have raised the issue at a higher level at Ford, but I didn’t. That’s on me.” Sophia Bracy-Harris of FOCAL says, “We actually might have chosen to give Arise more money ourselves. It was the intervention that we didn’t appreciate.”

“We succeeded in making sure that a lot of things didn’t get worse.”

For some members of the collaborative, the incident had racial, as well as financial, implications. Some of the Black members speculated that the increased funding for Arise may have resulted from the fact that Kimble Forrister, Arise’s director, is white, or perhaps merely as a result of his prior relationship with Ford. Although the tensions caused by the interaction have subsided, the challenge for AOP and other collaboratives is how to negotiate effectively with funders about the allocation of grant monies without sacrificing principles of equity and accountability.

Accountability: Three AOP member groups indicated that there had been some difficulties with the efforts of the Alabama New South Coalition (ANSC) to maintain smooth integration and accountability in the collaboration. Perhaps because of the repeated replacement of ANSC’s executive director in the past few years, some members of the collaborative viewed the ANSC as a weak link in the collaborative chain. Albert Harris of the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger echoes the sentiments of several collaborative members: “The ANSC has not been showing up for meetings, not providing budget information, and not been doing its fair share of the work.”

These undertones—complicated by often unspoken conflicts around accountability, laced with issues of race, money, and power—are not unusual. Taken by themselves, they are relatively minor in the schema of the collaborative. In order to address these tensions in a systematic and principled manner, AOP created an internal accountability process during a retreat in November 2002. As a result of this discussion, AOP representatives met with ANSC in February 2003 to resolve the issue and come to terms regarding standards for participation in the collaborative.

Collaborative Comparisons: The Dynamics of Internal Processes and External Outcomes in Building a Collaborative

It is important to acknowledge that because collaboratives are dynamic efforts, responsive to the external environment as well as internal pressures, it is possible for them to look and operate differently from year to year. New approaches and directions may change the roles of individual collaborative members and even the membership composition of the collaborative itself. To assess the South Carolina and Alabama collaboratives, it is therefore important to examine the relationships among a number of components of their work: 1) external outcomes; 2) initiatives to strengthen and expand the collaboratives’ infrastructure; 3) internal dynamics; and 4) the interrelationship of the first three factors.

EXTERNAL OUTCOMES

Neither collaborative has had success in passing collaborative-initiated public policies. In South Carolina, collaborative members have focused on the issue of redistricting, and although the group has been successful in its outreach

efforts, it has yet to achieve actual changes in redistricting lines. In Alabama, the results have been mixed. AOP members are cautiously optimistic about the possibilities for passing tax reform measures in the near future. However, the major policy accomplishment of the Alabama collaborative thus far has been to turn back legislative initiatives that would have harmed the groups' primary constituencies—low-income people and Alabamians of color. The key contribution of the Alabama collaborative has been the systematic development of grassroots activists and messengers who can effectively shift the contours of policy debate.

While a number of variables contributed to both groups having a difficult time in this arena, two factors have had a major impact on their efforts. The first is the external political environment. While the political climate in many states has shifted to the right, South Carolina has always been a conservative state, and over

the last six years, according to long-time organizer Kamau Marcharia, “The political scene has actually gotten worse. Racial tensions are higher, the press is hostile to efforts that push equity, and conservatives, including conservative Democrats, don’t feel like they have to make any compromises.”

In Alabama, on the other hand, political analysts feel that the fiscal crises have created an opening for change. “Not only do we have a real opportunity to affect the tax structure in the state, there is also a broad base of organizations that is seriously discussing the possibility of rewriting the state constitution,” says Scott Douglas.

A second factor that affects the ability of a collaborative to be successful in the policy arena is the ability of the organizations involved to develop and execute a plan of action. In South Carolina, collaborative members chose an issue—redistricting and the 2000 Census—on which none of the grassroots organizations had previously worked. By 2002, SCPOP was able to bring the issue of redistricting to a wide audience in South Carolina. The collaborative’s accomplishments also include the translation of materials into Spanish and holding meetings in two languages, the development of youth leaders as key organizers, holding statewide gatherings and regular local meetings, and the creation of alternative redistricting proposals in counties across the state.

However, although the list of outreach accomplishments is impressive, the SCPOP case study reveals that the campaign also exacerbated some tensions and

“Racial tensions are higher, the press is hostile to efforts that push equity, and conservatives, including conservative Democrats, don’t feel like they have to make any compromises.”

created new ones. The redistricting work created a new and resource-consuming area of knowledge and expertise for groups to master. Developing the capacity to absorb additional organizational work was easier for the larger groups—CAFÉ and Fair Share—but much harder for South Carolina United Action and South Carolina Environmental Watch.

In Alabama, members of the collaborative used their Quality of Life agenda to develop a more general vision for change, both within the collaborative and

“We have connections to new leaders and young leaders that we never would have had without this campaign.”

with other groups in the state. The regularity of the one-day event has given AOP the ability to collectivize positions on a number of pivotal issues, including childcare, community-based economic development, public transportation, healthcare, housing, tax reform, and wel-

fare reform. Sophia Bracy-Harris of FOCAL reflects, “We believed in the importance of vision over immediate, head-counting strategies. We were very aware of the tension between working towards specific goals and projects and the process of getting there.”

STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING COLLABORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Over the last 10 years, there have been rapid changes in the population demographics and the political environment in both states. The collaboratives themselves began at a time when the key buzzword was “devolution,” and state governments were taking on more responsibility for the direct administration of many social service programs. Leaders in all of the collaboratives have had to ask the question, “How do we respond?”

For SCPOP, the decision was to expand the base of people affected by the collaborative’s work, both geographically and racially. The redistricting campaign was a conscious effort to develop deeper relationships in Black and Latino communities by targeting specific areas where those populations were concentrated and engaging them in issue work. This strategy has succeeded in two ways. First, the membership bases of both the collaborative as a whole and its remaining participating organizations have deepened. According to Penny Hennigan, “We have connections to new leaders and young leaders that we never would have had without this campaign.” The campaign has also successfully engaged Latino communities. Hispanic Outreach Center, a key Latino organization in the state,

has become involved in the redistricting efforts, and SCPOP is hoping to formally involve the group in the collaborative.

In AOP's case, while the group's leadership development program has been successful in developing individual skills and the Quality of Life Day has been effective in collectivizing political vision, neither mechanism has successfully consolidated leaders and groups into a force that could adopt and succeed at a statewide campaign.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS

Barbara Gray's *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems* (1989) suggests that the success of collaboratives is contingent upon the resolution of a number of issues in its beginning phases of development, including: a shared definition of collaborative vision, goals, outcomes, and pilot activities; agreements on ground rules, staffing, communications, and decision-making structures; the allocation of resources; joint acknowledgement of the legitimacy of every collaborative participant; and the choice of leader or convener.

The genesis of SCPOP did, in fact, address a number of these issues—resource allocation, leadership and staffing, pilot activities, and initial project goals. However, some significant underlying issues were unaddressed: power sharing, the legitimacy of all members of the collaborative, ground rules for working together, and a workable communications protocol. Two participants suggested that there were a number of reasons that these issues were not resolved in the early phases of the collaborative. “We were really excited that the Ford Foundation was funding South Carolina—this is a funders’ wasteland,” said one participant. More to the point, another participant believes, is that, “We really need the funding. We felt that CAFÉ had the connections, and because we hadn’t really worked together before, we didn’t know what questions to ask.”

The availability and management of funds was a pivotal issue for SCPOP. Mildred Myers of SCEW reflects on SCPOP's experience with fiscal management: “Much of the imbalance of power within the collaborative could have been addressed if we had had an outside fiscal sponsor. It would have taken the load off CAFÉ, and we all could have participated in the management of funds.” This lack of prior working relationships, the need for significant financial support, and the concentration of both fiscal and staff management functions in one organization were important factors in creating the difficult internal dynamics that the groups experienced.

The Alabama project developed an explicit model for communicative transparency and power-sharing among the participating groups. The AOP adopted a number of governance processes that delegated leadership functions to participating organizations, including the rotation of the convening function and the sharing of fiscal sponsorship. For convening, each participating organization took a turn in planning and facilitating the monthly meetings of the Steering Committee. “Rotating the convenership has been very valuable and beneficial in distributing power,” attests Albert Harris, state coordinator of the Alabama Coalition Against Hunger.

The second example is in the area of fiscal sponsorship. One AOP collaborative organization acts as the fiscal agent for a specific foundation grant and is wholly responsible for reporting and product requirements, etc. The AOP coordinator acknowledges that grants can be awkward to administer in these circumstances. One of the biggest problems is that each organization keeps its own records when acting as AOP’s fiscal agent, which makes it more difficult to present

“Rotating the convenership has been very valuable and beneficial in distributing power.”

an accurate picture of the overall financial health of AOP and an updated, cohesive budget. However, the fiscal sponsorship policy responds to one of the values of the collaborative—the notion of shared responsibility and accountability—and, according to AOP coordinator Dionne Nelson, “It may be less *efficient* in terms of bookkeeping, but it is more *effective* in terms of keeping us true to our agreed-upon principles.”

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DYNAMICS

Assessing the work of the Alabama and South Carolina collaboratives reveals that the interrelationship of a number of variables produced different results:

Prior Relationships. Groups in Alabama had been working together since 1994. Group members had a sense of collective identity, and all were wary of “letting one group or letting the funder set the agenda.” In Alabama, even when there is disagreement among groups, it is within the context of both a shared history and a collectivized political trajectory. Conversely, in South Carolina there was little experience working together and very little group identity. Therefore, when differences arose, as they inevitably will in collaborative work,

group members did not have the experiential base to give each other the benefit of the doubt. Motives were suspect, and distrust seeped into the relationships among collaborative members.

Choice of Collective Work. SCPOP chose a campaign issue that inadvertently put smaller groups with less issue experience at a disadvantage. Tensions on strategy, campaign direction, and pace of development were inherent in choosing redistricting as the SCPOP showcase project. While SCPOP focused on a strategy around one issue, the AOP's Quality of Life agenda took an approach that addressed multiple concerns. However, while the visioning process gave AOP a good deal of flexibility in mounting issue campaigns and offered both member and nonmember organizations opportunities to participate, external campaign work was not a priority of the Alabama collaborative.

Sharing of Resources. Organizations come together with different capacities and infrastructures. AOP's principle of talking openly about funding has, for the most part, resulted in an equal distribution of the collaborative's resources. In the case of SCPOP, both CAFÉ and Fair Share had statewide reach and relationships with key actors in Columbia, the state capital. SCUA and SCEW, on the other hand, were smaller and less focused on statewide issues. In order to address these inequities, SCPOP allocated resources and time for the smaller groups to reach some level of parity of participation with the more organizationally developed partners. However, given the other tensions present in the collaborative, this reallocation of resources was not sufficient to keep SCUA and Fair Share in the collaborative.

Processes that Emphasizes Power-Sharing and Transparency. As a new formation with tenuous relationships among members, SCPOP put much more of the collaborative's emphasis on building the capacity of smaller groups and achieving of external outcomes. AOP's 10-year history made a substantial difference in terms of the group's internal development. The collaborative has addressed a number of issues that other collaboratives are just beginning to surface. The Alabama collaborative's approach to rotating both the convening role at steering committee meetings and the fiscal sponsorship of the project

“Because they are part of a system of structural inequality, issues of race, class, gender, and sexual identity are present and may become barriers for collaborating groups.”

increased the buy-in of partner groups. AOP's power-sharing and transparency have resulted in a collaborative where relationships are relatively smooth but have not increased AOP's ability to actualize external campaign work.

Summary of Key Lessons

Internal Transparency: The intentional adoption of transparent and democratic internal processes and procedures can provide groups participating in a collaborative with the means for addressing issues such as communications and resource sharing. However, these processes must be balanced with activities and programming that focus on external outcomes.

Limits of Internal Processes: There are limits to what democratic internal processes can do. They cannot, for instance, transcend real differences in power based on which groups bring more to the table, nor can they guarantee effective external campaign work.

Unanticipated Consequences: The SCPOP experience demonstrates the importance of reflecting on the unanticipated consequences of both success and failure. The choice of redistricting as a campaign focus was one of the factors that impeded the growth of the collaborative at the start and caused tension between grassroots and policy groups. However, it was this same campaign that built CAFÉ's exposure to the Latino community and opened the possibility for the Hispanic Outreach Center, the East Florence Community Development Center, and Movement of the People—a youth-based organization—to join the collaborative.

Structural Inequality: Because they are part of a system of structural inequality, issues of race, class, gender, and sexual identity are present and may become barriers for collaborating groups, even in groups like the two examined in this chapter that are predominantly organizations led by people of color. It is important to help groups anticipate these issues and provide the resources to address them.

Impact of Leadership Transitions: Leadership transitions in nonprofit organizations are very common. However, it is important to note that the ability of executive directors to be effective is determined in large part by their ability to lead by example, and by their capacity to coach, develop, supervise, and work with their own staff and the leaders of other organizations. In organiza-

tional transitions where a person of color is taking the place of a white person, the establishment of the new director's leadership and the realigning of relationships need to be done in a thoughtful and systematic manner. If the transition includes a difference in gender as well as race, it may be even more complex. The Ford Foundation's support for the leadership transition in South Carolina was a significant intervention, and future, systematic foundation support could help ensure that these transitions are successful. ●

*Foundation funds were not used for direct or indirect legislative activity.



CHAPTER SIX

Campaign Strategy and Leadership: Idaho and Oregon

“Do we have a voice in this process? I am here to say we do.”

A YOUNG LATINA CHALLENGING STATE OFFICIALS AT A HEARING IN OREGON

this chapter addresses the role of campaign strategy and leadership in the Idaho Collaborative campaign to win a farmworker minimum wage and the Oregon Collaborative campaign to expand eligibility and enrollment in the state’s food stamp program.

Campaign strategy means the ability to craft a plan and division of labor that utilizes the strengths of the groups in the collaborative to help realize the collaborative’s overall vision. The specific characteristics include: policy development and a coherent organizing strategy based on an analysis of the political opportunity; an assessment of potential allies and opposition; and a plan for shifting the public discussion on the issue in a way that supports the collaborative’s goals. Campaign leadership encompasses the ability to carry out the campaign strategy, make periodic assessments, and, if needed, adjust the strategy to respond to shifting political terrain. These case studies will explore how creating a plan

and providing leadership enabled the organizations and collaboratives to affect the outcome on key justice issues and achieve real gains for disenfranchised constituencies.

As in most of the states included in this study, federal and state tax policies have significantly diminished funds for social programs in Idaho and Oregon.

“The pressure to cut support for education, healthcare, and affordable housing is intensifying.”

The pressure to cut support for education, healthcare, and affordable housing is intensifying. Oregon, often perceived as a socially liberal state, has a particularly strong anti-tax lobby. And Idaho, a largely conservative state, has gained notoriety as the former home of the Aryan Nation.

Both states have significant fundamentalist, anti-immigrant, and anti-gay elements. Yet, both successfully defeated anti-gay initiatives in the 1990s. In each state, growing immigrant populations are changing the political and social landscape, and human rights organizing is on the rise.

The case studies presented in this chapter illustrate how strong campaign strategy and leadership can build statewide progressive power for social change, even in relatively conservative political environments. They also demonstrate how a racial justice framework can be utilized to promote broad-based reforms, even in states with predominantly white populations. Finally, these studies show how nimble campaign collaborations can fill strategic gaps by forming new infrastructure and deepening relationships for long-term collective work.

Idaho Collaborative: Economic Campaign, Racial Justice Frame

Idaho, a large state with a population of only 1.3 million (U.S. Census, 2000), may be famous for its potatoes, but its treatment of workers who harvest the crops is close to infamous. In 1998, when the Idaho Collaborative began its work, farm laborers were excluded from minimum wage protections, and most lived well below the poverty level. In a state where the annual mean wage in 2001 was \$30,130, farmworkers averaged only \$14,880—if they worked full-time, year-round, which they most often did not. (BLS, 2001) Furthermore, while the state’s population is 88 percent white, close to 98 percent of migrant and seasonal workers are Latino. (U.S. Census; Idaho Fact Sheet, 2001)

It was this policy context that the Idaho collaborative hoped to challenge.

THE PARTNERS

The Idaho Collaborative is made up of three statewide organizations:

- **Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN)** is a statewide, grass-roots organization that claims over 8,000 low- to moderate-income members. “We are the people power component of the collaboration,” states ICAN leader Adan Ramirez. ICAN emerged in 1999 from the joining of two prominent statewide community organizations: Idaho Citizen’s Network, a healthcare rights organization, and Idaho Hunger Action Council, an advocacy and service organization. With a combined organizational history of nearly 50 years, the merged group defeated anti-immigrant legislation as part of welfare reform, negotiated a new multimillion dollar charity care program with the state’s largest hospital, and increased access to the Children’s Health Insurance Program. ICAN, through its membership in the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, has also built a strong research capacity to support its organizing efforts.
- **Idaho Women’s Network Research and Education Fund (IWN)** is a statewide women’s coalition and the lead CtC grantee organization. According to Director Lee Flinn, “We are a women’s organization, but we are also a human rights organization.” IWN traces its beginnings to 1986, when 200 women from around the state gathered for a conference. Together, they envisioned an organization to unite women’s efforts to educate policymakers on a range of social justice issues. With 26 organizational members and nearly 1,000 individual members, IWN has helped train hundreds of women to participate in the public policy arena and hosted statewide conferences. It has had success on a range of issues impacting women and families, including strengthening Idaho’s child support enforcement laws and securing more than \$40 million in related federal funding.
- **United Vision for Idaho (UVI)** is a statewide coalition of 24 organizational members working to “increase civic participation, incubate new organizations, and transform state tax and budget policy.” UVI Director Jim Hansen notes, “In a state like Idaho, you have to work together to be effective.” Founded in 1995, UVI’s members include labor, environmental organizations, women’s rights groups, social workers, educators, low-income groups, and human rights organizations; both ICAN and IWN are founding members. UVI helps activists make connections among diverse issues and offers organizational support. To accomplish its

mission, UVI provides organizational development and media assistance, convenes strategic conferences and gatherings, and mobilizes a statewide action network. UVI also conducts state budget and policy analysis and tracks electoral campaign giving.

While all three groups have a strong history of working together, joint work was historically informal and sporadic. In 1996, with a seed grant from the Center for Community Change, the three groups began more formal coordination of their activities and strategies around welfare reform. “Getting that funding enabled us to work together on a fledgling project, which positioned us to begin exploring a grant with the Ford Foundation,” notes Wendy Matlock, a former IWN board and staff member. “It was an incremental progression.”

A GROWING DIVIDE IN POWER AND POLITICS

Idaho is a large but little-known state. It is, for example, second only to Alaska in designated wilderness area and, with rich hydropower resources, its residents enjoy one of the lowest utility rates in the country. However, Idaho is ranked 42nd in the nation in per capita income. (U.S. Census 2000, SF3) Twenty years of economic retrenchment in the mining and timber industries has resulted in high rural unemployment and poverty rates, forcing many rural families to seek work in more urban areas.

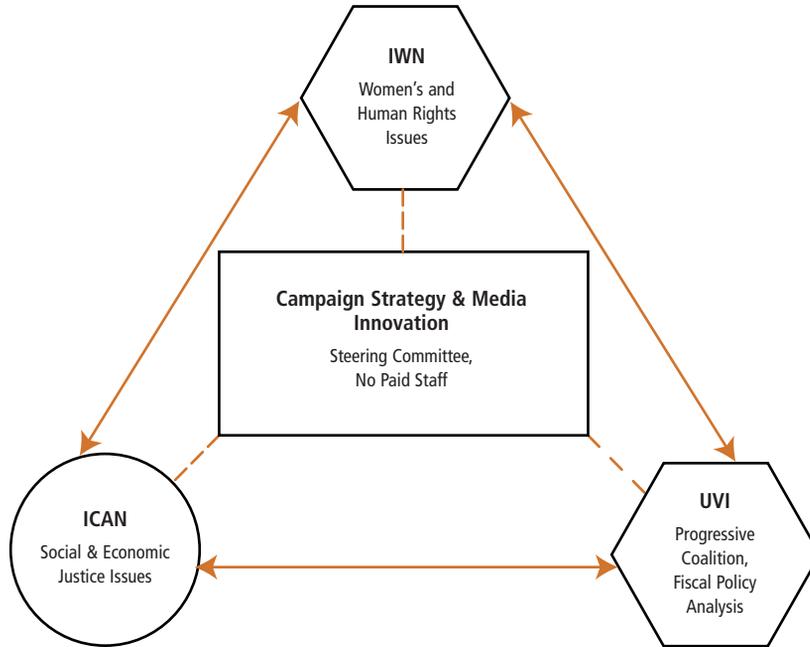
Boise and the surrounding Treasure Valley are home to the state capital and one-quarter of the state’s population. Ada and Canyon Counties—the two

largest and fastest growing in the state—are located in Treasure Valley. The region is the economic engine of the state and houses the national headquarters for Simplot, the mining and ranching conglomerate that supplies french fries for McDonald’s, as well as Albertson’s (ranked number 35 in the 2003 Fortune 500), Boise Cascade, and Micron Technology. (Fortune 2003) While agriculture is central to the state’s economy, in 2000

science and technology accounted for 30 percent of Idaho’s economy (\$11.1 billion), and the state ranked third in the U.S. in exports from high-tech firms.

“Twenty years of economic retrenchment in the mining and timber industries has resulted in high rural unemployment and poverty rates, forcing many rural families to seek work in more urban areas.”

Idaho's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

The Idaho collaborative is comprised of three members: a multi-issue grassroots organization; a coalition of women's organizations; and the statewide progressive coalition. Two representatives from each group participate in quarterly coordinating meetings. Most communication, however, is conducted informally, and broader coalitions are assembled to move issue campaigns.

KEY ISSUES

Farmworker Minimum Wage/Immigrant Rights, Healthcare Access, State Spending Priorities

ORGANIZATIONS

ICAN: Idaho Community Action Network

IWN: Idaho Women's Network

UVI: United Vision for Idaho

LEGEND

-  Collaborative
-  Community Organizations
-  Coalition-Based Organizations

(Idaho Department of Commerce, 2003) Nonetheless, the largest industries in the state are services, manufacturing, and state and local government.

Despite its overwhelmingly white populace, Idaho is far from homogenous. The 2000 Census reveals that Idaho's Latino population has grown to nearly

“Like many other states, education, healthcare, and social services, are first on the chopping block.”

eight percent, and the state is home to one of the nation's fastest-growing Latino communities. Native Americans make up close to two percent of the population, and Idaho includes five reservations. The state also hosts a growing refugee community—predominantly Bosnian and Afghani—and Boise's Basque community is the largest outside

of Spain. Approximately one-third of the state's residents are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Deseret News, 1998), who are commonly referred to as LDS or Mormon. The state also has a rich Jewish history. The nation's first Jewish governor was elected in Idaho in 1915, and Boise is home to the oldest synagogue west of the Mississippi (Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel).

Even as the state's population grows more diverse racially and ethnically, its political power remains concentrated. “While Republicans have long had control, in the past it was more balanced,” says UVI Executive Director Hansen, a former state legislator. Indeed, Democrats controlled the governorship for 24 years (1971–1995), and, as recently as 1991, both congressional representatives were Democrats. Since the early 1990s, however, Republicans have become a strong majority of the legislature, controlling nearly 80 percent of the Idaho House and Senate—plus the governorship and all four congressional seats. Redistricting efforts in 2001, conducted for the first time by a citizens' committee, have set the stage for a more balanced legislature, and created new opportunities for Latino voter mobilization.

The urban-rural divide has also created political tension. Republican State Representative Tom Trail, who represents residents in rural Northern Idaho says, “In Idaho, we have a ‘green book’ listing of ‘legislative advisors,’ which is the code word for lobbyists of big companies, mainly from the Boise area. They end up getting all of the access because of their money and presence at the capitol.”

Access to political power is even more crucial for the collaborative's constituents now, as the current economic downturn, coupled with recent cuts

in the state's individual and corporate income tax rates, have turned record budget surpluses into budget deficits. "When the tech industries crashed, the bottom fell out of the state's revenue," says ICAN Director LeeAnn Hall. "Like many other states, education, healthcare, and social services are first on the chopping block."

BUILDING THE COLLABORATIVE

Against this background, the collaborative needed to build new infrastructure to advance its common work. To secure campaign victories on issues like Head Start funding, redistricting to protect Latino neighborhoods, increased access to the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the farmworker minimum wage, the collaborative forged both a partnership and a coherent, shared campaign.

During the early stages, the partner groups met frequently and held quarterly, day-long joint staff meetings. "The collaborative helped formalize our relationship and decision-making, as well as increase the communication among organizations," says IWN's Lee Flinn. While all three organizations worked closely together, each group took leadership on different components of the work. In turn, collaborative members supported each other's campaigns.

ORGANIZING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE:

WINNING THE FARMWORKER MINIMUM WAGE CAMPAIGN

The next step was to find a campaign focus and frame. Asserting a racial justice framework, the collaborative decided to engage in a campaign to pursue a minimum wage for farmworkers. For more than 20 years, Latino organizations such as the Idaho Migrant Council had advocated for workers' compensation legislation for farmworkers, and then-Governor Phil Batt championed its passage in 1996. Soon after, Latino leaders from across the state gathered in an *acuerdo* (agreement) to focus on their next steps. Winning a minimum wage for farmworkers emerged as a priority.

For members of the Idaho collaborative, the minimum wage fight was a way to demonstrate their commitment to racial justice. ICAN had already been building a base of Latino members in Eastern Idaho as part of its self-help food program and had started to organize for farmworker minimum wage. IWN and UVI, building on several years of dismantling racism work within both organizations, focused their leadership on the need to prioritize racial justice issues.

The farmworker issue resonated with the collaborative member groups as well, both because of its economic justice component and because it provided an opportunity to build closer ties with immigrant communities. Humberto Fuentes, former Executive Director of the Idaho Migrant Council, notes that, “When we saw how committed these organizations were by going through the dismantling racism work, we knew we could count on them as real allies.” UVI Program Director Roger Sherman reflects, “Our growing relationship with the Latino community, coupled with ICAN’s organizing, provided a way for us to prioritize the issue.”

“This was the biggest joint project for the collaborative,” says Flinn, “and it was by far our biggest success.” Each organization contributed to the campaign.

“Latino leaders from across the state gathered in an ‘acuerdo’ to focus on their next steps. Winning a minimum wage for farmworkers emerged as a priority.”

IWN conducted issue-education trainings among its membership and helped organize the behind-the-scenes media work. “One remarkable thing during the campaign was the frequency and creativity in media events,” says Flinn. “In addition to regular briefings with reporters and generating materials for the press, we

helped organize an all-night vigil on the capitol steps, a huge rally linking hands in the capitol rotunda, events tied to the birthday of César Chavez, and media coverage for the ‘Walk for Wages,’ a 20-mile walk from Nampa to Boise.”

IWN also helped initiate a statewide “Fast until It’s Passed” campaign. Several hundred individuals across the state, including church members and high school classes, agreed to fast once a week or once a month until minimum wage legislation was passed. “It was spiritual and hard-hitting in ways we did not expect,” Flinn recalls. “It allowed people in mostly white communities to echo the message, and it demonstrated shared values.”

In analyzing their campaign, the partners noted an absence of effective participation among campus constituencies. UVI took on the task of helping student activists organize the Idaho Progressive Student Alliance (IPSA) at four of Idaho’s largest colleges. Leo Morales, a former farmworker and student at Boise State University, played an active role in IPSA. “The campus Hispanic organization was not doing anything, and I was looking for something different,” Morales states.

IPSA organized campus forums and participated in marches and rallies. Students also worked with farmworkers to make a documentary film, *Voices from the*

Field. “The video was a powerful tool,” reflects Morales. “It was shown everywhere in Idaho and is now being used in Texas and Oregon.”

Building on its growing base in the Latino community, ICAN organized hundreds of farmworkers to be active in the campaign. “ICAN played a strong role in providing testimony,” says Adan Ramirez. “We organized the real folks who could not speak English but wanted to tell their stories. What made the difference in the campaign was that farmworkers had the courage to go to the capitol and speak out.”

Under growing public pressure, the Idaho legislature assembled an interim committee and held public hearings on the issue during the summer of 2000. One hearing was held in Boise, the other in Burley, Idaho. “They wanted to hold the meeting in a small town like Burley because they did not think anyone would show up,” recounts Roger Sherman.

“We were asked to turn out 50 people, but we decided to set the goal at 200,” Ramirez states.

Nearly 300 people turned out for the public hearing in Burley. “People were sitting in the aisles, standing against walls, and filling the hallways. They had to expand the room twice,” recalls Sherman.

The state failed to bring an interpreter for farmworkers wishing to testify. “Eventually, I just stood up and started to provide translation,” says IWN Associate Director Lolita Anastasio. “I told them I would bill them later.”

Despite these efforts, by the end of the summer it became clear that the interim committee was going to bypass the minimum wage issue by recommending adoption of the federal minimum wage standard, which provides only limited protections for agricultural workers. “That was a phony bill,” says Sherman. “Passing it would not provide any new protections for farmworkers.”

The collaborative fought back with a massive media campaign to educate the public about the issue. The partners met with the editorial boards of major newspapers, posted radio public service announcements, and organized weekly silent protests at events attended by the governor. “On Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday in 2001, the governor left town rather than risk facing protesters, as he had the year before,” remembers LeeAnn Hall, director of both ICAN and the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO), an ancillary grantee in the CtC initiative. “We were

“What made the difference in the campaign was that farmworkers had the courage to go to the capitol and speak out.”

able to reframe the issue around civil rights and fairness. Everyone knew this issue was implicitly about race and racial justice, about whether the migrant farmworkers who put food on our tables should have minimum wage protections.”

“We were also winning on public opinion,” observes ICAN organizer Michele Casey. Indeed, a statewide poll made possible by CtC funding found that nearly 80 percent of the people interviewed supported the farmworker minimum wage.

“Support for the campaign was widespread. There were countless people writing letters, calling legislators, and fasting, including many who we had never organized,” recounts UVI’s Sherman. Nearly all newspapers published editorials supporting the collaborative’s stance. After a final series of actions held in Boise in early 2001, the legislature passed one of the strongest farmworker minimum wage laws in the nation.

“People across the state took ownership of this victory,” recounts Ramirez. “I remember going to a family barbeque where people passed around a letter urging the governor to pass the minimum wage. When it passed, they felt that their voices were finally being heard.”

Even state officials who were initially unsupportive claimed victory once the legislation was passed. Both the governor and the Department of Labor launched publicity campaigns claiming the legislation as a sign of Idaho’s commitment to the Latino community. One public information flier by the Department of Labor’s Idaho Works quotes Governor Kempthorne as saying, “This law marks a milestone of progress in Idaho...All of us can be proud of this accomplishment.”

“On Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday in 2001, the governor left town rather than risk facing protesters, as he had the year before.”

The Idaho Collaborative was able to build on the momentum of the minimum wage campaign. One example is the quick passage in 2002 of contractor bonding legislation, which protects both farmers and workers by requiring contractors to be bonded as security in case they do not pay their workers. The success of the farmworker campaign also energized grassroots activities that spread into the electoral arena. “The Latino Vote Project, which registered a record number of new voters, is an expression of that effort,” observes Idaho Legal Aid Services Executive Director Ernie Sanchez. IWN’s Lolita Anastasio adds, “When

people ask why they should register to vote, all you have to say is ‘remember farmworker minimum wage,’ and they sign up.”

Another important result of the farmworker campaign has been the enhanced visibility and credibility of organizations led by Latinos in the state. For example, in 2002 and 2003, in response to serious opposition from the Idaho Hispanic Caucus, the Idaho legislature withdrew a bill that would have made English the state’s official language.

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A NEW VISION

One key aspect of the Ford CtC initiative was to encourage community groups to work in conjunction with policy groups to build a united voice at the state level. In Idaho, this meant winning substantive policy change in the shorter term, while also building the infrastructure required for long-term gains. Strategic campaign leadership led to two major infrastructure-building components: (1) deepening media capacity of existing organizations to affect public debate; and (2) fostering new organizations.

DEEPENING MEDIA CAPACITY

Prior to the start of the Idaho Collaborative, all three partner organizations had developed significant media capacity and invested resources to train staff and members. Although garnering media attention in a rural state like Idaho is a less competitive proposition than it is in large urban media markets, it does require messaging capacity, the ability to develop and foster press relationships, human interest angles, and persistence. Members of the Idaho Collaborative have worked hard to develop these skills.

Starting in 1997, prior to CtC, UVI began working with the for-profit Creative Communications (CC) to expand the capacity of the independent Northern Rockies News Service (NRNS) to go beyond natural resource issues and cover issues of concern to the broader nonprofit community. NRNS stories are written by professional broadcast journalists under the supervision of a team of editors and are distributed to other wire services and directly to broadcasters. When UVI contracted with CC to raise funds to support the fledgling radio news service, UVI’s coalition groups, including IWN and ICAN, became CC members. “In such a large and rural state, radio has become an effective means to carry our messages across the state,” says UVI’s Hansen. “It makes my work so much easier,” adds Frye. “The number of stations that pick up the service is

incredible.” From 1999 through 2001, NRNS reports producing 171 radio stories that aired over 10,000 times, as well as 89 television stories. The stories covered a range of issues such as healthcare, livable wages, conservation, immigrant rights, and campaign finance reform.

With the farmworker minimum wage campaign, the collaborative increased its radio presence across the state with public service announcements, engaged

“In such a large and rural state, radio has become an effective means to carry our messages across the state.”

journalists in discussions about their reporting, and initiated a new political cartoon series. The collaborative also conducted annual message development workshops that helped member groups focus on human rights and racial and economic justice. In addition, the staff

and leadership of the collaborative partners participated in several media training programs. “The goal was to move long-term messages that could help frame future campaigns,” says ICAN’s LeeAnn Hall.

Engaging journalists through strategic editorial visits has become a central strategy. Staff and members of CtC groups regularly traveled across the state to meet with key reporters and editorial staff to discuss coverage of issues. “The result was that every publication, with the exception of the most conservative one, came out against the phony farmworker bill being proposed by the legislature and in favor of a real minimum wage increase,” says UVI’s Roger Sherman.

During the 2002 legislative session, the collaborative decided to develop political cartoons to help relate what was happening at the capitol to the general public. “LeeAnn Hall came up with the idea in a strategy meeting, and UVI made it a reality,” recounts Michele Casey. “We could sum up key issues in one political cartoon, but we had to make sure the messages were clear and easy to understand.” UVI contracted with an artist to develop “This Island, Idaho,” which is now printed in approximately 15 daily and weekly newspapers across the state.

FOSTERING NEW ORGANIZATIONS

As a statewide progressive coalition, UVI works to strengthen the capacity of its member groups. Over the last several years, UVI has also worked to start several new progressive organizations, including:

- **Interfaith Alliance:** In 1999, UVI engaged over 40 lay people and clergy in a year-long process to help found the Alliance. For the past two years, the Alliance has conducted “Overcoming the Hate, Reclaiming Our Voices” workshops to bring together church leadership and human rights activists to examine the myriad hate groups in Idaho and develop local working groups and a quick response network. “The renowned anti-gay activist Fred Phelps recently came to Idaho, and 200 people showed up to protest. We were able to get everyone in McCall (a small town in central Idaho) to boycott his event,” relates UVI organizer Pam Baldwin. “It’s hard to preach hate when there is no one to listen.”
- **Idahoans for Fair Elections (IFE):** IFE is a bipartisan campaign finance reform organization. “Not only did UVI help start us, but they have been there to provide us with the assistance we need to succeed,” says IFE Director Lori Dicaire. IFE actively works to recruit Republicans, Democrats, and third-party members such as the Reform Party. In 2002, after the defeat of campaign finance legislation, Republican Speaker of the House Bruce Newcomb established a Task Force to Study Campaign Financing for Judicial Elections. “We are about forging new alliances,” says Dicaire. “Just because you disagree on other issues, it does not mean that all conservatives are against campaign finance reforms.”
- **Idaho Progressive Student Association:** Initially founded as a component of the farmworker minimum wage campaign, the IPSA has addressed a number of issues, including proposed tuition hikes. The student organization, in particular, illustrates just how independent these new organizations can be. When IPSA staged a civil disobedience action in the Senate chambers in support of the farmworker minimum wage, it drew mixed reactions from collaborative partners and their allies. Ally organizations were unaware of the planned action, and ICAN had organized more than 100 farmworkers to testify at the capitol the same day. Devin Kelly, a student activist who has worked with IPSA since its beginning in 1998, argues, “The action was the best way to bring public attention to the issue.” However, ICAN leader Adan Ramirez felt that the action could have jeopardized ICAN’s efforts. “The students wanted to do the right thing, but the police almost shut down the capitol building.” This example of groups having the same goal but different tactics is not uncommon. What is uncommon is the legitimacy of the collaborative’s leadership role in working through this minor conflict, addressing issues of tactical effectiveness and division of labor.

Key Challenges

Building a cohesive collaborative campaign takes time, patience, and significant resources. The groups also noted that race, racism, and racial justice all present unique challenges and opportunities for building their organizations and increasing their collective power at the policy level. Finally, all three partner organizations identified sustainable institutional funding as their number one challenge.

RACE AND THE BASE

The Idaho Collaborative made the decision to use racial justice principles to frame their first campaign, in part because the partner organizations had begun to address race and racism proactively within their own organizations. During the six years of the CtC initiative, both UVI and IWN staff participated in Dismantling Racism trainings conducted by Western States Center, and both groups credit these trainings with helping their leadership prioritize racial justice issues and commit to the farmworker minimum wage campaign. “Our board members either loved it or hated it,” reflects IWN’s Lee Flinn. “It was

“A program officer...promised us funding if we won farmworker minimum wage. Now that we have, he won’t return my calls.”

intense, but in the end we believe the trainings and the Center’s support prepared us to take on new and different initiatives.” IWN has recently initiated a Women’s Health Project primarily involving low-income Latinas and is working to provide the opportunity for

the 75 participants to become part of the organizational leadership. “Our last annual conference was entirely bilingual,” says Flinn. “We provided simultaneous translation, and all the handouts were also in Spanish.”

ICAN has worked to move from a primarily low-income, rural, white membership to a membership that is truly multiracial. In 1996, ICAN mobilized its predominantly white membership to ensure that immigrants could be eligible for Medicaid benefits. ICAN has confronted racial stereotypes as part of its issue-training curriculum, and in 1999 it worked with the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations to pioneer a testing project of welfare offices that documented racial and language discrimination and other barriers to accessing the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The project led

to broad-based reforms and dramatically increased enrollment in CHIP, and the model has since been replicated by two other CtC grantees—Oregon Action and South Carolina Fair Share—as well as in four additional states.

These successes have not come easily. As long-time board member Adan Ramirez reflects, “When I started with ICAN, I had to push to get the situation going. But I am very pleased that now, when ICAN has an action in my home town of Burley, I know that it will also be a Mexican action.”

ICAN has also had to overcome instances of backlash from its white members, many of whom come from rural communities and live in extreme poverty. For many, ICAN is the one place where they have a voice. “We make progress in spurts, but we have also on occasion been accused of reverse discrimination,” remarks LeeAnn Hall. “Some of our major breakthroughs have been when our rural white leaders who really ‘get it’ come out in support of efforts to address racial justice. When it comes from them, instead of from staff, it changes the dynamic of every conversation within the organization.”

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

The collaborative has greatly benefited from the Ford Foundation’s multi-year support. “It has given us stability,” says IWN’s Flinn, “and the opportunity to focus and get the work done.”

However, participants noted that more foundations need to make long-term investments in Idaho. “It is hard to convince funders to invest in Idaho,” claims Adan Ramirez. “A program officer from one foundation asked me why he should put money into immigrant organizing in Idaho when he could fund the work in Los Angeles, where the numbers are greater. He promised us funding if we won farmworker minimum wage. Now that we have, he won’t return my calls.”

In late 2000, UVI helped establish the Fund for Idaho to bring more financial resources for social change work into the state. With a seed grant from Changemakers, the Fund was able to hire a staff person, select a board, and establish a grant-raising committee. The Fund has become a publicly recognized charity, raised over \$50,000 (primarily through multi-year pledges), and, in late 2002, made its first six grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 to small, emerging organizations. “This has been largely a volunteer effort,” says Hansen. “We’re currently working with the Funding Exchange to build upon this effort.”

Oregon Campaign for Economic Justice: Food Stamp Initiative Adds More Seats at the Table

In 1991, the Oregon Legislative Assembly established a policy that all Oregonians have a “right to be free from hunger” and set a goal of “food security by the year 2000.” Yet, in 1999 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated that 5.8 percent of all Oregon households were living with hunger, the worst rate in the country. (Leachman 1999)

These statistics made food stamp reform a top priority for the Oregon Collaborative. “This was an issue that resonated well with all four organizations in the collaborative,” says Oregon Action Director Kate Titus. The collaborative developed a strategic, ongoing campaign to address hunger in Oregon. Their efforts won a series of state policy reforms that have become a national model and were the impetus for significant federal reforms under the 2001 Farm Bill. In the process, the campaign helped to build a deeper and more effective infrastructure for social change efforts.

THE PARTNERS

The Oregon Collaborative (recently renamed the Oregon Campaign for Economic Justice) was initially composed of three grassroots organizations and a relatively new public policy institute.

- **The Rural Organizing Project (ROP)** is the CtC lead grantee organization. Founder Marcy Westerling relates that ROP was formed out of a movement to fight a 1992 anti-gay/lesbian ballot initiative “that was “an effort to write an entire group of people out of the Constitution.” Today, ROP is a statewide membership group working for human rights and inclusive democracy in rural communities. Westerling describes ROP as “engaging in the transformational conversations necessary to mobilize rural areas,” noting that rural communities suffer the state’s highest unemployment rates and have been among the most deeply affected by recent cuts in social programs.
- **CAUSA** is a coalition of 11 immigrant organizations, with a strong history of labor and youth organizing. CAUSA started in 1994 to fight a ballot initiative that would have denied immigrants access to social services. “We networked with many groups, including ROP and Oregon Action, and developed a grassroots, policy strategy,” recalls CAUSA

cofounder and board member Ramon Ramirez. “In our seven years, we have had about 25 key victories, including gaining farmworker rights and defeating propositions like the English-Only initiative.”

- **Oregon Action (OA)** is a statewide, multi-issue social and economic justice organization that evolved from Oregon Fair Share (OFS). OFS, which began in 1977, had built a reputation as one of the earliest and most effective citizen action groups in the state, prioritizing low-income and working-class concerns, especially healthcare. Today, OA has over 6,000 low- and moderate-income, dues-paying members.
- **The Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCPP)** is the policy arm of the collaborative. OCPP was founded as a way to challenge regressive policies in the state. In particular, OCPP has focused on state tax policy and the impact of state policy on low-income and working-poor families. OCPP describes itself as “the only progressive research and policy institute in Oregon” and has working relationships with a number of national organizations, including the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute (an ancillary grantee of the CtC initiative).

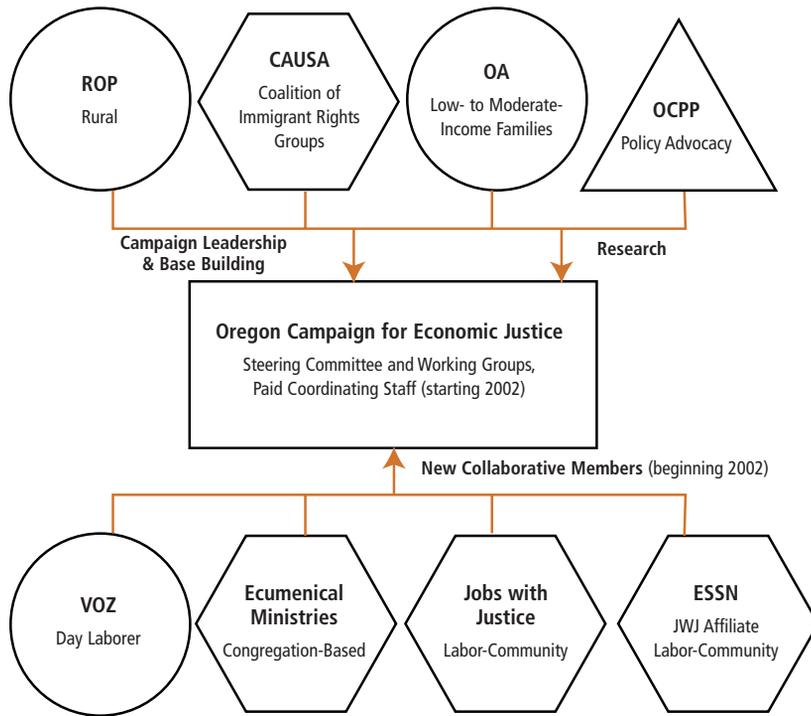
All three member-based organizations in the Oregon Collaborative have strong histories of doing economic justice work and have worked together in various partnerships. For example, CAUSA, OA, and ROP collaborated on immigrant rights work. “There is a good dynamic among the organizations,” says Westerling, “but the Oregon Collaborative is the first time all of us, including OCPP, have united to build something together.”

In recent years, the Oregon Collaborative has added four new partner organizations: VOZ, a day laborer organization; Ecumenical Ministries, a congregation-based coalition; Portland Jobs with Justice, a labor mobilization network; and, in January 2003, the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network. While significant collaborative resources have been allocated from CtC monies to hire a collaboration coordinator and to support the joint project work of all eight organizations, only the original four partner organizations received direct CtC funding.

A CONSERVATIVE SHIFT

Compared to Idaho, many people perceive Oregon, with a population of 3.4 million (U.S. Census, 2000), to be a relatively liberal West Coast state. Yet a

Oregon's Collaborative Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

The Oregon Campaign for Economic Justice is governed by a steering committee and develops workgroups as needed. The collaboration has a paid coordinator to increase communications and to develop issue education. The collaborative adopted a 2003 joint issue platform; member groups are currently working together on tax reform efforts.

KEY ISSUES

Food Stamp Reform, Workers' Rights, Immigrant Rights, and Tax and Budget Justice

BEGINNING ORGANIZATIONS

ROP: Rural Organizing Project

CAUSA: La Causa

OA: Oregon Action

OCPP: Oregon Center for Public Policy

NEW MEMBERS

VOZ

Ecumenical Ministries

Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network

Portland Jobs with Justice

LEGEND

-  Collaborative
-  Community Organizations
-  Coalition-Based Organizations
-  Policy Groups

complex set of economic and political dynamics has moved Oregon toward conservative initiatives that negatively affect low-income and immigrant communities.

The recession of the 1980s affected Oregon deeply. Even during the economic boom of the 1990s, low-income Oregonians, particularly in rural areas, never recovered. Dramatic population growth—20 percent in the 1990s—combined with the loss of living wage jobs in the timber, fishing, and manufacturing industries, made Oregon a national leader in both unemployment and hunger rates. (Census 2000)

Economic growth in the 1990s was concentrated in high-tech, service, and retail sectors, with most of the high-paying jobs situated in urban areas. The recession that began in 2001 resulted in a significant loss of high-wage jobs in the high-tech and manufacturing sectors.

As a result, Oregon's budget, which is based primarily on income tax revenue, is in crisis. The budget shortfall for 2001–2003 was over \$2 billion dollars, with another \$3.2 billion estimated for 2003–2005. (OCPP, 2003) In 2002, the Oregon legislature held five special sessions to address this crisis. Despite significant cuts to social programs, the deficits have grown.

Then-Governor Kitzhaber gave the legislature an ultimatum that year: balance the budget without making any more cuts to social programs, or raise taxes. Instead, the legislature deferred the issue to a referendum vote. While the vote was closer than expected, Oregonians defeated the proposed tax increase, paving the way for even deeper cuts in healthcare, social services, and public education programs. A 2003 OCPP issue brief notes, "Even after six years of projected steady economic growth, from 2004 to 2009, state revenues will still fall short of what is needed to fund programs and services."

The proposed tax increase faced heavy opposition from Oregon's aggressive anti-tax movement. One of its leaders, Bill Sizemore, ran against Kitzhaber for governor and heads the 19,000-member Oregon Taxpayers United. Sizemore is also a talk radio personality. As stated on his personal website, "I have dedicated a large portion of my life to lowering the tax burden on my fellow Oregonians, reining in the inordinate political power of the public employee unions, stopping the excesses of the Public Employee Retirement System." Sizemore has a

**"In the midst of a downturn like this,
and without a rainy day fund,
we're really up the creek."**

“populist appeal among Oregonians who blame liberal government policies for the decline of the timber and natural resource industries,” says OCPP’s Mike Leachman, noting that a number of Sizemore-supported anti-tax measures have passed. Among these is the three percent cap on the annual growth of assessed

property values passed in 1997, which has destabilized the state’s revenue base. “The state budget is much more reliant on the income tax than it was in the past, and much more affected by turns in the economy,” says Leachman. “In the midst of a downturn like this, and without a rainy day fund, we’re really up the creek.”

The federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (“welfare reform”) caused

further hardship for many of Oregon’s low-income families. Oregon implemented changes in its welfare policies before the rest of the nation, under a special state waiver. The former director of the Oregon Food Stamp Program, Michelle Wallace, observes, “Oregon is a work-first state, and we were even before the national welfare reform in 1996.”

The state’s political movement toward the right has also had a significant impact. Throughout the 1990s and during the 2000 election, the resources of grassroots organizations committed to social and economic justice were spread thin by an onslaught of ballot initiatives, which attempted to minimize the role of government and in effect limit the funding of social services and public education. Multiple ballot initiatives also targeted gays and lesbians, immigrants, and environmental laws, requiring grassroots groups to devote their limited resources to defeating legislation that would harm their constituencies, rather than taking on a proactive social justice agenda.

Although Oregon’s population is 84 percent non-Hispanic white, its immigrant population grew 148 percent during the 1990s, and in some communities Latinos are the demographic majority, though still an electoral minority. (Census, 1990/2000) In the past decade, new residents have faced numerous anti-immigrant initiatives, including proposals to deputize social workers as INS agents, deny healthcare and education to undocumented immigrants, and rid the state of bilingual education programs. In the wake of September 11, 2001, immigrants have become equated with terrorists and now face additional dis-

“Multiple ballot initiatives also targeted gays and lesbians, immigrants, and environmental laws, requiring grassroots groups to devote their limited resources to defeating legislation that would harm their constituencies.”

crimination from employers, long-established community members, and state and federal policies. “It started with attacks against those of Middle Eastern descent, but it’s spreading to other immigrant communities,” says CAUSA’s Ramirez.

Within this context of economic turmoil and shifting racial dynamics, the Oregon Collaborative crafted its immediate campaign and began to forge a long-term strategy for progressive action.

TAKING ON HUNGER

Like their colleagues in Idaho, the partners in the Oregon Collaborative established new ways of working together to provide effective campaign leadership, while simultaneously building longer-term infrastructure. Unlike their Idaho counterparts, they entered the process with a less-developed history of prior joint action. This led the Oregon Collaborative to undertake campaign work simultaneously with the building, testing, and refining of the collaborative’s infrastructure and internal processes.

In selecting the food stamp program as its initial campaign focus, the collaborative identified an issue that resonated with all the partners and the general public. The need was obvious. According to the USDA, Oregon had the highest hunger rate in the country, nearly twice the national average. One in four children in Oregon was living in a “food insecure” household. Just 66 percent of eligible Oregonians were receiving food stamps after the implementation of the 1996 welfare reform. (Schirm, 2000)

The Oregon Collaborative’s food stamp campaign was able to simplify the application process, extend eligibility to thousands of residents, restore benefits to immigrants, and exempt all childless adults from punitive food stamp time limits. Between 1997 and 2002, while national food stamp enrollment decreased by 3.3 percent, participation in Oregon burgeoned by 56 percent, ranking number one in participation growth in the country. (FRAC, 2003)

A number of factors came together to make the food stamp reform campaign a success. First, there was political opportunity. Oregon was already at odds

“According to the USDA, Oregon had the highest hunger rate in the country, nearly twice the national average. One in four children in Oregon was living in a ‘food insecure’ household.”

with the federal government over the issue of administrative errors. As Michelle Wallace, former director of the Food Stamp Program at the Oregon Department of Health Services (DHS) explains, the state had two choices: “We could write the federal government a check, or we could reinvest in error-reducing activities.” A governor’s committee of various state department heads was established to recommend new anti-hunger policies. OCPP’s Leachman believes that, “This committee was key, because it forced the welfare agency to defend its position.”

The four partners in the collaborative had complementary skills and constituencies. “You can distinguish each organization’s contributions to the larger victory,” says OA board member Ruth Anderson. Oregon Action was organizing families receiving food stamps prior to the formation of the CtC collaborative. The Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO) developed a multiyear project testing the practices of welfare offices, which exposed the institutional barriers families faced in accessing food stamps. This work prompted DHS to simplify application procedures and shorten its 25-page application to just two pages.

The Rural Organizing Project built support for the food stamp reform campaign in rural communities by organizing Hunger Forums involving 48 different groups and mobilizing members to contact the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force and other key decision-makers. “The Hunger Forums engaged members of human rights groups to begin thinking about poverty as a human

rights issue,” states ROP organizer Grace Taylor. “It also helped our members think about food stamp access as a statewide, as opposed to county, issue.” As a result of this work, Oregon applied for federal waivers from time limits to exempt counties with high unemployment rates. This

“You can distinguish each organization’s contributions to the larger victory.”

ended punitive treatment of single adults without children. Because Oregon is predominantly rural and unemployment rates remain high, 83 percent or 30 of its counties qualified for the exemptions. Childless adults in the six remaining counties were also exempted from time limits on other grounds.

OCPP provided the analytical framework to support these efforts, researching policies regarding food stamp accessibility and issuing numerous reports documenting hunger in the state. “OCPP brought credibility and data to the project,” says OA’s Titus. OCPP also worked with hunger advocates such as the

Oregon Food Bank to expand food stamp eligibility from 130 percent of the poverty level to 185 percent, and to eliminate asset tests, which disqualify many low-income families who have minor assets such as used cars. “The work of our collaboration partners was key in creating momentum that led to this victory,” says Leachman.

CAUSA played a central role in organizing immigrant families to testify to increase access to food stamps. “The state was calculating the income of all household members, even if they do not legally qualify for assistance. This hurt eligible children in immigrant households,” says Titus. “OCPP came up with a more flexible way the state could calculate benefits. We held a community forum targeting the Oregon Department of Adult and Family Services at a prominent church, but it was CAUSA’s efforts to have immigrant families publicly speak out at the event that really moved the issue.” These combined efforts were also able to halt a DHS initiative to limit translation services to only one welfare office in the entire state and to establish an “International Branch” in Portland, further isolating immigrant communities.

The work in Oregon also informed national efforts to increase access to food stamps. For example, regional and national organizations such as NWFCO and the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support were able to point to Oregon as a model for how to ease state reporting requirements. In addition, CAUSA played a leading role in federal restoration of food stamp benefits to immigrants.

Oregon’s food stamp campaign had an added benefit: unemployment data and personal stories documenting labor surpluses helped collaborative members win another ongoing campaign, led by CAUSA, to halt passage of national guestworker legislation. As CAUSA Board President Ramon Ramirez points out, “The Federal Guestworker Program bill would have brought 500,000 new workers into the U.S. under third-world conditions. It would have displaced migrant workers already here and destroyed over 30 years of immigrant rights organizing.” ROP, OA, and OCPP worked in conjunction with CAUSA to oppose the bill, helping mobilize over 2,500 immigrants, farmworkers, and supporters to march on the Portland Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) office against the Federal Guestworker Program. “We brought farmworkers to the hearings and made people’s stories real. We showed that Oregon had 30

“The Hunger Forums engaged members of human rights groups to begin thinking about poverty as a human rights issue.”

labor surplus counties and that there was broad-based opposition,” says Ramirez. “That was the last we heard of the guestworker program.”

A HISTORY LESSON

To develop a progressive vision for their state, the Oregon Collaborative invested significant time and resources to build new infrastructure that would take them beyond a single campaign. To inform the process, they looked to the experiences of the Oregon Alliance for Progressive Policy (OAPP), which was founded in 1989 and ceased operations five years later. “We reviewed OAPP documents and interviewed over 20 individuals who were involved in the Alliance, including former staff, board members, and funders,” says Leachman.

OAPP consisted of 27 organizations of diverse sizes, issue foci, and organizing approaches. Based on the Oregon Collaborative’s evaluation, it became clear that the predominant role of labor unions in the OAPP leadership had made it difficult for grassroots constituencies to gain a strong voice. Long-standing tensions between labor and other activists over reproductive choice, racism, and the environment made building and sustaining the coalition difficult. A collaborative research document states, “The unions, with substantial resources and a

broad agenda, wanted to see things happening quickly...while community organizations wanted to build stronger internal networks, increase the capacities of their staff and leadership, and deal with racism and homophobia.” Interviewees also observed that it was problematic that communities of color were not part of the founding of the Alliance. As Ramirez

“We were able to deliver our information through skits and quizzes to an entirely new set of people who are less likely to read research reports.”

notes about both community-based organizations and people of color, “We need to build more power amongst ourselves before we can sit across the table from unions as equals.”

Reflecting on OAPP’s experience, the Oregon Collaborative decided to take a different approach. “We didn’t want to create a formal coalition; instead, we wanted to build a history of working together,” says OA’s Titus. “The collaborative has created an opportunity for us to integrate our work naturally, planning things collaboratively and relying on each other.” The Oregon Collaborative also decided to be strategic about whom to invite and when to bring

unions into the mix. “We wanted to create a collaboration where grassroots communities, particularly low-income people and people of color, are driving the agenda,” says Leachman of OCCP.

In 2001, the Oregon Collaborative added three new member groups: VOZ, a worker education project for predominantly Latino day laborers; Portland Jobs with Justice, an economic justice coalition with strong working relationships with both labor and community-based organizations; and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), comprised of 16 representatives of religious organizations. “We have equal voice on the steering committee, and we have felt very comfortable since the beginning of our association with the collaborative,” says EMO organizer Phillip Wong. Another organization, the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network, joined in January 2003.

BUILDING A SHARED ANALYSIS

In 2002, as part of its expansion plan, the collaborative hired a coordinator and designated funds for joint work. Until then, the collaborative had been working on coordinated efforts and sharing information, while exploring opportunities for collective action. What members did not yet have was a shared analysis and public policy platform. Through a series of steering committee meetings, the expanded collaborative decided to focus on building a shared analysis across memberships to prepare for a joint, statewide campaign on economic justice that would also focus on immigrant rights.

Staff and leadership contributed to the development of an education curriculum and organized a series of cross-membership trainings in the fall of 2002. Twenty-seven grassroots leaders were trained to help facilitate the workshops, and 245 participants attended the issue trainings. All workshop materials were translated into Spanish, and approximately half the workshops had bilingual facilitation. ROP’s Marcy Westerling explains, “We wanted to bring our constituencies together beyond staff and leadership to map out a common vision.” The workshops incorporated popular education exercises with OCCP data. “We were able to deliver our information through skits and quizzes to an entirely new set of people who are less likely to read research reports,” Leachman states.

Some participants suggested that while the workshops provided opportunities to develop relationships across constituencies, there were a number of obstacles to creating a shared vision. Jerry Atkin, of Portland Jobs with Justice, believes that a less centralized process would have been more effective. “We did-

n't have the time and resources to do popular education the way it should be done. The result came out feeling scripted rather than emerging from the real-life concerns of the member base." In addition, diverse constituencies and organizational cultures made it difficult for the collaborative to find a one-size-fits-all approach to the workshops. ROP members expected hard data and analysis,

"We underestimated the ability of our base, who soaked up the information and wanted more."

while members of VOZ anticipated a popular education workshop rooted more directly in the real-life experiences of the participants. The differences in the constituencies' expectations led to some misunderstandings between facilitators, as each tried to operate in a way that was

appropriate to his or her organization. Geographic obstacles, particularly in rural areas, also made it difficult to bring the diverse constituencies together. "We thought we would have more geographic crossover than we actually did," reflects Grace Taylor. "A number of workshops were composed predominantly of members of one organization."

Overall, however, the evaluation of the workshops was positive. Ramon Ramirez acknowledges that CAUSA staff were initially concerned about the training. "But, when we did the workshop with farmworkers, it was successful," he recounts. "We underestimated the ability of our base, who soaked up the information and wanted more." EMO's Phillip Wong also felt the effort was successful. "While economic justice may take different forms, the collaborative has worked to establish a common framework, a filter through which we can judge and analyze specific economic justice issues like tax reform."

The recommendations that came out of the workshops were presented at a statewide forum in November 2002, where participants consolidated the range of issues for joint work and created a three-point platform focusing on workers' and immigrant rights and finding fair solutions to Oregon's budget crisis. "Each organization is contributing to platform goals with significant communication support from Kris Smock, the collaborative coordinator," notes ROP's Taylor. "Our vision is that grassroots input will be part of the state's tax reform and that we can help frame the debate so values of racial and economic justice do not get lost in the big push to find immediate sources of new funding for social programs."

In spring 2003, the collaborative adopted a formal name, the Oregon Campaign for Economic Justice (OCEJ). The OCEJ has educated policy leaders

about key public policy issues and has been working to ensure that grassroots constituents have a voice in a broader coalition working for tax reform. Within this broader coalition, the OCEJ has proposed a series of forums at which underrepresented constituents can help shape the coalition's tax reform agenda.

Key Challenges

The Oregon Collaborative, now OCEJ, faced some internal and external challenges on its road to success. Internally, member groups struggled with issues of capacity and resource allocation, and with melding different organizational approaches, structures, and systems of accountability. They were also confronted with new challenges emerging from the growing conservative power at both the state and national levels.

Bridging Organizational Cultures: The chapter examining the work of Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina explores some of the complexities of doing collaborative work among organizations that have different cultures and approaches. Similar issues surfaced in Idaho and Oregon. In Idaho, working on issues of race and racism enabled groups in the collaborative to mount a racial justice campaign. In Oregon, differences between policy groups and grassroots organizations required additional work. As Marcy Westerling observes, "It was stressful figuring out how three grassroots groups could begin working with a policy group, particularly because the three grassroots groups already had relationships, but the policy group was unknown. Part of the challenge was finding a balance between whether policy drives organizing or organizing drives policy. It is one of those chicken-or-egg issues." While both collaboratives were able to find ways to address these important issues, both have also had to commit initial and ongoing time, energy, and staff resources towards doing so.

The Shifting Political Climate: The continuing devolution of programs and services from the national to the state and county levels affects not just social services but entire public sectors, such as K–12 education. Coupled with growing budget deficits and post-September 11 "homeland security" policies, this poses serious new challenges. For example, immigration policy is shifting at all governmental levels. Since September 11, 2001, anti-immigrant sentiment has intensified. Ramirez notes that, "The targeting of people from the Middle East is part of a larger anti-immigrant attack. Since Sept. 11, there is increased harassment from police asking for documentation for minimal reasons. Overall, this

has meant an increase in fear in our communities. We must ask ourselves, ‘What is going to be our strategy?’” Several of the collaborative’s member organizations—CAUSA, ROP, OA, and VOZ—are currently working with the ACLU and other civil rights organizations to preserve two existing state laws that prevent law enforcement agencies from spying on individuals unless the agencies are conducting a criminal investigation, and from expending state resources to apprehend immigrants whose only violation is of federal immigration laws.

Capacity and Resource Allocation: One challenge noted by several collaborative members was that only the four initial groups were directly funded through CtC. Even though the collaborative had a democratic process that involved the new member groups in setting the future agenda, some organizations referred to themselves as “second-tier groups,” noting that they were involved but did not receive direct funding. It was also difficult for these groups to balance the work of participating in the collaborative with the needs and priorities of their own organizations. “It has been a challenge for our organization to participate. If we don’t have the resources, we cannot do the work,” explains Pedro Sosa of VOZ.

Collaborative members also pointed to the need for long-term investments to provide the stability needed to sustain newly-formed relationships. “In Oregon, this was the first time many of us had worked together, so we spent time developing relationships and establishing a greater understanding of the values and principles bringing us together,” says Philip Kennedy Wong.

Collaborative Comparisons: Campaign Leadership as a Springboard for Collaborative Work

The Idaho and Oregon case studies highlight the role of campaign leadership—the ability to create a strategic plan toward overall goals and to implement strategy in an effective, flexible manner. Through policy development, a coherent organizing strategy, an analysis of the political opportunity, and an assessment of potential allies and detractors, a collaborative is more likely to succeed not only in terms of policy reforms, but also in building organizational and collaborative membership and infrastructure. These collaboratives sharpened their skills and strengthened their infrastructure to increase their impact and build deeper and more effective relationships.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In both Idaho and Oregon, effective campaign strategy and leadership led to challenging existing public policy and winning policy reforms. In both cases, the collaboratives built on the previous work of one or more of the partner organizations, thereby leveraging political and organizing experience.

The collaboratives also took advantage of political openings to move their issues. In Idaho, that opening stemmed from the successful effort in the mid-1990s to pass workers' compensation for farmworkers, as well as from the growing number of Latino residents in the state.

In Oregon, Oregon Action had been addressing welfare inequities and food stamp issues prior to the CtC initiative. The dramatic USDA figures citing Oregon as having the highest hunger rate in the nation added urgency and power to the issue. In addition, Oregon was already at odds with the federal government on welfare issues, creating a wedge that the Oregon Collaborative could exploit to bring about policy change. The collaborative was also able to take some of the research done for the food stamp campaign and apply it to the fight against the proposed federal guestworker legislation, thus affecting another policy hostile to immigrants.

"It was stressful figuring out how three grassroots groups could begin working with a policy group."

ORGANIZING STRATEGY: A WINNING MIX OF ACTIONS AND ALLIES

To advance their goals, both collaboratives found they had to address gaps in their infrastructure, deepen relationships among partners, and identify and involve additional constituencies.

In Idaho, there was a preexisting progressive coalition, UVI. However, there are a limited number of progressive organizations in the state, and, with the exception of the Idaho Education Association, organized labor is virtually nonexistent. These conditions reflect a large gap in the state's social change infrastructure. To address that gap, the Idaho Collaborative established new progressive organizations and helped bolster immigrant/Latino political infrastructure. This required significant investment of coalition resources, including office space, startup funding, and staff time. The Idaho Progressive Student Alliance ended up playing an important, though controversial, role in the farmworker

minimum wage campaign, and IPSA continues to grow on the four major college campuses in the state. The congregation-based network has provided broader access to a powerful constituency base and has helped launch a series of human rights dialogues across the state. Further, the creation of Idahoans for Fair Elections has led to a multi-partisan effort to address structural problems in Idaho's electoral system.

The farmworker organizing efforts also created the political space for the Idaho Migrant Council, the primary immigrant rights advocate in the state, to take a more active role, and the campaign's success energized other emerging organizations led by people of color. The campaign also allowed the Idaho Community Action Network to build its base of Latinos and farmworkers and has helped pave the way for the Idaho Women's Network to initiate a new

health project primarily involving Latinas. UVI and IWN have also continued to support efforts of emerging Latino political leadership through voter registration and redistricting efforts. In a relatively short amount of time, the political clout and infrastructure among Latinos has grown exponentially.

When compared to Idaho, Oregon had a more extensive social change infrastructure. Unions have significant political power, there are some well-established people of color and immigrant organizations, and there is a more balanced legislature. What Oregon lacked was progressive cohesion. At the start of the CtC collaborative, there were no broad-based, multi-issue progressive coalitions, and the only attempt to create one had ended in failure. That failure supplied the Oregon Collaborative with three lessons: (1) quality, not quantity, matters in building lasting coalitions; (2) organized labor and community organizations do not currently work together as equals; and (3) communities of color must be involved from the onset to build effective multiracial coalitions or collaboratives.

These lessons had a profound impact on how the collaborative approached expansion. A number of organizations led by people of color were invited, and VOZ, a migrant labor organizing group in Portland, decided to join. The collaborative also gained access to two powerful constituencies with the addition of Portland Jobs With Justice, which has a history of working with labor and

"Since 9/11, there is increased harassment from police and an increase in fear in our communities. We must ask ourselves, 'What is going to be our strategy?'"

community-based organizations, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, a strong, statewide organization.

In setting a goal of establishing long-term alliances, the Oregon Collaborative was rejecting the “no permanent friends, no permanent enemies” model advocated by some more traditional community organizers. This approach requires the alignment and realignment of relationships based on the particular issue campaign that organizations are working on. The Oregon Collaborative felt, however, that issue-by-issue alliances do not build long-term progressive infrastructure. Instead, the collaborative decided to deepen relationships among both staff and constituencies to develop joint issue campaigns together. Over the past year, the collaborative has built cross-constituency consensus that the next issue will be tax justice and that immigrant rights will remain a central focus. The tax reform issue will be a way for the collaborative to experiment with raising the profile and influence of grass-roots groups in statewide coalitions, and to determine whether the group can create a sustainable model for working together over time.

On the other hand, the Idaho Collaborative—where the three organizations had already forged a strong working partnership—began as and remains an issue-driven alliance. It moved fairly seamlessly from a focus on the farm-worker minimum wage to the contractor bonding issue and is now organizing a campaign to provide immigrants access to drivers’ licenses. In contrast, the Oregon Collaborative used the food stamp campaign to forge a new set of relationships and a cross-organizational political vision that includes immigrant rights, economic justice, and tax reform.

Despite differences in approach, both the Idaho and Oregon Collaboratives demonstrate that building progressive infrastructure is an extension of an intentional and strategic process. The ability to maintain and expand on these efforts will depend not just on continued vision and campaign leadership, but also on whether individual and institutional funders are willing to invest the additional resources to sustain this critical work.

“In setting a goal of establishing long-term alliances, the Oregon Collaborative was rejecting the ‘no permanent friends, no permanent enemies’ model.”

Oregon Campaign Components

CONSTITUENCY/AUDIENCES	KEY ACTIVITIES	LEAD ORGANIZATION(S)
OREGON		
Food Stamp Recipients	Food Stamp Testing Projects	OA
Immigrants	Stop Guestworker/Labor Surplus Campaign	CAUSA
Rural Communities	Hunger Forums	ROP
Anti-Hunger Advocates	Research Reports and Policy Analysis	OCPD
Cross-Constituency Work & Public Opinion	Food Stamp Office Actions, 2,500-person March on INS Office, Letter Writing, Opinion Editorials	OA, CAUSA, ROP, OCPD
The campaign activities in Idaho and Oregon effectively utilized the strengths and skills of participating groups. The charts lay out some of the activities that comprised the campaigns in each state.		

SHIFTING PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Part of campaign strategy and leadership is the creation of public discussion around an issue that reflects and advances a social justice vision. Both the Oregon and Idaho collaboratives were able to fundamentally change the parameters of the public debate. By substantially upgrading their media capacity, both collaboratives were able to get their messages out to news outlets and the community at large. Innovative media strategies like the use of cartoons and radio actualities, along with standard activities such as editorial board visits, extended the reach of their campaign work in a cost-effective way. Perhaps the boldest piece of the overall strategy, however, was that both collaboratives took issues that most organizations would have advanced in terms of economic disenfranchisement and successfully framed them in terms of racial justice and human rights.

What prompted these two state collaboratives to address race in this manner? Why were they effective?

In Oregon, CAUSA, the premier immigrant rights coalition in the state, was one of the initial campaign partners. Having CAUSA involved in strategy development from the very beginning was one of the key reasons that the expansion of the collaborative targeted organizations of color. The organization also helped focus the campaign message. Linking the food stamp campaign with the guest-

Idaho Campaign Components

CONSTITUENCY/AUDIENCES	KEY ACTIVITIES	LEAD ORGANIZATION(S)
IDAHO		
Farmworkers and Rural, Low-Income Families	Farmworker Organizing, Testimony, Research Report	ICAN
College Students	Video Documentary and Direct Action	UVI
Human Rights, Church Groups, Ally Support	"Fast Until It's Passed" Campaign, "Team Kempthorne" Actions	IWN and UVI
Public Opinion	Marches, Letter Writing, Opinion Editorials, Editorial Board Visits, Public Service Announcements, Public Polls, Message Development, and Northern Rocky News Service	ICAN, IWN, and UVI

worker issue, for example, helped predominantly white member organizations broaden their analysis to include immigrant rights. ROP was able to use the food stamp campaign to engage rural human rights organizations with poverty and race issues. ROP has broadened its definition of civil liberties to include immigrant rights and has added a workers' rights issue agenda that includes increasing the minimum wage and strengthening farmworker bargaining power.

In Idaho, the decision to "lead with race" was more complex, in part because all three CtC partners were white-led. As early as 1995, IWN and later UVI engaged in significant internal anti-racist organizational development. This changed both organizational cultures and formed the basis for engaging in external racial justice work. The dismantling racism trainings conducted by Western States Center as part of its role as a CtC ancillary grantee helped build trust among organizations led by Latinos, who viewed IWN's and UVI's struggle through the trainings as a measure of their commitment to addressing issues of race and racism.

Similarly, as early as 1996, leaders LeeAnn Hall and Adan Ramirez were advocating for ICAN to diversify its membership base and leadership so that the organization could effectively advance issues of racial justice. In 1999, ICAN worked with NWFCO on the Children's Health Insurance Program testing

project, which surfaced clear evidence of discriminatory treatment of children of color. ICAN made a strategic decision to lead with the findings, and the campaign resulted in the state adopting all 18 reforms in the ICAN proposal. In evaluating the campaign's success, ICAN noted three key reasons this strategy worked: (1) the threat of federal investigation for civil rights abuses gave ICAN leverage in negotiating with the state welfare agency; (2) Idaho was particularly vulnerable to claims of racial discrimination, given its national reputation for being the headquarters of the Aryan Nation; and (3) discrimination heightened the issue of fairness. That experience bolstered the Idaho Collaborative's willingness to frame issues in terms of racial justice and human rights, rather than simply worker rights or economic equity.

Summary of Key Lessons

Campaign Strategy and Leadership: The Idaho and Oregon Collaboratives demonstrate how statewide, progressive social change is possible even in conservative political environments when effective strategies are developed and strong campaign leadership is present. The key components of campaign strategy and leadership are: policy development; a coherent organizing plan based on an analysis of the political opportunity that uses the strengths of participating organizations to their best advantage; an assessment of potential allies and opposition; and a plan for shifting the public discussion on the issue in a way that supports the collaborative goals. Not only does effective campaign leadership yield results, it also has a direct impact on the success of the collaborative as an entity/institution. The Oregon and Idaho collaboratives had the added benefit of assistance from two CtC regional ancillary grantees with which most member groups already had strong working relationships—the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations and Western States Center.

Media Innovation: By dedicating organizational and collaborative resources to expand media capacity, it is possible for a collaborative to reach a broader audience with an alternate message that reframes an issue. Innovative media strategies can extend the reach of a campaign in a cost-effective way. Both Oregon and Idaho worked with Creative Communications to expand their radio and television outreach capacities. (See Chapter Eight on the contributions of CtC's ancillary grantees.)

Accommodating Diverse Organizational Cultures and Approaches:

In working in cross-constituency collaborations, accountability, communication, and respect for different organizational cultures are essential. This is particularly significant in building partnerships across racial and ethnic lines and among organizing, advocacy, and policy organizations. The overall success of both collaboratives depended on their ability to be flexible and supportive of each individual group while remaining committed not just to the issues but also to the relationships being built.

Forming Multiracial Partnerships: Building a collaborative that includes organizations of people of color in an overwhelmingly white states such as Idaho or Oregon requires both political will and financial commitment. First, as the collaborative experience in both Oregon and Idaho illustrates, white-led groups require training and education to help the partnerships succeed. Second, as members of the Oregon collaborative learned by studying a failed statewide coalition, community organizations generally cannot work as equals with large institutions such as organized labor until they have more capacity. This is especially true of organizations in marginalized communities, particularly those led by people of color, who face internal and external pressures of racism in addition to the challenges and limitations of size and scope. In Oregon, VOZ noted the difficulties, because of its comparatively small staff and budget of fully participating in the collaborative. In Idaho limited capacity prevented a number of smaller, emerging Latino organizations from playing a larger role in the farm-worker campaign. Though these factors are exemplified in Idaho and Oregon, they are the norm in many states, suggesting that significant new resources are required to form and consolidate multiracial collaborative efforts.

“Having CAUSA involved in strategy development from the very beginning was one of the key reasons that the expansion of the collaborative targeted organizations of color.”

Building Infrastructure, Filling Gaps: In the course of working together, these two collaboratives (like most of the others we studied) found they were missing a piece of critical infrastructure required to advance their work. In Idaho, this meant strengthening existing organizations and starting new ones. In Oregon, it was necessary to expand the number of organizations involved the collaborative’s work.

Sharing Credit: Both collaboratives note that sharing, or not sharing, public credit for the work can result in an undercurrent of tension. The larger the victory, the higher the stakes. While not incorporated into the chapter narrative, the Oregon Collaborative faced challenges around victories in the food stamp campaign. Idaho experienced similar problems around the success of the collaborative's farmworker minimum wage campaign. The issue of shared credit was experienced to some extent by most CtC formations. Competition for scarce financial resources often fuels these dynamics, as collaborative member groups seek funding from the same limited number of foundations and major donors, who are often offering support for an organization's unique value rather than its ability to act as part of a multi-issue, multiracial, long-term formation. ●

*Foundation funds were not used for direct or indirect legislative activity.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Stages of Collaborative Development: Texas and Nevada

*a*ll the CtC collaboratives have progressed through various stages of development as they work to build a more powerful voice for poor and low-income constituents in state policy discussions. These stages of growth shape many of the questions, challenges, and opportunities the collaboratives face in their evolution. This chapter explores how the work of ProTex: The Network for a Progressive Texas and the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN) intersects with these developmental thresholds.

In Texas and Nevada, rather than funding a collaborative effort among a range of groups, the Ford Foundation funded a coalition striving to reach a new level of collaboration among its member organizations. In contrast to the other CtC collaborations, both ProTex and PLAN are centralized, statewide, independent organizations building a long-term infrastructure.

The two groups provide an instructive comparison because, while similar in purpose, they are at different stages of growth. ProTex was formed in 1997; PLAN, on the other hand, had been in existence since 1994 and, even before it received the Ford grant, was engaged in evaluation, assessment, and refinement of the organization's initial work.

Stages of Collaborative Development

PHASE	KEY TASKS	RESOURCE ALLOCATION ISSUES
PHASE 1 Conceptualize and Commence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess external environment ● Create shared visions and goals, and list anticipated outcomes for collaborative ● Explore interest of potential stakeholders ● Recruit key actors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the oppositional forces in the political environment? How do they operate, and how can they be effectively countered? 2. What are the collective experience and capacity of the groups and individuals proposing the collaboration? 3. How will a collaborative effort affect the resource base of both participating and nonparticipating groups?
PHASE 2 Devise, Develop, and Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure resources and staffing ● Develop program approach, working procedures, joint agreements, division of labor, communications protocols, and decision-making structures ● Design pilot activities ● Decide allocation of resources ● Shore up support of stakeholders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will the collaborative be structured to ensure maximum participation of member groups? 2. How will the collaborative balance building capacity of local organizations with building the collaborative? 3. What external role will the collaborative play? 4. What external support will ensure the collaborative's effectiveness?
PHASE 3 Examine and Evaluate (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess approach, division of labor, communications protocol, mix of participants (and nonparticipants), decision-making structures ● Explore areas of conflict/tension ● Examine goals vis-à-vis anticipated and actual outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What planning and evaluation processes will be used to reflect on the collaborative's efforts? How will decisions be made about shifting resources or focus? 2. Does the allocation of staff, financial, and communicative resources need to be changed? 3. How will resources be allocated to address conflict and deepen commitment? 4. How should resources be used to maximize the external impact of the work?

Within the context of their respective stages of development, both PLAN and ProTex have faced the challenges of leadership transition, membership recruitment, and the demanding task of deepening their political reach to the constituent base of groups involved in the collaboratives. Their respective histories, accomplishments, and challenges provide an opportunity to analyze how

Stages of Collaborative Development CONTINUED

PHASE	KEY TASKS	RESOURCE ALLOCATION ISSUES
Phase 4 Refine, Readjust, and Reinforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce all work that has moved the collaborative toward meeting its goals ● Refine systems to meet the capacity-building needs of all collaborative members ● Readjust decision-making structures and resource allocation to be congruent with self-assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the capacity-building needs for the collaborative, and how will these needs be met? 2. What will be the future staff structure of the collaborative? 3. What systems need to be formalized or refined? 4. What are the external communications needs of the collaborative (media, policymakers, funders, etc.), and how will they be addressed? 5. How will the organization build long-term power?
Phase 5 Institutionalize or Integrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achieve systemic change ● Evaluate overall effort ● Integrate collaborative functions into ongoing organizations or institutionalize collaborative 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the collaborative been successful in meeting its goals? 2. How has the collaborative influenced the general availability of resources at local and state levels? 3. Should the collaborative continue, or can the functions be integrated into existing organizations?

stages of development frame the internal issues that collaboratives address and how those issues affect the allocation of resources.

While each collaborative is different and “does not follow a predictable step-by-step process, a growing body of evidence indicates that the collaborative journey moves through loose chronological phases.” (Florin, Mitchell, & Stevenson, 1993) A number of models for collaborative growth have been developed, largely for organizations providing direct services. Based on the research and data collected through this evaluation process, the ARC evaluation team has modified those models to reflect our observations of these statewide social change efforts. The chart titled “Stages of Collaborative Development,” developed by the research staff of the Applied Research Center, reflects the phases, key tasks, and key questions—including resource allocation—that collaboratives in the CtC initiative have faced.

ProTex: The Network for a Progressive Texas: Organizing in the Lone Star State

When progressive groups in Texas decided in 1997 to pool their energies and form ProTex, they had their work cut out for them; they were facing a big task in a big state with a hostile political environment. The Texas moniker, “The Lone Star State,” reflects the unique characteristics and independent streak that run through much of the state’s politics and culture. Geographically, Texas is the second largest state in the U.S., and its almost 22 million residents are approximately eight percent of the total U.S. population. The distinct regions of the state represent wide ethnic, racial, and cultural differences. East Texas has much in common with the South, and, 800 miles to the west, El Paso is closer to two other state capitals than it is to its own in Austin. The high-poverty colonias along the Texas/Mexico border often resemble poor Mexican villages, while the major metropolitan areas of Dallas and Houston are often compared to the sprawling growth of Los Angeles.

According to Census 2000, 82 percent of the population lives in urban areas. Texas also has the second largest percentage of Latinos in the country, currently 32 percent of the total Texas population (up from 25.6 percent in 1990). Latino and African American populations are growing faster than the white population. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Texas grew by 22.8 percent; Latinos made up 53.7 percent of that growth and African Americans 22.5 percent. It is predicted the majority of the state’s population will be people of color by 2005.

With these shifts in demographics as the backdrop, the Texas legislature began its biennial 2003 legislative session with a budget shortfall of almost \$15.6 billion, predicting significant cuts in all areas of the budget. Historically, policymakers in Texas have not funded programs that address human needs, and there are numerous deficiencies in the Texas social safety net. According to a report by the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPPP) titled *The Texas Revenue Primer: The Measure of Our Means* (revised 2003), Texas was ranked 50th in general, per capita state spending. Rankings on other social and economic indicators offer clear evidence of the state’s political priorities. Texas is ranked third in the percentage of the non-elderly population without health insurance and fifth in poverty. The state is 47th in spending on healthcare, 41st in per pupil public education spending, and 49th in high school completion rate. On the other

hand, it ranks first in total toxic pollutants produced by manufacturing and industrial facilities.

According to CPPP’s “Texas Poverty 101 Policy Briefing,” 15.2 percent of Texans live in poverty; the poverty rate among children under 18 is 21.1 percent, significantly higher than the national rate of 16.3 percent. Census 2000 data show that poverty is concentrated in the largest cities in Texas and along the Texas/Mexico border, with counties along the border experiencing poverty rates ranging from 31 to 52 percent. The highest rates of poverty are found among the state’s Latino community (25.4 percent) and African Americans (23.4 percent), about three times the rate among non-Hispanic whites (7.8 percent). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, unions represent only 6.5 percent of the workforce, the third lowest rate in the country.

Policy decisions are concentrated in the legislature, which, over the last 20 years, is increasingly controlled by conservative forces. In this political climate, organizations advocating for equitable social and economic policies are left with few opportunities to advance proposals. According to Dick Lavine of the Pro-Tex Tax Fairness Group, “The regressive nature of the Texas tax system, which relies heavily on the sales tax and has no state income tax, along with policymakers’ reluctance to address tax reform and the budget crisis, suggests the continued erosion of human and social services for communities across the state.”

“The regressive nature of the Texas tax system, ...suggests the continued erosion of human and social services for communities across the state.”

THE INCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROTEX

ProTex was initiated in the wake of the 1997 Ford Foundation Devolution Conference in Boerne, Texas. Encouraged by that event, a group of participants held a follow-up meeting and decided to form a vehicle to further statewide cooperation among the state’s progressive groups. While there had been previous attempts to build a statewide organization, Texas had no progressive, statewide network. ProTex was founded to fill that gap and, according to its literature, “build a progressive movement in Texas through the creation of a statewide communications infrastructure and support for the coalescing of organizations working at both the grassroots and policy levels to effect change.”

Many organizations have influenced the collaborative since its inception. Members of the initial steering committee included the Mexican American Unity Council, the Center for Public Policy Priorities, the Texas AFL-CIO, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the

“A group of participants held a follow-up meeting and decided to form a vehicle to further statewide cooperation among the state’s progressive groups.”

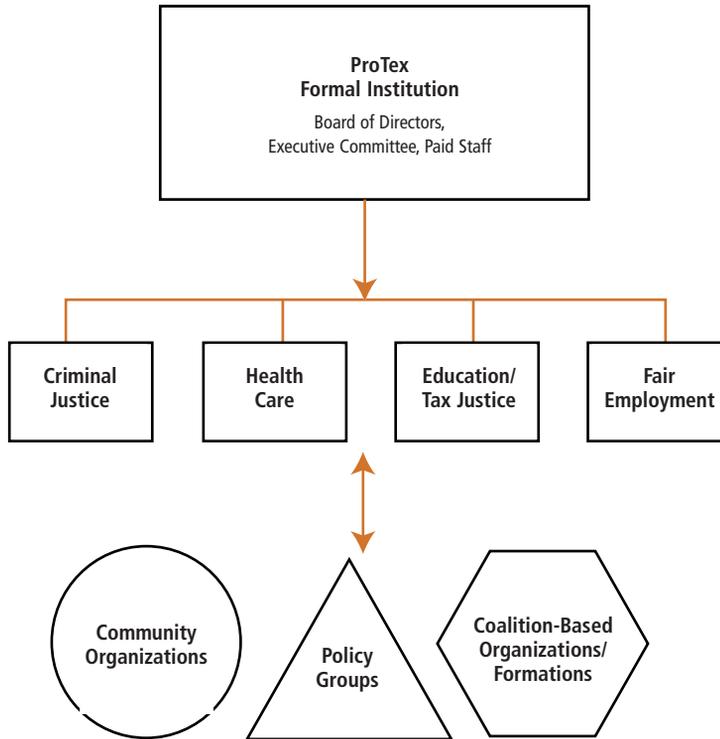
Consumers Union Southwest Regional Office, the National Council of La Raza, Texas Rural Legal Aid, Iniciativa Frontera, Liberation Community, League of Women Voters, Valley Organizing Project, and the El Paso Collaborative for Economic Development, among others. A number of these organizations formed the first ProTex board, which applied for

CtC funding, although they had voiced a commitment to the new organization whether it was funded or not. Steve Amberg, an activist who teaches at the University of Texas San Antonio, remembers, “It was exciting to have all these folks from around the state. I’m hoping we’ll aim at nothing less than taking over the state of Texas!”

In its initial stage of development, ProTex members addressed several key questions that shaped the early work of the collaborative, including: 1) how the group would be structured; and, 2) what role the group would take on in relation to member organizations. ProTex leaders decided to direct the bulk of the CtC grant to fund one central organization with full-time staff and a mission beyond the scope of any single organization or individual.

The group initially attempted to build statewide cohesion among progressive groups by developing a network of local coalitions in each region of the state. The intent was that the local coalitions would provide mutual support and become a base for statewide issue work. At the onset, ProTex had some success with this approach, especially in Houston, where the organization was instrumental in connecting social change organizations that had not previously been linked. However, over a two-year period, the organization’s leaders and staff found these regional coalitions difficult to maintain without an ongoing staff presence to provide coordination and continuity. Moreover, without a specific issue focus, it was difficult to maintain interest in the new coalitions. On the state level, the initial array of issues that regional groups were interested in did not overlap from one region of the state to another and did not foster statewide cohesion.

ProTex Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

ProTex is a collaboration of established, progressive organizations dedicated to building progressive infrastructure and enhancing efforts of public interest groups across the state. Pro-Tex is guided by the input of its Board of Directors.

KEY ISSUES

Criminal Justice, Health Care, Education, Tax Fairness, Fair Employment

ORGANIZATIONS

Two major coalitions emerging out of ProTex were the Texan Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (TCJRC) and the Texas Health Access Network (THAN)

REFINING THE MODEL

In evaluating this approach, questions arose within the collaborative concerning the efficient use of resources and the need to adjust the initial structure. ProTex leaders concluded that the organization lacked the considerable time and resources necessary to build regional coalitions throughout the state. Seeking

“The sheer size of the state makes the networking opportunities and travel assistance that ProTex provides valuable to local groups struggling with limited resources.”

to build the capacity of member organizations but not to overextend the collaborative, the leaders made two important decisions that significantly shifted the allocation of the group’s resources: 1) ProTex would centralize its operations out of Austin, functioning primarily as a statewide organization that

supports and coordinates the work of existing groups; and 2) the work of the collaborative would be focused on coalitions in four priority issue areas—criminal justice reform, healthcare, education/tax fairness and fair employment.

ProTex is still experimenting with different models of organization and has taken a flexible approach to the structure of the four individual issue coalitions. Some are formal coalitions with established processes for participation and accountability, while others are loose-knit networks with more informal communication systems. The degree to which the member groups would like to engage is left up to them.

The initial discussion about the role of the collaborative resulted in the organization’s decision to focus on building broad movement infrastructure by supporting existing efforts, rather than by assuming public leadership roles. Guided by this agreement, the current staff of six is responsible for implementing the decisions of the collaborative and providing general coordination to support the coalitions. Board members of the collaborative tend to the overall well-being of the organization, while members involved in the leadership of the coalitions formulate the strategy and goals and are the public spokespeople for those issues.

In order to be as inclusive as possible and minimize competitive relationships with organizations conducting local work, membership or participation in ProTex is open to any progressive organization in the state, and ProTex coordinates capacity-building efforts with a broad range of groups. These efforts include strategy and policy development, skills training, research assistance, lead-

ership development, coordination of state and regional gatherings, and travel assistance. The sheer size of the state makes the networking opportunities and travel assistance that ProTex provides valuable to local groups struggling with limited resources. ProTex also supports local organizations by linking them with potential coalition partners working in other parts of the state, policy groups addressing statewide issues, and national organizations seeking to develop relationships in Texas.

Throughout its development, ProTex has allocated resources to advance technology networking efforts as one of the primary ways to address the wide geographical spread and communication gaps in the state. A relatively young staff that is proficient in technological communication media enabled ProTex to develop a website to serve as a clearinghouse for a range of over 40 issues (www.protex.org). The site features job announcements, a calendar of events, funding alerts, and advocacy tools. A new online, searchable database of contacts allows users to search by issue area and geographic region; it is becoming an increasingly useful tool to help advocates extend their reach around the state. The website receives an average of 1,700 visitors per month, with a one-to-one ratio of new versus repeat visitors. Monthly funding alerts—sent by email and fax to more than 200 organizations and posted on the ProTex web site—have led to new funding for some progressive organizations across Texas. Other efforts by ProTex include support for member groups' campaigns, such as CPPP's "Texas in the Balance" online petition, which yielded more than 1,600 individual and 230 organizational endorsements from across the state.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TWO WINNING POLICY COLLABORATIONS

The ProTex coalition structure was based on the lessons learned from the organization's initial phase of development and subsequent evaluation. As a consequence, the group has successfully created statewide, issue-based collaborations addressing criminal justice issues and healthcare—the Texas Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (TCJRC) and the Texas Health Access Network (THAN). While CtC monies were not used for direct lobbying efforts, both coalitions have built networks that have successfully carried out policy advocacy and public education campaigns at a statewide level.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM COALITION

ProTex formed the Texas Criminal Justice Reform Coalition (TCJRC) in 1998, responding to the lack of coordinated, statewide efforts to address criminal justice policy issues and the problems in the Texas criminal justice system. TCJRC brings key leaders among the families of prisoners together with lawyers, advocates, and organizers to strategize and plan for coordinated policy efforts. The coalition focuses on four priority issues: police accountability; alternatives to incarceration; assuring fair and equal indigent defense; and opposing the death penalty. According to the TCJRC Statement of Core Principles:

- Texas has the largest criminal justice system in the U.S., with 706,600 Texans in jail, on parole, or on probation at the end of 1999.
- One out of every 20 adult Texans (5 percent) is under some form of criminal justice supervision.
- If Texas were a nation, it would have the world's highest incarceration rate (1,035 people imprisoned for every 100,000 citizens), significantly higher than the United States as a whole (682), Russia (685), and China (115).
- Texas ranks first in prisoners executed (from The Death Penalty Information Center) and carried out almost half of the executions in the United States in 2002.
- The state ranks third nationally in growth in prison spending per capita, with a 400 percent increase since 1980.

Numerous organizations had been attempting to address these issues but had no vehicle for drafting and proposing alternative, statewide legislation. TCJRC filled the gap; in its first three years of existence, TCJRC membership grew 500 percent—from 400 to over 2,000 organizations and individuals—and in 2001 the coalition played a central role in successfully advocating for criminal justice reforms at the legislative level. Reflecting broad support, the TCRJC steering committee includes representatives from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Center for Criminal Justice Initiatives, the Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, the League of United Latin American Citizens of Texas, and the Texas Inmate Families Association, as well as several attorneys. Other

organizations that have played a key role in TCRJC include the Nation of Islam, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and Texas Appleseed (part of the national Appleseed Foundation, which conducts research, legal advocacy, and policy development in partnership with community activists).

ProTex supports the coalition by providing office space, assistance with staff recruitment and supervision, book-keeping, and other administrative support. It has also developed a communication infrastructure for TCJRC on the internet to facilitate listservs, legislative action alerts, and information-sharing. Valerie Benavidez, ProTex executive director, is also the ex-officio steering committee chair for TCJRC.

The coalition's role is evolving, and TCJRC is currently focused on educational and outreach efforts. Other activities include: facilitating communication among the member organizations; developing and supporting policy proposals; coordinating gatherings; connecting groups with available resources such as funding or travel stipends; legislative advocacy; working with the media to set up editorial board meetings; and developing relationships with editors and reporters. Unifying all of these components, two TCJRC-supported major legislative reforms passed in 2001:

1. The Fair Defense Act. This legislation reformed the system for appointing attorneys for low-income defendants in criminal cases in Texas. Under the Act, attorneys must be appointed within 24 hours of an arrest. In addition, a task force on indigent defense was created to enforce the Act's new standards, including oversight of fund disbursements to attorneys. "A lot of times, courts weren't even keeping records, and we've heard horror stories about people being in jail for months before seeing an attorney," reports TCRJC staff member Eva Owens.
2. The Racial Profiling Bill. The new law requires police departments to develop guidelines for officers; a complaint and disciplinary process; a public awareness campaign; officer training; data collection and reporting procedures (including race/gender/result of stop); and yearly reports to city councils/local officials. The public reports allow individual citizens, as well as community groups, to participate in the public debate on how to respond to the results of the data collected.

"The Steward Research Group of Austin found that African Americans were searched twice as often as statistically expected, and Latinos 2.5 times more frequently."

While key members of TCJRC were instrumental in getting the racial profiling bill passed, the coalition as a whole is now taking a more central role in monitoring and implementing the new law. In a statewide study of data collected from the first year of implementation, the Steward Research Group of

Austin found that African Americans were searched twice as often as statistically expected, and Latinos 2.5 times more frequently. (American-Statesman, February 3, 2003) In February 2003, TCJRC sponsored a meeting of law enforcement officials and representatives of the coalition to discuss the 2002 data and how it should be analyzed.

“TCJRC membership grew 500 percent—from 400 to over 2,000 organizations and individuals—and in 2001 the coalition played a central role in successfully advocating for criminal justice reforms.”

Although the implementation of new legislation and plans for future policy proposals are the primary focus of TCJRC, the coalition is acutely aware that the changing political and economic climate of the state may pose a threat to its work. The coalition is nevertheless promoting a proactive agenda in addition to protecting the hard fought wins of 2001. During the 2003 legislative session, TCJRC brought together more than 500 people to advocate on a range of issues, including sentencing reform, opposition to the death penalty, rights of ex-felons, and police accountability.

Despite the continuing success of TCJRC, questions remain as to the role that ProTex will play in the future of the coalition. ProTex originally believed that it would “spawn and spin” the coalitions—meaning that they would create and support coalitions, and, in a relatively short time frame, assist them in spinning off and becoming independent. However, while the leadership of TCJRC has expanded, ProTex has remained central to the coalition’s functioning.

HEALTHCARE

With the successful establishment of TCJRC, ProTex was optimistic about turning its expertise and resources to building coalition efforts around healthcare. According to literature produced by the Texas Health Access Network (THAN), the incomes of almost 50 percent of uninsured Texans’ are less than 200 percent of the federal poverty rate, and more than one-fourth have incomes below the poverty line. Compared to other states, Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured residents, is 35th in Medicaid spending for children, 39th in

state and local government healthcare spending per capita, and ranks 36th in overall health.

In 2000, ProTex surveyed policy and grassroots healthcare advocates to identify the top issue priorities. Medicaid simplification—making the Medicaid application process easier so that more of the 600,000 eligible children could enroll in the program—emerged as the top issue for groups across the state. ProTex members convened a statewide planning group that set the agenda for the new network and defined what role ProTex would play in supporting THAN.

Member organizations of THAN partnered to organize community forums, meetings among grassroots groups, and briefings for public officials and advocates. In addition, THAN developed fact sheets, contact lists, sample letters, and talking points for distribution to activists for their Advocacy @ Home Day in the spring of 2001. The effort educated individuals and groups about the advantages and disadvantages of a Medicaid simplification policy proposal, which was adopted by the legislature later that year.

THAN also facilitated the development of relationships among organizations that had not previously worked together and introduced some local groups to the workings of the statewide policy development process. Describing her experience at the first ProTex meeting she attended, Ramona Casas, director of Project ARISE, a grassroots group in Pharr, Texas, recalls, “It was my first time meeting some of the people in the room, even though they work here in Pharr. We were very disconnected, not just from other groups, but also from any statewide advocacy work. After that initial meeting, we co-sponsored a local event to gain support for the simplified Medicaid form, and we’re looking forward to doing more statewide work in the future.”

The successful initial campaigns of TCJRC and THAN offer a useful model for developing a statewide organization that assists and supports coalitions conducting policy work. ProTex is using these experiences to inform its efforts to support coalitions focusing on tax fairness and fair employment issues.

Key Challenges

Although ProTex had a strong start, the organization has moved into the stage of development where evaluative questions concerning effectiveness and purpose are surfacing. As it enters its fifth year, ProTex is working to develop and project a clearer vision of what it seeks to accomplish and to expand the range of programmatic activities and broaden the spectrum of communities

involved in the network. The transition to a new director, stability, funding, staffing, and formalizing systems are also important at this stage and will shape the group's future work.

Will the network continue to sponsor and support issue-based coalition campaigns, or will it attempt to develop a distinct ProTex identity and statewide policy agenda? Executive Director Valerie Benavidez reflects, "It's a real question.

Because if we go that route, we've got to be careful about not taking attention and resources away from the work of the local groups." Additional challenges the organization is attempting to address include helping groups to actively support each other across issues, inclusion versus political solidarity, filling in policy gaps, developing an explicit racial justice

"Working with United for a Fair Economy, ProTex developed a popular education curriculum addressing issues of state revenues and funding of social programs."

agenda, and the perception of ProTex as an Austin-centric organization led by white-dominated policy groups.

HELPING GROUPS TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT EACH OTHER ACROSS ISSUES

ProTex's significant success with the coalition support model has not automatically translated into the cross-issue alliances that are vital to the building of a broad-based progressive movement. For example, it is important that education advocates support criminal justice reform, as there is a strong correlation between low-quality public education and disproportionately high rates of youth incarceration. Geography and resources present additional challenges to building relationships and understanding among diverse groups.

The tax fairness work the organization initiated in 2002 is a programmatic focal point that could provide a common experience for the groups and assist in developing cross-issue alliances. Working with a national organization, United for a Fair Economy, ProTex developed a popular education curriculum addressing issues of state revenues and funding of social programs. The tax fairness campaign will provide an opportunity for groups to address the question of state fiscal resource allocation, which is becoming increasingly important due to the budget deficit in the state.

INCLUSION VERSUS POLITICAL SOLIDARITY

With its broad definition of membership, ProTex has assisted a wide range of groups in the state that share the organization's values. According to its mission statement, ProTex:

...works to assure justice, dignity, and equity for all people in Texas. ProTex accomplishes this by bringing together Texans who are committed to economic, social, and environmental justice and supporting them in networking, engaging in collective action, and building power to effect progressive change.

In the future, the organization may be faced with the need to further define the meaning of “progressive” and take positions on more controversial issues. For example, attacks on reproductive rights and gay/lesbian rights have not been a primary focus of the organization and might prove to be more contentious than the issues addressed thus far. While the development of the organization has had its share of tensions, conflicts, and competing interests from within and without, addressing more controversial issues may result in sharper internal conflicts and even the loss of members.

FILLING IN POLICY GAPS

There are few organized communities of color that can play a role in policy development in Texas, which has led to a void in representation on statewide public policy issues for these communities. For instance, statewide policy groups advocating for Latinos have a limited presence in the state, and there is no statewide advocacy organization for immigrants' rights. The National Council of La Raza has a San Antonio office and conducts outreach through its 28 state affiliates, but it only has a policy staff person present during the legislative session every two years. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) has one full-time legislative director. Groups such as the NAACP and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) are often volunteer-run and do not have much capacity for new initiatives or ongoing community outreach. The Texas Immigrant and Refugee Coalition, a statewide advocacy organization for immigrant rights, dissolved in 2001. Other organizations with a large membership base—such as the United Farm Workers, La Union del Pueblo Entero, ACORN, and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)—are doing on-the-ground issue organizing but have a limited capacity to advocate on statewide policy. These gaps need to be addressed in order for ProTex to succeed in its self-appointed task of supporting communities of color.

ProTex has a stated commitment to creating multiracial collaborations that represent the diversity of the state and to calling upon the political structure to attend to racial justice issues. However, the lack of a unified, organized infrastructure focused on statewide advocacy efforts in communities of color may make it difficult to use the current coalition model to surface and support indigenous leaders and organizations.

DEVELOPING AN EXPLICIT RACIAL JUSTICE AGENDA

Valerie Benavidez, the new director of ProTex who came to the organization from the Texas Immigrant and Refugee Coalition, is a young Chicana activist and artist. She not only faces the challenges involved in any leadership transition, she must also negotiate the challenge of playing a central role in a largely white formation. One of Benavidez's goals for ProTex is to involve more people of color in grassroots political leadership in Texas. To this end, she envisions a leadership and skills training program within ProTex for people of color. "I am hoping to bring more young people of color into local activism. I want to develop a program that brings them into the coalition, teaches them organizing skills, gives them experience, and provides positive mentors," Benavidez states. "People of color should be at the forefront of the fight for social justice."

Beyond representation among staff and volunteers, the most explicit external racial justice work the organization has undertaken is the TCJRC racial profiling bill. The coalition framed the campaign with stories of racist law enforcement practices, and the proposed

legislation required specific, race-focused data collection. Other coalitions are working on issues such as tax fairness, healthcare, and fair employment that are explicitly framed as "income and access" issues. Despite an unspoken understanding, as Benavidez puts it, that "people of color bear the brunt of unjust policies

"People of color bear the brunt of unjust policies and practices in Texas, but the income and access frame is considered to be the most 'inclusive.'"

and practices in Texas," the income and access frame is considered to be the most "inclusive." The development of an explicit racial justice framework for a campaign or coalition may raise tensions in the organization and create both internal and external challenges for ProTex as it attempts to increase the participation of people of color.

THE PERCEPTION OF PROTEX AS AN AUSTIN-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION LED BY POLICY GROUPS

ProTex leaders decided to locate the organization in Austin because it is the legislative and geographic center of the state. While providing a strong policy base, this decision has also allowed Austin-based policy advocates to develop stronger ties to ProTex than have grassroots groups in other parts of the state. In addition, the concerns about power being concentrated in Austin seem to be intertwined with issues of race. People of color who work with the network tend to work locally on the issues organized through the ProTex coalitions, but most of these activists tend not to have relationships with policy groups based in the capitol. The network is attempting to overcome the skepticism of some community-based organizations that feel that policy groups started ProTex to gain legitimacy in the eyes of grassroots constituents without having to engage these constituents meaningfully in developing policy.

Ramona Casas of Project ARISE hopes that with ProTex's strong beginning the organization will continue to emphasize and support the role of grassroots activists. "We need to get information earlier so the community can have a more active role," Casas states. "Sometimes decisions are made without getting enough input from the people who are impacted, so there can be a problem of ownership."

Angie Briones-Sosa, former ProTex board member and former director of the El Paso Collaborative for Community and Economic Development, acknowledges that there has been a shift in the makeup and focus of ProTex since its inception. "When we started in El Paso," Briones-Sosa recalls, "many of us in the border groups really felt strongly that we didn't want this to become an Austin-centric organization, and the network really didn't start out that way. I was much more involved when ProTex was doing more regional meetings around the state, and those were really helpful for grassroots groups."

Another concerned board member is Matthew Momoh of Houston's Saving Lives through Alternate Options (SLAO), an organization that conducts advocacy work with immigrants, primarily from Africa and the Caribbean. "The

"The network is attempting to overcome the skepticism of some community-based organizations that feel that ProTex was started by policy groups to gain legitimacy in the eyes of their constituents."

sheer size of the state can be a barrier to the meaningful participation of low-income people, compounded by language issues for recent immigrants.” While ProTex did not choose immigration as one of its priority issues, bringing in immigration networks around other issues and building relationships of mutual support, might further the collaborative’s goal of increasing its policymaking power and influence in Texas. As a relatively new board member, Momoh sees his task as “making a mantra of reminding ProTex groups that there are a lot of issues affecting immigrants, and there are a lot of immigrants who aren’t from Mexico.”

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

There is no lack of ideas among the current leadership of ProTex about how best to develop the organization, while continuing to support existing formations around the state. ProTex board member Bill Beardall, who works with the Equal Justice Center on issues affecting low-wage workers, believes that two major issues ripe for action are healthcare access and establishing a state income tax. He says, “These are areas where we can do what we set out to do—provide organizational capacity and resources for groups working in these sectors to come together—and also to begin cross-sectoral public interest alliances.”

Mary Kelly, director of the Texas Center for Policy Studies, takes a more internal approach when discussing the collaborative’s future. “In the next two or three years,” says Kelly, “we need to pay attention to consolidation, financial stability, diversifying our base, and making sure we are providing what grassroots groups need.” Kelly also believes that ProTex needs to develop a “bigger vision of how we can become a force in the statewide policy-making arena,” which she believes necessitates developing “a core group of progressive legislative advocates who react appropriately on our issues.”

The two directions—building and increasing the capacity of a “big base,” versus prioritizing “targeted advocacy”—will shape the work of ProTex and the organizations it works with in the future. The “big base” approach would require a focus on statewide communication, membership recruitment, gatherings, and training, while building the capacity of local groups at the same time. The “targeted advocacy” approach would be limited by federal nonprofit regulations and require the development of a specialized staff. In addition, the work required to establish and maintain relationships with legislators may compete with the resources needed to support local groups in their work, and, indeed, could even

contradict the goals of those groups. The two approaches do not have to be mutually exclusive. However, at this stage of the organization's development, ProTex leaders must balance the available resources to both remain true to their membership and gain legitimacy in policy circles. According to Reggie James of the Consumers Union Southwest Regional Office, "We have to develop a big base in order for ProTex policy advocacy efforts to be effective. The long-term strategy of ProTex must focus on organizing and mobilizing the rising population of minorities and progressives. The demographic projections indicate a potential for influencing policies, but that potential is currently not realized. This is the major question facing ProTex and the progressive community in Texas."

"We have to develop a big base in order for ProTex policy advocacy efforts to be effective."

An important component of the organization's work that will help it move thoughtfully into the next stage of development is the initiation of a long-range planning process. The ProTex board has created a committee to develop a strategic planning process to address these issues and help the organization tackle tensions and deepen the commitment of its members. The process will include measures to advance the effectiveness of the organization's support for local work, such as training and technical assistance, as well as to strengthen the statewide policy work.

The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN): Gambling on Progressive Principles

The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN) was founded in 1994 to strengthen the work of the state's progressive organizations and to promote a social and economic justice agenda. In a state where a rapidly growing population confronts a rapidly diminishing social net, it's no easy task.

Nevada is known for glitz and gambling, but its brightly lit casinos hide myriad social and economic problems affecting the lives of workers and families. Nevada's population of approximately two million is unevenly split between north and south, and is concentrated primarily in urban locales. In the south, Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, is home to 70 percent of Nevada's population. It is a clear example of urban sprawl attempting to meet the growing need for housing and services, driven by the fastest-growing population in the

country. The expanding tourist and gaming economy has meant rapid job growth and provided a fertile organizing ground for unions. According to the Labor Research Association, unions represent 16.7 percent of the state workforce, and 19 percent in Las Vegas. Both rates are significantly higher than the national average of 13.2 percent.

Northern Washoe County, home to Reno and the state capital, Carson City, includes 18 percent of the state's population. Although gaming is a big industry in every city in Nevada, the northern part of the state has not kept pace with the business and gaming growth in the south, which has growing clout and representation in the legislature. Nevada also contains four Native American reservations and numerous Indian nations —called colonies—within the cities.

With a 66 percent growth in population between 1990 and 2000, Nevada is ill-prepared to accommodate the burgeoning demand for high-quality public schools, health services, and other public programs. The challenges stemming from this rapid growth are complicated by the increasing diversity of the population, which requires different language and cultural approaches to the delivery of services. From 1990 to 2000, the total Latino population in the state grew by 216 percent; the growth in Clark County was 264 percent, with the largest concentration in North Las Vegas, where Latinos increased from 22 to 37 percent of the population.

While many factors have influenced Nevada's economic and political climate in the past five years, the events of September 11, 2001 have had the most profound effect on the state economy. Immediately after the tragedy, domestic

travel slowed dramatically, and the tourism and gambling industries initiated major layoffs. Some employers used the opportunity to undermine unionizing efforts by laying off organized workers and rehiring them in part-time positions, without benefits or workplace protections. According to the Bureau of Labor

Statistics, the rate of union representation in Nevada fell from 18.4 percent in 2001 to 16.7 percent in 2002.

Economically conservative, Nevada has one of the lowest tax rates in the nation for gaming profits, and it has neither a business tax nor a personal income tax. In 2003, the legislature, which meets for 120 days every two years, focused

“Nevada has one of the lowest tax rates in the nation for gaming profits, and it has neither a business tax nor a personal income tax.”

on a growing state budget shortfall of approximately \$700 million and conducted a heated debate over new taxes.

While the state legislature is fighting over controversial taxes and budget cuts to social services, the need for those same services continues to grow, as evidenced by Nevada's low ranking on many social and health indices. In 2000, a *New York Times* article stated, "Pick almost any index of social well-being, and Nevada ranks at or near the very bottom of the 50 states, though it ranks near the top in personal wealth." According to PLAN's *Two Plus Two Proposal: A Tax Plan to Fund Nevada's Educational and Social Service Needs*, released in 2002, Nevada's suicide rate is almost double the national average; Nevadans lead the country in deaths from lung cancer and other smoking-related diseases; 22.1 percent of Nevadans ages 18–24 do not have a high school diploma (second only to Arizona); and Nevada's state average for per pupil spending is \$5,911, which is \$1,168 less than the national average. Nevada also ranks among the 10 riskiest states in which to be born—data from 1999 reveal that seven percent of Nevada women receive late or no prenatal care, compared to the national average of four percent.

Nevada's conservative public policies are not limited to health, education, and welfare. The state has also legislated anti-gay legislation and places a low priority on environmental regulation. New alliances that include the Church of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) and Christian fundamentalists have won legislative seats and passed Question 2, an anti-gay ballot initiative that allows a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage. (Nevada voters are required to vote twice on any ballot measures or questions that are initiated through signature campaigns. Question 2 passed in both 2000 and 2002.)

When it comes to the environment, 87 percent of Nevada is made up of federal lands, most of which are mostly managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Fights to preserve and protect wilderness areas are waged against business interests attempting to privatize public lands. One significant battle, ongoing since 1975, has been resistance to the federal government's efforts to use Yucca Mountain for nuclear waste storage. The Oil Dri Campaign, another environmental struggle, stopped the development of a proposed mine for kitty litter on federal land adjacent to the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony in Hungry Valley.

**"New conservative alliances have passed
an anti-gay initiative prohibiting
same-sex marriage."**

PLAN: BUILT ON A VISION OF JUSTICE

In its nine-year history, PLAN has brought together a wide range of groups from across the state to set a common agenda, build lasting alliances, and change policies for the betterment of Nevada's communities. Already four years old when CtC was initiated, PLAN was able to use most of the CtC funds to expand and further its statewide policy agenda. However, the organization also regrants \$50,000 every year through a Request for Proposals process open to its member groups. These small grants, ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000, have been used to support new and under-resourced efforts in the state.

In its initial stage of development, PLAN leaders decided that the role of the organization would be to become a strong public leader on efforts to achieve economic and social justice. As such, PLAN has provided leadership on issues that no one else in the state is working on and conducted research and released reports to educate the public on key social questions.

Additionally, PLAN decided that it would engage in policy work. It received assistance from CtC ancillary grantees—Western States Center and the Alliance

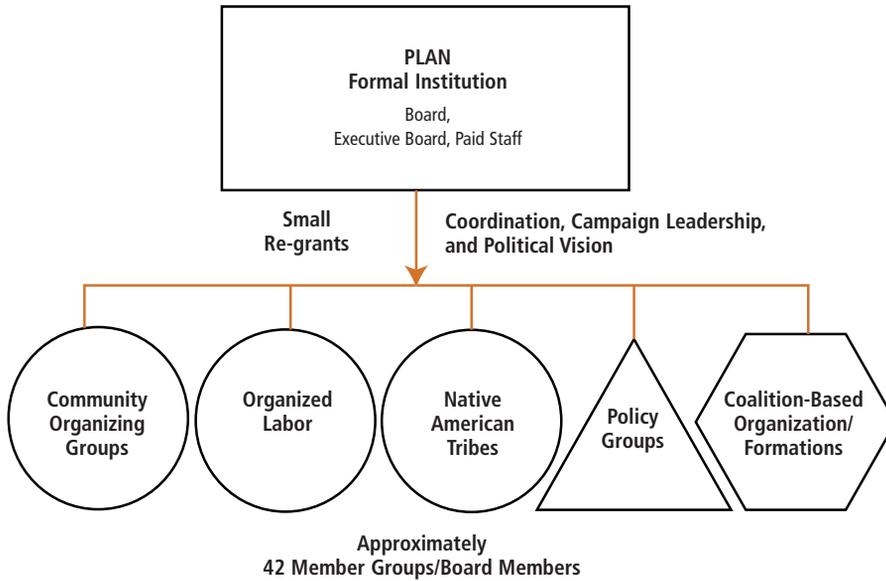
for Justice—to establish the parameters around which it could engage in policy advocacy and electoral work within the legal limits established by federal regulations for nonprofit organizations. The CtC grant monies were not used to fund lobbying efforts. However, the organization's policy work is integrated with its public education, organizing, and research to the extent that it would be

“In its initial stage of development, PLAN leaders decided that the role of the organization would be to become a strong public leader on efforts to achieve economic and social justice.”

difficult to separate the policy work and still give a comprehensive picture of PLAN's accomplishments and challenges.

The progressive frame of PLAN's work has been critical to its success. “When PLAN was first starting out, I felt relieved that someone was going to take on hard issues such as welfare, poverty, and gay and lesbian rights,” says Grace Thornton-Portorti of the Nevada Conservation League. Thornton-Portorti's sentiments echo those of many PLAN leaders and allies, who express the need for an organization providing a progressive political voice in Nevada. PLAN has tackled tough issues and incubated new programs to address issues that are not being addressed by other groups. It has provided resources (money,

PLAN Structure



COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

PLAN: The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada is an established statewide progressive coalition of approximately 42 community organizing, labor, tribal, policy, and smaller coalition-based organizations. Each member group is represented on the board, which meets monthly. A seven-member executive board is elected at an annual retreat.

KEY ISSUES

Economic Justice, Environmental, and Racial Justice; Human Rights

contacts, and equipment) and technical assistance to the Rainbow Place, Latinos for Political Education (LAPE), New Project, Equal Rights Nevada, the Nevada Conservation League, and the Nevada Empowered Women's Project, among others. The nurture of new projects has been important to fill in the gaps in policy discussions, raising concerns and perspectives that would otherwise be missing in the public and legislative arenas.

PLANNING FOR TOUGH ISSUES

PLAN's work is guided by a 10-year strategic plan developed in 1998, when the organization was four years old and evaluating its initial work. At that point, the organization set out to address tensions and deepen commitment among its members around racial justice issues. The strategic plan outlined priority issue areas and strategies, as well as goals for structural development. The process used to develop the 10-year plan was instrumental in bringing groups to some agreement around organizational political priorities, issue focus, and setting the stage for a future executive director transition, as well as raising issues around racism and racial justice in the organization.

The first section of the plan addresses the question of diversity and inclusion. It states, "Each of PLAN's programs are rooted in an approach that

"Each of PLAN's programs are rooted in an approach that acknowledges the roles of classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, ageism and anti-Semitism."

acknowledges the roles of classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, ageism and anti-Semitism." The strategic plan outlines objectives for programs and internal systems to further the goal that political principles be implemented at every level of the organization. Based on these principles, controversial issues such as protecting reproductive rights, opposing discrimination based on sexual orientation, and promoting anti-racist policies have become priorities for PLAN.

The long-range planning process also added two layers to the structure of the organization: the executive board and the people of color caucus. As a result, the current formal decision-making structure of PLAN is comprised of three bodies:

- The board, which meets once a month, is comprised of one representative from each member organization, of which there are currently 42. The board sets priorities for the issues and campaigns that the organization will work on and is central to the long-range planning process that the organization follows.
- The seven-member executive board, of whom two are appointed by the people of color caucus and the others elected by the entire board, is responsible for fiscal and programmatic management.
- The people of color caucus meets regularly to discuss and guide the racial justice issues—internal and programmatic—of the organization and has the power to appoint two members to the executive board.

In addition, the strategic planning process led to the conclusion that the organization would be most effective with some issue focus. PLAN documents explain that, “The organization formed five key program committees comprised of board members and allies that draw from a broad range of strategies to design the scope of work and decide how PLAN will use its resources to accomplish programmatic and policy goals.”

As a result, the member organizations in PLAN participate in workgroups focused on five priority issue areas: (1) Economic Justice; (2) Environmental Justice; (3) Racial Justice; (4) Nevada Young Activist Project; and (5) Human Rights. The workgroups carry out a range of activities, including coordinating coalition efforts; initiating campaigns; developing original research; producing and distributing information and research; and conducting large community events. Each workgroup has a PLAN staff member assigned to assist in coordinating its work.

GROWING THE MEMBERSHIP

As PLAN has matured and developed a more complex analysis of its work, the process of membership recruitment has also grown and deepened. Formalized during PLAN’s fourth stage of collaborative development—refining, readjusting, and reinforcing (see chart, “Stages of Collaborative Development” on pages 198–199)—the process currently involves several steps intended to introduce individuals and groups to PLAN’s activities, organizational priorities, and culture. Groups interested in membership are first encouraged to attend several PLAN events. The next step is to schedule a PLAN staff member to present a

full explanation of PLAN's vision and goals. After the presentation, organizations may join by signing a formal agreement that outlines membership dues (\$250 a year) and the responsibilities of participating organizations. As of December 2002, PLAN had grown from its 11 founding organizations to 42 member groups.

The membership agreement is one step in establishing shared operating principles, and it explicitly mentions controversial issues. Mark Nichols, director of the Nevada Association of Social Workers and PLAN's board chair, notes, "One way to maintain a coalition is to avoid potentially divisive issues. However, PLAN has not shied away from controversy." PLAN Director Bob Fulkerson describes the development of the political vision as one that "...started out as a small group discussion and then slowly moved until it became uniformly accepted by the PLAN member organizations. We recognized that we might lose some support, but we didn't want to be working on the least common denominator level." The agreement has allowed PLAN to take public positions and work on controversial, potentially divisive political issues, such as reproductive rights for women, gay and lesbian rights, tax reform, and welfare policy.

This political clarity did not come without a cost, however. The organization struggled through an internal process that was frustrating for some and surfaced real differences that, in the end, cost PLAN a few members—primarily religious organizations and one union—who did not share all of the views PLAN adopted as a progressive public platform.

Accomplishments: Scale and Substance

As PLAN approaches the end of its first decade, it continues to balance the goal of building a broad base for progressive work with the bold principles of its initial vision. The approach has yielded some significant accomplishments.

BUILDING A BROAD ALLIANCE

Mark Nichols recalls, "When I left my first PLAN meeting, I knew I had found my community. I was really impressed with the depth of involvement in the issues. It was the first meeting I had ever been to where labor, environmentalists, and other organizations that frequently were in conflict were working together." Scott McKenzie of the Nevada State Employees Association and AFSCME explains, "When I'm thinking about an issue from a worker's per-

spective, the discussion that takes place at PLAN with other organizations helps me to see the different dimensions of that issue from other viewpoints.” The opportunity to learn about the work and issues of other organizations has helped to foster a deeper professional relationship among unlikely allies. For instance, the Oil Dri campaign brought together the Native American community with the predominantly white environmental activist network, as well as gay/lesbian organizations, to prevent a proposed mine on federal lands adjacent to Hungry Valley. The campaign’s success was due in large part to the relationships established at PLAN and the subsequent support for the issue among PLAN members.

“One way to maintain a coalition is to avoid potentially divisive issues. However, PLAN has not shied away from controversy.”

The “Kiss My Foot Campaign” initiated by the Alliance for Workers’ Rights (AWR) is another example of the success that groups can have working in coalition. The campaign was developed to give waitresses in the casinos some control over their working conditions. According to Tom Stoneburner of AWR, “Women had no way to exercise power in the casinos. Thousands of women were being crippled by wearing high heels, and some women were getting fired for not wearing makeup.”

Stoneburner met Anne Golonka, the Nevada state president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), at the Community Strategic Training Initiative sponsored by the Western States Center. NOW has a long history of organizing women in casinos and raising issues about the exploitation of women. The notion of using the high heels as a symbol of women’s struggles emerged from that meeting. The joint campaign allowed for a division of labor among the organizations. AWR took on organizing the workers and negotiating with the casinos, while NOW and the Women’s Lobby worked to build community support. The campaign got the casinos to change their policies, allowing women to wear low heels and no makeup. It also elevated the visibility of women’s rights in the public debate and created strong ties among the organizations and their constituencies.

RACISM AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Since its inception, PLAN has expressed a strong commitment to racial justice and the representation of people of color within its membership. While the

organization currently has a preponderance of white members, PLAN is attempting to change that.

Deciding to take a more proactive approach as part of the 1998 strategic planning process, PLAN took on the challenge of addressing racism at both the

“The racial justice workgroup is researching potential campaign issues that PLAN can use to organize a base of people with a strong anti-racism framework.”

personal/interpersonal and structural levels. The process of shifting from a white organizational culture to one that is multiracial and multicultural—raising difficult issues of white privilege—began with a series of anti-racism workshops conducted by Western States Center. PLAN leaders found that it was not easy to get consensus on the board about the

importance of dealing with race, especially when the process was at a particularly emotionally charged stage. Joe Edson, PLAN staff member, notes, “The Dismantling Racism workshops had a shaky start. Some folks didn’t like them and felt that they were going to weaken the organization. There was some impatience and resistance to changing. Big issues came up around using racism as the defining ‘ism.’” However, PLAN has used this challenging process to strengthen the relationships within and among member organizations. Patricia Vasquez, member of the people of color caucus and representative on the executive board, recalls, “I thought we would trip over the conflicts that arose in the Dismantling Racism workshops. I’m extremely pleased at the results, and we’re stronger for it.”

PLAN responded to the workshops by incorporating structural and political goals for the organization in its 10-year strategic plan, focused on racial justice and diversity issues. Two major changes came out of this process: (1) the PLAN by-laws were revised to create the people of color caucus; and (2) the racial justice workgroup, which is exploring programmatic options for initiating explicitly anti-racist policy and campaign work was formed. Through staff and member recruitment, leadership development, and racial justice campaign work, the organization is moving toward its goal.

PLAN’s initial attempts to promote internal diversity and build relationships in communities of color focused on the rapidly growing Latino population. These efforts have, so far, concentrated on overcoming communication barriers and have included offering citizenship classes, translation of educational materials into Spanish, and voter registration drives. According to PLAN staff member

Rosa Molina, “We’ve responded to the challenge of having constituents who speak different languages by translating our materials and reports, and running public service announcements on Radio Español and on both Spanish-language TV stations, Univision and Azteca America, but I would like to see PLAN do more in the Latino community.”

With resources shifted to racial justice as an organizational priority, the racial justice workgroup is researching potential campaign issues that PLAN can use to organize a base of people with a strong anti-racism framework. According to Liz Moore, PLAN Southern Nevada coordinator, “We decided to develop our ability to do a campaign instead of moving existing groups to do it, because often they don’t have the capacity.” Building this internal organizing capacity is a change for PLAN, whose role has been primarily as an advocate and facilitator. In the long run, campaigns require a staff trained in organizing techniques and specifically assigned to conduct campaign work and membership development, along with a reallocation of other organizational resources to maintain the effort. Moore notes, “We’re conducting meetings with organizations and leaders across the state right now. We’ll probably start by doing something that we’ve done in the past, like issue a report or findings.” PLAN hopes these initial efforts will result in stronger relationships with communities of color, identify new leaders, and pave the way for campaigns that address racial justice issues directly.

ADVANCING PROGRESSIVE POLICY PROPOSALS

PLAN has made significant contributions to the terms of debate and policy reforms in numerous issue arenas. In addition to conducting research and public education campaigns, the organization has helped draft and support policy alternatives and has developed close relationships with legislators and leaders from different ends of the political spectrum. PLAN has also participated in strategy sessions with state leaders to develop a proactive legislative agenda linking decision-makers with communities most affected by the prospective policies.

PLAN established its presence at the legislature through a lobbyist (not funded by the CtC grant) who works on the issues the organization has prioritized. The lobbyist also provides vital information to groups that do not have the capacity to maintain an ongoing presence at the capitol. According to Gary Peck of the Nevada ACLU, “One of the greatest assets of PLAN is its presence in the legislature; they represent the only voice some groups have at the policy

level.” Activities at the biennial legislative sessions are communicated to PLAN’s member organizations through weekly conference calls that are used to give updates and strategize. Biweekly action alerts give groups the opportunity to take action on bills at critical stages. PLAN’s successes at the policy level include, among others:

- prohibiting workplace discrimination based on sexual identity;
- Net Metering Bill, requiring the state to purchase surplus wind or solar power generated by individual households;
- restoration of voting rights for ex-felons;
- stopping an English-only bill from getting to a vote;
- increasing state funding for basic human services;
- Renewable Energy Portfolio, which requires utilities to buy 15 percent of generated power from renewable sources; and
- funding for an AIDS Drug Assistance Program—\$3.2 million over two years.

As these successes indicate, PLAN has established itself as an important partner in policy initiatives. “Some of the legislators call on PLAN to help advocate for bills they are proposing,” says PLAN staff member Jan Gilbert, “and we’ve been able to build relationships across party lines. The ex-felon bill passed with Republican support.”

PLAN’s work not only benefits member organizations by advancing a policy agenda; the organization has also been an asset to the legislators themselves. “Legislators don’t have paid staff,” State Assemblywoman Chris Giunchigliani notes. “It’s extremely helpful to have a credible group to help build support through research and media outreach for proposed legislation.”

PLAN’s policy work over the years has led to its current efforts on tax justice. In 2000, Republican Governor Kenny Guinn commissioned an analysis of potential revenue to make up the state’s budget shortfall. When the Governor’s Task Force on Revenue was formed in 2001, PLAN was invited to participate. According to Assemblyman David Parks, “The Task Force came up with lots of potential revenue sources. PLAN developed its own proposal and put forth recommendations at an impressive presentation to the legislature.” The release of

PLAN's *Two Plus Two Proposal—A Tax Plan to Fund Nevada's Educational and Social Service Needs* received widespread media coverage. It was followed with a forum among legislators and the governor to discuss the tax proposals. According to Ande Rice, PLAN board member with the Metropolitan Community Church, "PLAN is well recognized in the state, to the point that the taxation plan was listened to and helped to set the terms of the debate."

This growing influence is evidenced by the fact that Governor Guinn has taken what is normally considered a politically risky position, and one that he did not voice while campaigning for office—that the state needs to raise taxes. Indeed, the governor has advocated for three of the four proposed taxes that PLAN put forward. Proposing an increase in cigarette and alcohol taxes and a business gross receipts tax to raise \$1 billion over two years, Governor Guinn says: "We have been innovative in our savings, and responsible in our cuts. As governor, I believe I have been a careful steward of the taxpayers' dollars. However, if I had to build this budget on only our existing revenue, I could not live with myself, and I don't know anyone who could. The time has come to say, 'enough.'...I refuse to balance this budget on the backs of our children, senior citizens, and the poor...[A] more prosperous Nevada, and a better educational system, require an investment by all Nevadans and all Nevada businesses." (*Las Vegas Sun*, January 21, 2003)

Key Challenges

In 2004, PLAN will celebrate its tenth anniversary. One of the key questions in developmental stage five is, "Will the collaborative continue?" For PLAN, the answer is a clear "Yes." PLAN can be proud of its many successes. The organization has a diverse membership; it is well-established and respected among progressive organizations and policymakers; it has played a key role in the development of public policy in Nevada; and the organization has taken concrete steps to advance its internal and external agenda dealing with issues of racism and racial justice. The question now is, "What will the next ten years look like?" At this stage, the organization is attempting to build on its successes and expand its power by taking steps to deepen its work in three major areas: (1) building relationships across issue areas; (2) promoting popular education among its members; and (3) building statewide power.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS ISSUE AREAS

According to many PLAN members, one of the main benefits of participation—coming together with groups working on other issues—can also be a primary source of tension. The success groups have had working together does not mean an absence of differences, particularly when PLAN has tried to get groups to pay attention to and support issues that are beyond their immediate interest. Tom Meyers of Great Basin Mine Watch reflects, “I thought PLAN would be a good place for networking with other groups, but it hasn’t been as easy as I would have hoped. Groups all have their own issues, and there isn’t an immediate connection. Communication is mainly through the board meetings and is not as direct as I would have thought.”

In addition to communication issues, groups are disappointed when their priorities are not put on the agenda. These challenges are compounded when the organization brings together groups who do not see eye-to-eye on the issues. For instance, labor groups viewed the Yucca Mountain controversy as a fight for unionized jobs, while environmentalists focused on the potential harm to the environment and the dangers of transporting and storing toxic waste. After long discussion, PLAN decided to try first to get the site rejected by the state and federal government. Now that it has been approved, however, the campaign will focus on worker and community safety.

PLAN has addressed these differences by: (1) creating new policy proposals that incorporate the various positions; (2) moving ahead with the majority on an issue and having the member organizations agree to disagree, as well as not taking an active role in opposition; and (3) forgoing a public position on controversial issues not central to its core agenda, which is, for example, how the organization handled the 2002 ballot question on the legalization of marijuana use.

POPULAR EDUCATION

While PLAN has a significant presence in the media and visibility among other organizations engaged in statewide political and policy debates, the membership base of its constituent organizations lacks deep knowledge of PLAN and its work. This limits the ability of member organizations to mobilize people for actions and could potentially cause internal organizational tension if PLAN takes a public position that members of constituent organizations have not discussed or with which they disagree. For Debbie Cahill of the Nevada State Edu-

cation Association, PLAN plays an important role in the state but faces challenges to getting broad participation in its issues. “PLAN is important because we say things that others can’t or won’t say; for instance that we need an income tax in Nevada,” says Cahill. “The challenge to our work is that the awareness of PLAN does not extend too far into the membership of my group.”

Bringing PLAN’s issues and political analysis to its constituent members is a problem not just at the level of the statewide collaborative. Member organizations have had limited success in educating their own constituencies about other issues and the connections among

them. “There is a need for us to be able to take issues back to our membership and do some political education. We need to be able to come up with a definition of ‘What is progressive?’ and educate folks about lots of different kinds of issues,” says Peggy Maze Johnson, executive director of Citizen Alert. “Right now, the statement of values doesn’t get to our membership.”

For Liz Moore, PLAN Southern Nevada coordinator, the organization stands to gain a lot from increasing the involvement of member groups. “With more member participation, we can increase our capacity to do organizing on the ground as a coalition. This would allow us to turn out more people to press conferences, act in solidarity with other groups, and generally build popular support for policy proposals.” Moore also points to one difference between traditional policy or advocacy organizations and membership organizations: “Not many groups in the state actually have a large base. Policy groups have more freedom to react quickly to issues than, for instance, large unions that have to go through a member education effort, which takes more time.” The challenge for PLAN is to bring the two types of organizations together as early in a campaign as possible to make sure that the policy group’s proposals reflect the experience and interests of the people whose lives are affected by the policies.

“PLAN is important because we say things that others can’t or won’t say; for instance that we need an income tax in Nevada.”

BUILDING STATEWIDE POWER

PLAN has had significant success at the policy level and has established strong connections and credibility with policymakers. However, the extent to which the organization can engage in legislative lobbying and electoral work is limited by funder guidelines and federal 501(c)(3) regulations. Attempting to

develop a clearer distinction in their work, PLAN leaders have decided to initiate a sister 501(c)(4) individual membership organization that will focus on electoral and legislative work. While viewing the close relationships with legislators as a positive outcome, PLAN's Director Bob Fulkerson is somewhat cautious about what that means long-term for the organization. He notes, "There is tension about where we want to go. Do we want to become a political 'insider'? Does this make a movement? What is power going to look like?" These questions, along with other challenges the organization faces, will shape the future direction of PLAN and the work that its member organizations do to continue building a lasting, effective, progressive voice in Nevada.

Collaborative Comparisons: Stages of Development and Resource Allocation

The key analytic question posed by the case studies in this chapter is: "How does the stage of collaborative development frame the internal issues that collaborative members must address, and how do those issues affect the resource allocation of the organization?" It is clear with Texas and Nevada that collaboratives are dynamic entities. Because they respond to specific social and political environments, their membership and approach to the work may vary year to year and state to state. However, although the work and the political environment may shift, there are predictable stages through which collaboratives advance. Below is summation of collaborative developmental stages and key tasks, as outlined in the introductory section of this chapter.

Stage 1. Begin the Collaborative: Groups assess the external environment, explore and recruit key organizational players, and develop initial vision, goals, and desired outcomes for the collaborative.

Stage 2. Develop the Collaborative: Key leaders secure resources and develop a program approach, joint agreements, staff structure, division of labor, and decision-making structures. Groups at this stage also design pilot activities and communications structures and allocate resources.

Stage 3. Evaluate and Assess: Based on the initial work of the collaborative, the group members evaluate the structure, division of labor, mix of participants, areas of conflict, and anticipated versus actual outcomes.

Stage 4. Reinforce and Refine: Collaborative members reinforce all work that has moved the collaborative towards meeting program goals, refine systems to maximize capacity-building strength, and readjust decision-making structures, approaches, and resource allocation to be congruent with the Stage 3 assessment.

Stage 5. Institutionalize or Integrate: Collaborative members evaluate the overall success of the effort, including internal development and external impact, and then decide whether to institutionalize and continue the collaborative or end it, integrating its functions into ongoing organizations.

Differences in resource allocation and priorities may be traced to the stage of development. ProTex is in a building phase (a combination of stages 2 and 3), has defined its role as a support mechanism for existing groups, and has an informal membership structure. Although issues about the consolidation of the collaborative have been raised, the group is nonetheless attempting to expand. PLAN, which has progressed through the five developmental stages in its nine years, is now focused on consolidation and depth, appropriately raising the questions Bob Fulkerson articulated: “Do we want to become a political ‘insider’? Does this make a movement?”

Although ProTex and PLAN are at different stages of organizational development, each group has addressed a number of the same questions at each stage of development. For instance, in its beginning phase, each group had to examine the political environment carefully in order to assess the potential for the collaborative and determine its appropriate role and structure. While a continuing rise in conservatism is common to both states, the Nevada groups knew they would have to allocate resources to mount public education efforts on ballot initiatives. In addition, because Nevada state legislators usually have no staff, PLAN’s early decision to build the organization’s policy advocacy capacity helped the organization develop close relationships with some members of the state legislature.

Neither of these factors framed the initial work in Texas, since legislators have staff to draft and research policy proposals and the state does not allow ballot initiatives. Rather, the major task for ProTex was consolidation of a wide variety of groups focused on well-thought-out legislative and public awareness campaigns.

Despite the differences in approach, both groups decided how to allocate initial organizational resources based on an assessment of the opportunities pro-

vided by their political environment. One of the significant initial decisions that both groups made concerning the Collaboratives that Count grant was not to divide the funding into regrants for core groups. This decision facilitated a focus on the common goals of the collaborative and reduced the potential for inter-group conflict.

CHOOSING A ROLE

During this initial stage of development, the organizations had different answers to the question, “What will our role be?” ProTex decided not to take a public role, but instead has provided a supportive infrastructure for existing groups and has facilitated the coordination of statewide coalitions. PLAN, on the other hand, started out defining its role as a catalyst for necessary work in the state that others were not doing. ProTex has allocated its resources to coordinating gatherings, technology development, media outreach, and research, with staff functioning behind the scenes in support of the work. PLAN has initiated new organizations, released controversial research, and is developing campaign ideas with a racial justice framework. The PLAN staff is also more public and is often quoted in the media. Regardless of the role that the respective organizations have decided to adopt, and whether they continue in those roles in the future, both models have had significant success at the policy level and have built broad alliances for continued collaborative efforts. The success of both models can be partly attributed to the initial assessment of the political environment in each state, preceding the initiation of the collaborative.

ALLOCATING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPACT

Both groups also had to make key decisions about resource allocation, centered on how to create and maintain a connective infrastructure. The differences in organizational cultures and state geography resulted in different answers to the same questions. For ProTex, the fact that Texas is such a large state with unique regional issue priorities made it difficult for a new organization to maintain a regional presence in its initial stages of development. Instead, ProTex shifted its resources to concentrate on four issue areas and devoted more of the technologically-oriented staff and volunteer time to develop a sophisticated website to provide a connective medium for groups across the state.

While PLAN’s initial communications with member organizations were by phone and fax, the existence of two concentrated population centers in a rela-

tively small state made the establishment of regional offices in both the north and the south a significant part of its communications infrastructure. In addition, while PLAN tends to sponsor training sessions focused on the issues that the group is prioritizing, ProTex usually emphasizes member participation in its yearly conference, as well as the many events it publicizes through its calendar of events. In order to accommodate hundreds of groups, ProTex conducts trainings on topics ranging from the organizational (nonprofit management, grantwriting, etc.) to the political (e.g., reproductive rights).

At Stage 3 in their development where groups examine and evaluate, both PLAN and ProTex addressed the question of how to allocate resources most efficiently to maximize the external impact. Both organizations decided to focus their efforts on issue priority areas. This decision provides several advantages for the collaborative, including: (1) there is a focus for the development of relationships among groups working in different regions of the state; and (2) since the issues can be shifted to allow for emerging priorities, the organizations have some flexibility to respond to new issues.

The challenges to this structure involve questions of cross-issue solidarity among member groups and participation of groups that are not involved in any of the issue areas. In addition, the long-term sustainability of the collaborations' development of new networks is difficult to manage, particularly with limited resources.

The direct expenditure of funds is only one dimension of resource allocation. ProTex's staff and board discovered that the organization's approach to building regional coalitions was extremely staff-intensive, and, given the staff size of the organization, was not a structure that the group could sustain. The organization used its early evaluations to shift its structure and focus on providing support for issue coalitions. In PLAN, one of the key allocations of resources was to develop the Young Activists Project, an effort to promote the participation of youth in progressive campaigns and develop their leadership capacity. The Young Activist Project will require the organization to allocate financial and staff resources and to do the internal work necessary to build shared power with historically disenfranchised young people.

Both ProTex and PLAN have initiated projects that they predicted would later spin off as independent organizations. This prediction has been accurate for

"Do we want to become a political 'insider'?
Does this make a movement?"

several of PLAN's projects, although the organization continues to provide support for these new groups as they meet the challenges of managing an independent organization. ProTex is currently evaluating its role in the growth of the coalitions it has initiated. As umbrella organizations, both groups will have to address the financial and structural challenges that will continue to arise as they initiate and provide ongoing support to issue-based formations.

MEMBERSHIP AND GROWTH

The membership structure of both organizations has also been influenced by its developmental stage. Systems generally become increasingly formal as the organization matures. Still in its initial stages of development, ProTex has a fairly open, "Y'all come" approach that allows any "progressive" organization or individual to join. PLAN, having developed a more definitive political vision as it progressed, requires its members to formally agree to a set of principles and accept the areas of work defined by the organization. Since both groups must balance the capacity-building needs of member groups with sustaining and developing the collaborative itself, there are implications in terms of resource allocation to each of these approaches. Both networks offer concrete support to member organizations for different types of activities. PLAN has a regranteeing program through which it makes small grants to support the work of its member organizations in its issue priority areas. ProTex provides travel resources to local groups so that they can attend training sessions, advocacy efforts, and strategic planning meetings.

In addition to supporting their existing membership base and expanding to new constituencies, PLAN and ProTex have had to decide whether and how to expand resources aimed at deepening the analytical and political awareness of constituent members. ProTex's work in this area has been primarily issue-focused. The organization has conducted educational training sessions on the work of its criminal justice and healthcare coalitions. It also brought in United for a Fair Economy to work with ProTex leaders to develop popular education materials on tax reform.

Because PLAN is four years older than ProTex and has developed along a parallel but not identical organizational trajectory, issues regarding both intra-organizational and membership education are more nuanced. PLAN must allocate resources both for broad popular education on key issues and for internal organizational work addressing macro issues relating to race, gender, sexual iden-

tity, and class status. The work in this arena requires not only time, energy, and money, but also the willingness to risk the organizational tensions that can result in a loss of some members when controversial issues are raised and dealt with.

A final tension in the allocation of resources in all of the projects in the CtC initiative is the question of credit. As Miller, Rossing, and Steel write in *Partnerships: Shared Leadership among Stakeholders* (1990), “Visibility, both for the partnership and the individual partners...is essential.” Sharing credit diffuses distrust and reinforces agreed-upon decisions about divisions of labor. However, the question of credit is often complex for collaboratives. In Stages 1 and 2, the established organizational members of the collaborative are actually in competition with the collaborative itself for funding and other resources. The collaborative borrows the credibility of these founding organizations to raise money and gain access to key media and political relationships.

Once the collaborative is established, the dynamics shift. As the concerns expressed by ProTex members indicate, a new tension may develop between the visibility of a now-centralized and successful collaborative effort, and that of still-struggling local organizations. Thus, different stages of a collaborative’s development may generate tensions from different sectors of the membership and constituencies.

Thus far, ProTex and PLAN have addressed both challenges and opportunities in ways that move them to the next stage of growth. Within the context of their respective stages of organizational development, they have taken their assessment of the political environment and used it to build collaboratives that have had significant impact on statewide policy, and they have allocated resources in ways that calibrate and strengthen both process and product. The lessons offered by their experiences can provide a useful road map for new groups just starting out.

Summary of Key Lessons

Need for Accurate Assessment: An accurate assessment of the external environment and internal capacities is vital. Regardless of the stage of development, an accurate assessment of (1) the state’s political environment, and (2) the organizational capacity of potential members of a statewide collaborative is an important developmental prerequisite. If the assessment is insufficiently rigorous, the approach the collaborative takes may be problematic.

Review and Revisit: Balancing process and product takes ongoing attention. It is important to reassess, revisit, and revise a collaborative's allocation of resources at every stage of development. Changes in the external political environment or in key staff, the growth or contraction of the membership base, and the group's visibility and ability to achieve success all affect organizational dynamics. Nonetheless, the collaborative exists to effect positive social change, and the allocation of resources must be regularly adjusted to maximize both internal development and external effectiveness in the policy arena.

Collective Vision, Collective Power: A collectivized vision can increase collective power. The development of a clear political vision for the work of the collaborative can be an effective guide and measure for the work. Collectivizing a broad analysis can be a major step in building group solidarity and anchoring decisions concerning the collaborative's priorities, political direction, strategies, and tactics. This in turn can lead to an alliance that has increased power to affect public policy debates and effect positive change.

Know the Stages: Learning about development stages and processes can increase the odds for success. The availability of an emerging body of literature on collaborations provides a useful road map of issues to expect when forging a collaborative. It is important that the road map also provide some exposure to statewide collaborations that have successfully progressed in the developmental stages described in this chapter. State-to-state exchanges and face-to-face meetings are invaluable in the process of sharing experiences and lessons, and therefore need to be supported as a key component of progressive social change efforts. ●

*Foundation funds were not used for direct or indirect legislative activity.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Ancillary Grantees: Augmenting Infrastructure and Expertise

in addition to providing direct support to state-based collaboratives, the Ford Foundation provided \$5.7 million—one-third of the total CtC funding—to support the work of eight “ancillary grantees.” These funds were provided to ancillary organizations to support both direct work with CtC grantees and the broader objective of strengthening the infrastructure for state-level work. The duration of Foundation support for ancillary grantees ranged from 18 months to six years, with grants ranging cumulatively from \$200,000 to \$1,182,000. Grantees included three regional intermediaries, two technical assistance providers, two national policy organizations, and one media innovation project. This chapter explores the work of the CtC ancillary organizations in the following four sections:

- An overview of the ancillary program.
- An exploration of the specific support each ancillary grantee provided to state collaboratives, addressing two evaluative questions: (1) To what extent did each ancillary directly support the efforts of state CtC grantees? (2) To what extent was this work perceived as helpful by state CtC grantees?

To answer these questions, evaluators (a) reviewed grant proposals, reports, and internal Foundation documents such as recommendations for grant approval (RGAs); (b) interviewed key individuals of state CtC collaboratives, ancillary grantee staff, and Foundation staff; and (c) surveyed collaboratives to solicit feedback on the work of ancillary groups. These surveys asked collaboratives to rate each group on a scale of 0–4: (4) used and was very helpful, (3) used and was somewhat helpful, (2) used and was not helpful, (1) had contact but did not use, or (0) no contact.

- An analysis of the ancillary program that explores the challenges of matching state collaborative needs with ancillary services, as well as the issue of ongoing coordination.
- Summary of key lessons for future ancillary granting programs.

Overview of Ancillary Program

When the Ford Foundation decided to include ancillary grantees in the Collaborations that Count initiative, there were a number of factors that influenced both the types of assistance that would be provided and who would provide these services. In the internal “Initiative Statement,” Ford staff listed four objectives for CtC, the last of which specifically addressed ancillary funding. The Foundation’s stated objective to “build capacities of key community and policy organizations in the states” included the following indicators of success:

- Communications with the public and the media;
- Financial administration and audit skills;
- Leadership development and skills training;
- New and broader membership;
- Expanded, stable resource base able to sustain the collaboration beyond the CtC grant;
- Technology infrastructure and use of email and the web; and
- Understanding of lobbying rules and 501(c)(3) compliance.

The work of the ancillary grantees, selected to help meet these capacity-building goals, falls into the following four categories: (1) regional intermediary support; (2) technical assistance; (3) infrastructure supported through national policy organizations; and (4) a special project to enhance media innovation. The chart on the following page lists the ancillary grantees, the amount of support received, and the general scope of work for each organization.

Regional Intermediaries

Three regional intermediaries provided organizational support to CtC members. The Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO) and Western States Center are multi-issue organizing, training, and strategy centers that support community-based organizations in the Northwest, while the Southern Partners Fund is a funding intermediary that supports community-based organizations in the South. All three organizations had existing relationships with many CtC grantees. Western States Center also assisted Ford Foundation staff in identifying potential CtC organizations and coordinating regional site visits before the CtC initiative began.

Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: Formed in 1993, NWFCO is a regional organization comprised of four statewide community action organizations: Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN); Montana People’s Action (MPA); Oregon Action (OA); and Washington Citizen Action (WCA). NWFCO’s mission is “to strengthen state-based community organizations and to execute regional and national campaigns that address racial and economic inequities.” Key organizational activities include:

- **Strengthening state-based community organizations** through staff and leadership training (50 training events each year, with participation of over 2,000 staff members and grassroots leaders, covering a wide range of information and skills).
- **Conducting research and developing policy alternatives**, producing 10 to 20 publications each year that document the experiences of community members and correlating those experiences with objective research, model policy solutions, and message development.

Ancillary Grantees: Collaborations that Count Funding

ANCILLARY ORGANIZATIONS	TOTAL CTC GRANT	STATES SERVED	SCOPE OF WORK
REGIONAL INTERMEDIARIES			
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations	\$300,000 (4 years)	ID, OR, WA	Support for training, capacity-building and research activities for community organizations.
Southern Partners Fund	\$200,000 (22 months)	AL, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX	Support to convene and coordinate organizational development training sessions for CtC grantees in the South.
Western States Center	\$1,000,000 (4 years)	ID, OR, NV, WA	Support to promote civic participation, training, and technical assistance in the Northwest.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE			
Alliance for Justice	\$1,182,000 (6 years)	All States	Support for the Nonprofit Advocacy Project and to provide technical assistance to CtC grantees on laws governing nonprofits.
Progressive Technology Project	\$650,000 (2 years)	All States	Support for provision of technical assistance and to increase capacity in areas of technology.
NATIONAL POLICY GROUPS			
Center for Policy Alternatives	\$1,000,000 (4 years)	All States	General support and to link public policy leaders with community-based organizations.
Economic Policy Institute	\$281,000 (4 years)	All States	Support for Economic Analysis Research Network; provide state-based coalitions with policy expertise.
MEDIA INNOVATION			
Creative Communications	\$550,000 (4.5 years)	ID, OR, WA	Support for an independent news service that created radio and other news stories highlighting the work of grantees.
TOTAL: \$5,163,000			

- **Assisting in state, regional, and national campaign development and mobilization.** NWFCO works with state affiliates to identify and meet strategic needs, and was the anchor group for the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support’s (NCJIS) Food Stamp Campaign, which resulted in restoration of benefits to immigrants and a federal increase in food stamp funding of more than \$5 billion.

SCOPE OF CTC GRANTS: Beginning in January 2000, NWFCO received two, two-year grants totaling \$300,000. According to the Recommendation for Grant Action (RGA), Program Officer Michael Lipsky wrote that the funding would support “training, capacity-building, and research activities of a valuable regional intermediary for community organizations.”

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: NWFCO integrated its training, organizational development, and applied research programs to enhance the work of CtC grantees in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Training: NWFCO developed a series of annual training programs to assist its state affiliates and CtC grantees. In 2001, NWFCO sponsored:

- Two, three-day **Community Organizing Trainings** involving 60 new staff and experienced leaders across the region;
- An annual **Advanced Organizer Training**;
- An annual **Advanced Session on Negotiation Skills** tailored to campaign work in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington;
- **On-site Staff Organizing Trainings** for Idaho, Oregon, and Washington CtC grantees;
- Multiple “**Saturday School Trainings**” for community leaders involved in CtC groups in each state.

Organizational Development: NWFCO worked with CtC grantees in each state to develop and implement ongoing state and regional campaigns, including the farmworker minimum wage campaign and the piloting of a program to test the state’s Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and childcare program in Idaho, and the modification of the testing program for use in Oregon.

Research: NWFCO worked with CtC grantees to develop research reports to support campaign efforts, such as publishing “Job Gap” studies for each state, and worked with ICAN to release more than two dozen issue-based reports.

STATE RESPONSES TO NWFCO’S WORK: In the groups’ survey response the Washington Living Wage Movement ranked NWFCO’s work with the highest rating, “4—very helpful.” “Our best experience with the technical assistance Ford provided was with NWFCO,” wrote the Washington Collaborative. “They

“NWFCO was the anchor group for the NCJIS Food Stamp Campaign, which resulted in restoration of benefits to immigrants and increased funding of more than \$5 billion.”

helped us with big-picture issues like campaign development and strategy, and provided us with the research capacity to build upon our campaign work.” Survey respondents from the Oregon Collaborative noted that NWFCO had more limited contact with them, with the exception of helping organize the regional CtC planning meetings, which partici-

pants described as “well done.” NWFCO worked more closely with CAUSA on regional immigrant rights and with its Oregon state affiliate, Oregon Action. In relation to the collaborative work, OA Director Kate Titus notes, “NWFCO assisted OA with adapting the CHIP testing project from Idaho and applying it to food stamps. This support helped us win the simplification of lengthy applications. NWFCO also led the regional efforts to impact national food stamp reforms.” In Idaho, NWFCO’s most extensive work was with its state affiliate and CtC grantee, Idaho Community Action Network. As the Director of both ICAN and NWFCO, LeeAnn Hall has worked to closely integrate the work of the two organizations. ICAN organizer Jessica Frye comments, “NWFCO trains our leaders and staff, assists in campaign development and implementation, and works with us to conduct tactical research.”

Southern Partners Fund (SPF)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: Founded in July 1998, Southern Partners Fund describes itself as “a regional, community-based foundation” that supports grantees in a dozen Southern states. The organization’s mission statement states, “By providing direct grants, helping to secure technical assistance, and leveraging support from other funders, we help [community organizing] groups in

their efforts to realize and renew the promise of American democracy.” Key elements of Southern Partners Fund’s work include:

- **Supporting Grassroots Efforts:** Over the past three years, Southern Partners Fund reports granting over \$3 million to more than 75 southern grassroots organizations. This has helped support a number of issues, such as public school reform aimed at education equity, farmworker initiatives to achieve just wages and working conditions, gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender struggles for equality, respect, and safety, and environmental justice efforts.
- **Participatory Governance Structure:** Southern Partners Fund is governed by a membership of 23 grassroots community leaders and grantee partners. This membership elects a nine-member board of directors. According to a Southern Partners Fund organizational description, “This innovative governance structure gives the Southern Partners Fund an insight, an understanding, and an energy rarely seen in the philanthropic world.”

SCOPE OF CTC GRANT: SPF received a single, 18-month grant for \$200,000, beginning in September 2000. According to former Program Officer Marcia Smith’s RGA, funding was to support convening and coordinating “organizational development training sessions for grantees of the Collaborations that Count initiative in the South.” Grant activities were to include organizing and hosting a regional meeting to facilitate peer exchanges and sharing of strategies, coordinating and hosting two skills-building seminars on topics to be identified by initiative grantees, and providing an ongoing resource for customized technical assistance. In 2002, the Foundation approved Southern Partners Fund’s request to extend the duration of the grant by four months in order to complete the two skills-building trainings.

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES:

Southern Regional CtC Gathering: In Spring 2001, SPF assembled a seven-state planning team to review the project work plan, determine the scope of the regional convening, confirm the date, and determine the next steps. SPF reported organizing “three face-to-face meetings, five teleconference calls, and numerous individual calls over the planning process for the regional convening.” In September 2001, SPF held a “Southern Collaborations that Count” convening in Atlanta, and 64 of the 81 participants were from Ford CtC groups. Non-CtC participants in the gathering were

other grantees of SPF. Southern Partners Fund also produced and disseminated a directory of participants in the convening.

Relationship Building: SPF conducted site visits to each group willing to meet in order to build relationships with state CtC groups, learn more about the need and role of SPF in assisting CtC grantees, and determine the level of readiness of each state to help shape a regional vision. At the time of this evaluation, SPF confirmed site visits with CtC leadership in Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas, with plans to meet with groups in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Skills Trainings: Two skills-building training sessions were conducted in Spring 2002, one focused on education policy and the second on tax reform. According to a Southern Partners Fund update to Ford, “The Mississippi Collaborative...agreed to take leadership in developing the training for CtC participants on education organizing, and the Tennesseans for Fair Taxation...agreed to take the lead in developing training on tax reform. The tax reform planning committee also included representation from Alabama Arise and ProTex.” SPF conducted numerous conference calls to plan for these meetings.

STATE RESPONSES TO SPF’S WORK: On a scale of 0–4, survey responses to Southern Partners Fund’s activities were as follows: two states rated SPF as being (3) somewhat helpful, two as (2) not helpful, and one as (2.5). According to Leroy Johnson of the Mississippi collaborative, “The Southern Partners Fund helped our collaborative develop a regional sense of our issues and alliances.” The Alabama Organizing Project responded that it was “difficult to find ways they could be helpful, but their multi-state caucus on tax reform was useful.”

Two states described the Southern Collaborations that Count Convening in Atlanta (2000) as “not very helpful.” In an October 2001 report to the Foundation, SPF acknowledged that there was “inadequate coordination—confusing communications, competing goals, unclear role expectations, insufficient attention to the details, and too much on process and not enough on product, [which] is an outcome of over-extending the coordination team.” Indeed, an SPF financial report indicated that nearly half of the confirmed participants did not attend, costing SPF \$13,618 in cancellation fees. SPF attributed some of these problems to staff transitions. According to Program Director Janet Perkins in her narrative report to the Ford Foundation, “New people come with new

ideas or different interpretations to existing ideas. This initiative is full of transitional elements from the Ford Foundation down to the planning team. A new program officer at Ford, a new southern regional coordinator at Southern Partners Fund, and new program team members planning the event are problematic.” Despite having, as Southern Partners Fund described it, “a bumpy start [in] building regional collaborative relationships...it is a start on which we can build.” Both Perkins and SPF Executive Director Joan Garner expressed a greater satisfaction towards the end of the organization’s involvement with CtC, particularly with regard to grantees “deciding to focus on tax policy and public education reform on a *regional* basis.”

“This innovative governance structure gives the Southern Partners Fund an insight, an understanding, and an energy rarely seen in the philanthropic world.”

Western States Center

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: Founded in 1987, Western States Center’s mission is “to build a progressive movement for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice in the eight states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah and Alaska.” The Center works on three levels:

- **Strengthening grassroots organizing and community-based leadership.** As part of this effort, Western States sponsors the Western Institute for Organizing and Leadership Development (WILD) and the Community Strategic Training Initiative (CSTI). WILD is an intensive, year-long training program through which participants develop skills and relationships in a peer network that crosses constituencies, issues, and geography. CSTI is an annual, regional convening that provides training and meeting opportunities for key leaders and organizations to address emerging regional and national issues. Now in its 13th year, CSTI draws over 400 participants from 150 organizations. The Center also provides hands-on technical assistance and consultation to organizations across the region.
- **Building long-term, strategic alliances** among community, environmental, labor, social justice, and other public interest organizations. Both Progressive Leadership Alliance Network (PLAN) and the United Vision for Idaho (UVI) were created through the work of the Center’s Western Progressive Leadership Network (WPLN), which the Center describes

as building the “capacity of informed communities to participate in the public policy process and in elections.” This includes supporting state research work on money in politics, campaign finance reform efforts, and grassroots voter education and mobilization in Latino and other immigrant communities.

- **Assisting organizations with race-related issues.** The Center’s Research and Action for Change and Equity (RACE) Program supports research, education and action on race-related issues at the community level. It includes a Dismantling Racism training program, issue education, strategic convenings of allied organizations working towards racial justice, and focused organizational development within communities of color.

SCOPE OF GRANTS: The Center received two, two-year grants totaling \$1,000,000, beginning in January 1999. In his Recommendation for Grant Approval, Lipsky describes the funding as “supplemental support to an intermediary organization promoting civic participation, and for training and technical assistance to CtC initiative grantees in the Northwest.” Grant activities were both directly and indirectly related to CtC grantees and included development of RACE, support for the Western Progressive Leadership Network, training programs and events, and trainings and technical assistance for CtC grantees tailored to their organizational and programmatic needs and goals.

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: CtC grantees benefited directly from the RACE project, participation in the Center’s trainings and events, and technical assistance. Western States reported that well over 200 staff, board members, and leaders from CtC have participated in the Center’s activities, including:

Trainings and Events: CtC grantees participated in annual WILD and CSTI activities. In 1999, six of the 17 participants in WILD were CtC grantees, and 75 of the 450 staff and leaders of CSTI were from CtC member groups.

Research and Action for Change and Equity (RACE): Staff and leaders of IWN, OA, PLAN, and UVI participated in the Dismantling Racism trainings, which also included message development for OA’s prescription drug campaign and PLAN’s felony reenfranchisement work. The Center also worked with PLAN, UVI, and CAUSA on Latino/immigrant voter education and mobilization.

Technical Assistance and Organizational Support: The Center provided on-site organizational development and planning work with UVI, IWN, OCPP, PLAN, ROP, and CAUSA. Based on planning and development needs, the Center provided each group with organizational development assistance, such as staff development, meeting facilitation, fundraising assistance, and on-site training. UVI, PLAN, and OA also received staff and financial support to conduct “money in politics” work. In particular, the Center provided training, consultation, and support to UVI’s Idahoans for Fair Elections.

STATE RESPONSES TO THE CENTER’S WORK: IWN and UVI of the Idaho Collaborative, and Nevada’s PLAN rated Western States Center’s contributions with the highest rating, “4—very helpful.” IWN and UVI noted that assistance with planning and organizational development, networking with regional partners, and fund development were most useful. Bob Fulkerson of PLAN commented that, “In addition to support around internal and external anti-racism efforts, Western States provided intensive and quality staff support for PLAN in long-range planning, organizational development, fundraising, and leadership development.” The Oregon Collaborative noted that the Center provided “strong facilitation assistance in the first round of funding” and assisted with regional planning meetings. “Once we hired staff and were soundly moving forward, they gave us more room to determine when and what services we needed,” notes ROP Director Marcy Westerling. During this second phase of collaborative work, a number of Oregon CtC grantees benefited from Western States’s assistance and programmatic opportunities. Other member groups, particularly new collaborative members and those with limited prior experience working with the Center, noted that they were less clear on what support options were available and that the Center did not actively explore these options with them, but added that the Center’s services have “constant regional value.” The Washington Living Wage Movement responded that they had been contacted but generally did not use Western States Center’s services; this, however, may primarily be attributed to the collaborative’s ongoing work with NWFCO.

“Western States provided intensive and quality staff support for PLAN in long-range planning, organizational development, fundraising, and leadership development.”

Technical Assistance

The Foundation funded two organizations to provide direct technical assistance to all of the collaboratives: the Alliance for Justice and the Progressive Technology Project. Funding for the Alliance for Justice was largely motivated by the Foundation's desire to ensure that collaboratives understood the federal laws with respect to lobbying and electoral work. As described in previous chapters, Ford Foundation grant agreements place strict limits on lobbying activities. Funding for the Progressive Technology Project was intended to help collaborative member groups analyze the role of technology in fulfilling their mission and expand their technology capacity.

Alliance for Justice

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: Founded in 1979, the Alliance for Justice is an association of 60 civil rights, women's, consumer, legal, environmental, and public interest organizations. Its mission is to:

- **Advance the cause of justice for all Americans** through education and advocacy on the selection and confirmation of federal judges, and by additional work to promote access to justice through the courts;
- **Strengthen the nonprofit sector's influence on public policy** through workshops, technical assistance, and plain-language legal guides that give nonprofits and foundations a better understanding of the laws that govern their participation in the policy process; and
- **Train and inspire the next generation of public interest advocates** through projects that expand the skills of younger advocates and promote youth and youth-led activism around critical public policy issues.

SCOPE OF GRANTS: The Alliance received two, three-year grants as supplemental support for the Nonprofit Advocacy Project for a total of \$1,182,000 beginning in September 1998. As outlined by Program Officer Urvashi Vaid in the 2001 RGA, the Alliance received "supplemental support for the Nonprofit Advocacy Project to provide technical assistance services to CtC grantees."

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: The Alliance's primary work with CtC grantees included workshop trainings and one-on-one technical assistance.

Workshops: The Alliance conducted more than 80 workshops on laws governing lobbying and election-related activity in the 11 CtC states, including 47 sponsored by CtC groups. In recent years, the Alliance has increasingly worked to sponsor day-long “Worry-Free Advocacy” workshops that are targeted to CtC states.

Technical Assistance: The Alliance provided CtC grantees with one-on-one technical assistance to understand and comply with laws governing lobbying and election activities. The Alliance reported responding to hundreds of TA requests from CtC grantees.

Nonprofit Action Network (NPAN): Each CtC grantee was added to the Alliance’s NPAN. CtC grantees were provided with updates on changes in the laws and other developments relevant to nonprofit activity.

“The Alliance went above and beyond with ProTex. They have conducted numerous trainings in Texas that were all highly successful, well-attended, and helpful.”

Advocacy Lawyers and Accountants Network (ALAN): The Alliance used CtC funding to help create a national network of professionals to assist members of CtC collaboratives and other nonprofit organizations to comply with laws governing advocacy activities. The organization also conducted 10 multi-day ALAN workshops for attorneys and accountants during the first five years of the CtC initiative, and CtC funding from the Ford Foundation subsidized the participation of lawyers and accountants serving some CtC grantees.

Publications: All CtC grantees were given a complete set of the Alliance’s publication series of legal guides at the start of the CtC initiative and received publications such as the newly developed *E-Advocacy for Nonprofits: The Law of Lobbying and Election-Related Activity on the Net* at workshops and in response to technical assistance requests.

STATE RESPONSES TO THE ALLIANCE’S WORK: Nearly every state collaborative responded that the Alliance’s workshop trainings and hands-on technical assistance were “4–used and very helpful,” the highest rating. “The Alliance for Justice was our best experience with a Ford TA provider,” says Scott Douglas of the Alabama Organizing Project. “They came and explained to us face-to-face how

to use our legal status as a nonprofit to further our mission.” Valerie Benavidez of ProTex wrote, “The Alliance went above and beyond with ProTex. They have conducted numerous trainings in Texas that were all highly successful, well-attended, and helpful.” Jennifer Bumgarner of the NC Alliance for Economic Justice noted that, “Whenever the NCAEJ or its partners have asked them to come to North Carolina, they have come. Their trainings were very detailed, with excellent materials to accompany them.”

Progressive Technology Project (PTP)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: The Progressive Technology Project is a relatively new technical assistance organization, founded in 1998. PTP provides grants and technical assistance to community-based organizations in an effort to further their mission by improving their technological understanding, capacity, and effectiveness. The organization received a support grant that underwrote its participation in CtC and describes its major goals as:

- Defining the role of information technologies in strengthening community organizing efforts to impact public policy, develop citizen leaders, and build effective organizations;
- Developing organizational support and capacity-building strategies that allow grassroots groups to use information technologies as significant and appropriate elements of their organizing efforts; and
- Sharing examples of effective uses of technology and organizational support strategies that advance community organizing efforts.

SCOPE OF GRANTS: The Progressive Technology Project received two grants under the CtC initiative for a total of \$650,000. According to the Ford grant agreement, the first grant of \$400,000 was made in 1999 to support the provision of technical assistance over two years in the areas of technology and finance for six CtC grantees in the South (AL, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN). PTP received a second grant of \$250,000 in 2000 to provide technical assistance over the course of a year to the remaining five collaboratives (ID, NV, OR, TX, WA).

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: PTP’s primary work included comprehensive technology assessments and equipment upgrades and purchases.

Technology Assessments: PTP reported conducting assessments with lead grantees in each state and the majority of collaborative members par-

ticipating in the CtC initiative. Assessments included surveys, face-to-face meetings and site visits, and phone follow-up. The assessments were used to identify organizational goals, strategies, and technology capacity and make organization-specific recommendations.

Equipment Upgrades and Purchases: PTP worked with the participating organizations to coordinate the purchase of all equipment and services identified in the recommendations. Groups were given three options: reimbursement, direct payment to vendors, or prepayment of purchases. Significant equipment purchases and upgrades such as copy machines, desktop and laptop computers, shared software, and internet access were made in each state. While the expenditure data was not readily available for the first grant cycle, PTP reported spending \$154,150 on equipment in the second grant cycle (62 percent of their total CtC grant).

Training and Assistance: As part of the first grant cycle, PTP brought two participants from each of the six lead grantees in the southern region (TX was assisted in the second cycle) to a two-day training in Washington, DC on database design and how to track members, fundraising, and program evaluations, as well as how to assess and plan for future technology needs.

Financial Services: In addition to technology assistance, PTP conducted financial assessments with lead grantees in Alabama, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee that included interviews with the executive director and key financial staff, as well as a review of financial records. Based on assessments of accounting systems, reporting, recordkeeping, and financial control policies, recommendations were reviewed and assistance was provided to help each organization strengthen its financial technology capacity.

STATE RESPONSES TO PTP'S WORK: Justin Maxson, former Director of PTP and primary agent of PTP's participation in the CtC initiative, notes that he had envisioned a broader role in state collaborative efforts. "We had high standards

"Progressive Technology Project was very helpful in providing recommendations and finding software and equipment that met out organizational needs."

in terms of what we expected from groups initially, and we were coming from a mission that includes technology as one tool to further progressive community organizing. But, for the most part we provided guidance on the use of the pass-through grants for hardware and software that were part of our CtC contract with Ford.” Despite Maxson’s assessment, nearly all of CtC grantees reported that PTP services were either “very helpful” or “somewhat helpful.” Bob Fulkerson of PLAN wrote that PTP “helped PLAN and member groups get the best bang for our buck technology wise.” Leroy Johnson of the Mississippi Education Working Group noted, “They were very helpful in working through our technology problems, but even more helpful in providing recommendations and finding software and equipment that met our organizational needs.” In addition, members of the Oregon Collaborative were appreciative that PTP staff were “good listeners and helped suggest realistic timelines.”

National Policy Organizations

The Foundation used the CtC initiative as an opportunity to make grants to two national organizations: the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), whose work the Foundation had long supported. CPA was funded to support state-based social justice work across the country. Similarly, EPI was supported to create the Economic Analysis Research Network (EARN), which has become a resource for state-based nonprofits and policymakers working on economic justice issues. Both organizations received general support funding for their national work. The scope of this evaluation, however, is limited to CPA’s and EPI’s direct work with state CtC collaboratives.

Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: CPA supports “progressive elected leaders to interact with grassroots organizations in order to make public policies that truly benefit local constituencies.” The organization’s literature describes a broad range of state-level policy victories and reports more than 750 progressive elected leaders in its various networks. Its strategy includes working with elected officials to “create a community of leaders that includes politicians, policy professionals, and community activists.” The organization’s key activities include:

- **Maintaining a website that has a monthly newsletter and a searchable database** of contact information for over 800 progressive national, state, and local organizations and provides links to state legislative web pages (www.StateAction.org);
- **Publishing an annual *State of the States* report**, searchable online, with key statistics and information for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia;
- **Coordinating the State Issue Forums (SIF)**, a collaboration of more than 50 national advocacy organizations working to advance policy at the state level. SIF serves as the representative of nonprofit policy and advocacy groups to the National Conference of State Legislatures;
- **Sponsoring two annual fellowship programs for state legislators**; and
- **Developing policy alternatives** on a wide range of social issues—such as education, health, and taxes—and publishing the policies online and in CPA’s annual Blueprint for the States.

SCOPE OF GRANTS: CPA received a total of \$1,000,000 in CtC funding, including two grants covering a span of four years starting in December 1998. The grants were for project support for a capacity-building initiative to link community-based organizations with public leaders for more effective policy innovation. In CPA’s 2001 proposal to the Ford Foundation, the Center’s goal was described as “maximizing 20 years of experience in the states on critical social and economic issues and better incorporating what progressive elected leaders who are part of CPA’s networks need to fashion policies that meet the needs of families and communities.” Program Officer Marcia Smith’s RGA was to “support a new project, Capacity Building in a Time of Devolution,” through which “CPA would build an electronic communications network to make research, information, and analysis more immediately accessible to both nonprofit and state policy leaders, increase the reach of its current publications program, and deepen its ability to provide technical assistance to public officials.” These activities were intended to enhance the

“State leaders need to be able to bring legislators and community leaders together to discuss some of the local as well as state issues.”

work of the CtC grantees, as well as other state-based organizations across the country.

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: The majority of CPA's work was indirectly related to the CtC collaboratives' efforts. However, CPA provided leadership trainings and networking opportunities for CtC grantees.

Leadership trainings for grassroots and legislative leaders:

CPA provided two grassroots trainings in the Southeast to help develop effective advocacy skills. During the trainings in Charlotte, NC and Jackson, MS in 2001, participants enhanced their skills in communicating ideas and developing effective messages, coalition building, and developing issue campaign plans. Fourteen of the 24 organizations participating in the Jackson training were CtC grantees, as were three individuals out of the 16 participating in Charlotte. "State leaders need to be able to bring legislators and community leaders together to discuss some of the local as well as state issues in order to make healthy communities," notes training participant Betty L. Petty of the CtC collaborative Mississippi Education Working Group.

Networking: Collaboration partners were provided with networking and information-sharing opportunities through CPA's programs and events, most notably the Summit on the States and regional conferences. CPA also developed a website and listserv for CtC grantees. After attending the women's caucus at the CPA 2000 Annual Summit and meeting participating state legislators, Merika Coleman of Greater Birmingham Ministries, the lead CtC grantee in the Alabama collaborative, was inspired to run for local office. "We haven't always seen direct or dramatic results from the intermediary support we've gotten as CtC participants, but CPA certainly came through for us in a big way and changed my life in the process." Coleman also participated in CPA's Southeast Policy Leaders Forum and won her bid to become an Alabama State Representative.

STATE RESPONSES TO CPA'S WORK: State CtC collaboratives' responses to CPA's services were mixed. Nearly half indicated that they had no contact with CPA or that they had contact but did not use CPA's services. A number of these groups indicated that either they did not know that CPA was an ancillary

grantee, or, if they did, were not aware of what services CPA was supposed to provide. Those that used CPA services found them to be “somewhat useful.” The Washington Living Wage Movement found CPA’s website particularly helpful. The Alabama Organizing Project appreciated being able to attend the regional training but noted that there was little overlap with their issue priorities. The Idaho Collaborative benefited from connections to other states and deepening relationships with state officials. For example, Idaho State Representative Tom Trail, who worked closely with the Idaho Collaborative on the farmworker minimum wage campaign and with United Vision for Idaho on campaign finance reform, participated in CPA’s 2002 Eleanor Roosevelt Global Leadership Institute fellowship program. ProTex found the conference they attended useful and informative. Their challenge, as Valerie Benavidez noted, was, “I don’t think we were able to use this resource as much as others, which may have been because our collaborations were not yet fully developed. Only now have we developed coalitions that have more direction and more of an agenda where we would benefit from CPA’s services.”

Economic Policy Institute (EPI)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: Founded in 1986, the mission of the Economic Policy Institute is “to provide high-quality research and education in order to promote a prosperous, fair, and sustainable economy.” The Institute emphasizes concern for the living standards of working people, and makes its findings accessible to the general public, the media, and policymakers. The organization’s key activities include:

- **Conducting original research on economic issues**, making policy recommendations based on its findings, and disseminating its work to the appropriate audiences. EPI’s research is focused on five main economic areas: living standards/labor markets; government and the economy; globalization and trade; education; and retirement policy;
- **Coordinating the Economic Analysis & Research Network (EARN) program**, funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and the Ford Foundation. EARN holds an annual conference that “brings together people from state-based research groups along with staff of national research organizations, labor unions, and other state groups working on a broad range of living standard issues;” and

- **Publishing *State of Working America***, which has been issued annually since 1988. The organization is now also producing state-level reports when they have an in-state organizational partner.

SCOPE OF GRANT: EPI's involvement with the CtC initiative came about through a request from the Ford Foundation for the organization to include CtC grantees in EPI's existing EARN program. Over the course of the CtC initiative, EPI received two grants totaling \$281,000 beginning in July 1999 and lasting four years. In his RGA, Michael Lipsky wrote that EPI's activities "would enhance the work of the [CtC] grantees, as well as other state-based organizations across the country."

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: EPI's work was, for the most part, only indirectly related to CtC collaboratives. The Institute did provide the collaboratives with statewide economic data, and a limited number of CtC groups also received technical assistance over the phone, attended EARN conferences, or benefited from the EARN program. These groups tended to be in states where EPI had established EARN affiliates (KY, NC, OR, TX, WA). The Oregon Center for Public Policy, for example, was one such group.

STATE RESPONSES TO EPI'S WORK: The majority of state collaboratives reported having no contact with EPI or that they were contacted but did not utilize EPI's services. For CtC groups that made use of EPI, however, the results were primarily positive. Michael Leachman of the Oregon Center for Public Policy wrote, "As an EARN affiliate, the program has had terrific value for our organization." In Alabama, Kentucky, and Washington, EPI was rated as being "somewhat helpful." The Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance commented that, "The EARN conferences were helpful," and the Alabama Organizing Project noted that they benefited from "TA support by phone on tax reform."

Media Innovation

Creative Communications (CC)—the only for-profit entity supported through CtC—was funded as an experimental media innovation project in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. As Michael Lipsky notes, "Creative Communications needed seed funding to establish a news service that would be financially supported by nonprofit organizations and would cover social justice issues in each state." The Foundation's funding allowed Creative Communications to expand into print and television work, as well as to begin to develop a Spanish

language radio capacity for the three-state region. The Foundation also played a role in promoting Creative Communications by subsidizing CC's services with CtC grantees and introducing Creative Communications to state non-profits through convenings.

Creative Communications (CC)

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: CC is a communications firm that runs independent news services. The organization's work focuses in eight states—Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington. Its 2001 Annual Report describes the organization as responding to a context in which “10 major corporations dominate U.S. media and control the information in magazines, movies, newspapers, television, radio and the Internet.” Key aspects of the organization include:

- Providing news stories to mainstream media outlets across the states where it currently operates. CC estimates that in 2002 it created more than 1,600 stories that aired over 51,000 times on 910 stations; and
- Building community-based support for the CC-sponsored news services by raising funds from foundations and memberships from nonprofit organizations. While members can designate their contributions to cover specific issue areas, such as education, livable wages, etc., CC retains editorial control.

SCOPE OF GRANTS: Beginning in March 1999, Creative Communications received four grants spanning four and a half years totaling \$550,000. Three grants were to provide support for CC's independent news services in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The fourth grant of \$100,000 was for developing a Spanish-language radio news service.

DIRECT WORK WITH CTC COLLABORATIVES: CtC grantees in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington reported working with Creative Communications in the following ways:

Northern Rockies News Service (NRNS): CtC groups in Idaho were working with CC prior to the Ford initiative. Members of the Idaho Collaborative describe their relationship with CC's NRNS as contractual. “Our current agreement is that they produce a minimum of 12 and maximum of 15 stories for us each month,” says Jim Hansen of the Idaho Col-

laborative, adding, “The Ford Foundation match is for an additional five stories per month.” According to CC documents, between 1999 and 2001 NRNS “produced 171 radio stories and 89 television stories that aired in the major market, as well as smaller stations primarily in Southeast Idaho.” ICAN Director LeeAnn Hall reflects, “One reason this type of service works in states like Idaho is that there are very few local sources, and rural stations are eager for new content.”

Oregon News Service (ONS): CtC grantees contracted with CC to support half of ONS’s budget. CC Director Lark Corbeil reports that, “ONS produced 74 radio news stories from 1999 to 2000 [on issues of budget policy and priorities].”

Washington News Service (WNS): According to CC reports, an average of 40 radio stations and three newspapers report each story generated by WNS.

STATE RESPONSES TO CC’S WORK: The Washington Living Wage Movement responded that CC was “4—very helpful” and noted that they benefited most from phone consultations. The Oregon Collaborative commented that, “ONS is a wonderful tool, but its value varies by groups.” Members of the Idaho Collaborative found CC’s news service product to be useful and effective. “NRNS has had tremendous value for our organizations,” says UVI’s Jim Hansen. The Oregon and Idaho collaboratives, however, noted that two factors limited their rating to a “3—somewhat helpful”—financial costs and concerns over CC’s for-profit model.

Creative Communications differs from other CtC ancillary grantees in that, in addition to Foundation support, it requires groups to pay membership fees.

“While the fees are a burden, they also are a consumer-driven way to sustain a valuable resource,” notes GCS Program Officer Michael Lipsky. In some states, groups were also asked to help interview potential producers and recruit additional nonprofits to join the service. During the

“Creative Communications estimates that in 2002 it created more than 1,600 stories that aired over 51,000 times on 910 stations.”

course of the CtC initiative, the Foundation provided supplemental grants to Idaho and Oregon to support the work of CC. This had the unintended consequence of complicating preexisting relationships in Idaho and straining organi-

zational resources in Oregon. “We would definitely have continued to use CC, since its radio services are excellent. However, not having any say over the application of matching funds from Ford complicated our ability to negotiate our contract at a very tough financial time,” says UVI’s Jim Hansen. “The timeline to start the project was very tight and stressful,” reflects ROP’s Marcy Westering. “Paying for the service had an unexpected budget impact. We also faced the additional work of helping hire the producer and recruiting other nonprofits to subscribe to the news service.”

CC’s for-profit model was also perceived by some as in conflict with social change values. One group, not wishing to be cited by name, raised concerns over future directions of CC. “As more and more nonprofits with less explicit social change missions join the service, the progressive political message is becoming watered down.” While a number of concerns were raised about the effects of CC’s for-profit status, it is important to note that issues such as membership dues, membership growth, and political content of media messages could also be raised with a comparable nonprofit organization.

Key Challenges of the Ancillary Program

Because of the differences in funding levels, duration of grants, configurations of states where they conducted direct work, and varying types of activities they supported (a number of which fell outside the scope of this evaluation), it is not possible to conduct a comparative, across-the-board evaluation of the ancillary grantees. However, it is possible to identify a number of trends in the delivery of services:

- Ancillary grantees that received general support grants, particularly the national policy organizations, tended to incorporate the collaborative groups into existing programmatic work;
- Ancillaries that received project support grants tended to develop programs most directly related to collaborative work;
- Interaction between an ancillary grantee and a state collaborative was strongest when either a prior, ongoing relationship existed, or when the assistance provided overlapped with or emerged out of a specific need of a particular collaborative.

State collaboratives reported the most benefit from the technical skills training and technical/organizational development assistance provided by the Alliance for Justice, the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations,

the Progressive Technology Project, and Western States Center. Groups also reported benefiting from the media news service work of Creative Communications; however, they related mixed experiences in interfacing with the organization.

Ancillary grantees also benefited. They were able to expand existing programmatic work, enhance their ability to understand statewide efforts and local organizations, and, in the case of Creative Communications, develop and test innovative media tools. Collaboratives and ancillary grantees alike pointed out two challenges that prevented the ancillary program from achieving its full potential: (1) problems matching ancillary support to the CtC groups' needs, including lack of clarity about who determines need; and, (2) inadequate communications among CtC grantees, ancillary grantees, and the Foundation.

MATCHING ANCILLARY SUPPORT TO COLLABORATIVE NEEDS

Internal Foundation considerations, not collaborative-identified needs, primarily informed both initial selection of ancillary grantees and the ways in which they were funded. With the exception of a survey of collaboratives in the Southern region, a complete needs assessment was absent from the ancillary grantee selection process. The first ancillary grant, for example, went to support the Alliance for Justice and “was driven by the Foundation’s concern that CtC grantees understand what is and is not legal activity in a 501(c)(3) context,” reports Michael Lipsky, one of the architects of the initiative. Urvashi Vaid, who joined the project in its third year, adds, “One of the reasons

“These ancillary grantees were chosen to participate in CtC because in general we believe they have a contribution to make to progressive, statewide efforts.”

the Alliance for Justice was preselected was that it is well respected by Ford’s legal staff.” The Foundation’s existing relationships with a number of providers also influenced how these ancillary grantees were funded. The Center for Policy Alternatives, Economic Policy Institute, and Western States Center all received

significant, multi-year general support grants prior to the CtC Initiative. “These ancillary grantees were chosen to participate in CtC because in general we believe they have a contribution to make to progressive, statewide efforts,” states Lipsky. “Involving them in CtC was a way of getting general support funding to them, as well as providing specific benefits to the state groups.”

The lack of collaborative needs assessments resulted in a mismatch between some of the services offered and the specific needs of each collaborative. As described in the case of the Progressive Technology Project, a mismatch arose between the desire of the collaboratives to increase their technological capacity and PTP’s ambition to integrate technology into the collaboratives’ organizing strategies. The collaboratives were unable to utilize PTP’s work in an organizing context. Similarly, a number of collaboratives were unable to benefit from EPI’s EARN network.

While acknowledging the importance of assessments, Alliance for Justice’s John Pomeranz raises concerns about strictly relying on self-identified organizational needs. “The Alliance itself is an example of a technical assistance provider that would typically be overlooked by a needs assessment but that nonetheless ended up playing an essential role in the CtC initiative,” says Pomeranz, adding, “The Alliance will almost always come out at the bottom of the list when grantees are offered a choice between somebody who will help them comply with relevant tax and election law and somebody who will buy them modern computers or help them be more effective in the media.” The positive responses of CtC grantees support this viewpoint. Because the decision to include the Alliance for Justice as an ancillary grantee was more directly driven by internal needs of the Foundation than external considerations, the benefits for collaboratives was a welcomed but largely unanticipated outcome by state CtC grantees.

“[A number of] collaboratives were unable to utilize PTP’s work in an organizing context [or] benefit from EPI’s EARN network.”

While assessments played a limited role in structuring the ancillary program, once selected by the Foundation, a number of ancillary organizations conducted both formal and informal organizational assessments. The Progressive Technology Project conducted formal technology and financial needs assessments that included surveys and site visits prior to recommending technological upgrades. Both the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations and Western States Center structured their workplans after working with select state grantees to identify organizational development and technical assistance needs. Similarly, the Southern Partners Fund assembled a planning workgroup and held two meetings involving CtC grantees to help structure the agenda for the Southern regional gathering.

Over the course of the CtC initiative, the Foundation became more responsive to collaborative needs. The Foundation conducted a survey early on with the Southern region collaboratives, which resulted in the hiring of two independent contractors; one assisted with technology needs and the other with tax and budget analysis. Similarly, the Foundation added the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations as a grantee after it became apparent that a number of collaborative members in the Northwest were already benefiting from their assistance. “As CtC evolved, it became clear that some groups had longer and stronger relationships with NWFCO than with us and vice versa,” says Western States Center Director Dan Petegorsky. “Funding both organizations allowed collaborative members to work more closely with the provider they related to the most.” The Foundation supported Creative Communications to experiment with media innovation, and when the Foundation learned about staff transitions in South Carolina they provided funding support for mentoring the new director of CAFÉ.

Despite Foundation efforts and additional ancillary support, there were still unmet needs in important areas. Ford’s Mike Edwards, head of the Governance and Civil Society Unit, comments, “Although I came in a couple of years after CtC started, it was clear that issues of race and culture were going to be central because of the geographical concentrations and the kinds of groups we wanted to participate. The staff had chosen groups that were multiracial and/or working on issues relevant to communities of color.” Tani Takagi describes this more specifically as “knowing that a lot of collaborations haven’t worked out in the past because of race issues, so in our RFP we were very deliberate in putting out that...we wanted the CtC collaborations to be diverse, to represent different constituencies.” Even though CtC was meant to support state-level policy alternatives to benefit low-income communities and people of color, the ability to assist collaboratives with internal race, class, and gender dynamics, or to provide a racial justice analysis, were not explicit criteria for selecting ancillary organizations. This explains, in part, why only four of the 11 collaboratives received ancillary support on internal race dynamics (ID, NV, OR, TN) and why only three received support on racial justice campaigns (ID, NV, OR). (CtC grantee Southern Echo assisted with racial justice work in Mississippi and South Carolina, but was not funded under the ancillary program.)

Similarly, only collaboratives in the Northwest region, served by NWFCO and Western States Center, received ancillary assistance with campaign develop-

ment. Additionally, a number of collaboratives were unable to address escalating internal conflicts, which in some cases resulted in groups leaving the collaboration. While the Foundation may have been willing to provide assistance for mediation, collaboratives were unaware of this possibility and, with the exception of the South Carolina collaborative, did not request it.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES

The Foundation did not clearly articulate the scope of the ancillary services to CtC grantees. Olga Lozano, the Alliance for Justice’s administrator for the CtC work, sums up the issue as follows: “Ideally, Ford would have had a mechanism for formally introducing the collaboratives to the intermediaries and promoting the value of the different kinds of TA being offered. Grantees probably did not get enough information from the Foundation about what TA was available and why.” Interviews with a number of collaborative members confirm this assessment. “We can’t really comment on the ancillary portion of CtC, because we were never clear about who the providers were or what they were supposed to do for us,” says Debra Tyler-Horton of the North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice. This lack of communication with CtC grantees also created confusion among collaborative groups who felt that CtC funding of ancillary organizations would result in more tailored services for each collaborative. “Providing support for CtC grantees was part of a broader general support grant for Western States,” says the Center’s Dan Petegorsky. “Because of this lack of clarity, there were different levels of expectations, and that may have created some tensions.”

“The ability to assist collaboratives with internal race, class, and gender dynamics, or to provide a racial justice analysis, were not explicit criteria for selecting ancillary organizations.”

A number of ancillary organizations faced major hurdles in translating their own visions, perspectives, and services into a form that was readily accessible and useful to many CtC participants. In some instances, collaborative members did not have the capacity to take advantage of services provided by ancillary grantees. Center for Policy Alternatives’ Tim McFeeley notes that CPA staff “thought we would create a website and listerv

for grantees, but it didn't go anywhere" because CPA could not make the information available electronically in a format that was useful for groups that did not already have a relatively sophisticated research capacity. According to CPA's Diallo Brooks, "Alabama and Mississippi were our standout experiences. In Mississippi, we learned more from them than they learned from us, especially regarding the larger progressive movement." Brooks goes on to say, "I think we are going to be able to relate to the struggles in the South in a new way because of our CtC work there."

The Economic Policy Institute faced similar problems. While EPI provided the collaboratives with statewide economic data such as labor market statistics, after two years the Foundation and EPI mutually agreed to end the organiza-

tion's participation in CtC. EPI's Lawrence Mishel states, "We couldn't work well with collaboratives that didn't have significant existing research capacity, and our funding from Ford was primarily for [project support for EARN] in any case." Valerie Benavidez of the Texas Col-

"There were different levels of expectations, and that may have created some tensions."

laborative agrees with this assessment. "While the Economic Policy Institute was able to give us raw data about our state budget, labor statistics, etc., we couldn't go very far with just the facts. So, we contracted with United for a Fair Economy to conduct popular education sessions with our members about how tax policy relates to our mission."

State collaboratives were not always responsive to ancillary support services. Even the Alliance for Justice, which was cited by many CtC grantees as being particularly helpful, faced communication barriers. "In some states, we weren't very useful," the Alliance's Pomeranz recalls regretfully, "because the collaborative either did not think they needed help regarding lobbying protocols, or they could/would not devote staff time to attending the Alliance's workshops in their state." Pomeranz, however, notes also that, "Where leaders of a state collaborative were unwilling or unable to help us organize a workshop, we worked with other partners in the state to schedule a workshop and did specific outreach both to include CtC grantees and to provide one-on-one TA." PTP also cited a lack of response to some of their outreach efforts. For example, Justin Maxson makes the assessment that, "Without funding as a carrot, PTP wouldn't have gotten through some hard times with the groups. We had to pursue some

groups just to get them to spend the technology regrant funds. Some of those tricky relationships with the groups we got through because we all wanted the [Ford CtC] money.”

Integrated support was a missing element of the ancillary services and might have resulted in more significant cumulative outcomes if included. Although the Foundation sponsored a number of gatherings, some

of which were attended by one or more ancillary organizations, there was no convening of ancillary grantees to plan how to enhance and integrate their efforts to ensure a more effective ancillary program. “Hindsight is 20/20,” comments NWFCO Director LeeAnn Hall, “but it would have been helpful to have an ongoing conversation about the goals of

participating organizations and how the intermediaries were going to provide the support needed to help achieve those goals.” In Oregon, for example, collaborative members received assistance from the Alliance for Justice, Creative Communications, the Economic Policy Institute, the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, the Progressive Technology Project, and Western States Center. Had the Foundation convened ancillary organizations early on in the CtC initiative to plan how to address identified collaborative needs and provided ongoing monitoring of how these needs were and were not being met, a very different picture of ancillary support might have emerged:

- The division of labor among ancillaries might have been clearer, particularly among ancillary organizations that provide similar support;
- Ancillary organizations might have worked in tandem to complement and reinforce each other’s work;
- Ongoing monitoring might have helped ancillaries recognize collaborative stages of development and reconfigure support as needed; and
- Coordination, integration, and increased communication among service providers might have resulted in more synergy between and among groups and service providers, resulting in measurable, cumulative positive impact on the work.

“It would have been helpful to have an ongoing conversation about the goals of participating organizations and how the intermediaries were going to provide the support needed to help achieve those goals.”

Summary of Key Lessons

While collaboratives benefited from ancillary support, an initial assessment of collaborative needs would help clarify the goals for the provision of services and determine the role and division of labor of ancillary groups. In addition to an initial assessment, there should be an ongoing process for reviewing collaborative development and modifying technical assistance services.

Funders should provide financial support for collaboratives to choose and contract with appropriate assistance providers. In many instances, direct contractual relationships between collaboratives and ancillary organizations would ensure that providers meet the needs of collaborative groups.

“One size does not fit all.” Even when groups realize they are in need of specific types of assistance, the same techniques or strategies are not workable in every situation. Matching providers with recipients is a difficult task that requires as much knowledge of the capacity and culture of the recipient as the skills of the provider.

Ancillary assistance often includes more than the provision or transfer of technical skills. Each ancillary organization has its own set of political values, a distinct culture, and an approach to the work that is grounded

in those values and culture. One example of this was PTP’s desire to work with groups on integrating technology with organizing. These efforts were initially resisted by collaboratives. In addition, organizations providing assistance are typically much better resourced than local and state activist groups in terms of funding base, staffing levels, and technical

“Matching providers with recipients is a difficult task that requires as much knowledge of the capacity and culture of the recipient as the skills of the provider.”

expertise. For instance, CPA’s attempt to develop a listserv and provide web-based services was not useful given the current capacities of collaborative members. In order for relationships between providers and organizations to mesh, either the values and cultures of both organizations must be similar, or one or both parties must work to set up a system of communication and accountability that is mutually beneficial.

Developing a systematic and coordinated approach to the delivery of ancillary services may increase effectiveness. This approach would include ongoing assessment, feedback, and coordination. Assessments of the needs of both a collaborative and its member groups would help ensure that services match needs. By getting systematic feedback from providers and grantees during the entire course of a project, mid-project corrections can be made if necessary. Finally, an independent “go-between” could potentially assist recipients and providers with matching needs to services, coordinating different providers, and monitoring progress.

“Creating opportunities for interaction among collaboratives and ancillary grantees, particularly at the beginning of a new initiative, would improve coordination and communication.”

Increased interactions between and among ancillary organizations and collaboratives may improve outcomes. Perhaps most importantly, ancillary groups need to convene and work in tandem in order to complement each other’s work. Creating opportunities for interaction among collaboratives and ancillary grantees, particularly at the beginning of a new initiative, would improve coordination and communication. As the only ancillary grantee that was both supported throughout the initiative and national in scope, the Alliance for Justice helped play a networking role during the early years of the initiative. In the CtC initiative, collaboratives appeared to have benefited most when interactions with ancillaries were one-on-one in organizational settings. Collaboratives may also benefit from peer support and cross-collaborative trainings and activities across states to increase leadership and staff development, facilitate information sharing, and create replicable models. ●



CHAPTER NINE

Observations, Lessons, and Recommendations

*t*he Ford Foundation launched its six-year Collaborations that Count initiative in 1998 to “promote a more inclusive democratic process and achieve equitable policy outcomes at the state level by building the capacity of key organizations and strengthening the links between policy analysis and community organizing.” (Ford Foundation, 2000) What factors contributed most significantly to the trajectory of a collaborative? This chapter addresses this question in three parts:

- An assessment of the changing political and economic context in which collaborative work has occurred;
- An analysis of six internal variables that help determine collaborative success; and
- An examination of how relationships with external organizations influenced collaborative work, including relationships with ancillary organizations, funders, and external evaluators.

The chapter also includes key lessons and recommendations for funders and organizations that are either considering or are already engaged in this type of collaborative effort.

The Changing Political and Economic Context

As the state case studies indicate, collaborative efforts for social and economic justice have been waged in the face of an often hostile political and economic climate. Yet despite the opposition, collaborative work in several states has led to concrete policy outcomes, including education reform in Mississippi, regulations on industrial agriculture in Kentucky, voter reenfranchisement in Nevada, food stamp access in Oregon, limits on racial profiling in Texas, and better farmworker wages in Idaho, among others. While not all collaboratives can claim policy victories, all have made some progress toward achieving external results. As the chart in Chapter 1 titled, “Outcomes of State-Based Collaborative Work” indicates, there have been many different outcomes from state-based efforts. Collaboratives have expanded their membership to include new constituencies, incubated new organizations, developed internal decision-making and resource allocation processes, and engaged in leadership training and constituent education. Most collaboratives produced research reports, garnered media attention, and/or engaged in other efforts that shifted public discourse around issues of social and economic justice.

As the state-based efforts worked toward these outcomes during the course of the CtC initiative, political and economic shifts across the nation became an increasingly significant determinant of many state campaigns, strategies, goals,

“Collaborative work has led to education reform, regulations on industrial agriculture, limits on racial profiling, and better farmworker wages.”

and outcomes. When the Ford Foundation first envisioned the CtC initiative, the impetus for an increased focus on state-level collaboration between organizing and policy groups was devolution—the transfer of authority from the federal government to the states. Ford’s Request for Proposals stated, “As respon-

sibility for income support and job training shifts to the states, state governments now have primary responsibility for dealing with the complexities of the remedies for poverty and inequality.” (Ford Foundation RFP, 1998) Although devolution framed much of the initial work of several collaboratives, over the first five years of the initiative three major occurrences proved to be equally profound in terms of their implications for low-income families, immigrants, and communities of color: the consolidation of conservative power in states; the crisis of September 11, 2001; and the recession that began in the spring of 2001.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF CONSERVATIVE POWER AT THE STATE LEVEL

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the conservative movement helped develop more than 60 regionally-based conservative think tanks to capitalize on devolutionary policies pursued by the Reagan administration. Patterned after the national Heritage Foundation, these state-based organizations have developed the capacity to provide conservative legislators and staff with the “Intellectual Ammunition” (the name of one of the publications of the conservative Heartland Institute) to support conservative legislative efforts, referenda, and ballot initiatives. (Smith, 1991) A report by the People for the American Way Foundation, *Buying the American Dream*, quoted one journalist’s observation: “*With increasing frequency, legislation, proposed and enacted, can be traced directly to think-tank position papers on such conservative agenda items as welfare cuts, privatization of public services, private options and parental choice in schools, deregulation of workplace safety, tax limitations and other reductions in government, even selling of the national parks.*”

Funding for these efforts has been both consistent and generous. Between 1992 and 1994, well before the Ford Devolution Initiative, conservative funders awarded more than \$9 million to state or regional policy institutions. The Heritage Foundation has played a leading role in this effort. It houses the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which maintains the links among conservative state think tanks, foundations, and national organizations. The council organizes annual conferences for state think tanks, publishes a resource guide to public policy experts, and develops models for effective policy research and marketing activities. (www.mediatransparency.org/state_regional.htm) A 1999 report by David Callahan for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy noted that in 1996 alone conservative think tanks spent \$158 million to promulgate their ideas and that funding for the decade would top \$1 billion.

The State Policy Network, an expanding conservative coalition of state-level policy think tanks, has affiliates in all 11 CtC states, while a parallel structure of Family Policy Councils developed by the conservative Focus on the Family exists in eight of the 11 CtC states. Such entities have been able to interface “strikingly with conservative politicians, especially Republicans.” (Political Research Associates, 1999) Despite their often blatantly partisan approach, this combination of think tanks and policy advocates has managed to create a credible and formidable force.

SEPTEMBER 11 AND ITS AFTERMATH

The events of September 11, 2001 have had a broad impact on low-income communities, particularly communities of color. Working families suffered after September 11, as unemployment rates skyrocketed, again having a disproportionate impact on people of color. (Applied Research Center, 2002) As the box below indicates, since September 11, 2001, immigrants and people of color have been the targets of law enforcement practices that threaten basic civil rights and

Since September 11, 2001, the Department of Justice, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now incorporated into the Department of Homeland Security), and the U.S. Congress have enacted numerous policies that infringe on the civil liberties of all Americans, but particularly of immigrants. These policies include:

- USA PATRIOT Act, which gives broad powers to conduct searches, use electronic surveillance, and detain suspected terrorists.
- Indefinite detention for immigrants, even after an immigration judge has ordered their release for lack of evidence.
- Questioning of 8,000 men ages 18–33 from countries allegedly connected to al Qaeda, with investigators instructed to hold those with immigration violations.
- Creation of secret military tribunals to try non-citizens and closure of deportation hearings.
- Operation Tarmac, a multi-agency sweep of airports nationwide resulting in more than 1,000 arrests and deportations of undocumented workers.
- The Absconders Initiative, which sent the names of 314,000 immigrants with outstanding orders of deportation to the FBI for inclusion in the National Crime Information Center database, resulting in 758 arrests as of January 2003.
- No-match letters from the Social Security Administration to more than 750,000 employers, compared to 100,000 in previous years, resulting in thousands of workers losing their jobs.
- Required special registration for immigrants from 35 countries, resulting in the arrest, detention, and deportation of thousands for minor visa violations.

(ColorLines Magazine, Spring 2003)

liberties. Most CtC state-based initiatives, with the notable exceptions of Oregon and South Carolina, have not addressed the targeting of immigrants by either hate crimes or government action.

THE RECESSION AND BUDGET CUTS

The recession that started in early 2001 has threatened the job security of millions of Americans. As of February 2003, 8.5 million Americans were unemployed. (Bureau of Labor Statistics February Report, 2003) At the same time, the net change in private payrolls—which Lawrence Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute calls “the best measure of the absolute amount of employment and unemployment trends”—had been negative for 20 straight months, constituting the longest such depression in the labor market since 1944–46. (Gonloff, 2003) Meanwhile, the vast majority of temporary, part-time, and seasonal workers were ineligible for unemployment insurance, and time limits for welfare benefits had begun to expire. Just as unemployed workers and their families were most in need of support, the recession diminished state tax revenues and pushed states into severe budget deficits.

“Some state collaboratives put proactive campaigns on hold as the likelihood of new state spending diminished and the defense of existing social programs against budget cuts became a new priority. ”

Most states, required by their state constitutions to maintain balanced budgets, have implemented or are considering massive cuts in education, healthcare, and other social programs. For the 11 CtC state collaboratives, the recession and budget crises have had an immediate, intense impact (See chart on next page). The recession also decreased the amount of funding available for social change work from both individual donors and foundations.

In terms of campaign work, some state collaboratives put proactive campaigns on hold as the likelihood of new state spending diminished and the defense of existing social programs against budget cuts became a new priority. Other collaboratives saw the budget crisis as an opportunity to push for reforms in state tax policies. Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Mississippi, and Nevada, for example, are among the ten states with the nation’s highest sales taxes, and with the exception of Mississippi these states have no income tax with which to apportion a fair share of the tax burden to wealthier earners. (Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, 2003) The inability to raise revenue for social spend-

STATE	FY 2004 BUDGET DEFICIT (millions of dollars)	DEFICIT AS PERCENT OF STATE BUDGET
ALABAMA	\$500	9.30%
IDAHO	\$200	10.1%
KENTUCKY	\$360	5.1%
MISSISSIPPI	N/A	N/A
NEVADA	\$359	19%
NORTH CAROLINA	\$2,000	14.6%
OREGON	\$950 to \$1,267	20.4 to 27.2%
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$700	13.6%
TENNESSEE	\$500	6.6%
TEXAS	\$4,000 to \$7,800	13.1 to 25.5%
WASHINGTON	\$1,000 to \$1,334	8.9 to 11.9%
U.S. Total/Average	\$71,058 to \$87,896	14.5 to 18.0%

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2003

ing without placing the burden disproportionately on the poor has long stifled progressive reforms in these states. Since the recession began, a number of states that had not previously worked on tax reform redirected their resources to focus on the issue. This issue overlap has raised opportunities for cross-collaborative learning, and these state-based efforts have become important resources for each other in their respective tax reform campaigns.

Six Variables Influencing Collaborative Success: Key Lessons

While collaborative outcomes were certainly influenced significantly by changes in the political and economic context, there are also a number of internal factors that affected collaboratives' ability to succeed. In Chapter 2 of this report, we identify six variables that, to varying degrees, influenced the ability of collaboratives to interpret, adjust to, and be effective within a changing political and economic climate:

1. the level and intensity of established **prior relationships** among collaborative groups before the start of the Ford Foundation CtC initiative;
2. different articulations of a shared **political vision**;

3. collaboratives' ability to negotiate **power dynamics** among groups and individuals;
4. **internal processes** that can affect external outcomes;
5. **campaign leadership** that can affect policy outcomes; and
6. **stages of collaborative development** that can affect strategies and allocation of resources.

This section addresses the relationship between these variables and the work of the collaboratives in the CtC initiative, and presents key lessons and recommendations for collaboratives and grantmakers as they consider engaging in or supporting ongoing or future collaborations of this kind.

PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS

Clearly, national and state political and economic trends—such as the recession and budget deficits, September 11 and its aftermath, and political shifts—have had a major impact on policy and organizing opportunities and have required state collaboratives to exercise ingenuity and flexibility in responding to changing circumstances. However, while many collaboratives have shifted campaigns and strategies to adjust to the changing external climate, the factor that most closely correlates with the collaborative's ability to achieve external outcomes within the timeframe of the CtC grant is prior relationships grounded in campaign work.

Lesson 1: The status of prior relationships among collaborative partners was the strongest indicator of the types of activities that collaboratives focused on during the Collaborations that Count program.

Depending on the status of prior relationships, collaboratives faced different internal challenges, particularly in terms of level of trust and shared political analysis, and had different capacities to engage in external campaign work. The varying degrees of prior interaction can be categorized as a) prior joint campaign work; b) prior agreement to, or formation of, a formal institution; c) prior collaborative work; and d) prior relationships but no formal collaboration across all groups.

- a) **Prior Joint Campaign Work.** States where groups had already worked together on specific campaigns (Mississippi, Idaho, Washington) were

highly successful at achieving external outcomes, largely because they were able to focus their efforts and structure their joint work on specific external results.

- b) **Prior Agreement to, or Formation of, a Formal Institution.** States that had already created or decided to create a formal, multi-issue statewide institution (Texas, Nevada) were also highly successful at producing external outcomes. These institutions consist of broad networks of organizations across the states and provide campaign leadership on specific issues as determined by the staff and boards. Ford funding in these states filled a predetermined need and helped build the capacity of a statewide institution.
- c) **Prior Collaborative Work.** Two states had already worked in formal collaboration. Alabama had been functioning as a collaborative since 1994, four years prior to the Ford CtC grant, with a focus that had been primarily internal. The collaborative has continued to devote its resources predominantly toward enhancing leadership, extending organizational capacity, and building and expanding internal systems. Mississippi had both formal campaign experience among the groups and a collaborative (the Mississippi Education Working Group) that was in place prior to the CtC initiative.
- d) **No Formal Collaboration.** Five states came together in formal collaboration largely at the impetus of the Ford Collaborations that Count grant process—Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Oregon. Because not all of the groups in these states had prior working relationships with each of the partners, the collaboratives spent more time on relationship-building, internal processes, and addressing intergroup power dynamics. North Carolina and Tennessee, both of which received planning grants to determine how a collaborative could work, focused on internal vision and capacity-building. South Carolina began with an external campaign until internal tensions, exacerbated by the selection of an issue campaign that did not play to the strengths of the collaborative's member groups, compelled the group to address internal issues. Kentucky and Oregon initially launched statewide campaigns and then refocused internally to build cross-organizational vision and develop the collaborative structure before reinitiating external cam-

paigned work. With the exception of Kentucky and Oregon, these collaboratives generally demonstrated fewer policy outcomes.

Lesson 2: Prior relationships should be a consideration in, not a prerequisite for, determining collaborative membership. While collaboratives with significant prior relationships tended to focus more on external campaign work, basing collaborative membership solely on this factor may diminish the importance of other criteria, such as building new strategic alliances and reaching out to new constituencies. For example, the grassroots groups of the Oregon Collaborative all had working relationships but used the food stamp campaign in part to test the potential of working with a policy group. In addition, several collaboratives are involved in the complicated process of expanding their constituent base to include strategic partners and organizations that represent marginalized communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Engage in external campaign work. The activities of external campaign work lead to external results while strengthening relationships among collaborative partners.</p>	<p>Do not expect all collaboratives to fit the same mold. Collaboratives will differ in structure based, in large part, on the status of prior relationships.</p>
<p>Develop criteria and goals for the strategic expansion of the collaborative.</p>	<p>Encourage organizations to consider involving new partners that represent a broader constituency, while being cautious not to force unrealistic partnerships.</p>

POLITICAL VISION

As this study has defined it, political vision includes: (1) a diagnostic element—an assessment of the problems, opportunities, and challenges that face the collaborative’s constituencies; (2) a shared picture of the solutions and changes that groups want in both the short and long-term, and a concrete sense of how the groups’ efforts will achieve these changes; and (3) the ability to ground the shared analysis and the vision for the future *internally* in the experiences of the constituent members of the collaborative and to communicate them *externally* to potential allies and the broader public.

Lesson 1: Developing a political vision that is shared among groups is a necessary component of long-term collaborative work. While groups can forge short-term coalitions to advance issues work without a political vision, if the intent is to build long-term power the groups will inevitably have to face the question: “Power for whom and for what?” Political vision can solidify connections among the collaborative’s participants, while determining how issues are framed and how groups will take action. In Nevada, for example, the collaborative is explicit about its vision, and new member groups are expected to sign on in writing. Shared vision is particularly important with respect to the diagnostic dimension of vision building. If groups lack a common analysis of how and why problems exist, they will be less able to craft a collective approach for change.

Lesson 2: Cross-organizational education and constituent consolidation are important prerequisites to collective action. While many collaborative efforts are primarily driven by relationships among the staff of partner organizations, the capacity to build statewide power and influence issue debates depends, at least in part, on the ability to mobilize a significant base unified by a joint vision. Collaboratives had multiple approaches to constituent consolidation. The Kentucky and Tennessee collaboratives conducted issue development and education sessions, while the Oregon collaborative initiated an action education program that helped group members prioritize and deepen their understanding of issue work. Through its Leadership Development Program and annual Quality of Life Day, the Alabama collaborative engaged both constituent members of the collaborative and groups and individuals who were not part of the collaborative. In Texas, ProTex offered a wide variety of opportunities for members to receive education and training from other organizations, while the Mississippi Education Working Group offered training sessions focused on issue analysis and organizing.

These efforts to develop and collectivize a common vision are essential. Developing educational programs that will be effective across diverse constituencies becomes more challenging and time-consuming the larger the number of groups involved. Such programs, however, are integral to the ultimate success or failure of the collaborative’s organizing efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Allocate time and resources for cross-constituent education. When appropriate, groups can utilize the resources developed by other groups for educational work.</p> <p>Develop a joint vision statement. The collaborative should also create a formal mechanism for both new and old groups to review, revise, and recommit to the vision statement.</p> <p>Develop strategies to communicate the political vision to a broader audience.</p>	<p>Support the efforts of collaboratives to build a joint political vision. Consider the development of a political vision and the necessary internal cross-constituency educational effort a product on a par with acting to promote change at the institutional level.</p> <p>Invest in organizations that conduct issue-based training to create materials tailored to different constituencies.</p> <p>Have patience. Vision-building and cross-constituent education take time.</p>

POWER DYNAMICS

Even with an alignment of social change goals, collaboratives must negotiate often complex internal power dynamics. These dynamics emerge at numerous points during collaborative development, particularly when facing questions of resource allocation, collaborative structure, decision-making power, issue and strategy selection, relationships to funders, and the inclusion or exclusion of different groups or constituencies. In particular, collaboratives were most likely to experience conflicts that were rooted in 1) internal and external issues of race and racism, and/or 2) the differences between policy and organizing groups.

Lesson 1: Race Matters. Issues of race and racism affected the work of each of the collaboratives. Race was the major analytical frame for campaign work in Texas, Mississippi, Idaho, and Oregon. Racial dynamics were an undercurrent between policy and grassroots groups in Tennessee, North and South Carolina, and Alabama. Collaboratives in Tennessee, Nevada, and Idaho underwent intensive, internal anti-racist trainings. Even in states with primarily or exclusively white collaboratives, like Kentucky and Washington, the absence of participants of color became an issue.

Some of the contexts in which collaboratives faced issues of race and racism include:

- **Inclusion of Diverse Constituencies:** Several states have struggled with expansion of the collaborative to include communities of color.

Involving strong organizations of people of color at the beginning of a collaborative initiative does not necessarily ensure that the collaborative will be hospitable to the interests and issues of people of color. However, not doing so will guarantee future difficulties in building relationships with communities of color. As both Oregon and Idaho demonstrate, groups led by whites will need additional training and education to help multiracial partnerships succeed. And, as the South Carolina, Oregon, and North Carolina case studies illustrate, often groups that represent constituencies of color are small and understaffed. While capacity can be an issue for any organization, the only way to ensure the participation of low-income groups led by people of color is for the collaborative as a whole to allocate the resources necessary for these groups to participate in all collaborative activities.

- **Inter-Organizational Power Relationships:** Although dismantling racism training workshops can lead to internal conflict—as experiences in Idaho, Nevada, and Tennessee illustrate—collaboratives that engaged in such trainings developed processes to minimize the tokenization or marginalization of people of color within the collaborative.
- **Leadership:** Leadership transitions in nonprofits are very common. A number of collaboratives experienced turnover in lead organization staff and collaborative staff. However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of executive directors is determined largely by their ability to lead by example and their capacity to coach, develop, supervise, and work with their own staff and the leaders of other organizations. In transitions where a person of color is taking the place of a white person, other white people often have difficulty taking leadership from, and extending trust and respect to, the new leader. The transition may be even more complex if it also includes a difference in gender.

Lesson 2: To build successful collaborations of policy and organizing groups, it is necessary to bridge organizational cultures and address differences in organizational self-interest. Organizing and policy groups bring different capacities to social change work, and these differences can be leveraged to shift state-level policy debates. Yet there is no conclusive evidence that the marriage of policy and organizing groups actually produced better outcomes for the collaboratives. In examining the work of this small sample of initiatives, the collaboratives that operated without policy organizations

	ORGANIZING GROUPS	POLICY GROUPS
PRIMARY CONSTITUENCY	People who are affected by public policies	Legislators and policymakers
MEASURES OF SUCCESS	Empowering low-income people to solve public problems	Passing good legislation, blocking bad legislation
DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE	Decisions driven by membership base, leaders, and staff	Expertise of staff and board members
RESOURCES	Smaller budgets; Limited access to regional or national intermediaries	Larger budgets; Access to national policy and research networks
RACE, GENDER, AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF LEADERSHIP	Leaders are more likely to be women and people of color; Value placed on indigenous leadership	Leaders are more likely to be white and male; Most leaders have professional or advanced academic credentials

(Washington, Mississippi, Idaho) were at least as successful in the policy arena as collaboratives where groups had prior or built-in relationships between grassroots and policy organizations (Texas, Nevada, Alabama, Kentucky); and they were more successful than groups that were forming new relationships between grassroots and policy organizations (South Carolina, Tennessee, North Carolina, Oregon). Given the potential benefits of merging these two types of groups, what does this study reveal about the barriers to making these alliances efficient and effective? Differences between organizing and policy groups include:

Primary Constituency: State-level policy organizations are typically located in close proximity to the state capital, where staff members have cultivated relationships with legislators and other policy groups. Grassroots organizations primarily work at the community level to build a base of members most directly affected by public policies. The needs identified by grassroots constituencies often do not match what is perceived as desirable by policy groups or possible by decision-makers. If there is insufficient trust between the policy and organizing groups, the collaborative will not realize the potential benefits of these relationships.

Decision-Making Structure: In grassroots organizations, decision-making is often driven by a membership base, while policy groups rely on the expertise of staff or board leaders. For grassroots organizations, adopting new issues or positions that are outside of the organization's campaign focus takes

time and constituency education. Moreover, grassroots organizations are often more focused on the expressed needs of the community, while policy groups are geared to respond to a legislative environment that often presents short-lived political opportunities. As a result of these structural differences, grassroots groups are often less able than policy groups to make quick decisions on issues or policy proposals, and this difference is sometimes a source of tension.

Measures of Success: Organizing groups often conduct campaigns for changes that will both make a fundamental difference in the well-being of their members and build a membership base. Policy groups have more frequent contact with legislators on a broader range of issues and are more likely to experience policy change as an incremental or a give-and-take legislative process. Given these differences and the lengthy process necessary to consolidate a position in a grassroots community organization, at the negotiating table policy leaders may argue that “something is better than nothing” and accept policy changes that some grassroots groups may not accept without a dialogue with membership. The needs of a grassroots campaign that builds membership at times may conflict with the needs of advocacy efforts to immediately influence specific policy outcomes. These organizational differences can generate internal conflict and mistrust in a collaborative.

Resources: A survey of CtC participant groups conducted by the Applied Research Center as part of this evaluation revealed substantial disparities in budgets and resources. Overall, the partners whose primary work focused on policy development and advocacy tended to have larger budgets than groups that focused on organizing. In 2002, for example, among respondents to the survey, the average income for policy groups was approximately \$737,000, compared to \$277,000 for organizing groups. As of 2002, policy groups who responded to the survey averaged eight full-time paid staff members, twice as many as groups that emphasize organizing. (Applied Research Center CtC Survey, March/April 2003) Resource disparities affect internal capacity, organizational stability, and the ability to contribute to collaborative work, as well as power relationships among collaborative partners.

Another resource influencing responses to issues and opportunities is *the connection that policy groups have to a national infrastructure* that delivers multi-state information, analysis, and critiques about past and upcoming policy proposals. In the Collaborations that Count initiative, several of the policy groups were affiliated with the network of groups in the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, which

is also funded by the Ford Foundation, and/or policy networks developed by the Washington, DC-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute. No parallel infrastructure that recognizes the structure and politics of community organizations exists to interact with community organizations. As a result, they are often required to craft responses to complex policy proposals with little support.

Race, Gender, and Level of Education of Leadership: Racial tensions are often intertwined with and reinforced by the differences between organizing and policy groups. One of the unique characteristics of grassroots organizations is that, more than other types of organizations, they tend to validate the experiences, leadership, and problem-solving abilities of indigenous leaders. When these organizations come into contact with other types of organizations that place less value on the experience of indigenous leadership, the resulting dynamic may be conflict. In the case of policy and organizing groups, that conflict is often intertwined with race. Gender dynamics are also connected to tensions between policy groups and organizing groups. In many state collaboratives, policy groups had male leadership, while organizing groups were more commonly led by women. Tensions of race, gender, and educational level can compound the difficulties these two organizational types will have in working together effectively *unless they are explicitly addressed*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Ensure that organizations of people of color are involved as core organizations from the beginning of a collaboration. This avoids the pitfalls inherent in trying to integrate a collaborative at a later stage of development.</p> <p>Establish principles of working together that can anticipate tensions between organizational types.</p> <p>Directly address power dynamics related to differences in race, gender, sexual identity, and class.</p> <p>Take into account issues that emerge from the grassroots base in determining proactive policy agendas.</p> <p>Hone policy and research groups' materials so they are accessible to diverse audiences and can be used effectively by grassroots groups.</p>	<p>Provide training and technical assistance to help groups initiate racial justice campaigns and address internal racial dynamics.</p> <p>Direct significant resources toward capacity-building. Resource gaps that exist between policy and organizing groups should be accounted for by providing additional funding to support the contributions of groups that have comparatively fewer resources.</p> <p>Support the establishment of a national infrastructure that can meet the policy needs of community organizations.</p>

INTERNAL PROCESSES

Internal processes are important for including voices that are not usually heard, developing leadership, and proactively addressing power imbalances among organizations and individuals. These processes can also be geared explicitly toward outcomes, such as increasing a membership base, developing leaders, or advancing a campaign. However, there are limits to what transparent and democratic internal processes can do. They cannot, for instance, transcend real differences in power and capacity, nor can they guarantee more effective campaign work. Collaboratives must find a balance between focusing on internal process and working for external outcomes. While collaboratives have varied internal processes, they all address how to allocate resources, maintain accountability, and establish a division of labor. They also reflect negotiations between organizations of different types, with different resource bases and different relationships to the collaborative itself. Some key factors that influenced collaborative internal processes include the relationships among groups prior to the collaborative's formation, the selection of a lead organization, and leadership transitions.

Lesson 1: The hiring of staff or establishing a public collaborative identity did not directly correlate with external outcomes. As the documentation conducted by the Education Resources Group in 2001 (p. 2) observes “The collaboratives were organized a number of different ways: two of them (Texas and Nevada) have incorporated as independent 501(c) (3)’s; three collaboratives (Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee) have full-time coordinators, established identities with separate names, and include six to nine member groups; three collaboratives (Kentucky, Mississippi and Washington) have separate identities but no full-time staff; and Oregon has four member groups and one quarter-time staff.” (See diagrams of collaborative structures in chapters.) However, choosing to hire staff or establish an independent identity did not necessarily help collaboratives resolve questions about political vision, campaign strategy, division of labor, or other decisions that might help a collaborative achieve external results. Staff often did not have the authority to marshal resources or take leadership on campaign strategy. Rather, their primary function was to coordinate internal collaborative processes.

Lesson 2: The role of the lead organization raised unique process issues. The Ford Foundation chose one group in each state as a lead organization. There was wide variation in the types of lead organizations, their experi-

ence in managing this type of project, and their financial capacity. However, there was the perception among groups in some state collaboratives that lead organizations had more capacity, and the reality that lead organizations had more interaction with the Foundation. When a lead organization is perceived as having a greater capacity than the member organizations, there are heightened expectations of its role and responsibilities, which in turn can shift the perceived locus of power and accountability in a collaborative. In response to concerns over the role and prominence of the lead organization in North Carolina, for example, the Council of Churches assumed lead organization responsibilities from the North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center, the initial lead organization, which also had a much larger staff and budget than other collaborative members. Meanwhile, the Alabama collaborative created a process in which the coordinating responsibilities rotated three times a year, so as to balance both responsibility and visibility with funders.

Lesson 3: Internal processes are affected by leadership transitions.

When there is a change in the leadership of a collaborative, there is often a new alignment of relationships among member organizations. In some cases, changes in leadership and personal relationships led to a loss of institutional memory of key agreements and necessitated building new relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Internal processes, such as leadership development, broadening the constituency, and developing a political vision, should build toward external outcomes.</p> <p>Collaboratives should proactively work to identify and surface power dynamics. Collaboratives should recognize the role of power dynamics and engage them both internally in terms of group process and power, and externally in terms of partner and issue selection.</p> <p>Collaboratives should formally establish internal and external goals and regularly assess them.</p>	<p>Funders should avoid becoming entangled in internal organizational processes. These dynamics are a natural part of the organizational development process.</p> <p>Provide TA and ancillary support to assist collaborative development. Service providers should be selected directly by grantees or in conjunction with funders, not by funders alone.</p> <p>Recognize that lead organizations may require additional capacities in order to manage a statewide project.</p> <p>Provide funding to help groups proactively and systematically address issues related to staff leadership transitions.</p>

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP

Campaign strategy is the ability to plan and implement a concrete set of activities to realize a specific goal. Such an organizing plan includes goal setting, strategizing, and collective activities based on a division of labor and mutual accountability. Campaign strategy also includes an analysis of political opportunities, potential allies, and opposition; alternative policy development; and a plan

“Racial justice campaigns were effective even in states such as Idaho and Oregon that have predominantly white populations.”

for shifting the public discussion of an issue to support the collaborative’s goals. Campaign leadership is the ability to carry out the campaign strategy, make periodic assessments, and adjust the strategy to respond to shifting political terrain, if needed.

Lesson 1: Campaign strategy and issue framing are closely connected to policy outcomes. Campaign strategies were most effective when they were able to leverage the strengths of allies, frame issues to mobilize key constituencies, and shift public debate. For example, prior campaign work on the minimum wage enabled lead groups in Washington to build a multifaceted campaign that utilized the strengths of collaborative partners and allies. In another example, South Carolina’s focus on redistricting enabled groups to systematically increase their outreach and education efforts, but strained the organizational resources of groups that had smaller staffs and were unfamiliar with the issues.

Lesson 2: Collaboratives that frame campaign objectives in terms of racial justice have achieved significant policy reforms benefiting both people of color and broad segments of the general population. Race was the major analytical frame for the work of the Mississippi Education Working Group, the Farmworker Minimum Wage campaign in Idaho, immigrant rights work in Oregon, and the anti-racial profiling legislation in Texas. Racial justice campaigns were effective even in states such as Idaho and Oregon that have predominantly white populations. In Idaho, for example, leading with a racial justice framework resulted in broad-based policy reforms to increase access to healthcare for children, such as simplifying the application process. These campaigns demonstrated that racial justice framing can:

- be effective when strong campaign leadership is present, even in predominantly white states where there are few organizations of people of color;
- help build a constituency base of people of color, develop white organizational allies, and shift the organizational political vision; and
- lead to broad-based reforms that benefit all communities.

Lesson 3: Building progressive infrastructure is an extension of an intentional and strategic process. To implement their campaigns and advance their goals, collaboratives found they had to address gaps in their infrastructure, deepen relationships among partners, and identify and involve additional constituencies. To address gaps in the progressive infrastructure in Nevada and Idaho, PLAN and UVI helped establish a number of new organizations, such as youth and student groups, an interfaith organization, and women’s and Latino organizations. The Alabama Organizing Project incubated the Campaign for a New South, and the Mississippi collaborative helped form Citizens for Quality Special Education. Similarly, the Oregon collaborative was expanded to include strategic alliances with established organizations, as well as with groups representing marginalized communities. While two of the original organizations left the South Carolina collaborative, it was subsequently able to broaden participation to include a youth organization and new participation from the Latino community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Conduct joint campaign work regularly throughout the collaborative organizing effort.</p> <p>Consider helping establish new groups that fill gaps in the social justice infrastructure.</p>	<p>Establish regional and national issue foci. Interstate training focused on responses to issue trends (such as tax reform and racial profiling) can help organizations select and frame issues, develop research, and build national multi-state messages and campaigns.</p> <p>Provide ongoing access to targeted assistance on issue framing and campaign strategy development. In particular, help develop regional and national infrastructure to assist organizations engaging in campaigns that are focused on racial justice.</p> <p>Consider the recommendations of state-level organizations in identifying and supporting the establishment of new organizations.</p>

STAGES OF COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Although collaboratives are dynamic entities, responsive to both their internal membership needs and the external political environment, they nonetheless advance through predictable stages. An examination of these stages points to a number of lessons:

Lesson 1: Accurate assessments of the external environment and internal capacities are vital. Regardless of the stage of development, accurate assessments of (1) the state's political environment, and (2) the organiza-

tional capacity of potential members of a statewide collaborative are an important developmental prerequisite. If the assessment is insufficiently rigorous, the approach the collaborative takes may be problematic. In Washington, for example, the fact that the collaborative included the state labor council enabled its mem-

"A good road map addressing stages of collaborative development can be a useful planning tool for groups at any stage of development."

bers to have an informed view of the state's political environment. This allowed the collaborative to deploy the capacities of member organizations to recruit allied constituencies on farmworker issues, living wages, and healthcare.

Lesson 2: Learning about development stages and processes may enhance internal cohesion and external outcomes. A good road map addressing stages of collaborative development can be a useful planning tool for groups at any stage of development. This base of knowledge can help groups anticipate key questions, investigate potential responses, and define desired outcomes.

Lesson 3: Differences in resource allocation and priorities may be related to the stage of collaborative development. Organizations in the early stages of development are necessarily focused on the role and structure of the collaborative, while organizations at later stages of development concentrate more on formal systems, processes for developing a deeper understanding of the vision of the collaborative, and long-term social change strategies. For instance, ProTex used its understanding of the political climate and the status of Texas's social change infrastructure to decide the appropriate role and structure for the collaborative, while remaining flexible and making changes to appropriately direct the work of the collaborative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>It is important to reassess, revisit, and revise a collaborative's allocation of resources at every stage of development. Changes in the external political environment and/or in key staff, the growth or contraction of the membership base, or the group's visibility and ability to achieve success may require different approaches.</p> <p>Document the experiences and lessons of the collaboration as an important tool for evaluation and for assisting new collaborations.</p>	<p>Design initiatives using the body of literature available concerning the stages of collaborative development. Past models and the lessons learned from those experiences can inform the structure and expectations of new initiatives.</p> <p>Expose organizations to successful models for collaboration. Provide resources and assistance for organizations grappling with key questions related to collaborative development.</p>

Interaction with Funders, Ancillary Organizations, and Evaluators

The six variables discussed in the previous section of this chapter reflect common themes and crosscutting issues that all collaboratives experienced as they worked to achieve external results. However, there are also factors related to the design of the CtC initiative that influenced the work of each collaborative. The Ford Foundation funded eight ancillary organizations to support the collaboratives, either directly or indirectly, in achieving state-level policy outcomes. Foundation staff also took a hands-on role in the initiative, and as such their role became a factor in collaborative performance. Finally, the process of documentation and evaluation conducted by two external organizations affected collaboratives as they attempted to reflect on and refine their work. An analysis of each of these relationships between collaboratives and external organizations can provide lessons for similar efforts.

FOUNDATION INVOLVEMENT

Approximately \$18 million in Ford Foundation resources was invested directly and indirectly in the Collaborations that Count initiative over a six-year period. This level of funding for state-level advocacy and organizing work was new for the Ford Foundation, and the initiative resulted in significant external outcomes and internal capacity development among collaborative members. The Foundation staff played a significant role in guiding the initiative, and their

involvement was particularly critical in the following four areas: the structuring of the CtC initiative; funder/grantee relations; the allocation of resources; and developing guidelines on the use of initiative resources for lobbying purposes.

Lesson 1: Foundation involvement can have a significant impact on the structure of collaboratives. State collaboratives were generally given broad flexibility in structuring themselves and selecting an issue agenda. The Ford Foundation stressed the importance of involving multiracial constituencies, which resulted in the involvement of a diverse constituency in all states but two (Kentucky and Washington). The Foundation also encouraged collaboration between grassroots and policy organizations, and sought out strong grassroots groups to anchor many of the collaboratives, which mitigated power struggles between organizational types. Participants identified two initiative components that, in hindsight, could have been set up differently to better meet the needs of the collaboratives:

- The Ford Foundation's selection of ancillary organizations preceded a complete assessment of all state collaboratives, and as a result the assistance available for collaboratives often did not match their needs. Collaborative groups tended to benefit most from regional intermediaries, technological support, and media innovation. However, unspecified expectations of ancillary organizations and a lack of comprehensive technical assistance options limited the efficacy of this component of the initiative in terms of advancing collaborative work and development. In addition, the Foundation was unable to maintain a consistent and ongoing evaluation throughout the initiative to help monitor and adjust the project as it developed.
- Feedback regarding regional and national gatherings was mixed. While some collaboratives benefited from exchanges with other collaboratives, a number of CtC participants also felt that the gatherings were time-consuming and strained organizational resources, particularly for staff.

Lesson 2: Power relations are always an underlying factor in interactions between funders and grantees, affecting a collaborative's actions and decisions. The Foundation took a number of measures to limit the impact of this dynamic. Ford allowed states broad flexibility in determining both the structure of the collaboratives and the issues they worked on, and the Foundation provided six years of continued funding for state collaboratives. In general, when collaboratives presented issues to Foundation staff, Ford attempted to direct additional resources to help address those needs. After con-

ducting a needs assessment in the Southern region, the Foundation provided funding for assistance from two independent contractors (one with expertise in tax policy, the other in education reform). The Foundation added the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations as a regional resource. At the same time, several collaboratives expressed concern with the Foundation's role in structuring the allocation of resources within the state. In one such instance, the Mississippi collaborative insisted that it did not want to include a policy organization, and once the issue was raised, the Foundation respected the decision. In Alabama, on the other hand, a number of groups had the perception that the Foundation had influenced their allocation of resources among collaborative members. The Foundation staff were unaware that this happened and surprised when the evaluation surfaced this issue. A series of follow-up interviews with groups in Alabama and current and former Ford Foundation staff revealed that the perception was based on a miscommunication between a staff assistant at the Foundation and some collaborative members. However, some collaborative members were reluctant to address the Foundation regarding this problem, and because there was no process for raising the issue earlier, the situation was never fully resolved.

“Unspecified expectations of ancillary organizations and a lack of comprehensive technical assistance options limited the efficacy of this component of the initiative.”

Lesson 3: Providing multi-year funding was crucial to the successes of state collaborative efforts. This long-term commitment allowed states to shore up collaborative processes and relationships, take risks and adopt innovative new approaches, and launch successful issue campaigns. What level of funding is necessary to sustain a state collaborative? The Annie E. Casey Foundation's “Making Connections” program, designed “to help transform selected neighborhoods in 22 cities into family-supportive environments,” has invested \$500,000 a year in each neighborhood. “We made the investment at that level,” says Casey program officer Garland Yates, “because we felt that we had to really build organizational capacity.” In addition, longitudinal research conducted by the Applied Research Center that examined the C.S. Mott Foundation's Intermediary Support Organization program found that successful, ongoing, local organizations had budgets in the range of \$300,000–450,000. While neither of these examples is precisely analogous to CtC, the initiative was, like the Casey

and Mott programs, focused on increasing organizational capacity. CtC attempted to address issues at the state level, build collaboratives that include both established and emerging grassroots organizations, promote interaction between organizing and policy groups, and support the development of cross-constituent consolidation and training. Given this ambitious agenda, funding for each state collaborative should start at least at the minimum range for local policy reform initiatives, which is approximately \$300,000 per year.

Lesson 4: Unnecessarily restrictive language in prohibiting the use of grant money for lobbying purposes imposed an undue burden on collaboratives. Because the Ford Foundation policy did not permit any of the grantees to use grant funds to “influence legislation through an attempt to affect

“The fact that the Ford Foundation includes unnecessarily restrictive language in its grant agreements has been a burden for all the CtC grantees throughout this initiative.”

the opinion of the general public, or through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body,” groups were forced to use internally generated funds or funds from other sources for legislative advocacy. The Foundation’s restrictions exceed those imposed by federal law, which allows 501(c)(3) organizations to engage in limited lobbying activities. Recognizing that the rules

governing lobbying activities of 501(c)(3) organizations are complex, the Alliance for Justice was included as an ancillary grantee to help the collaboratives understand the extent to which lobbying is allowed. “We recognize that the restriction is more attributable to the institution as a whole rather than the CtC initiative, the Governance and Civil Society program, and the Peace and Social Justice program,” says John Pomeranz of the Alliance for Justice. “We still think that the fetters that the Ford Foundation puts on its grantees deserves a brief mention in the evaluation of an initiative designed to expand the policy reach of grantees. The fact that the Ford Foundation includes unnecessarily restrictive language in its grant agreements has been a burden for all the CtC grantees.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Groups should consider collaboration as a potentially effective way to expand their reach, engage in new issue areas, and increase their leverage.</p> <p>Groups should not accept funding for collaboration if their primary need is to support their existing work and/or develop their own infrastructure. Collaborative work can impose unexpected demands on staff time and organizational resources.</p> <p>Follow the current laws and guidelines for lobbying restrictions.</p>	<p>Increase foundation support and provide multi-year funding for state-level organizing and policy work.</p> <p>Establish multiple funding streams to address organizational capacity-building, research and media development, and collaborative infrastructure and communication.</p> <p>Articulate clear standards and expectations for collaborative work.</p> <p>Establish a series of mechanisms to help elicit feedback and concerns from grantees. Contract with an independent intermediary to assist in communications, help organize and facilitate gatherings, conduct collaborative assessments, and link collaboratives to ancillary organizations.</p> <p>Follow the current laws and guidelines for lobbying restrictions.</p>

ANCILLARY SUPPORT

The Foundation directed one-third of the CtC initiative money to eight ancillary grantees to support direct work with CtC grantees and the broader objective of strengthening the infrastructure for state-level work. These grantees included three regional intermediaries, two technical assistance providers, two national policy organizations, and one media innovation project. Ancillary grantees that received general support grants, particularly the national policy organizations, tended to incorporate the collaborative groups into existing programmatic work. *Ancillary organizations that received project support grants tended to develop programs most directly related to collaborative work.* Interaction between an ancillary grantee and a state collaborative was most effective when either a prior, ongoing relationship existed or when the assistance overlapped with or emerged from a specific need of a particular collaborative.

State collaboratives reported that they benefited most from the technical skills training, technology assistance, and organizational development assistance

from the Alliance for Justice, Creative Communications, the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, the Progressive Technology Project, and Western States Center. Meanwhile, collaboratives and ancillary grantees alike pointed to a number of challenges, including the structuring of ancillary services and inadequate communications.

Lesson 1: Developing a systematic and coordinated approach to the delivery of ancillary services may increase effectiveness. This approach would include ongoing assessment, feedback, and coordination. Assessments of both collaboratives and their member groups would help ensure that

“Matching providers with recipients is a difficult task that requires as much knowledge of the capacity and culture of the recipient as of the skills of the provider.”

services match needs. By getting systematic feedback from providers and grantees during the entire course of a project, mid-project corrections could be made if necessary. Some foundations have established technical assistance programs with coordinators who facilitate interaction between national/regional intermediaries and state/local collaborative efforts.

While the Ford Foundation hired a coordinator who knew local groups firsthand and could facilitate this interaction, her departure led to communication challenges that impeded the successful provision of technical assistance.

Lesson 2: While collaboratives need technical assistance in a variety of areas, “one size does not fit all.” Even when groups realize they need specific types of assistance, the same techniques or strategies are not equally effective in every situation. Matching providers with recipients is a difficult task that requires as much knowledge of the capacity and culture of the recipient as of the skills of the provider.

Lesson 3: Collaboratives have a sense of their own developmental needs. This was evident in Texas, where the collaborative contracted with United for a Fair Economy to assist them in simplifying economic data, and in Tennessee, where the collaborative contracted with outside organizations to conduct dismantling racism sessions for their members.

Lesson 4: Assistance does not only mean the provision or transference of technical skills. Each ancillary organization has its own set of politi-

cal values and a distinct culture, and its approach to the work is grounded in those values and culture. In addition, support organizations typically have a larger funding base, more staff, and a higher degree of technical expertise. For relationships between providers and recipients to be productive, either the values or cultures of both organizations must be similar, or both the provider and the recipient of assistance must have a clear sense of what is needed and a defined system of communication and accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Increase cross-training and peer assistance opportunities. Collaboratives often experience similar challenges and opportunities and can benefit from interacting with other collaborative efforts.</p> <p>Develop internal technical assistance plans as part of ongoing organizational development work.</p>	<p>Contract with a third party to monitor the ancillary process and help grantees identify providers that directly address their concerns.</p> <p>Provide financial support for collaboratives to choose and contract with appropriate assistance providers. This will allow collaboratives to select providers that share their political values and cultures, including providers who are people of color, women, or people with local knowledge and expertise.</p> <p>Create opportunities for grantees to develop a plan for ancillary services and technical assistance in consultation with potential service providers. This will maximize the coordination of support and the potential positive cumulative effect of their work.</p>

EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluations and assessments conducted by external individuals and institutions can play a significant role in efforts to reflect upon and refine collaborative work. Collaboratives reported the greatest benefit from state evaluation meetings (as described in the Methodology section of Chapter One), which provided a collective opportunity for groups to assess collaborative successes, challenges, and future directions. Groups also noted the added benefit of being able to learn from the experiences of other state collaboratives. At the same time, the evaluation process was time-consuming and at times burdensome for participating organizations, as they simultaneously focused on working toward their goals and missions. While a number of participants noted that ARC’s experience with community organizing and issues of social justice enabled the eval-

uators to understand the collaboratives' work, others pointed out that the evaluators' lack of expertise in the South may have made them less insightful about that region's particular issues and dynamics. Participants also felt, at various intervals, that their willingness to speak openly and critically about themselves and their work was compromised by the presence of funders.

Lesson 1. While conflicting interests are inherent in conducting any evaluation, a participatory process helps produce an evaluation that reflects a wide range of viewpoints. Funders are hopeful that their initiatives are validated as successful. Grantees are concerned that the evaluation findings may influence future funding. And evaluators are concerned about analytical rigor and impartiality, as well as future relationships with participating organizations and funders. In addition to these self-interests, each individual brings personal and cultural biases to the process.

“Although participatory processes may result in a dampening of analysis, they can also help build trust and ensure that more balanced perspectives are represented.”

Although the risk is that participatory processes may result in a dampening of analysis, particularly of more critical findings, they can also help build trust and ensure that more balanced perspectives are represented in the final evaluation.

Lesson 2. Valuing the costs of participating in evaluations is important. Engaging in an extensive evaluative process requires a significant amount of work from participating organizations. Collaboratives received a small stipend to prepare for site visits, coordinate statewide meetings, provide follow-up data, participate in national convenings, and facilitate state-level feedback. Though the compensation for the evaluation did recognize the value of participation, it did not fully account for the time and resources expended by groups.

Lesson 3. Conducting ongoing, prescriptive assessments may be preferable to project-end evaluations. Conducting an evaluation in the final 18 months of such an extensive initiative created challenges, including documentation and institutional history, timing, and diminished utility of findings. There was no uniform method for collecting data from the start to finish of the initiative, and staff transitions at both the Foundation and grantee levels led to additional information gaps. The ARC evaluation team had to rely heavily on

triangulation of individual accounts that often differed and secondary data sources, such as reports, memos, and print media. In addition to more comprehensive data, an ongoing evaluation model could provide prescriptive assessments throughout an initiative that could further enhance collaborative outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVES	GRANTMAKERS
<p>Engage in cross-state collaborative activities to share successes, challenges, and key lessons.</p> <p>Convene periodic gatherings to reflect critically upon and refine collaborative work.</p>	<p>Invest in ongoing evaluations to assess and report on collaborative progress and challenges.</p> <p>Prioritize ongoing assessments over project-end evaluations.</p> <p>Earmark adequate funding to support participation in assessments and evaluation processes.</p>

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

COLLABORATIVE PARTICIPANTS

1. **Articulate clear goals, standards, and expectations for the collaborative and periodically assess them.** These should include criteria and goals for strategic expansion.
2. **Do not accept funding for collaboration if the primary need of collaborating groups is to support their existing work and/or develop their own infrastructure.** Collaborative work can impose unexpected demands on staff time and organizational resources.
3. **Ensure that organizations of people of color are involved** as core organizations from the beginning of a collaboration. This avoids the pitfalls inherent in attempting to diversify the leadership of the collaborative at a later stage of development.
4. **Conduct joint campaign work** regularly throughout the collaborative organizing effort. The activities of external campaign work can achieve external results while strengthening relationships among collaborative partners.
5. **Ensure that internal processes, such as leadership development, broadening the constituency, and developing a political vision, build toward external outcomes.**
6. **Develop a joint vision statement.** The collaborative should also create a formal mechanism for both new and old groups to review, revise, and recommit to the vision statement.
7. **Work to identify, surface, and address unequal power dynamics, both internally in terms of group process and externally in terms of partner and issue selection.**
8. **Allocate time and resources for cross-constituent education.** The success of many campaigns may depend on cross-constituent education and consolidation.
9. **Develop internal technical assistance plans for the collaborative and its participating organizations as part of ongoing organizational development work.**
10. **Revisit and reassess the collaborative's allocation of resources at every stage of development.** Changes in the external political environment and/or key staff, the growth or contraction of the membership base, and the group's visibility and ability to achieve success may require different approaches.

GRANTMAKERS

1. **Articulate clear standards and expectations for collaborative work.**
2. **Increase foundation support and provide multi-year funding for state-level organizing and policy work.**
3. **Expose new collaborative partners to successful models of collaboration.** Past models and the lessons learned from those experiences can inform the structure and expectations of new initiatives.
4. **Require groups to follow the current laws and guidelines for lobbying restrictions, but do not unnecessarily limit their ability to engage in educational and lobbying activities any more than current IRS regulations require.**
5. **Establish regional and national issue foci.** Inter-state training focused on responses to issue trends (such as tax reform and racial profiling) can help organizations select and frame issues, develop research, and build national momentum around messages and campaigns.
6. **Support the efforts of collaboratives to build a joint political vision.** Consider the development of a political vision and the necessary internal cross-constituency educational efforts a product on par with “institutional change.”
7. **Support training and technical assistance to help groups on issue framing, campaign strategy development, and addressing internal racial dynamics and external issues of racial justice.** Create opportunities for grantees to develop a plan to obtain ancillary services and technical assistance.
8. **Support the establishment of a national infrastructure that can meet the policy needs of community organizations.**
9. **Establish a series of mechanisms to help elicit feedback and concerns from grantees.** Contract with an independent intermediary to assist in communications, help organize and facilitate gatherings, conduct collaborative assessments, and help collaboratives develop peer cross trainings.
10. **Prioritize ongoing assessments over project-end evaluations to examine collaborative progress and challenges.** Ongoing evaluation could provide prescriptive assessments that could enhance collaborative outcomes. Earmark funding to support participation in assessments and evaluation processes.

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MISSISSIPPI INTERVIEWS

Reuben Anderson, Attorney, Tunica School Board, Summer 2002

Joe W. Bennett, Mississippi Department of Human Services, Summer 2002

Nikki Burns, Mississippi Link, Summer 2002

Bill Chandler, Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, Summer 2002

Br. Ted Dausch, Office of Hispanic Ministry, Catholic Diocese of Jackson, Summer 2002

Kim Galvin, Indianola Parent Student Working Group, Spring 2003

Mary Ann Graczyk, Mississippi American Federation of Teachers, Summer 2002

L. Patricia Ice, Attorney, Summer 2002

Johnny Johnson, Drew Community Voters' League, Summer 2002

Leroy Johnson, Southern Echo, Summer 2002

Jerome G. Little, Tallahatchie Housing/Tallahatchie Education and Redistricting Committee, Summer 2002

Rita Martinson, Republican Congresswoman, Madison County, Summer 2002

Betty Petty, Indianola Parent Student Working Group, Summer 2002

Mike Sayer, Southern Echo, Spring 2003

Rosa Sharif, Self-Help Farmer's Co-op, Summer 2002

Caroline Swanson, Superintendent, Montgomery County School District, Summer 2002

Charles Tisdale, Jackson Advocate, Summer 2002

Bennie Turner, State Senator, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Summer 2002

Hollis Watkins, Southern Echo, Summer 2002, Spring 2003

Al White, Action Education and Empowerment, Montgomery County School Board, Summer 2002

Dwight K. Wylie, Chief, Air Division, Office of Pollution Control, Mississippi Office of Environmental Quality, Summer 2002

Marilyn Young, Concerned Citizens For a Better Tunica County, Summer 2002

Melvin Young, Concerned Citizens For a Better Tunica County, Summer 2002

WASHINGTON INTERVIEWS

Matt Adams, NWIRP, Granger, Summer 2002
Rick Bender, Washington State Labor Council, Summer 2002
Amber Bolge, Association of Washington Businesses, Summer 2002
John Boonstra, Washington Association of Churches, Summer 2002, Fall 2002
Mary Sun Chang, Justice for Janitors, Summer 2002
Jean Colman, Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, Summer 2002
Silme Domingo, Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO), Summer 2002
Secky Facione, HERE Local 8, Walk with Workers campaign, Summer 2002, Fall 2002
Barbara Flye, Washington Citizens Action, Summer 2002, Spring 2003
Lupe Gamboa, United Farm Workers, Summer 2002
Bookda Geshari, A Territory Resource Foundation, Summer 2002
LeeAnn Hall, Northwest Federation of Community Organizations, Summer 2002
Pramila Jayapal, Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington, Summer 2002
Jeff Johnson, Washington State Labor Council, Olympia, Summer 2002
Tim Kaufman-Osborne, Washington ACLU, Summer 2002
Carlos Melentes, Jobs with Justice, Seattle, Summer 2002
Bruce Miyake, Assistant Attorney General, Washington State, Summer 2002
Mike Ramos, Washington Association of Churches, Summer 2002
Antonia Rivera, United Farm Workers, Summer 2002
Tania Maria Rosario, SEIU and Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice, Summer 2002
Sergio Salinas, SEIU Local 6, Summer 2002
Sharon Tomiko Santos, State Representative, House Majority Whip, Summer 2002
Robby Stern, Washington State Labor Council, Summer 2002
Chip Tan, Asian Counseling and Referral Services, Summer 2002
Xuantrang Tran-Thien, HERE Local 8, Summer 2002
Jane Villanueva, Yakima Archdiocese, Office of Social Justice, Summer 2002
Eric Ward, Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity, Summer 2002
Verleen Wilder, King County Labor, Summer 2002

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KENTUCKY INTERVIEWS

Lisa Abbott, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Summer 2002

Jason Bailey, Democracy Resource Center, Summer 2002

Anne Braden, Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, Summer 2002

Amy Carpenter, Community Farm Alliance, Summer 2002

Amy Christopher, Community Farm Alliance, Summer 2002

Sara Dryden, Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association, Summer 2002

Rick Graysaric, Kentucky Youth Advocates, Summer 2002

Chester S. Grundy, Office of African-American Student Affairs, University of Kentucky, Summer 2002

John-Mark Hack, Office of Agricultural Policy, Office of the Governor, Summer 2002

Jerry Hardt, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Summer 2002

Greg Howard, Appalshop, Summer 2002

Kelly Jackson, Cabinet for Families and Children, Summer 2002

Jennifer Jewel-Hudson, Women In Transition, Summer 2002

Burt Lauderdale, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Summer 2002

Heather Mahoney, Democracy Resource Center, Summer 2002

Deborah Miller, Kentucky Youth Advocates, Summer 2002

Richard Mitchell, University of Kentucky, Summer 2002

Meg Moore, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Summer 2002

Mimi Pickering, Appalshop, Summer 2002

Chris Sanders, Kentucky State AFL-CIO, Summer 2002

Dr. Robert Sexton, Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence, Summer 2002

Chuck Sohner, Lexington Living Wage Campaign, Summer 2002

Deborah Webb, Community Farm Alliance, Summer 2002
Scott Wegenast, Catholic Conference of Kentucky, Summer 2002

TENNESSEE INTERVIEWS

Leah Alexander, Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvilleans, Fall 2002
Bob Becker, Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, Fall 2002
Gordon Bonnyman, Tennessee Justice Center, Fall 2002
Eric Cole, Tennessee Citizen Action, Fall 2002
Vickie Creed, Independent Consultant, Fall 2002
Tony Garr, Tennessee Health Care Campaign, Fall 2002
Patty George, Tennessee Justice Center, Fall 2002
Dale Gray, MANNA, Fall 2002
Robert Manley, JONAH, Fall 2002
Brian Miller, Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, Fall 2002
Maureen O'Connell, Save Our Cumberland Mountains, Fall 2002
Suzie Putz-Drury, Tennessee Partnership on Organizing and Public Policy, Fall 2002
Judith Roitman, Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network, Fall 2002
Sarah Scott, Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvilleans, Fall 2002
Carolyn Washington, MANNA, Fall 2002
Carolyn Westlake, Tennessee Disability Coalition, Fall 2002

NORTH CAROLINA INTERVIEWS

James Andrews, AFL-CIO, Winter 2002
Geraldine Blackston, Project Rescue and Southerners for Economic Justice, Fall 2002
Jennifer Bumgarner, North Carolina Alliance for Economic Justice, Fall 2002
Armando Carbajal, North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Project, Fall 2002
Chris Fitzsimon, Common Sense Foundation, Fall 2002
Marie Hill-Faison, Southerners for Economic Justice, Fall 2002
Cathy Howell, AFL-CIO, Winter 2002
Jan Nichols, North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center (formerly with NC Equity), Fall, 2002
Susan Perry-Cole, North Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations, Fall 2002
George Reed, North Carolina Council of Churches, Fall 2002
Bill Rowe, North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center, Fall 2002
Debra Tyler-Horton, North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center, Fall 2002
Lynice Williams, North Carolina Fair Share, Fall 2002

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SOUTH CAROLINA INTERVIEWS

- Sue Berkowitz, Appleseed Legal Justice Center, Winter 2002
- Michael Bennett, South Carolina Environmental Watch, Winter 2002
- Carol Bishop, CAFÉ, Winter 2002 and Summer 2003
- Franklin Briggs, NAACP, Winter 2003
- Pastor W.C. Daniels, New Hopewell Baptist Church, Winter 2002
- Amanda Gibson-Adler, Appleseed Legal Justice Center, Winter 2002
- Penny Hennigan, CAFÉ, Winter 2002
- Tiffany Huggins, Movement of the People, Winter 2003
- Ann Johnson, South Carolina United Action, Winter 2002
- Freddie Jolley, Movement of the People, Winter 2002
- Rev. Kennedy, CAFÉ, Winter 2003
- Kamau Marcharia, Community Leader, Winter 2002
- Mildred Myers, South Carolina Environmental Watch, Winter 2002 and Summer 2003

Lorenzo Rosario, Hispanic Outreach, Winter 2002
John Rouff, South Carolina Fair Share, Winter 2002
Irma Santana, Hispanic Outreach, Winter 2002
Isaac Santos, CAFÉ, Winter 2003
Oleda Sinkler, South Carolina Environmental Watch, Winter 2002 and Summer 2003
Corry Stevenson, South Carolina United Action, Winter 2002 and Summer 2003
Lynette Taylor, Movement of the People, Winter 2003
Ike Williams, South Carolina Voter Education Project, Winter 2002

ALABAMA INTERVIEWS

Sophia Bracey-Harris, Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama, Fall 2002
Merika Coleman, Greater Birmingham Ministries, Spring 2003
Scott Douglas, Greater Birmingham Ministries, Fall 2002 and Spring 2003
Kimble Forrister, Alabama ARISE, Fall 2002 and Spring 2003
Ethel Giles, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Fall 2002
Albert Harris, Alabama Coalition Against Hunger, Fall 2002
Tony Haygood, GLD participant, Fall 2002
Dionne Nelson, AOP Project Coordinator, Spring 2003 and Summer 2003
Toni Smalls, Alabama New South Coalition, Spring 2003
John Zippert, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Spring 2003

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IDAHO INTERVIEWS

Maria Gonzalez Abbut, Immigrant Activist, Summer 2002
Lolita Anastasio, IWN, Fall 2002
Pam Baldwin, UVI Organizer, Summer 2002
Kevin Borden, ICAN, Summer and Fall 2002
Judith Brown, UVI, Summer 2002
Michele Casey, ICAN, Summer and Fall 2002
Lark Corbeil, Creative Communications, Fall 2002
Lori Dicaire, Idahoans for Fair Elections, Summer 2002
Lee Flinn, IWN, Summer 2002, Fall 2002, and Spring 2003
Jessica Frye, ICAN, Summer and Fall 2002
Humberto Fuentes, Idaho Migrant Council, Fall 2002
LeeAnn Hall, ICAN, Summer 2002, Fall 2002, and Spring 2003
Jim Hansen, UVI, Summer 2002, Fall 2002, and Spring 2003
Devin Kelly, Idaho Progressive Student Association, Summer 2002
Wendy Matlock, IWN, Susan G. Komen Foundation, Summer 2002
Leo Morales, Idaho Progressive Student Association, Summer 2002
Adan Ramirez, ICAN, Summer and Fall 2002
Jen Ray, formerly of IWN, Spring 2003
Ernie Sanchez, Idaho Legal Aid Services, Fall 2002
Gary Sandusky, Center for Community Change, Summer and Fall 2002
Roger Sherman, UVI, Summer and Fall 2002
Tom Trail, Idaho State Representative, Summer 2002

OREGON INTERVIEWS

Ruth Anderson, OA, Summer 2002
Jerry Atkins, Jobs with Justice, Summer 2002
Jonathon Brier, CAUSA, Summer 2002
Martha Calderon, CAUSA, Summer 2002
Tina Kotek, Oregon Food Bank, Summer 2002
Michael Leachman, OCPP, Summer and Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
Elizabeth Perry, VOZ, Summer 2002
Ramon Ramirez, CAUSA, Summer and Fall 2002
Roberto Ramirez, CAUSA, Summer 2002
Chuck Sheketoff, OCPP, Fall 2002
Kris Smock, Oregon Collaborative, Summer and Winter 2002 and Spring 2003

Pedro Sosa, VOZ, Summer 2002
Grace Taylor, ROP, Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
Kim Thomas, Oregon Food Bank, Summer 2002
Kate Titus, OA, Summer and Winter 2002
Michelle Wallace, Oregon Food Stamp Program, Summer 2002
Nancy Weed, Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, Summer 2002
Marcy Westerling, ROP, Summer and Fall 2002 and Spring 2003
Phillip Kennedy Wong, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Summer 2002

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TEXAS INTERVIEWS

Wafa Abdin, Texas Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance, Summer 2002
Steve Amberg, Texas Faculty Association, Summer 2002
Lauren Ashmen, Healthcare for All, Summer 2002
Bill Beardall, Equal Justice Center, Summer 2002
Valerie Benavidez, ProTex, Summer and Fall 2002
Angie Briones-Sosa, El Paso Collaborative, Summer 2002
Ramona Casas, Project ARISE, Summer 2002
Tricia Forbes, ProTex, Summer 2002
Reggie James, Consumers Union Southwest Regional Office, Summer 2002
Mary Kelly, Texas Center for Policy Studies, Summer 2002
Annette Lamoreaux, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, Summer 2002
Louis Malfaro, Education Austin, Summer 2002
Matthew K. Momoh, Saving Lives Through Alternate Options, Summer 2002
Eva Owens, Texas Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, Summer 2002
Eddie Rodriguez, Office of State Representative Glen Maxey, Summer 2002
Samantha Smoot, Texas Freedom Network, Summer 2002
Dianne Stewart, Center for Public Policy Priorities, Summer 2002
Estrus Tucker, Liberation Community, Summer 2002
Liz Wolff, ACORN, Summer 2002
Michael Wyatt, Texas Rural Legal Aid, Summer 2002

NEVADA INTERVIEWS

Bob Bellis, Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada, Fall 2002
Debbie Cahill, Nevada State Education Association, Fall 2002
Brenda Carrera, Nevada Empowered Women's Project, Fall 2002
Joe Edson, PLAN, Fall 2002
Ben Felix, A Rainbow Place, Fall 2002
Bob Fulkerson, PLAN, Fall 2002
Bobbie Gang, Nevada Women's Lobby, Fall 2002
Darlene Gardipe, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Fall 2002
Jan Gilbert, PLAN, Fall 2002
Chris Giunchigliani, Assemblywoman, Fall 2002
Jim Hulse, Common Cause, Fall 2002
Jermaine Lloyd, PLAN, Fall 2002
Inger McDowell, PLAN Youth Organizer, Fall 2002
Liz Moore, PLAN, Fall 2002
Mark Nichols, National Association of Social Workers, Fall 2002

David Parks, Assemblyman, Fall 2002
Gary Peck, ACLU Nevada, Fall 2002
Ellen Pillard, Sierra Club, Toiyabe Chapter, Fall 2002
Ande Rice, Metropolitan Community Church, Fall 2002
Egillespie Sinayoko, Nevada Employees Association, Fall 2002
Grace Thornton-Potorti, Nevada Conservation League, Fall 2002

CHAPTER 8

INTERVIEWS

Moira Bowman, Western States Center, Winter 2002
Diallo Brooks, CPA, Winter 2002
Lark Corbeil, CC, Fall 2002 and Spring 2003
David Crandall, CC, Fall 2002
Joan Garner, SPF, Spring 2003
LeeAnn Hall, NWFCO, Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
Olga Lazano, Alliance for Justice, Winter 2002
Selena Mason, Western States Center, Winter 2002
Justin Maxson, PTP, Spring 2003
Tim McFeeley, CPA, Winter 2002
Lawrence Mishel, EPI, Winter 2002
Tim Mooney, Alliance for Justice, Winter 2002
Janet Perkins, SPF, Spring 2003
Dan Petegorsky, Western States Center, Fall 2002 and Spring 2003
John Pomeranz, Alliance for Justice, Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
Jen Ray, CPA, Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
David Rogers, Western States Center, Winter 2002 and Spring 2003
Kelley Weigel, Western States Center, Winter 2002

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