COMM-ORG Papers

Volume 15, 2009

CDCs and the Myth of the Organizing-Development Dialectic

Joyce Mandell

joyce.mandell@charter.net

Papers Homepage

Contents

[References](#)
[About the Author](#)
[Reader Comments](#) (opens in new window)

Summary

In the literature on community development corporations, critics claim that CDCs do not represent the interests of target neighborhoods because of an ingrown tension between a development and organizing agenda. In debunking the myth of the organizing-development dialectic, this case study of a CDC in Lawrence, Massachusetts shows how a CDC can effectively spearhead development based on community organizing efforts and empowerment of neighbors. Based on 95 hours of participant observation from 2006 – 2007 and 29 in depth interviews of residents and staff, this study describes the interplay of organizing and development for this CDC.

In 1998, national community development expert Bill Traynor returned to his hometown of

Lawrence, Massachusetts to head an almost defunct community development corporation. Ten years later, the newly renamed Lawrence Community Works (LCW) has completed an impressive array of development projects but more importantly, has seen an uncommonly high level of engagement among the residents of its target neighborhood including over 500 residents attending the annual meeting to vote in contested board elections. Neighbors are out there cleaning up alleys, planning parks, going to Washington DC to lobby for funds.

LCW demonstrates how CDCs can integrate organizing together with development so that development projects are shaped from the ground up by residents themselves. For Lawrence Community Works (LCW), the question is not whether to base development on what the community wants. Organizing "before, during and after" bricks and mortar is a given basic mode of operating. Key findings of this study indicate that other CDCs can engage in community organizing for neighborhood driven development in two ways: 1)cultivating a diversified funding portfolio and 2)by hiring

Executive Directors and staff with organizing knowledge and experience to create an organizing culture.

Introduction

The community development movement has come a long way since that cold day in February, 1966 when Senator Robert Kennedy took a tour of the Bedford Stuyvesant area of New York, making the promises and setting the stage for the development of the first generation of CDCs. In terms of physical development, this movement has seen much success in its short 45 plus year history. By 1970, less than 100 community based development organizations existed. According to the 2005 CDC census of the National Congress of Community Economic Development (NCCED), the national arm of the CDC movement, 4600 CDCs have created over 1,252,000 units of affordable housing passing the million mark in 2003, developed $125 million worth of commercial and industrial space and are responsible for creating 774,000 new jobs.

CDC advocates point to these tangible "bricks and mortar" assets (housing, commercial development, new businesses and revivified main streets, new community gardens) that CDCs have developed. CDCs are often viewed as market enhancers, taking the first steps to invest in distressed neighborhoods that are considered market risks. Unlike private investors who evaluate a project solely on its profit potential, CDCs as place based non profit organizations, have an extra mission: to stabilize and improve local neighborhoods. Turning vacant lots or dilapidated housing into rehabbed, attractive housing, community green space or viable commercial districts creates a more attractive environment that may pump the prime for more private investment

Critics of the CDC movement cite CDCs as enhancers of a capitalist system which is naturally composed of haves and have nots. (Stoecker, 1997, 2003; Roelofs in Faber and McCarthy, 2005) In CDC target neighborhoods, the question remains: have the have nots become at all better off? According to a study of

43 CDCs in 1999, poverty levels had increased in CDC target communities where residents lost significant buying power. (Murphy and Cunningham, 2003: 41) What little urban regeneration that occurred was due to an influx of middle class residents moving into urban neighborhoods According to this critique, CDCs stave off the discontent and unrest of residents of poor communities by doing just enough token projects in a neighborhood. In this way, CDCs are sometimes seen as "an important supplement to the free enterprise system." (Roelofs in Faber and McCarthy, 2005:66)

CDCs are not undertaking a value neutral enterprise. In neighborhoods that are seeing increased property values, Rachel Bratt and William Rohe describe the phenomenon of "NIMBY in the neighborhoods", a backlash against affordable housing for people with low income or people with a social service need. (Rohe and Bratt, 2003:46) In this situation, irate homeowners or property investors conflict with CDCs that choose to represent the interests of low income residents by creating affordable housing opportunities that will prevent

displacement from the neighborhood. CDCs have traditionally operated in very distressed communities and could easily represent the interests of low income residents who predominated. However, what happens when the neighborhood begins to improve, increasing the number of other neighborhood stakeholders besides residents with low income? The question for a CDC then becomes: does this organization organize and represent the interests of low income residents or does it organize, work with and represent all stakeholders. Who is the "community" in community controlled development?

The Community in Community Development

Although CDCs have a proven track record in building physical and human capital, the question remains: what about 'the community' in community development, including the empowerment and participation of residents and community control of the development agenda?

What exactly is community control? What is the community and who is in control? There has been an extensive amount of literature critiquing community organizations such as CDCs for not representing the community where they operate and not engaging residents in taking leadership roles in deciding the development agenda. (Cnaan, 1991; Cummings and Glazer 1985; Stoecker 1997,2003; Sahd 2004, Warren 2001). Especially as CDCs have evolved to become more technically savvy housing developers, questions surface as to whether CDCs even have an interest in organizing and empowering the community. One of the more vocal critics of the CDC model, Randy Stoecker, declares that CDCs operate under a myth and not reality of community control. Due to historical political changes in federal funding programs, externally funded driven agendas, the pressure to develop product over community process, the emphasis on technical expertise and the supposed inherent tensions between community organizing and development, the CDC movement has tended to move away from its promising grassroots beginnings.

In the early years, many CDCs evolved out of strong local community organizing efforts – residents getting together to demand for change. However, as the movement grew and evolved and became more successful in the technical aspects of developing projects, CDCs became more technically savvy organizations. CDCs are actually buying and selling housing, developing commercial real estate and providing services. In a sense, CDCs must function as "expert" organizations, employing a highly educated and skilled development team. Developers tend to be college educated with technical expertise in real estate development. Where is the room for the local lay person? How does the technical language of development close out regular people who attend board and committee meetings? What are the tensions between the organizers out in the field, listening to the neighbors and the experts working on the spread sheets in the office and meeting with the bankers? Twelvetrees asserts that "it is unrealistic to expect a CDC to be a democratic organization in the sense that it offers opportunities to participate in decision making to

large numbers of residents". (Twelvetrees, 1989: 142) He even questions whether CDCs are private companies, charitable institutions, or arms of the government, and even views them as "potential predators".

The CDC's growing emphasis on technical expertise has had many negative consequences for the other goal of empowering and growing neighborhood leaders. Many CDCs hire staff and Executive Directors in particular for their technical knowledge of development and not their organizing ability. In other words, CDCs are hiring developers, not organizers who care about the inclusion of the community in the development process. What happens when developers, not community organizers are heading up CDCs? At the onset, there is ambivalence about community control and participation and a misunderstanding of how to fully engage the community. According to a 2003 study of Executive Directors of CDCs in Detroit, Michigan, executive directors view citizen participation as 'a necessary evil' or even a threat to a potential project. (Silverman, 2003). More of an interest exists in building housing

than building 'people'.

The Opposition of Organizing and Development

Developers often do not understand how successful community development work entails two enterprises – organizing and development. The organizing part of the work requires that the organization find out the needs and the wants of the community. Does the neighborhood want more affordable housing, jobs, better police protection, or programs to keep youth off the streets? Can some sort of common consensus emerge from the neighborhood that may be hosting a variety of different people with different perspectives? Ideally, the development goals should accomplish the goals that surface through this kind of community process. There has often been a tension between organizing and development where CDC critics have questioned whether it is structurally plausible for CDCs to organize around a local agenda.

Randy Stoecker understands organizing and development as coming from two very different and contradictory paradigms. According to the community organizing model, more specifically the conflict oriented model first promoted by Saul Alinksy, the goals of organizing are to build power for the have nots. Since the haves are not wanting to give up any power or resources, the people need to work together to confront and challenge the power system. In community organizing, it is the people who organize themselves that are most important in creating lasting changes in the capitalist system. In contrast, Stoecker cites the community development model whose goal is not to challenge and change but to work within the system, creating housing and development. In order to develop, one must not confront but cooperate with those in power to get development going. The most important resource in this endeavor is the paid staff member who is usually a non resident. The development model is seen as an attempt to bring more resources into the community accommodating and not challenging the

capitalist system.

In this highly dualistic conception of organizing and development, Stoecker claims that CDCs can not do effective community organizing and development in the same organization. His classic example of the contradiction is the dilemma posed by organizing residents in a community against a bank's lending practices while the developers are working on getting funding for a project from the same bank. Stoecker also points out the contradiction of being an owner of property and an organizer. How can a CDC organize tenants in a building owned by the CDC when its interests are in keeping the building as a sound investment? Stoecker writes that "CDCs are landlords and as landlords have an interest in maintaining the financial solvency of the organization even if they are nicer about it than for profit landlords. Renters, however, have an interest in maintaining the affordability of their housing. This creates a structural antagonism that divides the CDC from the community."(1997:9) This tension is analogous to a company organizing its own workers into a union instead of the workers

organizing on their own to negotiate with the company. In Stoecker's view, he would do away with the CDC model as it has evolved and replace it with small community organizing groups and large high-capacity CDCs that focus solely on doing the development projects that come out of the organizing process of the organizing groups.

The Integration of Organizing and Development

Though it is important to recognize the challenges that CDCs face in organizing neighborhood residents into truly participatory organizations and engaging people in the public sphere, it is just as important to look at the good news. CDCs have been and can continue to be strong proponents of community controlled development. CDCs can do organizing. CDCs can do organizing and development successfully under one roof (Hadrian, 1988; Traynor, 2002)

Offering 'hope and caution," Bill Traynor notes the current shift in community development practice. Community based development organizations are now seen as "community builders." According to Traynor, CDCs face the challenge of building a culture of organizing in organizations that are resistant to opening up the channels of broad based participation in decision making and are used to an emphasis on the technical expertise of real estate development. He also cites a need to develop industry standards so that there can be a repertoire of best practices for CDC organizing and community building.

The Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC), the Massachusetts statewide arm of the CDC movement, in partnership with the Local Intitiatives Support Corp (LISC) of Boston established the Ricanne Hadrian Initiative for Community Organizing (RHICO). The RHICO program, in operation from 1997 to 2006 in three phases, offered direct grants to a select group of 10 – 12 CDCs for hiring community organizers,

on site technical assistance, peer learning, trainings in community organizing and documentation and evaluation of the project including the creation of a power journal detailing stories of organizing campaigns for social change in the voices of staff and leaders working out in the field. One of the core beliefs of the program was that CDCs must center their development work on community organizing and community building. According to RHICO,

> By involving area residents from the outset, a CDC can anticipate street crime, drug dealing, and related community issues. Building a strong, organized base of community residents will provide the clout necessary for a CDC to win additional resources for its community, even as political leadership changes. Likewise, a community organizing approach will enable a CDC to respond to community priorities when choosing development projects. Finally, since most CDCs operate in diverse communities, successful organizing will allow each CDC to tap the participation of new residents

and to achieve a diversity that accurately reflects its community's profile and views. (MACDC RHICO literature)

The 4 million dollar RHICO initiative had an array of funders in addition to Local Initiative Support Collaborative (LISC) including the Boston Foundation, Annie E. Casey, Ford, Rockefeller, Surdna, and Edna McConnell Clark Foundations. It was believed that RHICO could serve as a national model of how to center development work on community organizing, thereby inspiring the CDC movement to return to their grassroots past with an emphasis on social change.

During RHICO's nine year history, funded CDCs engaged in highly visible and successful organizing campaigns, each with a different flavor or spin. A couple of CDCs organized with residents to get the MBTA public transportation line to re-open stops in their neighborhoods. The stations had been closed due to a combination of fear, racism and elitism according to local residents, and the trains now sped past those neighborhoods to stops in wealthier and

predominantly Caucasian neighborhoods further out of Boston. Another CDC organized a group of residents into a Committee to Limit University Expansion (CLUE) in order to protest the continued expansion and encroachment of a local university that was gobbling up much of the affordable housing in the neighborhood. Residents of another neighborhood were upset about a bed bug infestation in many apartment buildings and worked together to get the landlords and the city to remedy the situation.

The Case of Lawrence Community Works

In 1998, RHICO bestowed a generous grant to a struggling CDC in the mill town of Lawrence, Massachusetts. National community development expert Bill Traynor had just returned back to his hometown to head the almost defunct community development corporation. Ten years later, the newly renamed Lawrence Community Works (LCW) has completed an impressive array of development

projects but more importantly, has seen an uncommonly high level of engagement among the residents of its target neighborhood including over 500 residents attending the annual meeting to vote in contested board elections. Neighbors are out there cleaning up alleys, planning parks, going to Washington DC to lobby for funds.

In 2008, just ten years after this new beginning for the CDC, one can see the impressive results of the work:

- 22 full time staff people currently work at LCW
- LCW brought in over $12 million dollars worth of investment into the neighborhood for development projects. Developed 25 units of affordable housing in the North Common neighborhood including 17 affordable rental apartments in the Reviviendo Family Housing project and four two family owner occupied homes in the Summer Street Homeownership project
- Organized residents to plan and develop two parks – the Scarito park and the Reviviendo playground

- Developed a Family Asset Building program which offers classes in GED and ESL, first time homeownership, credit counseling, and matched savings.
- Developed a new model of organizing people through the creation of "neighbor circles" where neighbors get together for a series of three dinner meetings to get to know each other and to work on potential projects in the neighborhood. As of 2007, 38 neighborcircles have been formed, resulting in the people power to renovate parks, clean and beautify alleyways, organize block parties, urge the city to change parking policies and increase trash pickup.
- Purchased the St. Laurence School to develop Our House, a community center dedicated to the education of youth in design and technology.
- Partnering with a youth organization, created Movement City, a leadership development opportunity for Lawrence youth to learn design, performing arts and technology and learn leadership skills.
- Created a five month leadership training program called Poder (Spanish for "power")

where residents learn about Lawrence history, social change work, and power dynamics, culminating in a community organizing project.

- Cultivated a membership of over 1200 residents

Lawrence Community Works serves as a model in the movement for organizing truly community controlled development. Based on 95 hours of participant observation from 2006 – 2007 and 29 in depth interviews of residents and staff, this ethnographic study of Lawrence Community Works (LCW) demonstrates the workable interplay between organizing and development. Although the critics are correct that the CDC movement on the whole, has shifted to a "development only" agenda that tends to disregard organizing for resident driven planning, it is wrong to conclude that CDCs can not structurally engage in effective organizing and development simultaneously. The myth of the organizing/development dialectic prevents practitioners and academics from realizing the potential of housing development and organizing that can work synergistically under one roof.

Ultimately, CDCs can operate in two distinct ways – as primary developers or as organizer-developers. The critique of CDCs as disempowering, technically focused organizations is truly a critique of this first model of operation. The second model bases development decisions and planning on an inclusive process that organizes resident stakeholders first. In this model, technical staff work hand in hand with residents to create workable neighborhood plans so that residents are intimately involved in development projects before, during and after the bricks and mortar. In describing LCW's ground-up planning process, an LCW housing developer staff person indicates his bias towards this second model of operation:

> We use the network approach internally among departments and network among members and even beyond that. (It is) instrumental in the work that we have been able to achieve so far. I hear in other organizations that real estate and organizing are banging heads and I don't understand that. Maybe, it's because of

my mind set … to do it as we are doing it now. (It) makes for a stronger project with much greater benefit to the membership. I don't understand the turfdom. Maybe it is my bias that this is the best way to do it. (Interview, June 19, 2007)

An LCW resident member describes the LCW approach to development:

Transformation is happening block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood. The organizers are finding out what people want to see. We don't build a house on that corner because we think it is a great buildable lot. We engage the folks that live and work around that corner. We say to them, "Do you want to see a house on that corner? Do you want to see a house on that corner? What is the best use of that corner?" We do design charettes to address stuff like that. The alleyways are a huge undertaking. We don't just go in. We don't just plant flowers and walk away. We ask the neighbors," what do you want to see when you look at the window? Do

you need it to be paved to have vehicle access? Can it be a pedestrian walkway? Can we connect it to make an urban trail system?" We talk to people. If you are talking about going into a neighborhood and building in a neighborhood, then you need to make sure the neighborhood wants that there, whether it is a strip mall or affordable housing rental units…Don't walk in there like "I'm on a knight on the white horse and I'm going to save your neighborhood." It's about, "hi, my name is Lesley and I've noticed that there are a bunch of vacant lots here. We'd like to bring together a group of residents to find out what you all would like to see there. Let's talk about it. (Interview, October 12, 2006)

At LCW, the Director of organizing always participates on the real estate and housing committee. Unlike the antagonism between development and organizing departments in many other CDCs, real estate and organizing staff at LCW meet regularly to ensure that they are working together cooperatively.

Development commences with resident and member input, organizing charettes and neighborcircles to come together around an issue of a vacant lot or a problematic property. Perhaps, in these community discussions, all stakeholders in the neighborhood are brought together to generate ideas about the future of the site. Real estate staff helps to facilitate the design process, turning around ideas from the charette into workable conceptual drawings and diagrams based on the community input. Sometimes, there are certain limitations on the real estate end. For example, zoning is not always suited for single family detached housing in some neighborhoods. Usually, there is a transition from pure neighborhood organizing to the nuts and bolts of development. Yet, within the time of developing a project, a resident led committee forms to guide the process. For example, a core set of neighborhood leaders worked side by side with the development team for over seven years it took to complete the 'Our House' community center. This committee was even instrumental in fundraising for the project.

Generally, LCW will build what the community

wants if it is affordable and financing can be arranged even if staff has a different vision. For example, the real estate department saw a good opportunity to build housing on a vacant lot on the corner of Summer and Newbury Street. The lot was big. Additionally, there was a demand for housing in the community. However, during the organizing process, resident abutters wanted to see the lot turned into a neighborhood park. Since it was clear that the park was desired more than housing for that particular space, LCW build the Reviviendo Park and playground, working with residents to design it from the bare ground up.

Participation opportunities abound in the street in the nitty gritty planning of development projects in the neighborhood. Hundreds of North Common residents have taken part in the planning of local development projects. Brook Street residents in their 'neighborcircle' were instrumental in the planning and development of Scarito Park, working in collaboration with Groundwork Lawrence and LCW. Other residents attended and testified at public hearings to secure funding, site control and

other approvals for the Reviviendo Family Housing project, the renovation of three vacant historical buildings and one empty lot into 17 affordable apartment units. Neighborhood community gardeners on Union Street and other local residents sat down with planners to design the Union- Mechanic Street project. The vacant lots were primarily used for squatter community gardens, parking and illegal trash dumping. The gardeners wanted to keep their gardens but other neighbors wanted housing on the lots. Although neighbors were divided over whether there should be gardens or housing, the two groups were able to come together over the drafting table to come up with a win-win plan for building nine new homes (four duplexes and one single family) and preserving extra space for community gardening. In this way, the organizers served as consensus builders during a contentious planning process.

Usually, organizing residents together first leads to the development of a new project. However, LCW has also begun to explore the opposite order: using a new housing development project as a mooring to create opportunities to organize

residents. For example, in South Lawrence in a neighborhood in which LCW has not worked previously, LCW had a chance to purchase a property on Farnham Street that consisted of three vacant triple deckers and one partially occupied two family unit. The CDC purchased the property in order to rehab it to make affordable rental units. LCW organizers then had the opportunity to canvass the neighborhood to discuss the idea of revitalizing the abandoned homes and were met with enthusiasm and support for the project. The project did not bubble up through the neighborcircle process but the project may result in a neighborcircle in the future as connections are made between the CDC and the surrounding neighborhood. According to the LCW housing staff person, "we didn't hear one person say no. Everyone said, 'It's about time. It's great that you are here." In June 2007, the organizing department did extensive outreach in the neighborhood and invited residents to a new member orientation on site at the Farnham Street property, having a barbecue, music and getting-to-know-you exercises as a way to build connections and community on the street. This event was well

attended with over 30 – 40 people and very successful with local neighbors talking to each other as neighbors and planning to start a local neighborcircle. In this example, LCW is developing a new model of connecting organizing and development – identifying a project in a new neighborhood and then doing outreach in the neighborhood to invite people to participate in the LCW network. In this approach, a real estate project can serve as the starting point for network building and community organizing.

In the 'development only' model of CDCs, projects are dictated by available funding opportunities, guided by technical staff and approved by a small group of local board members. In this way, it is not surprising that CDCs, as other private developers who do not incorporate grassroots participation in planning, may potentially encounter resident apathy and even resistance to CDC neighborhood projects. In contrast, in LCW's organizing-development model, CDCs undertake development projects, programs and organizing campaigns that are resident led. True resident ownership of the

projects and the CDC itself, an increased place based commitment and a sense of neighborhood community and solidarity are the benefits of following this organizing-development path. Residents' naming of the newly completed community center, 'Our House" or 'Nuestra Casa', demonstrates this kind of project ownership. Other residents explain this phenomenon:

> I remember working with one of the young people, one of my clients. I wanted him to be part of Movement City (the LCW youth arm) so I drove him around and I said, "That's ours" and I showed him 'Our House'. I go to the Scarito Homes and say, "That's ours. And this is ours too." He says," So what are you to this organization?" And I say, "I am a member." "But you are saying that 'That's yours'." "Yes, it is mine. It is MINE because I have ownership of that project, making it happen with my participation, with my advocating, attending things, paying attention to what is going on in the city, talking about the program. That house

there is MINE. And if you become a member of this organization, it is going to be yours! As you drive around with your friends, you can tell your friends, that building over there is ours." (She laughs). That is MINE because what we build in the neighborhood belongs to us. If it is mine, I take care of it. This is my city, my neighborhood. I think that sense of ownership is what makes this organization a success because this is our organization. We belong. We do good stuff together. That sense of belonging, of ownership is what makes it work. (Interview, June 30, 2007)

One of the good things about LCW is they get everyone involved from the bottom up. What parts you want to play with it. They want community to see it as theirs. Ten years from now, you can tell your friends or your family or who is visiting, "I helped the planning of this project and they took some of my idea and her idea and his idea and turned it into this." You want to be a part of the very bone and marrow of it. You

want to say this is something that I helped create. I helped to physically build Reviviendo Park. I remember going out clearing the ground, planting the trees. So, you can really say, "I helped build this. I helped the design of it – where should that be, where should that be. No, we want that over there and not there." (Interview, October 12, 2006)

Community organizing is the primary building block for all LCW development work. Organizing is such a priority in this model that LCW's first hired fulltime staff person was the Director of Community Organizing. Utilizing this organizing-development alternative paradigm, this CDC has been able to see a large level of engagement of residents in their target neighborhood. Over 500 local residents attend the annual meeting and vote in contested CDC board elections. In a decentralized network though, the board is not the only source of leadership opportunity. Other members are organizing clean-ups, planning political campaigns and registering voters, implementing asset building programs, attending design charettes, recruiting new members,

writing press releases or doing radio shows.

Lessons from LCW

Demonstrating a successful example of development based on organizing principles and practices, the LCW case study reveals the myth of the organizing-development dialectic that has been prevalent in academic and practice discourses. CDCs can be effective organizers and developers. Indeed, community organizing can bring about development owned by the people who live in a neighborhood. Residents can be empowered to envision and plan their neighborhood space. Here are three practices that can be replicated in communities in order to develop a democratic and participatory development CDC:

1. Hire an Executive Director who has knowledge of and commitment to community organizing:

As Executive Director of LCW, Bill Traynor has been able to permeate an organizing model of

development because he himself is a trained community organizer. He joined in his family's work painting houses until age 25 and attended University of Massachusetts of Lowell, studying radical Marxism with sociologists there. He himself became a community organizer for Mass Fair Share, an Alinsky inspired state wide chapter organization organizing around consumer protection issues. Eventually, he completed a Masters Degree In Human Services Management at Brandeis and became the first executive director of Coalition for A Better Acre(CBA), a community development corporation in Lowell, Massachusetts. In his role at CBA, he was instrumental in welding organizing to development, advocating for a strong community organizing component of residents of the Acre to shape and advocate for the development of their neighborhood. He articulated this vision of centering development on organizing efforts in a series of articles he wrote geared towards community developers out in the field.

These articles served to give him national visibility and a national reputation, leading him to

a myriad of consulting jobs first at Community Training and Assistance Corporation (CTAC) and later in his own firm of nine years, Neighborhood Partners. He was fortunate to have a wide range of consulting jobs – from working with Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative to advise on their widespread community planning process, helping Mike Eichler shape the theory behind consensus organizing for the Consensus Organizing Institute, to advising the Annie E Casey Foundation's Rebuilding Communities Initiative by working with funded sites developing resident driven community revitalization efforts in Detroit, Boston, Washington, DC, Philadelphia and Denver. In 1998, he received a Loeb Fellowship from Harvard and studied technological design and its implications for urban planning.

Although it is impossible to clone Bill Traynor, CDCs can hire an Executive Director who not only is committed to organizing based development but also is grounded in the theory and practice of different methods of community organizing including the network centric community building approach. The Executive

Director is key in setting the tone and the priorities of the organization. Without a strong commitment to basing development on what the residents organized in the neighborhood want to see, then an Executive Director will be responsible for steering the organization to the common "development only" or "development first" type of CDC. In this way, an Executive Director who is able to let go of his or her own power to others in the network who will shape the environment, has the dual qualities of humility, and inner strength. Ideally, a Director also can bring technical knowledge of development to the organization so that he or she can adequately oversee the development and organizing parts of the work. However, primary importance is placed on the delicate knowledge and commitment to organizing. Technical know–how can always be hired in to the organization.

2. Ensure open nominating and fair elections of board of directors of the CDC:

The high rates of ownership of LCW are in fact due to the democratic nature of how board

members are elected. Board members representing the neighborhood are not chosen or personally selected by a small group of leaders. Open nomination slips are mailed to all network members. All members vote for nominated candidates in often contested elections at the annual meeting in December. In this way, elected in an open, transparent and fair process, the board is seen as true representatives of neighborhood interests.

3. Maintain a diversified funding portfolio:

One of the reasons why CDCs have been critiqued in the literature is that if they are dependent on government sources for operating support, they may not willing to jeopardize their funding by organizing residents to challenge the local civic status quo. Not wanting to "bite the hand that feeds it", a CDC becomes a more conservative vehicle, almost an extension of government itself.

LCW has not had this problem of public funding preventing activism because 95% of its operating budget comes from private sources

including private foundations that support the LCW model, private donors and private banks. Public funds accounting for less than 5% of the budget include contracted real estate development fees, community development block grant funds, Community Housing Development Operation (CHODO) operating support and HOME funds. LCW manages risk by diversifying its funding sources and not depending on any one sector for support. Although it is important to have a minimum public investment to show that the city buys in to the work that the CDC is doing and public funding can sometimes be a steady source of income, one of the LCW resource developers admitted:

> I don't want to ever be in a situation where the city says, you do this or we are going to yank your funding. If they say that, I would like to be able to say, (Forget) you. (Interview, October 11, 2007)

In this way, LCW has become adept at targeting specific sources for specific functions of the network. In order to maintain freedom of action,

the organizing work is only funded through private foundations and donors, never public money that may restrict activity. The resource development department is looking at public funding, corporate support and private donors to fund Movement City and other youth related parts of the network. Additionally, LCW cultivates relationships with banks to fund the asset building activities of FAB, not only their foundation but also their marketing dollars since FAB through its homeownership and financial education work link participants to the mainstream financial world.

One staff person involved in the strategic planning of LCW's resource development, lamenting the constant need for non profits in the United States to "beg" for money, advices new organizations to learn how to not give up and to "hustle" for support:

> It's about HUSTLE. If you are not asking someone for money because you do not fit their guidelines anymore or you have outgrown them, you are asking someone else for money and hopefully you are

asking 300 people. You are always searching for new people to ask for money and new sources of support. I can't think of a non profit out there that is self sustaining. We exist because of market failure in the capitalist system. We exist because this system does not pay for the things that people actually need for a healthy functioning, somewhat civilized society. We always have to ask people for money – the government, individuals, corporations, private foundations. That's the reality of the non profit world. People in Europe think we are crazy! There was not a need for a private foundation in France and Europe because the people there believe the government needs to take care of the needs of its citizens! So, they fund that stuff! (Interview, October 11, 2007)

In this discussion of the community organizing and development practices that can be replicated in other cities and states, it is theoretically possible to see that one can move beyond Lawrence and Lawrence Community Works to use this model in other CDCs. CDC

practitioners must not buy into the myth of the organizing-development dialectic. In this way, the LCW case study is a salient example of the power and promise of community organizing and resident driven development.

References

Alinsky, Saul D. 1946. Reveille for Radicals .. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago press.

------.1971. Rules for Radicals; a Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals. New York: Random House.

Arnstein, Sherry. July 1969. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." JAIP 35:216-224.

Barber, Benjamin R. 1984. Strong Democracy : Participatory Politics for a New Age. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bellah, Robert N. 1986. Habits of the Heart : Individualism and Commitment in American Life. New York: Harper & Row.

Bobo, Kimberley A., Steve Max, Jackie Kendall and Midwest Academy. 2001. Organizing for Social Change : Midwest Academy Manual for Activists. Santa Ana, Calif.: Seven Locks Press.

Boyte, Harry C. 1990. CommonWealth : A Return to Citizen Politics. New York; London: Free Press; Collier Macmillan.

------.2004. Everyday Politics : Reconnecting Citizens and the Public Life. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Bratt, Rachel G. 1997. "CDCs: Contributions Outweigh Contradictions, a Reply to Randy Stoecker." Journal of Urban Affairs 19:23-8.

Bratt, Rachel G. and William Rohe. 2004. "Organizational Changes among CDCs: Assessing the Impacts and Navigating the Challenges." Journal of Urban Affairs 26:197 - 220.

Bright, Elise M. 2000. Reviving America's Forgotten Neighborhoods : An Investigation of Inner City Revitalization Efforts. New York:

Garland Pub.

Bruyn, Severyn T. H. and James Meehan. 1987. Beyond the Market and the State : New Directions in Community Development. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cnaan, Ram. 1991. "Neighborhood Representing Organizations: How Democratic are they?" Social Service Review 65:614 - 634.

Couverthie, Alma and Marianna Leavy-Sperounis. 2006. "Budgeting for Democracy." Shelterforce Summer:8 - 11.

Cummings, Scott and Mark Glaser. 1985. "Neighborhood Participation in Community Development: A Comparison of Strategic Approaches." Population Research and Policy Review, 1985, 4, 3, Oct 4:267-87.

Dahl, Robert A. 1970. After the Revolution; Authority in a Good Society. New Haven: Yale University Press.

DeFilippis, James. 2001. "The Myth of Social Capital in Community Development." Housing

Policy Debate 12.

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

Evans, Sara M. and Harry C. Boyte. 1986. Free Spaces : The Sources of Democratic Change in America. New York: Harper & Row.

Faber, Daniel and Deborah McCarthy. 2005. Foundations for Social Change : Critical Perspectives on Philanthropy and Popular Movements. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Fairfax, Allen N. 2005. "Challenging the Rules: The Merrimack Valley Project and the Construction of Public Space.".

Ferguson, Ronald F. and William T. Dickens, editors. 1999. Urban Problems and Community Development. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Fiorina, Morris P. and Theda Skocpol. 1999. Civic Engagement in American Democracy.

Washington, D.C.; New York: Brookings Institution Press; Russell Sage Foundation.

Fisher, Robert. 1994. Let the People Decide : Neighborhood Organizing in America. New York :$bTwayne Publishers ; Toronto; New York: Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International.

Gecan, Michael. 2002. Going Public. Boston: Beacon Press.

Gittell, Ross J. and Avis Vidal. 1998. Community Organizing : Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Glickman, Norman and Lisa J. Servon. 2003. "By the Numbers: Measuring Community Development Corporations' Capacity." Journal of Planning Education and Research 22:240 - 256.

Goetz, Edward G. and Mara Sidney. 1995. "Community Development Corporations as Neighborhood Advocates: A Study of the Political Activism of Nonprofit Developers."

Applied Behavioral Science Review 3:1-20.

Green, Gary P. and Anna Haines. 2002. Asset Building & Community Development. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Grogan, Paul S. and Tony Proscio. 2000. Comeback Cities : A Blueprint for Urban Neighborhood Revival. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Hadrian, Ricanne. 1988. "Combining Organizing and Housing Development: Conflictive Yet Synergistic.".

Halpern, Robert. 1995. Rebuilding the Inner City : A History of Neighborhood Initiatives to Address Poverty in the United States. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hunt, Valerie H. 2004. "Community Development Corporations and Public Policymaking: Inclusiveness and Effectiveness." University of Arkansas, United States -- Arkansas.

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. New York: Vintage Books.

Kahn, Si. 1991. Organizing, a Guide for Grassroots Leaders. Silver Spring, MD: NASW Press.

Keating, W. D. 1997. "The CDC Model of Urban Development, a Reply to Randy Stoecker." Journal of Urban Affairs 19:29-33.

Keating, W. D., Philip Star and Norman Krumholz. 1996. Revitalizing Urban Neighborhoods. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Knotts, H. G. 2006. "Sticks, Bricks, and Social Capital: The Challenge of Community Development Corporations in the American Deep South." Community Development Journal 41:37-49.

La Piana, David. 2003. "Comment on William M. Rohe and Rachel G. Bratt's "Failures, Downsizings and Mergers among CDC": Merger does Not Mean Failure." Housing Policy Debate 14:57 - 68.

Mandell, Joyce L. 1993. "CDCs and the NIMBY

Phenomenon: A Case Study of a Legitimation Crisis.".

Mansbridge, Jane J. 1980. Beyond Adversary Democracy. New York: Basic Books.

Martin, Deborah G. 2003. "Place Framing as Place Making: Constituting a Neighborhood for Organizing and Activism." Annals of the Association of American Geographers 93:730 - 750.

McKnight, John. 1991. "Services are Bad for People: You'Re either a Citizen Or a Client." Organizing Spring/Summer:41 - 44.

Medoff, Peter and Holly Sklar. 1994. Streets of Hope : The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood. Boston, MA: South End Press.

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

Murphy, Patricia W. and James V. Cunningham. 2003. Organizing for Community Controlled

Development : Renewing Civil Society. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Nye, Norman and Norman Glickman. 2000. "Working Together: Building Capacity for Community Development." Housing Policy Debate 11:163-198.

Pateman, Carole. 1970. Participation and Democratic Theory. Cambridge Eng.: University Press.

Peirce, Neal R. and Carol F. Steinbach. 1987. Corrective Capitalism: The Rise of America's Community Development Corporations: A Report to the Ford Foundation. New York: Ford Foundation.

Perry, Stewart E. and Center for Community Economic Development. 1973. Federal Support for CDCs : Some of the History and Issues of Community Control. Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Community Economic Development.

Plastrik, Peter and Madeleine Taylor. 2004. "Lawrence Community Works: Using the Power

of Networks to Restore A City A Report for the Barr Foundation.".

------.2006. Net Gains: A Handbook for Network Builders Seeking Social Change.

------.December 7, 2004. "Network Development Meeting.".

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone, Revisited." The Responsive Community Spring:18 - 33.

------.2001. Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D., Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Nanetti. 1993. Making Democracy Work : Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Renauer, Brian C. 2001. "Why Get Involved? Examining the Motivational, Identity, and Ideological Aspects of Resident Involvement in Place-Based Organizations." United States.

Rivera, Felix G. and John Erlich. 1998. Community Organizing in a Diverse Society. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Rohe, William and Rachel G. Bratt. 2003. "Failures, Downsizings and Mergers among Community Development Corporations." Housing Policy Debate 14:1 - 46.

Rubin, Herbert J. 2000. Renewing Hope within Neighborhoods of Despair : The Community-Based Development Model. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene Rubin. 1986. Community Organizing and Development. Columbus Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

Silverman, Robert M. 2001. "CDCs and Charitable Organizations in the Urban South: Mobilizing Social Capital Based on Race and Religion for Neighborhood Revitalization." Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 30:240-68.

------.2001. "Neighborhood Characteristics, Community Development Corporations and the Community Development Industry System: A Case Study of the American Deep South." Community Development Journal 36:234-45.

------.2003. "Progressive Reform, Gender and Institutional Structure: A Critical Analysis of Citizen Participation in Detroit's Community Development Corporations (CDCs)." Urban Studies 40:2731-50.

------.2004. Community-Based Organizations : The Intersection of Social Capital and Local Context in Contemporary Urban Society. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Sinclair, Upton. 1971. The Jungle. Cambridge, Mass.: R. Bentley.

Sirianni, Carmen and Lewis Friedland. 2001. Civic Innovation in America : Community Empowerment, Public Policy, and the Movement for Civic Renewal. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Skocpol, Theda and Morris P. Fiorina. 1999. Civic Engagement in American Democracy. Washington, D.C.; New York: Brookings Institution Press; Russell Sage Foundation.

Smith, Jillaine, Martin Kearns and Allison Fine. 2005. "Power to the Edges: Trends and Opportunities in Online Civic Engagement.".

Smock, Kristina. 2000. "Strategies of Urban Change: A Comparative Analysis of Contemporary Models of Neighborhood-Based Community Organizing." Northwestern University, United States -- Illinois.

------.2004. Democracy in Action : Community Organizing and Urban Change. New York: Columbia University Press.

Steinbach, Carol F. 2007. "Community Development Corporations in US Civil Society.":1 - 17.

Stoecker, Randy. 1995. "The Myth of Community Empowerment: Rethinking the Community Development Corporation Model of Urban

Redevelopment.".

------.1997. "The CDC Model of Urban Redevelopment: A Critique and an Alternative." Journal of Urban Affairs 19:1-22.

------.1997. "Should we... could we... Change the CDC Model?, a Rejoinder." Journal of Urban Affairs 19:35-44.

------.2001. "Power Or Programs? Two Paths to Community Development." Keynote to International Association for Community Development Conference, New Zealand.

------.2001. "Report to the West Bank CDC; Communities, CDCs and Community Organizing.", 2007.

------.2003. "Comment on William M. Rohe and Rachel G. Bratt's "Failures, Downsizings and Mergers among CDCs": Defending CDCs Or Defending Communities?" Housing Policy Debate 14:47 - 56.

------.2003. "Understanding the Development-Organizing Dialectic." Journal of Urban Affairs

25:493-512.

Stout, Linda. 1996. Bridging the Class Divide : And Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing. Boston: Beacon Press.

Temkin, Kenneth and William Rohe. 1998. "Social Capital and Neighborhood Stability: An Empirical Investigation." Housing Policy Debate 9:1.

The Urban Institute. 2005. The Impact of Community Development Corporations on Urban Neighborhoods. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

Tigan, Mark T. 2005. "Citizen Participation in United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs: From the Great Society to the New Federalism." University of Massachusetts Amherst, United States -- Massachusetts.

Traynor, William. "Community Building: Hope and Caution." Shelterforce Online.

------."Comprehensive Community Initiative:

Preparing for Change." Shelterforce Online.

------.2002. "Reflections on Community Organizing and Resident Engagement in the Rebuilding Community Initiative." Annie E. Casey Foundation.

------.unpublished, 2007. "Community Building: Limitations and Promise.".

Traynor, William and Jessica Andors. 2005. "Network Organizing: A Strategy for Building Community Engagement." Shelterforce March/April:8 - 11.

Twelvetrees, Alan C. 1996. Organizing for Neighbourhood Development : A Comparative Study of Community Based Development Organizations. Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, USA: Avebury.

Walker, Christopher. 2002. Community Development Corporations and their Changing Support Systems. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

Warren, Mark R. 2001. Dry Bones Rattling :

Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Zdenek, Robert. 1990. "Taking Hold: The Growth and Support of Community Development Corporations.".

About the Author

Joyce Mandell received her doctorate in Sociology with a concentration in community development from Boston College in 2008. Her dissertation, "Before, During and After Bricks and Mortar: Network Organizing as a Community Development Strategy" was nominated for "Best Dissertation" in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 2008. Currently, she is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Urban Studies and Sociology at Worcester State College. Prior to her academic career, she had 14 years experience, working as a community organizer and program manager at several community development corporations.