

TRANSACTIONS TRANSFORMATIONS TRANSLATIONS

Metrics That Matter
for Building,
Scaling,
and Funding
Social Movements

Manuel Pastor
Jennifer Ito
Rachel Rosner



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Executive Summary

These are uncertain times. While high levels of inequality have finally provoked protests in the heart of Wall Street, the main response to economic anxiety and financial crisis has been the rise of right-wing populism. Meanwhile, the progressive forces who helped elect a former community organizer to the U.S. Presidency are wondering not only what happened to the promised hope and change but also why the frustrations of a nation have not produced a sustained shift in their direction.

Building a progressive movement to match the moment is a key challenge. It is critical to regain the momentum, sustain a common narrative, and develop the organizing that can lead us to a more just America. To do this will require resources, including the time and dues of grassroots leaders and the energies and creativity of organizations committed to social change. It will also require the stepped-up resources of funders who have long been committed to leveling the playing field and providing venues for community voice.

This report was originally intended to address the funder side of that resource gap – and one particular reason why it exists, the lack of metrics. For while there are many factors behind the reluctance of some foundations to put money into the broad field of movement building, including worries about being too political or just how one might explain it to trustees, one quite reasonable objection has been that movements are actually pretty hard to measure.

In a philanthropic world increasingly drifting towards evidence-based giving, this presents a conundrum. Housing the homeless, educating poor children, and passing key policies can be counted and neatly fit into an evaluation model.

Less measurable is an assertion that “we changed the frame” or “we shifted members’ consciousness.” Community organizers have not always helped matters. Some have been resistant to numeric measures on the grounds that these fail to capture the vibrancy of organizing. Since they see the magic in the one-on-one epiphanies of their members, counting only the number of members seems to entirely miss the point of the work.

Recognizing the gap, we thought we could help communication between funders and organizers – and perhaps shake loose some change for the field – by laying out what we call the metrics of movement building. We figured that we could derive some new measures for philanthropy by examining what the field is doing already. And we thought that we could help to convince organizers that they should understand the pressures funders face and meet them halfway by developing new metrics that track what movement builders think is important.

But like any good research project, we were surprised by what we found. Indeed, we came to a shift not just in our thinking about measurement and strategies but also in our very understanding of the context we had sought to address.

First, the field is changing: Recognizing the gravity of the times, hoping to gauge their effectiveness, and wanting to add up to more than the sum of their parts, the movement builders we interviewed are eager to come up with a common language and common framework. And second, funders may need less persuasion than we think: There are a wide range of program officers and philanthropic leaders who are eager for the evidence to make

the argument that movements matter. They are actively looking for the tools and the stories that can help their institutions see the bigger picture.

This report tries to build on this new openness in both the field and the foundations. We argue that gaps in mutual understanding between the field and the foundations can be bridged by developing metrics that can capture both quantity and quality, both numbers and nuance, both transactions and transformations. One element of movement building, for example, is organizing – and while you can judge success by the crowds that show up to protest, the more transformative marker is whether leaders grow, develop, and acquire the ability to pivot from issue to issue. Considering changes along both dimensions is critical and can help to build a broad acceptance of the work of movement building.

We apply this distinction between transactions and transformations to other common dimensions of movement building, including civic engagement, leadership development, alliance building, campaign development, and communications. We note, for example, that some measures to capture the use of new media might focus on the number of hits a story gets; another measure might be whether or not leaders are themselves becoming the story-tellers and producers of media. We also caution that transactions and transformations are deeply related: An energized leader with a clear power analysis – a transformative measure – will be more likely to turn out higher numbers for a coalition rally – a transactions measure.

However useful this new frame might be (and we hope that it is), we need more than a way to bring together quantitative and qualitative concerns. Movements are something special – they go beyond an organization to become sustained groupings with shared values, a common narrative, a broad and deep base, and a long-term commitment to change. Typical metrics, however, focus on organizations not

movements, on institutions not intersections. We argue for a new approach to measurement that looks at whether groups are working together to build alliances that can reach scale and secure social justice.

The mechanics of all this are hard but not impossible. A number of intermediaries, including the Progressive Technology Project and the Alliance for Justice are developing and housing the sort of toolboxes that are necessary. Several organizations, including Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, the Partnership for Working Families, PICO National Network, and many others are exploring their own approaches. The challenge is that most of these efforts also seem better at assessing organizational development than movement building, at reporting on a group's effectiveness than its ability to play well with others. This report attempts to start a conversation about that broader set of movement-level measures and suggests how the field can pool its efforts in a learning process to develop those markers.

But even if we make progress on the measurements, we still need to close the translation gap between organizers and funders. To get at that, we make a series of recommendations to both sides of this equation, including further development of assessment tools, a serious commitment to organizational capacity to use those metrics, and the development of a new evaluative framework that constantly queries how any particular policy outcome actually fits into the more transformational work of movement building. We also suggest new ways for organizations to communicate with funders, urging a mix of quantitative metrics with the art of story-telling to create epiphanies not just for community leaders but for foundation trustees.

We also suggest that the field needs to document and communicate innovation. In the world of business, a new technique or technology is quite quickly imitated by competitors – the market is a transmission

mechanism for spreading ideas. In the world of organizing, there is no such automatic mechanism, and so we need strategies such as convenings, peer-to-peer learning, and documentation of practices as well as communicative approaches that go beyond one-on-ones to include the internet and new media. In all of this, we offer an admonition to funders: Innovation also includes failure, and part of what is needed is a new relationship where grantees can honestly indicate what is working, what is not, and what is needed.

And this gets to our last recommendation: We need to co-create the new metrics of movement building. Much as a movement is a collaborative affair, the forging of new evaluative tools should not be the sole province of a single organization, a group of funders, or an industry of consultants. The organizers we interviewed are eager to find a common set of measures and tools, partly to avoid excessively complicated reporting to multiple foundations but mostly because they want to generate and measure success together.

The organizers and movement builders are also eager to work with foundation program officers on the issue, avoiding the problem of translation by settling on a common language at the get-go. Behind this view is a deeper sense that we need a fundamentally different – and hopefully more productive – relationship between the field and the foundations. For it is not really a question of one group performing for the other – although meeting agreed-upon targets and goals is wholly expected. It is that in the current moment, we can no longer pretend that a wary relationship between those who share the goal of social justice will be sufficient to

lay the groundwork for a more inclusive America.

In the midst of a deep crisis – and the challenges progressives have faced in capturing the national imagination – the key questions have changed. While organizers are still concerned about how to raise funds for their institutions and how to build the capacities of staff and leaders, many are concentrating on the big picture: *What is the long-term change that we want in this country? What are the big leaps needed to achieve it? And what roles can different organizations play in building a movement to match the moment?*

Measuring all this is just one part of the puzzle – but it is a part, and it is too important to ignore. We need movements that can make a difference – and we need metrics that matter. Evaluative approaches should match the complexity of the task, capturing narrative as well as numbers, politics as well as policies, transformations as well as transactions. None of this will be solved in one report, one conversation, or one convening. And so we offer this report in hopes that others will pick up where we leave off and carry on in building the momentum to create, sustain, and measure the change we want in this country.



Introduction

The election of President Barack Obama in 2008 seemed to signal a breakthrough moment for progressives. The unprecedented scale of grassroots action and activism not only propelled the nation's first African American – and community organizer – into the Presidency but generated a new sense of hope and possibility among those usually disengaged from the democratic political process and dialogue. An aspirational message tapped into people's best values – a sense of mutual responsibility, a commitment to equality, and an embrace of diversity – and opened up their imaginations for what is possible.

Inspired, everyday people reached out to their neighbors, took to the streets, and rallied in mass numbers. Thousands of individuals gained the skills to engage and mobilize millions of volunteers, many of whom were first-time activists. The campaign's success in blending traditional forms of organizing (door-knocking, phonebanking, trainings) with new technologies (social media, web-based systems for disseminating campaign tools and materials, and online giving) pointed to possibilities for sustaining engagement to build a mass-based movement for change. And the campaign proved what many organizers have been saying: Leading with values over issues can be widely effective in mobilizing everyday people.

Seeing an opening for moving federal post-election policies and politics, many placed their major bets on Washington, D.C.-based national coalitions that promised to move big issues, like healthcare, climate change, and immigration reform. But instead of a groundswell of support paving the way for a full-court press on a backlogged, progressive legislative agenda, the groundswell that erupted – and disrupted – has come from a movement

with a very different set of values and vision. As mid-term blues – and perhaps more realistic expectations – set in, many analysts sought to explain the rise in reaction and slump in support. One key factor: some policy makers, funders and others did not fully appreciate that what brought the Obama moment – a wave of activism in 2007 and 2008 that transformed people's civic engagement and sense of possibilities – needed to be sustained.

Insuring that movements can match the moment is not for the hasty or the feint-hearted – it requires patient investment in long-term base building that is often at the cutting (and uncomfortable) edge of social justice. This critical, yet often-invisible, work helps to transform the country person by person and organization by organization – and can create the basis for a movement for change that is larger than any individual or organization. Why is this important work invisible? It is partly because of its very nature – a dramatic march on Washington draws media attention while the living room conversations that give participants the courage to board the buses happen under the radar.

But part of the problem is that many of the movement side of the equation have found it difficult to articulate how all those conversations slowly and finally add up to something big. When the arc of change is long and arduous, guideposts demarcating the path to progress and victories that can be claimed along the way are critical. They are important not only for organizers who need to instill in others the courage and confidence to walk the road but also for funders who are increasingly embracing evidence-based giving.

Unfortunately, the metrics of movement building is not a subject designed to light up a room. It is much easier to whip up enthusiasm about storming the offices of a recalcitrant Congressperson or mobilizing millions of immigrants to vote than it is to stir a conversation about designing and filling out matrices for evaluation. And the usual sort of measures employed in evaluation fail to capture the epiphanies that drive organizing passion – and so measuring movement building can seem both somewhat vague to those who lean toward quantitative assessment and somewhat lifeless to those who do real-world community organizing.

But the gap must be bridged. In a world in which evidence is key and movements are more important than ever, we need a new way of looking at organizational growth and a new method to understand the alliance building that brings groups together. We need a new evaluative approach that can capture the importance of narrative as well as numbers, of politics as well as policies, of transformation as well as transaction. We need, in short, metrics that matter.

With support from the Ford Foundation, the University of Southern California's Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) has been looking at exactly this set of issues. This work builds on our previous research on social movements, including reports on the elements of organizing, interethnic collaborations, and new alliances for social change. And while part of our reason for focusing here on metrics stems from the interest of foundation leaders, we were also struck in our earlier work not just by the courage, creativity, and compassion of movement organizers but by one recurring and resounding theme: the need to create new metrics of success that can truly communicate the value and impact of movement building.

This report begins with a project overview, indicating the questions that originally drove the research and how the process of collecting

data helped to change our perspective on what we were really trying to achieve. Next, we turn to an explanation of why the issues of metrics have gained such salience in the current moment and how a combination of shifts in the philanthropic world and the field has made this arena critical. We, then, offer a new framework for measuring both transactions and transformations with sample metrics for ten common movement-building strategies: organizing, civic engagement, leadership development, alliance building, campaigns, research and policy analysis, communications and framing, traditional and social media, organizational development, and movement building. We finally turn to a series of recommendations to funders in the field, ranging from the practical steps of building a new toolbox of measures to more far-reaching suggestions that leadership development and the connection of policy outcomes to movement building become central parts of evaluative approaches.

Most of all, we argue for a new relationship between funders and the field. Movement metrics are not about a stand-offish assessment of grantee performance; they are about setting markers that actually reach beyond organizations and ask whether the whole being created by grassroots organizing and alliance building is actually more than the sum of its parts. In any new field, innovation will actually come from failure and suggesting that this be reported and analyzed can be frightening. This is why movement metrics – like movements themselves – need to be a co-creation that involves the world of movement builders and philanthropic leaders working together to develop a common language to reach common goals in what surely is an extraordinary moment.

Project Overview

We began this project with an interest in developing a framework for metrics that could serve as a bridge between interests in the community organizing field and those in philanthropy. We wanted to see what kinds of measures would translate the value and efficacy of organizing *and* provide the evidence that foundations are increasingly looking for to inform and justify investments. We wanted to see how we could connect a foundation trustee's vision of a world free of childhood obesity with a grassroots leader's excitement about building and confronting the power of grocery owners that have created food deserts. And we wanted to do all that without inadvertently steering money away from organizing and toward a cottage industry of evaluators . . .

But our discussions with movement leaders convinced us that it was more important to find a framework for metrics that was not aimed at closing a gap, as we originally envisioned, but rather at opening a space for conversations about what social change we want to see in this country and what it will take to achieve. Talking about strategies that match today's challenges and the metrics of success that we expect from them is a growing topic of interest among both leaders from the field and from philanthropy, albeit just one aspect of conversations needed.

Acknowledging that folks in the field have frequently figured out the theory and practice long before academics, we kicked off the project with a series of conference calls with organizers in the field and with funders. We asked participants to identify best practices in organizing strategies, expected impacts of those strategies, and measures of success and to see what successes and challenges folks

faced in communicating to funders. For a list of participants on these calls, see Appendix B.

We also did our due diligence by digging into the academic literature on social movements, organizing, and outcomes. Much of the academic literature on outcomes was done during the 1970s in response to the wave of activism in the 1960s. Mirroring the strategies of that time, early studies look at the outcomes of mobilization, protest, and resistance. Since the late 1990s, there has been a resurgent interest in the broader consequences of movements and their impacts on those that participate in them and on broader society, but this has not usually been matched with a focus on measurement and assessment.

There has been a bit more in this vein in the world of community organizing. We mined websites, most notably the Alliance for Justice's Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/reco/), for the latest reports and tools from the fields of program evaluation, philanthropy, and organizing. For a list of sample resources, see Appendix D. But here, too, there is a gap: If movements are about the weaving together of organizations and people, simply gauging organizational efficacy is not enough. If the whole is more than the sum of its parts, there must be a way to gain perspective on the whole.

A bit more confused after doing the research than before, we plunged ahead with a series of interviews with key movement leaders to ask them what mattered. For a list of interviews conducted for this project, see Appendix A. We also dug into a database we have developed over the last four years of interviews with over seventy key organizers throughout the country.

Drawing from some of the best thinking from the field, we then developed a framework of metrics related to base-building strategies that sought to offer a menu of examples for foundations and organizations that want to more fully capture and translate the art and science of base building.

Since it is always good to test the market before flooding the market, we convened a bi-coastal, simulcast meeting of social justice leaders to introduce the framework as a starting point for a conversation around metrics that matter. We presented our initial thinking about the role of metrics in building movement scale with nineteen of the country's greatest movement builders – theorists in their own rights though better known for the foot soldiers they put on the ground. For a list of participants, see Appendix C.

And it was there that we fully realized that developing metrics was not simply a question of translating to funders – both the interviewees and meeting participants had a strong interest in the metrics, too. One person even admitted to “a mild obsession with metrics.” Another interrupted a five-week vacation to come to the convening with a hope of having something to bring back to the board for its strategic planning process. And all wanted to be able to

show impacts and measure their successes more fully, not just to their funders but to their members, their organizers, and the general public.

Anyone who has spent late nights preparing a logic model for a grant proposal knows that having a more coherent framework for communicating and tracking the work could be helpful. But we heard from many organizational leaders that they are interested in learning from each other and in thinking collectively towards developing common language and concepts. This would allow them to compare progress across places and issues, avoid getting caught up in semantics, and demonstrate what is really possible in the field.

That convening transformed our own thinking and the message for this report, so it is with great appreciation and humility that we offer this report to the field. We will admit that we had been thinking about this project as a transaction: How can metrics help translate the value of movement and base building, and get more money to places where it is needed? But we have grown to appreciate that this is really about a transformation: How can a discussion about metrics be part of a broader conversation about what it will take to create a real movement that can match the moment?



Why Metrics? Why Now?

“[T]he New Deal wasn’t won by economic experts. It was won by ordinary people who organized to create a sense of crisis and a mandate for change.”

Jean Hardisty
and Deepak
Bhargava (2005)

Movements are essential vehicles for building a democratic society. From civil rights to climate change, progress has been made when everyday people push the powers-that-be to make change. And importantly, movements are more than single organizations focused on single issues or single policies; we define social movements as “sustained groupings that develop a frame or narrative based on shared values, that maintain a link with a real and broad base in the community, and that build for a long-term transformation in power” (Pastor and Ortiz, 2009, 7).

But building a movement – its vision, values, base, leadership, networks, and campaigns – is a long and arduous path with detours and peaks. And while there are flashpoints when a movement erupts (think about the hundreds of thousands of immigrants and their supporters dressed in white flooding the streets in 2006 or, at the other end of the political spectrum, the tea party’s town hall protests against health care reform in 2009), its most important stages of development usually happen under the radar of public awareness.

Building a movement for social justice requires the patient investment in creating and developing a base of confident and skilled leaders among those *individuals* most affected by systems of inequality. It requires investments in forging sustainable and effective *organizations* that can involve those individuals directly in the process of changing policy and building democracy. And it requires investments in *movements* themselves to make the connections across constituencies and issues so as to build broader efforts that move society as a whole

to embrace values of justice, equity, and diversity.

We often hear from those in the field that building a base and a movement is both an art and a science. That is not the only duality: Movements must achieve depth *and* breadth, must trigger broad social change *and* secure tangible policy wins, must challenge the base to ever more dramatic action *and* create a sense of victory and forward moments. These dual facets create tension – often creative tension – when there are limited hours in the day. (Do you spend three hours in one living room or hit as many doors as possible? Do you focus on developing a leader or winning on an issue? Do you believe that any organizer can be trained or do you search for those who already have the right personality?) No one pretends to know a magic formula or the perfect balance, but many do believe that there are lessons to be learned from each other so as to save a few steps and mis-steps.

And this is why metrics are important.

Metrics can help organizations articulate where they are going, what road they are taking, and what they expect to find along the way. They can help groups strike the right balance in the trade-offs above, allocating time and energy to be maximally effective. They can serve as a guide and tool for lifting up lessons for the field and for funders. But they should never be the tail wagging the dog; as one convening

participant warned, it is the “mission that determines the path – not the metrics.”¹

Nonetheless, metrics for measuring progress, outcomes, and impact are of increasing interest to funders, evaluators, academics, and movement builders alike. The *philanthropic sector*, upon whose support movement-building organizations largely rely, is increasingly asking for the “evidence” that their investments are making a difference along the social change spectrum, from social services to advocacy, from organizing to movement building. But change is often hard to measure in one- or even five-year increments, and this is a factor (or at least one that funders can use as a reasonable excuse) that contributes to the limited funding for organizing and movement building. Indeed, according to a report by the Foundation Center, less than 15 percent of grant-making dollars by U.S. foundations went towards social justice-related activities in 2009 with the largest donors being the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation.²

In response to evidence-based grant-making, we have seen the emergence of an *evaluation field* around policy advocacy, and more recently community organizing. The two strands of work – policy advocacy and community organizing evaluation – have been evolving in recent years with common themes beginning to emerge: having a theory of change to inform the work, using indicators to capture interim benchmarks, and measuring capacity-building steps (Ranghelli 2009, 136). The major limitation of the field, however, is that most approaches look



at organizing from a policy-change frame rather than from a movement-building frame (one exception is the “Social Movements and Philanthropy: How Foundations Can Support Movement Building” by Barbara Masters and Torie Osborn). The short-coming of the policy-change frame is that it may fail to capture important outcomes – such as how long-term collaborations between organizations can be built through one policy campaign and then leveraged for future campaigns well beyond the timeframe of the policy fight itself.

Academia, unfortunately, has not come to the rescue – even though we are rooted in it, we understand that it seldom does. Much of the academic literature on impact was produced during the 1970s in response to the wave of activism in the 1960s. Mirroring the strategies of that time, these early studies look at the outcomes of mobilization, protest, and resistance. (See Giugni, 1998; Cable and Degutis, 1997; and Amenta et al., 2010 for discussions of the early literature.) Since the late 1990s, there has been a resurgent interest in the broader consequences of movements, but the literature leans to abstraction and celebration rather than deep grounding in the field (Amenta et al, 2010; Giugni, 1998; Meyer and Whittier, 1994; Olzak and Ryo, 2007). There are exceptions to be sure – Richard Wood’s *Faith in Action* which compares two approaches to organizing in Oakland comes to mind – but the literature generally does not offer

¹ Denise Perry, Blacks Organizing for Leadership Development (BOLD), as a participant in a project convening, 16 August 2011.

² Foundation Center, 2011. Key Facts on Social Justice Grantmaking. http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/keyfacts_social_2011.pdf.

much analytical clarity or practical guidance in how to assess social movement outcomes and impact in the contemporary period.

The *field of organizing* itself is also generating theories, practices, and tools to assess strategies, outcomes, and impacts. Many, if not most, organizations consistently engage in evaluation whether through internal debrief sessions, strategic planning sessions, or retreats with allies. The exercise and discipline of having to articulate measurable benchmarks can help “bring the organization’s mission into sharper focus” as one organizer pointed out. But the ability to be systematic can vary based on capacity, and the ability to be effective can vary based on the metrics defined.

So why is accelerating the development of metrics so critical now?

There is something qualitatively different about the big questions that organizers are grappling with these days. The questions are less about how to raise funds for their organization (although that is still a top concern) or how to build the capacities of their staff and leaders (also a key concern). Rather in the midst of a deep crisis – and the failure of progressives to capture the narrative and the momentum, organizers are focused more on the big picture: *What is the long-term change that we want in this country? What is needed to achieve it? What strategies are needed? What roles do different organizations play?*

Organizers at the cutting edge of organizing and movement building are at the edges because they want to push the boundaries and advance the field into new territory to achieve bigger gains and victories. New formations, such as the Inter-Alliance Dialogue a national alliance of national, grassroots-led alliances, and new campaigns, such as Caring Across Generations and the New Bottom Line, are taking hold and leaping forward with big visions of transforming industries and opening avenues for everyday people to be at the forefront of change.

Part of this is fueled by the change in conditions in which people are organizing. This includes **demographic shifts**: As documented in our recent reports *The Color of Change: Inter-Ethnic Youth Leadership for the 21st Century* (Pastor et. al., 2010) and *All Together Now? African Americans, Immigrants and the Future of California* (Pastor, De Lara, Scoggins, 2011), organizers are responding to demographic shifts happening in regions and neighborhoods by developing new practices and forming new alliances both to manage real and potential conflicts and to build common unity and vision.

The increasing **complexity of decision-making** and the transformation in centers of power also influence how grassroots communities organize. In an article prepared for the Ford Foundation convening on Organizing 2.0 in April 2011, long-time organizers Kirk Noden and Doran Schrantz note that when the decision-makers were local elected officials and locally-based business leaders and civic organizations, neighborhood-based organizations could be effective. The Alinsky model of community organizing, developed in the 1930s, worked well when economic and political power was centralized in cities. But as the centers of power have become more diffused and even global, “doing base building 20 or 50 percent better is not good enough,” as shared George Goehl of National People’s Action.

Furthermore, people’s and organization’s **aspirations have grown**. As Leslie Moody of the Partnership for Working Families points out, when the demands were about getting a stop sign at a neighborhood intersection and the city coffers were full, a local organization could win alone. Instead resources are short and stakes have expanded; as Denise Perry, formerly of Power U in Miami notes: “Now we are fighting about all the foreclosed homes versus a traffic sign. We are being judged as if we are doing stop signs but really a community campaign is a vehicle to developing the bigger picture.”

And the **field of organizing is maturing and evolving**. Overall, the past 30 thirty years has largely been an experiment in building lasting organizations and institutions for building local leadership from the ground up and wielding the influence of that leadership through organized actions and mobilization. As Stephanie Gut, Director of Affiliate Support for PICO, notes, when PICO was founded in 1972, it was unknown whether you could build such organizations. Since apparently you can and social injustice is as rampant as ever, organizations are now pausing to ask themselves what works, what does not work, and what are the new experiments needed at this time.

Most of these experiments revolve around scale: With the problems so big, business so global, and the sense of powerlessness so pervasive, going at it alone is no longer viable. To keep up with the changing conditions, more and more organizations are challenging themselves not to build up their own institution or network but to re-orient their work towards **movement building**. In other words, they are experimenting with permanent coalitions and alliances aligned around values and vision; grounding the alliances with deep roots in affected communities; skilling up through strategic partnerships that bring research, policy, media, or communications capacity; and scaling up with others for greater impact.

What exactly are the right metrics for today?

The metrics for today's movements must meet more than the standard criteria of being measureable and timebound. These are still important characteristics but to be relevant and impactful for today, they also need to capture the transformations that occur in leaders, organizations, and alliances, and help us understand the qualitative as well as the quantitative dimensions of the work. Still, there are traditional categories in which metrics are structured that are helpful to define here:

- *Process*: This is a term embedded in logic models that show how inputs and activities lead to outcomes. Measuring process means answering the question, **how do we intend to reach the outcome?** The processes often have intrinsic value and can also be measured. Philanthropy, evaluation, and the field have tended to emphasize process measures.
- *Indicators*: This is an evaluation term for **measuring progress** and is often used interchangeably with “measures” or “benchmarks.” It answers the question: Are we on track to reach the outcome? This is, of course, reliant on the process model and its specifications, but indicators help to gauge (and demonstrate) interim progress when some of the end-game goals are far away.
- *Outcomes*: This describes the **end result** or what you aim to accomplish. It answers the question: What would we expect to see as a result of the efforts? The field is experiencing a move away from process metrics towards articulating and adopting outcome-based metrics. The problem is that outcomes change slowly and knowing whether your investment mattered or not is hard.
- *Impacts*: While this is often used interchangeably with outcomes, there is a distinction: Impacts look at the difference between what happened as a result of effort and what would have happened without it. It answers the question: **How much change** occurred because of the investment by either an organization or a funder?

Applying this basic framework to determine the right metrics in any particular case can be confusing and complicated because building a base and a movement is a complex affair. For



example, some outcomes are expected: New York State legislators sign a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. But others, equally important, are unexpected: Solidarity increases among national grassroots networks through mobilization against Arizona’s anti-immigrant law.

There is no one model for base building so the metrics vary. There are institution-based organizations, such as PICO and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) whose membership is comprised of schools and churches. There are others that engage individuals based on where they live, where they work, and how they identify. And there is an emerging field of online organizers amassing tens of thousands of names and email addresses. Each approach has its vision, values, goals, and strategies based on its understanding and analysis of the world.

Furthermore, movements look different in different places because they are shaped by external factors, such as political opportunities, cultural norms, and other movements, and by internal characteristics, such as the nature and number of organizations, its strengths, and weaknesses. What might seem an impressive policy or organizing gain for the Mississippi

Immigrant Rights Alliance – an organization we much admire – might seem small potatoes to a more established group in a more immigrant-friendly locale (consider the impressive work of the Illinois Immigrant Rights Coalition). Knowing the backdrop, the history and the limits is key – measures are about the value groups add, not the value they started with.

So developing metrics cannot be a one-size-fits-all exercise. To be clear, this report is not about

providing *the* metrics that matter for today. Each organization has its own roadmap to change. But despite this, there is one thing we heard loud and clear in the interviews and convenings we conducted for this report: **Organizers and movement builders want a common language and shared concepts for defining metrics that matter for today.**

This is partly because they want to avoid a new array of competing evaluation metrics for their grant reporting – letting a thousand different flowers bloom sounds a lot better when you are not the person tending the garden. But it is also because they know that movements need to get on track together to truly tackle the challenges of our times.

So what we offer below is not a definitive statement of metrics – we expect there to be more conversations, more iterations, and probably more reports before we are done. Rather, we hope to provide a framework for discussion between and among organizers and their supporters for understanding which strategies are working, which are not, and what new experiments in both measurement and movement building are needed.

Transactions And Transformations: A Framework For Metrics That Matter

Amassing large numbers of members, staging marches, and winning campaigns – all these remain important measures of a successfully growing movement. There are, however, other equally important aspects that are often missed in the numbers alone, including the fundamental changes that a leader, organization, or community experiences through their involvement in organizing and advocacy.

To capture both sides of this equation, we offer a framework of *transactions* and *transformations*. We also offer a summary table – sort of a Cliffs Notes for measuring movement-building – in the centerfold of this report, but as usual, there is a difference between the Cliffs Notes and the real thing, so we urge you to read on (an admonition not always taken up by our students).

Transactions involve the quantifiable markers both internal (e.g., how much funding, how many members, etc.) and external to the organization (e.g., voter turnout, policies passed, etc). While the data is not always easy to collect (especially with transient or mobile groups), such measures tend to be easier to track because they are more tangible. But transactions only tell part of the story and tend to skip over the richness of experience and momentum that can be precursors to big change.

Transformations, on the other hand, are the vital but sometimes “invisible” work. They show how people, organizations, and movements have been altered through the collective efforts. Taking the transformation further, they can show how societal and political views have shifted or been impacted by movement building.

Transformational metrics are more qualitative in nature which make them more difficult to define, let alone capture and track.

Clearly, it is the combination of the transactional and transformational metrics that will tell a fuller story. After all, transactions can be transformational – and transformations can be transactional. For example, by attending a meeting (a transaction), a person can be transformed through the experience of being among others with similar experiences and struggles. And “when people are transformed, their transactions change.”³ A community resident that gains the confidence and skills to see herself as a leader within the community and the organization will take more ownership and recruit more people to get involved.

Below we apply these two categories of metrics to ten base building strategies that we identified through our literature review and interviews: organizing, civic engagement, leadership development, alliance building, campaigns, research and policy analysis, traditional and new media, communications and framing, organizational development, and movement building.

This section is organized as follows: We describe each strategy, the problems of measurement, and highlight sample transactional and transformational metrics. While there are many different possible metrics, we focus on those that drive in the direction of movement building by looking at those aspects of organizational

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.

Albert Einstein

³ Zach Hoover, Executive Director, LA Voice, as a participant in a project convening, 16 August 2011.

development, for example, that lend themselves to working with others to create a broader force for social change.

The strategies and measures are not intended to be definitive nor exhaustive; we understand that much work remains to be done by us and others to nail down a meaningful set of metrics. Our point is simply to start a conversation by illustrating the problems and possibilities. As we argue later, involving the organizers themselves in the development of these metrics is crucial to creating a blueprint that will work. The goal, after all, is not to create another onerous requirement in the proposal and reporting process but to stimulate the creation of tools that can move forward organizing and movement building over time.

Organizing

Description

Engaging, educating, and mobilizing individuals and communities to work towards a common purpose is at the core of base building – and base building is the *sine qua non* for movements. Organizing strategies or models range from the traditional Alinsky-style organizing that is still commonly used across the country to providing services to the community-building approach that provides a safe, central community space like that of Our Beloved Community in Greensboro, North Carolina. Other approaches have been more virtual in nature, including the *presente.org* or *moveon.org* models.

Whatever the model, organizing is dependent on relationship and trust building that occurs over time and shared experiences. One movement builder's view about building from the base is that:

Organizing is linked to education and ... shared needs. First, there is a significant impulse, then you need a significant group of organizations, and the next step is to build institutions

*that have the affected community as a part of it.*⁴

Transactions

Process-related metrics in this arena may include the **number of one-on-one meetings** and **house meetings** with outcome metrics being **membership levels** and **numbers of leaders developed**, among the many others. The classic counting of membership and affiliates will give a quick look at the reach of an organizing effort. Drilling down further to **dues paying** members, the **diversity** of members, and the **number of contacts** made will help to further track progress. For those more involved in virtual organizing, **counting clicks, page views**, and **sign-ups** may be relevant.

There are, however, some other transactions that are not collected as systematically, like **percentage turnover** or **length of participation**. These hint at transformation because they help to paint a more complete picture of the steadiness and depth of engagement. Clearly these figures are harder to collect and without the basic capacity to track members, nearly impossible. One interviewee explains her organization's evolving measures of base building:

*We thought that recruiting higher numbers was [the right measure]... then we talked about turnover rates. Maintaining a core membership and what they were engaged in became our mark for sustainability.*⁵

Transformations

Measures related to transformations look very different. Examples range from individual shifts in perspectives to **seeing beyond one's interests** to effectively yielding enough **power to influence** public officials. An illustrative

⁴ Author Interview with Pablo Alvarado, Executive Director, National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), 18 April 2011.

⁵ Author interview with Denise Perry, Co-Founder and former Director, Power U, 22 April 2011.

experience is that of the Plumbers and Pipe Fitters union members who are active in the San Jose Central Labor Council. These workers, many of which had better than living wage jobs with benefits, came out strongly in support of the San Jose living wage campaign and the Children's Health Initiative.

Assessing these results will require tools designed to track **shifts in members' worldviews** and follow **changes in public opinion**. This is not a cheap or easy task, yet it is something many of the interviewees felt was significant. After all, the power to affect decision-making is a key goal of social movements. According one interviewee:

We need to balance campaign numbers with the real transformations which are harder to measure. How do you quantify a leader's world view? You can have a policy, an agreement to change conditions, but that's not adequate to change society.⁶

Civic Engagement

Description

Civic engagement can be defined broadly as “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.”⁷ Such civic engagement is a building block for movements; when people are empowered to act, they can feel empowered to make big changes.

While civic engagement is often linked to voter mobilization, it is inclusive rather than exclusive of non-voting residents. There were great hopes

⁶ Author interview with Kalila Barnett, Executive Director, Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), 19 May 2011.

⁷ Ehrlich, Thomas, 2000. *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

that the 2008 election would bring a new era of widespread civic engagement beyond voting. The wave of grassroots electoral support, however, was not captured, partly because of the particular choices made with regard to the structure of supporters that had been set up for the campaign. But this is actually reflective of a deeper and ongoing gap between cyclical electoral campaigns and ongoing base building. Electoral organizing and community organizing are very different, and it is challenging to gain a significant increase in the base from electoral work.

Transactions

Voter registration, turnout, and election results are the obvious electoral metrics. Also included are: **media coverage, donor levels, and get-out-the-vote** (lawn signs, phone banking, early voting, etc.). Civic engagement metrics would also include the **enrollments** in naturalization classes and the inclusion of **political education** with popular education

The Progressive Technology Project (PTP) has developed a database called Powerbase explicitly for tracking the transactions and transformations involved in base-building. PTP has worked with about 30 organizations to systematically track their organizing work through the identification of leaders and a sophisticated program that records their actions and followers. It is still a work in progress, but at least one executive director admitted to checking the numbers daily to see how the organizing was developing. Organizers can track which tactics result in certain actions, and they have begun to weigh those actions that have the most value. This tool is excellent for those groups with the capacity to enter the data. Even choosing a few measures may be a way to start with the potential to expand when there is more capacity.

courses. Leadership development classes offered by organizations from across the board – employment trainers, legal services, environmental justice, etc. – are including civic engagement in their curricula, and these can be counted and assessed.

Transformations

Transformative measures would start with a power analysis and look at the **shifting of political discourse and power** both pre and post campaigns. Other civic engagement transformations are reflected in the experience of leaders, including their growth and **ability to challenge** the current arrangements. Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote in California sees its work of electoral organizing in immigrant communities as inextricably linked to community organizing and political education; that is, it is part of a broader strategy for social, racial justice, and social change. According to one of the staff:

Creating spaces for organizations and grassroots leaders to engage in political education has informed our positions on ballot initiatives and has allowed us to have difficult conversations about race, LGBT rights, criminal justice, and immigrant rights... There was a community leader who didn't want to talk about same sex marriage, but eventually challenged her priest around Prop 8.⁸

One of the mechanical features that can help integrate voter and civic engagement is the inclusion of 501c(4) arms in key organizations. Making these connections is a work in progress. This 2011-12 election cycle, the Progressive Technology Project is deepening its effort to link electoral information with base building efforts.

⁸ Author interview with Mari Ryono, Director of Development and Evaluation, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (MIV), 12 May 2011.

But the big game is in examining how and whether civic engagement leads to a **value shift** at the community and societal levels. There are sophisticated data systems for capturing electoral metrics – just ask anyone who does polling or runs an election campaign. But it is not common to hear about nonprofits or movement builders doing large-scale polling. By probing into the minds and values of voters and residents, movement builders can create more effective narratives and get closer to reaching the scale that major elections bring to this country.

Leadership Development

Description

Over the past decade, there has been increasing emphasis on leadership development and political education for base building. A movement will thrive if its leadership is growing in numbers *and* diversity *and* in capacity. Building capacity of leaders enhances their engagement, voice, and role within the group or movement. The content of leadership development curricula can vary, from specific skills to building greater self-esteem, to broader power analyses. The delivery can be through one-on-one coaching or mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, intensive team building retreats, political and educational trainings, or involvement in campaigns.

Peer-to-peer learning is a particularly effective means of exchanging strategies and avoids “reinventing the wheel.” One leader describes how well peer learning works: “Going to other workers’ centers and seeing how they operate gives us really creative ideas. It’s a different way in which people are trained; it’s practical.”⁹

Leadership development, when done well, requires culturally competent curriculum and trainers that fit with the community. One

⁹ Author interview with Aina Gutierrez, Deputy Director of Operations, Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), 21 April 2011.

interviewee explains the importance and sometime complexity of this strategy:

Using the term “leader” with the Chinese members evokes a different image of what a leader is... General Mao is a leader. When we call our members “leaders,” we have to define what a leader means and what we expect our leaders to do.¹⁰

Transactions

Transactions for leadership development can be reflected in the skills that grow out of some highly innovative leadership development curricula: the ability of leadership to stand up and give **public testimony**, **lead house meetings**, **grow in their leadership position**, among other measures. What is even more telling than attending a course or showing up at an event is a leader’s ability to **change pathways**. Does the individual choose to go into a different field or serve on a board? Does she become a “hero” of the movement or a behind-the-scenes actor?

Urban Habitat has worked with the Richmond Equitable Development Initiative (REDI) in the East San Francisco Bay for many years to protect neighborhoods and communities against the potential for displacement or gentrification. To prepare its leadership and decision makers, it developed a two-track Leadership Institute to prepare the stakeholders for policy development. Workshop topics included land use, health, transportation, housing, and government processes. By training leaders, along with organizing the community, more people were able to participate more fully in the revision of the City’s General Plan. Urban Habitat also runs a Boards and Commission Leadership Institute for those considering this pathway.

¹⁰ Author interview with Roger Kim, Executive Director, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN), 14 April 2011.

Founded in 2007, the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) is a national alliance of grassroots organizations that organizes domestic workers for respect, recognition, and labor standards. In collaboration with Social Justice Leadership and Generative Somatics, NDWA launched the Sol Initiative, a movement-building training program for member organizations. Rooted in the principles of transformative organizing, the Sol Initiative adopts a multi-level approach for leadership development which focuses on transforming the effectiveness and impact of *individuals*, *organizations*, and the *domestic workers movement* so that it can achieve large-scale changes for workers *and* lift up its leaders in the broader movement for social justice.

Transformative organizing is an emerging model that couples grassroots organizing with ideological development and deep personal transformation. Unlike traditional organizing which seeks structural and systemic change often at the expense of personal growth and sustainability and unlike traditional leadership programs that focus on personal development divorced from building sustainable organizations and movements, this new approach seeks transformation of society and self simultaneously under the premise that you cannot have one without the other.

Launched in 2011, the two-year Sol Initiative will offer many lessons for the field including a better understanding of the transformational metrics at all three levels of change (individual, organization, and movement) and their connection to the transactional metrics that are associated with reaching scale (growth in membership, numbers mobilized, and policy gains achieved).



Transformations

Leadership development efforts need to be linked to action. Whatever the course, when a leader feels **empowered** to speak up and bring others into the movement, some real transformation is taking hold. Even the strongest curriculum and cohort can be limited by not having an immediate means for applying what is learned.

Political education, workshops, and conversations to build trust, in and of itself, is not enough. It has to be engaged with actual practice and taking a common adversary, fighting and winning. The practice builds the trust over time.¹¹

Just as important is another sort of linkage: Do leaders begin to **see beyond their own issue** to consider the concerns and agendas of others? Are they **able to pivot**? Are they increasingly **resistant to “wedge” issues** that seek to divide?

¹¹ Author Interview with Tammy Bang Luu, Associate Director, Labor/Community Strategy Center (LCSC), 2 March 2010.

To take on big fights and win, organizations know that they have to cultivate leaders that inspire their peers, bridge across sectors and issues, and even work with some unexpected allies. These “soft” skills and the broader vision needed for collaboration are closely linked with the next strategy of alliance building.

Alliance Building

Description

Core to movement building and building to scale is the formation and nurturing of alliances, collaborations, and coalitions. Social movement groups understand that to create systemic change, they cannot do it alone. Coalitions take different forms and knowing when and how to take the leap is a skill in itself. One interviewee described coalition building as more of a spider web with multileveled intricate relationships than a wagon wheel that radiates out linearly from a central institution. Some are loosely-formed groupings, and others are more formally structured with an anchor organization acting as the main driver. Attention to the composition of a coalition, who has power, and the voices present are all critical to coalition building.

Funders frequently recognize the value of funding authentic coalitions, and this can be advantageous to social movement builders (Solidago Foundation, 2004). It can also backfire when funders become a bit too enthusiastic about coalitions, and there is “forced” collaboration that would not have occurred organically. Shared power, interests, and values are the common denominators of authentic collaborative efforts. Sometimes a little push to work together can be beneficial, but there is a fine line that when crossed can be counter-productive (Pastor et al., 2008). Finding that sweet spot of intersecting interests with new partners signals that a coalition or even a movement is maturing.

Transaction

A coalition can be measured simply by size – the **number of participating groups/ individuals**, its **composition**, the number of cosponsored **convenings**, **percentage turnout**, etc. It can also be measured by scale: Some promising coalitions, like the Partnership for Working Families and Right to the City Alliance, are **linking regions** together and acting as resource for building power. Ensuring the connectivity and providing the glue across places is essential for movement building.

Relationships are the basis for coalition building, and most organizing. There are intricate social networks analyses that map complex relationships and structures. This type of analysis can give a sense of participation and scale but may not be that useful or capture the cohesion and trust necessary for real and effective collaboration. Our interviewees repeated over and over that there must be a shared purpose that is bought-into, compelling, and can resonate with the coalition members and influence public debates.

Transformations

Having a shared vision is crucial, but it is not really transformative if it is not jointly arrived at or changed as a result of the collaboration.

Transformative measures would look at **how leaders talk** about who is on their team, what **boundaries** have been **crossed**, and what **heightened awareness** there is of a wide range of issues as important to one’s partners as they are to ones’ constituencies. Another metric is the **degree of coherence** in values, vision, and strategic plans. A key question that one organizer and alliance builder poses:

Are we making progress in building unity and a strategic agenda across difference that is more than a laundry list?¹²

Other measures of transformation in alliance building include **shared values**, **connections between interests**, and **strategic agendas**. One interviewee noted that **authentic alignment** is when “at a key moment we didn’t take credit for what we did.”¹³ This level of shared purpose and trust is the groundwork upon which movements are built. It requires **healthy communication**, **cohesion** on complicated issues, and the **healing of past grievances**—all of which can be intangible and difficult to measure but are fundamental to alliance building.

Campaigns

Description

If relationships are the connective tissue for organizing and coalition building, then campaigns are the places where relationship skills are tested and where the development of trust and the experience of action can occur in a way that sustains the base for social movements. Campaigns are a series of organized, planned actions addressing a defined purpose, policy, or change. They have tangible beginnings and ends (even if they seem never-ending to overworked organizers),

¹² Anthony Thigpenn, President, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education, as a participant in a project conference call, 9 March 2011.

¹³ Author interview with George Goehl, Executive Director, National People’s Action (NPA), 19 April 2011.

Grassroots and Treetops: Learning from Immigrant Movement Building

Movement leaders are generally more enthused by the ways local policy campaigns can bubble up to inform national strategies than they are about starting with federal policy and making it a local campaign. Yet sometimes a national issue and strategy is so important and so salient at a local level that community organizers are compelled to step in.

In the case of comprehensive immigration reform, activists nationwide saw a prime opportunity to affect federal policy. The 2006 marches had demonstrated the political mobilization of immigrants and the 2008 elections signaled that they could be mobilized to the polls. With some arguing that it was the moment to pursue reform, national advocates geared up for a fight and local organizing got pulled in. But it had its costs: Attention shifted away from building infrastructure on the ground for the long haul, and many activists – and grassroots communities – became frustrated when so little moved on the national level.

The Arizona state legislation SB1070 returned the attention to the local. According to one interviewee: “Arizona helped spark a local level response. There it became more strategic. We were looking at how to document impacts, working with researchers, building testimony to share with Congress, and looking at legal challenges that we could engage in.”¹ Another interviewee describes her experience.

When Arizona passed SB1070, the immigration bill, we sent affiliate leaders from states that had copycat legislation to Arizona. It was taking advantage of an external crisis to give leaders the practical experience in a way that will help them strategize and stop legislation in their own state.²

While the Dream Act, proposed to give a clear path to citizenship student immigrants, had its disappointments, the struggles in this arena also illustrated the power of going bottom-up versus top-down. The Dreamers, energetic student leaders and their allies, built up from the states and local organizing. While a vote in the Senate in late 2010 was unsuccessful, the increasing power and voice laid the foundation for change. Obama’s executive order in the summer of 2011 finally began to address fears of deportation, a stated priority for the students.

In short, the immigration reform efforts of the last several years have demonstrated the need to be grounded in grassroots base building – without it the treetops advocacy can stall out. In the short run, you may be able to score some points inside the beltway, but in the end, it is the support from the base makes change possible.

¹ Author interview with Marielena Hincapie, Executive Director, National Immigration Law Center (NILC), 26 August 2011.

² Author interview with Aina Gutierrez, Deputy Director of Operations, Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), 21 April 2011.

and they are familiar and tangible to both organizers and communities.

Connecting discrete campaigns to larger efforts for building power is a highly effective strategy for movement building. A string of campaigns that do not hang together could drain rather than build momentum. But, as one activist commented, stepping back to situate campaigns within a multi-year power analysis is key, but taking the time to do so can be difficult:

[I am] struck by how we have begun to funnel our biggest vision and dreams through an increasingly narrow channel – professional organizers, funder guidelines – and in some way the big piece and long term vision gets lost down in the weeds. How do we get away from the minutiae of campaigns to reflect and lift up the big vision?¹⁴

Transactions

Campaigns can be measured by the **number of petitions signed, phone banking sessions conducted, the number of votes gained, and the types of policies passed or stopped.** Transactions along the way can include important elements like the **translation** of campaign materials or the **growth** in organizational capacity while the outcomes at the end can include the **value of services** accessed or costs avoided, the **increase in acreage protected, or the expansion in protection** of basic human rights.

But measurement should not stop with the “win.” Progressives have often focused on change but forgotten about governance. Some interviewees emphasized that most policies need to be monitored and may require some pressure to ensure that they are implemented – and this aspect of the equation is often

overlooked until there is a legal case or major protest about how policy change is being rolled out. Follow up and monitoring is often overlooked and underfunded – and designing metrics to **measure implementation** is critical to both attracting philanthropic support and keeping the attention of organizers and community leaders on the aftermath of change.

Transformations

Designing a campaign can be almost formulaic, but winning one requires the ability to **create a narrative** and build the power to **affect decision makers** and even **public consciousness.** These sorts of transformative dimensions are hard, but not impossible, to capture. After all, campaigns will come and go – what remains in terms of infrastructure and leadership in place for the next issue is just as important.

Transformative metrics would ask several key questions: How quickly are **campaign issues** are **taken up?** Is there **accountability** to affected groups? Has the **policy** been **implemented as intended?** Has the campaign created the **conditions for greater change?** As one interviewee expresses her organization’s approach:

We try to create opportunities and environments in which base building can flourish. We work to create changes in policy that provide more leverage. For example, public oversight of subsidies creates more opportunities to make organizing effective.¹⁵

Whatever shape a campaign takes, metrics should consider both the transactions and the transformations. Milestones demonstrating that one is heading in the right direction and measures that show movement growth and maturation along the way are critical.

¹⁴ Amy Schur, Executive Director, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), as a participant in project convening, 16 August 2011.

¹⁵ Author interview with Elly Matsumura, Education and Community Leadership Director, Working Partnerships USA (WPUSA), 2 May 2011.

Research and Policy Analysis

Description

Honest and careful research can either affirm a movement's instincts or challenge its beliefs and can either confirm a current direction or force the rethinking of old approaches. In either case, informed communities will be more strategic and better able to build a compelling case based on current facts. Research activities and outputs can take many forms: community assessments, polling, mapping, census data analysis, policy briefs, and monitoring. All these add credibility to the organizing and policy goals and can help strengthen advocacy.

Movements understand the usefulness of both fundamental academic research laden with statistics and literature reviews and applied research that can be more accessible. The process of participatory research can be empowering and educating to members and affected communities. By involving people directly in the data collection and supplementing it with their lived experience, they learn more about community impacts and benefits.

What really distinguishes movements is the capacity to go beyond thinking of research in a utilitarian fashion (i.e. acquiring just enough facts to make the case). Strong movement organizations know that a deeper understanding of the socio-political and economic context

Research is not just charts and graphs. California Calls (formerly called the California Alliance) is integrating strategic research on values into an entire suite of movement-building strategies that is demonstrating results at scale.

Seeking to launch a statewide campaign to reform the Golden State's dysfunctional tax and fiscal system, the usual first step would be to rally those already on board for a progressive agenda. But given the deep-rooted stalemate on tax reform in the state – and pretty much any state – California Calls knew that engaging only its base would never garner broad enough support to win a policy initiative, let alone the string of policies that would be needed to truly address on-going budget shortfalls. So it partnered with social values pollsters to get a deeper handle on Californians' attitudes around the issues of taxes and the role of government.¹

Rather than starting with problems and policies or with activists and allies, it used the resulting research to identify values-based constituency groups who could be organized to grow a pro-reform base. One such group it is targeting is "Aspiring People of Color." These Californians believe in an active government but not in politics and protests. The challenge: getting them to engage. Another group is the "Balanced Suburbans" who frequent the polls but do not support major changes. The challenge: getting them to embrace progressive solutions.

California Calls now has a clearer roadmap to building a majority for tax and fiscal reform: creating a new center of gravity by uniting the hopes of inner-city and suburban communities through organizing and alliance building and changing the narrative around government and taxes with strategic framing and communications. And the results are rolling in: between 2009 and 2011, California Calls has identified almost 300,000 voters who support their policy agenda and in the 2010 mid-term elections, its efforts increased the turnout of contacted occasional voters by ten to fifteen percent.²

¹ Kunisi, Satish, Torie Osborn, Sabrina Smith, Anthony Thigpenn, and Susan La Tempa, 2010. *California Road Map for a Tax and Fiscal Majority: A Values-Based Approach*. Los Angeles: California Calls.

² California Calls, 2011. "While Sacramento Stalls, Californians Answer the Call." Available at: http://www.cacalls.org/june_2011/.

can help to refresh the movement's analysis and strategic plan. And this is exactly why the line has begun to fade between academic and advocacy research: Some of the best-researched reports are being produced by movement organizations and increasingly theory is emerging, like organizing, from the grassroots (Pastor, Benner, & Matsuoka 2009).

Transactions

Once completed and published, research transactions include: the **number of reports, briefs, articles** produced, the **number of "hits"** if posted on the web, the number of **citations** or **references** to the piece, and the research **tools developed**. There are also ways to track whether or not a particular piece of research contributed to a significant decision and policy change: The wave of Living Wage analyses did just that as did the careful analysis of the Los Angeles ports conducted by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) that helped to support a new Clean Trucks Program (Zerolnick 2007).

Environmental justice organizers have developed a special talent at both cultivating academic allies and doing participatory research (see Liberty Hill 2004, 2010). Another metric in this area is the degree and length of such **partnerships** as well as the extent to which **policies** have shifted as a result of particular efforts.

Transformations

But there are also transformations in such partnerships: the degree to which **research capacity** is **transferred**, the degree to which **community-based participatory research** is **honored**, the degree to which **mutual and long-lasting respect** is developed. Another sort of transformation possible is a **change in the public discourse**. Measuring this requires content analysis with transformative metrics focusing on how research supports campaigns, influences decision makers, *and* alters the very way we speak about an issue.

In 1998, when the Center on Policy Initiatives published *Poverty and Prosperity in the New Economy: A Report on the Social and Economic Status of Working People in San Diego County* by Enrico Marcelli and Pascale M. Joassart, people referred to it, and it became part of the public dialogue. In this case, a transaction – the report getting a lot of coverage – begins to capture the story, but the full impact was a transformation in **the way the public talks about an issue**.

Another transformative dimension involves the way research triggers **changes in the organizations** themselves, particularly in their base-building activities. Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) partnered with a university to do a wage analysis that showed that both immigrant and black workers wages had been on the decline. By broadening the issue, the research demystified the sometimes divisive arguments that can pit African Americans and Latinos against each other. When research supports the coming together of communities, it becomes a valuable movement building strategy whose transformative impacts ripple well beyond the number of clicks or copies.

Communications and Framing

Description

Communications and "framing" have become a hot topic central to political campaigning and increasingly to movement building. A plethora of cable TV news and talk radio shows have made issue framing both strategic and inescapable. George Lakoff's analysis of conservative messaging during the 2004 election gleaned lessons for progressive movements. To effectively frame issues, he argues for a focus on values and identity rather than programs.¹⁶

¹⁶ Lakoff, George, 2004. *Don't Think of An Elephant*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

TRANSACTIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS:

TRANSACTIONS Sample Metrics

TRANSFORMATIONS Sample Metrics

	TRANSACTIONS Sample Metrics	TRANSFORMATIONS Sample Metrics
ORGANIZING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of outreach and recruitment activities (door knocking, house meetings, phone calls) Size and composition of membership base (dues paying, diversity, percent coverage) Core group of leaders identified and remain engaged Active participation, turnover, and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depth of engagement and ownership of the organization and work Sense of belonging, community, trust, and healing Willingness of members to take action Power recognized by elected officials and others
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in civic education workshops/courses Number and reach of phone banks Voter registration, share, and turnout Voting and polling results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders are informed and can articulate their political and other values 501c(4) set up by organizations Shifting of political discourse Power recognized by elected officials and others
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of leadership development activities (workshops, trainings, actions) Number and diversity of leaders trained and type of skills gained Leaders taking on new roles and responsibilities within the organization Leaders participating on committees, boards, and other leadership positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to articulate the problem, solution, and a vision so as to involve others Feeling prepared and empowered to speak up on issues and take action Shifts in position and views on wedge issues and the ability to take up new issues and campaigns Leaders recognized and respected by elected officials and others outside the organization
ALLIANCE BUILDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and diversity of partnering groups Commitments, contributions, and shared resources by allied organizations Scale of reach – regional, state, national Active participation, turnover, and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared analysis, aligned vision, and purpose that is crafted collectively and bought-into Trust and alignment built that carries over to new issues and shared work Transcending organizational interests for long-term collective interests Ongoing, permanent alignment and collaboration
CAMPAIGNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of activities to involve members and allies in campaign planning and implementation Number of members and allies at actions and activities (delegations, public hearings, mobilizations) Value of services gained, costs avoided Number of demands met and policies won (or successfully defeated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased accountability by decision-makers to affected groups Readiness and ability to act quickly and take up issues in response to changing conditions Ability to put forth and win larger demands and campaigns Infrastructure in place for future organizing and campaigns

A FRAMEWORK FOR METRICS THAT MATTER

TRANSACTIONS Sample Metrics

TRANSFORMATIONS Sample Metrics

<p>Appropriate research tools developed and implemented</p> <p>Number of members and allies and level of involvement in the research design and analysis</p> <p>Number of reports and briefs written and distributed (assessments, polls, maps, etc.)</p> <p>Internal research capacities developed</p>	<p>Ability to develop policy and set the agenda from the bottom-up</p> <p>Issues and policies are widely accepted and respected and used in public discourse</p> <p>Ability to refresh the organization's and movement's analysis</p> <p>Degree and length of partnerships of the organizations participating in the research</p>	<p>RESEARCH & POLICY ANALYSIS</p>
<p>Number of trainings and sessions to develop a narrative for the organization or movement</p> <p>Number of stories gathered from membership, systems established for collecting the stories</p> <p>Number of internal communications with membership, allies, and funders</p> <p>Number of external communications with decision-makers and general public</p>	<p>How well the frame was received – how it resonated and motivated people to get involved</p> <p>Narrative and framing of issues adopted more broadly</p> <p>Attitudes and values are reflected in policy development</p> <p>Ability to influence public awareness and consciousness</p>	<p>COMMUNICATIONS & FRAMING</p>
<p>Number of leaders trained to be spokespeople</p> <p>Number of mediums used for media outreach</p> <p>Number of contributors, level of support of editors and producers</p> <p>Number of audiences and readers reached, percent coverage</p>	<p>Community voices represented in media coverage</p> <p>Members and organization sought out as legitimate experts</p> <p>Positive visibility of a community, organization, or movement</p> <p>Ability to influence the public debate and set the tone and message</p>	<p>TRADITIONAL & NEW MEDIA</p>
<p>Number and diversity of staff and board</p> <p>Leadership growth (turnover and retention) and capacity</p> <p>Areas of expertise and capacity developed</p> <p>Sustainability of funding, trained staff, and leadership</p>	<p>Ability to form strategic relationships to optimize capacity</p> <p>Capacity to self-reflect, evaluate, and adjust goals and plans in a timely manner</p> <p>Ability to innovate and experiment with new models and strategies</p> <p>Ability to be responsive, nimble</p>	<p>ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</p>
<p>Number of alliances and links across groups</p> <p>A vision and narrative that resonate</p> <p>Scale expands with an infrastructure to support</p> <p>Landmark legislation supporting movement mission</p>	<p>Memberships awareness and action extends beyond the boundaries of one movement or campaign</p> <p>Diverse set of leaders able to speak for the movement, motivate, and inspire</p> <p>Transcending organizational interests for long-term collective interests</p> <p>Values and vision seep into the national consciousness</p>	<p>MOVEMENT BUILDING</p>

This is consistent with what we have heard from movement leaders, who are highly conscious of the need to have a purpose that resonates with their communities and beyond. They know that people are interested in issues, but their actions are driven by values. And an issue-based approach to organizing tends to lead to thin coalitions while a values-based coming together leads to deeper coalitions that can overcome difference.

But as one interviewee observed: “Communications tend to be event focused. How do we battle a narrative day-in and day-out?”¹⁷ It is a challenging question – but is what distinguishes the metrics for movements from metrics for an organization. The challenge, in short, is not about the short-term message; it is about creating a deep and sustained analysis that gives meaning to the lives of leaders and places them inside a larger story and battle for justice.

Transactions

Framing and communications are both internal to a movement and external for broad public exposure. Transactions measures to track progress on the external side could include: the **number of stories** collected and distributed, how many **audiences** were reached, the number of **issues framed** (or reframed), **web site visits**, etc.

But there are also important measures on the internal side as well. An interviewee from IWJ explains the growing importance of communications in the group’s organizing:

*Another way that we’re working to build our base is how we reach people in a systematic way. We’re building our internal capacity to collect emails to be able to engage people in social media.*¹⁸

¹⁷ Author interview with George Goehl, Executive Director, National People’s Action (NPA), 19 April 2011.

¹⁸ Author interview with Aina Gutierrez, Deputy Director of Operations, Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), 21 April 2011.

Transformations

Transformative measures will look at how and where the **debate** has **shifted** as a result of the framing and communications. With whom did it resonate, and where did it lead the debate?

*In terms of messaging, we need to be careful to not just move the debate further to the right. We need to speak to the hearts and minds of those who are fearful, but could change if they see positive action.*¹⁹

Ultimately the transformations are grounded in the ability to **move membership**, to **participate in constructive debate**, and to **influence public consciousness**. Measuring this kind of change usually requires some in-depth research about attitudes, but will ultimately be reflected in policies and how decisions are made and presented publicly. In general, we need much more work on developing these narrative and transformative markers.

Traditional and Social Media

Description

In the age of instant messaging, tweeting, and round-the-clock news coverage, staying in constant communication has become the norm. It has also become a bit of a generational irritation. Those who are younger are able to text, talk, and think all at the same time while many who are older are left dazed and confused by the overstimulation. But the future is the future, and there is a whole new media world into which social movements – including those associated with the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street – have leapt with great abandon.

While this new multi-media world could have been wrapped into the previous discussion of communications, we made it its own category for one key reason: In social media, the attempt

¹⁹ Author Interview with Pablo Alvarado, Executive Director, National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), 18 April 2011.

is not to feed the current outlets with messages one hopes they pick up but rather to create and disseminate content on one's own.

This is a fundamentally democratic impulse, and the style of communication reflects the values of movement organizations themselves. After all, media campaigns have been around since the printing press – and have used effectively in campaigns for smoking cessation or to raise awareness about transfat and exercise. Electoral campaigns are highly invested in how they are portrayed in popular media, radio, television, and more recently, the internet – and YouTube has virtually revolutionized public access to speeches by candidates and movement leaders.

What is a bit different about the new social media is the shift to a producer versus a feeder of content. With social media, the messages can be controlled by the movement and its members. At the same time, the technology is scalable, allowing for the opportunity to take the conversation directly to broader audiences without having to pause too long to worry about the way it is received and presented by traditional media outlets. The result is a bit cacophonous but also highly democratic – exactly what comprises movement building.

Transactions

While our focus is on new media, measures demonstrating the reach and saturation of a campaign do include some traditional measures, such as the **number of mediums** covering the issue, the **variety of coverage**, the **number of op eds** and **articles** published, the number of **hits** on a website, number of **newsletters** distributed, number of **contributors**, etc. But also important in the new world is the **frequency of references** on Twitter, Face Book, and blogs, the number of new **contributors**, and the continually **expanding circle of conversations**.

Citizen Engagement Lab (CEL) works closely with its partnering groups to collect stories and integrate a narrative into campaigns from the get-go. CEL sees digital media as part of the infrastructure for sustained organizing and a way to accelerate existing initiatives. Executive Director Ian Inaba describes its approach as using new technology to lower the barrier of entry by nationalizing an issue and by shifting public consciousness. It has helped drive high-profile campaigns like presente.org's successful campaign to get Lou Dobbs off CNN. CEL's communications work is about using new media to influence main stream media and getting online members into offline efforts.

Transformations

Capturing the transformative impacts of traditional media would, as with communications, require research about **attitudes and policy change**. It would also look at **who is being represented** in the media, **who is speaking** for the group, **how well the story is covered**, and the **level of support** via editors and producers. In the end, we would look for the **readiness of the media to pick up issues** and the **ability to influence public consciousness**.

On the new media side, the real metric is whether the **use of new tools** becomes part of the standard for organizers and organizations. This implies the development of **new infrastructure and capacities** to carry out the work. As one interviewee describes:

We have to capture these “viral moments” by having an infrastructure in place. We have seen it with the immigrant rights marches in 2006, the calls to action that were able to mobilize millions of people. We need vehicles to capture the energy and

There is some resistance to new media on the part of movement organizers, partly because organizers are wary that having a lot of followers on a Twitter feed will translate into a lot of allies in a cause. For that, you need the sort of epiphanies that come from slow, patient, and personal organizing. We agree – but in a world in which the virtual is real for so many young people and where the need for scale are so pressing, striking a better balance between old organizing and new media will be essential.

Many interviewees emphasized the importance of social media, but most did so with caveats. Organizers characterized it as a great way to follow up on base building but not as the sole method of reaching people or the public. In other words, individual and community engagement can be enhanced by social media, but it does not replace face-to-face human contact. Often social and digital media are seen as an “add-on” to base building or as a less effective substitute for frontline organizing. Everyone knows it is a tool that is out there, but they do not necessarily integrate it to their daily work. Whether this is because the media is nearly always involved with campaigns, because the emphasis is more on framing and messaging, or because they do not know how to fully utilize the tools was not clear to us.

Some technology-savvy activists would argue that bringing in the tools at the beginning and documenting the stories and campaigns is, in fact, a tremendous asset. A few interviewees also saw tremendous potential in linking not only organizing more closely with digital media, but also with electoral and civic engagement. Digital story-telling was seen as an especially empowering and effective communications tool, especially if it is woven into the organizing campaigns.

Again, few thought that high-tech was a substitute for high-touch. Working with people face to face is still key but the new technology offers a chance to amplify the message, increase accessibility, and touch a new generation where they are – on their smartphones.

*drive it forward so that next time the moment is not missed.*²⁰

Organizational Development

Description

Demands and opportunities too often pull organizations in many directions. Developing a strategic focus and sticking with it – rather than running from one coalition meeting to another – are critical. Groups need to connect with one another, but they should be fortifying their own organizational infrastructure in order to be not just movement participants but movement builders.

As groups become more established and develop strategic directions, organizational infrastructure and makeup will change. The changes can take many forms: more or less institutionalized, more or less advocacy, targeting specific populations or issues, etc. There are many traditional evaluation metrics around this, including organizational efficacy, financial stability, and size, competencies and stability of staff. We encourage readers to refer to Building Movement Project’s factsheet that compares organizational capacity building with movement capacity building.²¹

To look at the transformative aspects as they relate to movement-building capacity, one should – in the words made famous in the movie *Jerry Maguire* – “show me the money.” Decisions about where to devote resources and how to grow reveal a lot about an organization or movement. If an organization prioritizes staff, board, and leadership development by seeking out learning opportunities, it demonstrates its commitment to those individuals as an integral part of the organization. If it creates staff positions related to alliances and coalitions, this

²⁰ Author interview with Ian Inaba, Executive Director, Citizen Engagement Lab, 13 September 2011.

²¹ Building Movement Project. What is Movement Capacity Building for Nonprofit Organizations? Available at: http://buildingmovement.org/pdf/FACT_SHEET - Org vs. Movement Building .pdf.

signals a willingness to “play well with others.” If it creates opportunities for staff and leaders to learn about other issues – to acquire the skills to support friends and pivot to new challenges – this says it is leaning toward movement building.

In this light, what may look like off-time – sabbaticals, refreshers, and trainings – may actually be the kind of on-time that supports an individual’s growth, fortifies the organization, and allows the group to develop the intersectional perspective that makes for a good movement ally.

Transactions

Again, there are already some established metrics with regard to organizational development, and we do not seek to reinvent that wheel. Rather we want to stress transactions that go beyond the usual measures of organizational development and instead capture activities on those important to movement building. These could include **changes in staffing** to allow for alliance building, serving as an **anchor** in a coalition, increasing the **number of trained leaders**, and having a **grassroots leadership team or board** that is really grassroots. Measures could also include broadening the number of **areas of expertise** and conducting **peer-to-peer training and exchanges**, which seem to be important to not just learning about best practices but building ties. In considering all these metrics, it is important to stress that it is not necessarily the increase in the staff that indicates where an organization is heading, but rather the staffing structure.

Transformations

Organizational transformation is reflected in how learning and growth opportunities are applied. With greater capacity, how **nimble** is the organization? Is it **following its strategic plan**? Can it **work beyond its immediate organizational or constituency self-interests**? Can it **capture the impacts** of its

Upon navigating to VozMob.net, you will see a different type of news: often in Spanish, frequently underpublicized, and always concise. Blogger Madelou posts a video of a protestor at the OccupyLA demonstration, another reposts a *Los Angeles Times* article on a community garden where Day Laborers contribute, and another reports on a campaign by Immokalee Workers for Food Justice.

What ties these stories together?

All are those of immigrant and low-wage workers in Los Angeles shared via cellphone. Together, they are re-appropriating technology to amplify their typically marginalized voices in the “digital public square.”

Mobile Voices (Voces Móviles) “strives to make visible the true stories of those who have been excluded, marginalized, and made invisible by the traditional mass media.” Founded out of a collaboration between the USC Annenberg School of Journalism and the Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA), other social movement organizations have or are in the process of joining the VozMob network. They use cellphones because not all homes have internet connections. Following from Paulo Freire’s teaching, researchers, media activists, and volunteers work together through a “horizontal decision-making structure” to analyze stories and develop a shared knowledge of current events. They are bringing to organizing a new media strategy, doing their part to affect change.

work? Does it take the time to **evaluate and reflect** on the work?

While these seem like broad philosophical questions, they are crucial and can be measured and analyzed. Even more concrete: Has the organization become more sustainable

“Social movements also change the people who participate in them, educating as well as mobilizing activists, and thereby promoting ongoing awareness and action that extends beyond the boundaries of one movement or campaign.”

David Meyer (2003)

with **diversified funding streams**? Does it have the **infrastructure in place for the long term**? Organizations that are prepared for long-term social movement building will create a sustainable infrastructure that is ready to take advantage of opportunities, survive setbacks, and be adaptable to changing environments. One interviewee gave an example from Arizona showing the difference between running campaigns and building organizing infrastructures.

The Arizona opposition was a proper fight that they never expected. We pushed back: through boycotts, through bringing resources for local infrastructures. That is mobilizing power. This time we had a better connection to the base, even if we were defeated.

Arizona was different from the 2006 Comprehensive Immigration Reform [efforts] because there was infrastructure. You can have short-term victories but you need to build a long-term infrastructure. People came out because it was affecting the bottom. The people were the subjects of change.²²

With social movement building, organizations and leaders will buy into a bigger vision, commit resources to be able to participate in meaningful ways, and understand that they are part of creating an enduring infrastructure for change. That is what we mean by organizational development – organizations built to last and ready to respond as the moment changes and momentum shifts.

²² Author Interview with Pablo Alvarado, Executive Director, National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), 18 April 2011.

Movement Building

Description

So, if you were to add up strategies one through nine, would it equal the tenth of movement building? The answer is not quite . . .

While we have tried to keep our focus on measuring how strategies relate to movement building, it is clear that there is a bit of a quandary in the field: Because evaluation is generally of a single organization or project, the idea of measuring how it all adds together remains underdeveloped. We can assess whether a certain group has met its goals; we are often less skilled at whether that same group has perhaps fallen a bit short on its specific aims but built community, power and narrative in a way that may bring more significant victories.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that movement building is both an art and a science – and a fast-moving target. As one interviewee expressed it:

We usually associate metrics with science, but the “art” part is just as important – so how do we measure it? Part of it is trying to bring the mission into sharper focus in order to measure impact and expand the “we” as the mission develops and the context changes. How do we have systems and metrics to do that at the rate that change happens in world? Metrics are key for how we become nimble.²³

But just because the art side of movement building is hard to describe, and measure, does not mean it does not exist – indeed,

²³ Author interview with Ai-Jen Poo, Executive Director, National Domestic Worker’s Alliance (NDWA), 5 April 2011.

that is exactly the point of this report. Moreover, both metrics and movements need to respond to changing circumstances.

Transactions

According to Zemsky and Mann (2008) there are at least three ways in which social movement organizations differ from social change organizations. First, they are permeable, meaning in this context that they benefit from more forces rather than get diluted. Second, they seek to change systems, rather than work within systems. Third, that they take a long-term perspective and work to develop a long-term narrative – think the Dreamers or the Tea Party – that become part of the culture of the times.

In short, movements are about scaling up from organizations to something big. Such transactions of scale can be found with **membership figures**, the **number of alliances**, the **size of national events**, **voting results**, and the evident and accepted **linkages across groups/issues**. And those seeking to measure activities will need to get beyond the activities of organizations and assess the field as a whole, following the admonitions of Zemsky and Mann to assess whether **collaboration** is occurring, whether the **goals are transformational**, and whether constituent groups are in it for the **long haul**.

Transformations

Some transactional metrics mentioned above are suggestive of transformations, but measuring this aspect could go a few steps further. We think success occurs when we see common language, landmark legislation or wins, and a diverse set of leaders able to articulate the connection between the policy and the narrative. Beneath this are a readiness and widespread enthusiasm that indicate a movement is being built. Such a movement **outlives the**

campaigns, has **clear vision and values** that are carried forward through adversity, and has an **infrastructure that is inclusive and can withstand change**. And in its context, **leaders emerge**, with some becoming icons (think Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez) that inspire the nation to view issues differently.

This is when movements are transformative – and this is what we must measure, communicate, and support. The elements of these transformative metrics are in the previous strategies, but there is something about movement building that has longevity and value, that brings it all together with impacts that are far-reaching. We know it when we see it – and the challenge is to measure it so it can be seen by others.

If you are still reading this report, you are likely in the “mildly-obsessed-with-metrics” camp. You may have some questions about how quantitative or qualitative assessments should be, some disagreement about how tight the time frame is for evaluation, or some dissension on the sorts of categories we have developed and measures we have suggested, but you are basically on board– you want better metrics and see the framework as a useful tool, not an imposition.



Translations and Translators: Recommendations for Funders and the Field

What's the combination of transactions and transformations that will get us to the transformation we need?

Ai-jen Poo, National Domestic Workers Alliance

Having a number of funders and movement builders “get it” is an important starting point. After all, there is a new wave of evidence-based giving in philanthropy, and there is some resistance by organizers who think narrow measures miss the point. Ignoring metrics could create a wedge between these two worlds, leaving movement building unfunded and philanthropy without the possibility of having the momentum of organized movements with them.

So it is critical to close the translation gap – that is, for funders and organizers to learn each other’s language. An important premise in this regard is accepting that evidence-based metrics are needed – and understanding that for metrics to matter, they must capture transformations as well as transactions. Coming to this joint realization is critical: We need to educate foundations that they can and should invest

in policy advocacy, community organizing, and movement building; and we need to persuade movement builders to document what they do so we can actually forge (and fund) a movement to match this moment.

Yet closing the translation gap alone will not get us to movement scale. That would be yet another transaction – and what we need in the field is a transformation. To achieve breakthroughs in movement building, funders and the field must make bold leaps together. A growing number of organizers are replacing the “either/or” tension of organizing for breadth or depth with a “both/and” attitude and new experiments in transformative leadership training. There is also increasing interest in blending episodic, get-out-the-vote efforts that *reach* hundreds of thousands with on-going policy campaigns that *engage* hundreds and thousands. Organizers are pushing the boundaries of the field – and funders need to allow them to do so not only by providing funding, but also by realizing that mistakes are par for the learning course.

We are not advocating for blind faith or blank checks; this is where metrics fit in. Defining the milestones (and realistic timelines) for progress and success are critical check-points. And measuring transformations with equal importance and precision as transactions will help raise the visibility and fundability of the work. Finally, documentation and storytelling can go a long way in disseminating the best practices and strategies that any movement



needs to refresh its theories and strengthen its practices – and such stories can move foundation staff, leadership, and board members.

This is a big challenge: we are suggesting not only that we need a new set of metrics but also that we should develop this in a system of co-creation and trust – elements that are, in fact, part of movement building. But journeys begin with first steps, and so we offer below eight recommendations for what the field and funders can do together.

Build the Movement Metrics Toolbox

We start with what may be the easiest step: building the movement metrics toolbox. While this report is a start, there is a growing set of tools available in the field and much lived experience to draw from. Appendix D offers a partial list of reports and resources available – and there are more. Many are remarkably specific in their aims and measures. While we hoped that we could include some of the sample documents in this report, we realized that that would further lower the likelihood of anyone getting to the end of this already-lengthy document.

For organizers interested in learning more about database technology to track their work, we refer them to the Progressive Technology Project (progressivetech.org). For anyone interested in resources for evaluating community organizing, we encourage them to start with the Alliance for Justice’s Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (RECO) (www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/reco/). And we encourage everyone to use this report as a pretext for sharing tools and practices.

The action plan for funders is clear: create streams of funding that can support the development of metrics and models. Again, a warning: we are not calling for more complicated logic models or roaming crews of evaluators. Indeed, much of the toolbox can be developed through peer-to-peer learning – there

truly is a hunger in the field for this – and through the co-creation processes we suggest below.

Develop Movement Capacities to Use Metrics

Of course, tools only work if you have skilled craftspeople who can use them effectively. The presence of such metrics mavens varies across the landscape of movement organizations. For example, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote is the only organization that we interviewed that actually has a director of evaluation position built into their staff structure. Meanwhile, there are many other examples of groups systematizing the use of evaluative tools and technologies: PICO National Network has a rubric of metrics for low-, medium-, and high-power organizations and has developed a network-wide tracking database; Working Partnerships USA, Alliance for a Just Society, and ISAIAH in Minneapolis have metrics for leadership development and grassroots advocacy from a movement-building frame. And others may be using their own processes to review and reflect on their work in an evaluative way without realizing or referring to it as evaluation.

Metrics and measurements need to exist at every level of organization, but it makes a difference when someone is in charge and helps groups stay on track. While community organizers often find themselves pressed to take the time to assess in light of daily crises and immediate problems, movement builders have learned the power of reflection and refreshing. Metrics can help, and building them into an organizational culture can be facilitated by having someone with responsibilities to make it happen – and to steep others in the new practices.

Funders can help by working with groups to develop and fund such positions. And because movement building is more than organization building, the metrics need to go beyond

organizational development to include the formation and maintenance of alliances, for example. Moreover, we heard from organizers the desire to develop a common language about assessment – partly as a means for identifying what is commonly valued to hold each other accountable and partly to avoid having a thousand different reporting structures for funders. Philanthropy can fund the sorts of convenings and cross-training that can make this coordination real.

Nurture Leadership and Leadership Pathways

Another part of organizational and movement capacity building is leadership development. To build lasting organizations in affected communities, we need lasting leaders as well as leaders in waiting, sustainable leadership as well as leadership pathways. The emergence of organizations like Rockwood Leadership and Social Justice Leadership is evidence that the field has recognized the challenge and the opportunity. Developing a deep bench of leadership, nurturing a healthy organizational culture, and opening avenues for evolving forms of leadership are needed to support the organizations that are the foundations to movement building. And figuring out how to measure the outcomes and intersections between personal, organizational, and societal transformation is critical.

Most organizations do have a leadership development program for grassroots members (which is why we devoted an entire strategy section to leadership development), but they are sometimes less adept at prioritizing leadership and sustainability at the staff level. There are exceptions, such as Community Coalition in South Los Angeles, which has been able to move past a dynamic founding leader and support both a new leader and a management team, which is itself continuing leadership development. In general, while there are many different leadership pathways – from leader to organizers, from organizer to

executive director, or from executive director to elected official – there are too few programs and opportunities for peer coaching and bonding, let alone formal training programs.

To fill the gap, organizers can document and disseminate lessons to the field, including their own internal metrics and decisions about how much time and space to dedicate to leadership training. Others can offer best practices, curricula, and models for bringing grassroots leaders onto a board of directors, for developing a solid management structure that can sustain top-leadership transitions, and for preparing folks for elected positions (all within the legal constraints of 501(c)3s). Funders can help by providing time and resources for organizations to work through transitions in leadership, providing spaces for peer coaching, and offering grants for technical assistance. And both sides can work to insist that leadership development means more than just leadership in an organization – it also means movement-style leadership that can bring disparate groups together in common cause.

Link Policy Outcomes with Broader Social Change

Even if leaders are stepping up and working across organizational boundaries, translating the work of movement building can feel a bit like “Whisper Down the Lane” (more commonly known as “Telephone”) – the message gets lost in communication from organizers to program officers to trustees. Movement leaders often find a sympathetic and supportive ear with a certain program officer who “gets it” – often someone who was herself an organizer in a former life – but there can be a disconnect between the work that is necessary and what foundation leadership wants to hear. As one interviewee put it, talking to foundations is at times like “fitting a square peg into a round hole.”

Part of the mismatch: Many foundations and their trustees have grown to accept the

importance of policy advocacy and policy change but have not yet made the transition to placing those policy wins (and losses) in the context of a broader frame of changing the narrative and vision. Movement organizers, by contrast, see campaigns and issues as part of a broader arc of social transformation – and for many of them, the key evaluative question is what it all adds up to.

We can address this translation gap by creating metrics that relate policy fights to the broader imperative of base building, narrative, and communications. Movement builders can help by being clear about what they are doing and why – program officers expressed to us that when grantees have a strong analysis about their work, it is much easier to align the campaigns with ultimate goals of change. And program officers can help with translation to their trustees about why more lasting progress may be made on issues of concern by building a movement that can last and pivot from issue to issue in the service of social justice.

Communicate Transformative Shifts

In the same way that the invention of the internet revolutionized our world – from which

businesses exist (think dot coms) to the way businesses operate (the cloud) – some innovations in movement organizing are game changers that create a whole new world of possibilities. Sometimes the resulting transformations are viral and quickly appear and propagate – think the immigrant organizing of 2006 and 2007 or the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011. Sometimes they involve glacial change and intangible, subtle shifts – such as when a leader takes on a new issue that is not directly related to his/her interests or when a policy loss is actually an important step in building movement capacity.

And it is not only grassroots residents that find transformative processes fundamental to becoming real leaders of change – funders, too, need the opportunity for epiphany. After all, there is only so much that anyone can pick up from reading a proposal or report. To spark the excitement and imaginations of funders, “translators” – both organizers and sympathetic program officers – can offer anecdotes as well as real-life experience. For example, the Women Donors Network partnered with the National Domestic Workers Alliance to have its donors participate in leader delegations on



Capitol Hill, making the work of the Alliance immediate and visceral, and more effectively communicating why it should be supported.

And it is important to realize the need to sustain the excitement and commitment beyond the initial spark. This is a process not a product, and organizers and others can use the power of story and share experiences of community or individual transformation as a way of reaching and moving stakeholders over time. Increasingly, social media is making this easier and so this can be added to the organizing toolkit. Funders can do their part by getting key decision-makers within their own institutions or other colleagues that do not “get it” out into the field to see the work in action – and then to continually repeat the messages and reoffer the experiences that will make the importance of movement building stick.

Document Innovation and Experiments

As one organizer warned us, metrics can limit an organization’s focus to tweaking and tinkering at the fringes when radical changes – at least new innovations – are in order. Movement builders, and funders, should have the courage and latitude to invest where there are promising, innovative opportunities and to take advantage where there is momentum and a willingness to experiment. Organizations should not be seeking out new, trendy approaches just to be different; there are tried-and-true strategies of base building that work. But when forging new ground, documenting and communicating what is learned and what has been accomplished can contribute lessons that, even with failure, are critical to refreshing theories of change and strengthening practice.

Data collection methods are not the subject of this report, but they are worth mentioning because they will shape the approach of an evaluation. It is most common to find the more traditional methods of interviewing, focus

groups and surveys. Some of the best evaluation practices incorporate newer methods of digital story-telling and mapping. The pairing of systematic collection of quantitative data with systematic collection of story-telling gives a fuller picture – and hanging powerful anecdotes on a scaffold of solid research is key.

Groups can codify lessons learned in a variety of ways, including contracting with external evaluators, but we do think it is important to develop some in-house capacity (at least so one can choose better consultants). Funders can help by stressing that evaluation should benefit those doing the work not just those that fund them. Evaluation should be less of a stress test by outside parties – seeing which organizations or programs are likely to fail – and more of an opportunity to refresh organizational theories of change and develop strong analyses that can thread together the work of various groups. This requires resources – and it requires a reconfiguration of the relationship of funder, grantee, and evaluator.

Adopt a Movement Frame to Evaluation

Just as organizers have to see beyond their immediate issues and campaigns to the broader implications for base building and social justice, philanthropy must adopt a longer-term sense of what matters in their investments. Trustees may be eager to see a particular victory or a particular shift in well-being – and it may be necessary to frame how short-term strategies fit with long-term goals and long-lasting social change. Perhaps the best way to get at this is to move beyond the usual either/or approach (are we about winning policies or are we about building movement?) and instead adopt a both/and frame in which the two are woven together.

Such an approach occurred in the statewide strategy to increase the 2010 Census count in California. There was an immediate goal of

improving the numbers in hard-to-count census tracts, but as we review in our publication, *Beyond the Count: Leveraging the 2010 Census to Build New Capacities for Civic Engagement and Social Change in California*, several of the funders and the organizations adopted a movement-building frame to this short-term campaign. This meant that they kept their eye on how the immediate goals of increasing the count could build lasting capacities to advance changes in policy and politics, such as the ability to collaborate, reach residents, and frame a narrative. And along the way, many organizations developed new allies and new intersections.

So in addition to the metrics to measure short-term outcomes, both funders and organizers should ask questions about new capacities and new collaborations. For movement builders, this may mean being open to working with new partners – service providers and issue experts, for example – to help expand skill-sets and capacities that can be carried onto the next campaign. Funders can help by asking how collaborations in one effort will contribute to a stronger civic and movement infrastructure. Fair warning: We are not suggesting that a new collaborative checklist lead to forced marriages; the secret in California was strategic and authentic alignment between the funders (who did not pool their funds but simply coordinated their giving) and between grantees who developed an elaborative but functioning structure of anchor institutions, technical intermediaries, and grassroots organizers.

Co-Create the New Metrics of Movement Building

Movements are bigger than any one organization, issue, or campaign. They are co-creations – of the groups, of the leaders, and of all those who mobilize, who come together in new ways, who blur the lines of self-interest to look at the whole. We have already suggested that because movements are about a common vision and new alliances,

any metrics must also transcend organizational, and even coalitional, boundaries. In parallel fashion, metrics must – like the movements they purport to measure – be co-created by the leaders, the organizations and, we suggest, the funders.

For this to happen, organizations themselves need the space to begin to work together to build the common language and framework for metrics that can hold up against different models and approaches and different geographies and contexts. The change that is needed will not be achieved by replicating one model, expanding one network, or investing in one place, but rather by gathering a wide range of lessons from different places, issues, and constituencies. Developing a common vocabulary and framework can help facilitate the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned – and help the field hone in on valuable metrics.

But it must also be the case that funders and organizations need to work together in a fundamentally different way. Metrics are most useful when the parties involved in defining, tracking, and assessing metrics are doing so for their own self-learning rather than for punitive reasons. Organizations should be involved in developing metrics and have access to the data as a means of self-reflection, not to instill fear of being defunded. Funders can help by understanding that there may be hard lessons to learn but learning them together helps push through the disappointments, allow for adjustments, and build to success. And both sides can close the real translation gap by realizing that they are ultimately tied together by a long-term commitment to effective social change.

Metrics, Movements, and Momentum

As we wrap up this project, the so-called “Occupy Wall Street” movement has spread from the streets of New York to Boston, Tampa, Los Angeles, Seattle, and beyond. Is this finally the grassroots groundswell progressives were hoping would erupt after 2008? Is the slogan “we are the 99 percent” the accidental breakthrough message that liberal polling experts have long sought? And is this a set of activities and perspectives that can really dig in for the long haul?

Whether or not “Occupy Wall Street” is a movement or just a moment remains to be seen. But what it does point out is that one can never fully anticipate the spark that will set off the simmering fire of social frustration. After all, Rosa Parks engaged in a simple (non-)act: She refused to move to the back of the bus. But with this, she triggered a year-long boycott of

mass transit and energized a civil rights movement that would eventually reshape a nation. Likewise, the gay patrons who battled against the police at the Stonewall Inn in June 1969 were simply asserting their dignity on a night in which they had finally had enough. But their actions laid the groundwork for what we see today: the slow but steady desegregation of the military and the beginnings of marriage equality.

While the flashpoints that mobilize are important, achieving real change requires enough organization to turn protest into policy. The patient work of moving from the Montgomery bus boycott to advocacy for voter rights required a movement infrastructure that had deep roots and discipline, as well as a willingness to experiment, innovate, and disseminate new organizing practices. The long



march to gay, lesbian, and transgender rights has also required the development of new organizing and policy institutions as well as the patient work of alliance building across difference to change the narrative and eventually the reality.

Our focus on metrics is not meant to discourage creativity or stifle spontaneity. Movements erupt and disrupt, wax and wane. New organizations are created in their wake, and existing ones are transformed in their path. Metrics therefore need to be open to the unanticipated – to the art as well as to the science of movement building – but they can be helpful in measuring the background infrastructure needed to insure that movements both match the moment and accelerate the momentum.

We have argued that to do this, we need a different approach to measurement, one that values transformations as well as transactions, one that understands how grassroots constituents turn demands into policy and pivot from being protestors to being proponents, one that gauges how much leaders develop their analysis as well as how many troops they can rally to their cause. And we have suggested that such evaluation needs to go beyond the organizational level – the real key in movement building is how the various streams of organizing, research, and policy advocacy

come together to form a river so powerful that nothing can stop the drive to social change and social justice.

Getting to this new sort of movement metrics will require new attitudes and approaches on the part of both organizers and funders. Organizers will have to realize that evidence-based giving actually matches well with their own desire to develop a common language and common measures of success. Funders will need to understand that a more effective set of metrics will reveal as many failures as successes – and that the failures may actually be part of the process of innovation. Both will have to work to overcome a translation gap that may be limiting the support for base building and movement alliances.

And everyone – including academics writing a long report about the topic – will have to understand that metrics are not the movement. Indeed, while the measures we lay out can help us take stock of what is needed to go forward, it is the values, vision, and virtues of movement builders that help grassroots constituencies make sense of their lives and become empowered to act for change. We hope this report contributes to a conversation about how to capture that work, represent it to funders, the field, and the general public, and build the support necessary to realize the promise of a more inclusive America.

Appendix A: Interviewees

Pablo Alvarado Executive Director, National Day Laborer Organizing Network	Elly Matsumura Education and Community Leadership Director, Working Partnerships USA
Kalila Barnett Executive Director, Alternatives for Community and Environment	Kirk Noden Executive Director, Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative
Lewis Brandon Grassroots History Coordinator, Beloved Community Center of Greensboro	Denise Perry Blacks Organizing for Leadership and Dignity
Aaron Dorfman Executive Director, National Committee for Responsible Philanthropy	Ai-jen Poo Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance
George Goehl Executive Director, National People's Action	Mari Ryono Director of Development and Evaluation, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote
Stephanie Gut Director of Affiliate Support, PICO National Network	Doran Schrantz Executive Director, ISAIAH
Aina Gutierrez Deputy Director of Operations, Interfaith Worker Justice	Saket Soni Executive Director, New Orleans Workers Center for Racial Justice
LeAnn Hall Executive Director, Alliance for a Just Society	Veronica Terriquez Assistant Professor of Sociology, USC Department of Sociology
Marielena Hincapie Executive Director, National Immigration Law Center	Victor Vasquez Former Member, Youth Together
Ian Inaba Co-Executive Director, Citizen Engagement Lab	
Roger Kim Executive Director, Asian Pacific Environmental Network	
Arif Mamdani Executive Director, Progressive Technology Project	

Appendix B: Conference Call Participants

March 9, 2011

Tammy Bang Luu

Associate Director, Labor Community
Strategy Center

Vivian Chang

Consultant

Oona Chatterjee

Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New
York

Michael Leon Guerrero

Alliance Director, Grassroots Global Justice

Saru Jaramayan

Co-Founder and Co-Director, Restaurant
Opportunities Center United

Burt Lauderdale

Executive Director, Kentuckians for the
Commonwealth

Ng'ethe Maina

Executive Director, Social Justice
Leadership

Leslie Moody

Executive Director, Partnership for Working
Families

Anthony Thigpenn

President, Strategic Concepts in
Organizing and Policy Education

Helena Wong

Executive Director, CAAAV

March 10, 2011

Amy Morris

Program Officer, Strong Local Economies,
Surdna Foundation

Michele Prichard

Director, Common Agenda, Liberty Hill
Foundation

Pronita Gupta

Director of Programs, Women Donors
Network

Jocelyn Sargent

Program Officer, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

May 16, 2011

Nat Chioke Williams

Executive Director, Hill-Snowdon
Foundation

Sarah Christiansen

Program Officer, Solidago Foundation

Alexandra DelValle

Program Director, Third Wave Foundation

Brinda Maira

Program Officer, Merck Family Fund

Wilma Montañez

Program Officer for Reproductive Rights,
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

Guillermo Quinteros

Program Officer, Solidago Foundation

Robby Rodriguez

Programme Executive, Atlantic
Philanthropies

Laine Romero-Alston

Program Officer, Solidago Foundation

Kolu Zigbi

Program Officer for Sustainable Agriculture
and Food Systems, Jessie Smith Noyes
Foundation

Appendix C. Convening Participants

August 16, 2011

Los Angeles

Tammy Bang Luu
Associate Director, Labor Community
Strategy Center

Sarita Gupta
Executive Director, Jobs with Justice

Zach Hoover
Executive Director, LA Voice

Roger Kim
Executive Director, Asian Pacific
Environmental Network

Elly Matsumura
Education and Community Leadership
Director, Working Partnerships USA

Leslie Moody
Executive Director, Partnership for Working
Families

Ai-jen Poo
Director, National Domestic Workers
Alliance

Michele Prichard
Director, Common Agenda, Liberty Hill
Foundation

Mari Ryono
Director of Development and Evaluation,
Mobilize the Immigrant Vote

Amy Schur
Executive Director, Alliance of Californians
for Community Empowerment

New York City

Oona Chatterjee
Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New
York

Andrew Friedman
Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New
York

Jee Kim
former Program Director, Surdna
Foundation

Rachel LaForest
Executive Director, Right to the City
Alliance

Burt Lauderdale
Executive Director, Kentuckians For The
Commonwealth

Denise Perry
Blacks Organizing for Leadership and
Dignity

Jeff Pinzino
Development Director, National People's
Action

Sumitra Rajkumar
Political Education Coordinator, Social
Justice Leadership

Phone

Vivian Chang
Consultant

Appendix D: Selected Resources

Alliance for Justice, Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (RECO)
<http://www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/reco/>

Clearinghouse of resources about evaluating community organizing that are categorized by case studies, tools and methodologies, and theoretical approaches. Resources can be searched by type, author, or title.

Fine, Marjorie (2007). “Creating Change through Community Organizing: Funding Strategies That Develop Local Leadership and Build Collective Power,” presentation to the Minnesota Council on Foundations.

Outlines 10 main concepts of community organizing: 1) power, 2) relationship building, 3) leadership development, 4) political education, 5) strategy, 6) mobilization, 7) action, 8) winning, 9) movement building, and 10) evaluation. Includes three areas of questioning to assess a proposal and evaluate a group: 1) program or issue area, 2) strategy, and 3) organization.

Foster, Catherine Crystal and Justin Louie (2010). “Grassroots Action and Learning for Social Change: Evaluating Community Organizing.” Center for Evaluation Innovation and Blueprint Research & Design, Inc.

Based on 5 years of experience in partnering with organizers, advocates and funders in evaluating community organizing and notes the difference in approach that needs to be taken versus evaluating policy advocacy. Lessons learned about what makes for more successful evaluation: 1)

participatory, 2) prospective (forward-looking), 3) learning-based (vs. pass-or-fail), 4) real-time, 5) respectful of the culture of organizing, 6) attentive to leadership development as well as policy wins, and 7) focused more on evidence rather than proof. When designing an evaluation plan, a useful framework follows the core components of organizing: 1) participation and membership (the base), 2) constituent leadership and power, 3) organizational power, 4) organizing wins, 5) meaningful impact following wins (implementation and accountability), 6) organizational capacity, and 7) reflection and innovation.

French American Charitable Trust (2004). “FACT Community Organizing Evaluation Project: Lessons Learned.”

In response to the challenge of evaluating community organizing—specifically leadership development, empowerment and social change—FACT worked with three of its grantees (Environmental Health Coalition, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth and Southern Echo) to produce this report. FACT argues that traditional evaluation tools used by foundations were designed to measure the work of social service organizations, and do not accurately capture the impact of community organizing, leadership development, empowerment. Lessons learned are: 1) evaluation should be developed from the ground-up, 2) one size does not fit all, 3) must be linked to planning, 4) should build lasting capacity (vs. outside evaluators parachuting in and out), 5) assistance needed in translating the work into language and data so that others

can understand, and 6) evaluation is a multi-year endeavor.

Gold, Eva, Elaine Simon and Chris Brown (2002). “Successful Community Organizing for School Reform.” Philadelphia: Research for Action and Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform.

Cross City Campaign – a regional network of leaders focusing on creating school reform – hired Research for Action to help them develop the Education Organizing Indicators Framework. This framework aims to help funders, educators and organizers understand the impact that education organizing is having on improving their local schools. The framework identifies eight indicator areas that categorize education organizing and accomplishments (p. 13): 1) leadership development, 2) community power, 3) social capital, 4) public accountability, 5) equity, 6) school/ community connection, 7) high quality instruction and curriculum, and 8) positive school climate.

Grimm, Kristen (2007). Memo to Marjorie Fine and Seth Borgos on findings of a donor survey conducted by Spitfire Strategies for The Linchpin Campaign, a project of the Center for Community Change.

An online survey conducted from January 9 to March 16, 2007 completed by 189 individual donors. The survey found that individual donors are supporting community organizing but believe that it is difficult to measure the impacts. They are motivated by the bigger picture outcomes so organizers should communicate in terms of outcomes and offer measurements that demonstrate they are driven by results.

Hewlett Foundation (June 2011). “Charting impact: Helping nonprofit organizations explore their goals and progress.” Foundation Newsletter. Retrieved from

<http://www.hewlett.org/newsroom/newsletter/charting-impact>.

Charting Impacts is a project of a partnership between three national foundations to help nonprofits in the U.S. analyze their goals and break down paths to success (which they leave undefined). The project has three goals: encourage nonprofits to use a standard reporting platform to share their goals and measure their progress, help nonprofits determine their impacts, and help funders identify the most effective organizations. Charting Impact asks five basic questions of nonprofits: What is your organization aiming to accomplish? What are your strategies for making this happen? What are your organization’s capabilities for doing this? How will your organization know if you are making progress? And finally, what have and haven’t you accomplished so far? Organizations then share their responses on the Guidestar website, for funders and other organizations to see.

Hill-Snowdon Foundation. “Making the Case: Community Organizing in the Nation’s Capital.”

Make the case for supporting community organizing by defining organizing, and highlighting arguments for (i.e. 1) leverages impact and scope, 2) addresses root cause, 3) re-invigorates democracy, 4) works), and arguments against (i.e. 1) too political, 2) confrontational, 3) slow-moving, and 4) hard to evaluate), and discussing three reasons for investing in DC. It includes the evaluation criteria and questions that Hill-Snowdon uses: 1) base building and leadership development, 2) role of constituents and staff, 3) issues, process and analytical sophistication, 4) tactical and strategic acumen, 5) strategic partnerships, 6) success securing substantive improvements, and 7) organizational development.

Jagpal, Niki (2009). “Criteria for Philanthropy at its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact.” National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

In this report, the NCRP presents four main criteria with ten elements for foundations to assess how well they are maintaining and growing the strength of the civil sector. Philanthropists should serve the public good under four criteria: 1) Values – philanthropists should devote 50 percent of their grant dollars to low-income, marginalized, communities of color, and another 25 percent to advocacy, organizing and civic engagement around equity and justice; 2) Effectiveness – philanthropists should devote at least 50 percent of its grant dollars to general operating support and multi-year commitments to nonprofits, and make sure time to apply for and report on grants are proportionate to grant size; 3) Ethics – philanthropists should maintain transparency by maintaining a diverse board including community members, as well as maintaining ethics policies and disclose information freely; and 4) Commitment – philanthropists should engage a substantial proportion of their assets in pursuit of their missions.

Masters, Barbara and Torie Osborn (2010). “Social Movements and Philanthropy: How Foundations Can Support Movement Building.” The Foundation Review 2(2): 12-27.

The authors offer an evaluation framework for movement building for funders. The framework is a table structured to help funders focus on outcomes and benchmarks related to progress associated with developing five core components of movement building and also takes into account the movement’s stage of development. Along the horizontal axis are the five core elements to movement building: 1) organizing an authentic base, 2)

leadership, 3) vision and ideas, 4) alliances, and 5) advocacy infrastructure. Along the vertical axis are the four stages of movements: 1) infrastructure building, 2) identity and intention, 3) the movement moment, and 4) integration/dissipation.

McCarvey, Craig (2006). “Making Measures Work for You: Outcomes and Evaluation.” GrantCraft Series.

Findings based on interviews with grantmakers, evaluators, and consultants about measuring outcomes including seven tensions: 1) what needles are we trying to move (nuances of selecting which outcomes to measure), 2) are we searching under the streetlamp (distinguishing between indicators as proxies of measurements and the actual changes you are trying to make), 3) mistaking partial measures for the full truth, 4) corrupting data by pushing for accountability, 5) measuring meaningful impact given the realities of time and control, 6) individual measures to take account of the full complexity of the environment, 7) using outcome measures to help us learn about the things we want to understand.

McGarvey, Craig and Anne Mackinnon (2008). “Funding Community Organizing: Social Change through Civic Participation.” GrantCraft in partnership with The Linchpin Campaign, a project of the Center for Community Change.

Grantmakers’ perspectives on what community organizing can accomplish, how it works, and how to navigate funder-grantee relationships. Seven benefits of community organizing: 1) high level of public engagement, 2) cohesion on important issues, 3) leadership with an authentic following, 4) pragmatic solutions from the community, 5) public support for effective leaders, 6) greater accountability by public officials, and 7) attention to how policies are implemented. The visible

outcomes are in five areas: 1) individual member change, 2) organizational change, 3) community change, 4) policy wins, and 5) policy to practice.

McLeod Grant, Heather (2010). “Transformer: How to build a network to change a system. A Case Study of the RE-AMP Energy Network.” Monitor Institute. Retrieved from http://www.monitorinstitute.com/downloads/ReAmp_Case_Study_by_Monitor_Institute.pdf.

This report is a case study of the RE-AMP Energy Network’s development of power and its ability to pass legislation to reduce global warming emissions. For our purposes, the report also defines some metrics with which to measure the network’s success. The report distinguishes between three types of outcomes: direct, legislative/advocacy and process. Direct outcomes include shutting down 28 coal plants and reducing coal usage across the country. Legislative/advocacy outcomes include passing renewable energy standards in five states, passing energy efficiency standards in six states and defeating anti-environment federal legislation. On the other hand, process outcomes include aligning on-the-ground strategies of local organizations, fostering knowledge sharing and capacity building, increasing the power of individual organizations through collective action, attracting new sources of funding, attracting new players to the table, and helping to build relationships between unlikely partners.

Nakae, Maria, Moira Bowman and Eveline Shen (2009). “Movement Building Indicators.” The Momentum Series, Volume 6. Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice.

This tool was designed to be a living document for reproductive justice organizations and social justice

organizations doing reproductive justice work grounded in organizing and an intersectional analysis. The tool was developed to support groups in planning and assessing their movement building work with a focus on the “deeper” work of building power and leadership in marginalized communities. The tool asks critical questions around overarching shifts in four areas of movement building: 1) policy change, 2) leadership development, 3) communications, and 4) relationship building. The questions prompt organizations to develop their own indicators of success around both processes and impact.

Parachini, Larry and Sally Covington (2001). “Community Organizing Toolbox: A Funder’s Guide to Community Organizing.” Neighborhood Funders Group.

This report is an educational resource for funders, specifically for the F.B. Heron Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, to better understand the impacts and importance of community organizing. Additionally, based on some case studies, the report provides some metrics to use in evaluating community organizing initiatives, including: 1) winning concrete improvements or policy changes through collective action; 2) permanently altering power relations at all levels; 3) leadership development in low-income, urban communities of color; 4) increasing civic participation at all levels; and 5) building stable and financially viable organizations that are accountable to their communities.

Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (2010). “Marking Progress: Movement Toward Racial Justice.” Critical Issues Forum Volume 3. Available at <http://www.racialequity.org/criticalissues.html>.

PRE presents nine perspectives on the problems and prospects of measuring

progress toward racial equity and the impact of the work. One author includes a table of indicators for seven types of outcomes: 1) racial equity, 2) transformative public policy changes, 3) transformative changes in narratives about race, 4) strategies having intended effects, 5) collective sufficiency of intended strategies, 6) mechanisms to anticipate efforts to undo policy and practice changes, and 7) collective capacities of organizations and coalitions.

Ranghelli, Lisa (2009). “Measuring the Impacts of Advocacy and Community Organizing: Application of a Methodology and Initial Findings.” *The Foundation Review* 1(3): 132-148.

Because foundations do not know how to measure the impacts of advocacy and organizing, foundations do not see how these types of approaches can be strategic, and thus foundations shy away from funding this type of work. In response, Ranghelli creates a tool to both qualify and quantify the impacts of advocacy and organizing efforts, and specifically measure the return on investments. Incorporating findings from a literature review and a field scan, Ranghelli presents NCRP’s impact measurement tool evaluating: 1) organizational background; 2) fiscal information for a five-year period (to measure ROI); 3) membership, leadership and constituency (to capture level of engagement); 4) impact of organizing and advocacy (campaign and policy victories); 5) capacity building and interim progress outcomes; 6) stories of impact; 7) resources (or lack thereof) for organizing and advocacy.

Ranghelli, Lisa and Julia Craig (2010). “Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities: Impacts of Advocacy, Organizing, and Civic Engagement in Los

Angeles.” *National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.*

The authors attempt to quantify monetary benefits and highlight non-monetary benefits of community organizing and activism in Los Angeles. The study finds that 15 groups garnered more than \$6.88 billion for communities; or, for every foundation dollar invested in organizing and advocacy, the groups garnered \$91 in benefits. This report is to educate funders about ways they can leverage their funds to maximize their impacts in communities. The report suggests six recommendations for funders: 1) increase grant sizes for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement; 2) dialogue with board/donors about how organizing and advocacy can achieve their long-term goals; 3) support collaborations; 4) foster funder-to-funder dialogues to share lessons; 5) invest in capacity building and organizing infrastructure in Southern California; and 6) give general operating support and multi-year grants.

Solidago Foundation (2004). “A study that finds the most effective grantmaking is... funding community organizing that builds coalitions.”

Solidago’s report discusses their efforts to fund and measure the impacts of community organizing. This report studies the policy, organizing and alliance building outcomes of their investments. Specifically, for every dollar Solidago invested in community organizing for social change in 2004, communities received a \$59 benefit. They found that alliance work amplifies these benefits. The report does not list specific metrics for organizing, but lists key strategies for which Solidago provides general, not programmatic, support. These strategies include: opportunities to build alliances, democratic models of sustainable community development, civic engagement

and electoral participation, and building capacity through base building, leadership development, applied research, media and organizational development.

Stachowiak, Sarah (2009). “Pathways for Change: 6 Theories about How Policy Change Happens.” Organizational Research Services.

This report does not provide metrics to measure the impacts of organizing. Organizational Research Services produced this report for advocates, funders and evaluators to understand how to translate theories of change into policies, and how to measure the impact of such efforts. Specifically, the author presents six theories of change, each inform the types of advocacy and policy change: 1) “large leaps” theory, which says that policy change happens when the right conditions are in place; 2) “coalition” theory, which says that policy change occurs out of coalition work; 3) “policy windows” theory, which says how policy change emerges from advocates seizing windows of opportunity; 4) “messaging and frameworks” theory, which says policy preferences depend on how options are

framed and/or presented; 5) “power politics” theory, which says policy change happens when working directly with powerful decision makers; 6) “grassroots” or community organizing theory, which says policy change happens through collective action among community members around issues facing their daily lives.

Women’s Funding Network Online Evaluation Tool. “MAKING THE CASE: A unique measurement and evaluation framework for planning, evaluating and aggregating social change impact.”

Since social change results from several actions, builds gradually over time, and is difficult to define, it can be very difficult to measure. The Women’s Funding Network has created an online evaluation tool that provides a framework to help organizations and funders measure the impact of their work. The framework is based on five indicators of social change: 1) a shift in the definition of the issue, 2) a shift in peoples’ behavior, 3) a shift in peoples’ engagement, 4) a shift in policy, and 5) maintaining past gains.

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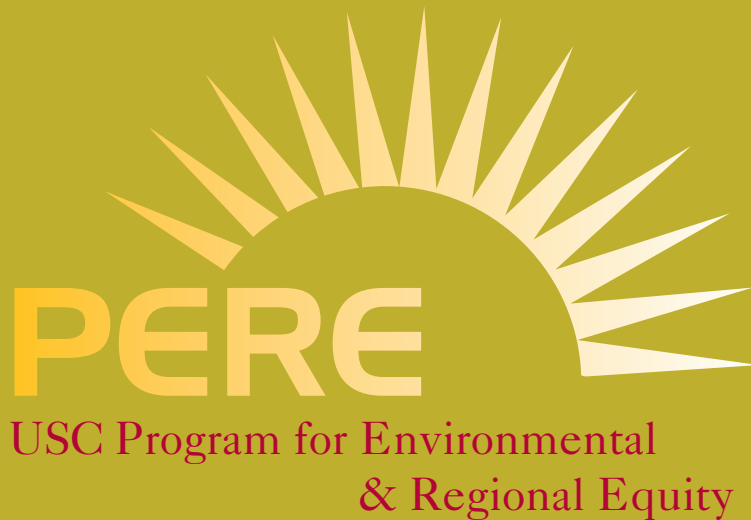
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USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE)

950 W. Jefferson Blvd., JEF 102

Los Angeles, CA 90089-1291

W: <http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere>

E: pere@dornsife.usc.edu

T: 213.821.1325

F: 213.740.5680

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