



# CCHE

COMMUNITIES CREATING  
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Improving Access to Healthy Foods and Safe  
Places to Play in Communities of Color

A national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
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# REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

When The Praxis Project and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) began to imagine what would become Communities Creating Healthy Environments (CCHE), we knew this would be more than a traditional “intervention.”

We all felt deeply connected to the issues that contribute to childhood obesity. We wanted to build an initiative that addressed the realities and root causes many of us around the table knew from experience.

These realities — including deep structural inequalities in access to play and recreation, and environmental risk factors like neighborhood and state violence — can make playing outside dangerous and even life-threatening for children in low-income communities and communities of color.

by Makani Themba Executive Director, The Praxis Project



When it comes to nutrition, our communities’ changing relationship to food sources, biased and predatory marketing and historic patterns of discriminatory policies have created a segregated food system that our colleagues at Community Coalition in Los Angeles call “food apartheid.” Many have observed how the same chain store can offer vastly different inventory and service depending on the community in which it is located.

We recognized that this was more than a knowledge gap. In fact, the primary inequities we needed to address were rooted in the enduring, racialized power dynamics in public policy. Closing these gaps was going to require nontraditional methodologies in public health — methods drawn from the rich, longstanding traditions of community-driven change in communities of color.

CCHE was launched to support local, community-based organizing and advocacy to directly confront the “blame game” and racial stereotypes driving a great deal of public policy and public conver-

sation about weight and health. Twenty-two groups were chosen from hundreds of high-quality applicants to form a diverse, inter-generational community of practice. These communities, which span 16 cities and indigenous nations across the United States, are leading some of the field’s most innovative fights.

And they’re winning.

In just five years — and with a little more than \$5 million in cumulative financial support and capacity building assistance — these 22 grantees brought about sweeping changes in their communities. They increased organizing capacity, expanded community involvement and focused resources on advocacy initiatives informed by best practices that continue to make a measurable difference in people’s lives.

## CCHE's efforts resulted in 72 local policy advocacy victories. These efforts include:

- Defeating regulations to hike transit fares, which would have threatened transportation access to quality food outlets and recreation services, and securing free and low-cost access to public transit for youth;
- Adopting workplace breastfeeding policies and more supportive breastfeeding policies in hospitals;
- Increasing public safety in parks and obtaining recreational programming for children and families with local parks and recreation departments;
- Engaging store owners to provide healthier food options;
- Securing funding and installation of streetlights and walking trails for community safety and increased walkability;
- Winning community led re-zoning regulations with city planning departments that protects low-income residents and small businesses to protect affordable spaces, services, and foods;
- Advancing regulations with the Bureau of Land Management to ensure traditional and customary use practices are protected such as hunting and fishing rights for Native communities;
- Securing thousands of acres for community gardens, farmer's markets, playgrounds and recreational spaces with the support of public (city and county) and private entities (churches, organizations, stores);
- Implementation of regulations for comprehensive wellness policies in schools and school districts that increase access to healthy foods for students, such as Federal Great Trays program guidelines, Breakfast in the Classroom, and use of locally sourced foods in school meals; and
- Increasing physical activity during school with Recess Before Lunch program with support from local school district.



From San Francisco to West Harlem, from the colonias of Texas to the Yukon wetlands of Alaska, CCHE grantees developed local, replicable, culturally relevant policy initiatives to address childhood obesity head-on. They then took their work to the next level by forging multiracial, multicultural and multilingual learning communities where grantees shared innovative strategies and emerging lessons.

These five years represent a strong and promising beginning, but there is much more work to be done. Recent cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other vital services only underscore the importance of supporting local community-based advocacy that builds on community needs and sensibilities.

There are also many lessons to be garnered from this work — for childhood obesity prevention and for any effort seeking to leverage community leadership and organizing as tools for change. The great musician and innovator Ornette Coleman said, “If you don’t make mistakes, you aren’t really trying.” This report is part celebration and part examination of what went well and what we learned, because at CCHE we certainly are “really trying.”

Looking ahead, we are building on the knowledge gathered by this incredible, multicultural community of grantees, intermediary support team and evaluation team. Each brought a level of energy, brilliance and innovation to this initiative that make CCHE special indeed.

I am grateful to each of them, along with my colleagues at the CCHE national program office, for their extraordinary work. Everyone associated with CCHE was, as they say, “all in.” It’s this deep personal commitment that made CCHE so transformative — and so successful.

In fellowship,



Makani Themba, Executive Director  
The Praxis Project  
CCHE National Program Office

PART 1:

# CHANGING THE FRAME, CHANGING THE GAME

*“There’s always political truth in problematic descriptions like ‘childhood obesity.’ There’s always something you can observe, read statistics about, and wag your finger at. And there’s always an imbalance of power and scale: These descriptions come from powerful institutions and describe vulnerable populations and places.”*

— Kenneth Bailey, Co-Founder, Design Studio for Social Intervention

Photo by Tasneem Penn

## Thinking Beyond “Childhood Obesity”

*It is easy to find frightening statistics about childhood obesity in America. Overall, obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents over the past 30 years. In 2012 more than one-third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>*

*It is easy to see which communities are hit hardest by the childhood obesity epidemic. Nationally, more than 39% of Black and Latino youth ages 2 to 19 are considered obese. Roughly 60% of Native American children living in urban areas are overweight or obese. In a 2010 survey done by the Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, more than 30% of the 9 million children under age 5 living in low-income families were obese or overweight.<sup>2</sup>*

*And it’s easy to place blame on these very communities. Media outlets and even medical journals feature articles about obese children being removed from their homes, while their mothers are charged with criminal neglect. The public often gazes upon the pictures of these children — corpulent and ashamed — while shaking their heads in sympathy or horror. The public gaze often ignores the systemic causes of obesity; it tends to focus on the “errant” parent and child.*



## A Structural Problem Needs a Structural Solution

CCHE chose to support community organizing because organizing advances structural solutions for long-term policy and community change. Community organizing builds leadership in communities that have been marginalized in policymaking and hardest hit by the root causes of childhood obesity. CCHE prioritized projects with the potential for building long-term change infrastructure, because addressing root causes is a long-term project.

### To build toward this vision, CCHE sought to:

- Make investments in communities with high need.
- Build sustainable grassroots infrastructure that would continue to work for health equity beyond this initiative.
- Focus on the structural change needed to create healthier communities, rather than getting stuck on individual blame and cultural scapegoating.
- Take into account the culture, language, geography and historical context of the communities.
- Make community organizing the central approach, so that residents could be involved in the political processes that affect their lives.

By recognizing the significance of local health policies in health outcomes, CCHE was able to support organizations in building the grassroots leadership necessary to win policy battles and hold local governments accountable over the long term. CCHE health advocates were better positioned to win effective and innovative laws supporting access to healthy food and recreation in their own communities. Over the course of the CCHE grant period, grassroots groups mobilized their neighbors and took their own agendas to city halls and statehouses, proactively shaping the landscape for progressive, meaningful policies.

What happened when CCHE changed the frame and took a systems approach? Here is a snapshot of CCHE's impact over the last five years:

**Changing the frame:** Grantees made significant progress shifting the conversation toward a more systemic understanding of childhood obesity in communities of color. The communications team comprising of the Center for Media Justice, Berkeley Media Studies Group and Colectivo Flatlander — with supplemental support from outside public relations firms — worked with grantees to develop communications planning and messaging support. The Berkeley Media Studies Group led an annual media content analysis documenting groups' coverage in the news media. From June 2009 through September 2013 grantees generated substantial news coverage. CCHE grantees were mentioned in more than 700 articles, and in the vast majority of stories, grantees successfully framed their work from a systems-change perspective, shifting emphasis away from individual blame. By 2012, for instance, the percentage of articles mentioning race or racism had doubled from 2009 (16% vs. 8%). Significantly, in every year of CCHE, at least 33% of all articles mentioned health or obesity, and at least 87% included a reference to making environmental or policy changes.

**Changing the game:** CCHE is already beginning to see the impact of its structurally focused, community organizing approach. Early evaluation data from the Loyola Marymount University Department of Psychology's Applied Research Center (LMU-PARC) show that CCHE has achieved the following local and national impacts:

- Grantees increased the number of community allies engaged in their respective fights for healthy communities by 96%.
- CCHE increased the involvement of grassroots advocates of color in the national discourse on issues related to childhood obesity.
- Grantees, using non-RWJF resources to support direct policy activities, helped pass 60 local policies with impact in 20 communities nationwide.
- CCHE conducted more than 200 cross-disciplinary learning opportunities to disseminate best practices (workshops, learning circles, seminars, symposia), reaching more than 5,000 people.

The CCHE story offers an important model for improving public health through a powerful combination of local community organizing, strategic communications and a committed learning community that engages the leadership and wisdom of those most affected by an issue.



PART 2:

# BEGINNINGS

## The Climate

In communities hardest hit by the childhood obesity epidemic, health inequities result from a long history of neighborhood neglect and disinvestment in communities of color. Yet, both locally and nationally, media and political discourse has tended to blame victims and disproportionately name individual behavior as the cause of obesity. Even structural frames on the discussion, like “food deserts,” rendered institutional and policy actors invisible. Overall, there has been limited public discourse lifting up the systemic challenges in low-income communities and communities of color.

Yet, a 2006 scan by The Praxis Project revealed many strong and successful community organizing groups ready to take on these systemic challenges. Initiatives for healthier school lunches, more vegetables in corner stores and more funding for parks and recreation had started to gain visibility in the media and modest traction in local politics. Some advocates, like Community Coalition (CoCo) in south Los Angeles, were taking bold steps to frame the healthy food crisis in stark equity terms, calling the systemic barriers to access “food apartheid.”

Within the growing food movement, including individuals and organizations involved in slow food, organics, and community gardening, there were struggles with cultural competency, diversity and inclusion of the pressing food issues confronting low-income communities and communities of color. A number of advocates in the leadership of food movements blamed these communities for not participating in these mainstream formations. Yet, below the radar of these national formations, underrepresented communities were animated by food policy in different ways that showed a strong understanding of the relationship between community health and civil and human rights.

For years, the acceleration of the “war on drugs,” community violence, and aggressive, discriminatory policing (in and out of schools) had been shaping access to recreation and physical activity, especially for children of color. In addition, drastic cuts in funding for parks, school physical plants, new school construction and recreation programs had constricted access to safe play and recreation. In response, a growing, diverse and intergenerational movement emerged to address these challenges and nurture a new generation of youth leaders in and out of school.

These and other factors shaped a programmatic framework that prioritized investment in institutional change — even as funding was being moved away from local organizations and community organizing and toward federal and state policy initiatives. Thanks to the visionary leadership of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, CCHE was created as a breakthrough investment in systemic change led by the people and communities most affected.



## Laying the Groundwork with the National Advisory Committee

In order to reverse childhood obesity in America, CCHE set forth one of its most important precepts: that those most affected by the epidemic should become influential leaders and major voices in the national conversation.

In 2008, The Praxis Project assembled a diverse National Advisory Committee (NAC) of 15 leaders (listed in Appendix 1) with expertise in food and public health policy, parks and recreation, criminal justice, cultural competency and policy development. Chaired by the venerable psychologist Dr. Lewis King, the NAC’s members shared a commitment to tackling the *root causes* of childhood obesity and an understanding of the larger social and historic context in which the childhood obesity epidemic was taking place.

The NAC convened its first meeting in Washington, D.C., where members shaped the organizational culture from the outset. The meeting opened with two rituals to bless and root the initiative in a strong cultural context. From the beginning, the broad cultural and disciplinary diversity of the NAC provided CCHE with a bounty of perspectives on key issues. As a body of respected researchers and advocates, the NAC and its support for this initiative helped bolster the credibility of CCHE’s approach.

Early discussions involved outreach strategies for the targeted communities, CCHE’s core operating principles and key policy areas. The NAC also played an important role in establishing grantee recruitment and selection processes. With NAC’s leadership, CCHE issued its first call for proposals in January 2009. As the initiative progressed, the NAC played an active role in fostering CCHE’s objectives by reviewing evaluation data, participating in strategic planning and even helping to deliver technical assistance (TA) to grantees.

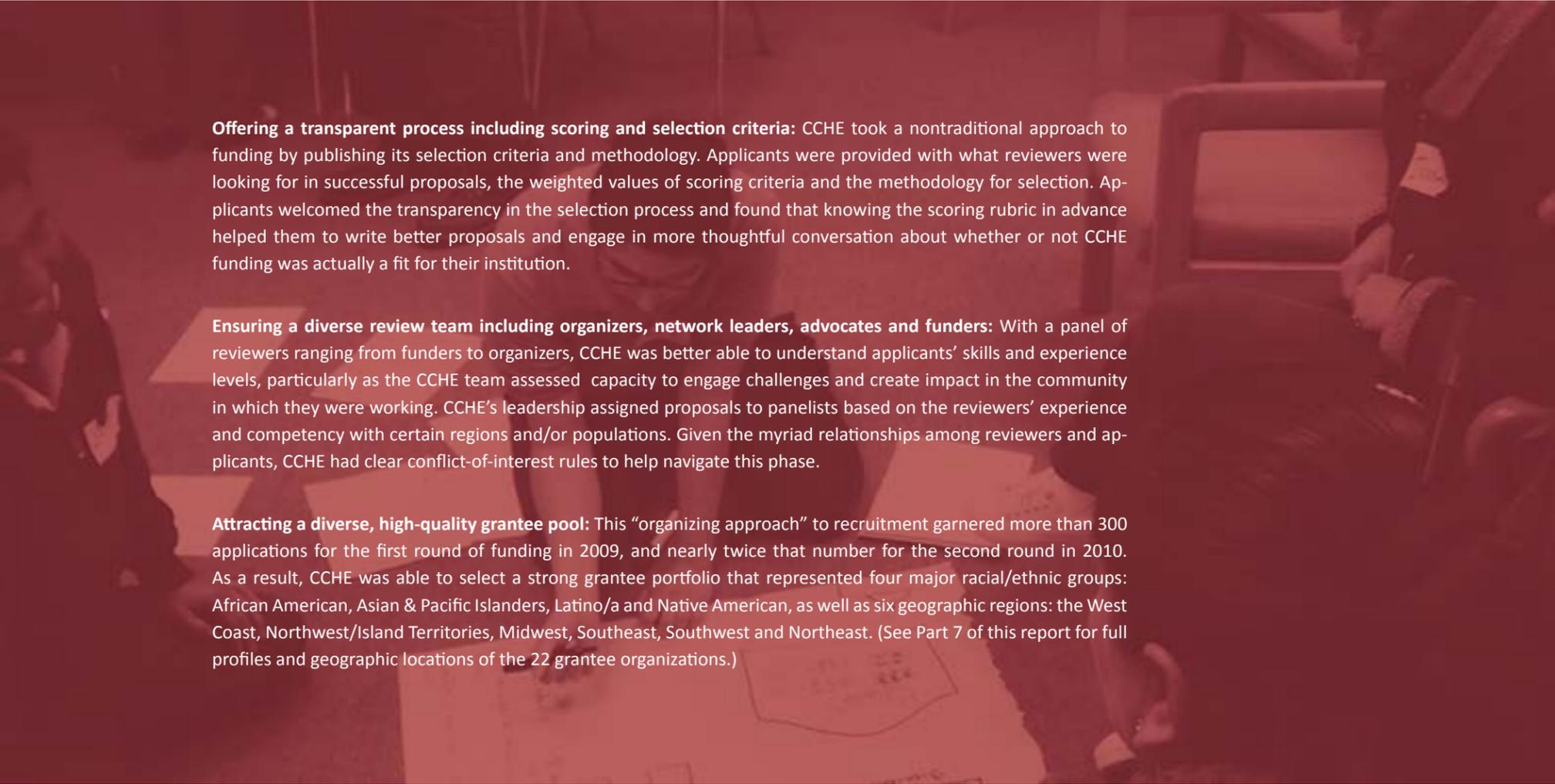
## Grantee Recruitment and Selection

CCHE's convening partners — the NAC, The Praxis Project and its technical assistance team — agreed that a public health approach rooted in community leadership needed to reflect organizing strategies from the start. Rather than simply post a call for proposals on major public health and philanthropy websites, the team set to work connecting with grassroots organizations and networks across the country. This approach was crucial, because many grassroots organizing groups would not typically see themselves as strong candidates for a national grant initiative like CCHE.

**Working in partnership with local and regional organizations:** By tapping into their extensive relationships, CCHE's leadership was able to reach strong community organizing groups nationwide, and to effectively convey that CCHE valued groups' organizing expertise and approach. In this way, the word spread to hundreds of small organizations that were highly experienced and trusted in the communities hardest hit by childhood obesity and other health inequities.

**Developing culturally and geographically specific outreach sessions:** Committed to making the application process as accessible as possible, CCHE created a process that included information sessions hosted by local organizations in regions throughout the country, as well as phone meetings and webinars. Both written materials and spoken presentations were offered in multiple languages as appropriate, and all sessions had a question-and-answer portion that underscored the message that CCHE was ready and willing to support nontraditional applicants. Indeed, CCHE information sessions recognized the need for multiple kinds of translation, not just across languages but also to reduce jargon common among foundations and major nonprofits.

**Providing technical assistance during the proposal processes:** For grassroots organizations without the experience or proposal-writing capacity of larger institutions, CCHE offered grant-writing support for interested candidates. The technical assistance process helped staff screen applicants, reduce the number of unqualified applicants and send a strong message that lower-capacity, high-performing groups were encouraged to apply.



**Offering a transparent process including scoring and selection criteria:** CCHE took a nontraditional approach to funding by publishing its selection criteria and methodology. Applicants were provided with what reviewers were looking for in successful proposals, the weighted values of scoring criteria and the methodology for selection. Applicants welcomed the transparency in the selection process and found that knowing the scoring rubric in advance helped them to write better proposals and engage in more thoughtful conversation about whether or not CCHE funding was actually a fit for their institution.

**Ensuring a diverse review team including organizers, network leaders, advocates and funders:** With a panel of reviewers ranging from funders to organizers, CCHE was better able to understand applicants' skills and experience levels, particularly as the CCHE team assessed capacity to engage challenges and create impact in the community in which they were working. CCHE's leadership assigned proposals to panelists based on the reviewers' experience and competency with certain regions and/or populations. Given the myriad relationships among reviewers and applicants, CCHE had clear conflict-of-interest rules to help navigate this phase.

**Attracting a diverse, high-quality grantee pool:** This "organizing approach" to recruitment garnered more than 300 applications for the first round of funding in 2009, and nearly twice that number for the second round in 2010. As a result, CCHE was able to select a strong grantee portfolio that represented four major racial/ethnic groups: African American, Asian & Pacific Islanders, Latino/a and Native American, as well as six geographic regions: the West Coast, Northwest/Island Territories, Midwest, Southeast, Southwest and Northeast. (See Part 7 of this report for full profiles and geographic locations of the 22 grantee organizations.)

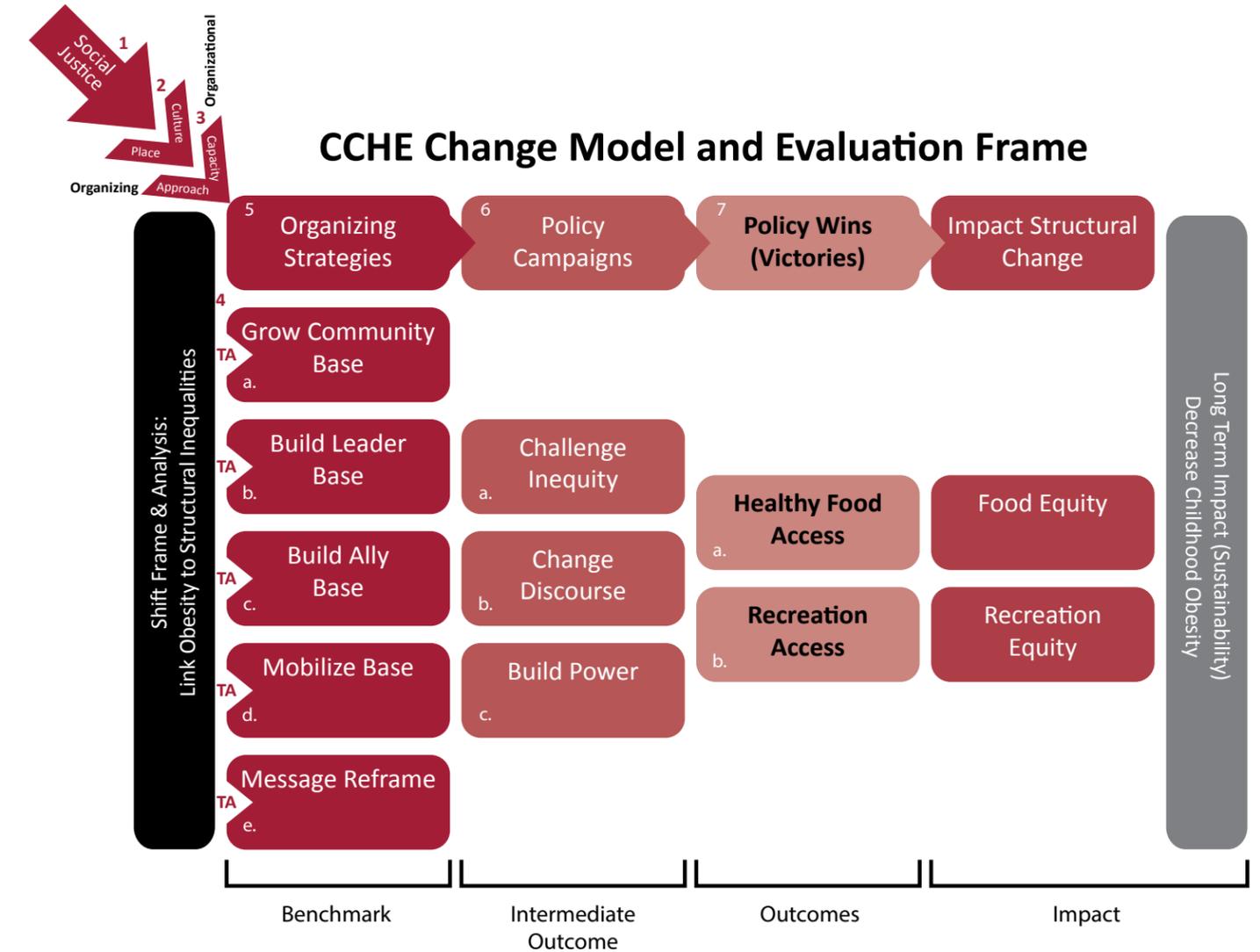
# THE CCHE CHANGE MODEL

CCHE began with a community-centered funding model — one based on the belief that grassroots organizing groups in communities hardest hit by childhood obesity should be leaders in developing policies for food justice and recreation equity. CCHE’s approach was shaped by a framework that made community organizing and capacity building central, with a focus on building power in communities that are frequently marginalized in policymaking. With a commitment to long-term change, CCHE’s leadership worked with technical assistance partner Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE) and our external evaluation team from Loyola Marymount University Department of Psychology’s Applied Research Center (LMU-PARC) to map out a change model and evaluation frame that could guide and measure CCHE’s process of “changing the frame and changing the game” in the movement to address childhood obesity.

Rooted in a social justice approach (top left corner), with an awareness of place and culture and a commitment to community organizing and capacity building, the CCHE change model provided a roadmap to guide the learning community among grantees and partners. By design, the model built on core grantee strengths in order to change discourse, build power, improve community conditions and reduce childhood obesity.

LMU-PARC led the work to develop this change model and evaluation tool so that their researchers could measure not only the success of the policy campaigns but also grantees’ efforts to strengthen base building and community leadership, strategic relationships with decision-makers, and alliances with key community groups. CCHE’s goal was not only to create policy changes for healthier communities but also to build communities’ ongoing capacity to create change and improve health conditions. This was critical for achieving CCHE’s long-term goal: addressing the root causes of childhood obesity.

The change model and evaluation tool were designed to capture the impact of grassroots organizing in the communities most affected by childhood obesity. For example, the tool measured not only the number of allies the grantees engaged in advocacy, but also the strength and depth of those relationships. It helped grantees analyze those relationships and create strategies for developing strong, deep and long-lasting relationships with other community groups. Overall, this tool grounded the policy and evaluation work in the importance of creating long-term systemic change, both within organizations and in their respective local environments.



PART 4:

# THE LEARNING COMMUNITY: SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND BUILDING CAPACITY

The next step for CCHE to embody its change model involved creating a strong Learning Community, in which each participant could be both learner and teacher. This was where the entire CCHE community was connected to a larger whole, and committed to sharing lessons beyond the learning community itself.

## Roots of the Learning Community

Learning communities using popular education methods are a long-held tradition among social justice movements in the United States and globally. Popular education methodology is largely traced to Brazilian educator and writer Paulo Freire, who expounded on this model as a critical tool in literacy education for poor and politically disempowered people in Brazil in the 1970 translation of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.<sup>3</sup> At its core, popular education sees every participant as both teacher and learner and promotes “a process which aims to empower people who feel marginalized socially and politically to take control of their own learning and to effect social change.”<sup>4</sup>

It is from these movements for racial justice, immigration rights and access to quality public education that CCHE drew its understanding of mutual learning as the foundation of its Learning Community. With popular education as its core approach, CCHE created supportive, interactive spaces for shared learning and teaching that were designed to respect participants’ knowledge and context.

As CCHE began supporting local grassroots organizations working on policy initiatives and strengthening the larger movement to address health inequities, the Learning Community created a space to acknowledge the wealth of experience and wisdom “on the ground,” ensure opportunities for shared learning and build support so communities could be effective advocates on their own behalf.

## Teaching and Learning Across Traditional Boundaries

The CCHE Learning Community included the grantees, staff in the National Program Office at The Praxis Project, NAC members, technical assistance partners and evaluators from LMU-PARC. The Learning Community was divided into eight teams: Indian Country team, organizing and planning team, integration team, language justice team, evaluation team, communications team, transformational policy team and the Get Free Team, which focused on supporting youth-led and intergenerational organizing.

The teams provided support to the 22 grantee sites, as well as to the field at large, in the development of culturally competent outreach and environmentally focused interventions. They developed toolkits, national events and webinars, and conducted onsite trainings for grantees and their partners. From the outset CCHE was committed to sharing what it was learning beyond its immediate partners. As early as the recruitment process, CCHE had been clear about its intention to make capacity-building resources available to communities and organizations beyond selected grantees. Indeed, each organization within the Learning Community remained connected to larger networks in public health, social justice and academia. Each component of the Learning Community was open to these larger networks.

Together, the teams provided support to more than 400 organizations and national networks, trained more than 5,000 advocates and produced more than 40 tools and resources made available online. CCHE is especially proud of the strong diversity and experience assembled on these teams, including the Indian Country Team and the Get Free Team.

During the summer of 2012, there was a record shortage of salmon in Alaska. Those bearing the brunt of this shortage were the Native families who rely on the fish they catch in the summer months to sustain them through the winter. To make matters worse, state and federal officials were responding to the shortage by handing out sanctions and arresting traditional fishermen. A social media frenzy began after a family had their nets cut and fish seized by state officials. The state’s refusal to recognize the hunting and fishing rights of Alaska Natives was at the heart of the issue.

With strong support from CCHE’s Indian Country Team (a collaborative effort between technical assistance partner Alliance for a Just Society (AJS), lead members of the NAC, and Indian Country grantees), the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) began planning a rally to fight this encroachment on Native Alaskan hunting and fishing rights. In October 2012, the “HUNT FISH SHARE” rally to promote Alaska Natives’ food sovereignty included more than 400 Natives as well as many non-Native residents, all gathered to call for an end to increasing regulations, enforcement and criminalization of the traditional Alaskan Native way of life.

Alliance for a Just Society provided technical assistance and on-the-ground support to the CATG leading up to and during the rally, along with overall support of the campaign. As Carrie Stevens, CATG Project Director, remembers, “The technical assistance from AJS allowed us to gain considerable momentum, implement effective grassroots action and build a much broader coalition. This had many more Native and non-Native leaders, as well as the Alaska Congressional [caucus] take us and the issue seriously.”

The rally called for the right to hunt and fish on all of Alaska’s lands and waters. It also called for increased, meaningful co-management of Alaska’s natural resources. In the days following the rally, both of Alaska’s U.S. Senators, Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich, came out with statements in support of Alaska Native subsistence rights.

In the months following the HUNT FISH SHARE rally, AJS and CATG published a joint report, *Survival Denied*. Senator Begich attended and spoke at the congressional briefing for the release of the report, where he noted he knew of no one better to manage Alaskan lands, waters and resources than the First Alaskans. He subsequently introduced Traditional Food Services legislation and held a Senate listening session on Alaskan Food Security.

## A Dynamic, Multi-Modal Learning Community

The CCHE Learning Community incorporated many elements to create a dynamic process for sharing learning and building capacity. Over more than five years, these gatherings created hundreds of opportunities to exchange **information** about issues, tools and policies. The Learning Community then placed this information in context through regular dialogue, transforming it into **knowledge** used to build leadership and community capacity among grantees and partners. Finally, the Learning Community created long-term change and collective **wisdom** by sharing stories about how this knowledge strengthened grassroots leadership, helped win local policy battles and built a movement for healthy communities.

To the right is a diagram showing many of the elements of CCHE’s dynamic Learning Community:

CCHE’s Learning Community advanced participants’ theories of change as well as organizing models, methodologies and tools. From participatory research to communications strategies, leadership development programs and multilingual tools, grantee groups were encouraged and supported to build power in a way that enhanced their autonomy and respected their identities. Within each element, grantees, technical assistance partners, CCHE staff and evaluators shared leadership and lessons. Much of it was shared beyond the Learning Communities as well. For example, grantees co-wrote public policy reports with CCHE staff, co-led public health webinars with technical assistance partners, and shared learning directly with each other and their larger communities during site-based peer exchanges.



## Case Study: Public Transportation = Public Health

As part of RWJF’s “New Public Health” National Prevention Strategy, the foundation has documented how “better public transportation options = healthier lives” by increasing physical activity and health while reducing obesity, air pollution and injuries due to traffic accidents. Perhaps ahead of their time, two CCHE grantees — People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) in San Francisco and Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) in Boston — were already working on transit justice. The Learning Community provided a critical space to share their work with others newly interested in the role of public transit in community health.

This sharing began at the CCHE National Gatherings. Each gathering kicked off with time for participants to join affinity groups based on commonalities in their work. These affinity groups gave POWER and ACE key opportunities to share strategies with each other and with other grantees. In these gatherings POWER shared how they successfully advocated for a free youth bus pass, ACE shared how their “T Riders Union” became a powerful intergenerational organizing space, and Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) shared how they were working with local coalitions to influence the planned redevelopment of a local BART station by demanding a community benefits agreement to alleviate the accelerated displacement happening in Oakland, California’s Chinatown neighborhood.

Groups from all over the country shared public transit organizing strategies, highlighting their work with labor unions for transit-related green jobs, local fights to maintain bus lines in “public transit dependent” communities, and cross-sector organizing to rally around the environmental benefits of public transit.

Realizing how many organizations were beginning to explore the role of public transit in public health, The Praxis Project asked POWER and ACE to join staff and technical assistance providers to co-lead a national webinar. In May 2012 these leaders came together to present, “You Can’t Get There From Here: Accessible Public Transportation and its Impact on Community Health.” The webinar included information on the health impacts of public transit, rural and urban examples of transit injustice, and the strategies, successes and lessons from campaigns led by POWER and ACE.

## The Learning Community Continues to Grow

Since its inception, CCHE has always created avenues for sharing information, tools and lessons beyond the two grantee cohorts. As grantees began participating in regular National Gatherings, they were encouraged to bring non-grantee organizations from their communities and social justice networks with them. As these larger networks came together, grantees frequently remarked that being a part of the CCHE initiative allowed their work to grow beyond expectations. The gatherings helped grantees learn from each other and become teachers. As a result, groups felt an emerging power and national energy in the midst of their local struggles. Thanks to these opportunities and CCHE’s technical assistance, several ongoing Learning Communities grew out of the CCHE Initiative and are still going strong.

Here are two examples:

### Roots & Remedies

A central part of the integration work with CCHE grantees included helping the various networks recognize the similarities between their priorities and RWJF priorities. *Roots & Remedies* is a national gathering designed to define a shared vision for healthy communities, spark innovative strategies for health justice and help key progressive networks connect in order to build a national movement for true democracy. Initiated by The Praxis Project in 2012, *Roots*

& *Remedies* has become an annual gathering of hundreds of social justice organizers, leaders and networks from across the U.S.

Founded to “connect, plot and build,” *Roots & Remedies* has engaged leaders in food justice, criminal justice, environmental justice and climate change, workers’ rights, immigrant rights, corporate responsibility and other key change sectors. Like CCHE itself, *Roots & Remedies* has also made a name for itself by valuing and convening leaders of color representing various perspectives on common struggles. As conference participant John Michael Torres, an organizer with La Unión del Pueblo Entero in the Rio Grande Valley Colonias, described it:

“The *Roots & Remedies* gathering is one of the few spaces where folks working in Latino communities can learn from our brothers and sisters in Indian Country, Black and East Asian communities. Even though the issues we face impact all of our communities, we don’t often get to learn from each other, our successes and challenges. When we come together in *Roots & Remedies*, we leave energized and ready to take on these issues with new perspective and creativity.”

As it moves forward, *Roots & Remedies* will continue to link the learning of CCHE grantees to the larger, ongoing work of community organizers and progressive networks across the country. As Pancho Argüelles, technical assistance partner and former co-director of Colectivo Flatlander, emphasized:

“The balance between roots and remedies has been key to establishing the tone of this gathering. In order to be relevant to young people and a whole new generation of organizers in communities of color, we need to be able to identify concrete examples of models that are working [as well as] policies and organizing experiences that are solving some of the problems our communities are facing — from school lunches to community gardens to infrastructure in our neighborhoods. ... The conversation at Roots & Remedies is both about the rights our communities have to live a life with dignity and the vision of this life becoming real in concrete experiences.”

## ROOTS & REMEDIES PARTICIPANTS ARE COMMITTED TO:

1. Facilitating connections between key progressive networks, sectors and issue work
2. Holding an intergenerational space
3. Engaging in respectful dialogue both as learners and teachers
4. Building a shared space to create more common ground in our analysis, but also respectfully acknowledging where we are not aligned
5. Working together in solidarity and mutuality. We appreciate the complexities of working across race/ethnicity/class/age/gender/nation status, and seek to develop/implement approaches that are relevant and sensitive
6. Making the connections across issues and communities, and understanding/embracing the complexity in our lives, identities and communities
7. Addressing real life issues and challenges
8. Using a racial justice lens to frame our analysis and integrate it into all parts of our work
9. Acknowledging that experience is also expertise — all kinds of expertise are valued



## CASE STUDY: VISION LAB AT ROOTS & REMEDIES 2

Vision Lab was the centerpiece of Roots & Remedies 2 in San Antonio, Texas. Over two days, Vision Lab convened approximately 200 participants and challenged them to imagine a future based on winning the social justice battles of today. During the lab, participants came together around topics ranging from land/territory, democracy, education, spirituality, food, health and media. Together they explored what a shared vision could look and feel like, as well as its critical implications for our present-day work. Participants left with new ideas, inspiration and connections to activists doing similar work in other parts of the country. As Jitu Brown, national director of the Journey for Justice Alliance, described:

“ [VISION LAB] IS REALLY GETTING US TO GET OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES AND TO BEGIN ... TO ENVISION A NEW SOCIETY. ... WE [OFTEN] FIND OURSELVES ON THE DEFENSE, TRYING TO DEFEND OURSELVES AGAINST POLICIES THAT ARE NOT IN OUR BEST INTEREST. SO I THINK THE POWER OF THIS IS THAT IT— IN A VERY CREATIVE WAY — PUTS US IN A SPACE TO BEGIN TO THINK LIKE NATION BUILDERS. ”

## Collaboration with First Nation Organizations and Governments

Native Americans in both urban and reservation settings face numerous challenges in the struggle to improve overall health and wellness in their communities. They struggle with securing affordable healthy foods, living wage jobs, health care and education. Efforts and funds to alleviate these issues have traditionally gone through social service organizations, while Native organizers struggle to obtain critical resources. Currently, less than 1% of foundation grant dollars are awarded to Indian Country, and only 15% of that money is awarded to support civic action, public affairs and community action initiatives. Additionally, in 2009, only 38% of funds granted to Indian Country went directly to Native-controlled organizations.<sup>5</sup>

While social service agencies strive to help Native communities meet their basic needs, CCHE took a small step toward supporting community organizing. As Native organizer and Indian Country team leader Danisha Christian pointed out, “It is imperative that while the basic needs of people are being met, we address root causes. By adopting community organizing principles, we are able to build sustained community-based organizations that promote solutions for Native families, build leadership within communities and make corporate and public officials accountable to Indian Country.”



CCHE selected four grantees from Indian Country who expressed a need for culturally appropriate capacity building, training and support. In response, CCHE’s Indian Country Team, led by technical assistance partner Alliance for a Just Society, convened two Indian Country Learning Circles. In year one, conveners were amazed to have more than 200 applications from Native organizers. In year two, CCHE expanded the work by partnering with the Notah Begay III Foundation.

Building upon the CCHE Learning Community, Alliance for a Just Society is now formalizing the role they have been playing in Indian Country by developing a Native Organizers Alliance (NOA). A platform for Native organizations and those who fund them, NOA will ensure Native groups can receive culturally appropriate technical assistance, training and campaign support. AJS believes in the expertise of community members and therefore creates spaces for organizers to collaborate, share best practices and support one another’s work. Through NOA, groups with limited organizing experience will build capacity and leadership to transform disenfranchising policies into organizing opportunities that strengthen Native American communities. As Christian noted:

*“Through the CCHE initiative, we are able to see that the groups that used community organizing principles are able to build a movement that goes beyond the grant cycle, staff person, organization, or even town. By shifting from advocacy to empowering community members, a fire was ignited and the work of the campaign will continue.”*





PART 5:

# LANGUAGE, POWER AND COMMUNICATION: CORE APPROACHES

With grantee sites on the front lines of policy battles ranging from Yukon, Alaska, to Miami, Florida, the greater CCHE Learning Community charted new ground nationwide. Using the CCHE change model, the Learning Community was dedicated to strengthening organizing strategies, building local leadership, changing media messaging and political dialogue, and promoting transformational policies that could improve communities' health by increasing food justice and recreation equity. To accomplish this, CCHE developed three core content areas:

- 1. Power Analysis:** a tool used to help grantees map and understand power relationships in the context of community organizing and policy campaigns
- 2. Strategic Communications:** a communications strategy that strengthens grantee capacity to communicate policy solutions for healthier communities
- 3. Language Justice:** a framework and tools that promote the right of communities to full participation and acknowledge the challenges and opportunities emerging within multi-cultural/multilingual communities



## The Power Analysis

Technical assistance partner SCOPE provided power analysis trainings to CCHE grantees at two National Gatherings and during individual site visits to many grantee communities. The visual and interactive power analysis tool was provided to increase the capacity of grantees to build grassroots power through base building and alliance building, and to develop strategic policy campaign plans. The grantees received different levels of training and technical assistance based on need and capacity.

All grantees participated in an *Introduction to Power Analysis* training. The purpose of this introductory session was to help grantees understand the importance of analyzing their local landscape to build strong strategic organizing and campaign plans. This session was grounded in the belief that it is critical for communities most impacted by health inequities to be at the forefront of creating potential solutions, advocating for those solutions, building their leadership capacity and helping bridge key alliances.

SCOPE provided deeper power analysis trainings and technical assistance to those grantees that requested it. The power analysis strategy sessions included an in-depth landscape analysis based on the campaign, the overall campaign and organizing goals, quarterly benchmarks and campaign work plans. The power analysis had an impact on the way the grantees analyzed the landscape. The process helped groups ground their policy work in grassroots community organizing for long-term solutions and increased their ability to impact change.



## Case Study: Padres' Power Analysis Moves Denver Toward "Recess Before Lunch"

The power analysis tool had a notable impact for Padres y Jóvenes Unidos, a grantee organization in Denver, Colorado. Their original campaign called for a policy change in Denver Public Schools (DPS) aimed at improving the quality of school meals. After an introductory power analysis training, Padres conducted strategic research on their policy goal, investigating "overlap" between their campaign, existing DPS efforts and other city, county, and state initiatives. They also assessed the policy landscape (including the impact of school budget cuts).

As they engaged in the power analysis process, they realized their campaign goal was too ambitious and too broad to accomplish within the three-year grant period. After conducting participatory action research with students and parents, Padres focused instead on the time allotted for students to eat their lunch. Interviews revealed that most DPS students have approximately 15 minutes total to stand in line, get their lunch, and sit down and eat, leading to unhealthy outcomes as students were forced to eat meals too quickly for proper digestion. In other words, winning a fight to increase the time a student had to eat lunch was a necessary first step before "moving up" to the much bigger fight for high-quality, healthy school meals.

At the beginning of year two, Padres further refined their policy goal after participating in an in-depth power analysis strategy session. Due to major education funding cuts at the state and local level, they determined that their demand for an extended lunch would result in strong opposition from DPS and a teachers' union, due to the additional human resource cost an extended lunch would create. Padres successfully identified a creative solution to this external challenge after learning about and researching the "Recess Before Lunch" model. This model program aims to improve students' health and behavior by having children play first and eat lunch after. (Schools that schedule recess before lunch report that students eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more milk, waste less food, and are better behaved on the playground, in the lunchroom, and in the classroom, according to a 2006 study in the *Journal of Child Nutrition and Management*).

Based on their power analysis and research, Padres' policy goal shifted to making Recess Before Lunch a mandatory policy for all DPS elementary schools. So far, they have been successful in gaining widespread institutional endorsement of their proposal and official agreement to launch a pilot project in one DPS school. As SCOPE's Gloria Medina summarized, "Successful policy campaigns require a continual landscape and strategy analysis; the power analysis allowed Padres to identify a policy they could win, that would create significant systems change, and that would be engaging for the impacted community."<sup>6</sup>

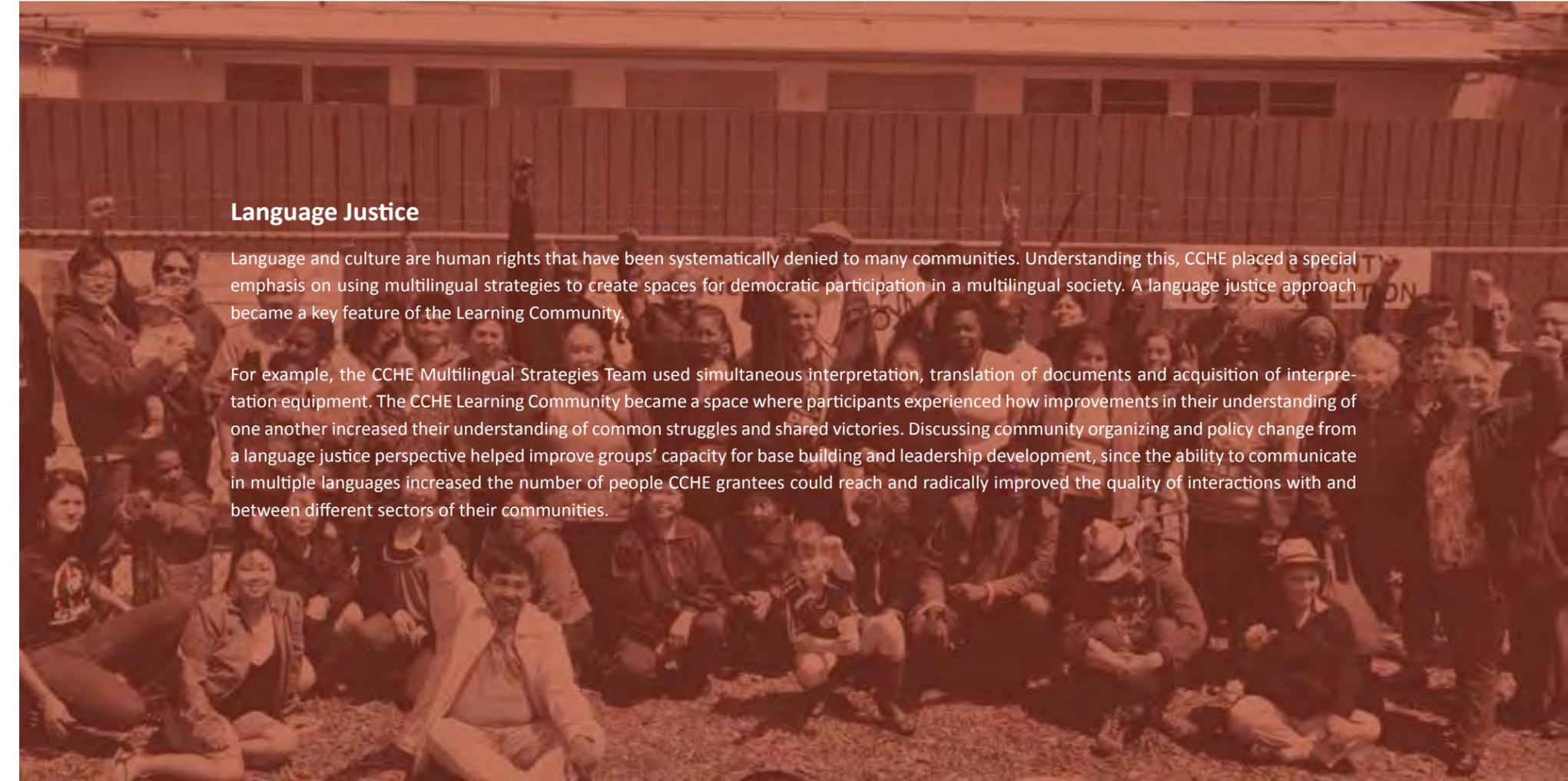
## Strategic Communications

Through communications training, strategic messaging, networking, technology and media research, CCHE worked to strengthen grantee capacity to communicate policy solutions for healthier communities. Together, The Praxis Project and technical assistance partner Center for Media Justice developed a specialized curriculum, *Communicating Health Justice*, to assist advocates in shifting the media debate away from the dominant “portrait” frame — blaming health outcomes on individual choices — and toward a “landscape” perspective that highlighted the role of policymaking, institutional behavior, structural issues and historical conditions in determining health outcomes. With this strategy, CCHE built a national communications network to deploy smart media messaging aimed at key target audiences.

The evaluation team at LMU-PARC then conducted a follow-up analysis of how CCHE grantees affected news coverage of the obesity epidemic. They found that the current national discourse is evenly divided between individual and structural causes and solutions (i.e., 45-50% each). However, an analysis of 32 articles from 2010–2014 featuring CCHE grantees revealed a different distribution. Only 26% of articles featured individual causes and 33% of articles featured individual solutions (e.g., eating and exercise habits). On the other hand, 48% of articles included structural causes and 78% of articles featured structural solutions (e.g., neighborhood food and recreational access, access to education). While this is a small data sample, these drastic differences demonstrate CCHE grantees’ ability to affect the public discourse and shift the discussion toward a structural frame.

## Key Communities Creating Healthy Environments Messages

- **Health is structural; it’s bigger than personal choice.** Getting access to healthy food and safe places to play is an ever-changing obstacle course for many families of color due to historical patterns of neglect and bias in public policy. The cards are stacked against these families, but they didn’t create these problems alone and they won’t be able to solve them alone.
- **Something can be done; work is underway.** Communities everywhere are coming together to address bias and neglect. They are creating neighborhoods where everyone has access to healthy food, safe places to play and other basic needs necessary for families to survive and thrive.
- **Yes, you can; join us.** CCHE is a unique funding approach that will build and expand upon the great work already underway in these communities. CCHE helps communities learn from one another and solve these problems together.



## Language Justice

Language and culture are human rights that have been systematically denied to many communities. Understanding this, CCHE placed a special emphasis on using multilingual strategies to create spaces for democratic participation in a multilingual society. A language justice approach became a key feature of the Learning Community.

For example, the CCHE Multilingual Strategies Team used simultaneous interpretation, translation of documents and acquisition of interpretation equipment. The CCHE Learning Community became a space where participants experienced how improvements in their understanding of one another increased their understanding of common struggles and shared victories. Discussing community organizing and policy change from a language justice perspective helped improve groups’ capacity for base building and leadership development, since the ability to communicate in multiple languages increased the number of people CCHE grantees could reach and radically improved the quality of interactions with and between different sectors of their communities.

## Case Study: From Multilingual Strategies to Language Justice

The Multilingual Strategies Team was founded by The Praxis Project staff with technical assistance partners Colectivo Flatlander, the Highlander Center, SCOPE and BMSG. The team's purpose was to increase the capacity of CCHÉ to integrate language accessibility into all facets of the initiative. Its goal was to build on the Highlander Center's work training interpreters for social justice, Colectivo Flatlander's experience promoting organizing spaces where people could fully express their whole selves, and The Praxis Project's commitment to creating spaces and providing resources to connect the issue of language justice to racial justice and transformational policy.

The team began by developing tools to improve organizing practices around interpretation, translation and outreach in multiple languages. Grantees Asian Pacific Environmental Network and Padres y Jóvenes Unidos paved the way by including translation and interpretation efforts in their organizing work long before CCHÉ. Grantees like CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities and Chinese Progressive Association also contributed by exchanging glossaries and integrating language justice strategies as part of their leadership development work. Inner City Struggle showed the importance of using bilingual materials not only for outreach but also to report their efforts and results for participatory research. As Helena Wong, CAAAV's former executive director, explained:

"There are so many different Asian languages represented in the communities we serve, we usually have a hard time finding and training outreach workers and getting information translated in Asian languages outside of Chinese. Through technical assistance provided by CCHÉ, we were able to train our staff to develop a Language Skill Share initiative that has been developing individuals with different language capacity in simultaneous interpretation and outreach in different languages. Currently we have volunteers and staff who can do some outreach work in Mandarin, Cantonese, Fujianese, Toishanese, Hindi, Vietnamese and Korean."

There were a number of grantees that were not able to fully implement language justice principles because they did not have enough resources for up-to-date translation equipment and translators. In 2010, CCHÉ provided an additional \$77,000 to support purchasing of interpretation equipment for simultaneous interpretation. However, it soon became clear that this work required something bigger than just tools and resources: The commitment required to truly make organizing accessible to all community members proved to be a critical process for reflecting about race and class within organizations, communities and the larger social justice movement. The Multilingual Strategies Team renamed itself the Language Justice Team with the goal of promoting full democratic participation within their organizations and in society at large. The challenges and opportunities emerging from this work drove CCHÉ's effort to produce a strong framework for the right of all communities to full participation.

Whether it was multilingual organizing, supporting transformative community dialogue, progressive strategic communications to change the political conversation or community-led power analyses leading to more campaign wins, CCHÉ's Learning Community used these core approaches to strengthen its collective ability to change the frame and change the game.



PART 6:

# IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The 22 grantee sites demonstrated strong progress in many elements of the CCHE change model (see chart in Part 3). CCHE and the LMU-PARC evaluation team helped grantees track their successes and challenges with a pre and post assessment, quarterly reports and phone meetings, site visits and focus groups at the National Gatherings. LMU-PARC, The Praxis Project staff and technical assistance partner SCOPE also worked with grantee sites to develop their own theory of change, to use SCOPE's power analysis tool to assess their effectiveness, and to tailor that tool to make it more culturally appropriate to Indian Country.

## Organizing Strategies

There was tremendous progress among grantees in their organizing strategies, with a total of 156 examples across the two cohorts. Grantees reported the following top accomplishments:

- 1) Built Community Base: 38 examples
- 2) Built Ally Base: 45 examples
- 3) Built Leader Base: 39 examples

In real numbers, this meant that between December 2010 and June 2013 the **membership bases** among grantees grew as follows:

- *Youth/student bases* increased a staggering 75% (from 613-1072)
- *Parent/resident bases* increased by 40% (from 1700-2374)

**Grantees' leadership bases grew as well** (defined as members who become leaders among their CCHE campaign peers as a result of leadership development efforts):

- *Youth/student leadership bases* increased by 66% (from 146-243)
- *Parent/resident leadership bases* increased by 84% (from 251-461)

Eighty-nine of these resident leaders (across 10 grantees) participated in a leadership survey from LMU-PARC. More than two-thirds (69%) reported experiencing either "a lot of growth" or a "total transformation" in their leadership abilities as a result of their involvement with CCHE.

Finally, grantees' **ally bases** also grew tremendously, by 136% (from 283-669). According to Rodrigo Rodriguez of SouthWest Organizing Project, "[The CCHE grant] really helped us to reengage with some folks that we haven't worked with in a long time and really reestablish some of those relationships."

## Policy Campaign Benchmarks

Grantees reported many gains in their capacity to engage in policy campaigns as well.

**Challenging Inequity:** All grantees participated in effective campaign actions, including campaign strategy meetings, orga-nizing for food/health justice, recreation/environmental justice campaigns, and research and investigation to build evidence of institutional inequity. They also organized and mobilized community members to voice their concerns, propose ideas and solutions, and demand accountability from decision makers. In total, CCHE grantees held 258 campaign actions during the grant period.

**Building Power:** Forty-five percent (9/20) of grantees reported that their strategic planning, visioning and path-to-power capacities increased. Grantees reported 46 unique instances of building their policy-making influence, through such activities identifying community-led solutions to community problems; conducting research, outreach, resident/youth leadership development and media advocacy; and forming key partnerships. The grantees were consistently taken into account in local decision making and were influential in shaping public policy.

## Challenges

The LMU-PARC evaluation team also asked grantees to track challenges faced in their work. Top challenges reported by grantees include:

- *Organizing Strategy:* Barriers to building ally collaboration and relationships, alignment in campaign mission, vision and/or strategy (53 examples); and challenges in building community and leader bases (43 examples)
- *Policy Campaigns:* Time needed to revise or refine policy campaign agendas so goals could be winnable (27 examples), opposition or non-support by influential decision makers or key stakeholders (34 examples), slow or stalled bureaucratic processes and policies including changes in the political landscape (32 examples), and lack of organizational visibility/influence (9 examples).
- *Organizational Capacity:* The issue of staff attrition and workload presented the greatest challenges for grantees (62 examples)



“THE INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER FOR MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY CAME TO AN ACE MEETING. [THIS WAS] IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT PROVIDE[D] INDICATION OF [THE] STRENGTH OF ACE TO GET POLICYMAKERS TO LISTEN TO THEIR MESSAGING.”

— Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE)



## Long-Term Outcomes: Policy Wins and Implementation

While much of this work (and its impact) continues beyond the CCHE grant period, it is important to acknowledge the policy wins the CCHE grantees accomplished with their communities and allies in just a few years.

The LMU-PARC evaluation team defined *policy wins* as “Movements that concretely challenge inequities or disparities and are aligned with the grantee’s vision; these often feature agreements with public or private entities including legislative bodies, institutions or organizational entities. This can relate to food access, recreation access or other relevant social justice goals.”

LMU-PARC tracked grantees’ progress and extracted data from quarterly check-ins and close-out interviews. The team coded a grantee’s progress as a policy win if the outcome “aligned with grantee’s stated policy goals in their grant proposals and/or annual work plans.”

As of 2015, grantees accomplished 72 policy wins.



Policy wins among CCHE grantees have been as diverse as the communities represented among the cohorts. Grantees’ accomplished wins related to increased access to parks and youth recreation programs; zoning law changes to decrease retail shelf space for unhealthy foods; community gardens; comprehensive school wellness policies that restrict access to unhealthy foods and beverages on and near campuses; and improved infant nutrition policies at one of the biggest hospitals in the world.

For example, Power U in Miami, Florida was pivotal in getting Jackson Health System to promote breastfeeding and stop handing out commercially sponsored infant formula samples. As *The Miami Herald* reported, “Power U representatives had been meeting with Jackson administrators after the group conducted a survey in 2012 that showed low-income mothers in Miami felt they did not receive enough support for breastfeeding while receiving too much promotional incentive for the purchase of baby formula.”<sup>7</sup>

From cities like Miami, San Francisco and New Orleans, to small towns like Bemidji, Minnesota, and big neighborhoods like East Los Angeles, grantees won policy changes that are turning the tide toward healthier communities nationwide. With the tremendous base-building growth that occurred during CCHE, the grantee sites are well set up to continue their fights for food justice and recreation equity in the years to come. Through CCHE’s community organizing approach, these 22 communities have thousands of youth and adults who are both informed about and skilled at addressing inequities that lead to childhood obesity and other public health injustices. Likewise, through the CCHE Learning Community, the lessons learned, model policies and key strategies will continue to be shared with communities of color and low-income communities throughout the U.S.



PART 7

# GRANTEES

CCHE's 22 grantees make up the heart of this initiative. These organizing groups are each deeply embedded in communities hardest hit by the structural inequities that cause childhood obesity. While their communities have been long-marginalized in policy decisions and conversations, these groups came into CCHE with incredible wisdom and experience. Their local policy wins, leadership development models and innovative approaches to systems change make them more than just local leaders; they are leaders in the national dialogue to reframe childhood obesity from a systems perspective. This section focuses on their distinct constituencies, approaches and policy wins across the country.

It is important to note that CCHE supported only grantee education and organizing activities; no CCHE funds were used for lobbying purposes. Policy wins are only cited as examples of grantee impact.



## COHORT 1 (2009-2012)

### ASIAN PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

Oakland, CA

Organizes Asian and Pacific Islander communities to build power for racial equity and environmental justice.

[www.apen4ej.org](http://www.apen4ej.org)

#### **Raising Community Voices for Healthy, Green, Economically Just Communities**

- Succeeded in incorporating a community benefits effort in the City of Oakland's Transportation Plan to begin to guide future development in and around the Lake Merritt BART station and Chinatown.
- Succeeded in getting the County Transportation Commission to use scoring criteria to incentivize development projects that include affordable housing and anti-displacement measures.

Over the last 16 years the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) has made significant strides in the fight for environmental justice and equity for low-income communities of color. Located in Oakland, California, APEN has established itself as one of the leading environmental justice networks in the country.

As a CCHE grantee, APEN engaged Asian American communities throughout Northern California's East Bay. They recruited and trained a large membership base of low-income Asian immigrants and refugee families to more deeply analyze environmental and health justice issues, as well as climate policy solutions. More specifically, APEN organized hundreds of members in this community to ensure they were not excluded from decision-making processes around city development projects underway in East Oakland and Richmond, California. Through strategic collaboration with Oakland's city council and planning commission, APEN's approach helped pass policies that will increase healthy spaces in Oakland's predominantly Asian American neighborhoods.



## FREEDOM, INC.

Madison, WI

Engages in intergenerational political education and advocacy in the local Hmong, Black and Latino communities.

[www.freedom-inc.org](http://www.freedom-inc.org)

### Food and Housing as Human Rights

- Established public and official recognition of “Food as a Human Right” and “Housing as a Human Right.”
- Won a commitment from the county for 3,600 square feet of land for community gardens, which the organization viewed as central to building safe spaces for healing, cultural continuity and self-determination.
- Organized hundreds of weekly political education groups for women, LGBTQ communities and youth. Held nearly a dozen intensive summer youth organizing camps, and more than 20 large community gatherings to present information and discuss issues.
- Convened a two-day, statewide youth of color health summit with more than 100 youth leaders.

Freedom, Inc. started as a grassroots, women-led volunteer organization, primarily working with young Hmong women in Madison, Wisconsin. Over the years, Freedom Inc. has grown its base to include women, queer and youth leaders in Black and Southeast Asian communities in order to build campaign power for health justice and the human right to land, housing and food.

As a CCHE grantee, Freedom, Inc. engaged a diverse membership of youth and their families in the Madison area to pass policies that increase access to safe places to play and expand public funding for recreation opportunities. The organization also developed a community education curriculum on healthy food access and safe places for children to play.

Recognition of “Food is a Human Right” and “Housing is a Human Right” paved the way for community access to public land for fresh food production and affordable housing. As a result, two community gardens were created in a low-income housing community, with the promise of an additional garden at the site of a controversial fight between low-income Hmong elders and wealthy homeowners.



## INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

Bemidji, MN

Advocates for policies that advance indigenous sovereignty, health and environmental justice in tribal lands.

[www.ienearth.org](http://www.ienearth.org)

### Meaningful Partnerships for Food Sovereignty

- Established the Headwaters Food Sovereignty Council with the Harmony Food Co-op, a thriving hub for the local food movement in the region.
- Persuaded schools to implement “Federal Great Trays” program guidelines and supported passage of a Bemidji School District policy to buy local and organic food for school lunches.
- Began working in the larger food sovereignty movement, connecting with the newly-formed U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance based in Oakland, California to help local leaders network in order to build power and share information and strategies.

Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) was founded in 1990 and is based in Northern Minnesota. IEN has affected policy change on tribal lands, national and international arenas. The organization has worked on hundreds of initiatives and has built a network of indigenous people and grassroots organizations working to achieve environmental and social justice.

As a CCHE grantee, IEN cofounded the Headwaters Food Sovereignty Council with the Harmony Food Co-op. IEN’s partnership with the co-op resulted in the creation of a new commercial kitchen and business incubator serving three reservations in Northern Minnesota and ten surrounding counties. The kitchen, which opened to the public in 2012, provides education and hands-on training for individuals and groups in the community; acts as a business incubator and processing facility for small, locally-based, value-added food products; and serves as a light processing facility and means of moving local produce to local institutions including schools, daycare centers and elderly nutrition programs.

IEN also partnered with the Rail River Folk School to start a community garden in Bemidji and partnered with the Leech Lake Youth Division to establish a venison butchering and canning class for youth on the Leech Lake Reservation. These partnerships were part of the effort to build culturally relevant food competency in the region where wild game is a major food source.



## INNER CITY STRUGGLE

East Los Angeles, CA

Organizes youth and adults to advocate for equitable education policy.

[www.innercitystruggle.org](http://www.innercitystruggle.org)

### A Broad Vision for Health in Schools

- Engaged in public outreach and education surrounding a 2013 “School Discipline Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights.”
- Established a Wellness Center at Esteban E. Torres High School.
- Won approval for a Breakfast in the Classroom program that makes healthy food directly available to students.
- Created a Health Task Force that brought school leaders together to provide mental health counseling, reproductive health counseling and physical health services to students.
- Started “Beet the System,” a food justice workshop that reached 5,000 students in five schools.
- Created and distributed the “Food Justice for Eastside Schools Policy Report, 2012” (in Spanish and English).

Inner City Struggle (ICS), based out of East Los Angeles, California, organizes youth, parents and residents of all ages for equitable opportunities in education for children. Their work has been instrumental in advocating for schools that anchor communities, promote healthy behaviors and provide a gateway for resources and services.

As a CCHE grantee, ICS sought to change school policies to increase safe places to play and access to healthy foods for students in East Los Angeles. ICS helped establish Health Empowerment Zones in and around neighborhood schools to provide health information and services to families.

Among its major accomplishments, ICS helped to establish a “Breakfast in the Classroom” program to make healthy morning meals available for students. Additionally, ICS brought together the Community Schools Coordinating Team at Esteban E. Torres High (ETHS) and the Los Angeles Education Partnership to establish a Health Task Force, which included all five pilot school principals, the school nurse, the school psychologist, a District 5 representative and community health agencies to discuss health issues at the school. This led to the creation of a Wellness Center at ETHS.

As a result of substantial organizing and base building, the organization hopes to see higher graduation rates, higher school retention rates, and a decrease in community violence in the East Los Angeles community.



## PEOPLE ORGANIZED TO WIN EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

San Francisco, CA

Organizes low-income homeowners, renters and public housing residents in the city’s Bayview Hunters Point community.

[www.peopleorganized.org](http://www.peopleorganized.org)

### Strengthening Community Self-Sufficiency

- Obtained 12,000 transit passes and established the “Free MUNI for Youth” 16-month pilot program passed by San Francisco city council, benefiting thousands of city youth who are now able to get to school activities safely using public transportation.
- Ran a successful public education and organizing campaign that resulted in the school district opening property for community activities through “Schools as Public Assets.”
- Secured EPA regulations for Hunters Point Shipyard before any further development proceeded.
- Won a lawsuit against Lennar Corporation to stop it from building on community land.

Since 2005, People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) has been building grassroots power for low-income homeowners, renters and public housing residents in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood in San Francisco, California. POWER’s movement strategy aims to achieve racial, economic and environmental justice within communities of color.

As a CCHE grantee, POWER sought to increase the community’s oversight of redevelopment activities and improve the city’s overall environmental health by increasing access to safe, green spaces and recreation areas, as well as locally grown produce for families, youth and workers.

POWER worked to win free public transportation for all young people in San Francisco so students could gain greater access to school, recreation, healthy foods and other city resources. POWER partnered with allies, including community-based organizations, progressive unions, teachers, students and Urban Habitat to craft and pass a two-year pilot “Free MUNI for Youth” program, which provides free bus passes for all low- and mid-income youth ages 5 to 18. Community outreach and education activities raised awareness about the barriers to public transit affecting low-income families and youth, and transit riders were mobilized to testify before the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) Board, after which the MTA Board passed the proposal for youth bus passes with majority support. Recently, the San Francisco Mayor’s Office announced that Google is donating \$6.8 million for the next two years to the San Francisco MTA, specifically to fund the Free Muni for Youth program.

Fighting toxic contamination was another POWER priority as clean air is critical to healthy outdoor activity. In the effort to ensure that the City of San Francisco and corporate developer Lennar Corporation fully disclosed and mitigated for toxic contamination at the Hunters Point Shipyard in Bayview, POWER conducted successful outreach to more than 2,500 low-income residents and experts who spoke out at a series of town halls and community meetings. This enabled community members to explore the race and class dimensions of neighborhood contamination, the history of the shipyard and the health impact of toxins in the site. Following POWER’s organizing and community participation in numerous hearings during the Environmental Impact Review process, the Shipyard is required to be completely cleaned before development is allowed to proceed.



## PADRES & JÓVENES UNIDOS

Denver, CO

Organizes primarily Latino youth and families to build power and improve quality of life in their community.

[padresunidos.org](http://padresunidos.org)

### Stopping Hunger in the Classroom

- Worked to create public support for Breakfast in the Classroom and Recess Before Lunch programs. These victories increased the number of Denver schools offering breakfast in the classroom from 27 to 43.
- Created partnerships with Denver Parks and Recreation to increase access to recreation space.
- Passed a school wellness policy for a scratch kitchen and food/wellness bar.

Padres Unidos has evolved into a multi-issue organization led by people of color who work for educational excellence, racial justice for youth and immigrant rights and quality health care for all. Jóvenes Unidos, the youth initiative of Padres Unidos, emerged as young people became active in reforming their schools, ending the school-to-jail pipeline and organizing for immigrant student rights. Both Padres and Jóvenes Unidos build power to challenge the root cause of discrimination, racism and inequity by exposing the economic, social and institutional basis for injustice as well as developing effective strategies to realize meaningful change.

As a CCHE grantee, Padres Unidos worked to develop new policies for Denver public schools that would increase access to healthy foods and physical activity for low-income youth of color. Padres also sought to improve academic achievement and students' ability to learn through better nutrition programs by crafting healthier food policies in the Denver Public Schools (DPS) system.

Padres Unidos measurably increased the number of schools offering "Breakfast in the Classroom," reducing food insecurity and hunger-related learning challenges. Their advocacy work with Food and Nutrition Services and Hunger Free Colorado helped grow the number of schools offering Breakfast in the Classroom from 27 to 43, a 60% increase in less than a year.

Padres also made progress in positioning parents of color to impact school nutrition and fitness policy recommendations. By promoting coalition building inside and outside of DPS, Padres & Jóvenes Unidos created vehicles for parent advocacy and improved their collaboration with DPS, which passed a school wellness policy for a scratch kitchen and food/wellness bar.

With district support from the Colorado Health Foundation, Padres & Jóvenes Unidos established the Healthy Schools Promotora program to provide parent training, education and leadership development for parent involvement around childhood obesity and school wellness issues. Fifteen predominantly Latino parents were trained as health promoters who went on to educate more than 300 families around these issues.



## ROCKY BOY HEALTH BOARD

Rocky Boy Nation, MT

Works to ensure the health and well-being of tribal members.

[www.rbclinic.org](http://www.rbclinic.org)

### "Ah-Wah-Si-Sahk-O-Chi" — For the Children

- Mandated food labels for the local Gramma's Grocery market.
- Developed sports leagues and built an outdoor basketball court.
- Youth Support Division provided nutrition education and sports activities to approximately 700 children.
- Organized a 4.5-mile Annual Sobriety Walk, with 200 adults and children participating.
- Inspired 400 parents and kids to participate in an annual family swim trip.

The Rocky Boy Health Board (RBHB) is located in the state of Montana. As a result of successful base building and organizing within the Rocky Boy Nation, the Indian Health Service awarded RBHB the Children's Youth Initiative Program to administer youth health programs. Through the program, RBHB established an integrated community outreach strategy that promotes learning and encourages healthy lifestyles.

As a CCHE grantee, RBHB worked with the Tribal Business Committee to improve healthy food access and visible nutrition labeling. They were successful in updating educational food labels at a local grocery store, Gramma's Grocery, and in doing so, strengthened their community engagement and government involvement. They succeeded in making it mandatory for the store to ensure that the easy-to-read, color coded labels are visible to the public so that shoppers could make healthier choices.

RBHB successfully increased recreational and health programs, including developing basketball, baseball and soccer teams, camps and leagues that served some 700 children. They additionally hosted the Annual Youth Pow Wow, with an average of 175 youth dancers, an Annual Sobriety Walk for adults and young people, and an Annual Family Swim Trip to increase parent involvement, which attracted approximately 400 participants. RBHB also made significant strides in promoting the benefits of early and lifelong fitness to the community with a Youth Symposium and Basketball tournament in 2012, attracting young people from throughout the state to participate.



## SAFE STREETS/STRONG COMMUNITIES

New Orleans, LA

Organizes low-income communities of color to advance community-based public safety policies that support healthy, whole communities.

[www.safestreetsnola.org](http://www.safestreetsnola.org)

### Real Reforms, Not ‘Law and Order’ Rhetoric

- Won recreation program fee waivers for families with children eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- Secured the creation of a Community Advisory Board with the New Orleans Recreation Department.
- Conducted outreach events for more than 300 residents to help highlight issues of recreational equity. Held local forums and worked with the Greater New Orleans Organizers Roundtable, local boosters organizations, neighborhood associations, coaches and parents whose children would be affected by city plans to privatize parks in low-income areas.
- Addressed the imbalance between criminal justice and youth development spending.

Safe Streets/Strong Communities (SSSC) was founded in late 2005 and quickly established itself as the primary grassroots organizing group in New Orleans. More than 75% of the organization’s members are low-income women of color based in the city.

As a CCHE grantee, SSSC focused on implementing new local budget priorities around recreational equity to protect community members most affected by the city’s criminalization and recreation policies. Additionally, the organization aimed to ensure that recreation and play spaces are adequately funded and accessible in every community.

Safe Streets/Strong Communities built relationships with key decision-makers to survey the community about the condition of recreational space and equipment, as well as how they were used by residents. SSSC gathered information about proposed changes to the New Orleans Recreation Department, mobilizing residents for community meetings in each council district to address their concerns. The organization also organized a health fair to inform residents about the importance of access to parks and a healthy well-balanced diet for children in order to reduce and prevent childhood obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.

These accomplishments helped build the foundation for future policy advocacy work in the community. Safe Streets/Strong Communities’ survey data will help develop initiatives and messaging to more effectively engage residents in future campaigns.



## SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT

Albuquerque, NM

Advocates on a range of quality of life issues to build power for traditionally disenfranchised communities in the Southwest.

[www.swop.net](http://www.swop.net)

### Planting Seeds for Community Needs

- Launched “Project Feed the Hood,” to encourage area restaurants to grow their own food and aid the community in developing healthy eating habits.
- Built gardens at seven schools, which led to Garden Clubs to connect parents to the project and foster a deeper understanding about food justice and healthy, local food.
- Launched the Healthy Kids Healthy Economies Initiative and encouraged schools to buy food from local growers.
- Built a community garden on underutilized land at a nearby airport. Worked with the city water authority to waive water fees and the city aviation department to support the project by building a gate, fence and signage.

SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP) was founded in 1980 with a mission to empower the disenfranchised communities of the Southwest to realize racial and gender equality and social and economic justice. Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, SWOP has worked on countless community efforts to create healthy alternatives and to reconnect communities to their land and environment.

As a CCHE grantee, SWOP set out to increase access to healthy foods, recreation spaces and water through the implementation of state and local policies. SWOP developed “Project Feed the Hood” to improve community health by educating and empowering local residents. The project was anchored by a cadre of leaders who advocated and organized for a just food system that fosters healthy relationships with food. Project Feed the Hood launched with a community garden, developed on public land, in Albuquerque’s International District, the most culturally diverse area of the city and home to the largest population of off-reservation Native Americans in the state.

SWOP’s food justice work energized the community, leading to the formation of other community groups such as Las Madres Naturalezas, three mothers who partnered with a local greenhouse and nursery to gain experience to grow their own food and start a small business.

SWOP continues its work to spur new policies within the city that will maintain water as a public good and promote sustainably grown food.



## WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

New York, NY

Works to improve environmental health for low-income communities in Northern Manhattan.

[www.weact.org](http://www.weact.org)

### Fostering Food Transparency

- Helped to secure a significant amount of land for green space at the local riverfront to increase walking and biking paths.
- Initiated the “Northern Manhattan Food Justice Initiative” to bring safe, fresh and nutritious food to schools through educational outreach to parents.
- Created a searchable database of every school food ingredient and produced a document with profiles of food providers.
- Helped residents track the carbon footprint of school food by winning a requirement that the Department of Education Office of School Food collect this data.

West Harlem Environmental Action (WE ACT) is a nonprofit, community-based environmental justice organization dedicated to building community power for environmental justice. Based out of Harlem, New York, WE ACT utilizes community organizing, education, training, community-based research and public policy development to improve environmental health in low-income communities of color.

As a CCHE grantee, WE ACT aimed to achieve changes in school food policies to increase access to healthy, local, high-quality school food for children in Northern Manhattan. WE ACT initiated the “Northern Manhattan Food Justice Initiative” to bring safe, fresh and nutritious food to schools. They introduced a policy platform to the New York City Procurement Policy Board aimed at changing the Department of Education’s practices to ensure that procurement contracts secured by the NYC Office of School Food are administered in the best interests of the city. To increase parents’ ability to hold food makers accountable for students’ school-based nutritional intake, they created an easily searchable database listing every school meal ingredient.



## COHORT 2 (2010–2013)

## ALTERNATIVES FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Roxbury, MA

Works to eradicate environmental racism and classism in lower-income communities and communities of color.

[www.ace-ej.org](http://www.ace-ej.org)

### Keeping Public Transportation Affordable for All

- Prompted the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to agree to a revenue-neutral pilot testing an affordable youth transit pass.
- Collected more than 3,500 petition signatures opposing the MBTA’s proposed fare increase and service cuts.
- Influenced the establishment of a state cap on MBTA fare increases.

Founded in 1993, Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) builds the power of communities of color and lower-income communities in New England to eradicate environmental racism and classism and achieve environmental justice. ACE provides legal and technical support, educational programs and organizing assistance to community groups throughout New England to solve environmental problems and develop local environmental leadership.

As a CCHE grantee, the ACE Transit Riders Union (TRU) laid the groundwork for a statewide campaign to provide adequate and sustainable public transit funding. They mobilized a cross-sector surge of support for improved transit service and equitable fare structures, bringing together transit riders and workers with regional planning groups and community development practitioners.

ACE also leveraged its membership base of nearly 1,000 low-income residents to develop a comprehensive economic development and land use policy for the Roxbury area to increase resident buying power, green space, walkability, healthy food outlets and resident access to the growing “green jobs” market. Together, they are addressing some of the root causes of food affordability.



## CAA AV ORGANIZING ASIAN COMMUNITIES

Bronx, NY

Addresses gentrification, worker exploitation, poverty, the detention and deportation of immigrants, and the criminalization of youth in low- and no-income homes in New York’s Asian communities.

[www.caaav.org](http://www.caaav.org)

### A Chinatown for Residents is a Chinatown For All

- Successfully pressured New York City to preserve key locations along the East River Waterfront as open public space through the “Our Waterfront Campaign.”
- Advocated for and won a new community recreation facility in the underserved, low-income Southeast Asian community of the Northwest Bronx.
- Influenced the Chinatown Working Group to incorporate strong provisions for anti-demolition and anti-harassment protections into its rezoning plan.

Originally named “Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence,” CAAAV was founded in 1986 as one of the first groups in the U.S. to mobilize Asian communities against police harassment and other forms of racially motivated violence. Over time, CAAAV has broadened its focus to address the myriad needs, challenges and injustices faced by low- and no-income Asian communities in New York, including gentrification, worker exploitation, poverty, the detention and deportation of immigrants, and the criminalization of youth.

As a CCHE grantee, CAAAV worked to increase public recreational space for Chinatown residents along the increasingly gentrified Lower East Side waterfront; establish a new community recreation facility in the underserved, low-income Southeast Asian community of Northwest Bronx; and establish affordable, healthy food alternatives in the Northwest Bronx. One of CAAAV’s major accomplishments included successfully pressuring New York City to preserve key locations along the East River Waterfront as open public space through its “Our Waterfront Campaign,” after which Pier 35 was developed as a park instead of the originally planned private retail/dining space. Where the City intended to build closed pavilions under the FDR Highway, they are now planning to build free basketball courts.



## CHINESE PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

San Francisco, CA

Educates and organizes the low-income and working-class immigrant Chinese community in San Francisco to build collective power and demand better living and working conditions.

[www.cpasf.org](http://www.cpasf.org)

### Improving Equitable Health Care Access for All

- Published the “Health Care Access in San Francisco” report based on nearly 1,000 responses to a comprehensive health access survey.
- Influenced guidelines of the Health Care Services Master Plan for equitable distribution of health services in San Francisco, including influencing the framework and scope of the health needs assessment to incorporate the need to create healthy communities.
- Played a key role in preventing the closure of St. Luke’s Hospital and won a subsequent 20-year commitment from developers and the city for St. Luke’s, including funding for an expansion.

Founded in 1972, the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) educates and organizes the low-income and working-class immigrant Chinese community in San Francisco to build collective power with other oppressed communities to demand better living and working conditions and justice for all people.

As a CCHE grantee, CPA worked to develop a more comprehensive approach to building healthy communities in San Francisco. Working to ensure low-income immigrants and communities of color had access to equitable and affordable health care, healthy food and recreational space, CPA advocated for the development of more culturally competent health services in San Francisco. CPA participated in the Health Care Services Master Plan Task Force, which brought together members of the health care industry, public agencies and community organizations charged with crafting guidelines for expanded health care services.

During that time, CPA published a report, “Health Care Access in San Francisco,” which included key recommendations developed from a 2011 health care access survey of nearly 1,000 community members. CPA youth leaders presented the report recommendations to the Task Force, which included creating incentives for the development of health care facilities in communities with fewer providers; ensuring that health services are easily accessible via public transportation by putting transit stops closer to provider offices and addressing the affordability of commuting; addressing cultural barriers by hiring providers and staff from the communities being served and/or who speak the languages of communities served; and developing appropriate outreach and service programs. Several of CPA’s recommendations were adopted into the draft guidelines proposed by the Task Force and will guide the development of future health care services.



## COMMUNITY COALITION FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Los Angeles, CA

Works with African-American and Latino residents to build quality schools and reduce crime, poverty and substance abuse in their community.

[www.cocosouthla.org](http://www.cocosouthla.org)

### Making a Difference, One Block at a Time

- Won the first-ever moratorium on fast food restaurants by uniting South Central's African-American and Latino residents.
- Expanded access to recreation for children with disabilities by insisting that park rebuilding and retrofitting be done with special needs children in mind.
- Helped to secure commitments for educational and recreational services including a commitment from the Mayor's office to support the Summer Night Lights program and prevent the defunding of the King Park neighborhood.

Community leaders founded Community Coalition (CoCo) as a non-profit organization in 1990, in response to the 1980s crack cocaine epidemic that devastated South Los Angeles. CoCo aimed to provide preventative, community-centered solutions to the drug problem. Since then, Community Coalition has worked with African-American and Latino residents to build a prosperous and healthy South Los Angeles with safe neighborhoods, quality schools, a strong social safety net and positive economic development in order to reduce crime, poverty and substance abuse in their community.

As a CCHE grantee, Community Coalition greatly increased access to recreation programs, especially in the King Park neighborhood. They developed the "People, Power, Assembly" (PPA), a vehicle for resident participation in large-scale community building events. For example, 200 to 250 members of the PPA, including many King Park residents, organized props and created an organizational float for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade (South Los Angeles' largest community event). Thousands of residents and key Los Angeles community figures witnessed the PPA float and the breadth of the organization's membership body.



## COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Fort Yukon, AK

Works to conserve and protect tribal land and other resources and to promote the general welfare of each tribe member.

[www.catg.org](http://www.catg.org)

### Protecting Native Food Sovereignty

- Signed the first self-governance Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) between the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a critical tool giving CATG and its member villages real decision making power over funding and resource allocations for their land. This is the only AFA in the nation between a tribal entity and the BLM. Also, signed successor AFAs with expanded scopes of work and increased funding.
- Leveraged funding for a Youth and Elders Traditional Canoe Expedition, where elders shared traditional knowledge and skills while educating youth about their land claims and the history of colonization.
- Won the battle to keep hunters out of sacred areas and created a model project to increase citizen participation in the management of traditional and customary resources to protect traditional foods.

The Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) is a grassroots organization founded in 1985 on the principle of tribal self-governance. It works to empower local member Tribal Governments and build their capacity to assume management responsibility of programs within their villages; conserve and protect tribal land and other resources; encourage and support the exercise of tribal powers of self-governance; aid and support economic development; promote the general welfare of each member tribe and its respective individual members; preserve and maintain justice for all; and exercise all powers granted by its member villages.

As a CCHE grantee, CATG supported citizen engagement and policy change to address the critical area of subsistence and traditional food access by addressing the impact of federal and state policy on the Native food supply. As the first tribal entity to sign an Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) with the Bureau of Land Management, CATG won the opportunity to participate in key decision making for their lands. As part of the effort to empower tribal leadership, hunters and fishermen to speak out, organize and protect their traditional way of life and lands, CATG planned statewide events to galvanize tribal leadership and traditional land users about how to assert their rights. CATG advocated for a revised system to increase access to healthy foods and recreational opportunities in the Yukon Flats and pushed more broadly for greater community influence in land management decisions. They also worked toward the decriminalization of hunting and fishing practices.



## INNER-CITY MUSLIM ACTION NETWORK

Chicago, IL

Works for social justice, delivers a range of social services and cultivates the arts in urban communities.

[www.imancentral.org](http://www.imancentral.org)

### Service, Justice and Compassion

- Ensured that available public fresh food funds support neighborhood/corner grocery stores.
- Pressured businesses to adhere to standards to increase access to fresh, healthy, affordable food in low-income communities.
- Held two “Fresh Expressions” events, a community forum providing a creative, artistic and educational space for local youth to connect around food justice.
- Worked with partner organizations to build capacity for alliances that focus on corporate accountability to impacted neighborhoods.
- Opened the new IMAN Youth and Arts Wellness Center, which provides a space for young people to learn about health and wellness.

The Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is a community-based nonprofit that works for social justice, delivers a range of social services and cultivates the arts in urban communities. IMAN was formed in 1995 and incorporated in 1997 by Muslim students, community residents and leaders responding to the pervasive symptoms of inner-city poverty and abandonment. IMAN seeks to create a community organization driven by the spiritual ideals of community service, social justice and human compassion.

As a CCHE grantee, IMAN introduced a diverse set of community programs and projects to improve food access in Chicago’s South Side, and to help local merchants address limited food offerings and the disproportionate amount of shelf space for unhealthy items. One important project that IMAN led was a coalition of Arab and African-American Muslims. The Muslim-led coalition supported Muslim food outlet owners to align their faith principles with their business practices by selling fresh produce and healthy foods, especially in neighborhoods without major grocery stores.

In urban communities nationwide, corner grocery stores owned by Muslim operators are a significant part of the food distribution system. IMAN’s aim to perform extensive data collection on the neighborhood outlet environment, provide merchant trainings and develop model financing policies to increase local healthy food could open the door for successful reform of Muslim-operated stores nationwide. IMAN hopes this could significantly change the food environment in a number of key metro areas.



## LA UNIÓN DEL PUEBLO ENTERO

San Juan, TX

Addresses serious, institutionalized inequalities in access and services for colonia communities.

[www.lupenet.org](http://www.lupenet.org)

### Building Power for South Texas Colonias

- Worked with Hidalgo County Commissioners to secure funding and installation for streetlights in 12 colonias, and to improve the quantity and quality of parks and walking trails.
- Secured an agreement with the county to clean up a canal for a walking trail.
- Secured the construction and renovation of new parks where walking and biking trails were built.

La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) has been organizing for more than two decades in the colonias of southern Texas. (Colonias are low-income communities outside of incorporated cities along the U.S.-Mexico border. These areas have been historically neglected by all levels of government). Founded in 1989 by labor rights activist César Chávez, LUPE is committed to building stronger, healthier communities where colonias residents use their power to achieve social change through community organizing and social services.

As a CCHE grantee, LUPE built on its strong history and relationships among colonias residents to actively engage hundreds of residents and decision makers to improve basic infrastructure issues and serious institutionalized inequities in funding and access to safe recreation. For example, LUPE worked with Hidalgo County Commissioners and their precinct staff to fund and install streetlights to improve the quantity and quality of parks and walking trails for the county’s colonias, where more than 76,000 children waited unsafely for school buses in the dark.

LUPE members also sought to enforce equitable and timely distribution of federal Community Development Block Grants. In addition, LUPE conducted an extensive scan of public and private resourcing of youth recreation opportunities, created a model county policy on equitable park and recreation funding, and expanded Spanish-language advocacy materials and resident training on these issues.

Going forward, LUPE intends to recruit new allies and push local school administrators to open school facilities to residents for recreation and exercise.



## AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSISSIPPI — MALCOLM X GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

Jackson, MS

Organizes neighborhood residents citywide to advance democracy and improve residents' quality of life.

[www.mxgm.org](http://www.mxgm.org)

### Take Back the Land

- Established land use standards for food outlets that restrict the amount of retail shelf space allotted for unhealthy items.
- Increased the amount of land set aside for public green space and recreation in the city's master plan.
- Achieved city requirement to enforce vacant building regulations.

Established in 1995, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) is a multigenerational network of racial justice and human rights activists and organizers working in more than a dozen cities. Their principles of unity include self-determination and organizing in Black communities. The Jackson-based MXGM project is a citywide collaboration of neighborhood associations, residents' councils, universities, youth groups, faith networks, health care providers and policymakers who come together to develop comprehensive food access and land use policies.

As a CCHE grantee, MXGM Jackson conducted a detailed scan of the Jackson food and recreation environment, created incentives to facilitate the expansion of healthy food outlets, strengthened collaboration with local farmers, increased outlets for local produce, increased public revenues for recreation and green space, and developed model school site-based food and recreation policies.



## MVSKOKE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY INITIATIVE

Okmulgee, OK

Enables the Mvskoke people and their neighbors to provide for their food and health needs through sustainable agriculture, economic development, community involvement, cultural and educational programs.

[www.mvskokefood.org](http://www.mvskokefood.org)

### Working to Impact Tribal Law

- Established the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Food and Fitness Policy Council, enacted into tribal law in September 2010.
- Created an Ad Hoc Food, Nutrition and Agriculture Committee at the 5 Tribes Inter-Tribal Quarterly Sessions with the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks and Seminoles.
- Developed a procurement policy allowing purchase of locally produced food by tribal food services, such as elderly nutrition and Head Start programs.

The Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative (MFSI) is a grassroots, Native American-led organization in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, capital of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. It works to enable the Mvskoke people and their neighbors to provide for their food and health needs now and in the future through sustainable agriculture, economic development, community involvement, cultural and educational programs.

As a CCHE grantee, MFSI helped to collect and compile local data as the basis of a policy campaign for food and fitness advocacy; create a Mvskoke Food and Fitness policy logic model and action plan; further model policy development for the (Muscogee Creek) National Food and Fitness Council to increase funding for physical fitness and access to healthy foods in the Muscogee Creek National boundary; host an annual Food and Fitness Forum to support policy development and citizen engagement; and develop a procurement policy allowing purchase of locally produced food by tribal food services such as elderly nutrition and Head Start programs.



## POWER U CENTER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Miami, FL

Works with low-income residents, women and youth of color who want to organize for social change.

[www.poweru.org](http://www.poweru.org)

### A ‘Baby-Friendly’ Approach to Improving Community Health and Nutrition

- Surveyed 300 mothers from Miami’s Black community through the “Powerful Women and Families” program, finding that breastfeeding support was highly unsatisfactory in health care settings and most mothers were highly influenced to use commercial infant formula.
- Released “A Call for Birth Justice in Miami” report calling for the expansion of breastfeeding, grassroots education and changes in the policies and practices of local institutions serving Black mothers.
- Instituted “Ban the Bag” breastfeeding support policy in three private hospitals and Jackson Health System, one of the largest public hospitals in the country. This was part of a nationwide effort to stop aggressive formula marketing in maternity hospitals.
- Developed a list of demands to redirect vital services to the Overtown area and train women from overlooked communities as breastfeeding peer counselors.

In 1998, Power University (Power U) was formed to build an organizing base around urban issues in low-income, inner-city neighborhoods in Miami. Power U’s mission is to organize low-income communities directly impacted by institutional oppression by utilizing leadership development, promoting self-determination and building community power to create an equitable and just society. Power U works with low-income residents, women and youth of color who want to organize for social change.

As a CCHE grantee, Power U initiated breakthrough projects centered on policy changes to increase breastfeeding among low-income women and gain institutional support for breastfeeding (in the workplace, clinics, and hospitals) — a key, evidence-based intervention to reduce childhood obesity. The organization offered free childbirth, health and nutrition classes.

Power U additionally surveyed 300 mothers from Miami’s Black communities through its Powerful Women and Families program. The survey found that not only is breastfeeding support highly unsatisfactory in many medical settings, but most mothers were highly influenced to use infant formula. This led to the release of a report, “A Call for Birth Justice in Miami,” calling for the expansion of breastfeeding policies in hospitals and medical offices, and increased access to midwives.



## RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER OF MICHIGAN

Detroit, MI

Improves working conditions and opportunities for advancement in restaurants nationwide for the collective benefit of workers, employers and consumers.

[rocunited.org/affiliates/michigan](http://rocunited.org/affiliates/michigan)

### Improving Options for Eating and Employment

- Launched the Good Food, Good Jobs Coalition, which convened a broad coalition of community, labor and health organizations.
- Promoted groundbreaking statewide effort to hold liquor-licensed establishments accountable to employment laws and food safety and sanitation standards.
- Designed and developed a community-based research project in which community members investigated food and sanitation violations at more than 300 liquor and corner stores in Detroit.

ROC-Michigan is dedicated to improving working conditions and increasing opportunities for advancement in restaurants nationwide for the collective benefit of workers, employers and consumers. ROC-Michigan takes a three-pronged approach to achieving change in the restaurant industry: campaigning for workplace justice, promoting the high road to profitability and conducting research/policy work.

As a CCHE grantee, ROC-Michigan facilitated a broad regional coalition of health, urban farm, small business, economic development, labor, community, faith-based and food policy organizations — the Good Food, Good Jobs Coalition — to support public education and engagement around model policies to better regulate the prepared food environment in Detroit.

Among ROC-Michigan’s exciting achievements were the introduction of the report, “Unequal Access: Two Tiers of Food Safety & Sanitation in Detroit’s Corner & Grocery Stores,” and the introduction of the “Good Food, Good Jobs Act” to the Michigan House of Representatives in February 2012 with more than 20 co-sponsors. This innovative bill allows the state to take into account an establishment’s record of compliance with employment and food safety laws when evaluating its liquor license.

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing sunglasses and a dark top, smiling warmly at a young girl with braided hair. They are outdoors, with a wooden fence and greenery in the background. The woman is holding the girl's hand. The image is partially obscured by a dark red overlay on the right side.

PART 8:

# LESSONS LEARNED

CCHE's community organizing approach to increasing food justice and recreation equity in communities hard hit by health inequities and childhood obesity had impressive results. By supporting a diverse set of 22 grassroots organizing groups to augment their organizing strategies, build power, change discourse and challenge inequity, CCHE truly laid the groundwork for "Communities Creating Healthy Environments."

With 72 local policy wins to point to, CCHE grantees are poised to build on their increased community leadership and advocacy effectiveness for many years to come. Indeed, CCHE made a strong case for community organizing as a powerful tool for public health.

Reflecting on the many components of the CCHE approach and its five-year initiative, it is helpful to explore what worked and what needed rethinking along the way. Here are just a handful of the "lessons learned" from the CCHE Learning Community:

- **Grantee recruitment** and engagement of applicants was most effective when CCHE partnered with regional networks and local organizations that already had strong relationships in targeted communities. CCHE began its outreach process by identifying key organizations that either represented or worked closely with priority constituencies. CCHE's extensive and diverse applicant pool was a direct result of these relationships. Thanks to on-the-ground relationships with trusted community partners, as well as its multilingual strategies, CCHE drew more than 500 grantee applications and selected two strong, culturally and geographically diverse grantee cohorts.
- **Ensuring language access** greatly expanded participation. CCHE began with a commitment to language accessibility in the grantee recruitment process, and continued as grantee needs assessments showed how much groups' membership bases needed information in multiple languages, especially Spanish. CCHE was able to respond by providing materials and web access in Spanish ([cchepuede.org](http://cchepuede.org)), as well as a Language Justice Toolkit and other resources. Through this, CCHE was able to greatly extend its outreach and impact. In addition, CCHE funds helped some grantees hire multilingual staff.
- **Working in Indian Country** required a range of cultural competencies and resources to effectively address the unique challenges of work in these diverse nations. Having a team of indigenous experts lead this work was invaluable in successfully navigating these issues and supporting not just the four grantee communities fighting for food justice and recreation equity within Indian nations, but also offering culturally relevant capacity building to the larger community of Native organizers seeking to create change.

**Peer learning** was cited by many grantee organizations as important to their work and learning. The annual National Gatherings provided rich sites of peer exchange, where a broad diversity of grantees shared common struggles, different organizing approaches and new solutions. Grantees were hungry for peer networking and interaction, so CCHE created additional venues for groups to share lessons as part of the Learning Community. Additionally, grantees that took advantage of peer site visits and affinity group meetings (smaller groups working together on similar issues) all reported that these activities sharpened their advocacy work and strategic planning. Whether it was youth-led groups sharing with intergenerational ones, rural groups sharing with urban ones, or historic institutions sharing with newer groups, grantees frequently cited how much they learned from and enjoyed the time spent with their peers. Many of these relationships have continued past the grant cycles and provide the foundation for CCHE’s national agenda going forward.

**Having an evaluation partner that understood** the organizing and advocacy process was vital. CCHE was greatly enriched by LMU-PARC’s approach to evaluation, and the many ways they translated grantee reports into recommendations for action. For example, they quickly identified that a number of sites needed support to conduct effective participatory action research. As a result, CCHE pulled together a Learning Circle in a timely manner to provide responsive, relevant training to interested grantees. Putting this training into practice, 10 grantee sites conducted participatory action research that informed their advocacy initiatives.

**Technical assistance** to grantee sites was most effective when grounded in their communities’ sociocultural contexts. Providers who were not skilled in applying their expertise to community context or not competent in applying structural analysis to their content expertise found it challenging to work effectively with grantees. Although it took some adjustments in the early phase, CCHE learned to prioritize partnerships with technical assistance providers already grounded in culturally diverse community organizing contexts.

- **Providing a wide variety of support** to grantees was imperative. In order for communities most impacted by structural inequalities to take on leadership roles in policy change, the structural inequalities they face must be addressed. CCHE recognized early on that staff and technical assistance providers must develop supports beyond just content-based technical assistance and training in order to address larger issues of organizational development and fundraising.
- **“Mainstream” organizations and networks** need support and training to effectively engage communities of color. CCHE provided training, technical assistance and other forms of consultation to help build cultural and community competency in the field. A number of these organizations, particularly those in the public health sector, were engaged through CCHE webinars with additional support available through CCHE-led strategy sessions on community engagement. For example, technical assistance partner Colectivo Flatlander led sessions on inclusive, principled community engagement for the 2011 and 2012 *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* National Gatherings.

**Multiyear funding** from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation helped build sustainability within the grantee organizations. When doing policy and systems-change work, multiyear funding allows organizations to dig deep and follow through from power analysis to campaigns, and from policy wins to implementation. Of course, CCHE funding was not enough to sustain organizations alone. Those few grantees that had a hard time attracting additional resources found it challenging to maintain the necessary infrastructure to support their ongoing campaigns. Two of CCHE’s grantees could not complete their grant work due to resource and infrastructure challenges. One grantee, Southwest Youth Collaborative, had to close down its organization in the second year of the grant due to funding challenges. CCHE tried to address these challenges, which are not unique to grantees, by contracting with development consultants to help augment grantee fundraising upon request. Grantees were able to leverage an additional \$4 million (combined) in grant and other donor revenue as a result of CCHE resources.

Just like the multidirectional teaching and learning within its Learning Community, CCHE’s leadership learned (and taught) a lot over the five-year grant cycle.



PART 9:

# MOVING FORWARD



As the grantee program of CCHÉ winds down, its work does not. The benefit of investing in community organizing groups that are embedded in the communities they serve is that the work does not end with a particular grant cycle. The communities mobilized by CCHÉ grantees, the community leaders who have grown through the process and the many allies who have connected with the work remain stronger than ever. This is particularly important because the work is not done. After policy changes have been won, the fight for implementation may be next. New terrain is emerging and lessons are continuing to be shared across the country.

Looking ahead, the road toward reducing childhood obesity and creating healthier environments in communities of color and low-income communities remains a long one. However, CCHÉ and its grantees are well on the path with a track record of winning campaigns, influencing media discourse and strengthening community leadership. In particular, CCHÉ's Learning Community has created a strong roadmap for taking the healthy communities framework to a national audience. Now CCHÉ is ready to take what it has learned and build a national strategy based on powerful local campaigns.



## The five primary goals of CCHE's national phase are:

- 1) **Developing a multilingual collection of culturally relevant community resources to connect and expand the base of advocates and networks working to address childhood obesity prevention in the most disproportionately affected communities.** This will help communities connect with a larger evidence-based framework and broaden the base of public support to advance their interventions as part of a national healthy communities agenda.
- 2) **Supporting advocacy organizations and other national partners in effective outreach, coalition building and collaboration in communities of color.** A major component of this phase is direct engagement with advocacy partners at the leadership and staff levels to develop coordinated outreach among base constituencies. A number of advocacy and national partners have requested support from CCHE to help inform their outreach and issue development efforts in communities of color. This work takes time, but we believe it is critical if we want these communities to succeed.
- 3) **Working with national, regional and local partners to support the implementation of at least two broad-based, nationally branded advocacy campaigns that address a minimum of four of the six RWJF priority issue areas.** CCHE will recruit a diverse group of advocates to serve as a brain trust and resource for campaign development, planning and ground coordination, and framing and materials around emerging issues.
- 4) **Continuing to convene and expand the CCHE Learning Community as a venue for building capacity and connections among key organizing communities and networks.** Grantees place a high value on the learning and support they received via CCHE. They cite the diverse, multicultural learning community, with its significant participation from Asian Pacific Islander and First Nations advocates; capacity building tools and resources; and peer-to-peer learning as important CCHE assets. These networks are vital in many of the communities hard hit by childhood obesity. However, a complex set of interests and beliefs can sometimes operate as barriers to meaningful engagement. We understand the history and political context that shape these relationships and will continue efforts to lay the groundwork for these organizations to actively support each other.
- 5) **Conduct additional data gathering, analysis and writing to lift up CCHE's impact and emerging practices for study and replication.** Thanks to CCHE's stellar evaluation team anchored at Loyola Marymount University under the leadership of Dr. Cheryl Grills, CCHE has gathered an incredible treasure trove of data. Preliminary findings have helped us better understand some critical differences between urban and rural work, including the finding that rural settings had more policy accomplishments than urban ones. We hope to spend more time analyzing this huge data set, drawing out the stories and making it available to practitioners and researchers over the next two years.

## Transformative Schools Network

As part of CCHE's Learning Community, many groups found common ground in their struggles to create healthy schools in their communities. Their energy and wins became a force to be reckoned with. As CCHE moves forward it will bring these grassroots groups and networks together to create the **Transformative Schools Network**, a local and national effort to achieve healthy schools for all.

Transformative Schools Network aims to:

- 1) Uplift local solutions and shape policy at all levels that centers on whole young people and fosters healthy schools and communities. By organizing a national effort, we have the power to leverage and broadcast local level successes for a nationwide impact on public investment in key areas that create progressive 21st Century schools.
- 2) Unite organizations and allies through targeted action to expose the corporate interests that profit from warehousing young people in schools that lack water, healthy food and safe, equitable learning environments.

Campaign areas include: Safety/safe space, healthy and safe food and water, physical activity, equitable facilities and school infrastructure, and equitable funding and governance.

Initiative partners include: Alliance for Educational Justice, Community Justice Network for Youth and CCHE/The Praxis Project.

PART 10:

# CONCLUSION

During CCHE's first five years, the initiative has built vital assets and networks that now serve as important resources for communities, issue-oriented hubs and the field at large. As a result, we have expanded outreach and cultural competency to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic, particularly in communities of color.

The CCHE initiative blazed trails from Indian Country to the Black Belt South, from New York City to the far reaches of western Alaska. It brought together 22 diverse and intergenerational organizations and created new opportunities to implement a distinctive change model that addressed priority issues in high prevalence communities. The initiative improved communities' understanding of the advocacy and policy process across a variety of settings. Perhaps most importantly, CCHE provided critical insights into facilitating community change as part of movement building in a way that not only required ownership by the affected communities, but also enabled people who view the work as essential to their survival and development to make substantive progress.

Through their accomplishments and progress, grantees have shown themselves, their communities and the public health sector the profound connections between access to nutritional foods, safe places for recreation and a whole suite of related social justice issues. This inspiring level of achievement shows us that we must build on the success of the first phase to achieve a broader, deeper impact through a national campaign.

The present and future work of grantees has the potential to create deep, lasting change in the movement to make communities of color stronger, healthier and more sustainable. A solid groundwork has been laid with this initial, locally oriented approach. We are now committed and ready to take the movement to a higher level of leadership and engagement with these and other communities. The end result: an even stronger, more diverse and sustainable movement that is informed by community realities and the power of shared wisdom and action.

**“CHILDHOOD OBESITY DID NOT START IN OUR KITCHENS AND IT WON'T END THERE. WE HAVE TO ADDRESS THIS JIM CROW FOOD SYSTEM, THE LACK OF SAFE PLACES TO PLAY AND THE CONSTANT PREDATORY MARKETING WHERE EVEN OUR SCHOOLS ARE PLACES FOR JUNK FOOD MARKETERS TO PLY THEIR BRANDS. THIS IS NOT JUST A FIGHT FOR THINNER KIDS. THIS IS A FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND ENSURING THAT WE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE HEALTHY AND HAPPY.”**

— Makani Themba, Executive Director,  
The Praxis Project



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Praxis Project would first like to thank the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their generous funding and willingness to explore a community organizing approach to reducing childhood obesity in communities of color. This support is in many ways a result of the tenacity, leadership and guidance of our Program Officer, John Govea, who has been a shepherd, guardian and more throughout the initiative. We are extremely grateful to John and to Janeil Mihalow and Laura Levitton, who have been important anchors for CCHE from its inception. Without this kind of leadership and support from RWJF, the CCHE initiative would not have been possible.

In addition, we are grateful to a number of organizations and people who made CCHE the powerful initiative that it was:

We are grateful to all the **grantees and their communities** that collaborated with us to expand their work on the ground and strengthen their capacity to create and communicate policy solutions for healthier communities.

The **National Advisory Committee** (NAC) played a major role in guiding the grantee recruitment and selection processes and helped us meet CCHE's selection objectives in ways that bolstered the credibility of the initiative. After the selection

phase, they continued to play an active role in guiding our work at the National Program Office. We would like to thank each of them for their time, energy and enthusiastic advocacy to ensure that the right groups were selected for the CCHE cohort. Special thanks to our NAC chair, Dr. Lewis King, for his stalwart leadership throughout each phase of the process. A list of NAC members is included in Appendix 1.

Sincere gratitude goes to our **technical assistance partners** who provided technical assistance for the grantees and the larger initiative, including individualized support, trainings, tools, publications and so much more. Their patience and dedication to grassroots organizing, capacity building, research and evaluation, communications and new media were instrumental to CCHE's success.

A special thanks is due to the **Indian Country team** for their intense work to bolster organizing infrastructure with other Native communities and build leadership around community-driven campaigns on the issues and concerns relevant to Indian Country. The team was led by Danisha Christian of the Alliance for a Just Society, and was primarily staffed by veteran consultants and NAC members Lori New Breast and shash yázhí.

We would also like to thank the evaluation team, **Loyola Marymount University Department of Psychology's Applied Research Center**, led by Dr. Cheryl Grills, professor and chair of the Department of Psychology, and Dr. Sandra Villanueva, assistant director, for their

extensive research and data collection with a participatory approach. Their work supported and captured grantee communities' multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual social change initiatives. The great evaluation work is also due to the outstanding contributions of Dr. Charisse L'Pree, Dr. Jason Douglas, and Dr. Andrew Subica.

Thanks are also due to the CCHE Program staff over its five year span:

AyeNay Abye, Greg Akili, Kali Akuno, Pancho Arguelles, Sylvia Castillo, Liz Derias, Kim Diehl, Priscilla Ellison, Kenyon Farrow, Gabriella Gutierrez, Rochelle Howard, Don Jones, Alfredo Lopez, Mervyn Marcano, Najma Roberts, Salimah Salaam Muhammad, Miles Parish, Melanie Prince, Kajal Shah, Lakshmi Sridaran and Ferne Williams. Special props are due to Ditra Edwards, who managed CCHE's day to day activities over the course of this phase of the initiative.

Finally, a number of colleagues generously gave their time to prepare pieces of this report, help in the editing, research and restructuring process, and participate in writing initial drafts, including Gloria Medina (SCOPE), Pancho Arguelles (formerly of Colectivo Flatlander), and Danisha Christian (Alliance for a Just Society), as well as Kenyon Farrow, Kawana Lloyd and Stacey Patton. In addition, many thanks to Ditra Edwards (The Praxis Project) and Lori Lobenstine (Design Studio for Social Intervention) for their significant contributions to the writing and structuring of the report, as well as to Amy Sonnie for her fine editing after the project's many iterations. Finally, our thanks to Kim Diehl for her coordination and management of the project in its final stages of production. CCHE is a team effort and this report was no different.



## ABOUT THE PRAXIS PROJECT

The Praxis Project is a movement support intermediary committed to capacity building for social change. Our mission is to build healthy communities by transforming the power relationships and structures that affect our lives. We support local policy advocacy as part of a comprehensive strategy for change. Our emphasis is on developing fields of work in ways that encourage multilevel, transdisciplinary learning and collaboration across issues, across the country and across the globe. National, multisite initiatives are a core part of our work as they operate as “laboratories” where we extract lessons for application in other fields of work and vice versa to help us all move the work of transformation further, faster.

### Basic Tenets of Our Change Model

**Building local power is critical to making real change.** What are the building blocks of a new democracy? How will we learn to work together? Govern together? Working locally, we can more effectively make our voices heard, forge shared vision and even implement cutting-edge initiatives. The local is especially important as our communities are often concentrated in urban and rural areas that are marginalized in the regular course of state and federal policymaking. As statewide initiatives tend to focus where legislative interest and power resides, these initiatives can contribute to the disenfranchisement of cities and rural areas and further privilege suburban areas. Building local power with national vision and coordination is building democracy from the bottom up.

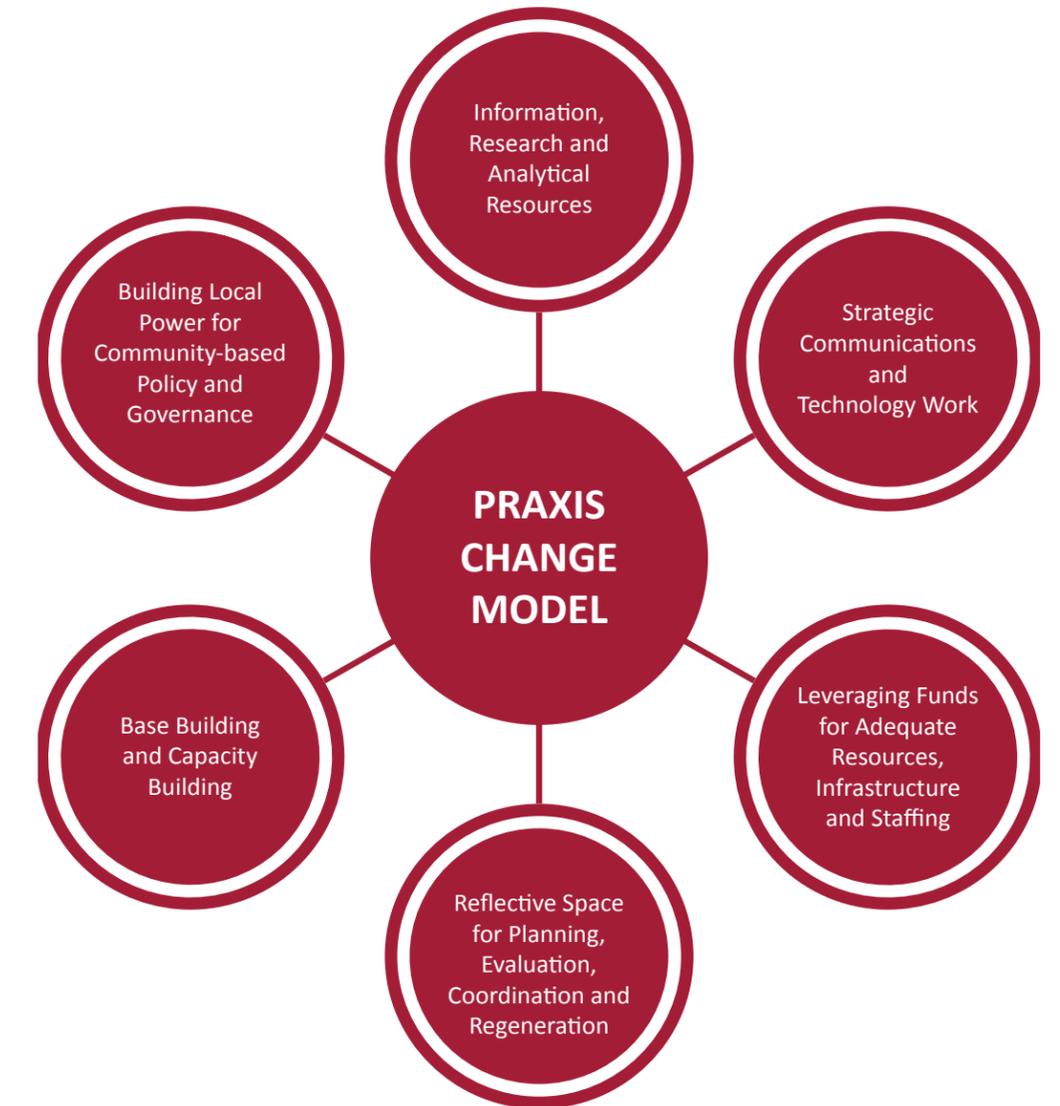
**Community organizing and capacity building are central to making sustained change.** Advocates also need a supportive community in which they can explore new models, forge new alliances and learn from one another. Praxis is dedicated to the principles of popular education. Praxis provides training and education approaches that value participation and experiential learning. We are committed to building power in communities that are often marginalized in policymaking. Projects with the potential for building long term infrastructure for change are a priority, as addressing root causes is a long-term project.

**Not just more policy but better policy.** Inspired by theoretical frameworks like Lefevre’s “Right to the City,” Sembello, Freire and Cabral, we seek to support policy development forged out of community vision that helps create just outcomes, more democratic governance and addresses the real problems communities face.

**Speaking truth to build power.** Effective communication is a critical part of a successful change strategy. Reframing does not happen with one smart media bite or in a few interviews. That is why Praxis’ justice communications work focuses on research and analysis that takes an interdisciplinary approach with an emphasis on framing for long-term change. Supporting groups to move into the digital age, we take the seemingly complex and put it in plain language — actually in two languages, as staff does training and consultation in both English and Spanish. However, given the rapidly changing terrain, Praxis is also active in efforts to shape technology and media policy so we are not just reacting to its impact on communities.

**Our work must be based on good research and evaluation.** This is the Information Age and research is the new currency in policymaking. Praxis develops information to help shape policy and strategy in this shifting social climate. We examine the context as well as the content of policy initiatives to provide credible information that advocates can use.

**Money making a difference.** Praxis is committed to leveraging resources to expand change infrastructure in communities hard hit by social problems. Working with traditional philanthropic partners and others, Praxis raised more than \$20 million for advocacy organizations nationwide. We also work with investors on funding change strategies to help identify gaps and change investment opportunities.



## OUR PROGRAMS

**Communities Creating Healthy Environments** (CCEH) is a national funding and capacity building initiative to support diverse, community-based organizations and tribal groups in the development and implementation of effective, culturally competent policy initiatives to advance food and recreation justice. [www.ccheonline.org](http://www.ccheonline.org)

**Transforming Communities** is a cross-disciplinary project to draw on some of the world's best practices in the development of comprehensive, progressive local policies. [www.transforming-communities.org](http://www.transforming-communities.org)

**Movement Building Initiative** provides funding, training, technical assistance, capacity building and e-advocacy initiatives that help increase the base of advocates engaged in social justice work with an emphasis on work at scale. We emphasize institutional/systemically focused strategies (versus individual behavior change), rooted in an intersectional framework (with race, class, gender, etc. in view). Praxis is committed to language access in all of our convening spaces. Programs under this initiative include Building Capacity Building Power, a national initiative to support grassroots civic engagement work, and our Learning Circle series.

**Meta Messaging Project** works through forums, skill building sessions, research and collaborative strategy development to forge cross-cutting, progressive communications frames while working to expand progressive infrastructure for disseminating messages. Our latest publication, *Fair Game: A Strategy Guide for Racial Justice Communications in the Obama Era* is now available at [www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org).

**Transformative Schools Network** is a national network working together to develop and pass comprehensive school health and wellness policies that will transform schools to keep up with students' needs in the 21st Century. [TransformativeSchoolsNetwork.org](http://TransformativeSchoolsNetwork.org)

For more information on these and other Praxis initiatives, please visit us online at [www.thepraxisproject.org](http://www.thepraxisproject.org)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: National Advisory Committee\*

#### Chair

**Lewis King**, Ph.D.  
*UCLA Dept. of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, UCLA Neuropsychiatric Hospital*

#### Members

**Kim Bailey**, M.Ed.  
*Vice President of Programs, Outward Bound*

**Michael Guerrero**  
*Former Executive Director, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance*

**Lisa Hasegawa**, MPH  
*Executive Director, National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development*

**Mary Hendrickson**, Ph.D.  
*Director, University of Missouri Extension Food Circles Networking Project*

**Manel Kappagoda**, JD, MPH  
*Deputy Director, National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity, Public Health Law and Policy*

**Lori New Breast**  
*Mahnokini and Associates*

**Maya Rockey Moore**, Ph.D.  
*President and CEO, Global Policy Solutions*

**Sarah Strunk**, MHA  
*Director, Active Living by Design, School of Public Health, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

**Marian Urquilla**  
*Consultant*

**shash yázhí**  
*Eagle Evolution*

**Kolu Zigby**, MCP  
*Program Officer for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, Noyes Foundation*

### Appendix 2: Technical Assistance Partners

The following organizations served on the CCEH Technical Assistance Team during all or part of the initiative.

**Alliance for Justice** works to ensure that the federal judiciary advances core constitutional values, preserves human rights and unfettered access to the courts, and adheres to the even-handed administration of justice for all Americans. It is the leading expert on the legal framework for nonprofit advocacy efforts, providing definitive information, resources, and technical assistance that encourage organizations and their funding partners to fully exercise their right to be active participants in the democratic process. [afj.org](http://afj.org)

**Alliance for a Just Society** (AJS, formerly known as North West Federation of Community Organizations) is a national network dedicated to systemic change by building strong state affiliate organizations and by executing national and regional campaigns that advance economic, racial and social justice. In the ten years since its founding, AJS has trained hundreds of community leaders who are taking action and making change for their communities. [alliance-forajustsociety.org](http://alliance-forajustsociety.org)

**Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG)** is a cutting edge research organization founded in 1993. Since its inception, BMSG has led in the communications research field by developing participatory research methods that support social justice initiatives in effectively communicating values-based, tested messages. They examine how controversial issues are discussed in the news and help clarify the arguments for and against issues so that advocates learn to understand the continuum of debate and anticipate opposing viewpoints. [bmsg.org](http://bmsg.org)

**Center for Media Justice** builds communications power and defends the communication rights of youth, communities of color, and organizing groups working for racial and economic justice. Launched in 2001 to counter racial stereotypes and anti-youth bias in the news, CMJ is a media strategy and action center dedicated to building a strategic and collaborative movement for justice by strengthening media strategy, capacity and action. [centerformediajustice.org](http://centerformediajustice.org)

**Colectivo Flatlander** is a Texas-based organization that works with groups throughout the Southwest and the Gulf Coast. Since 2002, Colectivo has served organizations and groups by providing practical organizing tools, critical analysis and spaces for dialogue — mostly in Spanish — and by applying a popular education methodology. Colectivo Flatlander has an extensive network of groups and allies, many of whom are working with immigrant communities.

**The DataCenter** supports grassroots organizing for justice and sustainability through strategic research, training and collaborations. They use research to help move the knowledge and solutions of communities of color and the poor from the margins to the center of decision-making. For more than 33 years, DataCenter has provided information invaluable to the development of movements for progressive social change, including those related to U.S. foreign policy, economic justice around the world, globalization, environmentalism and environmental justice, criminal justice, and youth organizing. [datacenter.org](http://datacenter.org)

**The Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI)** is dedicated to changing how social change is imagined, developed and deployed here in the United States. It is an artistic research and development outfit for the improvement of civil society and everyday life. DS4SI brings together artists, activists and academics to design and test social interventions with and on behalf of marginalized populations, controversies and ways of life. [ds4si.org](http://ds4si.org)

**The Environmental Justice Resource Center** was formed at Clark Atlanta University in 1994 to serve as a research, policy and information clearinghouse on issues related to environmental justice, race, the environment, civil and human rights. The overall goal of the center is to assist, support, train and educate people of color including students, professionals and grassroots community leaders, with the goal of facilitating their inclusion into the mainstream of decision making. The center is multi-disciplinary in its focus and approach. [ejrc.cau.edu](http://ejrc.cau.edu)

**The Highlander Research and Education Center** was founded in 1932 to serve as an adult education center for community workers involved in social and economic justice movements. The goal of Highlander is to provide education and support to poor and working people fighting economic injustice, poverty, prejudice and environmental destruction. They help grassroots leaders create the tools necessary for building broad-based movements for change. The founding principle and guiding philosophy of Highlander is that the answers to the problems facing society lie in the experiences of ordinary people. [highlandercenter.org](http://highlandercenter.org)

**Movement/Media Research and Action Project** is a national network of social researchers and activists led by Dr. Charlotte Ryan. Dr. Ryan is a professor in the Sociology Department of University of Massachusetts at Lowell who studies how social groups organize for change, paying particular attention to the role of mass media and communication in those change efforts. Her most recent book, with David Croteau and William Hoynes, is *Rhyming Hope and History: Social Movement Scholarship and Activism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005). Dr. Ryan also supervises fieldwork. [mrap.info](http://mrap.info)

**Movement Strategy Center (MSC)** helps to build local, regional and national networks of activists across issues, constituencies and geographies. MSC supports activists in developing skills, shared culture, analysis and vision to work together in broad, cohesive alliances — with a strong emphasis on the leadership of base-building groups working to address the needs of low-income communities and communities of color. MSC has extensive experience applying their successful model to youth organizing organizations. [www.movement-strategy.org](http://www.movement-strategy.org)

**Prevention Institute** is a national non-profit center dedicated to improving community health and well being by building momentum for effective primary prevention in areas such as injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development. Prevention Institute has a breadth of experience working with key leaders across the country and providing consultation, technical assistance, and trainings to local, state and national nutrition and physical activity projects. Prevention Institute is a founding partner and coordinator of *The Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments*, a California coalition focused on advancing an environmental and policy change agenda. [preventioninstitute.org](http://preventioninstitute.org)

**Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education (SCOPE)** develops multidimensional approaches that reduce and eliminate structural barriers to opportunities for poor and economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color. SCOPE pursues this work through four strategies, including building models of increasing civic participation, working to develop strategic alliances between diverse communities and constituencies, equipping poor and disadvantaged communities and communities of color with the strategic research/analysis, educational tools/methodologies, and the use of technology needed to understand the nature of structural economic changes, and providing training and strategic facilitation to ally organizations, in order to build connections, relationships and collaborations at local, regional, state, national and international levels. SCOPE has developed a number of tools that have set the standard for community building including the SCOPE Power Analysis process that is now used by thousands of community organizers nationwide. [scopela.org](http://scopela.org)

### Evaluation Team

Loyola Marymount University Department of Psychology's Applied Research Center (LMU-PARC) is modeled after the evaluation tradition of The Imoyase Group, a leading evaluation and action research organization whose diverse, multidisciplinary team boasts several languages including Spanish, Thai, Amharic and Cantonese. Their participatory approach to evaluation and action research is grounded in their extensive experience in conducting research to support social change initiatives. LMU-PARC and Imoyase design

public opinion and community surveys including focus groups, structured interviews and telephone interviews in multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual communities. They also have extensive translation capacity for culturally competent translation of messages and materials in several languages. Five factors make LMU-PARC uniquely effective: 1) the Psychology Department has immediate access to a cross-disciplinary team of scholars in Chicano Studies, African American Studies, Political Science, Sociology, Bioethics, Education, Language Studies, Business Administration, Life Sciences including Athletic Training faculty and Loyola Law School; 2) they are culturally grounded, which enhances their approach to research and evaluation; 3) their team is ethnically diverse, reflective of the United States and its broad range of social, economic, ethnic and cultural demographics; 4) they are linguistically diverse, capable of speaking, interpreting and translating a variety of languages; and 5) their team is respected for its work throughout the United States, having established and respected bonds with numerous community-based organizations, foundations and educational institutions across the country. [bellarmine.lmu.edu/psychology/parc](http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/psychology/parc)

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