INTRODUCTION

The 2008 election of President Obama seemed to signal a breakthrough moment for progressives...

• Unprecedented scale of grassroots action and activism

• New sense of hope and possibilities among communities of color

• Traditional and new forms of organizing and leadership development
INTRODUCTION

..but the groundswell of activism that erupted – and disrupted – has come from a movement with a very different set of values and visions.

INTRODUCTION

Having the movement to match the moment requires patient investment in long-term base building that builds capacity at three levels: - but evidence is needed that building a base and a movement makes a difference.
INTRODUCTION

Having the movement to match the moment requires metrics that capture the important investments at three levels:

- **Individual**: What leadership skills and roles are grassroots communities gaining?
- **Organization**: What knowledge, systems, and experience to achieve large-scale change are we building?
- **Movement**: What relationships are we strengthening that pivot to new issues and a broader frame?

**WHY METRICS - WHY NOW**

- **Foundations** increasingly need “evidence” to justify “investments”
- **Evaluation field**: building efforts to inform philanthropy
- **Increased academic** attention to outcomes & consequences but also spillover effects and networks – but not well connected to this field
- **Increased emphasis** on results and tools for tracking outcomes among movement building organizations
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Highlight the unique impact and value of base building as a strategy

A framework for defining metrics that matter for base building

Offer relevant directions for funders and organizers about measuring the effectiveness of investments in base building, organization building and movement building.
PROJECT OVERVIEW

METHODOLOGY

1) LITERATURE REVIEW:  
- Academic literature on social movements, organizing, and outcomes  
- Reports and tools from the fields of evaluation, philanthropy, and organizing

2) CONFERENCE CALLS with 10 social movement leaders and 13 funders to get early input

3) INTERVIEWS with 13 social movement leaders

4) PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS (70+) from past projects

PROJECT OVERVIEW

KEY FINDINGS: THREE GAPS

1) Need to distinguish the unique value and contribution of base building from the bottom-up versus advocacy from the top-down

2) Need to supplement traditional metrics of transactions (how many members) with critical yet less visible transformations (changing views on wedge issues)

3) Need to find ways to communicate what counts with different audiences – funders, movement builders, decision-makers, and the general public
UNDERSTANDING BASE BUILDING

FOCUS OF BASE BUILDING

- Improving the lives and conditions of marginalized people
- Investing in people to change power dynamics
- Building organization and leadership among communities most impacted

DISTINCT FROM OTHER SOCIAL change APPROACHES

- Advocacy led by experts
- Social service
- Communications / media campaign
- Litigation
**UNDERSTANDING BASE BUILDING**

**BASE-BUILDING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Long-Term Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Base-Building | • Bottom-up | • Organizing a base  
|               |          | • Leadership development  
|               |          | • Coalitions & alliances  
|               |          | • Campaigns  
|               |          | • Research & policy  
|               |          | • Communications & framing  
|               |          | • Media  
|               |          | • Organizational development  | • Policy change  
|               |          |                                              | • New social values & norms  
|               |          |                                              | • Power relations  |

*Base building organizations engage in policy change en route to changing societal worldview, values and power relations.*

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**UNDERSTANDING BASE BUILDING**

**ADVOCACY LED BY EXPERTS**

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|          |          | • Campaigns  
|          |          | • Research & policy  
|          |          | • Communications & framing  
|          |          | • Media  
|          |          | • Organizational development  | • Policy change  |

*Top-down advocates engage in policy change to change conditions for those below.*
# UNDERSTANDING BASE BUILDING

## BASE-BUILDING VS. ADVOCACY

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizational development</td>
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Engage in same strategies and arenas but the approach and long-term goals are different – metrics should reflect the difference

## UNDERSTANDING BASE BUILDING

### INVISIBLE YET CRITICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL WORK

- Building trust and unity across differences – in race, values, cultures, capacities
- Developing a deep bench of leadership while reaching scope and scale
- Sustaining engagement over time and across issues

Source: www.riniart.org
“The real question is: What will it take to create real, lasting social change in this country? That’s what takes a long time – not community organizing.”

Burt Lauderdale
Kentuckians for the Commonwealth

METRICS THAT MATTER

COMMON TENSIONS

- Broad social change vs. immediate policy wins

“A campaign is a vehicle to developing the bigger picture.”

Denise Perry
Formerly of Power U
COMMON TENSIONS

- Long-view vs. short-view

“Some groups forget their early history and how current wins have been building for many years.

“When we think of things from the last quarter, we lose the history and the relationship building. Investments in those relationships are the gifts that keep giving, seeds, one thing leads to another.”

Kolu Zigbi
Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation

- Breadth vs. depth

“It’s a struggle to have a functional core that is ideologically aligned and nimble enough to exploit opportunities and, at the same time, design campaigns and use national or statewide presence to build base and a movement that is broadly accessible.”

Oona Chatterjee
Make The Road New York
COMMON TENSIONS

- Local vs. state vs. national
  - Scaling up for state or national impact while maintaining relevancy and resonance of local work

COMMON TENSIONS

- Autonomy vs. alliance
  - Competition within alliances for resources and recognition between anchors and affiliates
METRICS THAT MATTER

COMMON TENSIONS

- Funding-driven vs. community-driven
  - Who defines success?
  - Who drives the agenda?

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

Albert Einstein
## METRICS THAT MATTER

### A FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSACTIONS</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIONS</th>
<th>TRANSLATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What can be counted that counts</td>
<td>• What is harder to count yet counts</td>
<td>• Communicating what counts</td>
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Applying this framework to base building strategies:

- Organizing a base
- Leadership development
- Coalitions & alliances
- Campaigns
- Research & policy
- Communications & framing
- Media
- Organizational development

### ORGANIZING A BASE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSACTIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• # of contacts</td>
<td>• Sense of belonging and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # and diversity of members</td>
<td>• Feeling of ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of house meetings</td>
<td>• Seeing fates as intertwined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of people mobilized</td>
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“We thought recruiting higher numbers was [the right measure]...then we talked about turnover rates. Maintaining a core membership and what they were engaged in became our sustainability.”

Denise Perry
DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

**TRANSACTIONS**
- # and diversity of leaders trained
- # of leaders on committees or boards
- # of public testimony

**TRANSFORMATIONS**
- Can articulate the problem and solution
- Ability to see beyond a single issue
- Shifts views on wedge issues

“Using the term ‘leader’ in the Chinese community evokes a different image – like General Mao. When we call our members leaders, there is explaining to do define what a leader means and what we expect our leaders to do.”

Roger Kim
Asian Pacific Environmental Network

METRICS THAT MATTER

BUILDING ALLIANCES

**TRANSACTIONS**
- # and diversity of partnering groups
- Ally contributions
- Scale of reach – regional, state, national

**TRANSFORMATIONS**
- Shared analysis and aligned vision
- Cohesion on issues
- Trust and alignment built

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

Anthony Thigpenn
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education
### METRICS THAT MATTER

**CAMPAIGNS**

#### TRANSACTIONS
- # of mobilizations, activities, actions
- # of demands met
- # of policy wins

#### TRANSFORMATIONS
- Ability to set the policy agenda
- Accountability to affected groups
- Wins build up to larger wins

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

Elly Matsumura  
Working Partnerships, USA

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### METRICS THAT MATTER

**RESEARCH / POLICY ANALYSIS**

#### TRANSACTIONS
- # of reports and briefs written and distributed
- Community participation in research

#### TRANSFORMATIONS
- Refresh the organization’s analysis
- Ability to translate research into action and campaigns

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“When people are part of the discussion on the ballot initiatives, they can say ‘read this voter guide, I helped inform what it says.’ and they can answer questions as the door.”

Mari Ryono  
Mobilize the Immigrant Vote
METRICS THAT MATTER

TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

TRANSACTIONS
• # of op eds and articles
• # of public speaking opportunities
• # of hits on web, blogs

TRANSFORMATIONS
• Messages used in different venues
• Diverse voices represented
• Ability to influence public debate

"With the Egyptian revolution, social media was used as follow up, but it was years of organizing behind it."
Denise Perry
Blacks Organizing for Leadership and Dignity

COMMUNICATIONS AND FRAMING

TRANSACTIONS
• # of grassroots spokespeople trained
• # of new audiences reached
• # of communications with membership

TRANSFORMATIONS
• Ability to move membership
• Influencing public consciousness
• Influencing constructive debate

"In terms of messaging, we need to be careful not to move the debate farther to the right. Need to speak to the hearts and minds of those who are fearful but could change if they see positive actions."
Pablo Alvarado
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSACTIONS
- # and diversity of staff and board
- Areas of expertise developed
- Leadership turnover and sustained

TRANSFORMATIONS
- Ability to self-reflect and evaluate
- Sustainability & refreshing leadership
- Innovation and experimentation

"Is the staff diverse and do they resonate with communities? Can staff strategize and operate independently?"
LeAnne Hall
Alliance for a Just Society

METRICS THAT MATTER

So far our focus has been on building metrics for measuring changes in individuals and organizations...

...but how do we know if we are building movement scale?
METRICS THAT MATTER

MOVEMENT BUILDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• # of organizations in an alliance or network</td>
<td>• Take on others’ issues as one’s own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of planning sessions</td>
<td>• Cross-movement relationship building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of joint campaigns</td>
<td>• Ability to scale up impact</td>
</tr>
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...to be continued this afternoon

EXAMPLE: No on Prop 23 – Protecting California’s climate change legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSACTIONS</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• # and % of contacts, supporters &amp; votes</td>
<td>• Climate justice framing that resonates with new constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of individuals and organizations mobilized</td>
<td>• Communities of color emerging as the new face of the environmental movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vote results (62% vs. 38%)</td>
<td>• Collaborations between EJ and mainstream environmental organizations lay foundation for future pro-active work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• % of people who considering themselves environmentalists</td>
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Source: Ella Baker Center
http://www.flickr.com/photos/ellabakercenter/454404096
Version: 72157622912357174
METRICS THAT MATTER

EXAMPLE: Caring Across Generations Campaign – National Domestic Workers Alliance

TRANSACTIONS
• # and diversity of coalition partners
• Turnout and participation at coalition events and convenings
• # and diversity of workers trained and provide public testimony
• # and diversity of individuals mobilized through coordinated campaign actions

TRANSFORMATIONS
• Previously-isolated workers feeling connected and empowered to speak up on multiple issues - from job quality and social security to immigration reform
• Communities of color and new organizational forms reviving the labor movement

METRICS THAT MATTER

- Movement building is NOT about finding and replicating one model
- If we measure just the parts, won’t get to the big change
- Need to develop metrics for movements, include all the strategies and their intersections
TRANSLATION GAP

COMMUNICATING WHAT COUNTS

- Engaging with different audiences – funders, allies, decision-makers, general public
- Bridging seemingly-different interests – policy and power
- Developing the appropriate tools and systems – databases, communications tools, evaluation processes

DIRECTIONS FOR FUNDERS & GRANTEES

- Translate the transformational aspects of base and movement building
- Transform the language of metrics to look beyond transactions
- Overcome resistance to metrics from base building organizations
- Understand the full ecosystem of change—power analysis that includes how each organization contributes
FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fund the **transformational work** of base and movement building (dedicated staffing, political education)

- Fund organizations to lead their own **evaluation and learning to develop appropriate metrics** (building in-house capacity, providing technical assistance)

- Fund organizations to develop a clear **analysis that threads together - and better communicates - their work** (inter-generational leadership, historical perspective)

- Fund **institutions committed to a bottom-up approach to support organizations’ to do the above-mentioned work** (transformational leadership & organizational development, movement evaluation, strategic communications)