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# the **COLOR** of **CHANGE**

Inter-ethnic  
Youth  
LEADERSHIP  
for the  
21st  
Century



**PERE**  
USC Program for Environmental  
& Regional Equity

# **The Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Youth Leadership for the 21st Century**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

America is on a path to a “majority-minority” nation by 2042. But the future is already here: demographers project that our youth will be majority-minority by 2023 – and 2010 may be the first year in the U.S. in which the majority of births will be of people of color.

The new world these young people will face is full of both promise and challenge. To some extent, racial barriers have fallen. A black man now occupies the highest political position in the nation. The leadership of the country in politics, business, and civic institutions is now more diverse than ever. At the same time, racial gaps in educational, employment, and other social outcomes persist even as globalization demands that all of our nation’s talent be ready to contribute to a strong America.

Closing the achievement gap requires investments in our educational institutions, particularly in the community college systems that serve many children of immigrants, young people of color, and others hoping to gain a toehold in a shifting economy. Closing the leadership gap – helping young people draw attention to the issues they face and the systems that are failing them – requires an equally significant investment in strategies and organizations that are training the next generation to articulate their needs and to work together to address them.

We begin this report by detailing the challenges as well as successes in this emerging area of youth development. We then focus on three areas that are particularly pertinent to youth leadership development: the changing demography of youth across the nation, the dual needs of youth as both clients and constituents, and the importance of proactively addressing the intersectionality of race and identity. Along the way, we identify gaps in the existing leadership development field, not to highlight the deficits but rather to point towards areas where new solutions and new strategies can help the field move forward. We close by offering a variety of strategies and opportunities – for both practitioners and funders – to address those gaps and develop and strengthen the field. Finally, we end with a message of hope: we really do think a series of well-placed investments could make all the difference.

The hopeful message we impart is not just ours: in the process of researching this piece, we talked to dozens of leaders across the country and eventually convened nearly forty of them for a meeting at the Gates Foundation to discuss both our findings and their learnings. We can take a bit of credit for what follows – we did, after all, try to synthesize, summarize, and strategize. But mostly we sought to be faithful in communicating their wisdom and their vision that another world is indeed possible – and that it is young people, with the support of elders and organizations, who will play a critical role in making it happen.

## What's Different

An investment in youth leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century will differ from past approaches for several reasons. First, traditional leadership programs for youth and young adults of color have often been built on a deficit frame. They are structured to provide services to the needy rather than organize opportunities for the empowered. Second, issues of racial difference in history and culture have often been downplayed in favor of common but shallow agendas with the hope that inter-ethnic tensions might weaken by contact rather than by communication. And third, youth leadership training has often been aimed at either high-school or college students (or recent college graduates), leaving a large hole in outreach to the community college and out-of-school populations.

We argue that this strategy needs an overhaul. We suggest that we need to move from *clients to constituents*, understanding that the problems of our educational systems will only be solved when youth can themselves hold systems accountable. We argue that *demography is destiny*, meaning that we need to recognize the changing youth population and target our efforts at multi-ethnic and inter-ethnic collaborations. And we insist that *race is real*, implying that we need strategies to lift up and affirm identity even as we move from “me” to “we” in the pursuit of uncommon common ground.

Finally, because we focus our analysis on the youth population between 18 and 25, we emphasize that special efforts should be targeted at the community college and out-of-school populations. This is, many organizers suggest, the new frontier in youth leadership. We have stellar high school programs as well as many efforts, such as Public Allies or Teach for America, that are mostly aimed at traditional college students who are ready to “give back.” Community college students are somehow perceived as lacking the same sense of agency, and out-of-school youth are viewed as having simply slipped out of the system and beyond institutional reach. But a new set of programs is focusing on closing this gap – on mobilizing youth exactly where high school ends and nothing else begins – with encouraging (albeit early) results.

## Closing the Gaps

The gap we identify in the post-high school period is one of several in the field. There is also what we term an *inter-ethnic gap*, a failure of our systems to make the differences in economic outcomes by race and ethnicity a central policy concern and a failure in our leadership programs to focus on crossing the challenging barriers of race through honest conversation.

We also identify a complex *generation gap*, arguing that we have an older and whiter set of voters disconnected from a younger and usually browner set of potential workers, a chasm that has impact on the willingness to expend resources and make systems work for all. But this is not the only generational dimension: many young people in the social justice field feel un-mentored, with millennials particularly concerned that their newer (and often more nuanced) understandings of race and class are not valued by veterans of earlier struggles.

We also note a *theory of change gap*, arguing that there is a tendency of philanthropic and other actors to think that well-researched directives from above can change conditions for those below. Yet an independent, well-organized constituency base can not only affect change but also ensure that reforms are sustained in the long-term. Inside strategies based on policy experts and politicians are bolstered and made more effective by an outside, bottom-up approach.

We emphasize the *institutional gap*, meaning not only the need for post-high school and non-college trajectories for organizing but also the role of services and supports for young leaders. While we do mean to emphasize young people as constituents not clients, this does not erase the need to help youth track through the multiple stressors that complicate their lives. Such services include financial aid, child care, immigration assistance, and counseling. The best emerging programs have figured how to balance this service provision with faith in youth leadership.

We also stress a *framing gap*, arguing that universalistic appeals that call simply for common action – and have been quite the fad within some progressive circles – run the risk of “undermobilizing” groups for whom race is (more than) real. Working race and other differences into the picture is challenging, but values-based conversations offer one way to do this. It also produces an approach where the different strategies needed to address the divergent situations of, say, immigrant youth striving to complete community college and African American and second-generation Latino youth seeking to escape criminalization are part of the same policy package.

Finally, we lift up what we term an *organizing gap*: essentially, we think that traditional issue-based organizing leads to thin coalitions that are limited in scope and easily perturbed by shifting political winds. By contrast, values-based organizing can build lasting bridges and social movements that cross issues and communities. The values approach takes more time to develop than a policy platform, but it is longer-lasting in its effect.

## **Moving Forward**

Gaps are gaps, but they are also opportunities to act. Improving youth leadership activities can both steel youth for their ride through sometimes difficult and unresponsive institutions and encourage those same youth to challenge and change systems. The field, nascent as it may be, is now generating a range of promising strategies.

*Developing and supporting individual leadership:* We find great merit in an approach codified by Marshall Ganz and the New Organizing Institute that starts with the “story of self,” places individual history in the context of a broader public history, and provokes leadership out of one’s values rather than one’s issues. The strategy, applied in the form of Camp Obama training for volunteers, helped elect a President. It is now being used to put community college students at the forefront of the fight for immigration reform. Beyond this simple but fundamental point, we need to create mentoring and cross-generational programs, pay attention to the transition points, particularly after high school, and



provide a high level of complementary services, particularly to out-of-school and community college youth.

*Creating a community of leaders:* Building ties of trust requires the patient development of “safe spaces,” recognizing that the heat of campaigns and issue organizing can lead to transactions rather than transformations. Going from the “story of self” to the “story of us” is not about erasing difference but seeing your history – and your partners’ histories – in the context of a wider struggle for realizing human potential. Expert facilitation, intentional programming, and special attention to black-Latino issues – particularly because these are the two youth groups experiencing most contact these days – are all part of a full package in this arena.

*Building inter-ethnic organizations:* “Be the change you want to see” is more than a slogan; it should be a goal of youth leadership programs. This is not to deny the importance of focused groups – we applaud efforts that allow particular groups to find their own voice even as they strive to work with others – but if inter-ethnic leadership is the way of the future, we should practice it actively now. Important in getting there is attention to the composition of staff, a willingness to hire “unlikely candidates,” and ongoing training for staff. We are especially excited about efforts to create new pipelines for inter-ethnic leadership and community development through the community college system.

*Engaging in issues:* Too often leadership programs are heavy on training and light on action. But there is nothing like transforming the world to give youth confidence that they can act and deliver. Students in New York’s Brotherhood/Sister Sol, for example, ran a multi-year effort to convert an abandoned school to community use while young people in L.A.’s Community Coalition organized to have their school district create a construction academy as part of a multiple pathways curriculum for both the college- and work-bound. Best practices here include joint direct action for shared goals, understanding the need to celebrate incremental wins, and pushing the envelope to issue areas that require overcoming personal prejudices and dispositions to build coalitions.

*Scaling up:* There are numerous boutique programs around the country doing important work; however, particularly for the gap we identify regarding community college and out-of-school students, it is hard to argue that there is more than the beginnings of a field. The size of the field should close in on the size of the population and the immensity of the opportunity. To scale up, we need to leverage existing institutions, such as community colleges, work to develop anchor organizations, create network and peer-to-peer-learning opportunities, and connect these with larger organizations working for social justice. Finally, we need to make the case to philanthropic partners that investments in this area are critical to our American future.

## **What’s Out There**

Americans are a pragmatic lot: identifying problems without pointing to functioning programs and possible solutions is a prescription for a frustrating (and quick) conversation.

The relative youth of organizations in this particular youth niche meant that we were forced to draw potential lessons from a wide range of related fields, including inter-faith and inter-ethnic organizations of adults, coalitions fighting for immigrant rights, and recent attempts to coalesce labor unions and community groups that have historically been at odds. But that does not mean that the field is unoccupied, and we were blessed through a series of visits and interviews to get an up-close view of promising strategies that could be further developed and replicated.

In Los Angeles, for example, the Public Allies program is run by a unit at a community college, and it is the most economically and racially diverse chapter amongst the national program's 15 affiliates. The program makes the diversity meaningful by treating race as real: about six months into the one-year program – when some initial trust has been built – the Allies hold a two-day session on race. Expressing the pain of racial profiling by the police and sharing the tears stirred by being seen as cheap labor, this heart-wrenching conversation was among the most honest we witnessed in our research. And rather than dividing the group along the lines of what USC professor Ange-Marie Hancock calls an “Oppression Olympics” – in which relative disadvantages are a calling card for who has it worst – the Allies are skillfully guided to the realization that working together is the only (and the best) way forward.

On the other side of the country, the Washington, DC-based Center for Community Change (CCC) is a technical assistance provider to the field of community organizing. Drawing from the Ganz-designed Camp Obama model – and using Ganz himself in the training – CCC developed a curriculum and used it to take 15 young people from Florida and another 15 from Colorado from the story of self to the story of us to the story of now, with a specific issue focus on immigrant rights and immigration reform. Armed with a sense of how they fit in, what the larger public narrative might be, and why it is so urgent to act together, those young people trained others in their own states and launched statewide campaigns. The program has now been replicated in six other states and has touched thousands of youth, immigrant and non-immigrant.

Aside from the patient attention to inter-ethnic dialogue, the focus on community college students and the understanding of the critical role of network support, these two programs share a common characteristic: leadership development is attached to a campaign or program rather than to a generic attempt to “build leaders” (indeed, CCC's program represents an evolution from its earlier Generation Change effort, a program that placed young people as interns in community organizing groups but without a specific agenda). For Public Allies in Los Angeles, it is about strengthening community development; for CCC, it is about building the bridges needed to change immigration policies. One lesson we draw: engagement may be stronger when it is leadership with purpose rather than leadership for leadership's sake.

### **You're Not Alone**

Other examples offer additional lessons. The Community Coalition's South Central Youth Empowered through Action (SC-YEA) engages high school youth in civic action and has scored tremendous victories in shifting educational structures. At the same time, the organization understands that providing food,

transportation, academic counseling, and free SAT courses is integral to the next generation of leaders succeeding. The lesson here: it is not clients *or* constituents – for Community Coalition, it is both, and so the organization creates a seamless approach to delivering services and training organizers.

Brotherhood/Sister Sol works with an even younger multicultural cohort in New York, and each group of young people adopts a particular project for social change. The organization’s training program includes not just lessons about bridging black and brown but also a deep exploration of sexism and homophobia. For them, developing pride in self is synonymous with developing respect for others; for us, the lesson here is that identities are complex and true intersectionality – understanding and overcoming the multiple barriers to human potential and building bridges across difference – will be multi-dimensional not just multi-cultural.

In Chicago, the Inner City Muslim Action Network understands the power of narrative and of giving an inter-ethnic cadre of young people the video and web tools to make their stories seen. In California, where the national Alliance for Educational Justice is headquartered, activists specifically target youth who are too young to be full-time organizers but are no longer in high school. Out in cyber-space, Mobilize.org and other efforts are using new social media to match the lifestyles and networks of millennials. Along similar lines, the Applied Research Center uses media and other strategies to foster a new identity for “people who care about racial justice and that isn’t color-bound.”

De Anza College, a community college in the Silicon Valley, has adopted civic engagement, social justice service learning, and campus-community collaborations as explicit strategies to engage, retain, and graduate under-represented students of color. De Anza offers interesting lessons for regions that do not yet have a solid foundation of organizing groups. They are modeling the “client-to-constituent” approach by engaging students in setting their own empowerment agenda and supporting them in forming new civic organizations. The hope is that students gain a social justice orientation and core set of skills at De Anza, continue to hone their skills at a four-year university, then return to their community and emerge as community builders there.

Our fundamental takeaways from these examples are simple. If youth get engaged actively and with a purpose, they change not only themselves but their community as well. If they get involved in a multi-ethnic and multi-dimensional fashion, they model the change and the world they and we want to see. And if we train youth in parallel fashion, offer similar tools, and create networks to communicate – as in the social media examples and the networked approach of CCC – we can take what starts as localized civic engagement and contribute to an emerging national infrastructure.

### **Building the Field**

How then can we build upon this work? First, we need to be clear about the specific field in question – a scattershot approach is not strategic. Youth leadership is already developed – though under-resourced – in many arenas. One important area for further exploration is the gap we identify with regard to those young people lost in the space between high school leadership programs and four year colleges.

Especially for these youth (but for all others as well), there is a growing need and opportunity at the frontier of inter-ethnic communication – and more broadly the creation of intersectional identities and skills, including around gender and sexual preference.

Finally, we would suggest that programs that develop leadership for leadership's sake have less traction – and less likelihood to change the underlying conditions – than programs that have a clear social justice agenda. This, too, drives us in the direction of community college and out-of-school youth, especially because it is the systems that often fail to fully serve such young people that are most in need of reform. Enhancing accountability through building youth leaders is as much a part of systems improvement as, say, the revision of curriculum and remediation strategies.

To move forward, more research and documentation is needed. From what we have uncovered thus far, we see great potential in continuing to encourage unlikely partnerships, being conscious about the role of race, and creating opportunities for intergenerational mentoring. We see little contradiction between this focus on intersections and the creation of safe spaces for single groups; the latter can become the “on ramps” for a “freeway” of inter-racial and inter-ethnic space. While little time is spent in the report on this issue, we would also stress the need to think about alliances with white youth who care about these issues and the development of a frame and an identity that can include everyone in the fight for a better world. Equally critical: considering the role of faith in identity and how best to craft interfaith alliances of young people, the life work of those in the Interfaith Youth Core based in Chicago.

Scaling up all these efforts is critical: what we have now is a set of boutique experiments that frequently know little about each other and have few opportunities to broadcast their stories. We think there may be great merit in creating peer-to-peer learning opportunities as well as figuring ways to become rooted in formal institutions such as community colleges. The Community Learning Partnership, for example, is working in seven metro areas to interest community colleges and others in creating career pathways for social change agents. It is an intriguing effort that is conscious about institutional self-interest and how that could lead to more permanent resources to support the work.

Just as young people need to be active participants of the programs designed to benefit them, youth organizations and youth need to be active participants in developing the field and engaging funders as co-creators. Funders can provide the resources to build networks, provide learning opportunities, and create the space for spiritual reflection and recharging. Convening of funders to see where they may play a role in “framing,” learning, and developing the work is also important. And while funders need to be part of the glue, they also need to approach the table recognizing that the funder-grantee relationship creates a power dynamic that can impede honest conversations.

Funders can also help by applying the prism of inter-ethnic youth leadership for social change to other parts of giving. Key questions include: Does the community college you support have an active youth leadership group? How does the local agency you fund incorporate youth voices and what is its approach to race? Do all your grantees understand the demographic changes headed our way and what

can be done to educate them? Have you developed performance metrics as tied to youth and community empowerment as to youth and community achievement?

Can a field be forged? We were struck in our research by the spark of connection. When we reached one young organizer for an interview and described our project, he replied: “Wow I feel like I'm dreaming, this is beautiful.” Other organizers, funders, and professionals working in this nascent arena may have been less poetic, but their reactions also ranged from “thrilled” to “delight” to “excitement.” And while we would like to attribute the reaction to the thoughtful rap of our charming researchers, there was also a sense that something has been quietly building that is about to be recognized, nurtured, and matured.

### **Moving the Needle**

America is changing – but not quickly enough. The demographic shift of 2042 may seem distant, but it is current for those entering the world this year and next. Racist attitudes are eroding, but racial differentials persist and some young people see an older generation seeming to lift the drawbridges to success. The economy has changed dramatically, but we have little sense – and some foreboding – of what is ahead and what it will take to survive and thrive as individuals and a nation. There is widespread agreement on the need to revamp education as part of the roadmap but much less congruence on what should happen, where we will start, and who will lead.

For America’s next generation, the future is now. Investing in the systems that can support them will help move the needle on our nation’s poverty and insecurity even as it helps youth realize their own chance to have healthy, productive lives. And investing in their leadership will shore up their resilience, help them develop all parts of their potential, and feed into the popular movements that will make existing systems and older leaders accountable.

In creating those movements, young leaders will need to find what Angela Glover Blackwell, Stewart Kwoh and Manuel Pastor call the “uncommon common ground” – not the lowest common denominator of agreement but the highest plateaus of intersection and challenge. They will need to tackle issues of race and opportunity, difference and commonality. They will need to close gaps between generations, frames, and institutions – and they will need to erase the perception that those who have not made it to a four year college have somehow lost all sense of agency or purpose.

From South Los Angeles to metro Denver to Miami-Dade County to urban Chicago to multi-hued West Harlem, there are a variety of programs – and young people and their allies – pointing the way. They are ready but often not networked, eager but often not resourced, exemplary but often not profiled. They deserve to have their story told – and their potential realized – and we hope that this report aids in that effort.

## **Introduction: Understanding Now**

### ***Demographic Shifts and Implications for the Nation's Future***

America is on a path to a “majority-minority” nation by 2042. But the future is already here. Some demographers project that our youth will be majority-minority by 2023, and others argue that 2010 is the first year in which the majority of U.S. births are of people of color.

The new world these young people will face is full of both promise and challenge. To some extent, racial barriers have fallen, with a black man now occupying the highest political office in the nation and the leadership of the country in politics, business, and civic institutions now more diverse than ever. Yet racial gaps in economic and academic performance have barely budged since the early 1970s. In particular, African American and Latino youth are disproportionately concentrated in disadvantaged communities that have limited access to opportunities to improve their social and economic well-being. They live in neighborhoods served by under-funded, poor-performing institutions that do not support upward mobility or even provide a safety net for last resort.

Part of this is because society has also become more unforgiving of youthful “mistakes.” “Zero tolerance” policies in schools and “three strikes” laws are trapping an increasing share of our youth of color in fast food jobs, the criminal justice system, and gangs. Youth of color who live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty are among those most impacted by harsh policies and yet often have little voice to make significant change. They – and we – would be better off if these youth both succeeded and spoke up.

While policy advocates and professionals are important in the social ecology of change, closing the leadership gap – helping young people draw attention to the issues they face and the systems that are failing them – will go further to shape our youth, to change our policies and to hold our policymakers accountable. This will require a significant investment in strategies and organizations that are training the next generation to articulate their needs and to work together, crossing racial and ethnic lines in new ways in the process. Youth of color are among the most disadvantaged in our nation yet they may be a key part of leading the nation towards a more diverse and equitable future.

### ***Color of Change Project Background & Overview***

The Color of Change project, led by the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at the University of Southern California, was conceived in conversation with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) around an end-game vision of empowered youth and transformed systems that could support improved access and outcomes for a new generation of leaders. For BMGF, its interest in this project stemmed from the foundation’s search for a positive frame and a contextual analysis for its work, including an improved appreciation of our country’s changing demographics in order to better ground the foundation’s understanding of disconnected youth. For PERE, this project offered an opportunity to build on our recent work on social movement building (see Pastor & Ortiz 2009), creating

space to think about how youth fit into those movements and how youth leadership development could be a more integral part of movement-building. This report is thus a convergence of our particular institutional interests, but it is really meant to inform both the field and the broader philanthropic world.

In taking on this work, our primary research and policy concern was with what some might call young adults, those aged 18 to 25, and within that age group, primarily on youth of color. These young people of color are a significant population in America, comprising 13.6 million individuals. We focused on this group because, as we argue below, we think many in that group are at a turning point in their lives, caught between high school and whatever will be next. Interventions here can set a life direction for empowerment and achievement; however, since youth formation into that often uncertain age comes from experiences and programs at an earlier age, some of our research also looked at programs working with a younger cohort.

In our work, we define youth empowerment as the transformation of individuals to reach their full academic and human potential and to become active actors in creating lasting change in the economic, political, and social conditions in which they live, thereby removing barriers to opportunity for themselves and for others. The educational system is critical to this, of course. A quality education puts one on a path to greater opportunity. Not only is higher education directly correlated to increased economic success, but a well-educated and engaged citizenry is an essential element to creating vibrant, healthy communities.

For many young people of color, the community college system is one of the main ways in which they are able to get either a springboard to further education or a toehold in a rapidly changing labor market. Some have suggested that improving student success at this level relies on a strong interplay between what might be called individual and structural factors: work to change the institutional structures that stand in the way of achievement, and through this, facilitate individual mobility through the system and into the workforce. We propose that these factors be intertwined in another way: empower community college-aged youth both in and out of school so that they can be the very agents of reform who will transform systems and insure accountability. Throughout history, when disadvantaged groups have been given the opportunity, they become highly engaged citizens (Zaff, Youniss, and Gibson, 2009).

This project thus offers a new frame for youth leadership for the 21st century that is rooted in a social movement perspective. Specifically, we suggest that lasting change comes when the “clients” become “constituents” and then “change agents.” Institutional renovation is more possible and more sustainable when a power base from below is active, engaged, and empowered. Mobilizing youth in these processes not only develops their ability to change the world, but also helps them develop the skills and self-confidence that can sustain them in their own ride through institutions still to be changed. This work will take place in an increasingly diverse demography that calls out the need for inter-ethnic leadership skills and for honest conversations about differences so as to forge the way to finding common ground.

In order to identify and understand best practices in inter-ethnic leadership development programs that could meet these requirements, we approached this project in four phases. The first phase involved identifying demographic trends by conducting quantitative data analysis. Based on economic, social, and demographic data between 1970 and 2007, as well as projections for the future, we explored trends in the racial makeup of America, including how racially/ethnically diverse our nation's and its metropolitan regions are, how much regions and the nation have demographically changed over the past few decades, how integrated metropolitan regions are (using segregation measures from the sociological literatures, including isolation, dissimilarity and exposure indices), and the relative age breakdown of the population by race/ethnicity. We focus in the main section of this report on the national picture but Appendix A offers a more detailed analysis of twelve places that fell into a range of categories – “majority-minority” regions, “tipping point” regions, and regions that are still significantly white.

In the second phase of our research, we reviewed the academic literature and interviewed experts to identify organizations that would offer lessons and best practices in the fields of civic engagement and social justice-service learning. Both the literature review and the initial interviews drew from a broad range of related fields in organizing and movement-building, including inter-faith and inter-ethnic organizations of adults, multi-racial coalitions, and labor-community alliances (for a full review, see Appendix B). The literature review provided a theoretical framework for inter-ethnic leadership development best practices, challenges, and trends, including model programs and/or components through which we could assess practices and experiences in the field. We did not research traditional leadership development models, such as those conducted through chambers of commerce, scouting programs, or local ethnic organizations; we understand that these are important platforms, with Eboo Patel, for example, eloquently arguing in *Acts of Faith* that his time in the YMCA was a springboard to service and activism (Patel, 2007). Given our social movement perspective, we instead focused on programs that are inter-ethnic and systems-transforming.

The third phase of our work involved identifying practices, leadership skills, and organizational capacities needed for inter-ethnic community building and systems transformation by conducting a scan of the landscape and interviewing practitioners in the fields of youth engagement and leadership development. Organizations were identified in consultation with experts familiar with youth leadership development and through snowball sampling. We sought out organizations that are responsive to the changing demographics of the communities they serve, promote cross-racial cooperation and collaboration, develop grassroots leadership, and engage grassroots leaders in efforts to address community concerns. The organizations worked across a broad range of issues, including education reform, immigrant integration, and interfaith understanding; if time had allowed, we would have liked to interview groups organizing youth involved with the criminal justice system and young veterans, two additional strands we think are important to this field. We supplemented the analysis by looking at leadership development models that were not youth-focused but did work with diverse constituencies, understanding the value in assessing the broader movement to better define the specific field of inter-ethnic youth leadership development. For a full list of individuals and organizations interviewed for this project, including the expert interviews, please see Appendix C.



In the fourth phase of our work, we attempted to synthesize our findings in this report. To help us gauge whether or not we were on the right track, we had the opportunity to co-convene with BMGF thirty-seven thinkers, organizers, and thinker-organizers to get feedback on an earlier version of this report as well as to discuss ways to build and strengthen the field. We are indebted to those who not only took the time to attend a day-long meeting in Seattle but also read a draft of this 100-page plus report and offered insightful, thoughtful feedback on what resonated and what was missing. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix D. While we have tried to reflect back what we learned from the field as accurately as possible, we realized as we were preparing to present our first draft that synthesizing movement building and youth organizing to the audience that attended our convening was a bit like telling Michael Jordan or Kobe Bryant how to play basketball. Fortunately, we seemed to be on the right track with our analysis, and we were also clearly told where there were shortcomings. So it is with great thanks and even greater humility that we offer this revised final report both for the field, funders, and other interested stakeholders.

The report proceeds as follows. We begin with a discussion of a social movement framework for understanding inter-ethnic youth leadership, seeking to distinguish our approach from more traditional constructions of the field. We then turn to the three premises guiding our work: (1) that demography is destiny and that our future calls for closing a set of gaps by both ethnicity and generation; (2) that young people should be seen not just as clients but as constituents, a shift that calls for us to close a series of gaps in terms of theories of changes and organizing strategies; and (3) that race is real – or perhaps better put, that complex issues of identity cannot be put to one side in bringing young people around “common” issues, partly because this runs the risk of “undermobilizing” those who must be engaged – and so we must close a series of gaps between those who focus on what they term universal strategies and those who call for community specifics.

Gaps, of course, are the flip side of opportunities – and the next section of the report offers five strategies that can help the field make progress as well as a series of promising practices from case studies we examined along the way. We stress the need to move from the “story of self” to the “story of us,” drawing on work being done by young organizers for immigrant rights, and highlight the need to couple service delivery with leadership programs. We also stress the chasm that seems to occur between high school leadership efforts and programs aimed at college students – often left in the lurch are those community college and out-of-school youth who yearn for a leadership role and a life as social change agents but find an institutional hole.

Into that gap have entered a number of organizers, leaders, and groups, including a new Community Learning Partnership linking seven metro areas, the Center for Community Change’s innovative work in eight states, the national-level Funder’s Collaborative on Youth Organizing, and so many others. What is missing, however, are the resources and the determination to create a national network, facilitate peer learning opportunities, and build a field that can meet the scale of the challenge. We therefore close the report by suggesting some efforts that can help push along that agenda and using that to offer some opportunities for funders to be supportive.

A caveat is in order. The tone of our writing is one of optimism. To the first reviewers of this paper, this was refreshing – and a bit confusing. After all, so much is wrong in our contemporary world and so many of our young people, particularly those of color, face extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We are not meaning to brush aside the difficulties these youth face – racial tension on the block and at school, homes stripped of parents because of unjust immigration and criminal justice practices, and a disinterested labor market greeting those who were offered only a sub-par education. Many other articles, reports, and books – some written by us – cover these realities and struggles. But we do not use this space to delve into them – just as the youth we profile understand that while the odds are indeed against them, their challenge is to both beat the odds and change the odds. Taking their cue, we instead acknowledge problems, particularly as we make our recommendations, but we also focus on the positive work that is ongoing and the possibilities that lie ahead.

Partly because of the urgency of the challenge, we felt blessed to have been given the opportunity to do this project. As we conducted our interviews, we were struck by the spark of connection. When we reached one young organizer and described our project, he replied: “Wow I feel like I'm dreaming, this is beautiful.” Other organizers, funders, and professionals working in this nascent arena may have been less poetic but their reactions also ranged from “thrilled” to “delight” to “excitement.” While we would like to attribute some of that positive reaction to the thoughtful rap of our charming researcher team, there was also a genuine sense that something has been quietly building that is about to be recognized, nurtured, and matured.

We hope this report does exactly that, helping to spur productive and challenging conversations about what knowledge and skills will be required of our future young leaders, and how the threads of promising practices and organizations can be woven together and strengthened to support a new generation of leaders prepared to guide an increasingly diverse populace towards a more equitable future.

## **A Social Movement Prism for Youth Leadership**

### ***The Traditional Approach and Its Limitations***

A traditional approach to addressing issues facing disadvantaged youth of color focuses on deficits and needs. Common in philanthropy is a view that racial minority groups are isolated and marginalized populations who face unique challenges, rather than groups whose experiences signal, in extreme fashion, the challenges facing and undermining all of America. Implicit in such an approach is both a distancing – assuming these groups are not the mainstream, although the demographic projections suggest that they increasingly are – and an effectively disempowering attitude in which we somehow believe that we can and should help those who are too hard-pressed to help themselves.

As a result of this approach, the traditional youth development field is often dominated by service-providing organizations. While such organizations provide necessary resources and services, such as after-school mentoring, sports and recreation programs, and vocational skills training, often little is done to address the structural problems that may be the root cause of youth difficulties. These direct service-oriented investments may lead to improvements in individual outcomes; however, funding services alone will not reduce the continual demand for services in the long-term.

This traditional frame may also force a false unity between diverse communities that ignores important differences in the realities confronting different ethnic communities. For example, the situation for African American males is particularly acute, and requires attention to issues of education, post-incarceration reentry, and long-term mobility. Young Latino men have experiences that are sometimes just as distressing but are also nuanced by the recency of migration (for either them or their parents), neighborhood location, language ability, and social networks. Furthermore, Asian American youth are often assumed to be “model minorities” and left out of the picture, but this is a bifurcated population in which those who live in lower-income areas face the same barriers to success as other youth of color. A one-size solution does not fit all, and both the narrative and policy frames require an understanding of the two cross-cutting realities of difference and commonality, which must be appropriately nuanced to address the multiplicity of issues that youth of color face.

### ***A Social Movement Perspective***

We propose that another frame is possible: developing leadership in the target populations – low-income, young adults of color– can yield the social base for improved individual success as well as a political base to change the institutional structures and practices that support improved access and outcomes for young adults of all races and ethnicities. Specifically, we suggest the following three frames:

1. *Demography as Destiny* – In 2042, we will no longer have a racial/ethnic majority – and that means we need to deal proactively with differences as power structures are rearranged. The growing presence of immigrants and the children of immigrants, and the increasingly shared

physical, social, and political space between African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and new immigrants, call out the need for inter-ethnic relationship-building and leadership. All Americans will need these inter-ethnic skills. Furthermore, society's institutions and practices will need to adapt to meet the needs and demands of an increasingly diverse populace.

2. *Client to Constituent* – Making systems, such as community colleges, accountable to inter-ethnic communities will require more than investments in policy solutions to affect systems change. Transforming “clients” into “constituents,” or agents of change, not only makes systems restructuring more possible, but change also becomes more sustainable and long-lasting when there is an informed and active constituency base that can keep institutional leaders and others accountable. The civic engagement practices, knowledge, and leadership skills that one acquires in the process of advocating for reform are essential for a vibrant and healthy nation.
  
3. *Race is Real* – Issues of ethnicity and equity have grown increasingly complex – consider the debate about the impacts of immigrants on African American prospects – and require a new conversation with new voices at a new table. The neighborhoods in which many young people of color grow up and continue to live are increasingly integrated – not with white populations but with Latinos, African Americans, and sometimes Asian Americans. Mistrust, prejudice or ambivalence must be overcome in order to mobilize diverse groups around shared concerns. While some suggest that we approach inter-ethnic relationship-building and collaboration by only stressing common ground rather than the silos of ethnicity, another approach calls for having an honest conversation about differences on the way to achieving an “uncommon common ground.” We concur that while each community is different, approaches by ethnicity are limited: a new generation of leaders that could help transform the conditions affecting these communities will have to learn to lead in multiple communities and in multiple ways. At the same time, trying to ignore differences in interest of a common story can lead to undermobilization of key constituencies (who need to see themselves in the narrative) and can also lead to inappropriate policy based on an inaccurate “one size fits all” approach.

We should note that all three frames also have a geographic component: demographic changes, individual transformation, and race relations happen in neighborhoods, so changes need to start there. The neighborhood level is where demographic change is felt and where conflict occurs. It is where youth hit barriers: drugs, crime, poor performing schools, and poor healthcare access. While there are important decisions and policy issues affecting their communities at the state and national levels, the development of youth leadership needs to be happening in their backyards, in their schools, and on their blocks.

### ***Defining the Field of Inter-Ethnic Youth Leadership Development***

Given our social movement framework, we looked at two fields that we believe have the greatest potential for seeding an infrastructure that should be strengthened and expanded upon in order to support the development of a new generation of leaders: civic engagement and social justice-focused service learning.

## **The Field of Civic Engagement**

For the purposes of this project, we focused on civic engagement organizations that work across different racial communities towards long-term social change from the “bottom-up.” In particular, we looked at organizations that either work directly at building an engaged and informed constituency base at the grassroots level or support such efforts through capacity building and technical assistance.

All the organizations we examined either employ or believe in community and youth organizing, leadership development, and/or building alliances and coalitions across race to achieve reform at policy, institutional, and/or deeper power structure levels. While valuable lessons could and should be learned from the corporate and policy worlds, among other places, we believe that a new approach to inter-ethnic youth leadership should emerge from some of the best organizers in the country who are working in multi-ethnic communities.

Nonetheless, we took lessons from multiple locations around engagement. This is partly because the world many organizers seek to build involves bridges not barriers, and common ground, not uncommon differences. At the same time, organizers are also highly pragmatic- they have to develop and learn the specific strategies, tactics, and skills required to address issues of ethnicity and equity and to overcome the deeply-rooted mistrust, prejudices, or ambivalence of their constituents.

## **The Field of Service Learning Based on a Social Justice Perspective**

Many look to service learning as a solution to two needs: the reform of youth and the reform of education. In the past two decades, interest in service learning to address these needs has grown significantly. We believe that the field of service learning offers valuable practices and lessons in improving students’ performance and enhancing their sense of civic and social responsibility, and it also provides models for how educational institutions can serve as anchors, or ground zero, for preparing a pipeline of new leaders from diverse backgrounds.

We reviewed the literature on the theories, practices, and evaluations of service learning programs at all levels of the educational system. While there are different theories and approaches to the field, we were most interested in models that are grounded in a social justice perspective and seek to build justice-oriented citizenship in its students.

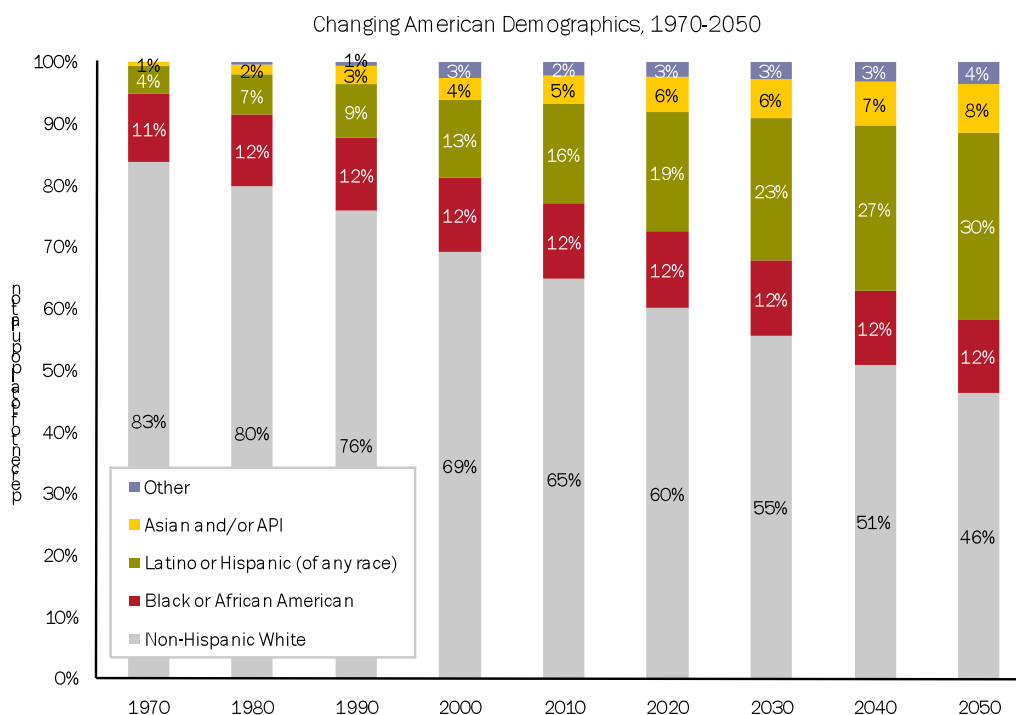
## Demography as Destiny... but the Future is not Fate

*"We can't assume that demography itself will create a just society."*

Denise Fairchild, CD Tech and Emerald Cities Collaborative

### Where We Are Headed as a Nation

America is changing. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the nation is on the path to becoming majority-minority by 2042 (see the chart below).<sup>1</sup> In fact, many regions have already arrived there before the rest of the country. In 2007, approximately 9 percent of the country's 934 Core Based Statistical Areas<sup>2</sup> were majority-minority, and another 9 percent were on the "tipping point," with populations between 40 to 50 percent Non-Hispanic White (see the map on the following page).<sup>3</sup> Strikingly, about 19 percent of the total population living in metropolitan regions is already living in majority-minority regions.

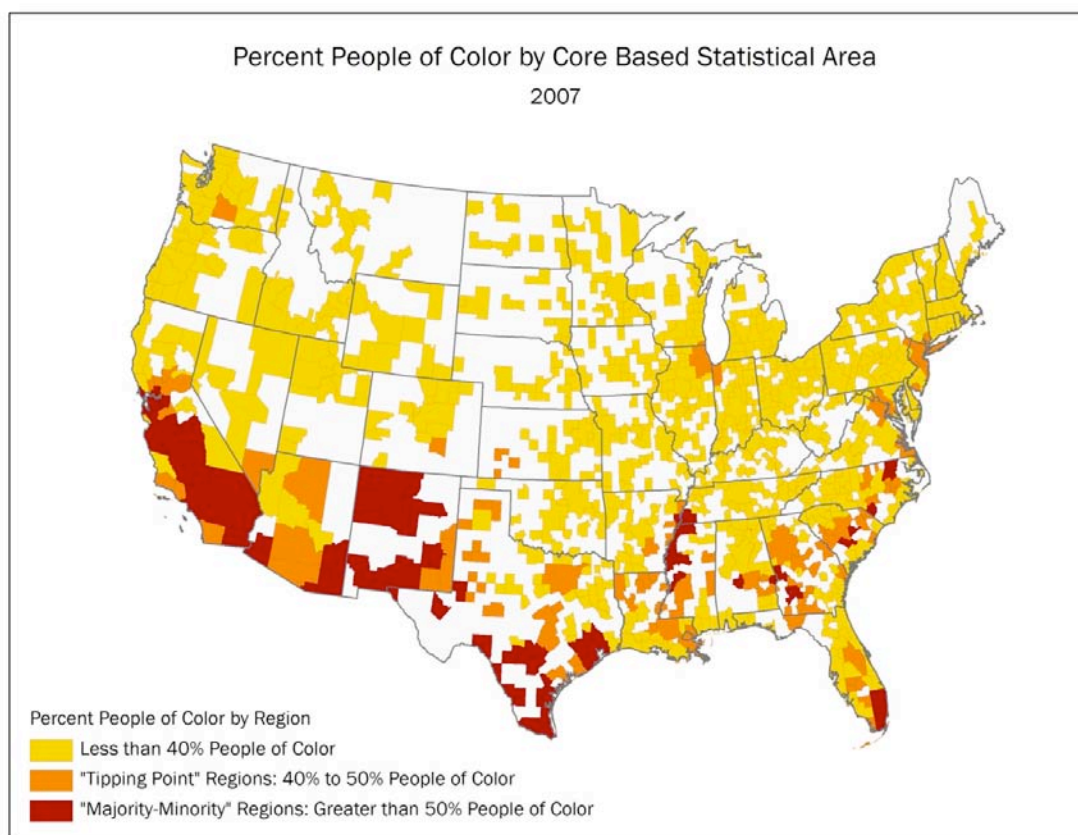


**Figure 1. Changing American Demographics, 1970-2050**

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Aug 2008. "An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury." U.S. Census Bureau News, <http://www.census.gov/Press Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html>

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines Core Based Statistical Areas as: a collective term for both metro and micro areas. A metro area contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, and a micro area contains an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population. Each metro or micro area consists of one or more counties and includes the counties containing the core urban area, as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core. Accessed at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/metroareas/metroarea.html>.

<sup>3</sup> PERE analysis of 2007 American Community Survey (Ruggles et. al 2010).



**Figure 2. Percent of People of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, 2007**

Focusing on the percentage increase in people of color alone can overlook the inter-ethnic shifts occurring at the regional level. For example, an increase in Latinos of 10 percent of the total population and a decrease in African Americans by the same amount yield a zero when simply calculating the percentage increase in people of color – but surely that is significant and important change. To get at this, we derived an “ethnic churning” index that calculates the absolute sum of ethnic changes at the regional level, and as a result identifies regions that have had drastic inter-ethnic demographic shifts over time. In this case, the same increase in Latinos of 10 percent of the total population and a decrease in African Americans by the same amount yield an ethnic churning index value of 20 percent rather than zero. When we examine the ethnic churning index for 1990-2007, the regions that had the largest inter-ethnic shifts include Las Vegas NV, Riverside CA, Merced CA, San Jose CA, and Bakersfield CA. Even more recently between 2000-2007, the top five regions that had the most ethnic churning include Stockton CA, Cape Coral FL, Bakersfield CA, Riverside CA, and Modesto CA. So while places like Las Vegas and Cape Coral and the so-called Inland Empire in California are not yet majority-minority regions, they are places that have undergone drastic demographic shifts in recent years.

Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity  
United States  
(2008)

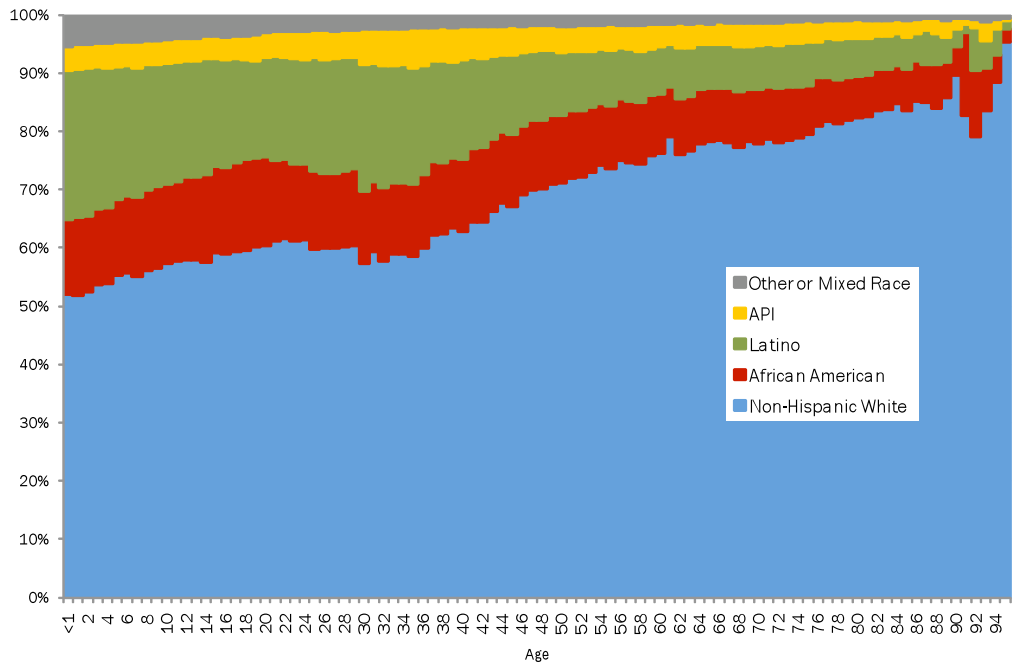


Figure 3. U.S. Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2008

Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity  
United States  
(2008)

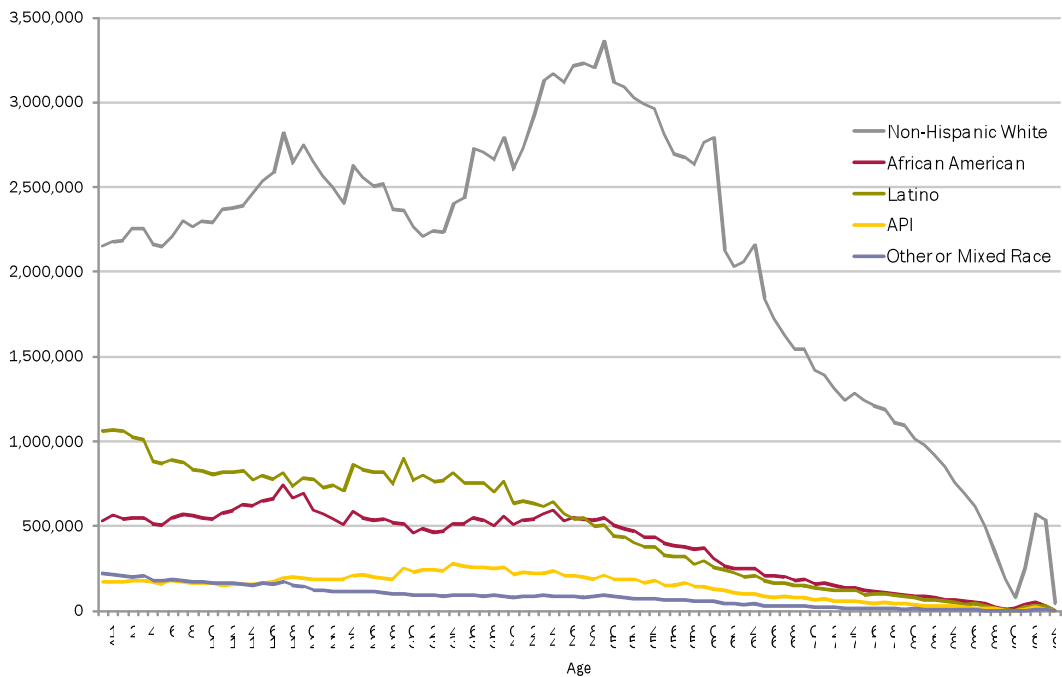


Figure 4. Population by Age and Race/Ethnicity, 2008



The country's transforming demographics is also apparent when we examine the total population in the United States by age and race/ethnicity. The charts on the previous page do this in terms of both numbers and percentages for the year 2008. While the Non-Hispanic White population is the vast majority of the middle-aged population in the U.S., there are a growing number of Latinos and African Americans among the younger population. In 2008, youth under 25 made up just over 15 percent of the population. There were 13.6 million young adults (18-25) of color, which is about 4.5 percent of the total population; while this is small relative to the entire U.S., it is large relative to the same age cohort and if one understands that these cohorts move to the right in the graphs over time, this segment of the population will only grow.<sup>4</sup>

The nature of the current minority population is also changing. Since 2000, Census Bureau data indicates that not only have Latinos eclipsed African Americans as the largest minority population in the whole United States, but also that Latinos in 20 of the 25 most populous counties outnumber African Americans. In California, New Mexico, and Texas, non-whites already outnumber whites, while Nevada, Maryland, Georgia, Arizona, Mississippi, and New York State trail closely behind.<sup>5</sup> By 2020, Latinos will comprise a larger population share than all other minority groups combined.

The statistics also suggest that we are becoming an increasingly integrated country. For example, an increasing number of people self-identify with several races or ethnicities. Starting with the 2000 Census, people have been able to self-identify by more than one race. The 2007 American Community Survey estimates that more than 6.5 million people self-identified as belonging to at least two racial classifications.

Interracial marriages are also on the rise. Between 1980 and 2007 while the total number of married couples increased by only 22 percent, the total number of interracial married couples increased by 350 percent.<sup>6</sup> Considering pooled data from the 2005-2007 American Community Survey, from which we can provide a more detailed characterization of intermarriages by both race and Hispanic origin, we find that among the nearly 4.3 million interracial, married households in the U.S. (about 7.6 percent of all married couple households), 43 percent of these unions are between whites and Latinos, 17 percent are between whites and Asian Americans, 12 percent are between whites and "Others," 9 percent are between whites and African Americans, and 7 percent are between whites and Native Americans.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> PERE analysis of 2008 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al. 2010).

<sup>5</sup> PERE analysis of 2007 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al. 2010).

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. The National Data Book: The 2009 Statistical Abstract. Accessed at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0059.pdf>. In the reported figure for "interracial married couples," the term refers to marriages between two people from different racial categories when all races and ethnicities are divided into three groups: whites, blacks, and other race (including all other races and ethnicities combined). Hispanics can be included in any of the three categories.

<sup>7</sup> Tabulations (here and in the following paragraph) by PERE using IPUMS 2005-2007 Pooled ACS data (Ruggles et al. 2010). Intermarried households are defined as those in which the householder is married to someone of another race/ethnicity using the following six categories: white, African American, Latino, Asian American (Asians and Pacific Islanders), Native American, and Other (all other groups). This categorization places all Latinos in the

There has also been a decline in residential segregation. In their new book, *Uncommon Common Ground: Race and America's Future*, Blackwell, Kwoh and Pastor (2010) show the pattern for a so-called dissimilarity index – what percent of a group would need to be evenly distributed across a certain geographic region so it would have equal chances of encountering another group – for the 30 most populous metropolitan areas in the United States. They, like many other authors, find that black-white segregation has dropped between 1980 and 2000. On the other hand, they find that Latino-white segregation has actually been on a steady rise in these same places. Part of the reason: what has gone down dramatically is black-Latino segregation such that that blacks and Latinos are more likely than other groups to live together, reflecting the new mix in many of our urban communities.

In short, there has been a sharp increase in inter-racial group contact – which research shows tends to diminish prejudice and deepen cross-racial empathy – and people point to President Obama's historic election as America's first black president as evidence of the progress we have made in achieving cross-racial understanding and acceptance. Against many predictions to the contrary, Obama won victories in states with some of the largest white populations in the country.

With the recent surge in the Tea Party movement, its implicit undertones about race, and the recent anti-immigrant law in Arizona; some now question how much the cross-racial social and cultural gap has narrowed.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, one wonders if a backlash is brewing, not just against a young black President but also against a younger and more multi-hued population whose needs are immediate and require more spending from public coffers. Research on America's states suggests that where there is a greater divergence in race between older and younger populations, state-level capital spending – essentially investment in the future – is lower (Pastor and Reed, 2005). This cross-sectional analysis may be matched by a longitudinal sense that the drawbridges that helped build America's middle class – the supports of a solid educational system, strong unions, and stable jobs – are being lifted just as a new generation is arriving.

### **Where We are Stagnating**

Investment in devising new supports for our youth is important in part because however much attitudes are shifting, the evidence is clear that the racial economic gap has not narrowed, and, at best, has stagnated since the mid-1990s. As the figure below illustrates, the black-white poverty differential was greatly reduced through the 1960s. This was due, in part, by the struggle against discrimination and the long economic boom of the 1960s. However, the gap between blacks and whites persisted through the 1970s and 1980s; not until the long recovery of the 1990s do we see African Americans once again making relative gains. The 1990s brought another phenomenon: for the first time, the poverty rate for

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"Latino" group, thus leaving all other groups "non-Latino." Note that the universe is restricted to couples in which one person per couple is the householder, so the reported totals understate the actual number of couples.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion on the "cultural generation gap," see William Frey, "Will Arizona Be America's Future?," (The Brookings Institution), 2010, available at [http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0428\\_arizona\\_frey.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0428_arizona_frey.aspx).

Latinos surpassed that of African Americans. This is partly due to the influx of foreign-born Latinos, many of whom work for lower wages and often directly compete with U.S.-born Latinos in working-class occupations that occupy the lower tiers of the American economy. Asian Americans have a poverty rate that is slightly higher than that of Anglos, although that gap has narrowed in recent years.

Percentage of Individuals in the U.S. Living Below the Poverty Line, 1959 - 2007

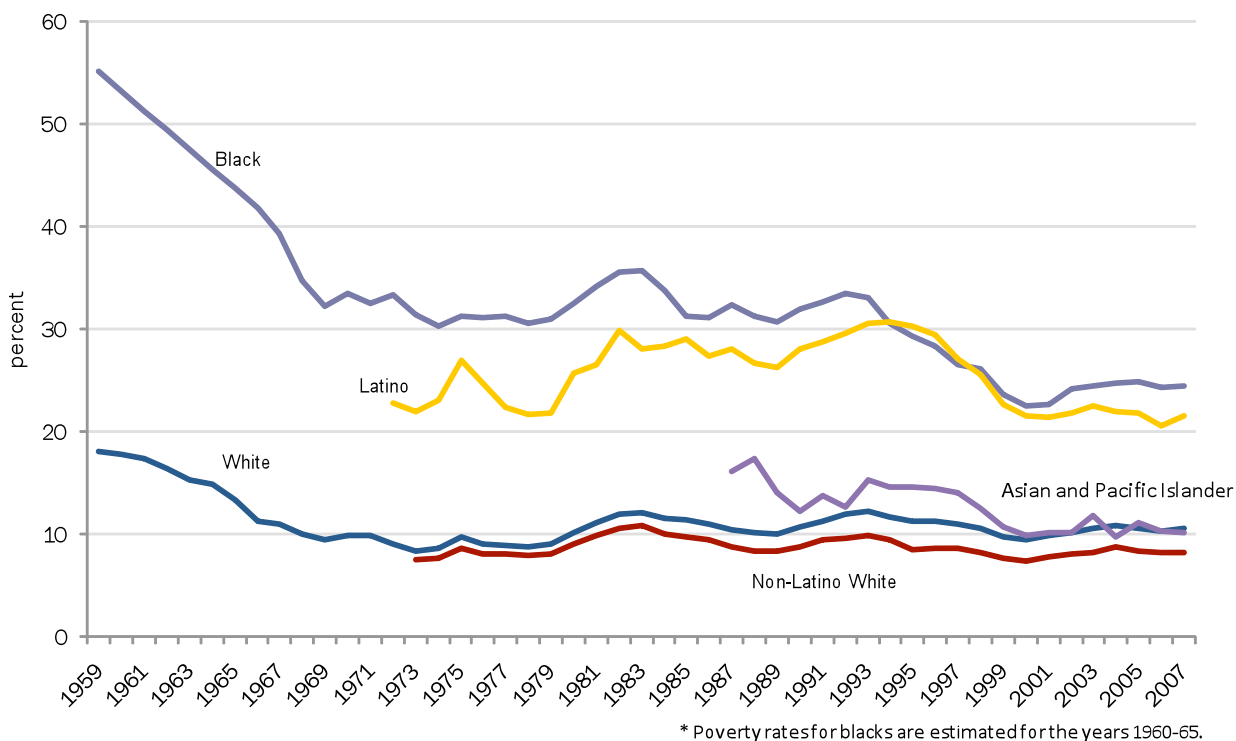


Figure 5. Percentage of Individuals in the U.S. Living Below Poverty, 1959-2007

Disparities in income and poverty rates are associated with changes in the economy. Part of this is the well-told story of structural change: the good-paying manufacturing jobs that characterized the American economy in the post-war era have gradually been replaced by lower-paying service sector jobs. The U.S. economy has created a two-tiered society, with the wealthy and well-paid professionals on top, and virtually everyone else far below; prior to the Great Recession, inequality by income had risen to levels not seen since the Great Depression. The American middle class is withering across all racial groups, but the disappearance of the middle class impacts communities of color the most.

The loss of jobs with decent wages coincides with declining investment in the social safety net intended to help poor families. The New Deal Era's Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or welfare program, was essentially abolished by the Clinton Administration and replaced with the far more stringent Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). In 2007, for the

first time since 1982-1983, welfare spending by state and local governments dropped for the second year in a row. Although the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) did allocate some emergency dollars to programs that would support low-income families, this one-time spending allocation cannot fix a system that is fragile if not broken (Gais, Dadayan & Bae, 2009; Bhargava, et al., 2009).

The economic disparities indicated here both contribute to and are driven by educational disparities as well. We will not take the time here to go into all the data – the extraordinary high school dropout rates for African American males, the failure of second generation Latinos to either enter or complete college – the challenges faced by young immigrants (some of whom face status questions), or the dismal picture illustrated by the criminalization of youth. All of that is material for another paper (or say, our new book, *Uncommon Common Ground!*). Finally, youth who have gotten off the college track are significantly less likely to be civically engaged (for a variety of reasons) so are often not challenging the structures that have impeded their own opportunity (Zaff, Youniss, & Gibson, 2009).

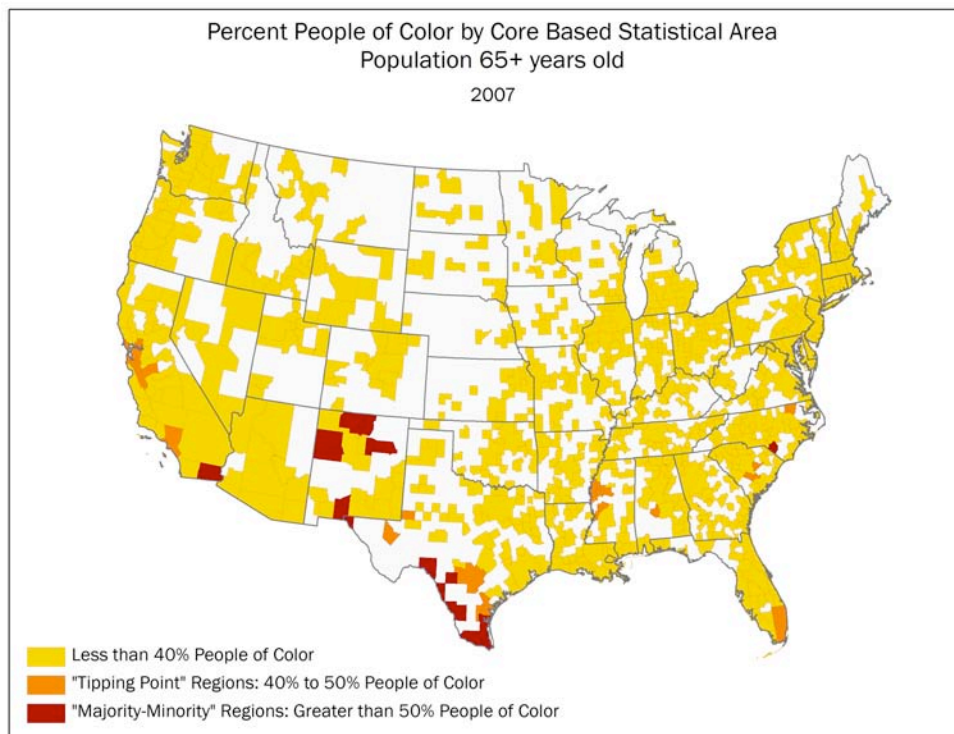
Addressing racial disparities will require the revamping of failed policies and institutions at all levels – federal, state, and local. Public schools have adopted “zero tolerance” policies and back them up with schoolhouses equipped with metal detectors, tasers, surveillance cameras, and even armed security. Our criminal justice system now jails more people than any country in the world, including China, which has a population nearly five times as large (Pew, 2008:5), and yet it does less and less to rehabilitate prisoners and discourage recidivism. Making change happen on this front will require a new politics: a willingness to honestly question continuing racial disparities, an ability to forge unexpected coalitions, and a solid commitment to bettering the opportunities for American youth.

### **The Future is Now**

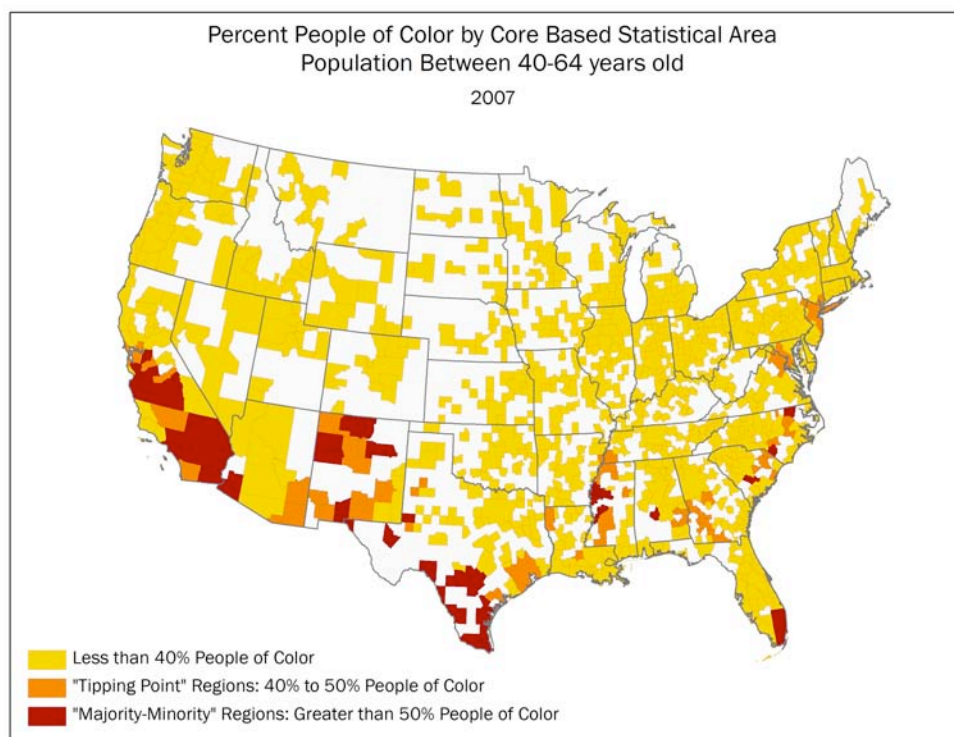
While the country may be three decades away from becoming “majority-minority,” the country’s youth is transforming at a much faster pace. Currently 43 percent of U.S. youth under 20 years old are people of color; and the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that within thirteen years, children of color will be the majority of the children in the United States.<sup>9</sup> By mapping the geography of today’s different generations, done below in a series of maps, we can get a snapshot of where the changes will be occurring first by seeing where these young people are today: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and the southern and eastern states up through New York.

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau News, “An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury,” August 2008. Accessed at <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html>.



**Figure 6. Percent People of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, Population 65+ years old, 2007**



**Figure 7. Percent People of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, Population between 40-64 years old, 2007**

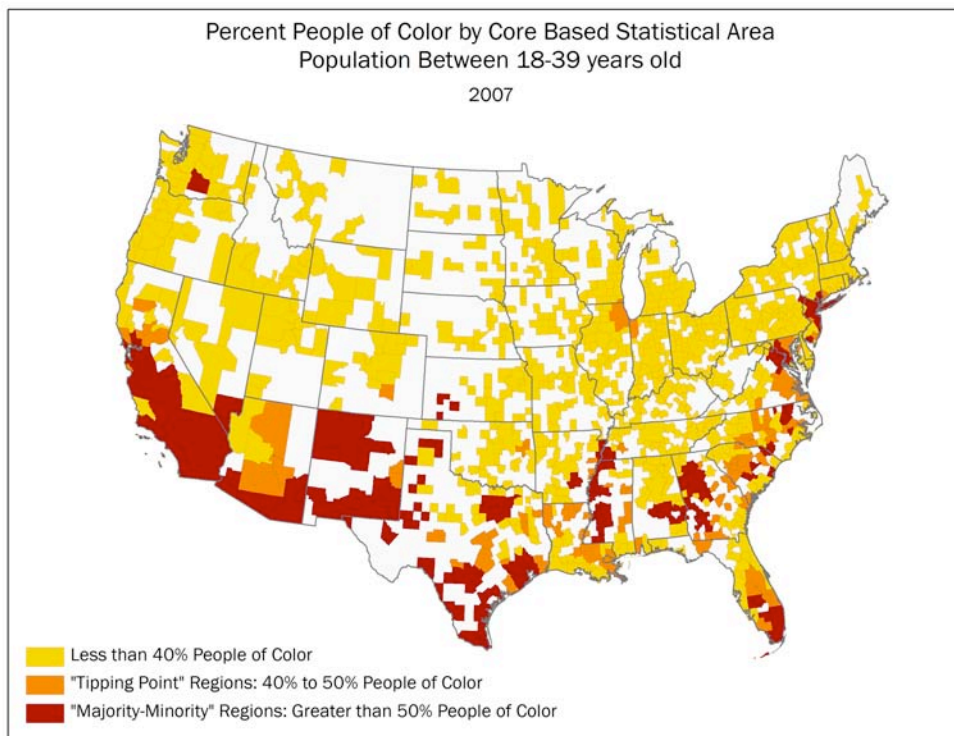


Figure 8. Percent People of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, Population between 18-39 years old, 2007

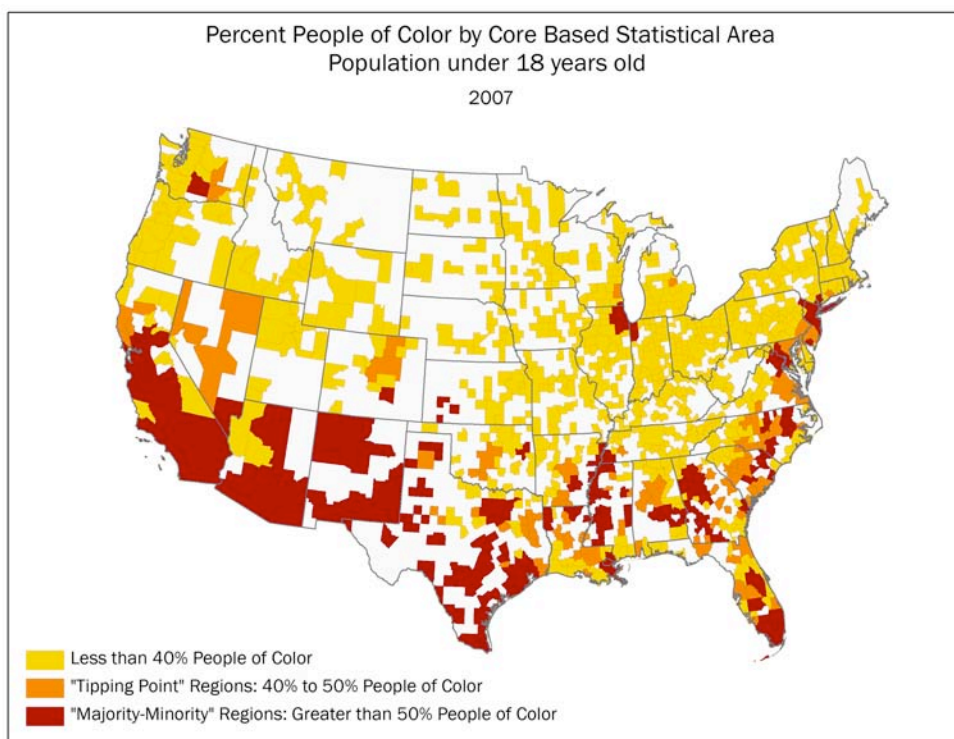


Figure 9. Percent People of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, Population under 18 years old, 2007

These young people of color are much more likely to live in poorer neighborhoods than their white counterparts. The Pew Center reports that of children born from 1985 to 2000, 66 percent of black children were raised in high poverty neighborhoods, compared to only 6 percent of white children (Sharkey, 2009:2). In Los Angeles, one-third of both Latino and black kids are poor -- a startling gap compared to the 9 percent rate for white children. But the degree of separation into poor neighborhoods is even more severe: 12 percent of white children live in poor neighborhoods, while 59 percent of both black and Latino kids live in poor neighborhoods.<sup>10</sup> Living in poorer neighborhoods also means reduced access to quality health and human services, more foreclosures, and increased likelihood of living near polluting and toxic land uses.

The usual remedy offered for disparate outcome is education. Education can boost individuals but if such an effort is divorced from the larger imperatives of community change, we are not likely to slow the pressures driving inequality. Indeed, there are fairly persistent gaps in earnings by race across various levels of education, with blacks outperforming whites only when they have a doctorate. Interestingly, the level of education which seems to shrink the racial gap the most – even more than a B.A. – is acquiring some college or an associate’s degree, a fact that speaks to the critical role of the post-secondary non-university system for youth of color (Blackwell, Kwoh & Pastor, 2010).

Growing inequality is bad for all of us. Fewer students are learning, more people are in jail, and fewer workers have good jobs. Youth of color are multi-cultural and often multilingual, thus positioned to take the lead in bridging barriers across communities. They understand most clearly what is wrong with our society because they experience it every day. Older leaders can provide vision and strategy, but it is the young who will carry us past the goal line. Unfortunately, while America prides itself on its legacy as the “land of opportunity,” as a nation we are depriving many youth of color the chance to showcase and use their talent to collectively forge a more just society.

### ***Implications for Inter-Ethnic Youth Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

While demography is our destiny, our fate is not determined. Being a majority does not automatically translate into having a greater hand in shaping the future. And having more people of color in leadership positions does not automatically translate into increased attention and resources to reverse the trends of racial inequity. Therefore, we need an intentional strategy to shape our future by preparing the next generation of leaders with the analysis, skills, and tools to “tip” the nation towards a more equitable future. “If we don’t, in 2042 we’ll be having the same conversation.”<sup>11</sup>

Our changing demography requires attention to two gaps, inter-ethnic and generational. It also requires special attention to place. The demographic changes discussed have a geographic component that affects how people of color ally at the local level – where inter-ethnic leaders are developed. The

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<sup>10</sup> PERE analysis of 2000 Decennial Census data (Ruggles et al. 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Alberto Retana, Director of Community Outreach for the Department of Education, at The Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Organizing and Leadership for the 21st Century convening, in Seattle, WA, on 22 April 2010.

formation and composition of neighborhoods has implications on how bridges need to be built across groups.

Addressing these two gaps requires patience: "[In] inter-ethnic, intergenerational organizing, the practical implications of bringing people together because of different languages and identities means you have to work a lot longer, harder, and smarter for the whole type of organizing we're doing," says Pramila Jayapal of OneAmerica.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Inter-Ethnic Gap**

The inter-ethnic gap is both about a failure to make the differences in economic outcomes by race and ethnicity a central policy concern and about a lack of leadership programs that focus on crossing ethnic and racial barriers through honest dialogue.

Reducing the racial disparities in economic and social outcomes will require the revamping of policies, institutions, social values, and power relations. As we become a minority-majority nation, no single racial or ethnic group acting alone will be able to achieve this scope and scale of change. Thus the challenge we face is building inter-ethnic coalitions that are grounded at the local level – where the adjustment to new neighbors and changing neighborhoods is occurring on a daily basis. Inter-ethnic coalitions are also needed not only between communities of color but also with white allies that share the same values and vision for a more equitable future.

The inter-ethnic gap is also about the gap in youth leadership programs that prepare emerging leaders to reach across different racial and ethnic communities. In order to build inter-ethnic coalitions, leaders will need to learn how to communicate across several constituencies and how to forge a new common ground, without dismissing the nuanced issues and needs of different groups along the way. Equipping white youth, as one practitioner reminded us, with social justice leadership analysis and skills is also important or they may continue to uphold the status quo.

Lessons can be learned from majority-minority regions, such as Los Angeles, where coalitions and alliances have come together with an explicit intent to bridge the inter-ethnic gap. As historically black neighborhoods have become mixed, or entirely Latino, conflict often ensues, as native-born blacks may fear immigrants undercutting already low wages or simply feel displaced by rapid community change. While immigrants do, at the local level, drop wages just a bit for low-skilled blacks, coalitions – not conflict – make more sense in fighting for policy change, especially as second-generation Latinos are coming to resemble African Americans' socioeconomic standing (Pastor and Carter, 2009). Coming together over common concerns and solutions will help both blacks and Latinos achieve equity.

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<sup>12</sup> Pramila Jayapal, OneAmerica, at The Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Organizing and Leadership for the 21st Century convening, in Seattle, WA, on 22 April 2010.



## The Generation Gap

Our changing demography also opens a generation gap that has two dimensions: 1) an intergenerational dependence that is being undermined by a gap in political power, and 2) a disconnect between veteran leaders and the younger generation in the social justice field.

Older white Americans and younger communities of color remain somewhat at odds – and the former holds greater political power in determining the allocation of public dollars integral to moving communities of color to the middle class, whether in education, the safety net, or our tax structure. At the same time, as these aging boomers increasingly rely on Social Security and Medicare, they will be depending on the taxes of the younger generations, immigrants, and people of color who will be keeping the economy afloat (Myers, 2007).

But boomers and seniors are often voting contrary to this intergenerational dependence. They often do not support funding for the very social services that they themselves once benefited from, including quality public education, and that are essential to the success and prosperity of immigrants and youth of color. Given their linked fates, building bridges and a new social compact between youth of color and older, white baby boomer communities are important. This imbalance between the distribution and control over the allocation of resources will not be reconciled solely by changing demographics and will require explicit interventions in new narratives and new understandings.

Within the social justice field itself, there is also a generation gap between the millennials (born 1980-2000), Generation X (born 1965-1979) and the baby boomers (born 1946-1964) who currently hold positions of leadership and authority. Elder activists have experience in challenging systemic inequalities, and youth often have limited understanding of the struggles of earlier generations. Gen Xers are next in line to step up in leadership but are either reluctant to do so or find there is no room at the top. Both Gen Xers and millennials can benefit from the guidance and mentorship of elder activists; however, this would require that elder activists view younger activists as agents of transformative change in their own right and allow them to assume leadership. Elders would also need to recognize that youth express themselves through different and equally valid forms of popular culture and organizing technology (such as cell phone texting and online networking).

Frances Kunreuther, Helen Kim, and Robby Rodriguez present a comprehensive and insightful look at the generational shift occurring in the social justice non-profit sector in their book *Working Across Generations: Defining the Future of Nonprofit Leadership* (Kunreuther, Kim, & Rodriguez, 2009). Closing the gaps they and we identify is critical but it is part of a much larger picture about changing how we think about young people (and how they think of themselves) and how we deal with race. We turn below to the first of these concerns.

## From Clients to Constituents ... to Change Agents

*"I didn't get a job at 17 because I was an amazing organizer,  
but because someone decided to invest in me."*

Cheyenne Hughes, youth organizer

Cultivating young leaders from low-income communities of color to engage in policy and systems reform efforts that will improve access to economic, social, and political opportunities in their communities is a strategic investment in the long-term health and vibrancy of the country. Transforming "clients" into "constituents" – and eventually to "change agents" – is, of course, partly a strategy for improved individual success. While the evidence is mixed on whether grades improve as a result of meaningful civic engagement and leadership experiences, such experiences do seem to have a positive effect on the resilience and survivability of youth in challenging educational institutions.<sup>13</sup>

Here, we are less concerned with these individual outcomes and more focused on how building the skills and experience of today's youth can create a political base for achieving and sustaining changes in institutional structures and practices that support improved access and outcomes for young adults of all races and ethnicities. While this study did not look at youth leadership programs and strategies funded by conservative foundations and organizations, there is much that we can learn from them.

Conservatives have been successful in grooming young leaders for the 21st century by funding their organizations; equipping them with an ideology and leadership skills; providing them with internships and real-life experience in the offices of conservative elected officials and think tanks; and convening young activists from different parts of the country together so that they see themselves as part of a larger movement (Dreier, 2009).

Putting into action the belief stated by the Gates Foundation that "all people deserve the chance to have healthy, productive lives" will require a long-term view and strategy.<sup>14</sup> Part of this is the slow march through institutions and policy change, and part of it is developing leaders in coordination with building a movement. Developing leaders takes years: "developmental theorists believe that sustained civic participation ... is a process that evolves throughout childhood and into adulthood" (Zaff, Youniss, and Gibson, 2009:11). Years 16 through 20 are particularly important for this leadership formation because it is "when earlier experiences and current events coalesce to help form lasting civic identities" (Zaff, Youniss, Gibson, 2009:17). And it requires that we close the loop of traditional youth development: engaging youth in transforming their own environments that will, in turn, support their individual success and well-being.

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<sup>13</sup> See the more extensive discussion of the relevant research later in this section.

<sup>14</sup> "Our Approach to Giving," The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Accessed at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/Pages/our-approach-to-giving.aspx>

## ***Where We Can Build an Infrastructure for Empowerment***

### **Social Movement-Oriented, Community-Based Organizations**

We believe that the foundation of an infrastructure for inter-ethnic youth leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be rooted in those communities where change is most needed. Thus, social movement-oriented, community-based organizations – and the ecosystems of organizations that support them<sup>15</sup> – form an essential pillar of this infrastructure. By social movement-oriented, community-based organizations, we mean those organizers who are building sustained groupings of individuals and organizations around a frame or narrative based on shared values that maintain a link with a real and broad base in the community and that build for a long-term transformation in systems of power (Pastor & Ortiz, 2009).

Unlike policy and advocacy experts, social service providers, or community developers; community organizers work towards change by developing leadership within the community. They prepare ordinary residents with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and opportunities to speak on their own behalf and engage directly with decision-makers. And while organized constituents will take on campaigns to improve the poor quality of education or reduce high incarceration rates, the real motivation organizers are trying to tap is anger at the unequal balance of power between the economic and political elite and everyone else.

Because no single minority constituency or neighborhood community group can alone achieve the scope and scale of policy and systems change needed to improve their condition, effective community-based organizations are explicit in their agendas and strategies for bridging across ethnicities, geographies, and social sectors. Common allied organizations include other community-based organizations, labor unions, faith-based groups, policy and advocacy organizations, and statewide and national networks. For more details on groups engaged in inter-ethnic alliances, see Appendix B.

While youth –university students, in particular – have been at the forefront of past significant social movements (for example, Students for a Democratic Society and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee during the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s), the current field and practice of youth organizing is relatively new. Since the early 1990s – sparked by anti-youth policies such as Propositions 209 and 21 in California – a growing movement of youth who are organizing themselves has generated an emerging field of youth-driven and -led organizations, campaigns, and alliances.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> To increase the effectiveness and impact of work at the grassroots level, there are a host of organizational intermediaries that provide capacity-building resources, technical assistance, policy and legal expertise, and training curricula and institutes. Some organizations have even taken on some of these intermediary functions based on the lessons learned in their own work and provide them to others.

<sup>16</sup> California Proposition 209, passed in 1996 by a slight majority, ended the use of affirmative action in determining admissions to public institutions. In particular, after Prop 209, admission and enrollment rates of African American students plummeted at the University of California, drawing criticism that the UC system furthered racialized elitism. Proposition 21 increased the penalties for youth charged with a variety of criminal acts, many of them gang-related. Youth and human rights groups opposed the proposition because of

The majority of youth organizing today is occurring at the high school and four-year university levels. Youth organizations are taking on issues that disproportionately affect youth of color, such as the education and criminal justice systems, but also broader social justice issues such as housing, immigration, and environmental justice. Many also integrate a broader analysis of anti-“isms” and work to counter prejudice based on age, race, gender, and sexuality. The tradition of university student activism continues under the leadership of the United States Student Association (USSA), founded in 1947 – long before the student organizations of the 1960s. Since the early 1990s, USSA has made an explicit commitment to build inter-ethnic leadership and to ensure its board is well-represented by race and inclusive of women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) students. Many of today’s leading organizers have come through USSA – or know or work with someone who has.

Grassroots organizing strategies hold great promise for reaching disengaged youth (those who are not enrolled in school, and in many cases, also out of work) by providing them with opportunities to engage in a variety of activities to develop their leadership, ranging from participating in community forums focused on issues that affect their everyday lives to mobilizing their peers to lobby decision-makers to support policies that increase access to post-secondary education and meaningful employment.

Contrary to the popular stereotype of disengaged youth as being undisciplined or unmotivated, these young people are willing to work for changes that benefit themselves and their communities. In fact, data suggests that young people of all socio-economic backgrounds are motivated to work on civic problems, though low-income youth are more likely to think that it is “very important” to correct inequities than their wealthier counterparts (CIRCLE, 2010). More often than not, they simply have not been exposed to opportunities for civic engagement. In other words, they have been issued “an inequitable invitation to citizenship” (Zaff, Youniss, and Gibson, 2009:8). They rarely have the opportunities to participate in organizations seeking to develop their leadership and engage them in defining the solutions to the structural challenges they face. The leadership development and empowerment that occurs through solution-oriented forms of civic engagement develops resilience and concrete life skills associated with educational achievement and success in the workforce.

Perhaps because the current youth organizing field is still in its growing stages, the research on the impact of organizing and civic engagement on youth development and education reform is relatively thin. Program evaluations suggest that organizing increases youths’ civic engagement.<sup>17</sup> The 2002 report “Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools: The Indicators Project on Education Organizing,” published by the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, suggests that an organizing approach to education reform adds the following value: 1) sustains change efforts over time; 2) persists in working towards

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requirements to be tried in adult court and its potential to increase juvenile incarceration – disproportionately for youth of color. The California proposition passed in 2000 with the support of over 60 percent of the state.

<sup>17</sup> See Social Policy Research Associates, “An Annotated Bibliography on Youth Organizing,” (Prepared for the Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing), 2003.

change; 3) creates the political will that moves officials to take action; and 4) produces changes that are reflective of parents and community members' concerns (Gold & Simon, 2002).

### **Community Colleges as Institutional Vehicles**

Given the critical role that the education system plays in preparing our future leaders, we propose that a second pillar upon which to strengthen and build out the infrastructure for transforming "clients" into constituents" should be based in the nation's community colleges. The salient educational institutions for reaching youth and building their civic engagement are high school, community college, and university. All of these institutions play a particular role in the "pipeline" of inter-ethnic youth leadership development; however, the most under-developed, untapped "playing field" is at the community college level.

The reasons for focusing on community colleges are three-fold: 1) recruitment opportunities given their embeddedness in the community both in terms of location and their student body composition, 2) leadership education and training opportunities given the multiple purposes and functions they serve – workforce development and higher education, and 3) opportunities to leverage resources to support and strengthen the infrastructure, or ecosystem, anchored by social movement-oriented, community-based organizations.

Community colleges have served as a gateway to either higher education or employment for socially and economically disadvantaged populations. Faculty and students at community colleges also tend to be more embedded in their neighborhood and more representative of the nation's increasing diversity than at four-year colleges and universities.<sup>18</sup> And because of the English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes offered, community colleges are also a gateway for new immigrants (Pusser & Levin, 2009).

Community colleges, in particular remedial education and ESL programs, are fertile grounds for organizing. Yet community college students tend to be the group most forgotten by funders, considered transitory and thus not worth organizing by community organizers, and, in general, perceived to have the least to contribute to our society. Because community colleges house the most "inter-ethnic" and "intergenerational" student population, they can be re-imagined as anchor points for the recruitment and preparation of the next generation of leaders.

Community college-based, social justice-oriented service learning holds promise as the "how" of transforming "clients" into an energized, educated, and engaged "constituency" of change agents. Also referred to as "critical service learning" (Mitchell, 2008) or "social justice youth development" (Prentice, 2007), this type of service learning blends classroom learning with hands-on, field experience that builds a social justice-consciousness. A distinguishing element of the classroom learning component is the critical analysis and skills-building that provides students with the tools to understand and address root

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<sup>18</sup> Abby Kiesa & Peter Levine, interview, January 14, 2010.

causes, such as unjust power structures, that perpetuate the problems they see and experience in their communities everyday (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Mitchell, 2008; Maybach, 1996; Prentice, 2007). In addition, the most successful service learning programs place students at a community organization, tie the classroom course work to the campaigns or topics being dealt with at those organizations to deepen their understanding of the issues and provide the space to reflect on the experience (Mott, 2005).

The literature and successful models on the ground, such as Public Allies of Los Angeles (PALA), suggest that school-based service learning can contribute to higher rates of youth leadership and academic achievement. Though research is limited and primarily focuses on high school or university-based programs, there is growing evidence of the positive impact of school-based service learning on personal, interpersonal, and inter-cultural development; decrease in “risk” behaviors; increased motivation to learn; and an increased sense of civic responsibility (Billig, 2000). In terms of academic performance, studies show mixed results on the impact on GPA; however, service learning students do demonstrate enhanced skills in problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development, and they are also more likely to graduate (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). According to CIRCLE analysis of the *Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS)*, 10th grade students who participate in community service through their school are more likely to take college entrance exams and less likely to drop out by 12<sup>th</sup> grade (CIRCLE, 2010).

The third reason for focusing on community colleges in this “clients-to-constituents” frame is that the public infrastructure can be leveraged to scale up and strengthen the first pillar of social movement community organizing. For example, trainings and curriculum developed in the process of recruiting and developing community leaders, building multi-racial alliances, and waging campaigns can be institutionalized and integrated into a community college-based service learning program. Not only does this help extend the reach to a larger base of students who enroll in the program, but it also provides students – who may also be members of grassroots organizations – with community college credits that could eventually lead to a certificate program or an Associate’s degree. It also adds a dimension of legitimacy and wider public recognition for the leadership skills that a grassroots leader acquires. Some have even called for the establishment of community studies programs for undergraduate degrees— at either the community-college level or four-year universities – and graduate degrees to formalize curriculum in this area (Mott, 2005).

While we think social movement organizations and community colleges are good institutional vehicles, they are not the only institutions that can be tapped to empower youth. Organizations that work with young ex-convicts and military veterans, two populations trying to reintegrate into society, can fill this “gap within the gap” by engaging youth who have frequently found themselves covered by no institution. Critical Resistance, for example, is a national organization with nine local affiliates. The local Los Angeles affiliate, the Youth Justice Coalition, is a grassroots organization led by youth ages 8 to 24 who have been labeled criminals. For veterans, Mobilize.org is gathering young veterans to help them set an agenda as they try to re-enter their communities. Kane (2006) estimates that about 90 percent of military recruits are non-college bound youth.

Younger workers, particularly those in working class and service occupations, are also difficult to engage. Amidst the press of low-paid jobs, poor public transit, and dependent children, they may not have the time for social justice organizing. Organizers report that they are among the most challenging group to attract and retain. This is one of many youth populations that is not represented in these pages but should be considered in any effort to build out the field.

That said, we remain convinced that two broadly important pillars for helping transform clients to constituents in this general space of youth of color are social movement groups and the community college educational system that so many of them encounter.

### ***Implications for Inter-Ethnic Youth Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

#### **Theory of Change Gap**

Challenging traditional youth leadership development with a “constituent-change agent” approach points to a gap – or perhaps better put, difference – in theories of change. By this we mean, the disconnect between a top-down approach to changing conditions for those below and a bottom-up strategy that builds an independent, well-organized constituency base to affect and sustain change.

We understand the healthy skepticism some have about bottom-up strategies for change. Increasing communities’ capacity for civic engagement takes a long time to take hold and it challenges existing power structures. Furthermore, the training required to develop leaders within the communities in which we have interest can seem like an unending process: youth may be deported, they graduate from community college, they cycle in and out of jobs and sometimes from prison or jails to communities, etc. Top-down strategies tend to be quicker, less expensive in the short-term, and may cause less upset for those in power, particularly if it becomes a civil debate between competing policy experts. Simply put, top-down can seem like a better bang for the buck.

However, as we have learned from the recent federal debate about health care reform, change requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies. We stress the latter because it is so commonly undervalued and misunderstood. More important, grassroots movements on either side of the political spectrum create the political space and will for decision-makers to take action. The ability to demonstrate large-scale support for policy changes either at the voting polls, at town hall forums, or on the streets, can change the political equation and thus the outcome. An independent, well-organized constituency base can not only effect change, but also ensure that the reforms are sustained in the long term. A top-down, policy reform approach that relies on a small cadre of policy experts and insider relationships with politicians and other decision-makers is bolstered when complemented by such an outside, bottom-up strategy.

#### **Institutional Gap**

Enabling a young person of color to get a higher education – both starting school and sticking with it – will make the biggest difference in their life-long income. Institutional support is key to ushering youth through higher education, particularly for low income youth and youth of color who often confront

more barriers to success. Many need to work while in school. Some are parents in need of child care. Others who are undocumented live in fear of deportation. And some may have criminal records and encounter significant barriers to finding a job that will allow them to pay for school.

This means that our emphasis on moving from clients to constituents should not be overblown: services are still critical. Opening the doors of success to these students means offering a package of support services. Beyond financial aid, this may include child care, immigration services, and job counseling and placement. Space for spiritual renewal should also be included. Public Allies, in particular, highlights the need for counseling, as many of these youth are at risk of dropping out because the multiple stressors are too much to deal with. This understanding also demands flexibility and forgiveness.

A second key institutional gap has been noted above: the tendency for leadership programs to target youth in either high school or university, leaving a space where one ends and the other does not begin. Integrating community college students – and finding a base within the community college system for this work – is a point of entry stressed by many of those we interviewed for this project.

## **Race is Real ... and Identity is Intersectional**

*“We know what predispositions are of people who are good at solidarity –flexibility, extroversion, tolerance, cultural empathy. They possess these qualities before they step into a context where they need solidarity. If we know that, we can cultivate those qualities.”*

Ange-Marie Hancock, University of Southern California

### ***We Are So Not Post-Racial***

Tomorrow’s leaders will have to deal with race in a meaningful way as our population and our leadership are visibly more diverse than ever before – just look at the cabinets of both former President Bush and current President Obama as well as the ranks of corporate America’s CEOs (see Blackwell, Kwoh, & Pastor, 2010). Partly because of this diversity at the top, we live in a world where the term “post-racial” seems to be gaining popularity. But as we noted in the Demography as Destiny section, real economic and social inequities between racial and ethnic groups stubbornly persist, suggesting that the term “post-racial” can provide as many blinders as insights.

In dealing with inequities, there is an argument parallel to the notion of “post-racial”: that the pursuit of racial equity may be best achieved by “universal” strategies as opposed to “particular” strategies. The universal, lift-all-boats approach can be useful; some regard it as more politically viable and effective because it unites people and deflects the notion that policies are serving one ethnic group. Many of the key issues of the civil rights movement have been anchored in a universal approach, with defenders of affirmative action often noting it has remained politically viable partly because its main beneficiaries have been white women.



But as Warren (2001) writes, you must be aware of race to be real about building coalitions about universal issues. In his talks with black church leaders in Texas, he found that it is talking about race – as uncomfortable as that might be – that actually builds trust. And William Julius Wilson, one of the most well-known proponents of universal strategies, has now rescinded his support of “race-neutral” strategies and now stresses the need for framing that facilitates a frank discussion of racial problems and builds broad political support to alleviate them. In his view, building coalitions to promote more targeted policies underscores the gravity of racial inequity and in doing so, gains widespread political support for the best, not the easiest, solutions (Wilson, 2009:141).

The post-racial notion also falls short in that it seems to imply that there are no differences within communities of color. Yet to achieve full-employment for all people, we will have to include some particular strategies that address criminal justice reform (for African Americans) and working poverty (for Latinos), to complement other efforts like school reform, college loans, on-the-job training, etc. These particular strategies are needed to lift the boats that universal approaches cannot.

### **Building Unity When There is Difference**

How do we deal with different racial identities on the ground? The most common universal framing may be to emphasize “class” over race/ethnicity in building alliances across diverse communities. Some organizers have found success in moving people away from a race-based identity towards building an identity rooted in work, class, or some other common experience. But while this is seemingly less contentious strategy, in the words of Alberto Retana, former organizer at the Community Coalition in South Los Angeles and now Director of Community Outreach for the U.S. Department of Education, “a lot of organizing often times ignores race entirely and assumes that the issues alone will unite people and it’s just not enough– that’s not good enough,” because communities experience issues in different ways.

Latinos and African Americans, for example, both need better and more employment. Both communities suffer from a broken workforce development system -but their problems and conditions are distinct. For example, blacks, especially men and youth, suffer from high unemployment. The issue for Latino immigrants is under-employment and labor exploitation. Both need a better performing education system at all levels – but major investments in adult education are especially important for the advancement of immigrant Latinos. Both need a rethinking of the criminal justice system— so that correction does not become destruction— but this is extraordinarily critical to African Americans in particular (Pastor & Carter, 2009). The issue is the same, but the experiences are different – and so too may be the solutions.

Young men of color are, perhaps, the most vital to involve in youth leadership and organizing efforts because they face the sharpest penalties and worst outcomes (Blackwell & Pastor, 2010). The neighborhoods in which they grow up restrict their opportunities, and thus they have the most to gain by making change and holding institutions accountable. However, they also seem to be the hardest to

engage. Low participation by males, especially by Latino men, was even noted in the two Los Angeles-based case studies we highlight below in the section on Promising Models, Hopeful Cases.

Addressing race in a serious and nuanced manner is not just a question of getting the policies right: it helps to bring more people to the table because they will hear their issue being considered and validated. Ignoring issues of identity may lead to what scholars call the “undermobilization” of minority constituencies (Bronfenbrenner & Warren, 2007). In other words, colorblind or genderblind approaches to engagement based on common class-based experiences may result in under-representation of those with whom the issues resonate most (Kurtz, 2002). For example, as Dorian T. Warren has shown, a union’s attention to race, gender, immigrant, and LGBTQ specific concerns can lead to high levels of engagement among diverse groups within an inclusive labor campaign (Warren, 2010).

### **Getting Beyond Race**

While we highlight race, we are actually talking about identity – and there is a need to move beyond past notions and understanding each others’ identity beyond race. Today’s youth are linked together through multiple categories of different identities - racial, cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, socioeconomic, etc. – that both connects them and leaves them never quite fitting anywhere. While we try to stay away from academic jargon, we find it hard to avoid here simply because the academic term is so precise: their identity is “intersectional.” Uncovering the nuances and complexities of the intersectionality of identity will help shed light on understanding problems and identifying solutions (Hancock, 2007).

Understanding experiences and struggles can help get to solutions and build effective coalitions. As one organizer pointed out, using rhetoric that “unity is power” and “bumper sticker slogans” will only get you so far when people are taking huge risks and need to depend on each other. For example, non-immigrants need to understand the reality of deportation for undocumented immigrants when they strike or protest and not make assumptions about their perceived lack of commitment to a common cause.

Indeed, another important lens of identity is nativity. Simply because immigrants have crossed borders does not mean that issues from their homelands have been left behind. For example, Japan’s takeover of Korea from 1910 to 1945 is a persistent issue for some immigrants, and frustration (to put it lightly) lingers. In rural California, a subset of immigrants from Mexico lives quite apart from other Mexican immigrants. Indigenous migrants still speak indigenous languages, have distinct cultural traits, typically work in the most oppressive sectors of agriculture, and are largely unrecognized. Services tailored for immigrants from Mexico often do not (or inadequately) reach indigenous communities (Mines, Nichols, & Runsten, 2010). Racial diversity is becoming increasingly complex as immigrants from more countries and ethnicities are establishing roots in America. Popular misperceptions and assumptions persist about who immigrants are and how we integrate them into the country.

Finally, recognizing multi-layered identity also extends to fully acknowledging the gender, sexuality, immigrant background, and religious faith of our nation's youth. Recognizing youth's diverse and complex identities can validate their experiences, develop their self-awareness and self-confidence, and further empower them to work for change. Effective models of youth development can recognize youth's multiple identities (based on gender, sexuality, immigrant background, religious faith, etc.) while developing understanding of the experiences of others with different backgrounds. In learning about this diversity, youth can also identify a common ground and shared fate.

Face to Face/Faith to Faith, for example, acknowledges how people of different religions are seen as "others" and tries to dispel that mentality by encouraging participants to seek out knowledge about unfamiliar faiths and experiences (Henderson & Feldman, 2006). Eboo Patel and the Interfaith Youth Core in Chicago have developed an interfaith youth model with an ethos of strengthening, rather than weakening, personal religious identities (Patel, 2007); the parallels to how one might approach "putting race up front to get race behind" are intriguing.

So, race is real and identity is integral. And acting as if it is not will leave youth of color without validation of their experiences, it will weaken diverse coalitions because of undermobilization, and it will generate broad policy solutions without the specificity and nuance needed to make a real impact. Moreover, bringing race and identity into the picture can, perhaps paradoxically, facilitate base-building organizers to look outside of their own communities, partly because a real discussion on race will allow them to better understand how to reach people beyond their narrow ethnic (or other) silos.

### ***Implications for Inter-Ethnic Youth Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

In our view, inter-ethnic organizations, community organizations, and coalitions are weaker if they only stress the common ground *or* if they solely focus on silos or ethnicities. Instead, we need honest conversations about differences on the way to an "uncommon common ground." This requires a deeper understanding of each other, and the multiple dynamics of race, as we have noted, above.

Millennials, today's young adults, generally tend to be more open to diversity – interracial marriage, for example, is generally a non-issue – and they are more accustomed to interacting with different races and cultures in their schools and extracurricular activities. However, presumptions of racial harmony often tend to be superficial as millennials have frequent contact with other races, but the quality of contact is not in-depth. This is good and bad news. Youth have a proclivity towards being open on the topic of race, but there is clearly still room to grow. Using the "Race is Real" framework, we note two gaps in the inter-ethnic youth leadership development field.

### **Framing Gap**

There is a gap in the public dialogue that keeps groups apart: how we address racial equity. Part of America, often white and of all ages, does not openly address race, and becomes uncomfortable when others do. Conversely, communities of color – particularly those who have been the victims of inequity – have trouble trusting leaders who do not address issues of race. For evidence of this, simply look at the

heated response to Obama's reaction to arrest of Professor Henry Gates. The same orator in his acceptance speech at Grant Park laced his narrative with quotes from racial justice leaders, like Martin Luther King, Jr., but in a way that racial equity advocates would understand without offending the color-blind majority.

But we need to find a way to close this gap – and that does not mean putting what is top on one group's agenda in disguise to fit another's. Indeed, many racial equity leaders argue that if we are going to really get to the root of ongoing discrimination, it will be have to be spoken about plainly. This will require finding a workable frame for our next generation of leaders. It will also require a message that is inspirational and unites and attracts a diverse populace.

A particular gap for organizations is finding the language through which to talk about race with their constituencies. Diversity trainings fail because, in the words of Tammy Johnson from the Applied Research Center, "people aren't willing to waste their time [talking about race] if they don't see a solid outcome."<sup>19</sup> Yet, oftentimes groups get paralyzed in conversations about interpersonal racism – and anger, fear, and tensions rise. How can organizations move past this paralysis to an honest conversation that will build consensus for tangible change? What facilitates a productive conversation about both structural and interpersonal race relations? Answering these questions is key to progress – and to identifying the targeted strategies needed to address the conditions of specific groups

### **Organizing Gap**

Rooted in the work of Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) founder Saul Alinsky, traditional community organizing has predominantly relied on narrowly-defined issues and demographic identities. Organizers approach people assuming that those living in the same economic class, racial group, or neighborhood will come to a shared, rational conclusion when presented with the facts pertaining to a particular problem such as poor education or lack of affordable housing. While this strategy has had its successes, its limitations are becoming more widely recognized and acknowledged as people often vote against their own self-interest or act with "mixed consciousness."

It is also untenable in the long run for a diversifying nation. Youth, in particular, are conscious of different dimensions to their identity: immigrant or native, gay or straight, Muslim or Jewish, white or Latino. But their destiny is one: contributing members to a healthy American society. How do we move beyond paralyzing notions of difference to a common, yet varied narrative?

"Values-based" organizing, informed by social values research, recognizes that people tend to view the world in terms of stories and images rather than facts and logic, and that they respond to visions and values that are consistent with their particular worldviews (Brownstein & Ito, 2007). "Values-based" organizing is an emerging term that captures a range of new organizing styles. Some organizations and alliances are organizing themselves around a set of values – rather than a policy or issues platform – to

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<sup>19</sup> Tammy Johnson, the Applied Research Center, at *The Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Organizing and Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* convening, in Seattle, WA, on 22 April 2010.

unite diverse constituencies. Some are finding frames and narratives that tap into and elevate the positive social values that they want to nurture, recognizing that a society's underlying social values largely define the playing field of policy debates.

Changing organizing styles will not be easy, but the values-based approach is beginning to flourish – it is what, in part, got Obama elected – and investing in this approach will help build the bridges and solidarity needed to effect large-scale, long-term change in a diversifying society.

## Lessons from the Field

The six gaps – 1) inter-ethnic, 2) generational, 3) theory of change, 4) institutional, 5) framing, and 6) organizing – present not only challenges but also opportunities for both practitioners and funders to come together in finding strategic investments that begin to bridge these gaps. This section highlights our findings from a scan of both theory and practice and offers lessons for how to build and strengthen the emerging and evolving field of inter-ethnic youth leadership.

### *Five Strategies to Close the Gaps*

#### **Identity Starts with “I” – Developing Individual Leaders**

At the core of this field is the development of young leaders who can make change for themselves. Leadership development, in and of itself, is a best practice in the field of organizing. It is good for the leader – they are empowered to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others – and it is good for the organization as an activated cohort of leaders will bring up the issues that really matter, move on them, and sustain the strength of the organization.

We draw on the expertise of several arenas of leadership development through organizing.<sup>20</sup> In the labor movement’s efforts to improve the economic outcomes of low wage workers, organizers build coalitions between white, African American, Asian American, and Latino workers. Youth activist organizations work to improve educational outcomes and are pioneering models in which youth set their own agenda and steer campaigns. Racial equity coalitions cut straight to the heart of the issue – they explicitly confront oppression and inequality engineered by social institutions. Community-based organizations typically confront racism and prejudice as part of larger campaigns to improve their neighborhoods. And interfaith organizers handle difference deftly: they discuss individual beliefs, are committed to understanding others, and use those differences as strengths – much like inter-ethnic organizers.

Indeed, before a shared identity and trust can be built within a group, youth need the space to articulate their own individual identities and the values that underlie their interests and actions. It starts with what Marshall Ganz, a lecturer at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and the architect of President Obama’s 2008 training for grassroots leaders, calls “the story of self.” Organizers working with diverse constituents emphasize the need to be intentional about creating a safe space for personal reflection. As they learn more about one another and are able to make connections among their individual stories, they also develop a fuller understanding of their own individual identity.

What was new and effective about Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign was that instead of saying “here’s what we can do for you,” organizers offered ordinary folks with “here’s what you can do to make

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<sup>20</sup> Appendix B includes a fuller overview of the different arenas of inter-ethnic leadership development.

a difference.” In communities where outside campaigns traditionally get little traction, barbers, for example, were empowered and used their chairs to make change.<sup>21</sup>

Scholar Ange-Marie Hancock expressed, “solidarity is much more deeply a personal process than it is an external, content-oriented process. We know what predispositions are of people who are good at solidarity (flexibility, extroversion, tolerance, cultural empathy). They possess these qualities before they step into a context where they need solidarity. If we know that, we can cultivate those qualities to make people be good at solidarity.”

In the words of one seasoned organizer, “you have to start where people are at, so you start off with their own ethnic identity.” You need to reach people, talk to them where they are at, then you can move their understanding, thinking, and values in order to connect them to other groups and sectors. This is not only applicable to ethnicity and race, but also to other identities, such as gender- or faith-based, that are oftentimes barriers towards the building of uncommon common ground.

### **The Tactics of Developing Individual Leaders**

1. *Creating the “Story of Self:”* To fill the Organizing gap, Marshall Ganz and the New Organizing Institute (NOI) have developed training curriculum that makes space to create the story of self – why that particular leader has been motivated to serve. This helps to connect values and practical action, both for the leader and the person with whom they are connecting. “The power in your story of self is to reveal something of yourself and your values—not your deepest secrets, but the key shaping moments in your life” (Ganz, 2009). In our interview with Jose Luis Marantes, he understood his family history of “doing anything it takes” to get out of Cuba as foreshadowing his daring work with undocumented immigrant students.
2. *Intentional recruiting:* To fill the Theory of Change gap, organizations often pursue highly intentional recruiting. Youth are not often asked to contribute to their communities, but are open to the possibility of becoming involved if asked. Organizations must be attentive in ensuring representation of the gender and racial diversity of their communities. Sometimes, this entails devoting additional resources for the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups, particularly African-American and Latino males.
3. *Recruiting from affected constituencies:* To fill the Theory of Change and Inter-ethnic gap, best practice organizations target youth of color from affected communities. For non-college youth, this is especially important as they are out in the community, working full or part time, or learning at community colleges. Great effort must be put into identifying the affected youth and, further, connecting them with an often unknown opportunity to make change. Targeted recruiting keeps organizations appropriately diverse. For example, Public Allies in Los Angeles is proactive in its recruitment, targeting specific communities so that their cohort does not wind up being composed of just affluent college students, many of whom tend to most easily

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<sup>21</sup> Personal conversation with Decker Ngongang (Vice President for Programs, Mobilize.org) on 22 April 2010.

gravitate toward the program. And money helps. Public Allies places their fellows in paid positions with community partner organizations, which makes it all possible since youth budgets are typically thin.

4. *Intergenerational mentoring:* Some groups are closing the Generation Gap by connecting their youth with previous generations of organizers and by seeking support of formal and informal “councils of elders” who have been involved in previous struggles for social justice. In Oakland, a “brotherhood of elders” that came of age in the 1960s meets regularly to connect among themselves which enables them to be more inspirational and impactful as they connect with and inspire younger activists. They are beginning to see a “train of effort and thinking that goes from 18 years of age to 60+.”<sup>22</sup> The United States Student Association (USSA) has a strong alumni network that is quite powerful – many of them work on the Hill or in major organizations. Their alumni give trainings and advise current students. Other examples include Beloved Community Center, where adult staff supports the development of youth organizers without taking over their work. Youth Together in Oakland calls on a group of respected “elders” to advise on campaigns, provide historical context to current campaigns, and provide other technical assistance.

*"Young people are desperate for mentors and want information and advice but they don't want to be seen as lowly receivers of knowledge. It has to be a two-way learning relationship to work; it has to be respectful in both ways, and genuine about that respect."* Tammy Johnson, Applied Research Center

5. *Supportive and Complementary Services:* As youth of color face multiple barriers, they cannot organize without the services to sustain them and to address their needs. As noted earlier, the Public Allies program offers a good example, with their staff coaching Allies one-on-one. Youth Together develops “individual success plans” to ensure that students are obtaining referrals to academic and other services to ensure their academic and personal progress. And some youth will need help communicating with their parents about the changes they are undergoing as a result of all of this. To truly close this gap, funders need to commit dollars to funding complementary services (i.e. social workers, academic tutors) to be part of the inter-ethnic youth leadership development field.
6. *On-going leadership development:* To fill the Theory of Change and Generational Gaps, organizations must constantly train the next cohort of leaders. These youth are high-need and highly-mobile, so turnover is constant. Organizations like the Center for Community Change, the Bus Riders Union/Labor Community Strategy Center, Brotherhood/Sister Sol, and Youth Together have regular trainings to bring the latest members up to speed and enter them into the leadership development pipeline. The Center for Community Change also has an Advanced

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<sup>22</sup> Joe Brooks, PolicyLink, at *The Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Organizing and Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* convening, in Seattle, WA, on 22 April 2010.



Leadership Training program to continue developing leaders. Most organizations offer their members a range of trainings that develop their grassroots organizing skills and move their issue campaigns forward.

Unlike traditional leadership development programs, a social justice approach to identity-building does not stop with “I.” Rather, the “I” serves as the foundation upon which to build solidarity and trust with others in the same racial, class, or gender group, and then with others across differences. The organizers we interviewed stressed the importance of building interpersonal relationships based on trust and understanding of each other’s life circumstances, and they all saw this as a key stepping stone in making connections to addressing root causes and understanding the need for structural change.

### **Transforming “I” to “Us” – Developing a Community of Leaders**

Our increasingly diverse demography and the widening socioeconomic and political disparities between racial groups threaten to undermine our nation’s future. To tackle this, we need boundary crossing and common understandings – but the lack of community amongst millennials (something that previous youth organizers, like SNCC, had) is a serious obstacle in this work.<sup>23</sup> Building social capital in communities most impacted by inequality is the first step to change. Inter-ethnic social capital can create lasting bonds between members working cooperatively towards common goals (Warren, 2001), but it requires a strong foundation of trust. Initial struggles with creating such a foundation can halt an organization in its tracks. Keleher and Morita (2004) warn against any weaknesses in this foundation, because when the coalition gets to work, opponents could use any weakness to rip the coalition apart. Therefore, an early and explicit focus on breaking down barriers and coming to a strong, common identity is an essential first step.

For the purposes of this report, we define social capital at three levels: interpersonal, community, and organizational (we address this last one more explicitly in the next strategy we consider). Effective and sustainable social change efforts rooted in diverse, underserved communities require a set of preconditions: trust and social cohesion between a critical mass of residents, a shared sense of community and common identity, and a minimum level of organization – either informal or formal institutions that create space for residents to “bond” within their own community, but also establish “bridges” to other communities. Community leaders can then leverage these conditions to organize and engage other residents in social change efforts. Brodtkin (2007) stresses how the personal and political come together in civic engagement, and, moreover, that coming to a collective identity and understanding the political ramifications of that identity can be quite motivational.

There is broad-based agreement among academics and practitioners that building social capital is a requirement to effect community renewal and improvement. With the influx of immigrants and the increase in different ethnic and racial communities sharing common space, dealing with racial tensions and exposing the roots of conflict must be addressed before bridges can be established between

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<sup>23</sup> Alberto Retana, Director of Community Outreach for the Department of Education, at *The Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Organizing and Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* convening, in Seattle, WA, on 22 April 2010.

communities. Some organizations shy away from talking too much about race because they think such discussions are divisive or get too “touchy feely in a Kumbaya sort of way.” Instead, they focus on building bridges by getting people to work on common campaigns. While there are differences of opinions and approaches in the field, we believe that having the difficult and often-uncomfortable conversations about race directly and honestly are essential (Pastor & Carter, 2009; Regalado, 1994). A reciprocal learning process that involves both intentional discussion and collective campaigning can build “bridging ties” and lead to a common identity (Briggs, 2003).

## **The Tactics of Developing a Community of Leaders**

### *Building Interpersonal Social Capital*

1. *Creating (Safe) Spaces:* The rigidity and pace of campaigns and organizing typically make it hard to create space for transformational conversations between leaders, but organizations that succeed make time for it and also make that space safe.<sup>24</sup> For example, the Public Allies program in Los Angeles (PALA) takes its time in building a stable foundation of trust among its cohort of youth before discussing race and conducting the “isms” training, about six months into their time together.<sup>25</sup> Part of PALA’s success is that their cohort is tested by fire; the cohort bonds around the intensity of the training on race and the common goal of working to achieve racial justice. Trust ensues.
2. *Invest in Staff Development:* Conversations about race are hard. Period. Youth organizations are particularly concerned about being inclusive and building trust, not only across racial lines, but also across gender and sexual identities. So while youth tend to be quite open around topics of identity, having the skills to be an adept and flexible facilitator is vital – not only to mediate dialogue amongst diverse members, but to also frame complex theoretical issues of race in a way that is both accessible and relevant. Investing in training from groups (such as the Interaction Institute for Social Change) is key to working through the tensions that will inevitably rise in conversations about race. There are distinct skill sets and tools to make these conversations bonding, instead of divisive.
3. *Hard on Systems, Soft on People:*<sup>26</sup> To close the Framing Gap, the best strategy for building interpersonal understanding is taking a systems-level view. In general, groups that start with race relations get frustrated and stuck – because blame is usually placed on individuals or cultures. On the other hand, a systems-level critique focuses on outcomes, institutions, and policies instead of people. Rinku Sen, a long time thinker on communication and race, believes that productive conversations on race approach internalized and interpersonal racism through a

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<sup>24</sup> Dushaw Hockett, interview, March 5, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> *Racism, sexism, etc.*

<sup>26</sup> A saying of John A. Powell, Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University.

systems lens (Sen, 2010). She is also an advocate of focusing on impact, not intention – saying there are more incarcerated African American males because of inequity, not because all police are individually racist, for example. As one organizer from the Beloved Community Center stated, “We always emphasize the human potential over the history of racial oppression and racism. We cannot do it unless we acknowledge that it is there.”

### *Building Community Social Capital*

4. *Creating the Story of “Us”*: The story of “us” is about the new community being built together and gets at the heart of the Organizing Gap. “Learning to tell a story of us is one critical piece of building community around values rather than just issues or interests alone” (Ganz, 2009). At their best, these stories include the nuances of the many community members but highlight the common oppression under which everyone lives. Following the difficult and deconstructive conversations around race, building these stories can be a constructive means of moving forward. The Center for Community Change and the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) use this tactic to build bonds between young organizers across state lines.
5. *Creating Safe Spaces within Single-Identity Communities*: While the increasing diversity of urban youth will require them to work together across ethnic lines, safe spaces are needed for them to address specific issues or concerns and develop pride and self-esteem based on their own identities. Several of the successful multi-racial justice organizations, including Gamaliel Foundation, Community Coalition (CoCo), Center for Community Change, and the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), allow for meetings and trainings that aim to address the interests and concerns of particular communities.

One organizer at the Center for Community Change has moved from working on immigrant-black relations to a project creating a “black space” that is conducive to affirming culture, building community, building power and healing within their black constituency base. His realization: you can only build bridges when your own foundations are not fragile and fragmented. While making a civic impact is important, communities also need a way to come together and heal, especially in the work of racial justice (Center for Community Change, 2008). This matters for white allies, too. Groups like AWARE-LA (the Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere –Los Angeles) are experimenting with “white space,” to create a place for white folks to work through their racial identity and come to the table ready to actively support an equity agenda, rather than using multiracial forums as a place for develop their own identity.

6. *Building Cross-Racial Trust*: To close the Inter-ethnic Gap, organizations are forging bridges between youth of different ethnicities and races who live in the same neighborhood. For example, Brotherhood/Sister Sol in New York and CoCo in South Los Angeles work with African American and Latino youth living in the same neighborhoods. Bridging these youth is particularly important because they make up such a large share of today’s youth, they live in close proximity, and their predecessors have struggled to find unity. Alberto Retana (formerly of

CoCo) states that the historic tension between the groups has been “manufactured by conditions or by people.” CoCo arms youth with this analysis and challenges them to be “unifiers” instead of dividers. The great news is that millennials are conscious of this manufactured tension and seem predisposed to finding common ground: one youth from CoCo remarked that it was frustrating how the newspapers keep highlighting African American-Latino tension when she does not see it play out that way in her daily life.

7. *Inter-Ethnic Curriculum*: To fill the Framing, Inter-ethnic, and even Generational Gap, many organizations have developed formal curricula on the historical context of systemic oppression and racism. By equipping diverse constituents with a structural analysis of racism, organizations seek to lay a more stable foundation for inter-ethnic collaboration. As the work of East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), CoCo, and Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) shows, immigrants, in particular, benefit from learning about how they reap the benefits from the African American civil rights movement. Meanwhile, African Americans learn to view immigrants as allies, rather than competitors for resources, as they obtain a racial and structural analysis of immigration issues. Brotherhood/Sister Sol and Youth Together also teach about the respective histories of groups’ struggles against injustice, different as they may be.

Social justice organizations serve as bridges for engaging people in relationships that transcend race, class, and individual identity. But organizers are quick to point out that inter-ethnic dialogue and trainings alone are not sufficient in building long-term, sustaining relationships. Coming together with a shared narrative around a common goal and achieving wins, no matter how incremental, is when “I” truly transforms into “Us.” When individuals see that they can achieve something by working together, trust and camaraderie are built. Seeing results by working together begins to lower barriers between groups. We will address the intersection of dialogue and practice in more depth but first we discuss how organizational structure can model inter-ethnic leadership.

### **Walking the Walk –Building Organizational Leadership**

The current formation of the social justice-oriented youth movement is rooted in an ecosystem of organizations - which provides a plethora of hands-on, real world opportunities for youth leadership development. Youth are leading projects within adult-led or multi-generational organizations, taking on organizational staff roles once held by adults, and forming their own non-profit organizations. Many organizers we interviewed are explicitly nurturing young leaders by involving them in the operations of the organization itself. Many also talked about the importance of modeling inter-ethnic youth leadership and cooperation by hiring staff that is reflective of their target constituency. And this is not seen as “helping” young leaders but more significantly as leveraging that leadership to effect greater change.

The Movement Strategy Center has developed a spectrum of youth leadership (see below) that is useful for assessing the degree to which youth are active participants in organizational decision-making and leadership. The six categories start with “Youth as Clients” up through “Youth Led” which is defined as

having youth in leadership roles, including Executive Director, and a majority of seats on the Board of Directors.

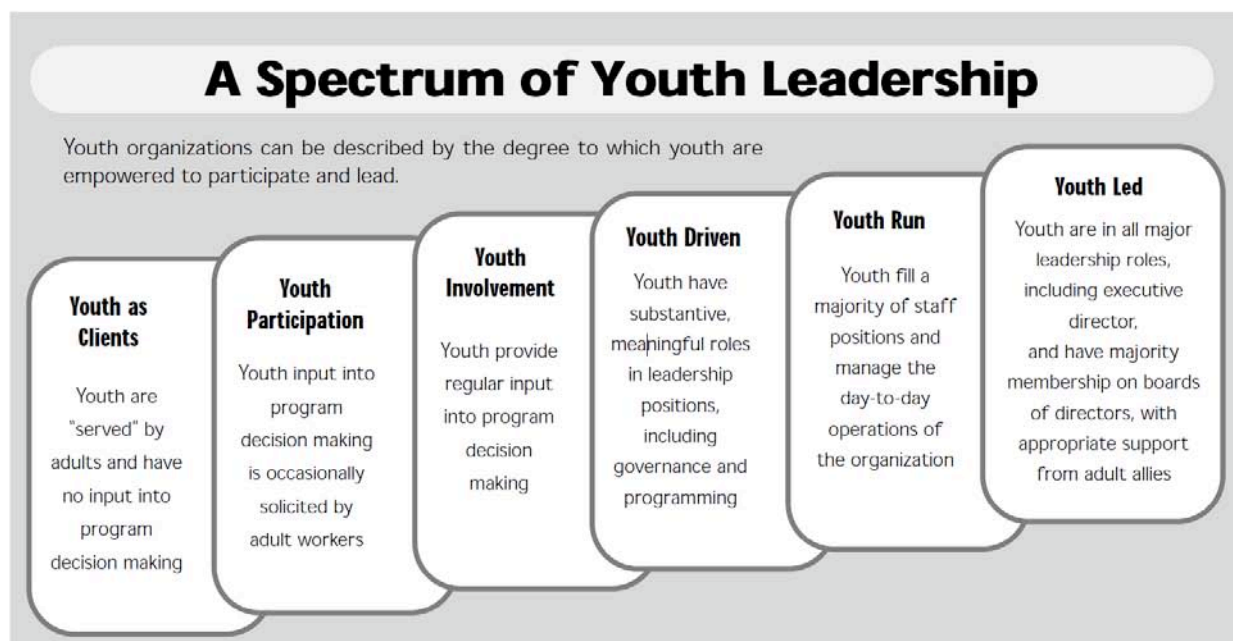


Figure 10. A Spectrum of Youth Leadership

### The Tactics of Building Organizational Leadership

1. *Inter-ethnic Staffing Composition*: All the organizations that we spoke with aim to hire staff that is reflective of the diverse communities they serve. Staff diversity helps organizations gain the trust of their constituencies. It is often cited that young men of color are more successful and effective at recruiting and retaining other young men of color – a demographic that is often hard to engage. Projecting a diverse public face is also important and allows organizations to model inter-ethnic relations. For example, the New Orleans Worker Center pairs immigrant and African Americans community members to facilitate outreach for their efforts or to speak at public hearings.

*"We try to be mindful of having men of color on staff due to young men of color tending to have higher dropout rates, more incidents with security, etc... It's important to have someone who reflects who you are for accessibility, and it does make a difference to have a strong role model of color."* Carmen Iñiguez, Californians for Justice

2. *Hiring Unlikely Candidates from the Target Community*: Some organizations are even more targeted in their hiring and recruit directly from the communities that they serve. Given the professionalized nature of the current organizing world which demands highly-educated organizers (Brodin, 2007, notes this tension in labor unions), this may require an organizational cultural shift and an explicit commitment of time and resources to hire and train "unlikely

candidates.” Sometimes such candidates do not possess higher education degrees or have limited English proficiency, but demonstrate natural leadership abilities and can bring existing relationships and legitimacy to the organization. Some organizations view hiring local staff as furthering their investment in the social capital of the community and will devote extra resources to provide them with the skills and knowledge to be successful within the organization.

*“I didn’t get a job at 17 because I was an amazing organizer, but because someone decided to invest in me. The way we operate now will make that difficult to do...If I came in now, we’ve raised the bar and have to run on that efficiency level – to bring someone on and teach them at the same time becomes difficult.”* Cheyenne Hughes, youth organizer

3. *On-going Staff Training and Support:* Recruiting staff is only half the battle. The on-going challenge is retaining them – training, mentoring, and individual support are essential. While the Community Coalition in Los Angeles is quite focused on this – and has generated leader after leader as a result – organizations vary in the type and amount of resources devoted to training staff. Some hire people with experience in other movements for their work expecting that these people will possess a commitment to and understanding of how to work with diverse constituencies. Others have formal staff development programs or wish they had the resources for such programs. Rinku Sen, President and Executive Director of the Applied Research Center sees the need to build the staff capacity of youth organizations to have an explicit and well-developed racial equity analysis. Because staff at youth organizations often play multiple roles as organizer, mentor, and teacher, it is critical that they “know why race is an important element to today’s world, (otherwise) a racial equity analysis is never going to take hold.”<sup>27</sup>

*“It’s not so much bringing [young black men] into the work as retaining them. What I’ve seen work is the individual worker support that the young men get and it’s a lot of behavioral stuff. They get a lot of pull to be reactionary, to not be involved in spaces such as these.”* Prishni Murrillo, Youth Together

4. *Building Ownership:* Part of keeping youth committed to an organization is giving them a sense of ownership; retention is all about ownership (O’Donoghue, 2006). The United States Student Association (USSA) tries to incorporate the ideas of all their leaders and let them set the organization’s agenda. It also means giving them ownership over programs, projects and timelines. Many youth organizations seem to be moving in this direction as former youth organizers are now Executive Directors who highly value youth leadership in their own campaigns.

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<sup>27</sup> Rinku Sen, interview, January 13, 2010.

5. *Leveraging the Community College System to Create a Pipeline for Non-Profit Inter-ethnic Leadership:* Under the leadership of Denise Fairchild, Community Development Technologies (CDTech) has built a Community and Economic Development Department at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College (LATTC) that offers a Certificate and an Associate's degree in Community Planning. Course topics include community economic development, community organizing, and non-profit management. Once youth are riled up after learning about the structural and historical root causes perpetuating the problems and conditions in low-income communities, they need the tools and knowledge to channel their anger into constructive, problem-solving actions.

Recognizing this need, Public Allies of Los Angeles has integrated courses in community and economic development at LATTC so that Allies learn how to build and manage non-profit organizations. CDTech now has plans to develop a community organizing school that will provide youth, including non-college-bound students, with community college credit through organizing trainings and placements in local community organizing groups. CDTech is also part of the Community Learning Partnership (CLP) headed by Andy Mott, former director of the Center for Community Change; CLP is exactly about figuring out how to root such opportunities to train social change agents in the country's community college infrastructure.

### **Bringing It All Together to Make it Real –Direct Action Campaigns**

Direct action campaigns engage and mobilize impacted constituents in the process of identifying problems, developing demands for change, and directly interacting with decision-makers to meet those demands. Campaigns can serve multiple purposes: 1) build trust among diverse constituents through the hands-on experience of working together on a common issue against a common adversary, 2) provide opportunities to build and exercise leadership, 3) create bridges with other communities and organizations through coalition- and alliance-building, and 4) lead to concrete changes.

Empowering organizations tend to focus on supporting members as they develop the skills and competencies to exercise effective leadership (Anderson & Milligan, 2006); in other words, they engage in the transformative work of turning “clients” into “constituents.” Empowered groups focus their positive influence over their community and relevant policy debates (Anderson & Milligan, 2006), and these groups have the capacity and influence to effect change. Campaigns are an opportunity and strategy within themselves for building an organization's capacity to be both empowering and empowered.

### **The Tactics of Direct Action Campaigns**

1. *Building Trust through Joint Action:* When asked about how to build trust and cohesion among diverse communities, practitioners point to the value of working side-by-side on a common campaign. Building trust requires political education, workshops, and safe spaces for focusing and directing conversations; however, discussion alone will not break down barriers. Taking on a

common adversary, fighting, and winning demonstrate to constituents that working together does achieve results.

*“We can’t do the kind of political education and workshops and conversations and get-to-know you and build trust, in and of itself, it’s not enough. It’s that engaged with actual practice, building a practice, taking a common adversary, fighting and winning; the two together, works. If we didn’t talk about it, problems would surface in the work. But we don’t build the trust either by just talking about it. The practice builds the trust over time.”* Tammy Bang Luu, National School for Strategic Organizing

2. *Creating Ownership around a Shared Vision, Theory, and Strategy:* Effective campaigns define a clear strategic objective based on a theory of “how we can turn what we have (resources) into what we need (power) to get what we want” (Ganz, 2009). A social movement-approach to campaign development creates opportunities for grassroots participation, leadership, and decision-making in defining the best approach and tactics to achieve the objective. This approach to organizing draws on the experience of some of the most successful grassroots organizing groups in the country such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), People Improving Communities Through Organizing (PICO), the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), and Gamaliel Foundation. Creating leadership opportunities, in turn, fortifies community ownership, broader accountability, and sustainability.

*“The capstone moment is when young people are used to adult culture, so they think “what should I do?– I want to do this but I don’t know if you’ll let me” - or on the other hand, a rebellion - “you don’t let me do what I want to do” – then I say “Why are you asking me? Isn’t it your organization? When are you going to own it?” – There’s a passage of ownership, people like top-down control so they don’t always like taking responsibility, but it also creates powerful agency to own the organization.”* Jose Luis Marantes, Center for Community Change

3. *Defining Incremental Wins and Celebrating Victories:* Setting strategic, achievable, and measureable goals is critical in planning and evaluating campaigns. It is important to define both “empowering” and “empowered” goals. In other words, “empowering” goals are about building the leadership of those involved in the campaign. “Empowered” goals are about how the campaign is building and strengthening the organization or alliance so that it can effect greater change. As confronting injustice and facing perpetual resistance during a campaign can oftentimes be emotionally discouraging – especially for young people who wonder why the challenges need to be there in the first place – recognizing and celebrating incremental wins are important, not only because of the actual achievements, but also because such celebration revitalizes the confidence of those involved and makes others want to join and stay part of a winning cause. The point is rather simple: For youth to get involved and stay committed to an issue, they have to make some progress forward and they need to have fun doing it.



*“[The undocumented youth who participated in our demonstration] realized the pathway to liberation could be in starting a group and building a collective identity and taking bold, risky actions that really created this level of euphoria that made them feel like they can change the world.”* Jose Luis Marantes, Center for Community Change

4. *Selecting Campaign Issues that Attract and Unite Diverse Constituents:* In order to build an organized inter-ethnic, broad-based constituency, organizations work on, or at least prioritize, issues that affect their diverse interests. Given that resources for organizing are scarce, most focus their energies on efforts that bring people residing or working in the same area to address a common cause. In other words, ensuring that the diverse ethnic groups affected have a direct stake in the success of campaign efforts. Youth groups address issues such as educational justice, racial profiling, and poverty-related concerns that directly impact diverse young people, particularly low-income youth of color. Faith-based and community groups focus their energies on neighborhood safety, housing, transportation, or other issues that similarly affect more than one ethnic group. And framing the same issues in different ways can help attract different groups, too. For example, framing an employment issue through a criminal justice lens might attract young black men, while framing it around immigrant rights might attract young Latinos or Asian Americans.

*“Los Angeles is so segregated, if we did one neighborhood, it wouldn’t be very racially diverse - but instead we organize on the bus and in high schools, and the bus is a very public and diverse space.”* Tammy Bang Luu, National School for Strategic Organizing

5. *Pushing the Envelope to Overcome Inter-ethnic Conflict and Contradictions:* Building inter-ethnic alliances with the influence to steer the country towards a more equitable future requires more than uniting around “comfortable” issues. Multi-issue organizations use one issue to bring in constituencies, but then provide political education and bridge personal relationships between diverse individuals to gradually challenge them to make connections to other issues and movements they may not initially support – older immigrant members supporting marriage equality, for example, or African American criminal justice advocates for immigration reform.

*“Our members are very vocal in the immigrant rights and pride, marriage equality, and reproductive justice movements. They engage in the contradictions in their own communities – in the Latino community, there are many who don’t believe in reproductive justice or abortion, but they may believe in worker rights...It means engaging your base where they’re at and engaging over time, building relationships through education and leadership development and exposure. People move over time. It’s about having that thoughtful and deliberate engagement.”* Tammy Bang Luu, National School for Strategic Organizing

6. *Making Issues Real, Relevant, and Urgent to Inter-ethnic Communities:* To achieve multi-racial cooperation, organizational leaders frame issues so that members clearly understand how

interests are shared across racial and immigrant/non-immigrant lines. Marshall Ganz's "story of now" is about creating the urgency for people to take action. This entails articulating the challenge we are facing in a way that is grounded in the "story of self" and the "story of us" and that points to the "hopeful choice" that people have to rise up and do something (Ganz, 2009). In building inter-ethnic alliances, organizations take on issues that at face value may not seem relevant to one constituency base but frame them in ways that broadens their understanding and makes issues real, relevant, and urgent. For example, the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) frames immigrant rights' issues in the context of improving working conditions for African-Americans. Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) draws a link between the criminalization of people of color and immigration enforcement. Californians for Justice supports the Dream Act as part of a larger effort to increase greater access to higher education for all.

### **It's Time to Grow Up – Taking the Field to Scale**

In the mid-1990s, youth and students mobilized against California Proposition 209 which eliminated affirmative action practices in the state's universities and public institutions. In 2000, California passed Prop 21 which increased the penalties for youth who commit crimes, sometimes sending them to adult prisons. In 2006, youth turned out *en masse* to rallies and demonstrations protesting the proposed Congressional crackdown on undocumented immigrants. These were formative moments for the inter-ethnic youth leadership field, which has now come to what might be adolescence.<sup>28</sup> As Kimi Lee of the Movement Strategy Center puts it, "It's always been an emerging field; it's been evolving. In everything I've seen, it's experimental or evolving, like 'let's try this right now.'" So it is an appropriate time to be thinking about how the field defines itself, how to stabilize the field, and how to take it to scale.

Youth civic engagement is about broad-based change. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the scale or geography of social movements. This is partly because while most mainstream movements in the U.S. traditionally began in the workplace, they now also evolve from grassroots community organizing – and so the spatial frame of reference has changed. But it is more than a community-workplace dichotomy: while the nation-state was once the focal point for civic engagement, a variety of factors have combined to make local, regional, and state platforms equally important and oftentimes more relevant.

Making a national impact will always matter because youth are affected by federal policies in the arenas of criminal justice, immigration, and education, for example. However, the local level is where communities establish their identities, and also where elites try to focus conflict– as in African American-Latino tensions which are often sharp at a neighborhood rather than leadership level.<sup>29</sup> Organizers looking to resolve these tensions as well as make progress on issues of inequality have increasingly

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<sup>28</sup> See Brodtkin (2007) to read the stories of some young activists who came to political consciousness turned to civic engagement in Los Angeles' immigrant worker and youth-led campaigns against racialized voter initiatives.

<sup>29</sup> Marshall Ganz, interview, September 13, 2009.

thought about metropolitan regions, partly because the last decade or so has seen the rise of regions as economic units in the world economy (Pastor, Benner, & Matsuoka, 2009). For example, there was a wave of local living wage laws and regional labor organizing prior to any such wage hikes on the national front – change has been coming from the region “up” rather than the nation “down,” and smart leaders have taken advantage of this new causal route (Pastor & Ortiz, 2009). Moreover, focusing at the regional level -- where relations are face to face – helps keep the national level from feeling too remote.

As the inter-ethnic youth leadership development field defines itself and stabilizes, it will be important to start thinking about scale. In the previous discussion of strategies, we relied on best practices we saw in the field of inter-ethnic youth leadership. In this section, we highlight tactics that we have also learned from the broader social movement field about getting to scale.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Tactics of Taking the Field to Scale**

1. *Scaling-up Civic Engagement:* To fill the Theory of Change Gap, youth organizations need to take on geography. Many youth organizations stay local, but engaging at the regional and national levels matters in terms of long-term impact. Californians for Justice leads the Campaign for Quality Education, a statewide alliance of over 100 organizations working for education policy reform with a racial justice lens. United States Student Association (USSA) comes close to being a national voice for university youth. It is youth-led and directly engages in changing policy through campus organizing around the nation. Community colleges are an under-tapped opportunity for scaling up civic engagement from the local to the regional and national levels. Their students tend to be from the most disadvantaged communities, yet there is a lack of student organizing on community college campuses.
2. *Cultivating Large and Growing Organizations:* There is a tendency to think that small must mean authentic, and this is a special danger in the leadership development field given the high value of building strong personal relationships. But the scale of the social problems youth face, and the disproportionate weight of power on the other side, often requires a scale of organizational capacity to match. We do not mean to dismiss small groups, many of which are doing excellent work and are critical in the social ecology of change, but we think it is important for the health of the field that there are anchor organizations with the scope, sophistication, innovation and reach to be able to challenge power and policy. While we found some frontrunner organizations, there were no true anchors in the field of inter-ethnic youth leadership development. Developing a cohort of anchor organizations that can lead with humility and keep on the cutting-edge of innovation is a central challenge.
3. *Engaging and networking organizations:* Getting to scale requires collaboration between organizations – big and small, old and new, with similar and different trajectories – so as to make a real impact. After all, no one wins alone. This requires building relationships and

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<sup>30</sup> We draw heavily from an earlier PERE publication “Making Change: How Social Movements Work and How to Support Them” (Pastor & Ortiz 2009).

engaging in networks beyond an organization's immediate constituency. Peer-to-peer learning is critical – and it is an area that seems ripe for investment and growth. At the state and national levels, this may mean creating alliances with both the usual and not-so-usual suspects. While some collaboration is dispositional (can you really play well with others?), some of it is managerial, and so investments in improving organizational effectiveness, including the training of effective leaders, is important. Understanding one's role in the broader social movement ecology, and working effectively to support other strands of the movement, is a key needed capacity.

A word regarding how foundations fit in this mix: Foundations may find this work highly attractive but they should play the role of supporters not partners, partly because they arrive with so much power and partly to retain an objective stance. They also need to be aware that they are backing groups likely to pick a fight – it might be a good fight, it might be the right fight, but it is always likely to involve struggle against entrenched interests. Be prepared, in short, for the inevitable blowback: if change was easy, it would already have happened.

4. *Networking with Other Movements*: The field needs to find potential allies in other movements. Past successes to make change – like the ability of the Republican Party to significantly remake American politics in the '80s – was largely due to welcoming a broad range of interests. Networking with other movements may help to address the generation gap and provide youth organizers with a historical perspective on their work, inspiring them by rooting their efforts in the long history of social movement organizing, as well as giving them insights into proven strategies for what works and what does not. The youth civic engagement field has found success in this: the Center for Community Change has effectively connected youth to the immigrant rights movement – and it has strengthened both fields in so doing (see our case study below). Youth organizations that are too exclusive or too focused on building their own group may fail to build a broad-based movement that will ultimately strengthen and sustain them; the goal is to find those who seem to view their own activities as streams flowing into a raging river of social change.

*'...you have a strong youth movement and they are so connected to that issue [the DREAM Act] and create an identity around it. Then you have a strong identity around comprehensive immigration reform, which is led by an older generation. I used to say, "Dreamers, if you connect your heart only to the DREAM Act, you'll be moved only up and down rather than if you identify with an immigration youth movement."'* Jose Luis Marantes, Center for Community Change

Our alternative frame for inter-ethnic leadership development creates gaps which are also opportunities to act; the organizations we spoke with are pioneering strategies to close those gaps. In the table below, we summarize how our six strategies and tactics fill these gaps. We do not pretend that this is an exhaustive list of best practices. There were numerous organizations engaged in pioneering work that we wanted to speak with but – with the inevitable limits of time and resources – simply could not. And

there are surely excellent organizations we did not even know to interview. Furthermore, sometimes we choose the best practices that need to be highlighted the most. For example, youth leadership development curricula is pretty standard, but we choose to highlight portions of that curricula that are central for closing the gaps we identify and that should definitely be the standard throughout the field.

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### ***Promising Models, Hopeful Cases***

In this section, we profile four programs that offer promising models for the field. These examples, among many others that deserve equal attention here but we could not include, illustrate distinct approaches to getting youth actively engaged not only in changing themselves but their community as well. These types of programs and partnerships are forming an emerging national infrastructure and can provide lessons for building the field at a scale needed to prepare for 2042.

The first two profiles, Los Angeles' CDTech-LA Trade Tech College-Public Allies partnership and Silicon Valley's De Anza College, are both pilot sites of the Community Learning Partnership which is focusing on creating educational pathways into youth and community organizing in the nation's higher educational institutions. While both programs approach youth leadership through a social movement prism and seek to leverage the community college infrastructure, their approaches differ due to the unique contexts in which they operate.

In South Los Angeles, we highlight Community Coalition's inter-ethnic, intergenerational approach to engaging high school students in campaigns to improve their schools. Their efforts have not only addressed the inadequate and unequal distribution of resources at the nation's second largest school district but have also generated new political leaders in the process.

To highlight the role that technical assistance, intermediary organizations can play in strengthening the field, we look to Washington, D.C.-based Center for Community Change and their experience in training the next generation of organizers. Based on Marshall Ganz's Camp Obama model, CCC conducts a training-of-trainers that prepares young people to organize in their home state as part of a national campaign for immigrant rights and immigration reform.

### **CDTech, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, and Public Allies**

Under the leadership of Denise Fairchild (who has since gone on to head Emerald Cities in Washington and has been replaced by Benjamin Torres), the non-profit organization CDTech runs the Public Allies of Los Angeles (PALA) program. CDTech does so in a way that both models a "race is real" and "client to constituent" framework *and* weaves together the community college and local social movement infrastructure. CDTech is thus not only exposing the next generation of leaders to a social justice awareness but also institutionalizing the field of community organizing at the community college-level, illuminating for youth a clear pathway to organizing as a career goal.

In the past 10 years, PALA has placed Allies in over 100 organizations in Los Angeles, and 75% of its alumni go on to work in the nonprofit or public sector. The program has developed an intricately balanced curricula that confronts the tensions that arise when discussing race in diverse organizations, leveraging collective action with well-facilitated and explicit discussions; interpersonal with structural racism; and deconstructing social issues with constructive alternatives.

PALA is housed within CDTech's Working Democracy Division which seeks to strengthen community engagement, partnerships and inter-ethnic and cross-cultural relationships that build social capital and strong communities. CDTech also runs the Community and Economic Development Department at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College (LATTC) that offers a Certificate and an Associate's degree in Community Planning. Course topics include community economic development, community organizing, and non-profit management. LATTC is one of nine campuses in the Los Angeles Community College District. The Fall 2009 student body composition is 54% Latino, 31% black, 7% Asian, and 6% white. Nearly half of all students (49.8%) are taking courses to prepare for the workplace and nearly half are working more than 30 hours per week.<sup>31</sup>

CD Tech leverages its relationships with LATTC, traditional youth development and community development organizations, and community organizing groups so that PALA is part of a nascent pipeline of social justice leadership for young people ages 18-30. PALA starts with the standard 10-month AmeriCorp program that combines full-time, paid apprenticeships in non-profit organizations with intensive leadership skills training, community-building projects, coaching, and critical reflection. However, from student recruitment to alumni engagement, CDTech runs the program with a strong social movement prism.

Not accidentally, PALA is the most economically and racially diverse chapter amongst the national program's 15 affiliates. PALA staff is intentional about forming a diverse cohort that balances race, class, and educational levels; however, in practice, it is difficult to strike that balance. In a proactive effort to recruit youth from low-income and working class backgrounds, and African American and Latino men especially, they partner with local youth programs and community development agencies and recruit at high schools in South Los Angeles.

Their ideal cohort composition is one-third college graduates, one-third some college and one-third no college; however, due to recession-related staff cutbacks, organizations are requesting college-educated Allies and are less willing to invest in non-college youth. As a result, in this year's cohort there are 32 with Bachelor's degrees, 6 with some college, and only 2 with a high school degree or GED certificate. Additionally, there are few males of color. Of this year's 21 Latino Allies, only 3 are male; of the 12 African American Allies, there are 5 men – actually an improvement from the last two years, when the program only had 1 African American male Ally.

Based within LATTC's Community and Economic Development Department, PALA's curriculum is reflective of a "race is real" and "clients to constituents" framework. PALA supports a diversity that is "grounded in a values system and understanding of how to negotiate with each other" that will "create the tipping point for a community revolution" aimed at influencing policy, economic development, and the built environment of the local community.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Student characteristics data from the Los Angeles Community College District's Office of Institutional Research and Information available at <http://research.laccd.edu/student-characteristics/index.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Torres, interview, January 12, 2010.

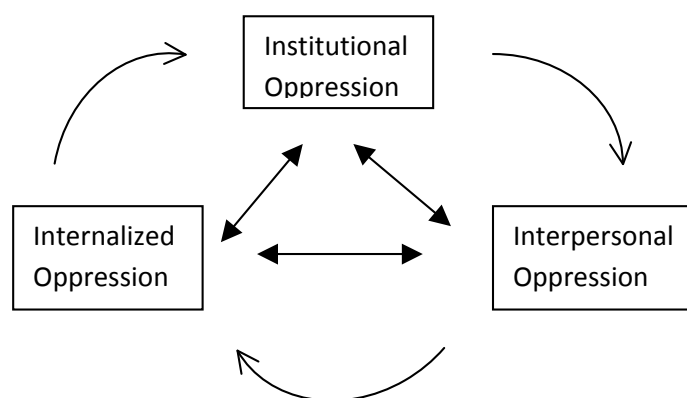
The program offers 12 units of credit that equips participants with both critical political analysis and practical skills. The course topics range from community economic development and nonprofit management to discussions on race and power. According to Benny Torres, now Executive Director but then Vice-President of Working Democracy at CDTech and Director of the Community Planning Program at LATTTC, “What we found in the past was that PALA graduates were good at deconstructing but were not great at constructive equitable structures. So we transitioned the program in 2005 so that they would take classes in community and economic development at Trade Tech and learn how to build nonprofit organizations.”

<b>ALLY TRAINING TOPICS</b>
Personal Leadership Development
Communication Skills
Placement Reflections
Race, Power, Privilege, and Oppression
Introduction to Team Service Projects
Group Dynamics
Project Planning
Power
Race, Power, Privilege and Oppression Continued
Facilitation and Team Service Projects
Introduction to Asset Based Community Development

The ambitious program means that Allies are involved in PALA activities 50-60 hours a week, which is especially challenging for “at-risk Allies.” On top of the program’s demands, at-risk youth struggle to address challenging personal and family circumstances. In the team discussion on race, a male African American Ally recounted being wrongfully detained in a holding cell the day prior, after being mistaken for someone who had just robbed a liquor store. These Allies, says Director Miesha Watson, are the ones who take conversations one step deeper, but the hardest part is getting them to “hang on” in the midst of the chaos that confronts them. She stressed the need for funding to hire social workers who can offer additional support services and ensure that the most critical, at-risk Allies persevere and succeed with their fellow team members.

PALA’s two-day training on “race, power, privilege, and oppression” is purposely scheduled halfway through the year – allowing the cohort to first establish trust. The training starts with personal stories and sentiments related to race and class which are then woven into an historical and structural narrative. The training also includes time for reading and written reflection, break out groups, as well as instruction in the nuanced definitions of institutional, interpersonal, and internalized oppression. The terminology equips Allies with the vocabulary and structural framework to understand, process, and contextualize their experiences and family histories. PALA’s emphasis on building helps Allies focus on transitioning from discussing experiences of oppression that are oftentimes emotionally exhausting to creating alternative alliances for racial and economic justice.





**Figure 11. Racial Oppression Schematic**

In an effort to further fill the leadership pipeline gap before and after PALA, CDTEch recently launched a second-year program that trains Allies in professional development. Some alumni return to conduct trainings for current Allies. In 2009, CDTEch launched a six-week Green Corps Leadership Summer Internship, which exposes youth of color from South Los Angeles to career opportunities in the green industry and offers temporary full-time employment in the green job sector. It also serves to introduce youth to PALA; it is yet another recruitment venue to get hard-to-reach youth of color into PALA. Recognizing that 10 months is not sufficient but that at least two to three years of leadership development and constant engagement is needed, CD Tech hopes to start a Community Organizing School that would train young folks in community organizing and allow them to get community college credit in organizing. This effort is part of a larger national network in 8 cities.

The unique partnership between CDTEch, LATTC and PALA illuminate the possibilities of how community colleges can institutionalize inter-ethnic youth leadership in their curriculum and certificate programs.

#### ***Race is Real – How Diverse Cohorts Matter***

*In a continuation of a prior discussion on race, facilitators opened up the day by creating space for Allies to share their personal stories and sentiments with respect to issues of race and class, both an emotional yet affirming process. One Ally recounted a time when a classmate told her that Latino immigrants were just used for cheap labor, but the Ally rebutted, “My grandparents aren’t cheap labor. My uncles aren’t cheap labor, and I know my cousins are not just cheap labor.”*

*Facilitators then guided the group to weave individual experiences as part of a historical and structural narrative. The educational diversity of Allies meant that they could educate each other and were able to minimize the dominance of the facilitators. In response to one Ally stating, “I don’t like the term people of color because I don’t get it,” another responded to him by elaborating on the social origins of the term, and also tied in her own undergraduate studies on the racialization of Irish immigrants in the U.S. to guide other Allies through thinking about the concept of “whiteness.” Through a more personal lens,*

*one of the few Latino male Allies in the room shared his experiences of race as experienced in the criminal justice system. He described the extraordinary obstacles he faces everyday as a result of his criminal record, whether he's being pulled over on the road or applying for a job.*

*Allies not only educated, but nurtured each other. As some struggled to process deeply rooted feelings of self-hatred and think through the "messy" politics of race and class, some also forged ahead with hope, emphasizing the importance of self and community love in organizing for systems change. "I hate injustice because I love my people...I'm serious when I tell you that I love you all," an Ally announced to the room. Amidst a heavy conversation, facilitators intervened to remind Allies that the role of these conversations is to "dig deep – not to turn the dagger – but to understand love for each other from a real and not artificial place."*

### **De Anza College's Institute for Community and Civic Engagement**

Located in the Silicon Valley – a place marked by great wealth but also by a diverse, often immigrant population struggling in the shadows of the high tech industry – De Anza College is forging a pathway for other community colleges in preparing the next generation of civic leadership for a diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the 2008-09 annual report, the largest ethnic group accounting for 38% of the student population is Asian, Pacific Islander and Filipino. The next largest racial group is white at 21%, then 16% Latino, and 6% African American. About 44% of students are from San Jose and 21% from the college's immediate neighborhood. With 1,600 international students, De Anza is one of the largest community college programs for international students.<sup>33</sup> De Anza College is known for being one of the top transfer schools to the state's four-year university system. They also offer a range of vocational certificates.

Under the leadership of College President Brian Murphy, increasing diversity and closing the racial academic achievement gap are top campus priorities. The college is committed to increasing enrollment among students from historically underrepresented communities, specifically Latino, African American, and Filipino. Yet in order to ensure their academic success, the college recognizes the need to engage and retain diverse students. Civic engagement, service learning, and campus-community collaboration are explicit strategies that the college is undertaking to achieve their equity goals. In fact, one of the three key points in their mission statement is to "challenge students of every background...to serve their community in a diverse and changing world."<sup>34</sup>

In addition to their academic achievements, President Murphy also wants the college to be known for equipping students with the skills to become organizers to engage their own community. He is dedicated to creating a space at the college where it is the norm to learn political skills and become organizers. To institutionalize such a space, the Institute for Community and Civic Engagement (ICCE) was established about five years ago with the following goals:

<sup>33</sup> State of the College Annual Report 2008-2009, (Cupertino, CA: De Anza College), June 2009, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> "Our Mission," De Anza College, available at <http://www.deanza.edu/about/mission.html>.

- Empower students to be agents of change in the social, economic, political realities of their lives, their communities and beyond;
- Define education as a transformative and deeply relevant force in students' lives;
- Emphasize the teaching and practice of democracy for advocacy and change through community-based learning and collaboration;
- Embrace the cultural and social contexts of students as learners representing different ways of knowing, understanding, and experiencing; and
- Foster a democratic environment in our interactions with each other and in our efforts for institutional change.

ICCE is developing an educational pathway from high school to post grad for community organizing. Students can pursue a certificate of "Leadership and Social Change" by completing a course on "Grassroots Democracy: Leadership and Power" along with 14 other units of courses listed as part of the Community Service Learning (CSL) program. ICCE's service learning is focused more on community empowerment/community organizing than in "volunteering." ICCE also offers an Internship Program, during which students can intern during their sophomore year with a local community-serving organization, to put their learning into practice.

We highlight De Anza College because it offers a different community college-based approach than CDTech-LATTC-PALA. The difference in approach is due to the unique contexts in which the programs have evolved. While CDTech can offer lessons for regions that have a solid foundation of civic engagement organizations, De Anza College offers lessons for those regions that still lack such an infrastructure. De Anza also demonstrates the difference that institutional leadership and commitment from the top can make.

De Anza College has the buy-in and commitment from top leadership to a social justice-oriented vision. Prior to joining De Anza College as president, Brian Murphy headed the Urban Institute, since renamed the Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, at San Francisco State University. During the hiring process, he made it clear to the Board of Trustees and Chancellor that strengthening civic and community engagement was one of his highest priorities. Under his leadership, he has woven in a social movement prism throughout the culture of the institution. So that this commitment is not dependent on the college president, he has built a cadre of committed faculty from a range of disciplines that provide a broader base of leadership within the college. This leadership emerged from a year-long process during which a task force of 23 people discussed the question of civic and political learning and developed a proposal that led to the establishment of ICCE.

Because the social movement infrastructure in the Silicon Valley is less developed than in Los Angeles, De Anza College has had to play a different role. Rather than leverage campus resources to strengthen

the community-based non-profit sector, De Anza is leveraging their resources to seed civic organizations – starting with student activist groups on campus. There was already an Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute (APALI) dedicated to developing APA leadership. The college thus built up capacity to work with Latino students and by engaging students in setting their own agenda, a new Latino group called ¡LEAD! (Latina/o Empowerment At De Anza) was formed. The hope is that students gain a social justice orientation and core set of skills at De Anza, continue to gain skills at a four-year university, then return to their community and emerge as leaders there.

Therefore, scaling up for De Anza means starting at the ground level of building the local civic engagement infrastructure. Even under the best of circumstances, it is an ambitious endeavor. The current economic and fiscal crisis means fewer financial resources and thin staffing to realize their vision. However, with unwavering commitment and a strong vision, De Anza is still able to forge a model for other community colleges and inject a social movement prism into the community college debate to shift the dominant discourse from one solely focused on jobs to one that includes community transformation and building diverse leadership.

### **Community Coalition’s Youth Organizing and Education Campaign**

“Who here goes to a PI 3+ (low-performing) high school?” asks SC-YEA organizer Alfred Burks. Rowdy students sitting around the circle start teasing and pointing disparaging fingers at each other, evidencing South LA high school rivalries surfacing amongst the 33 students in the room. “You *all* go to PI 3+ high schools!” Burks announces, to which the room falls quiet. “It doesn’t matter what school you go to, because you’re all in South LA. Our schools are changing, people are making plans, and you’re not in them,” he warns, “that’s why we train you to come together and organize.”

Since the mid-1990s, CoCo’s youth organizing effort, South Central Youth Empowered through Action (SC-YEA, pronounced “Say Yeah”), has waged campaigns to address the lack of resources and disparities in how resources are allocated at Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the nation’s second largest school district. CoCo offers a hopeful case of how supporting African American and Latino high school students can contribute to increased capacity and accountability in educational systems needed to close the educational achievement gap as well as to increased community capacity to affect larger change.

CoCo was founded in 1990 by former California Assembly Speaker Karen Bass in response to the crack cocaine epidemic that devastated South LA in the 1980s. Over its twenty year history, CoCo has built an organized base of thousands of African American and Latino residents and organizational allies and has engaged them in changing public policy in order to “transform the social and economic conditions in South LA that foster addiction, crime, violence and poverty.”<sup>35</sup> They work with five key constituency groups: high school students, parents, residents, caregivers, and service providers.

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<sup>35</sup> “About Us,” The Community Coalition, [www.cocosouthla.org/about/ourmission](http://www.cocosouthla.org/about/ourmission) .

Since its inception, CoCo has taken an inter-ethnic approach to building the leadership of residents as agents of change. They are deeply committed to uniting African Americans and Latinos who are usually pitted against each other, especially as Latinos have become a majority in the traditionally African American neighborhood. Their approach includes waging campaigns to address problems that affect both populations, doing the “homework” required to become knowledgeable about the problems and specific solutions, and consistent education and training to ensure residents have a strong and effective voice in policy decision-making. And while organizers may initially get people to the table through their interest in a particular issue or campaign, their aim is to build greater community power by organizing people around a common set of values and a broader platform for change.

In addition to building black-brown unity, CoCo is also committed to building intergenerational leadership. Their membership spans the age spectrum from the teens to the 60s. Their youth members are ages 13-17, parents are ages 40-50, and other members tend to be ages 50 and up including the majority of caregivers who are in their 60s. Core leaders from all organizing components complete a leadership school and have representation on an organization-wide leadership council.

SC-YEA has about 50 leaders and a total of 250 youth involved in various committees. Staff organizers bring together leaders of youth-led High School Organizing Committees (HSOCs) from eight South LA high schools, and they invite committed members to SC-YEA’s twice-a-week meetings. Tuesdays are dedicated for hands-on organizing (phone banking, door-knocking, strategy planning) and Thursdays are for interactive political education and discussion. SC-YEA’s four staff organizers train a core group of student leaders from different campuses to mobilize their fellow students in collective action. Youth members of SC-YEA’s Leadership Council facilitate the session’s icebreaker, small group discussions, and announcements – and also give input on the direction of the program.

SC-YEA provides the basic support – like transportation and dinner – along with academic counseling and free to low-cost SAT courses to support the success of youth members. SC-YEA’s ambitious programs are resource-heavy, not only in terms of offering students college readiness services to open the doors of opportunity, but also in building the staff skills to develop young, civically-engaged leaders in their own communities. Their aim is to educate and unite an emerging generation of African American and Latino youth. The success of the program’s investment in youth leadership is evident by the fact that Burks, once a SC-YEA participant, is now a staff organizer.

The campaigns that SC-YEA takes on stem from the daily experiences of youth, and the youth membership keeps the organization accountable to their needs and interests. Their education campaigns have focused on closing the achievement gap by improving South LA high school facilities, ensuring access to college preparatory coursework, and preparing students for high-skilled, high-wage careers. Not only has their work resulted in school and curriculum improvements, but they have also built new forms of parent, youth, and community power.

As documented in the Annenberg Institute for School Reform’s *Securing a College Prep Curriculum for All Students*, CoCo’s youth organizing has contributed to increased educational opportunities for

marginalized students. While it was too early to measure CoCo's impact on student educational outcomes, the study found that CoCo's organizing contributed increased equity and accountability to community constituencies and new political leadership (Shah, Mendiratta & McAlister, 2009). Specifically, their work has resulted in over \$153 million to improve South LA school facilities; more equitable access to college preparatory courses; over \$350 million to reduce overcrowding and for more counselors in South LA; and implementation of an innovative academy that prepares high school students for careers in architecture, construction and engineering.<sup>36</sup>

CoCo also has a track record of producing transformative political leaders. Its founder, Karen Bass, was the former California Speaker of the Assembly and will assume a seat in Congress in 2011, and former Director of Organizing (also a long-time youth organizer) Alberto Retana was appointed Director of Community Outreach for the U.S. Department of Education in 2010. Twice a week, SC-YEA prepares youth not just for college, but to assume positions where they can make a change - but a change that is informed by their everyday experiences and rooted in a critical social and racial justice framework.

The challenges that CoCo faces in building black-brown leadership are not uncommon. While SC-YEA is a youth-driven organization, CoCo staff struggle to bring on and maintain youth participation in adult-dominated coalition discussions around policy, strategy and political negotiations during the heat of a campaign (Shah, Mendiratta & McAlister, 2009:25). They also find it difficult to engage African American and Latino men and to engage people between the ages of 25-50. Some ways they seek to fill these gaps in their membership include hiring male organizers who can relate to African American and Latino men and working on issues affecting young men and boys.

CoCo approaches youth as both clients and constituents, helping them learn to do what they can with what they have, but more importantly, equipping them with the invaluable tools to unite and transform the conditions that make it an uphill battle for a high school student to succeed in South LA.

#### ***Making a Difference in South L.A.***

*"Why does SC-YEA exist?" asks an organizer to a bustling room of almost 40 students, the majority of whom are new to the organization. Their responses: "to benefit the community," "to organize," "to go to college," "to bring lasting change in the community and our schools," and "to bring black and brown together." The organizers' response: to help youth "understand different ways to make a difference."*

*The conversation continues by breaking down the term "organizing" – explaining the process of collective action to change power structures - through storytelling, role-playing, and pictures. To help define organizing, they use SC-YEA's own high-profile victories to describe how students successfully mobilized an intergenerational base of youth, teachers, and parents to bring renovations to South LA high schools – first – as provided by a state construction bond measure. Another victory: they organized to ensure that*

<sup>36</sup> "About Us," The Community Coalition, [www.cocosouthla.org/about/ourmission](http://www.cocosouthla.org/about/ourmission) .

*their schools would provide the same platform for university entrance as those in other parts of the city, in what is known as the A-G campaign.<sup>37</sup>*

*Through reviewing their victories and flashing photos of students at marches from years past, telling them, “that’s you guys,” youth organizers ground students in the legacy of SC-YEA’s institutional history. They have been able to sustain the energy from these victories and continue cultivating new youth leaders by giving them agency and decision-making power in the program curriculum and structure, while also understanding students’ unique needs and deconstructing terms and concepts in a fun and engaging way.*

*Before students end the day with a communal dinner, they stand in an “Umoja” (“Unity” in Swahili) circle, interlinking hands and affirming Black-Brown solidarity by declaring, “We are only as strong as our weakest link.”*

### **Center for Community Change’s Generation Change**

The Center for Community Change (CCC) helps multiply the impact of local youth developers through providing specialized trainings and tools. Staying true to their roots, CCC partners with community groups to increase their organizational effectiveness, cultivate leaders, advocate for local residents, and master the technical skills needed to create change. It is a promising model for technical assistance for the field.

Since 2007, CCC’s Generation Change program has been providing training to the next generation of leaders, a task that is especially important as an older generation of organizers is beginning to retire. CCC’s internship program, fellowship program, and advanced leadership training provide spaces for young organizers to learn and connect across diverse backgrounds, organizations, and geographies. In its fourth year, Generation Change has now trained 75 new organizers from its internship program, 18 from its Fellowship Program, and over 70 from its Advanced Leadership Training Program. These trainees are not retained by the Center but return to their local organizations to continue leadership development and civic engagement throughout America.<sup>38</sup>

But leaders within CCC have also been a bit frustrated by Generation Change: it placed interns within a wide variety of organizations, creating opportunities for long-term learning and commitment to the field, but the program was not providing a direct conduit to an ongoing campaign and the sense of exhilaration that comes from making a real difference. Looking to try a new approach, in August of 2009, CCC thus gathered 30 youth leaders from Florida and Colorado “to build support for just, human, and comprehensive immigration reform in 2010.”

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<sup>37</sup> For more on Generation Change, see their website at <http://www.communitychange.org/our-projects/generationchange>.

This Train-the-Trainers event not only emphasized teamwork, strategy, and action, but it also helped participants develop their stories of “self,” “us,” and “now.” These stories are integral to a values-based approach that engages both the mind *and* the heart in working towards change. The newly trained trainers then trained 175 more youth (ages 17 to 29) in their home states. In turn, teams organized events that drew over 1,350 people in Florida and over 1,200 people in Colorado. And by January 2010, the youth leaders had identified another 6,120 new supporters for comprehensive immigration reform. The work in Colorado and Florida was only part of a much larger strategy that has since included youth leader trainings in North Carolina, Arizona, Nevada, New York, California, and Ohio, all in service of the Center Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM, 2010).

Throughout this report, we have repeatedly highlighted the need for high-quality inter-ethnic leadership training that is connected with organizing for civic engagement. Organizing is one form of leadership, and the Florida and Colorado trainings highlighted that those youth who took the new skills and applied them “were more likely to develop a stronger sense of themselves as individuals who have the power and capacity to be key players in the political system” (FIRM, 2010). This program and Generation Change make space for high-quality and highly connected youth leadership – and it is hard to fully convey what the connection means when an African American male organizing for immigrants in Idaho discovers that there is someone just like him doing the same work in Colorado.

“The two biggest challenges to the growth and development of community organizing are money and talent,” says Susan Chinn, Director of Generation Change. CCC has figured out a way to tap into the talent and develop it; the money remains lacking for a fuller expansion but the Center is demonstrating how Technical Assistance (TA) organizations not specifically tied to youth leadership can be helpful and, actually, integral to building this field.



## **Youth Organizing Training in Colorado and Florida**

September 2009

### **Objectives**

1. Train new youth leaders in the organizing skills and practices needed to build support within their states for comprehensive national immigration reform;
2. Develop a better understanding of how to engage, equip, and mobilize youth to take leadership roles, organize, and produce substantive results; and
3. Create and strengthen connections between organized youth and established organizations within each state.

### **Curriculum Elements**

*For the below segments, trainers generally used the following pattern in order to immediately put into action the teaching: presented new material, had leaders work in teams or pairs, and then debriefed.*

Practices of Organizing and Leadership

Creating Shared Story: Story of Self

Creating Shared Commitment

Creating Shared Structure

Creating Shared Story: Story of Us

*\*Curriculum from the Arizona Training in December 2009*

### **Outcomes**

1. Mobilizing a broader base of supporters.
2. Developing a cadre of skilled, committed youth leaders.
3. Building strategic grassroots infrastructure in battleground states.

*Fair Immigration Reform Movement. (2010). Report Assessing the September 2009 Youth Organizing Training in Colorado and Florida. Washington D.C.: The Center for Community Change.*

*Ganz, M. (2009). Reform Immigration for American Movement Building Training: Arizona Leadership Workshop Guide (adapted by the New Organizing Institute). Washington, D.C.: The New Organizing Institute (NOI).*

## Other Models

We could not do justice to the field with only four Promising Models, so here are a few more:

- Mobilize.org recognizes the contributions and unique issues of millennial veterans, most of whom are people of color. From April 1-3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, they hosted “Beyond the Welcome Home,” a summit to hear from millennial veterans and to spark conversations about producing millennial-based solutions for integrating them back into our society. This very much fills one of the gaps we raised earlier.
- Students Working for Equal Rights (SWER) and the Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC) helped organize four undocumented students who, together, mustered the courage to march from Miami to Washington D.C. on what they called “The Trail of Dreams,” risking deportation as they drew attention to themselves and their documentation status. Their hope is to share their stories and heighten awareness for the DREAM Act.<sup>39</sup>
- Responding to both the framing and generational gap, Applied Research Center (ARC) has reconfigured itself to focus on media, including new media, and how to reach youth of color. It is also starting to think about how “to build an identity for people who care about racial justice that isn’t color-bound (not tied to racial phenotype) and that is aspirational.”<sup>40</sup> The parallel is a model like the environmentalist movement’s coinage of the concept “green” that captures the interests of many.
- The Inner City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) in South Chicago, among other things, works with Arab, Latino, and African American youth through organizing but also offers training in video production, web-design, and art classes. Through these creative and spiritual activities, they focus heavily on what it means to be people of the world and how to achieve social justice.
- Brotherhood/Sister Sol’s intentional model of staff hiring is attracting the right people and keeping them. Their process includes a phone call, a face-to-face, a two-hour ideological interview, and a workshop with the constituency. A lot of effort, but the average tenure for staff is seven years. Brotherhood/Sister Sol is also connecting the dots between addressing homophobia and working with a racial justice framework. The organization teaches its youth how to respect themselves, to be sure, but it also includes a strategy for learning to respect others and respect difference.
- The American Federation of Teachers, Local 1521- which represents faculty in the Los Angeles Community College District – also leverages community college resources to lift up community

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<sup>39</sup> For more on the Trail of Dreams, see their website at <http://www.trail2010.org/about/>.

<sup>40</sup> Rinku Sen, interview, March 13, 2010.

organizing as a career goal. The union employs community college students as part-time interns to promote student civic engagement against the state's budget cuts to community college, and they partner with the Dolores Huerta Labor Institute to offer monthly trainings that equip directly affected students with skills in community organizing, legislative lobbying, and knowledge of the history of the Los Angeles labor movement. In addition to paid compensation, students also earn a unit in Labor Studies through Los Angeles Trade-Technical College. Although not a youth-run program but one that promotes youth participation, it serves as an example of how community colleges and unions together can plug students into social movement organizing through the issues of educational access and the labor movement.

- The national Alliance for Educational Justice is working to address a particularly pressing issue: How do youth transition between institutions as they age? The Alliance for Educational Justice conducts workshops for both youth and adults to reorient each other, remind each other of different perspectives and give each other space to thrive. AEJ helps create space for youth leaders who are too young to be full-time organizers but no longer in high school.<sup>41</sup>
- Finally, the New World Foundation's Civic Opportunity Initiative Network (COIN) "increases community capacity, creating opportunities for academic and leadership training for young leaders, linking them to grassroots community organizing in a long-term and on-going way." Launched in 2008, the COIN pilot program works with a cohort of high school juniors involved with six different community organizing groups from across the US. The students participate in an initial leadership development retreat, a summer organizing internship, and on-going leadership opportunities, mentoring, and academic support with their home organization throughout the school year. Once in college, participants receive gap funding to cover tuition and fees, continue to work with their local organizing group during the summers, and have access to a national support team of experts. The final phase is 1-2 years of paid service with a COIN participating organization upon graduation.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement's (PACE) "Civic Pathways Out of Poverty and Into Opportunity" will soon make available their whitepaper on youth transitions and "aging-out" of youth organizations.

<sup>42</sup> From The New World Foundation website at <http://newwf.org/special-projects/civic-opportunities-initiative-network-coin>.

## Build It and They Will Come?

With the nation crossing the majority-minority threshold in 2042, the time is ripe for investment in inter-ethnic youth leadership. Building the field that will generate young leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is as much about building a movement for change as it is about creating leaders. The social justice prism of inter-ethnic youth leadership should also be applied to the work of building and strengthening the field itself.

Accepting that *demography is destiny* means that the partnerships required to weave together institutions, practices, and partnerships to strengthen the infrastructure need to be inter-ethnic, intergenerational, and multi-issue. Just as youth should be active participants of the programs designed to benefit them, youth and youth organizations should move from *clients to constituents* in actively formulating strategies to build and strengthen the field. And *race is real* which means that strategies to affirm identity (and multiple identities) in the pursuit of field- and movement- building are necessary.

### ***What's Missing?***

*“We have pieces of pipe. That’s not a pipeline.”*

Taj James, Movement Strategy Center

To talk of building the field does not mean we are starting from scratch – quite the contrary. Innovative approaches to developing inter-ethnic leadership are bubbling up primarily from places that are already majority-minority. The organizations that we interviewed and the five strategies and tactics highlighted in this report are just a sample of promising models and practices that are ready for further investment. Seeking out organizations that are pioneering strategies will be a continual process as organizations are constantly evolving, growing more sophisticated, and experimenting with new methods.

Groups need to be better resourced and networked so that they can more effectively develop and adopt the capacities needed to build the field to scale. Private funding alone will not be sufficient to build the field’s infrastructure to scale. Federal resources will be critical; however, these funds do not come with a “race is real” or “clients to constituent” frame. If left to chance, an influx of federal funds into communities or into the community college system could ameliorate but not fundamentally transform a system that is producing disparities. In order to be prepared for 2042, filling the funding gap for developing innovative models, bottom-up policy change, and scaling up in a significant way will be critical.

Another gap that we have emphasized throughout is the break in the youth leadership pipeline between high school and four-year colleges. There is a lack of institutions and resources targeted to youth in community colleges and out-of-school youth. It is no accident that they are among the hardest-to-reach. But community colleges are untilled and fertile ground for cultivating inter-ethnic youth leadership. Although some organizers are beginning to reach out to community college youth, these students are

often juggling school, work, and sometimes family which leaves little to no time for involvement in social justice organizations; they are perceived to be transitory thus not worth organizers' effort to recruit and develop; and lack the student organizations, such as USSA, that exist at many four-year colleges and universities. Public Allies Los Angeles and Mobilize.org are two of the few venturing to fill this particular gap; we also noted above a model effort generated out of De Anza College as well as the efforts of the Community Learning Partnership to link together efforts in this space across the country.

Finally, for out-of-school youth, the challenges are even greater. Other than community and faith-based organizing efforts that reach youth where they live, institutional connections through which to reach this population are thinner. At-risk youth are too often tracked into low-wage jobs, jails, military service, and, in the worst cases, the streets. Understanding where they are employed, the probation camps, veterans programs, homeless shelters, and other social service agencies that "touch" this population can only help strengthen efforts to ensure they can access the leadership pipeline.

### ***Strengthening the Field: Top Ten Recommendations***

Below, we make recommendations for defining, strengthening, and expanding the field. Three major themes run through the recommendations. The first is that there is a need to build organizations doing this work; organizations themselves must be strong for the field to be strong. The second is that the field needs to build its identity; the story of "self" as an organization needs to become the story of "us" as a field. The third is that the field needs to build to scale; to make a real impact, we need a broader reach.

There are numerous ways to weave these themes: focus on who should do what, consider the sequencing of strategies, or just proceed with long treatises about each of our three themes. On the other hand, people seem to remember top ten lists better than general themes or broad admonitions. So with a nod to popular culture – and with a proper drum roll to get started – here are our top ten recommendations:

#### **1. Invest resources for youth as both client *and* constituent**

To force the fundamental shift away from a traditional approach that view youth as un-empowered "clients" to be served, we have emphasized the notion of youth as an active constituency base for change. In reality, the lines between client and constituent are not so clearly drawn. Low- income youth and youth of color are likely to face multiple barriers to success – low incomes, low educations, single parenthood, criminal histories, etc. – so services that support their leadership trajectory are still critical. These services include transportation, nutrition, academic and life counseling, mentoring, and spiritual and intellectual renewal. While these types of services for many would simply prevent burnout, for these youth, these services make it possible to engage at all. They are critical.

For both organizers and funders, this means integrating service and systemic funding. A systemic approach to leadership development is critical, but needs to be paired with in-house or nearby services to be truly effective. For some, this may mean a fundamental shift towards integrated delivery.

## **2. Support efforts to build unusual alliances**

Because of the intersectional identities of youth and the need to build a broad movement, the field needs to be intentional about alliance building. Moreover, alliances can serve as bridges for engaging members, whether individuals or organizations, in relationships that transcend single identities, issues, and geographies. In the way that organizers push the envelope with regards to the issues they take on in order to overcome inter-ethnic conflict and contradictions within their membership, this also needs to happen with non-traditional partners and alliances. For example, finding and engaging non-traditional partners and institutions that “touch” out-of-school youth will be critical in addressing the field gap. This also includes building new conversations and forging new relationships with sectors such as business and traditional youth development, which can offer important lessons and serve as useful platforms for shifting towards a “clients to constituent” approach.

For organizations, this means new and usual partners; for funders, this can mean funding alliance building with the long-term commitment and patience required to build trust, a shared vision, and common work between sectors that have not worked together.

## **3. Build a “story of us”**

The field needs a compelling and coherent story of why this work and this movement matters. In the same way that individuals need to move from “me” to “we,” most organizations have their story, but the field lacks a collective narrative. Building a “story of us” – in this case, the field – puts youth leadership development organizations on the same page, establishes a de facto reason why youth, foundations, and other partners should come on board, and defines the goal of the movement. This defining also enables organizations to find their niche in the greater whole.

For funders, this means providing funding for organizations to invest in communication, framing, and storytelling. This also means bringing together organizations to define the field but also helping to disseminate the story in order to bring in additional partners, both traditional and untraditional.

## **4. Define metrics that capture transactions *and* transformations**

Inter-ethnic youth leadership development organizations are underfunded partly because the metrics and evaluation have not been developed in a way to back up the story of the work. Says Christina Hollenback at the Generational Alliance, “We need more innovative ways of evaluation and metrics—that’s a huge hole in our work.” Inter-ethnic leadership development and youth organizing can be difficult to gauge because of the many dimensions: success of a campaign or struggle, success of the strategy, success of the organization, and success of the individual participant. So, essential to capturing both the transactional (did we win the campaign?) and transformational (did our youth grow?) achievements is establishing short, intermediate and long-term goals. An evaluation framework that

lays out the capacities and phases of organizational development along a continuum and that uses both qualitative and quantitative measures will be part of this.

Metrics for social justice-oriented service learning are also needed. Because the field is relatively nascent, the research identifying outcomes associated with exposure to and participation in social justice work is thin. De Anza College, for example, is in the process of determining a system to track involvement in social justice activities so that success rates can be tracked over time and compared to non-civically active students.

For funders, this presents a challenge, particularly given the new emphasis on effective grantmaking in philanthropy. We're all for effective – but we have also seen the power and transformational nature of social movements and inter-ethnic organizing. There are few efficient levers or buttons that will make single, deep impacts and traditional and discrete metrics, like college completion or GPA achieved, don't fully measure what we're really aiming for – that is, youth empowered to make change and hold the government and other institutions accountable.

But measurement should and must occur. This means researchers, organizations, and funders need to work to develop a new set of metrics that can make the link between organizing and outcomes, between interracial collaboration and real progress on eroding racial disparity. And it means expanding time horizons of evaluation to allow for the tracking of transformational development.

## **5. Be active (but cautious) collaborators with funders**

Just as youth need to be active participants of the programs designed to benefit them, youth and youth organizations need to be active participants and the primary drivers in developing the field. At the same time, organizations may find it useful to engage funders as collaborators and not just as deep pockets. After all, many funders were once not funders but themselves organizers and practitioners, a fact that is sometimes obscured to the community eye when these former practitioners cross to the “other side.” As a result of that as well as their birds-eye view of cutting-edge activity (after all, if they're doing their job, program officers are funding innovative strategies), they often have important experiences, perspectives, and relationships that are important to building out the field, as well as the networks to organize other funders who might be interested in “framing,” learning, and developing the work.

For both funders and organizations, however, this implies the need to approach the table recognizing that the funder-grantee relationship creates a power dynamic that can impede honest conversations. The same practices that the field uses to build trust, a shared vision, and a common cause apply to the grantee-funder partnerships required to build the field. For funders, this means being disciplined about staying focused on their role: supporter, convener, and conveyor of information about best practices from and to the broader world. It also means creating a safe feedback system for grantees so they can push back on their funders without the risk of losing funding.

## **6. Take risks on new leadership**

With the professionalization of civic engagement organizations and the decreased funds available because of the economic downturn, both funders and organizations are looking for the most bang for their buck. Instead of hiring affected youth as organizers, organizations are hiring those who best qualify on paper.

“Unlikely” candidates need more staff development, mentoring, and support services but they are more personally connected with the goals of the organization. As one organizer mentioned in a candid moment, “having a college education isn’t really an indicator that you’re going to be a good organizer.” Organizations need to commit to bringing up new talent, something that will require training as well as patience.

Funders also need to provide groups with the resources, trust, and space that will allow them to build individual leadership from the community they serve. Operational support is key to allowing organizations to make the “risky” decisions that will create a new generation of inter-ethnic youth leadership.

## **7. See youth organizing as both direct and indirect**

Throughout this paper, we emphasize building alliances with other organizations. It is, however, important to continue each organization’s individual work as well so they can be strong partners within the alliance. This is extremely important as many organizations do not receive the amount of funding needed just to support the work in which they are currently engaged. Because of this, funders should provide organizations with resources specifically targeted towards youth organizing.

At the same time, there is a pressing need for other organizations – community groups, labor unions, immigrant rights organizations – to build in a youth component. The model program we profiled at Community Coalition in L.A. is rooted in a group whose primary concerns are more about land use than youth leadership. The shift at the Center for Community Change occurred when CCC went from promoting youth leadership *per se* to incorporating such leadership in an ongoing campaign for immigrant rights. Environmental justice organizations have frequently developed youth programs in high schools and elsewhere, providing growth opportunities that are not captured by the tradition “youth field.” Such opportunities – which also address generational gaps within organizations– are important.

Funders can build this by building youth criteria into giving strategies. Agency is central to leadership development; so youth must have a hand in steering the organization. Says Kimi Lee about the ladder of youth engagement (shown earlier), “There are fewer groups that are really about youth engagement; we tried to make a distinction where youth had a say in their own programs and decision-making process.” For more mature organizations or those looking to renew long-time grants, be sure that the youth element has not evolved into a “youth program” that has more of a summer camp feel. Beyond agency in the organization, be sure that the youth have agency in their community – that they are out



there engaging their community around the social issues affecting neighborhood outcomes. And ask questions about youth engagement of all grantees, not just those who explicitly claim that youth empowerment is their primary goal.

### **8. Build the depth of the field**

Anchor organizations help others grow and can be the connective tissue for the field. Organizations that are already large, strong, and making a big impact are ideal – giving smaller organizations an influx of funding before their infrastructure can handle it is risky. But, larger organizations need solid investment to have the capacity to serve as anchors to help the field scale up. Doing so will also encourage the field to remain in the hands of the practitioners, instead of the funders.

Part of the challenge here is identifying the anchor organizations. This process should be undertaken with humility and honesty and by working closely with practitioners to hear which groups are rising to the top of their game, are trusted by others, and have the potential to play such a central role. To be clear, we are not saying smaller organizations should not be funded – they should – but that moving this field to maturity will require defining and strengthening key anchors that will have a stabilizing influence.

### **9. Build the breadth of the field**

Any field needs to develop networking, peer-to-peer learning and ongoing field building. Organizations doing inter-ethnic leadership development are doing remarkable work across the country, but much of it is unknown to potential partners and allies. This is forestalling a larger movement and likely wasting scarce resources on duplicative efforts. Organizations do need to be introduced to each others, but also given space to build trusting relationships and a common agenda.

Some of this can and should be taken on by existing organizations. But efforts to create peer-to-peer learning communities or forge formal networks at the regional, state or national level often find themselves underfunded. It is the allying of multiple organizations that leads to a stronger field and movement in which youth can see their efforts make in impact. Both organizations and foundations should prioritize this “connective” work, too.

### **10. Broadcast the “story of now”**

We need to make the case that investment in building the field of inter-ethnic youth leadership is critical and urgent for the future of our country. This will entail several interdependent elements: educating the relevant public, developing a common definition and paradigm for the field, and studying the impacts of youth organizing, inter-ethnic alliance building, and social justice service learning programs.

One aspect of this story-building will be supportive research – it’s an easy call for us to make, of course, as researchers but we also truly believe that establishing the effectiveness of the field with a solid

research scaffold for the story will be helpful. But the field should also be doing what we rarely take time to do – celebrate and publicize success stories. No matter how incremental the win, victories give practitioners confidence that they can effect change and, simultaneously, helps to attract new supporters to the field.

We do not pretend that these are the only interventions in this field. Nor do we think these are either the only – or even the most important issues – facing our youth. On the education side, we think that investments in multiple pathways high schools, improved and more engaging remediation programs in community colleges, and enhanced access by immigrant youth to state post-secondary systems are all exceptionally important, and might even be ranked above leadership development in terms of immediate and measurable outcomes.

With regard to the economy, we think that creating more effective workforce development models that have neighborhood-based programs and pipelines might be more important than inter-ethnic discussions for guaranteeing an upward trajectory over time in the labor market. And as for criminal justice, we think that reducing the likelihood of being caught up in the system and creating more effective re-entry programs for those who are might go a much longer way to securing the future for youth of color than providing social justice organizing experiences for a small and select group.

At the same time, we would suggest that bringing those other policies – with regard to education, the economy, and the justice system – to fruition may be facilitated by an engaged, active, and empowered youth leadership that sees their own future, feels their own confidence, and makes their own world. And creating a more defined field – with best practices, reasonable metrics, and a solid story – can play an important role in helping these youth find that new role.

## Conclusion: Change Not Chance

America is changing – but perhaps not quickly enough. The demographic shift of 2042 may seem distant but it is happening in real time for those entering the world this year and next. Prejudiced attitudes seem to be eroding but differentials in economic and social outcomes by race are persistent and stubborn. There is widespread agreement on the need to revamp education as part of dealing with the inequality – but there is little agreement on what should happen, who will lead, and whether this will be the silver bullet that leads us back to the nation’s great promise of opportunity and mobility.

For America’s next generation, the future is now. Investing in the systems that can support them will help move the needle on poverty even as we enable youth to realize their own “chance to have healthy, productive lives.” Investing in their leadership will shore up their resilience, help them develop all parts of their potential, and feed into the popular movements that will help hold existing systems and leaders accountable.

From community centers in South Los Angeles to community colleges in Miami-Dade County to interfaith institutions in urban Chicago, there are a variety of programs, young people, and their allies pointing the way. They are ready but often not networked, eager but often not resourced, exemplary but often not known. They deserve to have their story told – and their potential realized.

For it is not just that our demography and economy are changing – partly as a result, we are becoming disconnected as a nation, more willing to engage in what Bill Fulton (2001) calls the “cocoon citizenship” of gated communities and failed ghettos. We often hope that someone else will solve the problem, that the next generation will not notice the economic and social mess that they are being handed, that they will also fail to recognize that the expensive drawbridges of support that propelled a nation into a golden era for the middle class are being lifted up and away just as they are coming of age.

As a nation, we are leaving the American future to chance rather than purpose. An intentional effort would instead develop youth leadership, infuse it with a sense of social justice, and be conscious about weaving the tapestry of difference into a single cloth. It would not bury identity but use it to connect to a broader view of who we are and who we will become. And it would understand that the fundamental promise of America is really its democracy – the idea that ordinary people, including young people, can make the systems that often seem stacked against them begin to work for them and for a brighter tomorrow.

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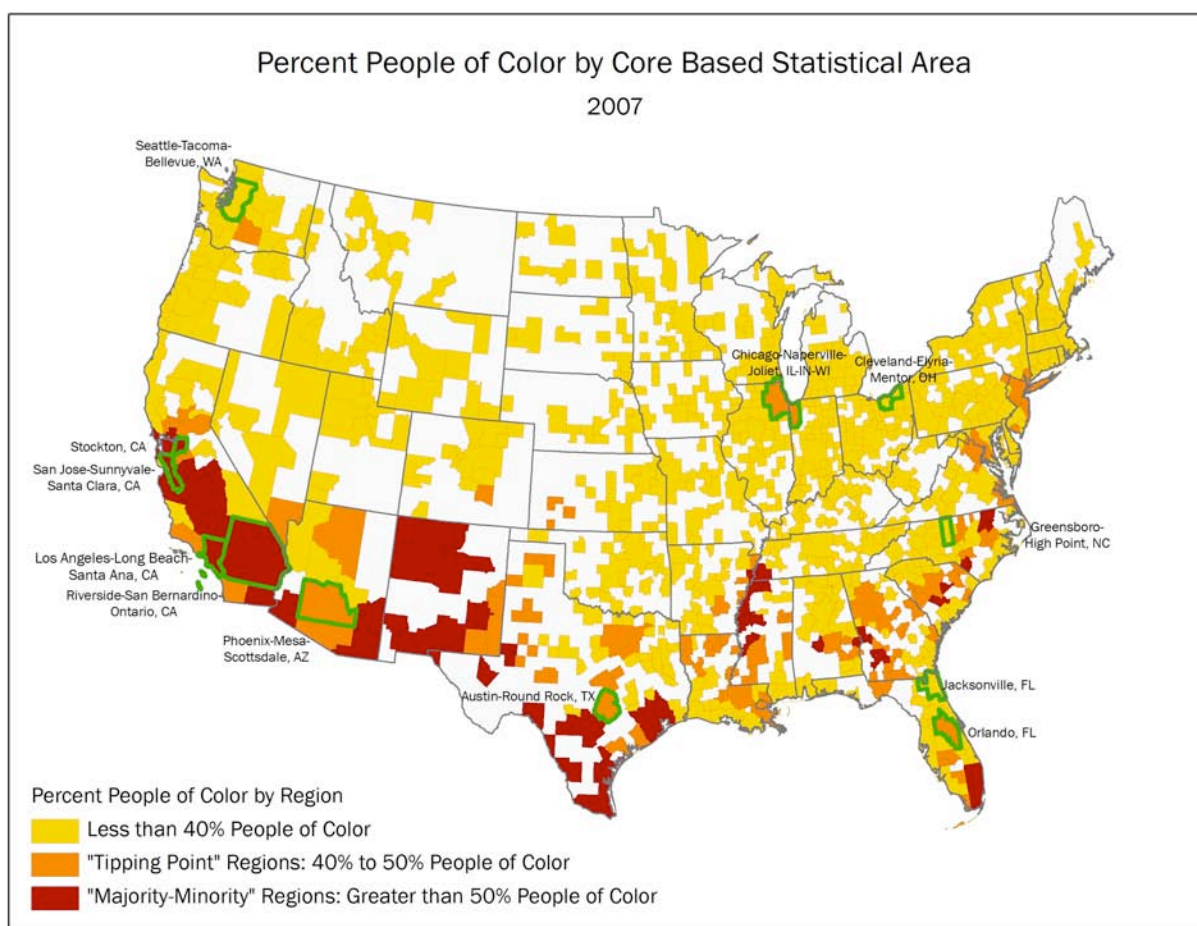


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## Appendices

### *Appendix A: Scenarios for America's Future: Snapshot of Twelve Metropolitan Regions*

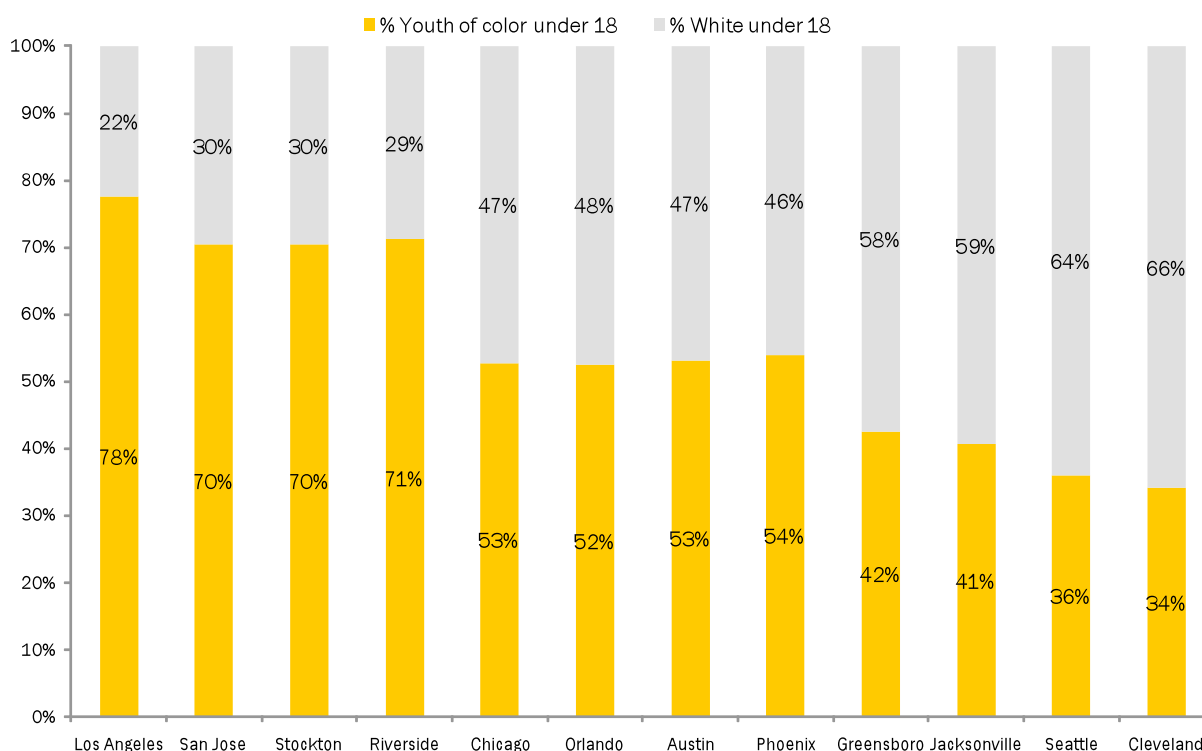
As noted throughout the paper, demographic shifts are taking place throughout the nation; however, the rate at which it is happening varies from region to region. To illustrate the various demographic scenarios of the country, we've identified twelve regions to examine in greater detail. The twelve CBSAs are categorized into regions that are "majority-minority" (regions with over 50 percent people of color), "tipping point" regions (with populations between 40 percent to 50 percent people of color), and regions with less than 40 percent people of color. For each of the twelve regions detailed below, we look at the demographic shifts in terms of change in percentages of Non-Hispanic White, Latino, African American and Asian and Pacific Islanders by age group, educational attainment, and changes in the level of segregation in the region.



**Figure 12. Percent People of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, 2007**

Data suggest that each region's percentage of people of color will continue to increase, therefore regions that currently do not have large percentages can learn from the experiences of majority-minority and tipping point regions.

**Percent Youth of Color by CBSA  
(population under 18 years old)  
2005-2007**



**Figure 13. Percent Youth of Color by Core Based Statistical Area, 2005-2007**

### **Majority-Minority Regions: San Jose, Stockton, Riverside, and Los Angeles**

These four “majority-minority” regions have populations that have far surpassed the majority-minority threshold with between 62 (Stockton and Riverside) to 72 (Los Angeles) percent people of color. They provide us with insights into the challenges and lessons that can be learned from such diversity.

*San Jose.* The San Jose metropolitan area has undergone rapid demographic shifts; whereas the region was once 70 percent Non-Hispanic White as recently as 1980, the share of Non-Hispanic Whites declined to 34 percent in 2005-2007, the share of Latinos rose to 33 percent, and Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) to 30 percent. Over the same period of time, the share of foreign-born population more than doubled from 14 percent to 37 percent of the region’s population. Consequently, the youth in the region are representative of this transformation. The population under 18 years old is now 70 percent people of color, and nearly 60 percent of the region’s children are children of immigrants.

When we examine the 18-26 year old population – a group that is transitioning into their prime working years – it is comparatively more diverse than the middle-aged and senior population, which is still

majority Non-Hispanic White. 18 to 26 year olds in San Jose are 31 percent Non-Hispanic White, 35 percent Latino, 26 percent API, 3 percent African American and 3 percent Other. The disengaged youth in this segment of the population (those that are not enrolled in school, do not have a college degree, and are unemployed) is disproportionately Latino – 59 percent compared to 35 percent in the general 18-26 year old population. African American and Other youth are only slightly overrepresented among disengaged youth, and APIs and Non-Hispanic Whites are underrepresented. With over 81 percent of the disengaged youth population as youth of color, San Jose's ability to address the challenges of this population will greatly impact the region's future prosperity.

Although there is great diversity amongst the youth population, the most diverse segment of the region's population is actually the 27-34 working age population, which is disproportionately comprised of Asian and Pacific Islanders (40 percent compared to 30 percent in the overall population). The 27-34 population is also very educated – 30 percent of this population has a Bachelor's degree or higher. But of those that have a Bachelor's degree, only 7.6 percent are Latino. The demographic composition of the region's working age population may be attributable to the presence of high tech industries in the region, which has attracted many educated immigrants to the area. As home to the Silicon Valley, the area is fortunate to be rich in resources, and Santa Clara County has established itself as a leader on progressive immigrant integration strategies.

Segregation has not changed much in the region between 1980 and 2008 – particularly because the African American population in San Jose is so small (2 percent) compared to the Latino population (26 percent). In 1980 the Black-Latino dissimilarity index was 34.1 percent, and in 2008 it was 32.4 percent. This means that 32.4 percent of Latino populations would need to move to other census tracts in the region to make Black and Latinos evenly dispersed across the region.

*Stockton.* Stockton, located to the east of the Bay Area in California, is also a diverse region but is markedly different from San Jose socioeconomically. According to RealtyTrac, the region had the second highest foreclosure rate in the nation in 2007 – with 4.87 percent of Stockton's households entering some stage of foreclosure (Reuters, 2008). Since 2007 the situation has only slightly improved – Stockton now ranks sixth nationally among cities with populations over 200,000 in foreclosures. One out of 117 homes in the region is in some stage of foreclosure (Central Valley, 2010). The region's 27-34 population also has lower levels of educational attainment than their San Jose counterpart – with only 11 percent holding a Bachelor's degree or better, and nearly half (46 percent) without a high school diploma. And those with a Bachelor's degree are disproportionately Non-Hispanic White – 46 percent even though only 31 percent of the 27-34 population is Non-Hispanic White. Comparatively, Latinos comprise 42 percent of this age group; however they represent 91 percent of the population with less than a high school education, and are 63 percent of those with only some high school education.

The largest changes in the population between 1980 and 2005-2007 have been the 30.5 percentage point decline in the share of Non-Hispanic Whites and the 16.4 percentage point increase in the share of Latinos. Also notable was the sizeable increase in the share of APIs in the region; only 7 percent of the

population in 1980, the share of APIs doubled to 14 percent in 2005-2007. The region is now 38 percent Non-Hispanic White, 7 percent African American, 36 percent Latino, 14 percent API, and 5 percent Other. Over this time period, the share of the foreign-born population more than doubled from 11 percent in 1980 to 24 percent in 2005-2007. The region's youth population is also 70 percent people of color, and 42 percent of the region's children are children of immigrants.

These demographic changes have also resulted in African Americans and Latinos living in closer proximity. The region's growth in these two populations has resulted in a slight decrease in the Black-Latino dissimilarity index (an indicator of the share of the black population that would need to move to another neighborhood in the region to make African Americans and Latinos evenly distributed throughout the region). Between 1980 and 1990, the Black-Latino dissimilarity index increased slightly from 40.3 to 42.2 percent, but since then has declined to 38.9 percent in 2008.

Stockton's 18-26 year old population has a disproportionately larger share of Latinos (41 percent compared to 36 percent in the overall population). And when we examine more closely the demographic composition of the region's disengaged youth (18-26 year olds that are not enrolled in school, do not have a college degree, and are not currently employed), 77 percent are youth of color. Nearly half (48 percent) of the disengaged youth population is Latino, 13 percent are APIs, 12 percent are African Americans, and 5 percent are other. The 19-26 year old population also has the highest high school dropout rate of the twelve regions examined – nearly one quarter of the age group has not completed high school.

*Riverside.* As in Stockton, Riverside's demographic shift to becoming a majority-minority region occurred recently in the 90s. Approximately 30 years ago, Riverside was nearly three-quarters Non-Hispanic White, but as of 2005-2007, the region was 62 percent people of color (7 percent African American, 44 percent Latino, 6 percent API, and 5 percent Other). It is also notable that during this time period, the population more than doubled from 1.5 million to nearly 4 million. The share of the foreign-born population also jumped from 9 percent in 1980 to 22 percent of the population in 2005-2007, and 42 percent of all children are now children of immigrants.

African Americans and Latinos are increasingly living in closer proximity, according to the Black-Latino dissimilarity index. The largest decline in the dissimilarity index occurred between 1980 and 1990 – approximately at the same time when the share in the African American population increased from 5 percent to 7 percent and the Latino population increased from 19 percent to 26 percent. In 1980, 46.2 percent of the African American population would have needed to move in order to achieve an even distribution of the two populations in the region, by 2008 that declined to 33.7 percent.

Riverside will continue to diversify. The current population is already over three-fifths people of color, but the population under 18 is already 71 percent people of color, and those that are just entering their prime working years (27-34 year olds) are already two-thirds (66 percent) people of color. This younger segment of Riverside's population looks much different than the middle-aged and senior populations.

The region's adult population over age 40 is majority Non-Hispanic White, while the younger population under 34 is majority Latino.

Similar to Stockton, the Riverside region has low levels of educational attainment – only 12 percent of the region's 27-34 population has a Bachelor's degree or higher and 45 percent have less than a high school degree. Those that do have a Bachelor's degree are disproportionately Non-Hispanic White; Non-Hispanic Whites are 34 percent of the 27-34 population, but are 47 percent of those that have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Latinos, on the other hand, are 51 percent of this age group, and are 93 percent of those with less than high school education and are 74 percent of those with some high school education.

The region's disengaged youth population is also disproportionately youth of color. Riverside's 18-26 year old population is 66 percent people of color, but the 18-26 year old population that is not enrolled in school, does not have a college degree, and is not employed is 72 percent people of color. Furthermore, Riverside's high school dropout rates for 19-26 year olds is the third highest of the twelve regions profiled; 19 percent do not have a high school degree.

*Los Angeles.* Los Angeles is the largest of the twelve regions we profile, and it is also a region that had the largest growth in its total population over the nearly 30 year period. Between 1980 and 2005-2007, LA's population grew by nearly 3.5 million from 9.4 million to 12.8 million. Over the same time period, LA's demographic composition shifted rapidly. LA had already crossed the majority-minority threshold long ago in the 80s. By 1990 LA was 46 percent Non-Hispanic White, 9 percent African American, 34 percent Latino, 10 percent API, and 1 percent Other; and in 2005-2007, Non-Hispanic Whites were only 28 percent of the region's total population, African Americans were 7 percent, Latinos were 44 percent, APIs were 14 percent, and Others were 7 percent.

As a traditional immigrant gateway city, Los Angeles has long been home to new arrivals to the country. In 1980 immigrants were 20 percent of the total population, and that share quickly jumped up to 31 percent by 1990. Since then the share of immigrants in LA has leveled off to around 35 percent. Children of immigrants are now 57 percent of all children in the Los Angeles region.

African Americans and Latinos are increasingly living in the same communities in LA. Whereas in 1980 there was greater segregation between the two populations, that segregation had notably declined by 2008. In 1980, 72 percent of the African American population would have needed to move in order to be evenly distributed with the Latino population, and in 2008 that percent declined to approximately 52 percent.

Los Angeles' children are now over three-quarters (78 percent) children of color, and over half of all children are Latino. Approximately 22 percent of those under 18 years old are Non-Hispanic White, 7 percent are African American, 57 percent are Latino, 10 percent are API, and 3 percent are Other. The only age cohort that is not yet majority-minority in LA is the senior population. Those that are age 65

and older are still 54 percent Non-Hispanic White, 7 percent African American, 22 percent Latino, 16 percent API, and 1 percent Other.

The younger segment of LA's workforce – the 27-34 year olds – is also extremely diverse. Twenty-five percent are Non-Hispanic White, 6 percent are African American, 52 percent are Latino, 15 percent are API, and 2 percent are Other. Among this particular population, roughly 20 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher and about 43 percent have less than a high school degree. Of the 27-34 year olds that do have a Bachelor's degree, 46 percent are Non-Hispanic White, 5 percent are African American, 19 percent are Latino, 29 percent are API, and 2 percent are Other.

The 18-26 year old age cohort that will follow 27-34 year olds into the workforce have approximately the same demographic composition. About 14 percent of this age group in LA is considered to be disengaged (not enrolled in school, does not have a college degree, and is not working). LA's disengaged youth are disproportionately youth of color – they are 85 percent youth of color (11 percent African American, 66 percent Latino, 7 percent API, and 2 percent Other).

### **Tipping Point Regions: Phoenix, Austin, Orlando, Chicago**

These four “tipping point” regions have populations that are between 40 and 50 percent people of color. They are examples of regions that are moving towards majority-minority faster than the country overall, and are places where best practices learned from majority-minority regions could be applied.

*Austin.* Austin Texas, most often referred to as the progressive capital of Texas is a region on the brink of becoming majority-minority. The region has undergone rapid growth since 1980 – almost tripling in size from 585,000 in 1980 to 1.5 million by 2005-2007. Over that time period, the share of Latinos, APIs, and Others steadily increased, while the share of African Americans and Non-Hispanic Whites steadily decreased. In 1980 the region was 71 percent Non-Hispanic Whites, but by 2005-2007 the Non-Hispanic White population declined to 56 percent.

These demographic shifts in Austin are also driven by the growth in the foreign-born population. As a “pre-emerging” immigrant gateway region,<sup>43</sup> Austin saw its immigrant population more than triple in share from 4 percent in 1980 to 14 percent in 2005-2007. Austin is now home to many new recent immigrants; in fact, almost half (46 percent) of the region's foreign-born population migrated to the United States within the last ten years and nearly 25 percent of the region's children are now children of immigrants.

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<sup>43</sup> Audrey Singer from the Brookings Institution's Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy defines “Pre-Emerging” immigrant gateway regions as those with smaller foreign-born populations but which had very high growth rates in the 1990s. Accessed at [http://www.brookings.edu/urban/pubs/20040301\\_gateways.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/urban/pubs/20040301_gateways.pdf).

Between 1980 and 2005-2007, there was an 11 percentage point increase in the Latino population, and by 2005-2007 Latinos were about 29 percent of the region's total population. This growth in the Latino population has also contributed to Latinos and Blacks living in closer proximity to one another. The largest decline in the Black-Latino dissimilarity index occurred between 1980 and 1990, when the percent of the black population that would need to move in order to achieve even distribution between blacks and Latinos declined from 51.8 percent in 1980 to 42.6 percent in 1990. This dissimilarity index steadily declined over the 28 year period since 1980, dropping to 30 percent in 2008.

Although the region's overall population has not yet reached majority-minority, Austin's population under 18 is already 53 percent youth of color – which is drastically different from the population over the age of 65. Austin's senior population is over three-fourths (77 percent) Non-Hispanic White.

Austin's younger segment of the workforce is divided on educational attainment; twenty-five percent of the region's 27-34 year old population has a Bachelor's degree or higher and 38 percent have less than a high school degree. Those with a Bachelor's degree are disproportionately Non-Hispanic White (67 percent), even though only half of the 27-34 population is Non-Hispanic White; and those with less than a high school education are disproportionately (91 percent) Latino. When we look at the population that has just entered the labor force or is about to enter, 12 percent of the 18-26 year old population could be classified as disengaged youth. A closer examination of the disengaged youth reveals that they are disproportionately youth of color. Non-Hispanic Whites make up over half of the 18-26 year old population but are only 35 percent of the disengaged population. The disengaged youth population is nearly half (49 percent) Latino, 12 percent African American, 2 percent API, and 2 percent Other.

*Orlando.* Orlando is another "tipping-point" region; as of 2005-2007, Orlando was still a majority (54 percent) Non-Hispanic White region. Between 1980 and 2005-2007, the region more than doubled in size from a population of 809,667 to 1.9 million. During this period of demographic growth, Orlando's Non-Hispanic White population declined from 83 percent in 1980 to 55 in 2005-2007, while the Latino share of the population increased dramatically by 18 percentage points from 4 percent in 1980 to 22 percent in 2005-2007. The African American population has remained steadily around 12-13 percent over this time period.

These demographic shifts have resulted in African Americans and Latinos living increasingly in the same neighborhoods. In 1980, the Black-Latino dissimilarity index suggests that there was far greater segregation between the two populations. Approximately 70 percent of the black population would have needed to move in order for the region to have an even distribution of the two populations in 1980; by 2008, the dissimilarity index declined to 46 percent. Although still relatively high compared to some of the other regions profiled in this section, the dissimilarity index hints at the trend that it is becoming more common for African Americans and Latinos to share common spaces.

The metro region's foreign-born population also grew rapidly during this time, particularly in the 90s when the percent foreign-born jumped from 7 percent in 1990 to 12 percent in 2000. Similar to Austin,



most of the region's immigrants are recent immigrants. Forty percent of Orlando's foreign-born population migrated to the United States within the past ten years, and now approximately one-fourth of Orlando's children are children of immigrants. Although Orlando is a tipping-point region, its youth population has already crossed the majority-minority threshold, with 52 percent of the youth population being youth of color. This distribution is also notably different from the region's older population. Those that are between 40-64 are 65 percent Non-Hispanic White and those that are over 65 years old are 77 percent Non-Hispanic White.

Approximately 19 percent of the region's younger segment of the workforce (those between 27-34 years old) have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Those that do have a Bachelor's degree are 62 percent Non-Hispanic White, 11 percent African American, 17 percent Latino, 8 percent API, and 2 percent Other. At the other end of the spectrum, 35 percent of the 27-34 population has less than a high school degree – and those with less than a high school education are 72 percent Latino. The 18-26 year olds that will follow this population into the workforce is similar in their demographic composition (approximately half people of color), but 14 percent of the 18-26 year old population is considered disengaged – not enrolled in school, without a college degree, and not working. And the disengaged youth population is disproportionately youth of color. In Orlando, African Americans and Latinos have higher levels of representation among the disengaged population. African Americans are 18 percent and Latinos are 26 percent of the 18-26 population, however, they are 22 and 34 percent of the disengaged population, respectively. The two groups combined encompass over half of the disengaged youth.

*Phoenix.* Phoenix is well-known as a new immigrant gateway city, particularly because of its reactionary response to immigration. Phoenix is home to controversial Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, who has actively utilized the 287(g) agreement with Department of Homeland Security to aggressively enforce immigration at a local level.

The region remains a majority Non-Hispanic White metropolitan area, but with a population that is 42 percent people of color, Phoenix's transition to majority-minority is just around the corner. Phoenix in 2005-2007 was 58 percent Non-Hispanic White, 4 percent African American, 30 percent Latino, 3 percent API, and 6 percent Other.

Between 1980 and 2005-2007, the region's foreign-born population more than tripled from 5 percent to 17 percent. Similar to the other "tipping-point" regions, Phoenix's immigrant population is mostly comprised of recent arrivals. Nearly half of the foreign-born population in Phoenix arrived within the last ten years; and almost one-third (31 percent) of Phoenix's children are children of immigrants.

Phoenix's Black-Latino dissimilarity index also indicates that African Americans and Latinos in the metro region are increasingly living in the same communities. In 1980, 43 percent of the African American population would have needed to move in order to achieve an even distribution of the two populations; by 2008, the dissimilarity index declined to 28.5 percent.

The youth population reflects Phoenix's growing diversity; the population under 18 is 54 percent people of color. This is a stark comparison to the senior population – Phoenix's population over the age of 65 is 86 percent non-Hispanic White and 14 percent people of color. The next age cohort above the region's children is the 18-26 year olds, who are also racially/ethnically diverse. Eighteen to 26 year olds are 52 percent Non-Hispanic White, 4 percent African American, 37 percent Latino, 3 percent API, and 4 percent Other. Sixteen percent of this particular age group is considered disengaged youth, and the highest proportion of the disengaged youth is Latino (51 percent).

The younger segment of the workforce, the 27-34 year olds, has a similar racial/ethnic composition to the 18-26 year olds. They represent a more diverse segment of the region's working age population, as those that are between 40-64 years old are nearly three-fourths Non-Hispanic White. Eighteen percent of Phoenix's 27-34 population has a Bachelor's degree or higher and 40 percent have less than a high school degree. Of the 27-34 year olds that have a Bachelor's degree, 71 percent are Non-Hispanic White, 3 percent are African American, 13 percent are Latino, 10 percent are API, and 2 percent are Other.

*Chicago.* Chicago is an older immigrant gateway city, and with a population of nearly 9.5 million, it is also one of the more populous regions we profile. Chicago has not experienced any rapid demographic change – rather, the region has steadily become more diverse over the past 30 years. The region is now 48 percent people of color and is on the verge of becoming majority minority.

As of 2005-2007, Chicago was 52 percent Non-Hispanic White, 17 percent African American, 19 percent Latino, 5 percent API, and 7 percent Other. It is notable that there are nearly equal shares of Latinos and African Americans in the region, yet Chicago remains a highly segregated metropolitan area. According to the Black-Latino dissimilarity index, in 1980, 82 percent of the region's African American population would have needed to move in order to achieve an even distribution with Latinos in Chicago; by 2008 that declined to 74 percent, still a considerable share of the African American population.

Chicago has long been home to immigrants; the foreign-born population is nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of the region's total population. Between 1980 and 2005-2007, the percent immigrant in the region increased by 8 percentage points from 10 percent to 18 percent – with the largest jump occurring in the 90s. Today, children of immigrants are 29 percent of all children in the metro area.

Like the other regions profiled, Chicago's youth population is already majority minority. Those under 18 are already 53 percent children of color; however, at the other end of the age spectrum is the aging population. The population over the age of 65 is about three-quarters Non-Hispanic White. The older segment of the workforce (40-64 year olds) is also majority (65 percent) Non-Hispanic White.

The 27-34 year olds, like the youth population, are already majority-minority, so the workforce is also on its way to transforming racially and ethnically. In 2005-2007, the 27-34 year olds were 48 percent Non-

Hispanic White, 17 percent African American, 27 percent Latino, 7 percent API, and 1 percent Other. Twenty-two percent of this population has a Bachelor's degree or higher, while 37 percent has less than a high school degree. The 27-34 year olds that have a Bachelor's degree are higher proportions of Non-Hispanic Whites (67 percent) and APIs (15 percent) compared to their shares in the age group (48 percent and 7 percent, respectively).

The 18-26 population that is about to enter or has just entered the workforce is similar in its demographic composition to 27-34 year olds; they are equally racially and ethnically diverse. Approximately 16 percent of Chicago's 18-26 year old population is disengaged, and again, the disengaged are disproportionately youth of color. Youth of color are 51 percent of the 18-26 age group, but they comprise 70 percent (38 percent African American, 32 percent Latino, 2 percent API, and 2 percent Other) of those that are not enrolled in school, do not have a college degree, and are unemployed.

### **Less than 40 Percent Regions: Seattle, Jacksonville, Greensboro, Cleveland**

These four regions have populations that are less than 40 percent people of color. They are examples of regions that may be moving at the same rate as the rest of the country in regard to demographic transformation. In these regions lies the opportunity to plan for the future, to apply best practices learned from places that reach majority-minority first, and to develop the necessary infrastructure to address the demographic shifts that lie ahead.

*Cleveland.* Cleveland, Ohio is a region that is unique to the other regions we've profiled – unlike other metropolitan areas examined here, Cleveland is a region that has actually had negative population growth between 1980 and 2005-2007. In 1980, Cleveland's total population was approximately 2.1 million, and by 2005-2007 the region's population was closer to about 2 million in size.

Furthermore, the racial composition of the region has not changed too much over the past 30 years. In 1980, the region was 80 percent Non-Hispanic White, 17 percent African American, 2 percent Latino, and 1 percent API. In 2005-2007, Cleveland's demographic composition was 70 percent Non-Hispanic White, 19 percent African American, 4 percent Latino, 2 percent API, and 5 percent Other.

Overall there was also zero net gain in the share of the foreign-born population. Cleveland's immigrant population also declined between 1980 and 1990, from 6 percent to 5 percent. As of 2005-2007 the percent foreign-born had returned to its 1980 level of 6 percent.

African Americans and Latinos are highly segregated in Cleveland, and that has not changed much since 1980 according to the Black-Latino dissimilarity index. In 1980, 80 percent of the African American population would have had to move in order for the two populations to be evenly distributed. In 2008 that percent remained high at 74 percent.

Despite the region's slow demographic transformation, it is inevitable that the region will continue to transform. Already, Cleveland's youth look more diverse – one-third of the children in the region are children of color. Those that are 18-26 years old are 68 percent Non-Hispanic White, 23 percent African American, 5 percent Latino, 2 percent API, and 2 percent Other. While this population is not yet majority-minority, disengaged 18-26 year olds have already crossed the threshold. Eighteen to 26 year olds that are not in school, are without a college degree, and are unemployed are 46 percent Non-Hispanic White, 40 percent African American, 12 percent Latino, and 2 percent Other.

Those that are 27-34 years old in Cleveland have a similar race/ethnic composition to 18-26 year olds: 69 percent Non-Hispanic White, 21 percent African American, 5 percent Latino, 3 percent API, and 1 percent Other. Eighteen percent of this age group has a Bachelor's degree or higher and 35 percent has less than a high school degree.

*Greensboro.* Greensboro, like many other regions in North Carolina, has transformed dramatically since 1980. The region's total population grew by over 50 percent between 1980 to 2005-2007 from 500,000 to approximately 750,000. The demographic change was largely driven by rapid growth in the Latino population. Over the last 30 years the share of Latinos in Greensboro jumped from 1 percent to 6 percent. Meanwhile, the African American population remained relatively stable at around 21 to 23 percent of the total population.

Similar to Austin and Phoenix, Greensboro's foreign-born population grew quickly during the 90s. In 1980 the immigrant population was only 1 percent of the region's total population; by 2005-2007 the share had increased to 7 percent. The largest increase took place between 1990 and 2000, when the percent foreign-born escalated from 2 percent to 6 percent. Children of immigrants are now 13 percent of all children in the region.

Despite the sizeable African American population and the rapidly growing Latino population in Greensboro, there has been little change in the Black-Latino dissimilarity index over the nearly 30 year period. In 1980, 45 percent of the African American population would have needed to move in order for blacks and Latinos to be evenly distributed throughout the region. In 2008, the percent of African Americans that would need to move declined by 2 percentage points to 43 percent. Although not nearly segregated as other regions such as Chicago or Cleveland, there remains some separation between African Americans and Latinos in Greensboro.

While Greensboro is still a majority Non-Hispanic White region, the region's younger segment of the population hints at changing demographics in the region. The 27-34 year old population is 60 percent Non-Hispanic White, 25 percent African American, 11 percent Latino, 2 percent API, and 1 percent Other. Those that are 18-26 are 58 percent Non-Hispanic White, 30 percent African American, 7 percent Latino, 2 percent API, and 3 percent Other. A closer examination of this age group shows that even though 18-26 year olds are not yet majority-minority, those that are disengaged youth are majority

youth of color. Disengaged youth in Greensboro are 49 percent Non-Hispanic White, 34 percent African American, 11 percent Latino, 3 percent API, and 4 percent Other. The challenges that face this population will need to be addressed as they move into the labor force. If we look at those that make up the younger segment of the labor force, 16 percent of 27-34 year olds have a Bachelor's degree or higher, while approximately two-fifths (39 percent) have less than a high school degree.

*Seattle.* The Seattle, Washington region grew by nearly 1 million between 1980 and 2005-2007 from just over 2 million to approximately 3.2 million. As of 2005-2007 Seattle was 68 percent Non-Hispanic White, 4 percent African American, 7 percent Latino, 11 percent API, and 10 percent Other. The changes in the region's demographic composition were principally driven by the growth in the Latino, API and Other populations.

Over the same time period, the share of the foreign-born population more than doubled from 7 percent in 1980 to 16 percent in 2005-2007. Similar to other regions profiled, the largest spike in the percent foreign-born occurred in the 90s; for Seattle in particular, their percent immigrant increased from 8 percent in 1990 to 13 percent in 2000. By 2005-2007, Seattle was 16 percent foreign-born; and children of immigrants comprised 25 percent of all children in the region.

With the growth of the region's Latino population, African Americans and Latinos began to increasingly occupy the same spaces. The Black-Latino dissimilarity index declined from 49 percent in 1980 to 34 percent in 2008. The largest decline in the dissimilarity index occurred in the 90s, when the share of African Americans that would need to move in order to achieve an even distribution of the two populations decreased by 10 percentage points from 45 percent to 35 percent.

Like the other regions profiled, Seattle is well on its way to becoming a tipping point region. The region is currently 32 percent people of color, and the youth are 36 percent people of color. The demographic differences are most salient among the young and the old. Seattle's population that is over the age of 65 is 84 percent Non-Hispanic White, while those that are under 18 are 64 percent Non-Hispanic White. Those that are 27-34 years old are 65 percent Non-Hispanic White, 6 percent African American, 11 percent Latino, 15 percent API, and 4 percent Other. Twenty-five percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher and 31 percent have less than a high school degree.

Those that are following the 27-34 year olds into the workforce – the 18-26 year olds – are similar in their race/ethnic composition, but like many of their counterparts in the other regions profiled, the disengaged population has a higher representation of youth of color. Seattle, compared to the other regions profiled, along with Jacksonville, are the only regions where the disengaged youth population is majority Non-Hispanic White. Seattle's disengaged youth are 61 percent Non-Hispanic White, 9 percent African American, 13 percent Latino, 8 percent API, and 9 percent Other.

*Jacksonville.* Jacksonville, Florida has been a region of slow and steady demographic transformation. Between 1980 and 2005-2007, the percent Non-Hispanic White declined by 11 percentage points from 76 percent to 65 percent. The share of African Americans in the total population remained constant at 21 percent, and there was small growth in the shares of Latinos, APIs, and Others to 5 percent, 3 percent, and 5 percent, respectively. Over the same time period, the percent foreign-born grew from 3 percent in 1980 to 7 percent in 2005-2007. Children of immigrants are now 11 percent of all children in Jacksonville.

It is notable that the Black-Latino dissimilarity index indicates that the region's African American and Latino populations are increasingly living in closer proximity. In 1980, African Americans and Latinos were far more segregated, with 60 percent of the African American population needing to move in order to achieve an even distribution of the two groups. By 2008, the Black-Latino dissimilarity index declined to 46 percent.

Although Jacksonville is classified as a "Less than 40 percent" region, Jacksonville's youth population is already on the tipping point of becoming majority-minority. Forty-one percent of their population under 18 is youth of color, compared to 35 percent of the general population. And again, there is a notable contrast in the composition of the region's senior population and the younger segments of Jacksonville's population. Those over the age of 65 are 79 percent Non-Hispanic White, 15 percent African American, 3 percent Latino, 2 percent API, and 1 percent Other. In comparison, those that comprise the younger segment of the workforce (27-34 year olds) are 63 percent Non-Hispanic White, 24 percent African American, 7 percent Latino, 4 percent API, and 2 percent Other. Within the 27-34 age group, approximately 18 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher, and a little over one-third (34 percent) have less than a high school degree.

Like the other regions profiled, Jacksonville's 18-26 year old population that is disengaged is disproportionately youth of color. Although African Americans are 26 percent of the region's population, they are 39 percent of those that are not enrolled in school, do not have a college degree, and are unemployed. However, unlike the other regions, Latinos are actually slightly underrepresented among the disengaged. Latinos are 7 percent of 18-26 year olds, but they are 6 percent of the disengaged.

### ***Appendix B: Inter-ethnic Leadership Development Best Practices Literature Review***

Before embarking on our qualitative interviews, we set out to conduct a scan of the current literature around inter-ethnic youth leadership development to highlight best practices in the field. The constantly evolving character of inter-ethnic youth leadership development and its somewhat nascent status required us to draw from a reservoir of related literature, which is presented here. While the literature on this field is growing, we highlight lessons to be learned from four somewhat overlapping and related fields from which to draw wisdom: union organizing, interfaith organizing, student activism, and racial equity coalitions. Our richest examples of inter-ethnic youth leadership development were presented throughout the paper. While this literature review is in no way exhaustive, it does illuminate some especially instructive examples that leaders might want to integrate into the inter-ethnic youth development field. By initially casting this net widely, we hope to have caught some important analyses that would have been overlooked had we focused narrowly in literature directly from the primary field of interest.

#### **Union Organizing**

Many trade unions have not had good track records for building inter-ethnic leadership or inter-ethnic alliances. However, changing demographics have forced many, particularly those representing low-wage workers, to promote understanding across race, ethnicity, and nativity. These changes have even re-energized some unions. The revitalization of labor unions by immigrants began in the 1990s in Los Angeles with the Justice for Janitors campaign and has spread to other major cities, like Chicago and Houston (Milkman, 2006; Bronfenbrenner & Warren, 2007). The inclusion of immigrants corresponded with the inclusion of people of color, more generally – and thus has spurred the reorganization of leadership and coalitions. An example of this is SEIU Local 1877 in Los Angeles, the union that spearheaded the Justice for Janitors campaign. SEIU Local 1877 has been organizing security workers, a work force dominated by African Americans.

Studies on labor force trends acknowledge that an increase in immigrants over the past two decades has changed the composition of the low-skilled labor market, particularly at local levels (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007). Occupational niches have changed and that has complicated coalition-building among workers. Tensions are based on the misconception that recent immigrants, who are mostly Latino and sometimes undocumented, are displacing low-skilled blacks. On a national scale, the impact of immigrant labor on native wages and job markets remains minimal at worst (Borjas, Grogger, & Hanson, 2010) and non-existent at best (Card, 2005). However, specific industries or localities that have shifted to mostly immigrant labor are more likely to see slight wage reductions and decreased employment stability (Catanzarite, 2004; Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007; Pastor & Carter, 2009).

Wage effects and demographic shifts in employees are particularly evident in low-skilled manufacturing, construction, and production job markets, which in recent history have been comprised mainly of African Americans or native Latinos (Pastor & Carter 2009; Smith, Williams, & Johnson, 2006). For these

populations, maintaining job security is a significant challenge as they are likely to face increased competition and employer prejudice. In the low-skilled job market, racial discrimination is a reality. In particular, the stereotyping of African American workers as less motivated or more difficult to manage exists in stark contrast to the notion that new immigrants are eager and willing to work for low wages. In a national climate of animosity towards undocumented workers, immigrant laborers tolerate below market wages and subpar working conditions when compared to their native counterparts (Smith, Williams, and Johnson, 2006; Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007). This dimension of race and nativity complicates labor organizing between the two groups that could have, and have had, success through collaboration.

Facilitating cross-cultural understanding between diverse workers has become increasingly important to labor organizers, who aim to retain jobs and hard-won benefits through the power of collective bargaining. Although less common in the past, inter-ethnic coalition building did exist in powerful ways. Reflecting on organizing in the 1940s and 50s, Zeitlin and Weyher (2001) note that the Congress of Industrial Organization's (CIO) collaboration between African American and white workers helped win employment equality. Similarly, rather than using their power to trying to bar immigrants, unions are now inclusive of recent Latino immigrants, integrating them into the socioeconomic fabric of our communities. Influential leaders are necessary to create understanding and solidarity between workers (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007).

According to Gordon and Lenhardt (2007), education is an initial step for building coalitions between African American and Latino unions. For recent Latino immigrants, learning the history of African American labor and racial struggles in the U.S. can be instrumental in understanding the impact of reduced wages or workplace safety policies. Teaching African American workers about immigrant struggles may improve solidarity – they may reconsider strategies meant to bar undocumented workers from hiring and redraft polices to, instead, gain immigrant worker support for broad workplace protections (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007).<sup>44</sup>

Training workshops or seminars can create unity among workers and enhance their leadership skills. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has held a series of leadership development workshops for its staff and members to discuss race, immigration, and work (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007). Some groups have taken additional measures to facilitate communication and ensure equal representation among participants. In 1999, a joint project between Black Workers for Justice and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee resulted in the "Black and Brown Freedom School." The day-long event brought equal numbers of African American and Latino organizers together for the purpose of creating inter-ethnic unity. Training sessions were designed to inform each group of the other's cultural

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<sup>44</sup> The shift to pro-immigrant policies has become the norm for numerous unions, which substantially alters the way that they define their membership and train organizers. The level of cooperation by immigrants is partly determined by how they perceive their long-term status. Recent immigrants can become more active in labor movements as they come to consider themselves settled in U.S. society (Waldinger & Der-Martirosian, 2000).



and experiential history. Language courses were also offered to teach basic Spanish and English to each group. The Carolina Alliance for Fair Employment, a majority African-American group, similarly held a “Hispanic Outreach Project” in 2000, an ongoing effort to unite the two groups on the basis of shared social experiences, especially discrimination (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007).

Along with being able to incorporate immigrant members, leaders in workforce solidarity movements must also be able to draw support from community groups (i.e. churches) and bridge ethnic groups with little prior contact (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007). The CIO’s leadership has been held up as a model of union success: their political consciousness aided effective workforce bargaining. The elected leadership makes all the difference in the direction of the union – from the issues it picks to the way it goes about its campaigns (Zeitlin & Weyher, 2001; Warren, 2010).

Leaders of inter-ethnic unions in particular, given their often discriminatory history, must redefine institutional goals and organizational cultures to be more inclusive. African American and Latino unions can create shared identities as people of color while learning to understand the cultural differences and histories that make each group unique. While this understanding includes being sensitive to linguistic needs (Gordon & Lenhardt, 2007), it means more – not the least of which is grooming minority leaders.

### **Interfaith Organizing**

The framework for interfaith organizing is similar to that of inter-ethnic organizing in that it recognizes that people are all a little different, but by acknowledging those differences they can work together to make important changes. “Forging a broad and inclusive conception of the common good” (Warren, 2001:98) does not require complete unity without recognition of doctrinal differences, but does rely on a group ethos that values the development of interdependence and shared interests.

For faith-based organizations, religion provides a moral basis for creating a sense of shared goals amongst those from diverse belief systems. For example, People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) incorporates various social ethics unique to Catholic, African American, white Protestant, Hispanic ministries, and, more recently, Jewish teachings and other theologies. It can also provide motivation, as the teaching of some traditions moves adherents to action (Wood, 2002). Further, “the deep religious faith of people and the support they receive from fellow parishioners help generate the vision and confidence necessary to enter the public arena as leaders of long-neglected communities” (Warren, 2001:5). In Texas, this has led to cross-church alliances. In Chicago, this has led to multi-faith coalitions, often led by youth.

#### *Community-based Interfaith Coalitions*

The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and its Texas affiliates spent years building a solid foundation of inter-ethnic representation and support amongst its members (Warren, 2001). When progress on education reform, work training programs, and election coalition building was limited by racial/ethnic tension, IAF made two changes. First, black staff and leadership were actively recruited, in no small part

because of the lobbying of black pastors. Recognizing that black communities needed to take advantage of the growing number of campaigns designed for them, IAF secured funding and implemented trainings specifically to bring African American leaders into the organizing dimension of its work (Warren, 2001). As a result, the Allied Communities of Terrant (ACT) became a diverse local political action group, united by a general Christian faith.<sup>45</sup>

Second, IAF encouraged affiliates to bring matters of race to the forefront, and to discuss racial tension. Warren attributes the lasting political success of Dallas Interfaith to its long and sustained discussions on race early in its development. Inviting prominent black academics and intellectuals to lead a series of IAF seminars allowed for open discussions of issues specific to African Americans. Because of these conversations, white leaders were asked to contribute through cooperative action rather than acts of charity. Moreover, to expand its Hispanic base, Dallas Interfaith began to provide Spanish translation at its public meetings (Warren, 2001).

Part of IAF's success has been its federated structure that allows the issues of individuals and communities to reach the regional level. This fosters confidence that the concerns of groups within IAF and ACT will not be overlooked, even if there are concerns that are specific to individual congregations. Historically, inter-ethnic coalition building has been criticized for relying heavily upon integrationist ideals, which, in its broad argument for equal rights for all, have overlooked specific concerns of the black community, in particular. IAF's inter-ethnic membership views the support of community-specific causes as a means to increase appreciation for African-American or Latino issues rather than a way of reducing their importance. At the organizational level, IAF uses large discussion forums as a means to bridge understanding between groups, rather than coalition-building tactics that rely on integrationist tactics. (Warren, 2001)

A final lesson from IAF is that while they conduct some of the best inter-ethnic and interfaith organizing, they focus on leadership development more than anything else. IAF staff pushes the local leaders of its affiliated organizations to engage in leadership training by participating in issue campaigns. They believe that political training improves leadership capacity, which will result in better-served communities and meaningful collaborative activity. Affiliates, in turn, look to IAF as an authoritative agency and seek out the leadership skills taught by their organizers (Warren, 2001).

PICO has a similar approach to developing leadership through formal training and evaluation sessions, among other things. This promotes leadership development that encourages an understanding of the connection between personal responsibility and achieving power at an organizational level. PICO members hold each other rigorously accountable (Wood, 2002).

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<sup>45</sup> Terrant County, Texas, which includes Dallas and Fort Worth.

### *Interfaith Youth*

Interfaith youth contribute to this ecology of leadership development by being committed to understanding each other and using those differences as strengths. Due to the amount of contact between students of diverse backgrounds on college campuses and other youth settings, youth interfaith groups have the opportunity to easily draw members from a broad set of religious and ethnic backgrounds (Patel & Neuroth, 2006; Kazanjian, 2006). Face to Face/Faith to Faith, an annual two week camp held in New York City, brings together youth and religious leaders, especially those who have experienced violence or other antagonism due to their religious affiliations, to tell their stories. The organization stresses the importance of “otherness” and encourages participants to seek out knowledge about unfamiliar faiths and experiences, in addition to exposing each participant to the experience of being an “other.” (Henderson & Feldman, 2006)

Indeed, Patel (2007) has found that beginning with an honest conversation about individual faiths can aid interfaith communication instead of inhibiting it. As a result, he has developed an interfaith youth model with an ethos of strengthening, rather than weakening, personal religious identities. The Interfaith Youth Core in Chicago uses these shared-values dialogues in the process of promoting service learning. The organization operates on the notion that adults should not merely prepare youth to take on future roles, but should guide them into present leadership positions, with the acknowledgement that they have valuable contributions to make to the community at large (Patel & Neuroth, 2006; Patel, 2007). Large-scale interfaith service events and interfaith service clubs comprise the main programmatic curriculum of the organization, while training sessions on how to conduct interfaith groups are offered for college students and youth advisors (Patel & Neuroth, 2006).

Interfaith youth organizing shows that turning differences into strengths through dialogue can strengthen coalitions and our social fabric. Starting with youth can actually be an effective means of reaching adults and entire religious communities, because adults might initially be less open to such bridge building, particularly across faiths (Patel, 2007).

### **Student Activism**

Student activism is one of the few means by which young people can influence public life (Noguera & Cannella, 2006). Ginwright, Cammarota, and Noguera (2005) argue that such activism is necessary because public policy does not address – and even impinges upon – the needs of youth. Therefore, youth must become civically engaged to transform social policy. In this light, youth play a positive role in building community capital and community problem solving.

Youth Rising, an organization in California, addresses high drop-out rates by engaging a multiracial group of youth in apprenticeship programs at struggling high schools (Kirshner, 2006). The dozen youth leaders – including fairly traditional students as well as those involved in the juvenile justice system – engaged students in school governance as a means of improving academic achievement and reducing

dropout rates. With guidance from three adult leaders, they conducted extensive research at the school, analyzed it, and then lobbied the school board for increased leadership roles for students.

Kirshner (2006) attributes the impressive show of leadership by Youth Rising to the organization's use of an apprentice-style mentorship. Adults engaged youth as their mentors and colleagues rather than mere facilitators, using techniques of modeling, coaching, and fading to actively guide student leaders through the planning and implementation of their campaign. Students felt secure in their environment and confident enough to raise novel issues or differing views at meetings. Significantly, most youth leaders agreed that Youth Rising is primarily run by neither students nor adults, but rather acts as a collaborative organization.

O'Donoghue (2006) reached similar conclusions from her studies in the San Francisco Bay Area; her research drew on the work of Youth as Effective Citizens and Youth Supporting Youth Change. When adults enabled youth to participate in decision making around core organizational issues, the youth were more invested in their roles. She found that youth benefited most from decision making when: they were included in large-scale organizational decisions, they were provided with well-structured opportunities to participate, and adults were open-minded as to the level of contribution youth could provide. Stovall (2006), also learning from Youth as Effective Citizens, adds that in order to encourage discussions among students that foster trust and prevent racial tensions from escalating, adults must bring forward compelling issues such as social justice and equality.

And, they need to do this in safe spaces: the key to a successful social justice discourse lies in the amount of comfort and honesty between students and facilitators. Goodman (2001) thinks this safe space can be used to move out of a purely intellectual discussion to an emotional one (i.e. one that uses personal stories) where feelings of guilt or betrayal can be more easily expressed and transformed. Griffin (1997) suggest a "learn-as-you-go" method wherein the instructor acts as an observing and guiding presence during student-based dialogues, rather than a teacher.

Shapiro (2002) suggests that the most successful discussions or training will provide learners, in this case, students, with the means of applying their knowledge into direct action both individually and, ideally, collaboratively with community-based organizations. Kirshner (2006) echoed this in his analysis of Youth Rising. What the IAF in Texas calls "praxis" is a repeated theme throughout not just student activism literature, but also throughout the larger inter-ethnic leadership development literature.

### **Racial Equity Coalitions**

Rather than working towards inter-ethnic leadership via other avenues (labor, education, or interfaith), some authors have driven straight to the issue. Wood (2002) writes about the Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO). CTWO is explicitly multiracial and organizes against American consumerism, what Wood identifies as a common cultural thread across different racial groups. A key aspect of CTWO ideology is linking dominant forms of oppression in order to create a shared interest in issues of

inequality, or a “multiracial consciousness.” CTWO also focuses on the more general forms of oppression as engineered by dominant social institutions.

After the Los Angeles riots, Regalado (1994) surveyed several multicultural coalitions, some intent on building relationships with each other, and others intent on reducing poverty amongst minorities. They included the Black-Korean Alliance (BKA), the Black-Latino Roundtable (BLR), The Ethnic Coalition (TEC), The New Majority Task Force (NMTF), the Multicultural Collaborative (MCC), the Southern California Civil Rights Coalition (SCCRC), the United Neighborhoods Organization (UNO), and the Southern California Organizing Committee (SCOC). Beyond noting the relative thinness of the theoretical literature on inter-ethnic coalition building, Regalado suggested that multi-racial coalitions must grapple with how to implement representative democracy, economic redevelopment, race and class diversity, and multicultural pluralism. A quarter century earlier, Carmichael and Hamilton (1967) had identified the importance of having similar identifiable goals, like redevelopment, as opposed to converging only over theoretical abstractions.

The LA multicultural coalitions did not reach their goals, perhaps because they did not dig into the issues Regalado identified. Regalado’s analysis is instructive in revealing the depth of critical thinking and action needed for successful inter-ethnic coalition building and leadership development. Grant-Thomas, Sarfati, and Staats (2009) offer another element of successful multi-racial coalitions: members need to devote resources to increase ownership. Having a stake in the functionality of the group encourages more democratic participation and investment in the direction of the allied organization. Grant-Thomas, Sarfati, and Staats (2009) noted that the coalitions that seemed to get this mix right were the ones that eventually invested in community driven projects.

Getting involved in community projects is central, and requires the racial equity coalition to be deft at understanding their member organizations and their surrounding institutions. For example, Stovall (2006) stresses the need for community involvement to improve student achievement that cannot be left to schools alone. Political leadership is needed on an extensive scale so that it can build coalitions broadly across communities as opposed to selectively serving interests (Warren, 2001). In order to remain effective, faith-based and community organizations must remain cognizant of their political standing in local power structures, particularly considering the low income status of many of their members and their limited access to political capital (Wood, 2002). Youth organizations should also be aware of the politics surrounding youth involvement in their locality, and, consequently, train student leaders to recruit others as needed for support (Kirshner, 2006). Political action, in turn, must be a sustained and passionate effort. Wood (2002) warns against allowing political action to become overly “nice,” and suggests that interfaith groups in particular need to utilize their anger as much as their ethical and moral underpinnings to be politically successful.

### **Putting it all Together**

Each stream of inter-ethnic leadership development feeds into a reservoir of knowledge from which youth leadership developers can pull. In response to shifting demographics in their rank-and-file

membership, unions are developing ways to facilitate cross-racial understanding. Interfaith organizers are navigating core differences and turning them into strengths for the welfare of the group – with lessons clearly applicable for our modern world of multiple identities. Student organizing groups are taking a “learn by doing” approach by integrating youth leadership and decision-making into their organizational processes. And racial equity coalitions have the sophisticated systemic analyses that any effort – that acknowledges how real race is – will need if civic engagement is to make a change. The key to successful efforts may lay in the ability of organizations to combine the aspects of these three areas, as well as others, to openly address root causes, educate each other on the experiences of each racial and ethnic group, acknowledge the differences and make them part of the strength of the organization, and mentor and nurture participants.

***Appendix C: Individuals and Organizations Interviewed***

**Anderson, Brooke**

Deputy Director  
East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy  
(EBASE)

**Bang Luu, Tammy**

Senior Organizer and Co-Director  
National School for Strategic Organizing at the  
Labor Community Strategy Center (LCSC)

**Breyer, Chloe and Sarah Sayeed**

Executive Director and Program Associate  
Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY)

**Carmona, Eddie**

Director of Organizing  
Orange County Congregation and Community  
Organization (OCCCO)

**Chinn, Sue**

Director of Generation Change  
Center for Community Change (CCC)

**Christopher, Gail**

Vice President for Programs  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

**Ganz, Marshall**

Lecturer  
Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations,  
Harvard Kennedy School

**Gonzales, Mary**

California Director  
The Gamaliel Foundation

**Hancock, Ange-Marie**

Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science,  
University of Southern California

**Harris, Loren and Khary Lazarre-White**

Board Member and Executive Director  
Brotherhood/Sister Sol

**Hockett, Dushaw**

Director of Special Initiatives  
Center for Community Change (CCC)

**Hollenback, Christina**

Director  
Generational Alliance (GA)

**Hoyt, Josh**

Director  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee  
Rights (ICIRR)

**Hughes, Cheyenne**

Lead Racial Justice Organizer  
Colorado Progressive Coalition (CPC)  
\*at time of interview

**Hutchings, Phil**

Senior Organizer  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)

**Iñiguez, Carmen**

Statewide Campaign Director  
Californians for Justice Education Fund (CFJ)

**Ismail, Kyle and Alia J. Bilal**

Former Associate Director and Executive Fellow  
Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)

**Johnson, Nelson**

Pastor and Founder of Faith Community Church  
Beloved Community Center (BCC)

**Kunreuther, Frances**

Project Director  
Building Movement Project (BMP)

**Lee, Kimi**

Coordinator, The Alliance for Educational  
Justice (AEJ)  
Senior Fellow, The Movement Strategy Center  
(MSC)

**Levine, Peter and Abby Kiesa**

Director and Youth Coordinator  
Center on Information and Research on Civic  
Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

**Ma, Eileen**

Campaign Director  
Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)

**Majones, Danielle**

Executive Director  
Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO)

**Marantes, Jose Luis**

National Youth Organizer  
Center for Community Change (CCC)

**McGhee, Heather and Lucy Mayo**

Director of Washington D.C. Office and  
Associate Director for Advocacy & Outreach  
Demos

**Murillo, Prishni**

Executive Director  
Youth Together (YT)

**Murphy, Brian and Edmundo Norte**

College President and Director of the Institute  
of Community and Civic Engagement (ICCE)  
De Anza Community College

**Ngongang, Decker**

Vice President of Programs  
Mobilize.org

**Patel, Eboo**

Founder and Executive Director  
Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)

**Pillai, Supriya**

Executive Director  
Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing  
(FCYO)

**Retana, Alberto**

Director of Organizing  
Community Coalition (CoCo)  
\*at time of interview

**Sen, Rinku**

President and Executive Director  
Applied Research Center (ARC)

**Soni, Saket**

Director  
New Orleans Workers Center for Racial Justice  
(NOWC)

**Sugland, Barbara**

Executive Director  
Center for Applied Research and Technical  
Assistance (CARTA)



**Teal, Monique and Gaby Madriz**

National Field Director and Field Organizer  
United States Student Association (USSA)

**Torres, Benjamin and Miesha Watson**

Vice President of Working Democracy,  
Community Development Technologies (CDTech)  
and Site Director, Public Allies Los Angeles (PALA)  
\*at time of interview

***Appendix D: Attendees at the Color of Change Convening, Seattle, WA, 22 April 2010***

**Armenta, Raquel**  
Inner City Struggle

**Bensimon, Estela**  
University of Southern California (USC)

**Berg, David**  
Yale University

**Bilal, Alia**  
Inner City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)

**Blair, Jill**  
Jill Blair Consulting

**Bloch Garcia , Peter**  
Marguerite Casey Foundation

**Brix, Matt**  
Center for Civic Policy

**Brodkin, Karen**  
University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)

**Brooks, Joe**  
PolicyLink

**Cammarota, Julio**  
University of Arizona

**Chinn, Susan**  
Center for Community Change, Generation  
Change

**Fairchild, Denise**  
Community Development Technology Center  
(CDTech)

**Gates, Chris**  
Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement

**Hancock, Ange-Marie**  
University of Southern California (USC)

**Harris-Dawson, Marqueece**  
Community Coalition (CoCo)

**Hockett, Dushaw**  
Center for Community Change (CCC)

**Hughes, Cheyenne**  
Youth Organizer

**James, Taj**  
Movement Strategy Center (MSC)

**Jayapal, Pramila**  
OneAmerica

**Johnson, Tammy**  
Applied Research Center (ARC)

**Johnson, Leroy**  
Southern Echo

**Jones, Chad**  
Marguerite Casey Foundation

**Kunreuther, Frances**  
Building Movement Project

**Levine, Peter**  
Center for Information and Research on Civic  
Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

**Marantes, Jose Luis**  
Center for Community Change

**McGhee, Heather**  
Demos

**Mendez, April**  
Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)

**Mott, Andy**

Community Learning Partnerships

**Ngongang, Decker**

Mobilize.org

**Pillai, Supriya**

Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing  
(FCYO)

**Ramirez, Antonio**

YouthBuild USA

**Retana, Alberto**

Obama Administration/U.S. Department of  
Education

**Rodriguez, Robby**

Southwest Organizing Project

**Teal, Monique**

United States Students Association (USSA)

**Terriquez, Veronica**

University of Southern California (USC)

**Wilcox, Susan**

Brotherhood/Sister Sol

***Staff of Co-Convening Organizations:***

**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

Chirwa, Dawn

Gonzalez, Elizabeth

Patel, Nisha

Patrick, Stephen

Pennington, Hilary

Sanchez, Juan

**USC Program for Environmental and Regional  
Equity (PERE)**

Carter, Vanessa

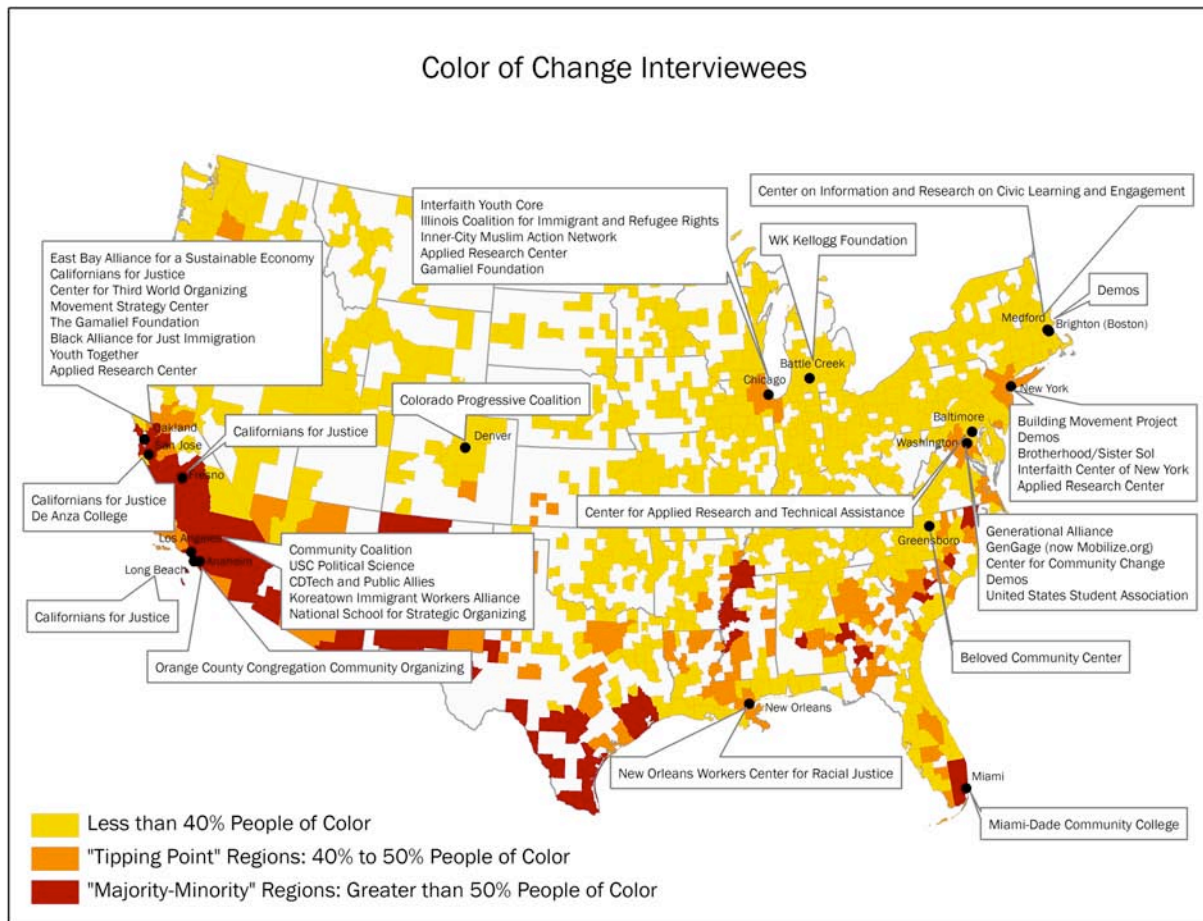
Cheng, Teresa

Ito, Jennifer

Ortiz, Rhonda

Pastor, Manuel

**Appendix E. Map of Organizations Interviewed**



**Appendix F: Data Sources**

Figure 1: Blackwell, A.G.; Kwoh, S.; and Pastor, M. (2010). Figure 1-1: Changing American Demographics, 1970-2050. *Uncommon Common Ground: Race and America's Future*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. and the American Assembly, p.30.

Figure 2: PERE analysis of the Building Resilient Regions (BRR) database – a project of the Network on Building Resilient Regions, funded by the MacArthur Foundation.

Figure 3: PERE analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data (Ruggles et al., 2010).

Figure 4: See Figure 3 source information.

Figure 5: Blackwell, A.G.; Kwoh, S.; and Pastor, M. (2010). Figure 3-11: Percentage of Individuals in the U.S. Living Below the Poverty Line, 1959-2007. *Uncommon Common Ground: Race and America's Future*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. and the American Assembly, p.114.

Figure 6: See Figure 2 source information.

Figure 7: See Figure 2 source information.

Figure 8: See Figure 2 source information.

Figure 9: See Figure 2 source information.

Figure 10: From “Making Space Making Change,” Young Wisdom Project of the Movement Strategy Center, 2004.

Figure 11: From “Race, Power, Privilege, and Oppression” Training, Public Allies Los Angeles (PALA), 2010.

Figure 12: See Figure 2 source information.

Figure 13: See Figure 2 source information.



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