social service and social change:

A Process Guide

Building Movement Project

Inspiring Activism in the Nonprofit Community

Acknowledgements

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This guide originated with Linda Campbell's work with the Building Movement Project in Michigan. Since 2003, Linda has worked intensively with five groups in Detroit and Grand Rapids to help them incorporate progressive social change into their agencies. During this experience, many patterns emerged and many lessons were learned about the *process* groups and individuals can engage in to move toward systemic change. We are deeply indebted to the staff, boards, members, and constituents of the Vanguard Community Development Corporation, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, the Detroit Primary Care Network (DPCN), Our Kitchen Table, and the AKIDA Network for participating in this process and allowing us to learn from them along the way.

We've also drawn on the work of others, including the Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA), the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE), Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide, the Ricanne Hadrian Initiative for Community Organizing (RHICO), and the Forest Hills Community House, Inc. Information on these organizations and the tools they have developed can be found in Appendix B.

Other members of the Building Movement Project team provided invaluable support to this effort, including Helen Kim, Kim Klein, Robby Rodriguez, and Emery Wright.

Building Movement Project

The goal of the Building Movement Project is to build a strong social justice ethos into the nonprofit sector, strengthen the role of nonprofit organizations in the United States as sites of democratic practice, and promote nonprofit groups as partners in building movement for progressive social change.

Many individuals in the nonprofit sector are strongly motivated by the desire to address injustice and promote fairness, equality, and sustainability. The Building Movement Project supports nonprofit organizations in working toward social change by integrating movement-

building strategies into their daily work. To accomplish its goals, the Building Movement Project makes use of four core strategies:

① **Changing the discourse and practice** within the nonprofit sector to endorse social change and social justice values.

② **Identifying and working** with social service organizations as sites for social change/social justice activities in which staff and constituencies can be engaged to participate in movement building.

③ **Supporting young leaders** who bring new ideas and energy to social change work.

④ **Listening to and engaging people** who work in social change organizations—especially grassroots and community-based groups—to strengthen their ability to shape the policies that affect their work and the communities they serve.

Comments and Feedback

This guide represents our attempt to communicate a process for supporting social change values and activities within service agencies. We consider this our "pilot" year and look forward to documenting its implementation and learning what was useful and what didn't work as well. In addition, we want to create space for groups to learn from each other.

So we ask that you share with us your experiences using the guide: What was the most useful? The exercise that was a disaster (hopefully nothing but we want **all** feedback)? The ways you think the guide should be

modified? Basically, whatever you have to say, we want to hear. We plan to devote space on our website to your comments so you can both give us feedback and hear what others have to say.

To respond to any of the ideas or strategies contained within this guide; to offer comments, questions, or examples of your work in this area; or to be put on our mailing list, please contact us at:

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You can also visit our website at **www. buildingmovement.org** to post responses and join in an online discussion with others engaged in this work and using this guide.

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Introduction

Progressive social change and service organizations

This guidebook was developed for staff and board members of nonprofit service organizations who are interested in learning how to incorporate progressive social change values and practices into their work. Progressive social change aims to transform the underlying systemic problems that result in inequalities in the distribution of power and resources—inequalities that directly affect the lives of those served by the vast majority of nonprofit service organizations. [1]

Nonprofit service organizations provide a vital lifeline to individuals and families who lack access to resources, and whose needs and interests are often overlooked or ignored within the larger society. The paid and volunteer staff members of these organizations work tirelessly to help meet their clients' needs—from housing, food, and healthcare to information, skills, and support. Yet no matter how hard staff members try to help their clients, they are often stymied by the larger systems that seem to work against the people they are trying to serve. The individuals who staff these organizations recognize that there is more to their clients' problems than self-destructive behavior or poor personal choices. Addressing these larger systemic barriers is a daunting task, especially at a time when so many service providers face growing demands and reduced funding.

We believe that a way must be found to meet clients' day-to-day needs as well as to change the circumstances that currently reinforce inequality, injustice, poverty, and lack of access. This guide introduces a step-by-step process that nonprofit organizations can use to identify how groups can address systemic problems through social change work within the context of their usual services and activities. The process proposed in this guide can help organizations decide which strategies and actions will work best for them.

This introduction provides a brief overview of the entire process. The chapters and appendices that follow provide in-depth information on each step in the process, including:

>> **Tips** on how to assess your organization's readiness to engage in social change/justice work.

>> **Methods** for identifying the underlying causes of the problems your constituents (including clients) face, along with ideas on how to address these issues in partnership with your constituent base.

>> **A glossary** that defines many of the terms used in this guide, including "social change work" and "constituents."

>> **Stories** about what other groups are doing that can provide ideas and inspiration as you think about how to integrate social change values and practices into your work.

>> **A chapter-by-chapter list of resources**, including books, websites, articles, and tools for social change.

>> **Information** on how to assess or evaluate your efforts along the way.

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[1] For the purposes of this guide, we use the term "nonprofit service organization" to include all organizations delivering services to communities, including social service agencies, community development corporations, human services organizations and coalitions, food banks and soup kitchens, and service intermediaries.

This guide can be used in different ways. One option is to read through the entire document and engage in an activity over several months. You can also scan the table of contents and identify areas that you know your organization needs to work on. A third option is to begin by using the assessment tool in Appendix C to identify whether your organization can begin to embrace a social change perspective.

The assumptions that guide our work

We have written this guide based on our strong conviction that direct service organizations can be a powerful force for progressive change in the United States. This belief is based on three important facts:

1 **Most human service agencies are already organized around a mission** to bring about change, seeking to fill service gaps and meet human needs that arise from inequality and injustice.

2 **Service delivery organizations have daily contact** with large numbers of underserved people, forming the basis for a significant constituency group.

3 **The U.S. has a vast social service infrastructure** that can support organized activity for change.

This guide is also rooted in the belief that:

>> **Broad-based social change** is possible.

>> **Persistent and increasing** social, health-related, and economic disparities are the result of systemic policies, not individual behaviors.
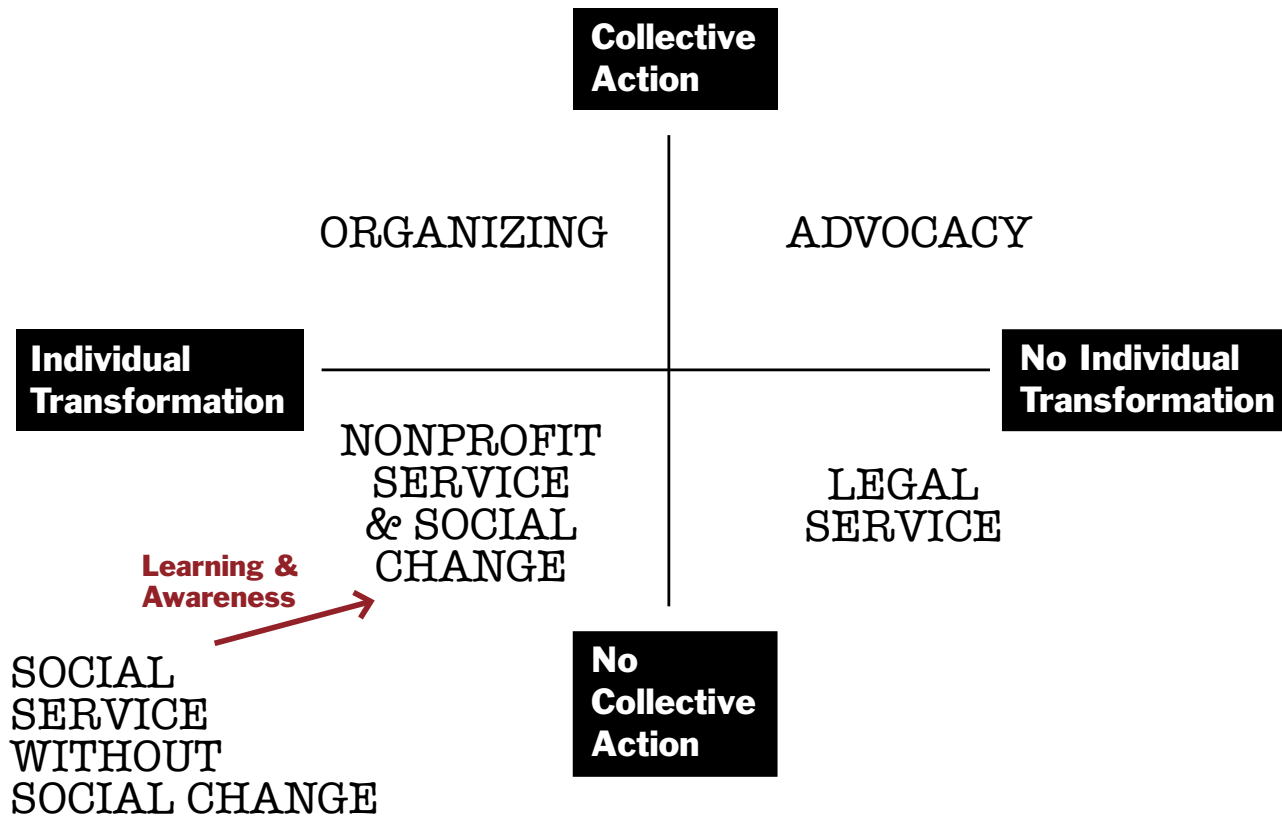
>> **Advocacy, civic engagement, and community activism** remain viable strategies for addressing the underlying causes of these disparities.

>> **The people** directly affected by these issues—those who use social services to help meet their basic needs—must play an active part in crafting solutions to the problems they face.

Moving toward social change

Many social service groups are already involved in progressive social change. A key element of social change organizations is that at some level their constituents are involved in setting the organization's agenda. Service groups working for progressive social change recognize that constituents' problems are in large part caused by systemic issues rather than personal failure. Such organizations work with their constituents to address systemic change as well as personal change.[2]

Figure 1 (top of next page) diagrams four different types of social change organizations. Organizing groups (in the upper left quadrant) work to transform the awareness of individuals in a community, making visible the policies and laws behind the problems they face and then taking action collectively to promote change. Advocacy groups (in the upper right quadrant) are generally less concerned with individual transformation than with social change brought about through collective action. Legal service groups (in the lower right quadrant) tend to work with individuals to remove larger structural barriers; like advocacy groups, legal service

2 See the sidebar on page 9, "From Client to Consumer to Constituent: Who Uses Our Services?"

Figure 1: Different Types of Social Change Organizations[3]

Collective Action

ORGANIZING   ADVOCACY

Individual Transformation   **No Individual Transformation**

NONPROFIT SERVICE & SOCIAL CHANGE   LEGAL SERVICE

Learning & Awareness

SOCIAL SERVICE WITHOUT SOCIAL CHANGE

No Collective Action

groups are generally not focused on individual transformation.

Nonprofit service groups that actively work for social change (in the lower left quadrant) provide direct services to clients while also working to transform the consciousness of their clients and constituencies to make them aware that the issues they face are largely systemic.

Notice that not all service organizations fall within the structure of this diagram.

Specifically, the category of "Social Service without Social Change," located on the lower left edge of the diagram, falls outside the four main quadrants and represents service organizations that are not yet engaged in social change work but are interested in moving into this quadrant. An important part of making this transition is to raise the awareness of the organization's board, staff members, and constituents about the root causes of problems and the importance of involving constituents as partners in promoting systemic change. This guide can help.

The transformation process

What does it mean to integrate progressive social change values and activities into your work? We view this process as a cycle of transformation—for constituents, staff members, board members, and the organization itself. The six steps in this process can be summarized as follows:

① **Learning:** (a) Identifying and learning about the root causes of issues/problems faced by the organization's constituents. (b) Identifying and learning about ways to address these issues/problems.

② **Awareness:** Understanding the larger structures of power and how these structures operate, as well as examining the way power operates within the organization.

③ **Vision:** Articulating the type of world those in the organization believe is possible for the constituents they serve, and examining the organization's role in moving towards that world.

④ **Strategy:** Outlining the steps the organization needs to take to implement its vision, especially as it relates to building the power, influence, and visibility of its constituents.

⑤ **Action:** Identifying and implementing a method for moving the organization into social change work that suits the organization and its constituents, while maintaining the organization's capacity to continue providing its core services.

⑥ **Reflection:** Evaluating the results of the action(s) taken by examining what worked, what did not, and what will be needed to improve upon the plan in the future (including what new learning and strategies are needed).

Each of these steps is described in detail in the chapters that follow. Figure 2, on the right, shows the cyclical nature of this transformation process, which an organization can enter into at any point.

Things to keep in mind

Organizations that want to include progressive social change in their work face many challenges and obstacles. Here are some things to keep in mind as you move forward with this effort:

>> **This process may lead to changes** in the group's organizational culture.

>> **Organizations engaging in this process are on the cutting edge**, so you may sometimes be ahead of the crowd. This demonstrates strong leadership and can be exciting, but it can sometimes provoke a backlash from those who do not fully understand the process you are engaging in.

>> **This process will bring your organization closer to its constituents** and its community, since they will be not just clients, but partners in this effort.

>> **Some staff members may have to shift their idea of professional training** away from a client/provider mentality to a stakeholder/constituent framework.

>> **The organization will be tapping into more energy** from staff, board, and constituents throughout the process.

>> **Funders may not understand** this part of your work and oftentimes need to be educated.

Figure 2: The Transformation Process

1.
Learning
> **Identify the issues**
> **Form learning group(s)**
> **Designate time**
> **Decide on curriculum**
> **Communicate results**

2.
Awareness
> **Identify structures of power**
> **Learn how structures operate**
> **Include role for constituents**

3.
Vision
> **Identify the world we want to create**
> **Set long-term goals**
> **Identify the role of constituents**
> **Identify values and beliefs**

4.
Strategy
Identify the best way to enact our mission and vision:
> **Determine our analysis**
> **Develop our goals**
> **Identify our partners**
> **Identify what results we expect to achieve**

5.
Action
> **Put strategy into place**
> **Measure the outcomes**
> **Work with constituents**
> **Institute principles**

6.
Reflection/Evaluation
> **Identify results: What worked? What didn't?**
> **Ask, "Should we change our strategies?"**
> **Ask, "Should we change our analysis?"**

>> This process opens up opportunities to find new allies and become a part of something bigger.

The next chapter of the guide provides detailed information on "learning," the first phase of the cycle of transformation we have been discussing. The chapters following that provide a step-by-step guide to each of the cycle's other five phases. There are also additional resources located in Appendix B. So get started, and let us know what you think!

Chapter 1:
Learning and Changing

The "learning and changing" phase of the cycle of transformation involves setting aside a designated time and place for staff members, board members, volunteers, and constituents to learn about and reflect upon the work of the organization, and to gather information about the root causes behind the problems the agency's constituents face. In this phase of the cycle, information is collected and ideas are discussed, laying the groundwork for the planning and implementation that comes later in the process. Learning and changing is a process that agencies can revisit regularly throughout the entire cycle of transformation, and it can be integrated into venues such as staff meetings and retreats.

What does learning have to do with social change?

An essential part of making systemic change is learning why things operate the way they do, opening up to new ideas, and thinking about the implications of these ideas for the organization's work. The learning and changing phase may focus on learning about best practices; exploring policy issues and the effects of policy changes; gathering information on worldviews or root causes of constituents' problems; or carrying out research on a topic that can help to define or advance the organization's social change agenda. The goal is to expand how groups approach issues and to more fully understand the problems faced by constituents and their communities.

Setting aside a regular time and place—whether weekly or monthly—where staff members and others in the organization can reflect on their work is vital to the process of integrating social change practices into service delivery. Without designating periods of learning and reflecting, organizations naturally tend to focus on responding to immediate needs, whether presented by constituents or driven by funding sources. This is understandable, given the enormous pressure the service delivery sector is under to do more and more with fewer and fewer resources. Each day, staff members are expected to give excellent, efficient, customer-friendly service that solves and prevents problems. Emphasis is placed on service quality, recordkeeping, evaluation, and outcome measurements, with time rarely set aside to stop and think, and to analyze, explore, and reflect. That is why it is important to integrate these specified times into the daily work routine to avoid having the work seem extra.

But to keep the social change portion of the work front and center, organizations must establish a regular time and place to allow the organizational players to think about what this work means and where it is going.

To understand the importance of this phase in the cycle of transformation, it's helpful to keep three ideas in mind:

① **It is easy to overlook the importance of learning.**
Staff and board members, constituents and volunteers all benefit from learning about and discussing ideas, especially those that help explain the causes of the problems faced by individuals and communities. This learning may come from experts, peers, and the people the organization seeks to serve. Reading, talking, and listening are all part of exploring new ideas about the work of the organization and possible future directions for this work.

② **Learning is not the same as training.**
Learning is a process of examining and discussing how your work fits into a larger vision for change. Learning is also a process in which staff and board members can question and challenge the ways they have typically analyzed and addressed problems, which opens the door to new ways of thinking about their work.

③ **Learning gives nonprofit service organizations an important edge in a rapidly changing environment and helps keep the focus on long-range goals.**
Ultimately, most providers would like to see their constituents transform their lives so that eventually they can do without the agency's assistance and intervention. Likewise, as providers, it is important to think about how to transform our agencies to continually move toward our long-term goals. Learning allows you to anticipate change by keeping you informed of your constituents' needs, while providing the information necessary to develop a broader analysis of what is required to address these needs.

How to make a decision about what to learn

Organizations sometimes have trouble figuring out how to begin the learning process. One starting point is described below, but other approaches are offered in the resource list in Appendix B.

Whatever method you choose, keep in mind that the focus should be on learning that provides an understanding of how your organization might contribute to making long-term systemic change.

Identifying an issue
Every organization has decisions to make and issues to address. When you get staff members, board members, or constituents together, they will all have something they want to say about these issues and decisions. Any organizational issue can be used to get the conversation started. Potential discussion topics include: applying for funding in a new area, finding that your organization is serving a different population, or exploring how changing regulations affect your organization's work.

These discussion points offer a chance to stop and reflect on the "big picture" and the ways your organization might fit into a larger movement for social change.

PROCESS
➤ **Talk** with staff, board members, volunteers, and/or constituents to identify one issue that seems to be on everyone's mind. If possible, pick a topic that sparks differing opinions about what to do.

>> **Select participants** for a "learning group." In small organizations, the learning group might include the whole staff, while in larger organizations the learning group might be comprised of representatives from different departments. Some organizations will include the constituents, staff, and board. In the beginning, do what works best for your organization, but make sure to include people whose job or organizational role rarely allows them time to participate in this type of reflection.

>> **Make sure the learning group is:** (a) fully sanctioned by the agency's decision-makers; (b) given set-aside time to meet regularly; and (c) charged with creating a mechanism to transmit whatever it learns to others within the organization.

>> **Convene the group** and spend the first meeting talking about the issue you have selected. This meeting should last for at least an hour. Designate a facilitator from within or outside the organization whose job it will be to make sure everyone's viewpoint is heard, including those who are reluctant to speak. When talking about the issue you've selected, remember that you are trying to identify root causes that go beyond individual actions or behaviors.

One way to do this is to keep asking "why?" This helps people orient to the larger systemic issues. For example, if the discussion topic is that children are unable to succeed in school, we might agree that schools lack the resources to give the children enough individualized attention. Then we would ask, why? That "probe question" might lead to a discussion about leadership, funding, or resource allocation. Again, we would ask, why? The process helps us

How it works...

A Community Development Corporation (CDC) working to ensure safe and affordable housing in one neighborhood sparked a controversy when it decided to expand into a second neighborhood. The new area would have increased the CDC's reach without cutting back on any of its existing services, so the staff were not prepared when the CDC's current constituency strongly resisted the expansion plan. To understand the underlying issues, the staff began reading about and discussing the history of the city and its neighborhoods. The staff were surprised how little they knew, especially about age-old divisions based on race, culture, and opportunity—divisions that still defined these two neighborhoods in the eyes of many local residents. Learning this history helped the staff rethink how to approach the issue of expansion with their constituents. The staff also saw the importance of the city's historical background. As they discussed these issues, the staff members—who did not live in the community they served— began to think about whether they were truly meeting the neighborhood's needs. In fact, they had never asked the local residents what they wanted. Through this learning process, the CDC decided to revisit its mission and vision in a process that included the local residents. This resulted in more resident involvement in organization- and community-wide decision-making, better serving the CDC's core mission of empowering an underserved community.

gain a broader perspective on the large societal, cultural, political, and economic structures that influence the lives of our constituents and stand in the way of broad-based change. In facilitating this discussion, it is important to remember and respect the fact that not everyone will agree.

>> **In the last half-hour** or so of the meeting, talk about what else you want to learn and where you can start gathering the necessary information. This can include generating a list of things to read, people to talk to, or other research activities. Keep focusing on the larger issues, not the "best practices" for solving a constituent problem. Select a few things to concentrate on, then figure out a schedule. For each meeting, choose something that is doable and that all group members can commit to (e.g., read an article, attend a meeting with a guest speaker, review some relevant policies, etc.). Follow-up is crucial, so make sure someone is responsible for distributing any materials needed for the next meeting, sending reminders, and making sure people will attend. It may also help to identify who will facilitate the next session in advance.

>> **When you reconvene**, take the following steps: (a) find out what people learned; (b) discuss how this helps them think about the work; and (c) discuss what all of this means in terms of wider change. This should jumpstart the conversations that will take place over the next few weeks until the group is ready to transmit what they have learned to others in the organization.

The learning group should aim to challenge its own beliefs and those of others in the organization concerning power, individual responsibility, the ways in which overarching systems operate (almost invisibly, at times), and how these overarching systems affect the organization's constituencies and communities.

Creating a learning environment and selecting participants

At the Building Movement Project, we have seen service organizations approach the learning and changing phase in many different ways. Regardless of how organizations go about making the time and space to engage in this process, some of the common elements that have contributed to their success include the following:

1 Executive director involvement
A key to the success in establishing space for change was support from the executive director. In some cases, this simply meant sanctioning the meeting times; in other cases, the executive director participated directly in the process.

2 Set-aside time
A regular meeting time—whether time set aside at the monthly staff meeting or a lunch meeting every other week—provides consistency and continuity. This is often more successful when it is not seen as an "add-on" to work already being done. In our experience, groups that incorporated this learning into their existing work—either through previously arranged meeting times, such as a staff meeting or a lunch gathering, or through staff development sessions and retreats—found that it resonated more with the staff and received wider support within the agency. In many organizations, not all staff attended the learning group; often the executive director

selected the group participants. This seemed to work fine, especially in the beginning as the groups got their bearings. However, it is important to consider how to integrate the learning and reflection experiences that the smaller group participants are exposed to into the larger organization. This type of planning is also needed to bring the board along when the learning and changing process is initiated at the staff level.

③ Involving constituents

Constituent involvement is an essential aspect of integrating social change into service groups. How constituents become involved in the organization varies greatly depending on the organization. Offering constituents the time and space for change can build their capacity and confidence to participate in setting the direction of the organization and becoming active in their communities. In some organizations, this will mean separate spaces for constituents; for others it will be mean integrating constituents in with staff and board. These decisions should be based on the nature of your organization. Chapter 4 contains information on different ways service groups can involve their constituents.

④ Facilitation

It often helps to bring in an outside facilitator to plan and run the meetings. Doing so brings fresh experience and expertise to the process, while lending legitimacy to the effort. The facilitator's role is to make sure that all voices and ideas are surfaced and to

From Client to Consumer to Constituent: Who Uses Our Services?

In many service agencies, those who receive assistance are generally referred to as "clients." Over the years, providers have changed how they refer to those they serve, including the terms "stakeholder" or "participant." As you integrate service and social change, it's important to notice the shifting role that clients play in your organization, as well as becoming aware of the other organizations and individuals that shape your work. The definitions here highlight how we define the difference between a client, a consumer, and a constituent.

Client

A person who is eligible for assistance and accepted for assistance through an intake system or other established protocol. Clients receive services from a provider or agency.

Consumer

A person who has a choice between two or more agencies of where to receive services. A consumer evaluates the quality of services received and the provider strives to provide superior service in a competitive environment.

Constituent

The person (or group) an agency serves, advocates for, or organizes. An organization must answer to its constituents for its use of resources and its level of effectiveness.

For more information and definitions, refer to Appendix B, "Resources for Chapter 1."

help participants think in new ways about the problems faced by their constituents.

⑤ Integrating all staff members
If the learning group starts small, it is important to figure out when to rotate new people into the learning group, how to make sure everyone's ideas are included, and how to keep everyone in the organization "in the loop."

What are the results?

Expand your view of "the work"

Most people in service delivery are taught a professional practice focused on helping individuals and their families. Creating space for change means offering an opportunity to step back from the daily work to think about and discuss societal causes of problems and the impact of these problems on the daily work. Staff and boards might start with their vision and then read articles or hear from guest speakers that can help them broaden their thinking about change in a societal context. The research process can cover a range of topics, from understanding how power works in different communities to analyzing the history of specific policies in the U.S. It can also cover the history of certain institutions, such as community development corporations or settlement houses.

Transforming a worldview

The challenging process of reexamining our worldview during the learning and changing phase is the beginning of a kind of self-transformation for many staff members and constituents. It also provides a necessary grounding for the next step in the process—awareness—when people in the organization examine the messages we receive from various parts of our society about how things

work, and how these messages relate to our personal beliefs and values. Creating space for change—for learning, discussing, exploring, and reflecting—provides a much-needed place for this important process to occur.

For resources to further orient you to this process, see Appendix B. It may also be helpful to learn some techniques taught in popular education (such as the "Aha! Moment" exercise). For more information on Popular Education, see the sidebar on page 33.

Exercise:
The Aha! Moment

One way to help people to learn more about each other's histories, as well as the issues facing their communities, is an exercise from Project South (available at www.projectsouth.org). The exercise uses a timeline that starts in the 1900s and includes important events in U.S. and global history. A large version of the timeline is posted on a wall. Group participants are each asked to take a Post-it note and write down an "Aha! moment" (a moment of awareness), or the point in time when they decided they wanted to work for change or to do mission-driven work. For service providers, it may be the point in time when they decided to work to help others. Participants take a few minutes to think about their Aha! moment, write it down, and put down the date. They then add the Post-it to the timeline at the corresponding date. The facilitator selects some of the Post-its and has the people who wrote them come up, read them aloud to the group, and describe the specific influences that led to their moment of realization. The group also looks at what else was occurring at the time to examine the larger forces that bring people into social change work.

Chapter 2:
Awareness

Transformation and community

In Chapter 1, we emphasized the importance of setting time aside for people in the agency to come together to learn. In this chapter, we move the process of learning to its outcome: awareness. At this stage, staff and board members, volunteers, and constituents move to a new understanding of the systemic (rather than the individual) causes of clients' problems.

Awareness is important for three reasons:

1 **Awareness offers a deeper understanding** of the underlying systems that influence how we do our work.

2 **This recognition helps to prepare groups** for developing their vision.

3 **It also paves the way for increased constituent/client involvement** in the organization and community.

Awareness is a way to take the transformational process one step further. Whereas learning informs us about different world views, awareness – or as some people call it, consciousness – brings us back to our organizations and communities to examine how they operate in light of larger underlying systems that can be hard to see. Gaining awareness helps to challenge the assumptions we hold about how things operate and therefore changes how we think and feel about our work.

Raising awareness often includes an analysis of power, an important concept when moving toward social change. Many nonprofit groups include empowerment as part of their work with individual clients, but not as many bring that concept to the next step, that is, identifying how power operates in communities, our daily lives, and in our work. Helping our staffs and constituents identify the larger issues related to power is a crucial aspect of social change work, and can benefit constituents in all aspects of their lives.

Identifying power in a community

Power is the ability to make decisions that affect one's life and the lives of others. Talking about power can range from exploring the inequities in society that result from an unequal distribution of wealth to learning how to advocate for your child at school.

Power is not a bad thing in and of itself, but it can be used in ways that benefit some people and hinder others. It is so built into the fabric of our lives that it can be hard to see. Who has influence can be based on structural factors that are often "invisible," hidden, or unseen. For example, in this country we are told that everyone is born equal, but we also see the different ways that power is assigned based on where people were born, the color of their skin, who their parents

are, their religion, and other factors. Another example of how power operates has to do with people's "role" in society–the positions they hold (e.g., the judge in a courtroom, the teacher at school, the parent in a family). Power can also be expressed in subtle or informal ways–for example, the neighbor who watches and reports on what everyone does on the block.

It is not uncommon for individuals and communities to play out or reproduce the larger power structures, even if these dynamics are harmful to them. After all, we live in this society and it is not easy to figure out whether and how we could succeed by doing things differently. This is a dynamic service providers often see within their own programs, as illustrated in the "How it works..." sidebar below.

All communities have power structures. One useful thing for your organization to do would be to identify the power–formal and informal– that exists within the communities you serve. The exercise to the right offers one way to generate this type of analysis.

What is constituency involvement?

Throughout this guide, there is an emphasis on involving our constituents in the work of the organization and the community. We see this as an important part of progressive social change. Increasingly, service providers interested in social change are examining how they can raise constituents' participation in their communities and their engagement in civic issues. We believe this starts at home through finding ways that constituents can exercise influence within the organization.

There are two reasons behind this line of thinking:

1 Constituent influence within the service organization gives the constituents **practice** in how to advocate and have a voice in their community and beyond.

2 Constituent influence within the service organization gives the organization **vital information** about the needs of the people they serve, resulting in improved outcomes.

How it works...

The director of a summer youth program spent weeks preparing a youth council to be the program's decision-makers. The youth read articles, discussed the issues affecting their lives, and analyzed how power was used and abused. Later, the director was shocked when the youth council decided to mete out a harsh punishment to one of their peers who had broken a rule. The director sat with the council to discuss how only weeks earlier they had talked about the negative effect that punitive treatment had had on their own lives. Yet all around them—in movies, on the news, in their schools—the young people had seen models of power that included the ability to punish others, and they instinctively followed this model. The director furthered their learning by using their own decision-making and judgment as an opportunity to continue exploring the role of power in their lives and their community.

Exercise: Who Has Power?

This exercise helps to identify the places of authority and responsibility within communities.[4] We suggest you do this by setting aside separate meeting times for staff, board members, and constituents. The point of the exercise is to see where power lies and where it can be better distributed. Remember, everyone has some power, so use the time to think about solutions. It might work best if participants write down their responses to the following questions rather than simply shout out their answers – this will give the opportunity for a wider breadth of views to be expressed:

>> **Who has the formal power–individual and organizational–in the community where you live?**
   o How do individuals (or groups) get this power?
   o How could this power be shared?

>> **Who else has power in the community?**
   o How do individuals (or groups) get this power?
   o How could this power be shared?

>> **Where do you see the power of your organization in the community?**
   o How could your organization become more powerful?
   o How could this power be shared?

>> **What power do similar organizations in the community have?**
   o How could these organizations become more powerful?
   o How could this power be shared?

When the group has finished, record each individual's responses on a flip chart. It might be good to have people report out in small groups first and then capture all the different answers. Discussing the results is essential, especially talking about its relevance to the work of the organization and the meaning to its constituents and the community. A second step would be to hold a joint meeting with all of the different groups (staff, board, constituents, etc.) to see how each group responded to the questions. As you compare the similarities and differences between responses, ask the following questions:

>> **Are there people and places that have power that are not noted on the flip chart?** (You may wish to remind the groups that *everyone* has some power, both individually and collectively.)

>> **If we wanted to make changes** to solve problems with our constituents, what are the important places to target and why?

These conversations will help you take what you have learned and begin to apply that learning toward making operational changes within your organization, as discussed in Chapter 4.

A good example of why constituent involvement is important can be found in a recent research study in which residents in three low-income neighborhoods were interviewed to solicit their views on both the most important neighborhood problems and the services they would add if funds were available. These questions also were asked of executive directors of nonprofit service organizations located in the same neighborhoods. The results showed significant differences between what residents and nonprofit directors identified as community needs. The study also found that the least professionalized staff members were more likely to hold the same views as residents. The researchers concluded that, although the nonprofit groups specifically included empowering residents as part of their missions, there was a notable communications gap in what was meaningful to residents and what organizations set as their priorities.[5]

Helping to raise awareness among constituents is an important piece of promoting constituent involvement within the service organization. It is important to remember that if constituents and communities feel they have a stake in community organizations and the issues they represent, they are more likely to stand up and fight for these groups if they come under attack or if funding is cut.

How constituents gain a sense of involvement within the organization

Service providers integrating social change values into their work look for ways to involve constituents in their organization. A good place to start is to think about the ways in which constituents can have more power, both in their own lives and in the work of the organization.

Here are some starting points:

>> **Service providers can start simply by listening to their constituents.** Being heard and having a voice are often first steps to gaining power.

>> **Providers can respond to their constituents** rather than ignoring or dismissing what they have requested. People feel a sense of power when someone recognizes and acts on what they have to say.

>> **Providers can support constituents in making changes on their own** by partnering with constituents to help them gain more control over the decisions that affect their lives. Many providers are skilled at working *with*–not *for*–constituents on meeting the constituents' needs, so partnering with constituents to increase their power is a natural next step.

>> **Providers can ask constituents to contribute** or "give back" to the organization.

To really figure out how constituents can play a significant role in the organization, staff, board members, and volunteers must stop and reflect on their own power and how it might change if the constituents had a more of a say. One way to structure this process of reflection is for all staff, volunteers, and board members to discuss and answer the following questions:

>> **In what ways do you personally have power in the organization?** How do you

[5] Kissane, R.J. and Gingerich, J., "Do You See What I See? Nonprofit and Resident Perceptions of Urban Neighborhood Problems" *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly,* Vol. 33, Number 2, June 2004. See Appendix B for a web link to this document.

use or express that power?
o How do you get this power?
o In what ways could this power be shared?

>> **In what ways do you personally have power over your clients?** How do you use or express that power?
o How do you get this power?
o In what ways could this power be shared?

>> **Why do you have the power you have?** (Think about your position in the organization, the role you play, how long you've worked for this organization or in the field, your degree of education, your status based on pay, your cultural background, your age, your gender, etc.)
o How do you get this power?
o In what ways could this power be shared?

Participants do not need to share their answers, but they should use them as a springboard for

self-reflection and discussion. While examining your own power in the organization in addition to that of the other staff, volunteers, and board members, it is also important to examine the power of your constituents and what they think about the organization's services, direction, and level of responsiveness.

There are many other ways that service organizations can involve, engage, and share power with constituents. In some agencies, constituents sit on boards and advisory councils. Other agencies become constituent-directed. Still others convene town hall meetings with their constituents and communities on a regular basis. All of this gives constituents a voice in the organization where their role is recognized and their ideas, concerns, and questions are addressed. As we'll discuss later, organizations must provide the support and training to make sure that constituents have a real voice rather than just a token position. It is also important

How it works...

Halfway though a three-year campaign to build community among staff, the director of a community house decided to engage providers and staff in connecting more deeply to their constituents, which the agency referred to as "participants." Staff began to discuss the concepts of participation and reciprocity. They explored the idea that everyone has something to give in a neighborhood—not just money, but skills, talents, connections, and other resources that can help to

build community. Instead of seeing themselves as being there only to help people, the staff members were asked to seek support from the participants and engage them in building the community. Although there was some hesitation about taking this unusual action, a letter was sent to everyone who received a meal through Meals-on-Wheels asking them to write letters to their representatives in support of summer youth employment programs. The participants were excited to

be able to help, and could do so even though they were homebound. The letter-writing campaign was successful, and staff began to feel more comfortable asking for support from program participants. The staff realized that no matter what a person's situation is, it is empowering to them to give in some way. The participants felt more connected to the community house, and were delighted to take on a more active, participatory role—the staff had only to ask.

to remember that there is a difference between someone who represents a group (i.e. someone chosen by and accountable to a group) and someone who is a representative of a group (i.e. someone from a group that shares certain characteristics of the group but does not necessarily represent its interests).

Getting the job done

As you gain awareness, a question will inevitably arise: *How does power play out in the organization at various levels and in various ways?* For example, you might explore the power case workers have over constituents or the control a director has over staff members. While these kinds of questions are certainly not new, they can be helpful in assessing how power and responsibility can be distributed in ways that move the organization to be more effective and equitable.

There are several ways groups can begin to look at these internal issues. One way is to find out who the staff and board members identify as having influence in what happens at the organization (for example, formal hierarchical power, informal power, peer-to-peer, staff-to-constituent, etc.) As you think about discussing the internal organizational dynamics remember to ask: *What are the questions we want to answer and how will the answers to these questions help our constituents build their capacity to perform effectively? How will it be useful to assess the power dynamics within the organization?* Keep in mind that for this process to be helpful, you will need to be clear about what you want to know and why.

Here are examples of some of the questions an organization might use to explore the power dynamics within its organizational structure.

>> **What is the role of staff, board, and other volunteer members in contributing to the direction of the organization?** What works well? What could be improved?

>> **Who has formal power in the organization?** Who has informal power? How would people in the organization map decision-making processes? Who makes budget decisions, hires and fires staff, influences what staff do and say, etc.? What sort of responsibility accompanies this power?

>> **What sort of influence do constituents have in the organization?** How could this be expanded or increased?

>> **How can the organization improve its operation** e.g., delegating decision-making, listening and acting on problems confronting support staff, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, building an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, etc.?

>> **How can the organization integrate constituents into the decision-making process?**

>> **What specific recommendations could be made that fit the organization's vision, mission, and theory of change**[6] and would increase or expand the role of staff members and constituents in the organization?

Awareness and vision

In the end, it is important to remember that though individuals have power–in the world, in our country, in communities, and in our organizations–such influence is supported and maintained by larger structures that are often invisible to us. Becoming aware of these power structures is like peeling an onion: there is always another layer. By continually deepening our awareness of these "layers," we can gain a meaningful understanding of how power operates and how external events affect our constituents and their communities. This understanding provides the basis for creating a potent organizational vision, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3:
Vision

This guidebook began with discussions on learning and awareness because building agency capacity for progressive social change is essentially a process of discovery and transformation—one that can be both exciting and unsettling. Our hope is that this process will promote critical conversations among agency leaders, staff members, volunteers, and constituents while providing you with new ways of looking at how and why you do your work.

This section focuses on organizational vision, which is a way of incorporating the expanded knowledge that comes from learning and awareness into the organization's culture. A vision is a statement or image of the society we want to create—a society in which the consequences *and* the causes of the problems our agencies deal with have been addressed. For example, an organization that shelters homeless people may have a vision of a community where quality housing is affordable and accessible to all.

Why do you need a vision statement if you already have an organizational mission? Your mission statement describes the problem your organization is trying to solve. It is the heart and soul of most service agencies—the driving force behind their existence and the reason clients seek them out. The ability to deliver on mission is critical to organizations, especially in the wake of our government's diminishing support for the welfare of its citizens.

However, it is useful to step back from time to time and ask ourselves, "What is the world we are trying to create?" In developing a vision for your work, you can challenge the prevailing assumptions about how the world operates

and refer back to your learning to think more critically about the root causes of the problems your agency addresses. A vision reflects the values you hold and represents how you see the world. The vision is not just about your organization; it links you and your agency with countless others in moving toward a more just and sustainable world.

Creating a vision statement

Once the exercise on the right is completed, it's time to create a vision statement describing the society the participants wish to create—one where the consequences *and* the root causes of the problems your agency deals with are addressed.

Your vision statement will be broader than the success of your individual agency. Likewise, your agency will not be able to achieve its vision on its own. Clearly, no single organization can solve the root causes of major social, economical, and political problems. Even so, it is important to recognize that putting forth a vision is not merely "dreaming"; it is a process of analyzing and understanding, a statement of beliefs and values, and a picture of the future we want to work towards.

Exercise:
Causes and Consequences

The exercise below offers one approach for shaping an organizational vision. The exercise helps service providers and other stakeholders develop a shared analysis and a collective vision that reflects systemic transformation.

① **Hand out copies of the agency mission and (if available) the agency's long-term goals, vision statement, and/or program summary.**

On a flip chart, record responses to the following questions:

>> What **community problems** does our agency's mission seek to address?

>> What are some of the **root causes** of these problems?

(Before going any further, make sure that everyone understands what the term "root cause" means. If participants are unfamiliar with the concept, refer to the definitions in the sidebar or start by discussing the "Raining Rocks" story at the end of this chapter. If some participants are familiar with the idea, ask them what "root cause" means, and take a few responses to make sure everyone is clear about the term's meaning.)

After you have brainstormed a list of the root causes of the problems the group has identified, ask the group, "What keeps these problems from being solved in a meaningful and permanent way?" and "What other factors cause these problems to persist?"

② **Describe the agency's day-to-day activities in carrying out its mission.** To what degree do these activities address the *root causes* of the problem? To what degree do they address the *consequences* of the problems?

The facilitator should emphasize the importance of the agency's work, whether it addresses root causes or consequences (or both); staff and other stakeholders must not be left with the impression that their work is unimportant. Rather, this exercise is meant to get participants thinking about the ways the organization contributes to addressing the root causes of problems along with responding to the consequences of these problems.

The exercise also helps participants assess where their work is having an impact. Not everyone may agree, but by deepening their understanding of the root causes of the problems that confront them, they will broaden their perspective on what the solutions might look like for their community. A critical awareness can prompt participants to acknowledge and speak about the conditions and systems in their community/society that keep people from reaching their fullest potential. This in turn can inform participants' assessment of the impact of their work and the work of the agency as a whole. In this conversation, participants are encouraged to ask themselves and each other, "Is it enough to work only on the consequences?"

Root Cause: Definition and Example

DEFINITION:
A "root cause" is the underlying factor or condition that makes a problem happen. A "root cause analysis" is a procedure for ascertaining and analyzing the causes of problems in an effort to determine what can be done to solve or prevent them.*

EXAMPLE:
Problem: Youth of color in urban areas have a high drop-out rate.

INDIVIDUAL/BEHAVIORAL CAUSE:
Youth make bad choices.

ROOT CAUSE(S):
One root cause is that in economically disfranchised communities, schools are under-resourced, lacking in experienced and qualified staff, and/or are in physical disrepair.

WHAT FACTORS CAUSE THE ROOT CAUSE TO PERSIST?
One factor is the lack of political power among poor and other marginalized communities to secure equitable funding, resources, and accountability within the school systems that serve their children.

* Definition adapted from http://www. rootcause.com/WhatIsRCADetail.htm.

If your organization does not yet have a vision statement, or if your vision is a summary of long-term goals that stem from your mission activities, spend some time brainstorming and discussing your vision. Remember to use the learning and awareness activities from the first two chapters of this guide to gain clarity on why certain conditions exist and how structures of power keep these conditions in place.

A vision expresses the values that you share. This includes organizational values, as well as those held by individuals within an organization. Some groups begin with a discussion of what these shared values are before moving on to discussing a vision. It is important that participants are encouraged to express different ways of seeing or thinking about root causes. We often learn more from discussions about divergent views than if we assume everyone agrees. To get this conversation going, start with the following questions:

>> **What would our society look like if the root causes of the problems we work on were addressed?**

>> **In thinking about how such a society would look, what are the key words and phrases that come to mind?**

>> **What changes would have occurred at the systemic or policy level?**

>> **How would resources be allocated?**

>> **Who would make systemic and policy decisions?**

>> **How would these decisions be made?**

>> **How might people think and act differently?**

It is difficult to move from a brainstorming session to consensus, so you may want to choose a few people to write up the notes from the discussion and turn them into a written statement, focusing again on the comments and ideas that help you formulate a description of the world you envision. Or you may choose to simply type up the notes and reference the range of opinion. Whatever process you choose, you should be clear from the beginning about the end goals and process for the meeting.

When the written statement has been circulated among staff, board members, and constituents, take the feedback you receive and integrate it into the final vision statement. It's a good idea to pair your vision statement with your mission statement on your website and in your program materials, so people can see where your organization is heading, as well as what it does day to day.

Including constituents in crafting your vision

Your organization's vision statement should be formed with input from the individuals and families you serve. Including constituents accomplishes two important things. First, it helps to create a vision based on the concerns and needs of those with the most at stake—the people who best understand the community's problems and are most in need of fundamental change. It also enables your constituents to experience the power of envisioning and defining their own future.

Vision and Mission

Below are two examples of vision statements and mission statements.

BILOXI AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATION
**Vision: Our ultimate goal is a world without
HIV/AIDS.**

Mission: Our mission is to help people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS to secure adequate nutritional and health support to enhance their lives.

ENLACE COMUNITARIO
**Vision: We envision a city, state, and nation where immigrants can become a collective, conscious, free, and powerful force dedicated
to the eradication of violence and the elimination of barriers to success.**

Mission: Our mission is to work with Latino immigrants to eliminate domestic violence and strengthen their community.

When inviting constituents to a meeting to help shape your agency's vision statement, conduct outreach to inform people about the goals of the meeting and what you will be asking them to do there. Remember that making contact with people and asking them to attend is the most important part of getting them there. Most clients will be able to participate in these activities without extra preparation. For more tips on constituent involvement, see Chapter 4.

The "Raining Rocks" Story*

Long ago, in the foothills of a large mountain in Peru, there was a little town named Milagro. Suddenly one day, rocks began to rain down on the town. The rocks were hard and sharp, and many people were hurt during these "rainstorms." The townspeople were at a loss as to what to do, so they called a town meeting.

At the meeting, Doctor Rodriguez, the town physician, stepped forward and said, "I know what we should do. I can cure many of the people's wounds. Build me a hospital so that all the people with injuries can come to see me." Not knowing what else to do, the townspeople worked together to build a hospital, which opened with great fanfare. In this hospital, Dr. Rodriguez worked hard to cure the townspeople of their wounds. But the rains continued, and more and more people came to see Dr. Rodriguez each day, until everyone realized that Dr.

Rodriguez could not serve even a fraction of the people who had been hurt by the raining rocks.

So the townspeople held a second meeting. This time, an architect came forward and said, "Curing people's wounds will not stop the rain. We need to protect the whole town from the rain. Let's build a huge canvas tent to cover the town so the rocks won't fall on us anymore." The people of the town helped the architect build this canvas tent over the entire town and for a few days, everyone was safe from the raining rocks. But after a few days of raining, the rocks began breaking small holes in the tent, which grew bigger and bigger until there were holes everywhere, and the rocks once again fell on the people of the town.

The townspeople held yet another meeting. "Because the rain of rocks keeps coming and coming," they said, "nothing we have done

to protect ourselves has helped. What shall we do?" Everyone was silent. Finally, a small child came forward and spoke: "Why don't we try to figure out why it's raining rocks?" she suggested. "Why don't we all work together to find the source of the rain?"

So the townspeople, not having any better ideas, set out together in search of the source of the rain. They walked to the top of their mountain, and found that the rocks were not rain at all, but the result of an avalanche originating on the mountaintop.

Armed with this knowledge of the root cause of their problem, the townspeople worked together to construct a giant barricade that stopped the avalanche and ended the problem of the rocks raining down from the sky.

*Adapted from the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC) of New York.

Linking mission with vision

In the next section, you will learn how to bridge the gap between your mission and your vision— the gap between the work you do each day to meet people's needs and the work that needs to be done to create systemic change over the long haul.

Chapter 4:
Strategy

Involving constituents, building alliances

Strategy is the vehicle by which your organization's vision is put into action. Many organizations already engage in strategic planning or similar processes during which they design a work plan based on dividing the agency's mission into attainable goals and objectives. More recently, groups have been encouraged by funding agencies and capacity builders to use a logic model or a theory of change as they engage in this process. The theory of change is a way to analyze the assumptions underlying the organization's approach to its work. (For more information on the terms "logic model" and "theory of change," see Appendix A and the list of resources in Appendix B.)

This chapter focuses on two strategies for promoting vision and mission at nonprofit service organizations engaging in social change work: constituent involvement and alliance-building. Just as many organizations work to fulfill their mission using a theory of change, they can also examine how to work towards their vision using a "theory of social change" that addresses the consequences *and* root causes of the problems their constituents face. Adapted from the *Power Tools* manual developed by SCOPE in Los Angeles, the theory of social change can help define the strategies to enable your organization to integrate a social change element into its existing work.

The chart below illustrates the different steps of a theory of change and a theory of social

Theory of Change	Theory of Social Change
Assumptions	Analysis
Service Goals	Social Change Goals
Resources You Need	Resources You Have
Activities	Strategies

change. The theory of social change uses what your organization already does to develop concrete strategies for bringing your vision to life. The key difference is that, unlike the theory of change, the theory of social change helps you focus on *systemic* change.

Assumptions and Analysis: In a traditional theory of change, service providers look at the assumptions that underlie their work—an extremely important task. By contrast, the theory of social change focuses on analysis—based on the work you've already done in the preceding chapters of this guide. This analysis provides an understanding of *why* your constituent communities face certain problems.

Service Goals and Social Change Goals: Under the traditional theory of change, goals are benchmarks for moving towards the mission, setting the direction in which the organization is heading, and measuring impact. Under this model, goals evolve from the assumptions of how change is made. While a theory of social change also has goals, these goals directly relate to promoting social change and are based on

how the organization will address the systemic issues its constituents face. Social change goals rely heavily on problem-solving using analysis and people power. Like the goals developed under a theory of change, social change goals are used as measures of impact—in this case, to assess how well the organization is contributing to social change.

Resources You Need and Resources You Have: Under the traditional theory of change, the organization's resource needs usually refer to funding and in-kind services to meet operating costs. Under the theory of social change, an organization still needs operating funds, but also relies heavily on time, support, and commitment from its constituents. These constituents are expected to define their needs and priorities, bring their personal resources (including their networks, skills, ideas, and energy) to the process of addressing the larger systemic issues.

Activities and Strategy: A traditional theory of change will guide your organization's day-to-day activities and programmatic operations. Similarly, a theory of social change will help to define your strategies. What all this means, especially for service groups working toward social change, is described below.

Strategy

Nonprofit service organizations attempting to integrate social change into their work will have to decide which strategies they will

The Role of the Board

The role of the board in this process is important to consider. Since board members are sometimes removed from day-to-day agency operations, staff, and constituents, the board may have difficulty broadening its view of the agency's mission to include social change or increased constituent involvement in the organization's decision-making process. While this may not be true of every community-based nonprofit, it is worthwhile to consider two key issues:

1 **Timing counts. Give some thought as to when to bring the board into the process. It might not always be effective to do it early on. Sometimes it's better to begin the in-depth work with the staff, starting with a space for learning and reflecting to identify specific areas for change that are coming from the people "on the ground." Once changes start to surface, the board will have more concrete examples of how this process works and some of the benefits that arise. This may increase the board's likelihood of supporting this venture.**

2 **In deciding when to bring the board into this process, think about the board's composition. Is it composed mainly of professionals, activists, or community members? To what degree does the board reflect your constituency base? This information may help you gauge your board's receptivity to an involved process for social change and help you prepare your approach accordingly.**

employ to address systemic change for the problems their constituents face. We suggest starting with a focus on two areas: (1) the involvement and transformation of constituents in the organization and (2) working with other organizations. The remainder of this chapter offers ideas on how to go about this.

But first, a word of warning: groups that engage in this process are exploring new territory that

requires time and commitment, and where results are not always immediate. In an era where funding is scarce, outcomes are primary, and people are already overcommitted, it can be challenging to involve constituents and build alliances. However, it is precisely because the issues facing your constituents are so great that organizations such as yours need to build not just their own capacity, but a larger movement that rests on deep beliefs and values while pushing for systemic change. It may help to keep this in mind as you move ahead.

Constituents

What does it mean to involve constituents in their communities and in your organization? Constituent involvement is a form of civic education and participation—what many would consider a cornerstone of democracy. Service organizations are in a perfect position to support these democratic practices. However, most groups are designed to meet people's immediate needs, not to teach them about the importance of voting or how meeting with a city council member can help their situation or what it means to be a leader in their community. The examples below may require some fresh thinking about your organization and its relationship to the people it serves.

The payoff to going down this road is it offers the possibility of achieving outcomes and developing a new level of integration in your constituent communities. It builds lasting relationships with those you serve. It expands the capacities and leadership of your constituencies. And it honors your expertise as a vital resource while providing dignity and direction to those with whom you work.

Milk and Cookies

Getting people involved isn't always easy. Service providers are often skilled at involving clients and constituents, but if your group hasn't had much experience in doing so, you can get help from other groups, local organizers, and community leaders. Here are some tips to get you started.

>> **MAKE USE OF ONE-ON-ONE RELATIONSHIPS.** One thing therapists and organizers have in common is the building of "one-to-one" relationships in their work. Such relationships offer an opportunity to learn about constituents' needs, interests, and concerns. These relationships are invaluable for learning what people really care about and whether they are willing and able to attend a meeting.

>> **IDENTIFY INFORMAL LEADERS.** In all situations, there are people who naturally take a leadership role. Some service agencies hire informal community leaders to help them. These individuals can be the key to getting other constituents involved.

>> **MAKE IT THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE.** Meetings, discussions, and groups are better attended when they are held at convenient times and places. As much as possible, remove or reduce obstacles such as transportation, childcare needs, and time conflicts.

>> **BRING SOMETHING.** In many communities, food brings people together, creating a more relaxed atmosphere where constituents can "switch gears" from client to constituent.

How it works...

Based in Northern California, the Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA), works to increase civic and political activism among low-income immigrant communities in order to strengthen democracy and advance social justice. PILA provides training, technical assistance, and peer-learning opportunities to support dozens of organizations in developing leadership among their constituents.

The efforts of PILA and its community-based partners are rooted in the principle that constituency leadership development is not merely an end in itself, but a means to building the power of immigrants and immigrant communities to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. PILA and its partners' leadership development programs share a variety of values and practices, many of which are grounded in popular education. These values/practices include the following:

>> A commitment to promote participatory decision-making and analysis, with organizations and community-based change guided by community members.

>> A "learn-by-doing" approach to leadership development, where skills are put into action while working on important community issues.

>> An ongoing leadership development process whereby leaders develop other leaders to build broad-based community power.

>> A focus on mutual learning in which every individual is both learner and teacher.

>> A connection to larger movements, with local neighborhood and community efforts linked to broader issues and systemic change.

>> Relationships that are built across differences and that act against oppression by acknowledging power dynamics, building trust, honoring cultures, and working in multiple languages.

>> Respect for sustainability and historical context through engagement in planning, reflection, and documentation.

>> An awareness that each organization possesses unique opportunities and challenges and can benefit from a multitude of leadership development strategies.

Making room for constituent involvement

To have constituents genuinely involved in the organization means finding ways to "make room" for them to have a real voice in the direction of the organization and within their communities. This can include approaches ranging from town meetings to constituent-led organizations. For many nonprofit service providers, this is nothing new. They have learned to hold self-help sessions, resident meetings, parenting groups, and similar constituent gatherings. Still, involving constituents can be difficult even for those who are committed to the process. The key is to see constituents not just as people in need but as people who possess valuable information and skills.

One way to start is to go back to your theory of social change to think about how constituents can be engaged, who will be responsible for

Popular Education

Popular education was made famous by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, and was used extensively in the U.S. during the civil rights movement as a literacy tool. It is a way to teach adults, especially those from the least advantaged communities. Project South describes popular education as a learning process that:

>> Is inclusive and accessible to people at a variety of education levels;

>> Addresses the issues people face in their communities;

>> Moves people toward a place of action; and

>> Develops new grassroots leadership.

Popular education is based on the lived experience of those participating in the learning and incorporates nontraditional methods of learning such as poetry, music, and visual arts.

to solve their problems. Faced with the assumption that they are individually responsible (inadequate, foolish, uneducated, disorganized, etc.), they can find it hard to see the larger systems at play. Popular education—a collective method of adult learning—is one way to help constituents look at the big picture and its effect on their lives. In this process, participants both learn and teach each other by sharing their experiences and discussing the issues that affect their lives.

Popular education can include political education in which participants learn about the social, economic, and political systems that shape individuals and society. In a service organization, popular education can be added on to any group process, focusing on the origin of common problems as participants work to improve their lives, their families' well-being, and their communities. This form of education helps to develop constituents as active participants in civic life. For a list of organizations that have developed popular education materials and curricula, see "Resources for Chapter 4" in Appendix B.

implementing a constituency engagement plan, what the plan will entail, and the desired outcomes. The challenge is to combine what constituents bring with your agency's infrastructure (staff and other resources) and the contributions of other allies to solve problems collectively.

Working through the earlier portions of this guide should help prepare the staff and board for constituent involvement.

Popular education
Constituents often hit obstacles when trying

Leadership training
It is natural enough to wonder whether the constituents you serve can really participate in your organization in a meaningful way. As a service provider, you are keenly aware of the profound difficulties your clients face, day in and day out. Yet you also know that in spite of these difficulties, your clients do make changes and find ways to improve their lives and survive even the most horrible conditions. You do have constituents who possess the potential to participate fully in your organization if given the right opportunities to do so.

You can facilitate this process by providing a mechanism for supporting and training new leadership among your constituency—not just among those with the education and personal qualities often associated with leadership, but among those with diverse backgrounds and qualities. Leadership comes in many styles, and one way to identify leadership is through the political education process described in the first two chapters of this guide. See the sidebar entitled, "How it works…" for an example of how some providers in northern California build constituent leadership into their programs and coalitions.

Challenges to constituency involvement

Constituent involvement differs from other aspects of nonprofit service work in that it poses a challenge to the traditional role of nonprofit service staff (especially professional staff) and to the traditional agency structure and operations. Since it is a big leap for many providers to view the people they have been trained to help as partners, we suggest that groups struggling with this issue refer back to the discussions of external and internal power in Chapter 2.

In our society, it is never easy to find ways to deal with power imbalances such as differences in education, class, race, citizenship, language, age, religion/spiritual beliefs and/or employment status. There will certainly be challenges along the way—for constituents who are asked for more and for staff who are asked to do their work differently. However, it is important to think about the organization's vision and to make the commitment to overcoming some of these barriers so that staffers and constituents can move forward together.

Alliances
Looking at the larger issues

Those working in the organization may want to identify one or two larger issues to begin exploring as part of their strategy to implement their theory of social change. Given everything your group is already doing, it is important to choose an area closely related to constituents' concerns and the organization's work.

Making new allies

In social change work, it is important to collaborate with others. Many service agencies are used to working with other organizations to accomplish their goals, especially to solidify referrals for clients and to advocate for funding from public sources. Working for social change on even one or two issues will require that you identify all of your potential allies, including individuals and organizations you might not have worked with before, such as community organizers, policy-makers, and advocacy groups.

Building alliances for social change may stretch organizations' resources, but such alliances also give nonprofit service groups room to get involved in ways that might otherwise be impossible. For example, one multiservice organization we worked with at the Building Movement Project served on several coalitions whose members were frank about what issues they could take the lead on, and what issues they needed to take a more subtle role in to protect the agency or its constituents.

Alliances can also raise awareness. In one state, a living-wage campaign was supported by some nonprofit service groups but opposed by other groups who feared that increasing their employees' wages would strain their budgets. This conflict created an important opportunity

to raise awareness about the root causes of issues that faced not only constituents, but also staff members who were unable to make ends meet on the wages they made as full–time employees in the nonprofit sector.

Building your voice

Alliances and coalitions provide a good way for organizations to get involved in policy and advocacy work and to learn from established groups. You can develop your own voice as an organization in the legislative arena, and learn how to communicate your message effectively. For information on coalitions and networks in your area, check the website of your state nonprofit association (or comparable organization) and ask your colleagues at other nonprofits. To find out if your state has a nonprofit association, visit the National Council of Nonprofit Associations at www.ncna.org.

You can also find more information on legislative advocacy and potential groups to partner with on websites such as **www.ombwatch.org**, **www.humanics.org**, or through you state and local colleges.

Offering resources

Most service organizations have a lot to offer in terms of resources, especially in working with constituents and building alliances. These resources may include:

>> **People:** Including those who work for your organization (in both paid and unpaid capacities) as well as the constituents you serve every day (a powerful and often overlooked resource).

>> **Infrastructure:** Including meeting space, phones, computers, and copiers.

>> **Community Ties:** The relationships you have developed with other institutions and organizations, media, and elected officials, among others.

Conclusion

Strategy is an important part of working toward social change and can be integrated into your existing logic models, strategic plans, and work activities. In the next chapter, we'll take a look at some of the models other groups have used to convert the strategies of constituency involvement and alliance building into action.

Chapter 5:
Action

Implementing strategy

This chapter discusses how to move into the action stage using everything your organization has learned about progressive social change and constituent involvement. Reading and learning are essential, but taking action is the real test of the organization's intention to integrate social change into its daily work.

So far, this guide has stressed the importance of constituent involvement in developing leadership and setting the internal direction of the organization. Now we'll explore how constituents can become key players in advancing progressive social change through three different methods: advocacy, voter mobilization, and organizing. These methods are not mutually exclusive and can be combined in various ways. Perhaps some of these activities are already taking place in your organization.

As you explore this material, bear in mind that implementing these changes can be difficult and slow going. However, this process can bring significant rewards, including greater engagement from your constituents, strengthened community-building, and more effective change at a systemic level. As the funding and political challenges facing nonprofits continue to grow, it is ever more important to build a strong base of support from your staff, board, and constituents. The examples provided in this chapter can help you think about where to start.

Advocacy

Advocacy is one of the most familiar and significant ways to include social change in service work within your organization's array of activities. In an organizational context, advocacy generally involves taking a position on legislative, policy, administrative decisions—especially at the government level—that affect your constituents and their communities.

Many service organizations—especially those that receive public funds—are familiar with advocacy. Your organization's executive director may have a relationship with the director and other staff at the government agency that funds your work. Most groups, at a minimum, know the person who oversees their funding contract. When contract renewal time comes around or when budget-related changes occur, it is routine to meet with the funders' decision-making team to discuss the implications of these changes and to advocate for continued or expanded services. In addition, many organizations belong to coalitions that monitor the legislative process, budget allocations, and budget-related decisions. These coalitions arrange meetings between legislators and providers in their districts to discuss the impact

of reducing services if funds are cut. Individual staff and board members may also be involved in advocacy through personal contacts or coalitions.

Some service groups involve their constituents in the advocacy process through activities such as "lobbying days," where a coalition of organizations—including staff and constituents—visit with legislators to explain the importance of the services these organizations provide and to advocate for the preservation or expansion of such services. These efforts usually include advance training for constituents on the legislative process, effective use of one's time with an elected representative, and the goals of the advocacy effort.

For some service groups, advocacy extends beyond funding-related issues to address policies and practices that affect the constituent population. For example, organizations that provide shelter for homeless persons might join coalitions that promote more government support for affordable housing. Nonprofit after-school programs might weigh in on policies and budget decisions affecting the public school system. Constituent involvement in these efforts may vary, but in most cases it is primarily the staff—often the executive director—who are called upon to do this work.

Advocacy is an important part of working toward social change and should involve constituents in a meaningful way, as discussed below. Usually advocacy is supplemented by research and specific policy recommendations (e.g., budget amounts for certain line items, removal of barriers to access, etc.). Policy organizations often conduct research that

points to community needs and solutions. The truly valuable and vital element that service agencies can add is the voice of its constituents!

Involving constituents in advocacy

Along with lobbying days, here are some ways of involving constituents in advocacy:

>> **Build on the popular education model** (discussed in Chapter 4) to learn about the issues constituents feel most affect their lives. Then work with a group of constituents who are willing to take leadership in thinking about how the organization might address those issues with legislators and government representatives. To advance this effort, find out who in your community has already identified these issues and try to build alliances with these individuals and organizations.

>> **Have constituents intern at local policy/ advocacy organizations** to learn about the advocacy process and/or to conduct research on the issues the organization and its constituents have identified as priorities. Constituents can then create a proposal for addressing these issues.

>> **Ask advocacy or policy groups to work with your organization** to conduct constituent-led research on a policy or systemic issue affecting your constituents. For more information on constituent-led research techniques, see Chapter 6.

>> **When conducting leadership training for constituents,** include advocacy-related skills-building.

>> **Encourage the various member organizations in advocacy coalitions to form a cadre of constituents** from the different organizations to meet regularly to discuss their shared policy concerns and the actions needed to advocate for change. Provide tangible support to this process in whatever ways you can—by donating space for the meetings, sharing the costs of meals and related expenses, helping to organize the constituent meetings, and so on.

Participating in advocacy is an excellent way for your constituents to learn how government operates and to influence outcomes. This process also pushes organizations to think about who their allies are. Those working in nonprofit service organizations know that the problems constituents face cross many different issue areas. Individuals confronting a lack of decent housing, failing schools, and intense economic pressure have a hard time choosing just one issue to "fix" the problem, but are often the best people to "connect the dots" for policy makers, legislators, and community-based nonprofits.

Voter mobilization

Like advocacy, voting offers an important mechanism for influencing government. We often think of mobilizing constituents around a presidential election; however, it's also key in local elections where the voice of your constituents as expressed through the ballot box

can shape electoral outcomes on the local school board, city council, state legislature, etc. If your organization's constituency includes ex-felons, undocumented immigrants, young people, or other populations that are denied the right to vote, it is important to remember that even these individuals can participate in the process by holding candidate forums, taking part in voter mobilization efforts, making phone calls that inform their fellow constituents of their right to vote, and engaging in related activities.

Nonprofit organizations are permitted to register and encourage people to vote. Such

Keeping it legal...

Many individuals working in the nonprofit sector believe that lobbying activities will jeopardize their organization's tax-exempt status. On the contrary: the Alliance for Justice points out that if you're not lobbying, you're not exercising your full rights under the tax laws.

The IRS actually encourages nonprofits to engage in lobbying and other advocacy activities, as long as these adhere to certain spending limitations. The guidelines are easy to follow. Based on their overall expenditures, most charities can spend as much as 20 percent of their budget on direct lobbying activities intended to influence legislation. You can use these generous limits by filing a simple, one-page form with the IRS to make the "501(h) election." Because the limits are based on the money you spend, there are no limits on volunteer efforts and other cost-free activities. Likewise, there are no limits on other kinds of public policy work, such as research, public education, and attempting to influence decisions made by administrative agencies. Lobbying by nonprofits isn't just legal—it's important, powerful, and fundamental to democracy.

Visit the Alliance for Justice website (www.ajf.org) for more information.

organizations can hold candidate forums to promote public discussion of key issues and learn where the candidates stand on these issues. There are many other activities your organization can undertake to build momentum, increase the base of empowered voters, and connect constituents with the larger systemic issues that affect their lives. Constituents can lead and/or participate in all of these processes. Here are a few examples.

>> **Provide information on voting** by distributing voter registration materials and teaching constituents how to register to vote.

>> **Familiarize constituents** with polling locations.

>> **Provide education** on how to utilize various voting technologies (hand-counted paper ballots, mechanical lever machines, computer punch-card machines, direct recording electronic systems, etc.)

>> **Provide information on the electoral process,** how votes are counted, what different political parties' positions are (and their history in the community), and why voting matters.

>> **Distribute information** on the position each candidate takes on various key issues.

>> **Work with ally organizations** to support constituent-led candidate forums.

Constituent voting can make a big difference in an election, especially on a local level. Engaging in voter mobilization within your organization has the added advantage of inspiring staff members who may not have been exercising their right to vote to begin doing so.

Organizing

Organizing offers yet another meaningful way to involve constituents in your organization while pursuing progressive social change. Organizing is based on the principle that communities—even those with few resources—can gain power and visibility by working together and engaging in collective action to build power for change. Like nonprofit service work, organizing is rooted in the belief that individual transformation leads to action and can change how people see their lives and their future; however, organizing depends on people acting collectively to create change and not as individuals.

Grassroots organizing was the basis for the creation of countless types of nonprofit services across the country, including youth programs, rape crisis services, and services for people with disabilities, among others. As the organizations providing these services grew, many became institutionalized and professionalized—and the organizing arm withered. Given the growing disparity between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in our society, it is not surprising that organizing is once again being embraced by nonprofit service groups.

Organizing relies on constituents joining together to decide what they want. Organizing makes use of many different techniques, including issue campaigns, political education, community building, and documentation. It is your constituents who should decide what action to take; working with a trained organizer can help facilitate this process. Service providers can incorporate organizing throughout the agency, or in a variety of other

ways. Most often, service providers hire an organizer to work inside the organization. In other cases, providers work in partnership with an organizing group to help their constituents gain the skills and opportunities to participate in organizing activities.

RHICO (the Ricanne Hadrian Initiative for Community Organizing), run by the Massachusetts Community Development Corporation, provides a good example of how to incorporate organizing into a wider service agency. RHICO adds community organizing to community development corporations (CDCs) that wish to mobilize their constituents. The program funds several Massachusetts-based CDCs to hire community organizers who work with residents to develop strategies

Funding: An Educational Process

Despite the importance of working for social change, nonprofit organizations are often frustrated by funders' reluctance to support groups that are helping their constituents to solve their own problems. Below are some ideas about how to approach funding sources, especially individuals and foundations. Of course, you'll need to use your best judgment about your particular funders to determine the most appropriate approach for your situation.

>> AS YOU KNOW, RECEIVING FUNDS FOR NEW PROJECTS RELIES ON BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS. Don't be shy about meeting with funders to start the process. How many times has it happened that an idea a funder initially rejected becomes a priority for that same funder down the road? Take heart; this process takes time.

>> FIND OUT WHAT IS HAPPENING NATIONALLY AND LINK THESE TRENDS TO YOUR LOCALLY FOCUSED IDEAS. This guide includes helpful resources, as does our website at www.buildingmovement.org. Additional resources include the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, and the National Council of Nonprofit Associations (see Appendix B, "Resources for Chapter 5," for contact information). Check back on these and other resources from time to time to stay current on new developments.

>> WORK WITH OTHERS. It's great to be ahead of the curve, but that can sometimes frighten funders off. Build coalitions with other groups, especially unlikely allies, where you can all benefit and advance your common goals. Use the coalitions as a mechanism to help raise funders' awareness.

>> LOOK FOR NEW TYPES OF RESOURCES. For example, the Independent Sector, a national group that addresses the needs of the nonprofit sector, has recently released a report on Social Justice Funding. Grantcraft, a project of the Ford Foundation, has information on advocacy funding and other issues of interest. See Appendix B, "Resources for Chapter 5," for more information on these resources.

>> DON'T FORGET TO EXPLORE SMALLER OR LESSER—KNOWN FUNDING SOURCES. We often look to well-known foundations in seeking funding for our work, but getting resources from smaller funders can build people power and support for your work. One place to learn more about how to do this is the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, as listed in Appendix B, "Resources for Chapter 5."

to address the physical, social, and economic needs of their community. RHICO also brings together the paid organizers they fund—along with other organizers from CDCs around the state—to discuss their work and the strategies they use within and outside of the agency to build on their common agendas. An evaluation of RHICO's first three years of engagement found that organizing in the participating CDCs produced more active residents and engaged more people in organizing on behalf of both the organizations' future and the future of the affected communities.

The importance of involvement

How and why should your organization make the necessary resource-allocation shifts to support activities such as organizing, advocacy, and voter mobilization? In a time of such difficulty for nonprofits, it may seem counterintuitive to think about redirecting any of your agency's time and resources toward such efforts. Organizations have to stay afloat, meet the current needs of constituents, and navigate treacherous waters in an increasingly hostile political climate. While these challenges cannot be minimized, it is also true that unless many more nonprofits take on this kind of work, the entire nonprofit sector and the vital services it provides may be at risk. There is no question that we are witnessing the severe erosion of economic support for the kinds of services the nonprofit service sector provides. That times are tough for nonprofits is all the more reason to look for creative ways to strengthen your base, diversify your strategies for success, and increase your constituency's power. Now is the time to bring your staff, board, and constituents together to work for the kind of world where people's needs are more likely to be met.

Chapter 6:
Reflection and Evaluation

No effort is complete without some way to evaluate its successes and areas for improvement, although the prospect of doing yet another evaluation can be daunting for a service organization that's already mandated by its funders to provide detailed reports on the measurable outcomes of its work.

Even so, at the Building Movement Project we believe evaluations are useful and important, especially when organizations spend the time to take stock of their actions and strategies, and to use the evaluation process to determine what went well and what did not. After all, people learn as much (if not more) from setbacks as from successes. Moreover, the information you collect during the evaluation process will be helpful in convincing your funders and other allies to invest in this type of work.

In this context, evaluation is a process of reflection, an opportunity to see how well the beliefs, values, assumptions, analysis, strategies, and tactics that have guided your work have fared. Evaluation also allows you to identify any unintended consequences of your actions and to discuss how you want to change or refine your future activities.

Gathering relevant information

Taking the time to make sure you have the information you need to evaluate your work can be a challenge. In a perfect world, you would know from the start exactly what type of information to collect, but the reality is that new questions are likely to emerge once the information-gathering process is underway. At the beginning of the evaluation process, simply do your best to identify, in as much detail as possible, what kind of information you want to gather,

but don't worry if adjustments need to be made along the way. Flexibility and a willingness to fine-tune your questions and information-gathering activities as you go will make for stronger and more precise results.

Bear in mind that the information you collect for the purposes described in this guide should link directly with your social change goals. Here are some tips for getting started.

>> **Spend time with staffers, organizational leaders, board members, and constituents** to review your vision, mission, and strategy, and then decide what you want to find out from your evaluation process. What information that you already collect can be used for this purpose? What else do you need to know?

>> **If you decide that you need to collect additional information, be as specific as possible** in determining what this information is and how to go about gathering it. Thinking about what information you want (and why) on the *front end* of the process will ensure that you gather the right information along the way. Involve those who will be collecting the information to make sure your evaluation plan is feasible.

Who Collects the Data?
Two Approaches

It's great to talk about collecting data, but most groups are strapped for funds and time. Here are two options that can ease the pressure.

① CONSTITUENTS: Individuals who are using or have used your services may be the ideal people to help collect data. The cost of training and paying constituents to collect information can be built into program costs. Other advantages are:

>> **Peer to peer conversations often reveal more information.**

>> **Constituent involvement promotes leadership and teaches people new skills that they can use inside and outside the organization.**

>> **Constituent involvement redistributes power.**

>> **Constituents who are trained to collect information will feel more involved and invested in your organization and its success.**

>> **Involving constituents in a** formal way will introduce new ideas into the process that others in the organization may miss.

② ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS: Partnering with a local academic institution is another way to meet your data collection needs. Although many academic institutions offer evaluation service free of charge, be aware that the interests of professors and students may differ from those of your organization and that the services offered may not fit your agency's needs. As you negotiate the terms of the agreement, be sure that what you want (and don't want) is clearly understood and agreed upon. When deciding whether to invest the effort in building a long-term relationship with a person or program at a nearby university or college, keep the following information in mind:

>> **Academics and their students who focus on research and evaluation can add valuable information on how to collect and analyze information.**

>> **While a partnership with an academic institution costs the nonprofit organization time, it may yield other resources, including student placements, volunteer resources, or speaking engagements for staff and constituents. (note: Such partnerships should not cost the nonprofit partner any money).**

>> **Your organization might also use your partnership with an academic institution to bring attention to structures and policies that need to change in order to address the root causes of problems constituents face and to respond to the issues identified through the data collection process.**

>> **You don't have to do it their way. Even the best-intentioned academics don't necessarily know your population, the best way to gather data, or what is most useful to you. The process should involve dialogue and meet your agency's needs, respect its organizational culture, and fit within the realities of your constituent base.**

>> **When you need to collect new or additional information, make sure you are clear** about what information you want to obtain and how this information should be gathered and recorded. Adding to an existing written form, such as a program evaluation, is preferable to creating new paperwork.

>> **Pre-test any new data collection method** or form to make sure it works before finalizing the tool and putting it to use. This allows you to iron out any rough spots ahead of time.

>> **Take the time to provide proper training** for anyone who will be involved in collecting information so that everyone is clear on their evaluation-related responsibilities and how to carry them out. Whether it's counting numbers or asking questions, it's important to make sure everyone is on the same page right from the start. Don't wait until you're at the end of the evaluation process to find out that people had different ideas about what they were supposed to do.

>> **Check in on a regular basis to make sure things are going according to plan.** Don't be afraid to change or refine your evaluation tool along the way if something isn't right.

>> **Human services agencies are heavily regulated** by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and by state privacy acts. You need to make sure that you have consent if you're collecting or using lists that include personal or contact information, and clients must have the option to opt-out of surveys and evaluations.

Adding a check box to your existing forms and explaining how the information will be used should address this issue. For more information on HIPAA regulations, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website at http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/.

Deciding what to collect

Your social change goals will inform your decisions about what kind of information your evaluation should yield, which will in turn determine how you go about gathering the information you need. Below are some approaches to consider.

Getting the numbers

Many organizations already collect numerical data on how many people use their services, what type(s) of service they use, and client demographics. Some groups also collect information on how clients found their way to the organization (referrals, word of mouth, etc.). If you collect such information, you may also want to gather information that can illuminate certain trends. For example, are more people coming to your agency seeking a certain kind of service than in the past? Are constituents facing any new or emerging issues? Are there particular areas of increased or reduced need? The answers to questions like these will give you important clues about the larger systemic trends in the community you serve. Gathering numerical data can also help you think about potential new activities. How many constituents came to a community meeting sponsored by the organization or attended trainings on advocacy? Getting a sense of the level of demand for a certain activity can point the way to future planning that matches your constituency's needs.

Constituent satisfaction

Some organizations try to find out how their constituents rate their services through client focus groups, constituent surveys, and other feedback mechanisms. Measuring constituent satisfaction can indicate whether your constituents feel involved in efforts to address the issues they face. If you already have your constituents rate how well your service is delivered, you may also want to ask them to what degree this service is something they really want or need. A deeper understanding of your constituents' needs lays the groundwork for your future social change activities. Responding to the needs and concerns your constituents identify through this process is an important first step to incorporating social change work—and increased constituent involvement—into your agency's wider mission.

Constituents' worldview

For providers that are integrating progressive social change values and activities into their work, it is important to collect information about how constituents view their own power and the way the organization helps to address systemic issues. How you go about capturing this information will depend on the strategies and activities you have pursued. You might start by finding out whether constituents have gained an understanding of how their situation is based not only on their behavior but also on broad based policies and social, economic, and political structures. You might also explore how constituents feel they could participate (or have participated) in changing systems and how or whether they feel your organization has supported them in this process. To take this a step further, you can involve constituents in the collection of the data as well (see "Who Collects the Data?..." on page 43).

Examining and reflecting on the findings

After you have gathered your data, the most important and useful activity will be to spend time discussing it. At this stage, the more people involved the better. Diverse perspectives on what the information "means" or what its implications are will help you decide how to move forward with your work. It may mean changing or adjusting your strategies, learning more about the community, rethinking your theory of social change, or adding some new element to the effort.

For example, if only three people showed up to a community meeting sponsored by your organization as part of its effort to incorporate social change goals, it is important to talk about whether or not this level of attendance is indicative of a problem. On the one hand, this may be a good showing for a first meeting and the three attendees may have brought lots of ideas and energy to the process, along with good ideas for recruiting more people. On the other hand, the attendance level may be a sign that the meeting was held at a bad time for constituents or that the topic was not of interest to the people you sought to attract. The "why" needs to be investigated and understood to ensure even better results the next time. That's the essence of evaluation and how it can work for you.

It can sometimes be difficult to measure the impact that advocacy and policy change can have on a community, and the extent to which your organization and its constituents have effected change. For more information and tips on how to evaluate these changes, see *The Challenge of Assessing Advocacy* in Appendix B, "Resources for Chapter 6."

Learning and changing: A cyclical process

This entire effort—from learning and awareness to vision and strategy, right on through to action and evaluation—is a cyclical process. Evaluation and reflection tell you what else you need to learn, what strategies to keep or change, how to fine-tune your analysis, and how to continually take actions that are relevant to your constituents' evolving needs. With your vision firmly in mind, you can make your way toward incorporating a vibrant social change agenda within the context of all the other work you do. The continuous process of learning and changing that takes place within your organization and between your organization and its allies will provide the energy and direction required to make this process one of joy, strength, challenge, and hope.

Conclusion

We have written this guide because we believe that service organizations are key to promoting social change. Through their extensive contacts and long relationships with constituents and residents in low-income and other marginalized communities, such organizations are uniquely positioned to promote democracy and civic participation throughout the U.S.

This is a critical juncture for civil society, a time when nonprofit groups can take leadership in new and important ways. If you are making use of this manual, you are pioneering how service work will look in the future, making change based on sound principles and solid experience.

Nonprofit service organizations that integrate social change principles and activities into their work are expanding their focus to look beyond individual-level change to include larger systemic issues. We believe this will add to, not detract from, the mission, vision, and future potential of these organizations. Such efforts will help your constituents take more control of their lives in significant ways—think, for example, of how self-help groups altered the landscape of substance use and domestic violence services. Such efforts will also help break down the barriers between organizations to move together toward a larger vision that benefits all. In short, these efforts provide an opportunity for changing the direction of our society for the better.

Nonprofit service organizations can take the lead, but they cannot do it on their own. We recommend that local, state, and national umbrella groups representing different issue areas in service provision support constituent involvement in a meaningful way, working with nonprofit service groups that have a proven track record in this area. We also believe that national infrastructure groups that support the nonprofit sector such as Independent Sector, BoardSource, the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, and the National Council of Nonprofit Associations can continue to promote this work on the ground and advocate for more constituent participation on a national level. Nonprofit and professional academic programs—ranging from social work schools to American Humanics to nonprofit degree programs—must teach about civic engagement, democratic practice, and constituent/client engagement in nonprofit service organizations. We also need to challenge funders—especially those outside of government—to support this type of work much as they once supported model programs that were later adopted by government funders.

In the future, we'll need to be more connected across organizations, issue areas, funding sources, and at all levels, from national groups to community-based agencies. Most importantly of all, we need to forge a new compact with our constituents, where the work we do does not simply "fix" an immediate problem, but integrates them into the world of participation, decision-making, and leadership. This guide provides a roadmap for beginning this vital work.

Appendix A:
Glossary

Some of the terms we use in this guide are defined below to clarify our assumptions and understanding.

Asset mapping: A process of defining the strengths and needs in a community. Asset mapping creates an in-depth "map" of a community's local resources, networks, places of importance, and prevalent issues, along with charting how these elements are currently connected, and where potential connections may exist.

Clients: The people who receive services from a nonprofit service organization.

Constituents: Refers mainly to an organization's clients, but can also include the broader community of potential service recipients and their families, as well as other stakeholders, including alliances and coalitions.

Ideology: A set of beliefs and/or assumptions; a framework that helps people process or filter information about the world and their day-to-day experiences.

Individual responsibility: The belief that individual choices and behaviors, rather than structural and institutional factors, are to blame for poverty, lack of advancement, lack of education achievement, and other socioeconomic problems.

Leadership: The ability to guide or give direction.

Leadership development: The process of preparing individuals to guide or give direction to others within the community, or to participate in organizational decision-making. Leadership development can occur through formal classes or trainings, mentorship, or informal conversations, and may impart skills such as fundraising, leading meetings, and analyzing information, among others.

Logic model: A planning framework that offers a tool for communicating how a particular set of actions can bring about a desired result.

Members: Constituents who have chosen to affiliate themselves with an organization by signing up as members and/or paying membership dues.

Mission statement: An organization's description of what the organization does and why.

Movement building: The process of creating progressive social change through

social movements. (Social movements are large-scale, mass efforts to create fundamental change. Examples include the Civil Rights movement, the gay rights movement, the feminist movement, and many others. In this guide, we sometimes use the terms "social change work" and "social justice work" interchangeably with movement building.)

Movement-building capacity:
The extent to which an organization can contribute to social change. The Building Movement Project has defined key features of movement-building capacity to describe organizational structures and practices within nonprofits that generally indicate an ability to make progressive social change (see Appendix D).

Organizational culture: The
often unspoken or unofficial ways that a given organization operates. Thinking about organizational culture can be helpful in determining who has unofficial or informal power in an organization and how that power operates.

Organizational structure:
The way that groups or individuals within an organization make decisions and exercise decision-making authority. Organizational structure can offer a roadmap to understanding who has formal and official power in the organization.

Popular education: A style of
teaching and learning in which participants' experiences are at the center of the learning.

Power: The authority or force to determine
an outcome. A power dynamic is the pattern of who or what (an individual, a corporation, a government entity, a funding source, etc.) wields power in a particular context. This pattern is often "invisible" or unspoken.

Power analysis: A strategic planning
tool used by organizing groups to understand who has direct and indirect power over specific decisions, and how to alter the balance of power. Power analysis can also be used to understand power relationships more generally.

Progressive social change:
Changes in society that reduce or eliminate the root causes of inequality (often used interchangeably with the terms "social change" or "social justice").

Root causes: Underlying factors that
create community problems, and make those problems likely to persist even though services may be in place to help individuals and families meet their immediate needs. One of the assumptions of this guide is that the root causes of most community problems are systemic, not the result of individual decisions or behavior.

Social change: Any work or analysis
that addresses the root causes of oppression and promotes fairness, equality, equity, and sustainability.

Social change work: The process of
creating progressive social change through social movements (see under "movement building," above). In this guide, the terms "social change

work," "social justice work," and "movement building" are used interchangeably.

Structural barriers: The social and political forces that impede individuals' ability to gain access to resources and opportunities.

Structural or systemic forces/ factors: The underlying economic, political, and social forces or "systems" that shape people's lives. Structural and systemic forces/factors include, but are not limited to, racism, classism, and sexism.

Theory of Change: A tool for defining all of the building blocks required to achieve a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks (outcomes, results, accomplishments, preconditions, interventions, assumptions, etc.) is depicted on a graphic representation or "map" of the change process.

Transformation: A process of change in an individual's beliefs and/or actions that many organizations believe is a necessary basis for larger-scale change in our society.

Vision statement: A statement or image of the society we wish to create—a society in which the consequences *and* the causes of the problems our agencies deal with have been addressed.

Appendix B:
Resources

Below is a sampling of resources from each chapter. To suggest more, e-mail us at **processguide@buildingmovement.org** and we'll post them on our website.

Resources for Chapter 1:
Learning and Changing

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES

›› Crabgrass - www.crabgrass.org
Crabgrass is a small non-governmental organization based in San Francisco that works on environmental, social justice and human rights issues, both globally and locally.

›› Highlander Education and Resource Center - www.highlandercenter.org The Highlander Center is a residential popular education and research organization based outside of Knoxville, Tennessee. Since 1932, Highlander has gathered workers, grassroots leaders, community organizers, educators, and researchers to address the most pressing social, environmental, and economic problems facing the people of the South. Highlander sponsors educational programs and research into community problems, as well as a residential Workshop Center for social change organizations and workers active in the South and internationally.

›› Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide - www.projectsouth.org Project South creates popular education to build grassroots leaders by providing opportunities for organizers to learn and develop movement-building tools. The organization strives to build a stronger movement for social and economic justice by connecting local organizing efforts to consciousness, vision, and strategy.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

›› Joan Minieri, Jennifer Dodge, Erica Foldy, Amparo Hofmann-Pinilla, Marian Krauskopf, and Sonia Ospina of the Research Center for Leadership in Action at NYU for the Leadership for a Changing World Program. ***From Constituents to Stakeholders: Community-Based Approaches to Building Organizational Ownership and Providing Opportunities to Lead.*** **www.wagner.nyu.edu/leadership/reports/files/ConstituentstoStakeholders.pdf**

›› Mezirow, Jack. ***Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress.*** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR USE IN LEARNING SESSIONS
The books listed below include readings used by various organizations in Detroit who participated in the Building Movement Project with Linda Campbell, a member of the Building Movement Project Team and one of the authors of this guide. In many cases, participants read one or two chapters of a particular book that applied to the issue(s) they wished to learn about or discuss.

›› Guinier, Lani. ***The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, and Transforming Democracy.*** Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

>> Horton, Myles and Paulo Freire. **We Make the Road by Walking.** Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

>> Kozol, Jonathan. **The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America.** New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2005.

>> O'Connor, Alice. **Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History.** Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

>> Payne, Charles M. **I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle.** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

>> Polletta, Francesca. **Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements.** Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

>> Sen, Rinku. **Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy.** San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Resources for Chapter 2: Awareness

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES
>> **SCOPE (Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education) – www.scopela.org**
SCOPE's mission is to develop multi-dimensional approaches to reducing and eliminating structural barriers to social and economic opportunities for poor and economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color.

>> **Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA) – www.PILAweb.org**
PILA works to increase civic and political activism among low-income immigrant communities to strengthen democracy and advance social justice. PILA has published a number of papers that are helpful tools for thinking about leadership development.

>> **Forest Hills Community House – www.fhch.org**
The Forest Hills Community House is a settlement house founded in 1974 to assist, strengthen, and help improve the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. Located in Queens, New York, their sites serve as centers for community gathering, organizing, and social service activity, while their programs work to promote inter-generational and cross-cultural cooperation and exchange. In addition, the Community House works with other organizations in networks and coalitions to advocate for and provide services boroughwide.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES
>> Kretzmann, John P. and John L. McKnight. **Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.** Skokie: ACTA Publications, 1997.

>> **Political Education: Case Studies** (forthcoming). Building Movement Project **www.buildingmovement.org**

>> **Power Tools: A Manual for Organizations Fighting for Justice.** Los Angeles: SCOPE, 2003. **http://www.scopela.org/eejp/pa.html**

>> Rebecca J. Kissane and Jeff Gingerich. **"Do You See What I See? Nonprofit and Resident Perceptions of Urban Neighborhood Problems." Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector**

Quarterly, Volume 33, Number 2, June 2004. **nvs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/33/2/311**

>> Polletta, Francesca. *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Resources for Chapter 3: Vision

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES
>> TIPS: The Indispensable Public Space — buildingmovement.org/artman/publish/ article_72.shtml
TIPS provides tools and exercises for holding debate and discussion within organizations.

>> Tools for Change – www.toolsforchange.org
Tools for Change is a multicultural organization that promotes healing, leadership development, and sustainable democracy. Its programs are based in collective reflection and open the imagination, inspire dialogue, deepen relationships, and empower people's work. On this site, you can learn about the national network of "circles" that integrate politics and social transformation, enabling people to reclaim power in their lives. Also included is information on a sister charitable organization called the Tools for Change Institute **(www.instituteforchange.org)**, which is dedicated to bringing history, heart, spirit, values, and vision into the center of public life.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES
>> *The Midnite School: Creating a Vision for Our Movement.* Report-back from Project South Gathering 2004. www.projectsouth.org

>> Radtke, Janel M. for The Grantmanship Center. ***"How to Write a Mission Statement."*** **http://www.tgci.com/magazine/98fall/ mission.asp**

>> *"How to….Write a mission statement from Student Action for Change,"* www.actionforchange.org/getstarted/howto-mission.html

>> *"What's in a mission statement?"* from the FAQ section of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management website, **www.allianceonline.org/ FAQ/strategic_planning/what_s_in_mission_ statement.faq**

>> *"What's in a vision statement?"* from the FAQ section of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management website, **allianceonline.org/ FAQ/strategic_planning/what_s_in_vision_ statement.faq**

>> *"What are the Steps of a Strategic Planning Process?"* (adapted from Compasspoint) on the Idealist website, **www.nonprofits.org/if/idealist/ en/FAQ/QuestionViewer/default?category-id=19 &item=24&section=3&sid=44306147-7-wjQWK**

Resources for Chapter 4: Strategy

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES
>> Theory of Change – www.theoryofchange.org
This website was developed in response to the growing demand for assistance and materials on applying the theory of change. The site provides information on how to apply the theory of change and how this model can improve an organization's design and evaluation plans.

>> National Community Development Institute (NCDI) – www.ncdinet.org
NCDI builds capacity for social change in communities of color and other underserved communities using culturally-based methods. The organization's aim is to develop strong, resilient communities of color with the collective capacity to promote democratic participation, equitable distribution of resources, and social and economic justice in this country and around the world.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES
>> *Power Tools: A Manual for Organizations Fighting for Justice.* Los Angeles: SCOPE, 2003. **www.scopela.org/eejp/pa.html**

>> Roth, Stephanie. *How Does Your Board Measure Up? Grassroots Fundraising Journal* www.grassrootsfundraising.org

>> Mizrahi, Terry and Beth Rosenthal. *Complexities of Effective Coalition-Building: A Study of Leaders' Strategies, Struggles and Solutions. Social Work,* January 2001.

Resources for Chapter 5: Action

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES
>> Alliance for Justice – www.afj.org
The Alliance for Justice is a national association of environmental, civil rights, mental health, women's, children's, and consumer advocacy organizations. Since its inception in 1979, the Alliance has worked to advance the cause of justice for all Americans, strengthen the public interest community's ability to influence public policy, and foster the next generation of advocates. The Alliance's website includes information on the types of lobbying or advocacy activities a nonprofit organization can engage in.

>> Coalition on Human Needs – www.chn.org
The Coalition on Human Needs is an alliance of national organizations working together to promote public policies that address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable people.

>> ENLACE Comunitario – www.enlacenm.org
ENLACE Comunitario is a community-based organization dedicated to serving the needs and promoting the rights of Spanish-speaking immigrants in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with a focus on serving victims of domestic violence. The organization began as a University of New Mexico community project promoting parent involvement in child education. In 1995, one parent died as the result of domestic violence and since then, this issue has remained a core focus of the agency. In 2000, ENLACE Comunitario incorporated as its own unaffiliated not-for-profit agency, and continues its struggle to empower victims through community development and organizing, as well as social and legal services.

>> MassVOTE – www.massvote.org
MassVOTE is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, statewide organization dedicated to increasing voter participation and promoting election reform in Massachusetts. MassVOTE seeks to create a healthy and participatory democracy open to all.

>> OMB Watch – www.ombwatch.org
OMB Watch is a nonprofit government watchdog organization located in Washington, DC. Its mission is to promote open government, accountability, and citizen participation.

>> PILA (Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action) – www.pilaweb.org
Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (formerly known as NCCP) works to increase

civic and political activism among low-income immigrant communities to strengthen democracy and advance social justice.

>> RHICO (Ricanne Hadrian Initiative for Community Organizing) – www.macdc.org/docs/rhico.html

The Massachusetts Association of Community Development Associations (MACDC), in partnership with the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), established RHICO, bringing a large and active statewide CDC trade association together with a national community development intermediary as program collaborators. Named for the late organizer and MACDC deputy director who spearheaded the creation of this program, RHICO provides funding, technical assistance, training, and peer-to-peer support to Massachusetts CDCs.

>> Right To Vote – www.righttovote.org

Right To Vote (RTV) seeks to broaden national public discussion of disfranchisement through media and communications, impact litigation, and scholarship. RTV has also launched, and provides technical assistance to, state-based efforts across the country. The RTV website provides information, rules, and guidelines on voting for citizens with felony convictions.

>> *Grassroots Fundraising Journal – Grassroots Fundraising* www.grassrootsfundraising.org

Views fundraising as a critical and integral part of progressive social change, and operates based on the conviction that anyone can learn fundraising. The organization produces and distributes accessible materials on how to fundraise.

>> National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NRCP) – www.ncrp.org

Since 1976, NCRP has advocated for the philanthropic community to provide nonprofit organizations with essential resources and opportunities to work toward social and economic justice for disadvantaged and disfranchised populations and communities.

>> The Alliance for Nonprofit Management – www.allianceonline.org

The Alliance for Nonprofit Management is a professional association of individuals and organizations devoted to improving the management and governance capacity of nonprofits—to assist nonprofits in fulfilling their mission. The Alliance is a learning community that promotes quality in nonprofit capacity building. It convenes a major annual conference, networks colleagues year-round online, and provides member discounts on books and other publications. In addition, the Alliance provides visibility to its members in the online "Find a Consultant or Service Provider" directory, the People of Color Roster, and the print membership directory.

>> The National Council of Nonprofit Associations (NCNA) – www.ncna.org

NCNA's mission is to advance the vital role and capacity of the nonprofit sector in civil society and support and give voice to state and regional associations of nonprofit organizations. NCNA links local organizations to a national audience through state associations and helps small and mid-sized nonprofits to manage and lead more effectively; collaborate and exchange solutions; save money through group-purchasing opportunities; and achieve greater impact in their communities.

>> Grantcraft – www.grantcraft.org
Grantcraft, a project of the Ford Foundation, offers information about advocacy funding on its website. Also included are other resources primarily geared for grantmakers, but informative for nonprofit organizations as well.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

>> Kissane, Rebecca J., and Jeff Gingerich. *"Do You See What I See? Nonprofit and Resident Perceptions of Urban Neighborhood Problems." Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly,* Volume 33, Number 2, June 2004. **nvs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/33/2/311**

>> Chetkovich, Carol and Kunreuther, Frances. *From the Ground Up: Making Social Change.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, forthcoming Fall 2006.

>> Klein, Kim. *Fundraising for Social Change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

>> Klein, Kim. *Fundraising in Times of Crisis.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

>> *Journal of Community Power Building: Reflections from Community Development Leaders and Practitioners* by RHICO **www.macdc.org/uploads/95/WEBSITE_ Journal_of_Comm_Power.pdf**

>> *Mobilize the Immigrant Vote: 2004 Bay Area Capacity Building Program Report* by Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action **www.immigrantvoice.org/**

>> Sen, Rinku. *Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

>> *Social Justice Grantmaking: A Report on Foundation Trends,* a report jointly released in 2005 by the Washington, D.C.-based Independent Sector and the New York-based Foundation Center. Highlights of the report are available for download under the "Special Reports" section of **www.fdncenter.org/research/trends_analysis/** and the entire report is available for sale at this site as well. A press release about the report may be viewed at **www.independentsector.org/ media/20050912_grantmaking.html**

Resources for Chapter 6: Reflection and Evaluation

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEBSITES

>> Innovation Network – www.innonet.org
Innovation Network is a nonprofit organization that shares planning and evaluation tools and know-how through consulting, training, and online tools for nonprofits and funders. The network currently runs the Advocacy Evaluation Project to identify a practical planning and evaluation framework for policy advocacy. Evaluation-related tools and resources are available for download on the network's website.

>> Nonprofit Sector Research Fund of the Aspen Institute – www.nonprofitresearch. org/newsletter1525/newsletter_show.htm?doc_ id=26488
The Nonprofit Sector Research Fund awards research grants and convenes meetings to expand knowledge of the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, improve nonprofit practices, and inform public policy related to nonprofits. The fund's website includes information on current practices and techniques in nonprofit evaluation.

>> **Tools for Change – www.toolsforchange.org**
Tools for Change is a multicultural organization that promotes healing, leadership development, and sustainable democracy. Its programs are based in collective reflection and open the imagination, inspire dialogue, deepen relationships, and empower people's work. On this site, you can learn about the national network of "circles" that integrate politics and social transformation, enabling people to reclaim power in their lives. Also included is information on a sister charitable organization called the Tools for Change Institute **(www.instituteforchange.org)**, which is dedicated to bringing history, heart, spirit, values, and vision into the center of public life.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES
>> Guthrie, Kendall, and Justin Louie, Tom David, and Catherine Crystal Foster *The Challenge of Assessing Advocacy: Strategies from a Prospective Approach to Evaluating Policy Change and Advocacy* The California Endowment, October 2005 **www.calendow.org/reference/ publications/pdf/npolicy/The%20Challenge%20 of%20Assessing%20AdvocacyFINAL.pdf**

>> *The New Girls' Movement: New Assessment Tools for Youth Programs.* Ms. Foundation for Women **www.ms.foundation.org/user-assets/ PDF/Program/TOOLKIT%20REPORT.pdf**

>> Saegert, Susan, and Lymari Benitez, Efrat Eizenberg, Tsai-shiou Hsieh, and Mike Lamb *Participatory Evaluation: How It Can Enhance Effectiveness and Credibility of Nonprofit Work* City University of New York Graduate Center. **www.nonprofitquarterly.org/section/499.html**

>> Peavey, Fran, *Strategic Questioning: An Approach to Creating Personal and Social Change* Edited by Vivian Hutchinson **www.crabgrass.org/site/strategic_1.html**

APPENDIX B:
RESOURCES

Appendix C:
Assessment

An assessment can help you and your organization determine whether the process described in the guide is a good match for your organization—and where to begin.

Who should participate in the assessment?
The assessment is designed for the leadership and staff members of an organization where there is interest in pursuing social change work. However, not every staff member in such an organization needs to complete the assessment. We suggest that a group of people in the organization complete the assessment form. This group can be made up of persons who volunteer to be a part of the group, the individuals who are participating in the learning and changing process, or a group chosen by the staff who are leading the change effort. Once the assessment forms are collected, you can then discuss the results together, as detailed below.

How do we take the assessment?
Hand out copies of the assessment to each respondent and ask each person to keep track of his or her answers on their worksheet. For each question, the respondent is to choose the multiple-choice answer that most accurately reflects the organization. Once the respondent has completed the assessment, s/he should count up the answers to determine their score. Respondents should be informed that since every organization is different, it's likely that no single answer will perfectly describe your agency— respondents should simply select the answer that fits best.

Once everyone has completed the assessment and scoring process, the assessments can be turned in anonymously. The scores will almost certainly vary among the individual participants in any given group. The facilitator can average all the scores together (for a single collective score) or simply acknowledge the range of scores within the group. Either way, the scores can help your group to choose a starting place for using this guide.

Once the assessments are in hand, the facilitator can also lead a brief discussion on the scoring totals and any surprises in the assessment responses. The idea is not to get too "caught up" in analyzing the assessment findings, but rather to use these findings to guide the organization's "next steps" for incorporating a social change component into its overall work.

Part 1: Vision, mission, and the theory of change

1 **Does your organization have a written mission statement?**

A) No, our organization does not have a written mission statement.

B) Yes, our organization has a written mission statement, but I don't really know what it is or how it applies to our work.

C) Yes, our organization has a written mission statement; I know what it is but I don't think it really guides our work.

D) Yes, our organization has a written mission statement that guides our work; staff and board understand the mission.

② **Does your organization have a vision statement? (A vision statement is a description of the world that your organization wants to help create.)**

A) No, we don't have a written vision statement, and we have never talked about our vision.

B) No, we don't have a written vision statement, but we talk about our vision. However, there doesn't seem to be any overall agreement among staff and board members about the vision.

C) Yes, we have a written vision statement, and I know what it is but I don't think it really guides our work.

D) Yes, we have a written vision statement that guides our work; staff and board understand the vision.

③ **Does your organization evaluate how your activities advance the mission and/or vision?**

A) Unless something is obviously going wrong, we assume that our activities are working.

B) Our program staff and their supervisors evaluate their programs. These evaluations do not reference our agency's mission or vision, and are often dictated by funders' guidelines or grant proposals.

C) Our programs are routinely evaluated based on our agency's goals and anticipated outcomes,

which stem from our mission or vision. However, we rarely discuss the results of these evaluations.

D) We set goals and strategies that reference our agency's mission or vision. Programs are routinely evaluated and we discuss the results among ourselves and with others in the organization. We then make changes in the program based on our mission/vision, and on the evaluation results.

Part 2: Leadership for change

① **The organizational structure and decision-making process within your agency can best be described in the following way:**

A) The director and/or board of directors make most of the decisions.

B) The director regularly consults with staff and constituents, but there is no formal leadership structure with decision-making power beyond the director and the board.

C) The director consults with staff and constituents. We are working on developing a more formal power-sharing process.

D) Decision-making structures and accountability are clear, and power is formally shared among people at different levels of the organization.

② **How do your organization's leaders reflect the communities you serve? ("Leaders" refers to senior staff and other staff with significant decision-making authority and autonomy, as well as the board of directors.)**

A) Our organization's leadership does not reflect the community we serve in terms of race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, age, etc. There is little interest in recruiting, developing, or promoting leadership that reflects those we serve.

B) Our organization's leadership does not reflect the community we serve. The organization has tried to change this through diversity training or other efforts, but with little success.

C) Our organization's leadership is not fully reflective of our community, but it is more reflective than it has been in the past. The organization is consciously working to address this issue.

D) Our leadership (or organization) reflects and is representative of the communities we serve. We have ongoing, well-developed procedures in place to recruit and develop leaders from the community.

③ How do clients/constituents participate in your organization?

A) Our clients/constituents receive services, but do not have any say in the services they receive or the goals of the organization.

B) We are interested in feedback and periodically ask clients/constituents for their opinions or feedback through surveys, evaluations, comment cards, or meetings. However, this process is not consistent and there is no structured way for clients/constituents to have a say in how the organization operates.

C) We get feedback from clients/constituents in different ways and take that feedback into account when we evaluate our agency's work. We

have tried to bring constituents into leadership roles (such as board members), but we haven't done it consistently and when we have done it, the results have not gone very well.

D) Clients/constituents successfully participate in our organization at every level, from giving feedback on services to serving on committees, leadership groups, and the board of directors.

④ Does your organization work with clients/constituents for social change?

A) We provide services only; the organization does not seem interested in doing social change work, such as advocacy or teaching our clients/constituents about their rights.

B) Our organization is interested in social change but is afraid that if we speak up it will jeopardize our ability to do our work. We do belong to coalitions that advocate to prevent funding cuts to our organization.

C) Our organization has been active in several issues affecting our clients/constituents and keeps us informed about what is going on in that arena. Mainly, the executive director and a few senior leaders are involved in this effort.

D) Our organization has been active in social change work and its activities include and are led by constituents who have had leadership training on how to do this work. We are regularly informed and updated on progress in this area, and are encouraged to participate and to include our clients/constituents in these efforts.

Scoring the assessment

Score each section separately, as your score in each section will help you identify where to begin your efforts. For each of the following answers, give yourself the following score:

A – 0   B – 1   C – 2   D – 3

Part 1:
Mission, vision, and the theory of change ____

Part 2:
Leadership for change ____

Total Score: _____

What your score means

Low Score: 0–7

You have a ways to go to incorporate social change strategies. But don't worry; many service organizations will score at this level, so you're in good company. Nonprofit organizations get little (if any) support to do social change work, and for the past two decades nonprofit managers have come under increasing pressure to run their organizations like businesses, despite growing evidence that this approach is not working for clients or communities. We suggest you start with Chapter 1 of the guide and work your way through the entire process.

Midrange Score: 9–15

You're well on your way, and probably already doing some of the things suggested in this guide. What you are already doing well will help you implement other ideas. If you or others in the organization have attempted to make change without much success, you may feel discouraged. This guide will offer fresh approaches to

problems that you have already started to learn from. We suggest you focus your efforts on the area where your scores were lowest. If your score in Part 1 was low, you may want to browse Chapters 1 and 2 before moving on to Chapter 3. If your score in Part 2 was low, you'll probably want to focus on Chapters 4 and 5. In any case, it is important to remember that the process of reflection and evaluation, as detailed in Chapter 6, should always be a part of this cycle, no matter where you start.

High Score: 16–21

Your organization is probably in great shape! You are already making use of many social change strategies. We believe that working for change is a constant process, and all of our organizations can benefit from continual growth and development. We hope the materials in this guide will serve as useful tools to help you further articulate and strengthen your social change work, as well as address the funding and political challenges that can arise from taking on such work.

Appendix D:
Features of Movement-building Capacity for Nonprofits

There have been significant resources dedicated to the development of nonprofits' organizational capacity. However, far less attention has been paid to the capacity of groups to support movement for social change. Below are nine areas the Project identified as important building blocks of *movement* capacity of nonprofit organizations.

Vision

The organization has a statement of the world it wants to create and a theory of how change is made, including the role the organization plays in the larger social change arena and to whom the organization views itself as accountable.

Principles

Based on its vision of social change, the organization develops values that are applied within and outside of the organization.

Learning and Reflecting

The organization allocates time for its staff and constituents to learn and reflect on the organizational vision through presentations, readings, discussions, or arts/culture. The organization reflects on its work in order to refine its vision and strategies.

Issues of Race and Power

The organization considers society's "dominant culture" and how this culture is, often unconsciously, replicated within the organization itself. The organization analyzes how the effects of race, class, gender, and other cultural factors impact its work.

Work Across Boundaries

The organization builds relationships with other agencies, groups, and individuals to create a movement, and supports other groups without trying to "own" every issue or campaign.

Work Across Generations

The organization has a mechanism for transferring trust, power, and responsibility from older leaders to younger ones, while educating younger leaders about the complexities of social change work and inspiring their involvement in these issues. The agency also encourages dialogue between different generations about the challenges inherent to social change work and develops strategies to address issues related to burnout, the balance between work and personal life, and professional development.

Constituent Involvement

The organization has a mechanism by which to promote meaningful constituent involvement that goes beyond just staff, board, and funders. The organization also directs resources toward constituency involvement, within and outside of the organization.

Structure

The organization creates a system of effective leadership, management, and accountability while remaining creative and flexible in internal and external problem-solving. The agency collaborates with other organizations to bring about social change.

Funding

The organization recognizes and examines the impact that funder priorities have on the group's activities. To increase accountability to constituents, there are structures in place that encourage constituents to contribute – financially or otherwise – to the organization.

BuildingMovementProject

Inspiring Activism in the Nonprofit Community

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