Recommendations to the Campus Committee: An Organizing Strategy for the North End of Springfield, MA

By
Peter Samuel Banks

B.A. in History
University of Pennsylvania

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Author

Peter S Banks
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
May 22, 2008

Certified by

Professor J Phillip Thompson
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by

Professor Langley Keyes
Chair, MCP Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Abstract

The North End neighborhood of Springfield, MA is one of the poorest areas in the entire Commonwealth. For many years, agencies in the community have worked to provide basic services to the residents, who are primarily Puerto Rican. For the past twelve years, the major service organizations in the North End have tried to collaborate in an effort to better serve residents. Out of this collaboration came an idea to create a campus for lifelong learning. Since 2006, these service organizations and many other neighborhood institutions have been a part of what they refer to as the “Campus Committee.” The purpose of the Campus Committee is to create and implement the “Campus Concept”, which will provide lifelong learning opportunities to community members. Members of the Campus Committee continue to struggle with how to find resident leaders to participate in the process of creating and implementing the Campus Concept. This thesis is an attempt to provide an organizing strategy to find this leadership.

This document provides evidence that the Campus Committee must actively search for leadership. Leadership will not simply emerge largely due to of historical trends, disproportionate power relationships, and a mistrust of the service organizations. Thus, the Campus Committee must use relationships that the North End Outreach Network has, and continues to make, as a vehicle for finding leadership. Once that leadership is found, the Campus Committee must have space within its own organization that will allow residents the opportunity to take responsibility for planning and implementing the Campus Concept.

The Campus Committee must realize that its most valuable resource is the residents of the North End. Resident involvement with this process will build skills, give residents a sense of ownership over the Campus Concept, and will ultimately ensure longevity of the project.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

This thesis is, in essence, an outreach and organizing strategy for the Campus Committee in the North End of Springfield, Massachusetts to find resident leadership. The Campus Committee is an outgrowth of several service organizations in the North End. Its purpose is to create a hub of activity at the local schools, in particular at the Gerena School, that links all community organizations and residents together. This idea is referred to in this thesis as the “Campus Concept.” The campus that will be created will connect the North End by providing activities that teach useful skills, celebrate the history and culture of the community, and generally improve the lives of residents.

In order to find leadership in the community and implement the Campus Concept as a true community development project, the Campus Committee must change its philosophy. Currently, the Campus Committee is run based on a service model, which proceeds based on community deficiencies. A service model:

- Looks at the needs of a community and works to meet those needs
- Creates dependence
- Inhibits change

What the Campus Committee needs is an asset-based model that looks at the strengths of the community and creates change based on those strengths. This model starts from existing positive aspects of the community and works within the given skills of the community, but creates opportunities for learning.
By functioning based on an asset-based model, the Campus Committee can begin to focus on its most important resource: the people of the community. Instead of continually looking for money to create programming to serve the community, the Campus Committee can use its most valuable resource, the community, to create change.

It is the hope of the Campus Committee, as well as the author of this thesis, that the North End Outreach Network (NEON), an experienced community outreach organization that is familiar to most residents in the community, will play a large role in executing this strategy. The reason that the Campus Committee needs an organizing and outreach strategy is because the leadership of the organization has determined that there needs to be an increase in resident participation as the process for implementing the Campus Concept proceeds. In addition, it is the belief of the author that the Campus Concept will not succeed without increased resident involvement in and oversight of the process. The Steering Committee of the Campus Committee is currently the primary decision-making body in the organization. The leading members of the Steering Committee are also the executive directors of Brightwood Health Center, Gandara Mental Health, New North Citizens’ Council, and the Spanish American Union, the four major service organizations in the neighborhood.

The Campus Committee and the Campus Concept

The vision for the Campus Committee and the Campus Plan came from Dr. Jeffrey Scavron, the head of the Brightwood Health Clinic. His idea is based on the notion that the community needs a place for lifetime learning activities, a place where all family members can come and find activities that interest them. While there are many
organizations doing good work in the community, these activities sometimes appear disjointed and uncoordinated. Before the Campus Committee was formed, each organization was in its own world, creating programming that sometimes overlapped. Dr. Scavron feels it is imperative, if the community is ever going to improve and residents thrive, that the organizations serving residents need to come together to better coordinate their activities. This idea led to regular meetings among service organizations in the North End that began a little over two years ago.

The meetings began merely as networking and information sharing activities. What changed these meetings, however, and moved the Campus Concept closer to reality was when the organizations learned of a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) that had been negotiated between a member of the state legislature from Springfield and Baystate Health Center. Baystate Health Center wants to increase its physical presence in the North End. This CBA will provide $572,000 per year for a period of seven years for the Campus Committee and thus pushed Dr. Scavron’s dream closer to reality.

As the Campus Committee continued to meet, many issues arose, especially those related to creating programming for the Campus concept. In particular, members of the Campus Committee realized that “the active participation of all residents is needed to improve the community” and that “the key to change would be motivating those previously uninvolved residents to become part of the process.” It is this realization that informs the need for organizing residents.

Thus far in the creation of the Campus Concept, the leadership of the Campus Committee feels that there is no one from the community who has taken a leadership role. Despite having some basic outreach infrastructure in NEON, residents have not had any
impact on decision-making. Further, there is anecdotal evidence that a major
disconnection between the leadership and community members exists. If this
disconnection is not remedied, the outcome for any campus activity would be negatively
affected.

The Contribution of an Organizing Strategy to Local Capacity

Resident Capacity

Organizing is all about finding and developing leadership. A strategy for
organizing resident leadership to contribute to the creation of the Campus Concept could
accomplish two major things. First, by giving residents an opportunity to take
responsibility for decision-making and act with purpose toward a concrete outcome,
practical skills will be developed. Second, the process of creating the Campus Concept
will give a sense of ownership to the community and increase the likelihood of its success
and longevity.

Organizational Capacity

In organizing residents to help create change in their community, the leaders of
the Campus Committee are taking a bold step that many communities fear. Many
organizations would rather not act at all, then to try and fail. This step shows that the
current leadership is interested in community empowerment and the development of
resident capacity. This resident capacity could contribute to the improvement of services
that are delivered to those residents and could create a vocal ally that will work with
service providers.
There are a number of examples of how community organizing can impact community change. Some of those examples will be examined later in this document. There is some evidence, as the United States continues to be plagued by income inequality and wealth polarization, that people without traditional resources, such as money, are marginalized.\textsuperscript{vi} Community organizing is one of the few strategies to empower local residents in communities that have limited resources.

Though community organizing is by no means new, it is now being seen as a strategy that organizations can use effectively to create change. What may limit the number of organizations who use this strategy effectively, however, is a fear of failure. This fear may cause some organizations to cling to traditional performance routines that may not be effective.\textsuperscript{vii} Funding for community organizations may not encourage innovation, thus limiting the use of non-traditional techniques. The use of effective organizing by the Campus Committee would be further proof that community development can only work when community members feel empowered.

**Community Building and Organizing**

The purpose of the Campus Committee is essentially to build community. Community building is a process where "neighbors learn to rely on each other, work on concrete tasks that take advantage of new self-awareness of their collective and individual assets, and facilitate creation of social capital."\textsuperscript{viii} There are many important factors for successful community building, all of which need to be considered before beginning such a process. Community building should be\textsuperscript{ix}:

- Community Driven
Community building starts from local conditions. It is a process that begins with an assessment of community assets and builds on them by fostering broad community participation, valuing cultural strength and supporting families and children. Ultimately, community building seeks to integrate community development and service strategies that push neighborhood residents to take responsibility for improvement. Responsibility includes holding residents accountable for results.

There are many examples of community building where people living under great personal stress have come together to improve their communities. These examples dispel myths that people living in poverty do not want their communities to improve or that they are unwilling to contribute personally to such improvement. Organizing residents to lead and participate in improving their communities is now seen as an essential aspect of community building.

Organizing is no longer just fighting against a particular policy or group. The practice is now often about fighting for something: creating structures, policies, or environments that allow communities to flourish. As we will see in examples presented later in this thesis, most successful community building activities require strong organizing.
Thesis Development and Methodology

This thesis is part of an ongoing relationship between the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at MIT and the North End of Springfield, MA. For more than five years, DUSP has worked with organizations like NEON and New North Citizens Council to provide training, ideas and data to help improve the lives of residents. As part of the DUSP curriculum and the commitment to the North End, there has been a Springfield Practicum, where Master in City Planning (MCP) students work with organizations and community residents on a particular issue.

In the spring of 2007, the author enrolled in the Springfield Practicum and was introduced to the issues and complexities of the North End. Though the work of the spring semester was related to housing, there was some discussion of the Campus Committee and the Campus Concept, which helped frame the context in which the students worked. It was this discussion in the spring and further contact with Dr. Scavron in the fall of 2007 that led the author to focus this thesis on an organizing strategy for the Campus Committee.

Methodology

Much of the information gathered for this thesis on the North End community is the direct result of spending time there. The author visited the North End more than fifteen times, conducted 12 interviews, attended seven meetings, held numerous informal conversations and conducted many observations of actors, all of which contributed to the organizing strategy. The background research on the neighborhood context came from previous reports that were done by service organizations as well as previous MIT classes.
In addition to this, the author took a class on organizing at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, which was taught by esteemed organizer and professor, Marshall Ganz. The reading list for this class contributed a great deal to creating a strategy for this community. Further, the organizing project for the class allowed the author to bring together a group of residents to show the Steering Committee the purpose of organizing and how organizing can empower people.

**Thesis Outline**

This chapter seeks to present the importance of an organizing strategy for the Campus Committee. It also tries to present a broad context for the importance of community building and the necessary use of organizing as a part of that work. The following chapter presents literature that is relevant to community building generally and specifically organizing, as well as literature on social capital, conceptions of power, and community participation.

Chapter three presents more of the context for this organizing and community building work by describing briefly the history and demographics of Springfield. More importantly, the chapter describes the North End community in which the organizing strategy will be executed. This analysis focuses on data, anecdotes, and a mapping of major actors in the community.

Chapter four is the organizing strategy that was presented by the author to the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee. The document describes the basics of organizing and the purpose of organizers. It presents an analysis of the history and current state of the North End Outreach Network (NEON), which was drawn from previous planning strategies and interviews. The document also gives examples of
successful organizing within larger community building strategies and draws out the key factors that made organizing successful in those processes. Finally, the document recommends how NEON could function and contribute to organizing residents and provides recommendations for how NEON and the Campus Committee should begin to organize residents.

Chapter five reflects upon major findings in the process of doing research for the thesis and draws conclusions from chapters three and four.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

This literature review is intended merely to touch on some of the broad themes that have been encountered in the process of thinking about and working on an organizing strategy for the Campus Committee. Indeed, there are critical debates within the broad topics that follow. However, this literature review does not intend to present all of these debates. Instead, this literature review intends to present some of the leading scholars and practitioners who have written about organizing and other relevant issues. A second purpose is to show how consideration of organizing in the context of community building has several dimensions, many of which are not commonly thought about during community development processes.

The chapter focuses on four major themes: social capital, organizing, power, and community participation. In choosing these four themes to focus on, the author has not sought to exclude other relevant themes. Instead, the purpose is to punctuate the dynamics of organizing in limited-resource communities of color.

Social Capital

Robert Putnam’s seminal work on social capital within the civic traditions of modern Italy is particularly instructive to organizing generally and the North End in particular. Putnam defines social capital as “social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated norms.” He points out that the failure of a community “to cooperate for mutual benefit doesn’t necessarily signal ignorance or irrationality.” Thus, rather than insisting that
communities where cooperation is limited is the result of general apathy, Putnam points to the lack of strong networks as the cause.

Cooperation, he insists, is not based on altruism; rather it is founded on a sense of value to individual participants. While trust in a community facilitates cooperation, cooperation itself can breed trust. Thus, there is more than one way for trust to emerge within a given community.

Social capital should be considered a moral resource, which is defined as a resource that increases with use. Where social capital is seldom used, what often emerges is “clientelism”. A professional-client relationship tends to encourage networks that are vertically oriented. In these relationships, information is disseminated from the top down, thus undermining more horizontal, community-oriented institutions.

Horizontal networks of civic engagement, on the other hand, can help participants solve problems. The more horizontally structured an organization, the more it can foster institutional success. Top-down or vertical institutional frameworks tend to emerge in settings where people do not see the benefit of working together, and often result in coercion and dependence.

Finally, Putnam insists on the importance of context in order to understand social capital within a given framework. The context and the history of the people within a given framework will provide a great deal of information about how effective institutions can be. Within a given situation, the greater the use of social capital in the past, the more likely institutions will be to succeed.
Organizing

In recent years, many people have written about how to organize and the importance of organizing. However, all of these authors cite Saul Alinsky as a major influence. In the 1930s, Alinsky organized the Back of the Yards council in Chicago, Illinois. This organization allied with the United Packing House Workers Union and the Catholic parishes in the neighborhood to work on issues of worker rights and conditions. Alinsky also founded the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which continues to be a powerful force for organizing throughout the United States. In addition to all of this work, Alinsky wrote two important books that continue to be read by organizers and students of various organizing traditions.

*Reveille for Radicals*, Alinsky's first book, describes a philosophy of organizing and the organizer. Organizing, he posits, is essential to democracy. Organizing breaks down man's fear of man, which greatly threatens democratic traditions. Alinsky envisions a world where political and economic rights are realized, thus creating a new social morality that views the golden rule to be more important than the gold standard. However, in order to begin such a transformation, people must come together to discuss their attitudes and beliefs. They cannot be afraid of conflict, because it is inevitable in any democratic society.

The purpose of organizing, according to Alinsky, is to create organizations of the people. These organizations are defined as being led and run by “the people” for particular ends. What happens often, is that the organizations are not of the people at all, but can be traced to an organization or a small group. The greatest opportunity for any “people’s organization” is to create its own program, to define goals and the strategies for
accomplishing those goals. Such opportunities provide invaluable opportunities to find and develop leadership and to build skills among average, working people.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

Alinsky warns that without “native leadership” in people’s organizations, the organization will fail. Most organizations, which Alinsky cites, talk about having such native leadership but in fact act with tokenism, assigning only ceremonial roles to community members.\textsuperscript{xxvii} They fail to take notice of the “little Joes”, the people in a community who do not necessarily hold formal leadership positions but are people to whom many people listen.\textsuperscript{xxviii}

Alinsky’s second book, \textit{Rules for Radicals}, presents more specific information about organizing and tips for organizers. While the book is not meant to be a step-by-step guide for organizing, it presents basic considerations for anyone who is interested in working on an organizing process. Alinsky starts from the premise that any organizing strategy must begin with an understanding of the current situation that a given community faces.\textsuperscript{xxix} Usually an organizing campaign is undertaken in places where there is a sense of apathy. He dismisses the notion that such communities are disorganized, but rather that they have been organized around apathy. The first step in organizing is to disorganize this sense of indifference.\textsuperscript{xxx}

An organizing campaign in a community that has not been organized previously must select easy victories at first in order to boost the confidence of participants.\textsuperscript{xxxi} If there is no opportunity or method to make substantive change, then it is not worth trying to organize people. An agitated person without a practical outlet could be dangerous.\textsuperscript{xxxi}

According to Alinsky, the organizer is essential to a successful organizing campaign. But, competent organizers are difficult to find. The good organizers are those
who believe that people make good decisions. They are curious, irreverent, imaginative, funny, organized, sensitive, politically savvy, a little egotistical, open minded, can create new from old, and have some vision of a better world. Organizers must communicate clearly and motivate people with specific references to current injustice rather than generalities of moral certitude. Finally, good organizers work creatively and act with the resources that they have.

*Power*

In a 1976 lecture before the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, Bernard Loomer described and challenged the modern conception of power. The universally accepted definition of power, he posits, is unilateral. In other words, most people conceive of power as the ability to produce an effect. This conception of power is zero-sum. If one person gains power, than another person must lose power. Thus, it is in the interest of anyone with power to hold on to that power.

Further, unilateral power is abstract. It sees the individual as disconnected from society. The individual has relationships with others, but those relationships do not aid in the creation or forming of the individual.

This unilateral conception of power, Loomer claims, maintains inequality. He offers an alternative to unilateral power, which he terms relational power. Relational power is defined as the ability to produce and undergo an effect without completely losing identity. Relational power is based on relationships and thus is mutual. This type of power does not conceive of power as finite.

Relational power sees the individual as the sum of his/her experiences and relationships. Thus the more relationships and experiences that an individual has, the
greater the power of that individual. This conception of power, Loomer posits, is ideal for groups that have faced discrimination. The goal of relational power is to enhance the stature of participating individuals and groups as they begin, and continue to, create power relationships.

This relational view of power has greatly affected organizing over the last thirty years. Alinsky’s conception of power was primarily what Loomer would call unilateral. However, after Alinsky’s death IAF leadership began to take on this relational view of power. Most organizers have adopted this same conception of power.

**Power and Public Participation**

Several years after Loomer’s work on relational power, John Gaventa wrote about how power manifests itself in public participation. Gaventa challenged the idea that lack of participation in a given situation is the result of apathy or alienation. This framework fails to take into account the role that power dynamics play in participation.

Gaventa states that it is possible that one actor (A) can influence another actor (B) to the point that A can determine what B wants even before B begins to participate in a public process. This effect is the result of A’s power over B. Over time, if A continues to have power over B, B’s sense of powerlessness increases. But worse, B develops a sense of fatalism and self-deprecation. B comes to accept the rules that A has created and treats those rules with respect, though they may be to B’s detriment.

Gaventa further challenges the idea that participation is the consequence of political awareness. In fact, he states, participation can itself increase political consciousness. The dominated group, B, must go through a process where it becomes
conscious of its needs, which sometimes happens through participation. Thus it is through participation that a dominated group can begin to recognize its own power, but also the harm that the “rules of the game” established by A have caused to them.

As the Campus Committee moves forward with its process of creating and implementing the Campus Concept, it must be aware of its own structure, the need to find native leadership that is willing to take responsibility, and the power dynamics in the community. These three considerations will ultimately determine the success of the Campus Concept. Further, the Campus Committee should examine each of these considerations throughout this process by creating the internal capacity to allow such consideration to take place. What follows is a brief summary and analysis of the North End that will provide some insight into how community dynamics have evolved and why the neighborhood is in its current condition.
Chapter 3 Springfield and North End Background

This chapter will provide background about the city of Springfield, Massachusetts as well as the North End. It is important to understand the context in which the Campus Committee is working for several reasons. First, while Springfield has a robust economic, social, and political history, in the last ten years it has undergone numerous government scandals and serious financial mismanagement. This transformation has greatly affected the people and organizations of the North End by adding another layer of management, a state-run financial control board at the top of the local decision making structure.

Second, knowledge of the people who live in the North End, both statistically and anecdotally, will provide a sense of why the Campus Committee came into being. Further, the Puerto Rican tradition and the service-organization framework in the North End are significant. Understanding the rich, but sometimes troubled past and present of the community will provide insight into the difficulty in organizing and finding leadership there today.

Finally, organizing requires an understanding of the current conditions in a community. It requires ambition and vision, but it also requires a dose of reality. An overview of where Springfield and the North End have been, and where they currently are, will help provide the Campus Committee with a sense of where the community should go and how they should get there.
Springfield, Massachusetts

An Overview

Springfield, Massachusetts is a city rich in history and complexity. Understanding the city in a holistic way helps in understanding the North End neighborhood of Springfield and how it has developed demographically, economically, and socially. By tracing its history, observing the current demographic trends, the economic transition, and the political situation of Springfield, one can begin to see a story that is similar to many other cities in New England and throughout the United States. This history also begins to explain why the North End is the way it is.

Historically, Springfield has been known as a city of commerce. Its origins are linked directly to its proximity to the Connecticut River. As it developed, the city was the site of great historical events, and significant personalities in American culture. Since World War II, like many American cities, Springfield changed significantly in demographic, economic, and political terms.

Demographically, the population of Springfield has transitioned from primarily white to an increasing number of African-American and Hispanic/Latino residents (52.4% of the population in 2000). While the population has not changed much in terms of numbers over the last twenty years (just over 150,000, 1980-2000), there continues to be a perception that Springfield is a city in decline, largely due to the increase in the number of poor families.
Economically, Springfield has declined since World War II. Once a place of production, Springfield is now primarily seen as a service center. Many major employers have left, thus reducing both the tax base and the opportunities for employment.

Politically, the city is in turmoil. A judicially required financial control board has overseen most city functions since 2002, largely as a result of significant corruption and financial mismanagement. This control board is likely to be in place for several years to come.

_A Brief History_

The city of Springfield is located in the Pioneer Valley and was originally settled in 1636 by William Pynchon as part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. During the first three centuries of its existence, Springfield was known as a hub of trade and industry.

George Washington built the very first armory of the United States in Springfield. This development drew people from all over the country. The armory was the site of Shay’s Rebellion, when poor farmers from Western Massachusetts attempted to seize arms in order to close down courts that were seizing their land to repay debts.

Traditionally Springfield’s proximity to the Connecticut River was an advantage for trade. By the 1830s, the railroad made its way to Springfield. The city became a hub of railroad activity because of its central location between Boston and New York.

By the mid 19th century, Springfield was the home to a number of financial institutions including the Springfield Fire and Marine Insurance Company and the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company^xlix. The gun makers Smith and Wesson began producing firearms in the city. During the Civil War, when the armory at Harper’s
Ferry, West Virginia was captured by the Confederacy, the Springfield Armory became the primary storage place for the Union, drawing an even larger population to the city.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the city was home to over 500 production plants, including the first American car manufacturer. Eight national banks made their headquarters in Springfield. With the conclusion of World War II, however, Springfield began to lose its status as an attractive city for production and began a slow transition toward a service economy.

As with many cities after World War II, Springfield began to lose much of its white, middle class population. African Americans from the South came to the city looking for employment. As suburban housing developed, the flight of the white middle class became easier.

In the 1960s Springfield endured what many other cities faced, the imposition of Urban Renewal plans. During the late 1960s, Urban Renewal in Springfield tore down 2,100 housing units, closed 355 businesses, and relocated nearly 500 businesses. Interstate Routes 91 and 291 were built through the middle of Springfield, disrupting many communities, including the North End, but making it easier for those living in the suburbs to get into the central commercial district for work.

**Current Demographics**

Springfield’s overall population has stayed relatively stable over the last thirty years, hovering at around 150,000. However, two trends over that time have changed the city. Currently, the city’s population is mostly people of color. This change occurred during the 1990s. The population of Springfield is also increasingly poor and young, a
fact that has continued to challenge government officials, service providers, and residents.

Most obvious about the population of Springfield is the growing Hispanic/Latino population. Roughly one quarter of the city’s population speaks Spanish at home. The growth in the number of native Spanish speakers has had far reaching effects. Most notably, just over half of the public school population is Hispanic as compared to 12.9% for the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Nearly three-quarters of children who attend Springfield public schools qualify for free lunch.

Though known as the “city of homes” for its abundance of Victorian style housing, most residents in the city do not own their own homes. In 2004, nearly 6,000 housing units were vacant. Almost half of the housing stock was built before 1940. Thus, Springfield faces an aging housing stock often owned by absentee landlords.

In 2006, the median household income for the city was $31,046. This estimate is significantly less than the $48,451 for the United States. Thus, it is apparent that, in general, Springfield is a city that is below average in terms of family earning power and potential.

Forty-percent of all households in the city are headed by women. The majority of adults in the city who are able to work have low levels of education. One-quarter of adults have never finished high school. Less than 20% of the population has completed a four-year college degree. While African Americans and whites get college degrees at roughly similar rates (18.4% and 13.3% respectively), Hispanics lag very far behind (6%). Thus, it is apparent that there is a significant divide between the Hispanic/Latino population and the rest of the population in Springfield.
Economy

The city of Springfield remains a modest center of commerce. Residents of the city are employed primarily in the service sector. The exodus of many of the larger employers in the city, including the Armory in 1968, coincided with an exodus of skilled workers, many of whom moved to the suburbs.\textsuperscript{lxiii} Because most skilled employees reside in the suburbs, yet commute into the city and use many city services, it is evident that the suburbs are taking advantage of what Springfield has to offer without giving too much back.\textsuperscript{lxiv}

While production has declined greatly in the city, several industries have grown dramatically and are the primary employers in the city and the region. Healthcare, education, arts and entertainment and other services are growing at a fast pace. Within these industries, residents of Springfield are concentrated in a few occupations, primarily service/sales and office jobs.

Indeed, there continues to be some major companies in Springfield, including Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, a Fortune 100 company that employs over 4,000 people, and Smith and Wesson, the gun manufacturer. However, the largest employers are active in the healthcare and social assistance sector. Nearly 18,000 people are employed in this field. Most of the businesses outside of the healthcare field are small.\textsuperscript{lxv}

By far the largest employer within the health sector is Bay State Medical Center, which happens to be located in the North End of Springfield.\textsuperscript{lxvi} In 2006, the Medical Center employed 8,000 people, or one in ten of the total number of employees in the
city. But, as stated before, most city residents tend to work in the lower service levels of this field.

Political Situation

Since 2002, Springfield has been under the oversight of a state financial control board. This board was created after a Massachusetts General Court ruled that the ongoing financial crisis in the city required State oversight. The current control board is made up of two gubernatorial appointees as well as the mayor and president of the city council. While the original mandate for the control board stated that it should be in place until 2009, it is likely that it will extend even further. If the city does not repay state funds soon, it is likely that the financial control board will be extended to 2012.

The mismanagement of Springfield’s finances is often viewed as a part of the extreme corruption and mismanagement that plagued several city agencies. A number of employees of the housing authority, including the executive director, were arrested and sentenced for corruption.

Having just elected a new mayor in the fall of 2007, the city has high expectations for the future. The city council is made up of nine members elected at-large. These city councilors live in four neighborhoods. This at-large election scheme means that there are few people of color on the council. Neighborhoods of color have long complained that their voice is not heard at city hall. During the 2007 election, residents voted to support a change in the city council put forward by the previous mayor and supported by the State Senate. This change would add four additional seats to the city council and create nine wards. This change will likely be implemented during the next election cycle.
In addition to these citywide offices, many neighborhoods also have Community Action Agencies, which were created in the 1970s in order to give residents more of a voice in neighborhood decisions. These agencies are made up of elected community residents. Some Community Action Agencies play a larger role than other agencies and are more influential with the mayor and city council than others. New North Citizens Council (NNCC), one of the major social service organizations in the North End, is one of these Community Action Agencies.

The North End of Springfield

Background

The North End of Springfield is actually made up of two separate neighborhoods, Brightwood and Memorial Square. Individually, the two neighborhoods are the smallest in the city, totaling just over 500 acres. During the early and mid-20th Century, the North End was home to many immigrants including Russians, French-Canadians, Poles, and Jews. Now, the North End is primarily made up of Puerto Rican migrants, with an increasing number of immigrants from Central America and Mexico.

The entrance of Puerto Rican people into the North End, and New England more generally, began more than fifty years ago. In the 1950s, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico negotiated several agreements with farmers in Massachusetts and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to send workers to the Connecticut River Valley area to work on tobacco farms. Migrants from Puerto Rico immediately began moving to the area. Competition grew quickly among farmers and other low-skilled industries for the new laborers.
The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1964 restricted the use of foreign-born workers for agriculture. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans could migrate with no difficulty. Thus the demand for Puerto Rican labor increased dramatically after 1964, bringing an increased supply of Puerto Rican people to the U.S., and the Connecticut River Valley in particular. By 1980, two million Puerto Ricans were in the U.S. By some estimates, nearly half of all Puerto Ricans at that time lived, or had lived in the United States.

In the 1960s, as large numbers of Puerto Ricans began settling in the North End, the Urban Renewal Program, started by the U.S. government, came to the area. During that decade, a great deal of land was cleared. As part of Urban Renewal, two major housing projects were built in Brightwood, Edgewater and Pynchon Terrace.

Perhaps more importantly, Urban Renewal divided the North End into two sides with the construction of Interstate Routes 91 and 291. The construction of these two Interstates made it very difficult for residents to cross from one side of the North End to the other. There were only two connections between Brightwood and Memorial Square. Thus, several ideas were proposed about how to link the two sides of the North End.

The city decided that the best way to link Brightwood and Memorial Square would be through a tunnel that would go under the highway and the railroad lines. In need of more school space, the city also determined that a school might work well as part of the tunnel design. The idea for the Gerena School was born. The school, which continues to operate, is built on the lowest inhabitable point in the neighborhood, and is built underneath the sewer lines. It continues to be the major walking thoroughfare from one side of the neighborhood to the other.
Demographics and Poverty

The indicators in the North End point to a neighborhood that is ethnically and culturally homogenous. It is, in general, a place of extreme poverty, where there is a lack of educational attainment and linguistic isolation. For those who work and live in the community, the numbers from the 2000 U.S. Census continue to inform programming decisions. It should be noted that some professionals who work in the North End believe that the census data actually underestimates the population and level of poverty in the neighborhood.

There are about 10,000 people living in the North End of Springfield, the vast majority of which identify as Hispanic/Latino. This fact makes the North End the most culturally homogenous neighborhood in all of Springfield. Further, the North End is known as the poorest community in Springfield. The neighborhood contains the poorest census tract in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### Percentage of Population that is Hispanic/Latino in the North End

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract</th>
<th>Total Hispanic/Latino Population</th>
<th>Population in tract that is Hispanic/Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8006</td>
<td>2,437</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8007</td>
<td>3,431</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8008</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only half of all children will graduate from high school, while ten percent of the population will enter the Hampden County Correctional Center in a given year. According to some estimates, Springfield schools have a 75% failure rate on standardized tests.
### Unemployment in the North End vs. Massachusetts

| Census Tract 8006 |  |  |  |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | Tract | Massachusetts |  |
| Unemployed (In labor Force) | 7.3%  | 3.0%  |
| Not in Labor Force (16 and Over) | 62.9%  | 33.8%  |

| Census Tract 8007 |  |  |  |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | Tract | Massachusetts |  |
| Unemployed (In Labor Force) | 7.2%  | 3.0%  |
| Not in Labor Force (16 and Over) | 53.3%  | 33.8%  |

| Census Tract 8008 |  |  |  |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | Tract | Massachusetts |  |
| Unemployed (In Labor Force) | 3.4%  | 3.0%  |
| Not in Labor Force (16 and Over) | 68.6%  | 33.8%  |

Below is the estimated level of poverty in the three census tracts that are located in the North End. This poverty is compared to the commonwealth of Massachusetts as a whole. These numbers are indeed staggering and indicate the level of need in the community.

### A Portrait of Poverty in the North End

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract 8006</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Tract</th>
<th>Mass.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families Living in Poverty</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$10,422</td>
<td>$50,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$5,255</td>
<td>$25,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract 8007</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Tract</th>
<th>Mass.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families Living in Poverty</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$15,956</td>
<td>$50,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$9,989</td>
<td>$25,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tract 8008</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Tract</th>
<th>Mass.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families Living in Poverty</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$13,803</td>
<td>$50,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>$7,723</td>
<td>$25,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Neighborhood Institutions

As in many communities where there is a high level of poverty, there are many institutions in the North End that provide social services. Because of the uncertainty of the political situation at the city level, these community agencies are increasingly taking responsibility for creating change at the local level. It would be a mistake to try to go through each and every one of those services in this thesis. However, it is worth taking a moment to discuss the major service providers in the area. The executive directors of four of the five institutions that follow are the leaders of the Campus Committee and thus are the catalysts behind its creation. This assessment provides a glimpse into the services that are currently provided and gives an understanding of the Campus Concept. The service organizations have a history of competing with one another, particularly for
programmatic funding. Yet they have come together to form the Campus Committee and continue to work together for a common purpose.

Baystate Medical Center

Baystate Medical Center is not a local service organization, but is the largest healthcare provider in Western Massachusetts. It has two major campuses in the North End. Baystate has sought and received approval for the expansion of its facilities. Thanks to a local state representative, this expansion provided community benefit in the form of money for various programmatic activities, including the Campus Committee.

According to its website, Baystate has almost 800 hospital beds throughout the region. It will be the largest medical center in Western Massachusetts after expansion and serves as the Western medical center for Tufts University Medical School.\textsuperscript{1xxx}

Baystate has worked in the North End community for many years. According to a recent report, it has provided more than $2.5 million for more than 60 activities that are run by local community organizations.\textsuperscript{1xxxi} In addition, it continues to be the fiscal administrator for both NEON and Brightwood Health Clinic, though NEON will soon move to New North Citizens Council.

As a show of good faith, Baystate has given money to the city of Springfield to show its long-term commitment to the area. The Health Center has invested in a community relation’s staff member. Steven Bradley sits on numerous boards, including the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee.

On February 23, 2008, the city council of Springfield voted to allow Baystate medical Center to move forward with its $259 million expansion. This development will increase the size of the Emergency Care area. Currently, the Emergency Care area is
designed to receive 40,000 patients per year but actually receives 110,000.\textsuperscript{xxxii}

According to Baystate, the development will create 550 new jobs.

\textit{New North Citizens Council}

New North Citizens' Council, Inc. was founded in 1973. It was originally called Memorial Square Citizens' Council, and was one of several neighborhood councils under Springfield's Community Development Block Grant Program. Its initial purpose was to promote physical, economic, and social development of the Memorial Square area in the North End of Springfield. Memorial Square Citizens' Council acted as a planning agent for the City; assessed the neighborhood’s physical, economic and social needs; advised the City Government; and advocated on neighborhood issues. Much of its early work focused on improving housing stock, the neighborhood’s physical and economic development and educational issues.\textsuperscript{lxxxiii} It was, and continues to be, governed by a Board of Directors that is elected yearly by the community.

Now, the mission of the New North Citizens' Council, Inc. "is to provide advocacy, public and human services to Hampden County residents with an emphasis on the Hispanic/Latino community for the purpose of enhancing the preservation and support of the family resulting in the improvement of quality of life."\textsuperscript{lxxxiv} The organization focuses on five major areas:

- Family Service
- Youth
- Early Childhood
- Health and Prevention
- Housing
The executive director of the organization is Michael Denney. Mr. Denney has lived in the North End for many years. He sits on the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee and will oversee the North End Outreach Network (NEON) in the coming months.

**Brightwood Health Clinic**

Brightwood Health Center/Centro de Salud is a full service health center, affiliated with Baystate Medical Center. Physicians, nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, and many other health care professionals staff the center. Patients at Brightwood Health Center/Centro de Salud, have their own primary care provider (PCP), a physician, a nurse practitioner, or nurse-midwife. Each PCP is part of a team that includes a physician, nurse practitioner, nurse, medical assistant, and clerical staff that work together to provide the best health care possible.

Brightwood continues to do innovative work in the field of public health. Its program for people incarcerated by Hampden County infected with HIV incorporates a holistic approach that includes care inside and outside of jail and addresses the concerns of family members. Executive Director Dr. Jeffrey Scavron has been the motivating force behind the Campus Committee and continues to look for innovative ways to serve the North End community.

**Spanish American Union**

The Spanish American Union, Inc. (SAU) was established in 1968 and is the oldest Latino community organization in Western Massachusetts. Its original mission responded to the housing shortage created by the construction of Interstate Route 91.
through the North End of Springfield. During that time, SAU helped Latino residents access housing, employment, health care and social services. In 1989, SAU’s attention turned toward public health promotion, disease prevention and multicultural approaches to health and well-being. Community members were trained as Health Promotion Workers and Health Educators in order to educate and mobilize their neighbors.

Currently, SAU has six major programs:

- Multicultural Alzheimer’s Service Project
- Community Land Trust
- Latino Elder Program
- Men’s Health Partnership Program
- Pioneer Valley Gang Prevention Coalition
- Puerto Rican Cuatro Project

Robert Bailey is the executive director of SAU. He sits on the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee as well as numerous other organizations.

**Gandara Mental Health**

Gandara Mental Health was founded in 1977 because the Puerto Rican community in the North End did not have access to mental health and substance abuse treatment. While originally only located in the North End, Gandara has moved its main offices to West Springfield, MA. It continues to have several facilities in the North End, however. The mission of Gandara is to promote the well being of culturally diverse populations through innovative, culturally competent behavioral health, prevention and educational services.

Gandara currently focuses on eight major areas:
Dr Henry East Trou is the Executive director of the organization. He sits on the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee and participates in numerous other organizations.

It is obvious that many of the organizations located in the North End deal with health related issues. It is this focus that guides the Campus Concept and fuels Baystate's interest in the Campus Concept. The ideal of the Campus Committee and the Campus Concept is more than health related, however. The Campus Concept is about creating a learning environment in the community that encourages residents to take responsibility for community improvement and development. The Campus Committee will use health as a basis for acting in many areas that affect the lives of neighborhood residents including employment, housing, and recreation.

Perceptions of the Community

The statistics prove that residents are beset by a number of the same problems that numerous other urban communities face. In response to the data, a number of service providers work on a daily basis to combat many of these ills. These providers are experienced professionals with extensive knowledge of the conditions that community
residents face. In the course of their work, many professionals have developed narratives about the people that they serve. The descriptions of community conditions are just as powerful as any statistics. Here, in an effort to be concise, only the major points of those descriptions are presented.

Poverty in the North End is the result of a lack of adequate jobs and education. There are employers such as Baystate, and even some major banks in the downtown area that employ vast numbers of people, but most of the people who live in the North End do not have the skills to get those jobs. There are training programs that serve North End residents, but those training programs often have difficulty linking those who have completed the programs to jobs. One of the direct results of this poverty is that there are many people in the North End who suffer from hunger. Lines for food vouchers at New North Citizens Council, for instance, are as long or even longer than ever.

Hunger is but one of the problems facing residents on a daily basis. There are constant crises in the community. Families and individuals always face one emergency after another, including those related to health and housing. Because of these constant problems, individuals worry, almost exclusively, about their own situations. Thus, many people are lonely and depressed. For those who are at home all day because they are not working or because they only have a part time job, or because they have to care for a loved one, there is constant frustration. People want to have connections with other people in the community. But quite often, people do not even know their next-door neighbor, much less have a significant relationship with them.

This isolation leads to a feeling of helplessness. This feeling of helplessness leads to inaction. NEON workers report that some people ask for help with tasks that are
extraordinarily basic. One worker speculated that these constant requests for help could merely be the desire to spend time with another person.\textsuperscript{xcii}

Perhaps most importantly, there is some indication that many people in the community do not have strong relationships with the service providers in the community. In extreme cases, some residents are intimidated by service organizations. It is not entirely clear why this is the case. However, there is some indication that residents are not always treated with respect when they go to these service providers for help.\textsuperscript{xcii} Further, there is no longer a belief that service providers can enact change by themselves. While there has been innovative work in certain areas, like public health, there has not been a change in the way that the average person in the North End lives. There have been numerous plans to enact change, put forward by MIT and the Springfield Planning Department and other organizations in association with the service providers. Yet none of the plans have ever been fully carried out. This has led to a belief that nothing that the service providers do or say will ever happen. Or, if action does take place, it will not have any significant impact on the community.\textsuperscript{xciii}

A Lack of Leadership in the Community

It is the confluence of the data, organizational action, and the description of the average North End resident that illuminate the importance of the Campus Concept. The Campus Concept is about empowerment. This is why organizing is perhaps the most important part of the whole concept. For too long, too many people have felt isolated from decisions that are made in the community, particularly decisions made by service organizations.
Part of the reason that people have felt isolated from decision-making processes is that the major service organizations in the community have declared that they are the voice of the community. Seeing that the community is made up of primarily poor people who speak Spanish, the organizations take responsibility for making sure that the community is heard in city and state politics. Thus a great deal of decision-making power in the community is centralized.

The greatest example of this centralized decision-making in the North End was the late Barbara Rivera. Mrs. Rivera worked in the North End for over thirty years, for much of that time as the head of New North Citizens Council. She was, by all accounts, a fierce advocate, but also an intimidating presence. Mrs. Rivera, who was not Puerto Rican but married a Puerto Rican man, built New North Citizens Council into a large service agency with over one hundred staff members and a $4.5 million budget.

In her obituary, it was noted that some people claimed that Mrs. Rivera held too much power. In meetings, it was said that no one could question Mrs. Rivera. Even if meeting participants wanted to oppose her, they deferred to her because she was “Barbara Rivera.” She was generally the only one who spoke and had the final say in most decision-making activities. This top down decision-making has had a lasting influence on people in the community. By some accounts on a recent local radio show in the community some service providers even tell residents who to vote for in elections.

Because there is such a history of organizations speaking for the community, there continues to be an assumption that the true leaders are the service providers. They have taken on educating the public, soliciting money, and providing services to “improve the community.” Thus, because there is an assumption that the service organizations are
in control, some residents may feel that it is not worth participating in any process to change the community.

It is clear that as a result of these feelings of isolation and disconnection, leadership will not simply emerge from the community. Leadership must be found, trained, and included in decision-making processes. The Steering Committee of the Campus Committee should see the creation and implementation of the Campus Concept as an opportunity to engage and attract all of those people living in the North End who are looking for leadership positions in a movement that could change their neighborhood.

NEON can play a significant role in finding leadership. The Steering Committee must be prepared to make space for resident leadership within the structure of the Campus Committee. What follows is a document that was delivered to the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee and the Campus Committee membership in order to guide a strategy for finding leadership in the North End.
Chapter 4 An Organizing Strategy for the North End

A Note on this Document

This document was created by the author as a guide to inform organizing in the North End. It was presented to members of the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee as well as outreach workers from the North End Outreach Network. The response to this document was positive. Everyone who read the document agreed that it presented the issues clearly and called for easily actionable steps.

However, further discussion must take place around the content of this document by the Steering Committee and the Campus Committee more broadly. This document is a call for a dramatic shift in the philosophy that underpins the Campus Committee and thus consideration of the topics discussed here cannot be rushed.

This organizing strategy is the result of action-oriented research. Action-oriented research is research that tries to make change a system while at the same time providing critical knowledge about it.\textsuperscript{xiv} The author spent more than three months working on the community in order to devise this strategy and was influenced greatly by the interactions with community members and service providers.

Introduction

This document is an organizing strategy that will help the Campus Committee in the North End of Springfield, MA identify and develop leadership. In particular, this document informs the role that the North End Outreach Network (NEON) could play in organizing and outreach to find this leadership, the steps that the Steering Committee of the Campus Committee must take in order to support organizing, and also the role that new leadership must play in the creation and implementation of the Campus Concept. Ultimately, this document should be used as a tool to clarify roles and purpose of the actors that participate in the development of the Campus Concept.

An organizing strategy to find and develop leadership is needed by the Campus Committee for several reasons. First, the Steering Committee wants to find leaders in the community to participate in the creation of the Campus Concept. Second, some members of the Campus Committee believe that there is no accountability for what is happening, which is the direct result of an inability to share power and decision-making
responsibilities by the Steering Committee. Finally, it is the belief of the author that organizing residents to identify and develop leadership for the purpose of creating and implementing the Campus Concept will be an invaluable way for residents to positively re-imagine their own sense of power and status within the community.

The form that this document takes and the solutions that it recommends are influenced by several factors. First, the author spent time in the North End talking with actors, attending meetings, and observing interactions. Second, the author explored some recommendations for NEON that have been developed over the past ten years by various sources and compared that to how NEON has actually functioned over that time. Finally, the author took a class on organizing at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, which was taught by esteemed organizer and professor, Marshall Ganz. The involvement in this class contributed a great deal to creating a strategy for this community.

This document is divided into seven sections. The first section describes what organizing is, a basic framework for thinking about organizing, some basic tools for organizing, and how organizing is done. The second section describes the use of campaigns in organizing. The third section describes some basic ideas about what leadership is, how to find it, and how community organizations can effectively use resident leadership. The fourth section describes the role of the organizer and the skills that a good organizer must have. The fifth section explores the various visions for NEON through the years and compares that to how NEON has actually functioned over that time. The sixth section gives three examples of how organizing to find and develop leadership was used effectively by three community development projects. The last section provides recommendations for how the Campus Committee should organize to find leadership in the North End.
Part 1: What is Organizing?

Organizing is about finding leaders who are accountable to their community by developing relationships. This leadership, in turn, brings people in a given community together to create a collective vision and achieve a common goal. Organizing is not only about bringing people together to disseminate information. It is about asking people to take responsibility for the improvement of themselves, their families, and their communities. Organizing is about taking action. The idea that people in a given community can create and lead organizations starts from the premise that people are neither passive nor dumb. It is a sad reality that in many communities, residents are viewed as incapable or unwilling to participate in and lead activities to affect change by some service organizations, government officials, and academics.

The very act of participation teaches people skills. Through organizing, people can learn to convene meetings, do research, analyze public policy, and negotiate. Residents learn about themselves, their neighbors, and their communities when they come together under leadership to reach a common goal.

There is nothing magical about organizing. It is not a trick that will lead to quick success. Rather, organizing must follow some basic rules, some of which have been used in other places with success and others that are native to a given community. Some theorists believe that people who share hardships will automatically come together to create an organization. However, as organizers who work in limited resource communities understand, often feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt are so entrenched that residents cannot imagine a different world, much less think about coming together to enact change. Sometimes residents need to be pushed.

Principles of Organizing

A number of key principles of organizing emerge, the more one looks at successful organizing efforts. These principles are essential if an organization wishes to increase resident capacity and exact significant change in the lives of residents.

Organizing is Action Oriented

It is quite common for organizations to bring together people in order to discuss their problems or to learn new information. While organizing can facilitate discussion and present new information about particular areas of interest, organizing is fundamentally action oriented. Organizing brings people together to win real improvements in their lives and their communities. This is far different from helping individuals, which is primarily the role of service agencies. Thus, there should be concrete outcomes to any organizing effort.

Organizing is Participatory

Solving the problems of limited resource communities of color is obviously not easy. In past efforts to create change in those communities, such as Urban Renewal, participation in the process of formulating plans for change was discouraged. Since that time, community organizations, planners, and politicians have sought to get away from such a model. However, in many communities there continues to be top down approaches to creating change.
Organizing requires the participation of as much of a given constituency as possible. This comes from the premise that there is strength in numbers. It also emerges from the idea that the more that people participate in the creation of an institution, program, or policy the more they will take ownership over it in the future.

Organizing Allows for Critical Perspective

No organization can claim perfection with any credibility. As stated previously, organizing is not a magical solution to serious, long-term problems. In any campaign to create significant change in a community, there must be space for reflection on what has taken place. This reflection should not be superficial. Instead, reflection should allow participants to recognize what worked and what did not work in a given situation. Such an analysis should be used as a tool to improve any future action.

A Framework for Organizing

A community group that wishes to engage in organizing must understand the tools and resources that their community has. But, in order to use these tools and resources effectively a community group must have a framework for their organizing. While no two strategies are the same, most organizing follows the same general trends.

Step 1: Identify, Recruit, and Develop Leaders

The process of identifying, recruiting, and developing leadership will be discussed more in a moment. However, it is worth briefly noting the importance of this step in the organizing process. Whether there is a strong organizational presence in an organizing process or not, the role of native leadership in enacting change cannot be understated. The term native leadership refers to residents of a given community who do not necessarily hold official leadership positions, but who have been identified by organizers as not only representative of the community, but able to bring people together. This native leadership cannot be given token responsibilities. Without the significant contribution of native leadership, any organizing process will fail.

Step 2: Build Community Around those Leaders

This step is perhaps the most difficult part of any organizing effort where there has been no organizing effort or no successful organizing effort previously. For community members to believe that an organizing process is serious about change, and be willing to participate, they must see that “indigenous leaders” have directed the decision-making and visioning process. Community members must be sure of what they are working toward both in the short-term and long-term.

When beginning any long-term, comprehensive community building activity, it is important that organizers and organizations backing those organizers at first choose actions that are relatively easy to complete. This also means choosing tactics for that are within the range of skills possessed by a given community.

Step 3: Build Power from Community

Building power in a limited resource community means helping community members recognize and understand the
resources that they have. Often, these resources have not been recognized previously as having value. Such resources include time, effort, and skill sets. The key to building power out of community is facilitating the concept that interdependency increases power. Sometimes, when community members view themselves only as individuals and do not see the value of or the power in interdependency, they cannot imagine the world being different.

**Outcomes of Organizing**

The results of successful organizing are more than measurable. While the outcome of any community building effort should bring tangible improvement to a community, organizing should also create new networks. In creating new networks of interdependence within a community, a new narrative of that community is created. That new narrative changes the way that community members conceive of themselves as individuals and collectively. It further increases the likelihood of commitment to any action in the future.

**Takeaways**

Organizing:
1. Is Action Oriented
2. Is Participatory
3. Allows for Critical Perspective

Organizing Steps:
1. Identify, Recruit, and Develop Leaders
2. Build Community Around those Leaders
3. Build Power from that Community
Part 2: The Use of Campaigns in Organizing

When most people think of campaigns, they think of politics. Before any election, there is a build-up of energy behind candidates. This energy leads to action and an outcome. Campaigns are used in other arenas besides political elections, however. Campaigns are also used in organizing to create change. Rather than being associated with particular subjects, campaigns should be thought of merely as a way of organizing time. There are kickoffs in campaigns, various peaks of action, and always a resolution. A campaign is either successful or not successful. An unsuccessful campaign should not be spun as a win.

It is important to organize time for two major reasons. First, no one has an unlimited amount of time. In trying to gain commitments for acting and participating in a campaign, organizers and leaders must understand that participants have other obligations. Second, most participants in a given campaign will lose interest if the campaign goes on indefinitely. This does not mean that campaigns cannot be long, merely that every effort must be made to ensure that campaigns maintain the interest of those who are participating by allowing them to take responsibility for the planning and implementation of a given strategy.

Stages of a Campaign

Choose an Action that will lead to a Specific Outcome

In choosing an action for a constituency to organize around, it is important to ask questions that will help focus on a specific outcome. First, determine whether a suggested action addresses a specific issue. Second, determine whether people can mobilize around the topic. By asking such questions, organizers should try to answer them with a sense of realism about the situation, but also a sense of optimism about the possibility for organizing. In the case of the Campus Committee, one question could be: Is organizing a resident task force to create programming for the Campus Concept feasible?

Develop a Strategy

The work of an organizing campaign is not organic. It does not simply emerge from the people. An organizing campaign requires a deliberately crafted strategy that understands where the community is, the resources of the community, the opportunities for success, and also the limitations. The development of a strategy also requires understanding the skills of the participants. Such an understanding will facilitate the crafting of tactics that allow for broad participation in the campaign. Strategy is about turning what you have into what you need to get what you want.

No strategy is perfect, however. There must be opportunities within a campaign to learn from mistakes and refine the strategy appropriately.

Announce Campaign

Any effort to bring a large group of people together for a common purpose requires letting the public know that there is a desire for public input and public control. Most community organizations have a mechanism for, or understand how to let the public know about activities. Whether distributed through the media or done through formal and informal networks, the
more constituents know about the campaign, the more likely they are to participate in it.\textsuperscript{cxxxii}

\textit{Begin Outreach}

It is likely that the public will not simply volunteer to participate in the campaign. Many people are skeptical of processes like this either because they have been let down previously or because they do not feel like they can make a difference. One of the purposes of organizers, a population that will be discussed in a moment, is to get out and motivate people to participate in the process. This process should be done systematically. Doing outreach requires getting commitments for action and participation from people in the community and holding people to those commitments.\textsuperscript{cxxxiii}

\textit{Stage Action}

The purpose of creating strategy and gaining the commitment of a constituency is to take action. An action is conducted in a finite amount of time and within a given space. An action is undertaken with a specific purpose in mind that has been crafted in the strategy and is carried out by the constituency. In this case, the Campus Committee is organizing residents of the North End to create and implement the Campus Concept. Thus, any action undertaken should be done with this in mind.

\textit{Succeed or Fail}

As stated previously, campaigns either succeed or they fail. This does not mean that lessons cannot be learned from an unsuccessful campaign. In fact, it is important that after any campaign, reflection takes place on what worked and what did not work so that any future campaign will build on success and understand why particular tactics did not work. Trying to claim that failure is success makes a constituency doubtful of any future campaign.

\textit{Campaigns within Campaigns}

Small campaigns often take place within the context of larger campaigns. This is often done so that time is used more effectively and so that more people can participate and take responsibility for action. It also aids the conceptual understanding of what is taking place. Mini-campaigns seek to reach particular outcomes that will ultimately lead to success reaching broader goals.

\textit{A Note on Meetings}

Anyone who has been involved with an organization has probably participated in a meeting. Any successful campaign and organizing effort requires meetings. Organizers need to have strong meeting development and management skills in order to be effective and productive. There are several rules that most organizers follow when scheduling and holding a meeting.

Never have a meeting for the sake of having a meeting. A meeting is not a casual get together among friends. The purpose of having a meeting is to develop some sort of action.\textsuperscript{cxxxiv} This idea includes a prohibition for holding meetings merely for educational purposes.\textsuperscript{cxxxv} Education can be a part of a meeting when it is required to inform action. However, it should not be the ultimate goal. Meetings should
be held for purposes like developing strategies, developing tactics, recruiting volunteers, evaluating goals or programs, planning for future action, and voting for organizational decision-making.\textsuperscript{exvi}

The reason why these rules are important is very simple. People will stop participating in meetings if they are not action oriented. Because the purpose of organizing is to leverage the power of a group of people, it is important, when organizing, to make every effort possible to retain the interest of your constituency.

**Takeaways**

**Campaign Steps:**

1. Choose an Action that Will Lead to a Specific Outcome
2. Develop Strategy
3. Announce Campaign
4. Begin Outreach
5. Stage Action
6. Succeed or Fail

**Meeting Dos and Don’ts:**

1. Meetings Should be Action Oriented
2. Never Have a Meeting Just to Disseminate Information
3. Never Have a Meeting for the Sake of Having a Meeting
Part 3: Organizations and Leaders

When there is an existing organization that wishes to make change, one of the biggest barriers to creating that change is an isolated organizational leadership. The primary way to break or change an isolated leadership is to establish collaborative work practices. Effective collaboration depends on a skilled leadership that understands its constituency, the resources available, and the challenges that an organization faces.

Esteemed organizer and professor Marshall Ganz distinguishes between organizations and what he calls “disorganizations.” Organizations are united in purpose. They share an understanding of current conditions as well as future outcomes and goals. Organizations allow for participation among a broad constituency. They take initiative and act with a shared sense of purpose.

“Disorganizations” on the other hand are divided about their purpose. They are confused about who has responsibility for particular roles. Disorganizations are passive and usually only react once outside forces have impacted them in some way. But sometimes, even when an outside force has taken an action, disorganization remains inactive.

The difference between organizations and disorganizations is in the quality of leadership. Strong leaders turn division into solidarity. They turn confusion into understanding by facilitating interpretation. Strong leaders turn passivity into participation by motivating people. Through strategy, strong leaders turn reaction into initiative. Strong leaders accept responsibility for their commitments and turn a drifting organization into one that acts with purpose. Finally, it is important that leaders of community organizations are native to the community that they are trying to lead.

Building Organizational Power

In order for any community organization to build power, leaders must be willing to give up some control over the process of creating change. A fear of delegation means that community strength will be stifled in any organizing activity. In bringing in more leaders, it is necessary to make them feel respected and cared for. New leaders should get training to increase their capacity. New leaders should be instilled with confidence by offering them responsibility and providing them with expectations for their work.

Leaders should not assign tasks to individuals. They must offer responsibility. Do not give responsibility to someone who does not want it. Further, when someone takes responsibility for a given task, they must be held responsible for completing the task.

How to find Leadership

One of the basic questions about leadership, particularly in limited resource communities of color is: How do you identify leaders? The answer is quite simple: You must look for them. This may seem like a painfully obvious answer. However, there is often a feeling, particularly in community organizations, that leadership from community residents should simply emerge on its own. When no one comes and knocks on the door, there is a conclusion that there is simply no one out there who is a leader.

The truth is that there are always leaders in communities. They can be identified because they have followers. The ability to rally and bring people together...
should not be underestimated as a leadership quality. Other qualities that most people imagine leaders to have, such as the ability to speak in public or write well may be important. But some of those qualities can be taught. The ability to rally people together often cannot.

Leaders must be able to listen. They must be curious about their environment and about forces that are shaping their environment. Leaders must be able to imagine a different world and be able to articulate that vision. They must have a sense of humor about themselves, while at the same time maintain confidence in their ability to lead others and affect change.\textsuperscript{cxviii}

Leaders must have a commitment to their community and to the goals of the organization that they are leading. They must trust in the people that they are leading. Leaders must be diplomatic not only internally but also when representing their community and organization.\textsuperscript{cxvix} When searching for leaders, it is important that they represent the constituency that is being organized.

While some people may possess all of these qualities in tandem, most people do not. To restate what has already been said, it is important to make sure that new leadership is well trained and that there is ongoing opportunity for leadership to increase their own capacity, as well as constant opportunities for new leaders to emerge.

**What Leaders Do**

Within the organization, leaders should do most of the work to maintain the organization, including setting board policies. External to the organization, leaders should be able to represent their constituency at all public events and lead all major actions. Leaders should be able to do much of the work of an organization or be able to delegate much of the work to their constituency.

**Takeaways**

**Organizations:**

1. Are United in Purpose.
2. Share an Understanding of Current Conditions as well as Future Outcomes and Goals.
3. Allow for Participation Among a Broad Constituency.
4. Take Initiative and Act with a Shared Sense of Purpose.\textsuperscript{cxl}

**Leaders:**

1. Must Sometimes be Sought Out.
2. Must Possess the Ability to Bring People Together.
4. Must Have Opportunities to Develop Skills.
5. Take responsibility for most of the work in a community organization.
Part 4: Organizers

What Organizers Do

Organizers are the most critical actors in jumpstarting any organizing activity. Organizers carry out the job of identifying leaders, and recruiting and developing those leaders. Organizers build community around that leadership and build power out of that community. These actions are within the framework of organizing that was described previously. Perhaps the most essential work of organizers is to develop new relationships out of old ones. Where there is inertia, a feeling that change cannot occur, organizers are able to make community members recognize the power in themselves and others to create change.

How Organizers Work

Every organizer is different in the way that they work. However, there are a number of common activities that all organizers must do in any successful campaign to bring about change. First, organizers bring people together and challenge them to act on behalf of their shared values and interests. This first step comes from the notion that the only way to engage people in community problem solving is to bring people together. With their constituency, organizers develop relationships, motivate increased participation, and strategize for action. They get apathetic people to act by challenging feelings of inertia, fear, and self-doubt. Finally, they challenge people to take responsibility for themselves, their communities, and for community change.

Organizers must understand the characteristics of the community in which they work. To increase their
understanding, organizers must listen to their constituency. They cannot create or push issues for organizing that community members do not believe to be the most important. Organizing begins with finding out what people want as individuals and then helping them to find a collective way of accomplishing their goals.

Besides searching for new leadership, organizers work with current leaders to develop organizational capacity. Organizers help leaders in a community create proposals for action. They help leaders make work plans for accomplishing their goals.

Organizers help identify leadership roles and training needs so that new leaders and current leaders feel comfortable in those roles. Perhaps most importantly, organizers coordinate the flow of information between the leadership and the constituency so that the constituency is fully informed of decisions that are made.

The Craft of Building Relationships

The key building block of any strong civic or community organization is relationships. This fact distinguishes them from service organizations, which rely on a professional-client distance to work effectively. Relationships are about exchanges, emphasizing difference as much as commonality. An organizer begins to build relationships with a constituency by meeting with individuals in one-on-one meetings. These meetings are meant to build trust between the organizer and constituent, find out individual constituent interests, and gain commitments from the constituent for further participation in the campaign.

With increased numbers of individual relationships, the organizer begins to hold meetings with small groups, sometimes referred to as house meetings. These meetings allow small groups of people to get together to start to build relationships with each other and to recognize the common obstacles that they face. From these meetings, organizers also seek to gain commitments for action.

From there, organizers help to bring people into a given organizational framework to create change. They use various tactics for motivating people, facilitate understanding of complex problems, and challenge people to accept responsibility. But the primary responsibility of an organizer is to look for new leadership within a given community.

A Look at Strategy

Strategy is about turning your resources into power. A good strategy turns what you have into what you need to get what you want. Merely creating a list of what you want to accomplish is not a strategy. Nor is strategy about creating a plan at the beginning of a process and following that plan. Strategy making is an ongoing process.

An isolated leadership should not develop strategy for a community building process. The membership of an organization must be involved in creating strategy. Involving the membership of an organization in strategy making ensures that the strategy stays within the experience of the membership and creates ownership over the process. Any strategy that the leadership and membership create must be both short- and long-term in scope.

In the course of any campaign, it is likely that the course of events will not follow the strategy that was laid out at the beginning of the process. Thus, it is important to have a
group of people who are devoted to strategy. As a campaign unfolds, this group should review how the strategy is working and make adjustments to fit the reality of any situation.

Takeaways

Organizers

1. Find, Recruit, and Develop Leaders.
2. Build Relationships with Leaders and Community.
3. Motivate People to Act
4. Facilitate Creation of Strategy
Part 5: Vision and Reality of NEON

Organizing and outreach in the North End of Springfield has plenty of history. The North End Outreach Network (NEON) has done a lot of outreach since 1996. As the Campus Committee proceeds with the strategy and implementation of the Campus Concept, there is little question that NEON will play some role in this process. As the sole outreach organization working in the North End, it is important to examine the organization in concept and in practice.

The examination that will take place here looks at the vision behind NEON. As we shall see, in the various plans describing work in the North End, NEON has been given a primary role in doing the leg work for many activities undertaken by organizations in the community. After examining the various purposes of NEON, the actual accomplishments of the organization will be reflected upon briefly. The purpose of undertaking this activity is two-fold. First, by understanding the connection between the vision and the accomplishments of the organization, we can begin to understand why the organization has not reached its potential. Second, this examination will inform how the Campus Committee should proceed in the future with its strategy for organizing and outreach, thus improving upon what has taken place in the past.

It should be noted that most of the information that informs this analysis is drawn from neighborhood plans created by MIT and local institutions. It is also informed by discussions with some of the actors involved with NEON. This is not a quantitative analysis of the organization. Every effort has been made to create a complete picture of what has transpired since the inception of NEON. However there is probably information that is not included in this analysis that would provide a more full picture of what has transpired.

The Many Purposes of NEON

The North End Outreach Network (NEON) was created in 1996 as a collaboration between New North Citizens Council, Gandara Center, the Spanish American Union, and Brightwood Health Clinic. The impetus for NEON was to increase the access to healthcare for residents of the North End. Many people in the community did not feel comfortable accessing available services, primarily because of language barriers. Important medical services sometimes did not have Spanish-speaking staff members. Further, there was a significant amount of competition between service providers in the neighborhood. NEON was an effort to increase cooperation between these agencies and increase information sharing for the benefit of community residents.

Dr. Jeffrey Scavron was the person who brought the idea of NEON to the service providers. The idea was inspired by the Cuban healthcare system. There, community health workers were out in the field gathering information, informing community members about public health issues, and ensuring that all people who needed healthcare received it.

The NEON Steering Committee decided to divide the North End into ten zones. Each zone was supposed to be the
responsibility of one well-trained community health worker. These health workers were supposed to be responsible to community members and not to any particular organization. They were supposed to “connect to every person, advocate for them, connect them to services, collect information from them, help organize residents around community issues, connect people to educational and healthcare resources, and generally help to improve the lives of people living in the North End.”

In 2001, NEON and the Center for Reflective Community Practice (CRCP) at MIT entered into a long-term working partnership. In 2003, after getting money from the Waitt Family Foundation to create a strategic plan for NEON and also increase its capacity, it appeared that the original vision for NEON would finally become a reality.

The Strategic Plan for the North End crafted in conjunction with CRCP was created around the same time that a visioning process for NEON was conducted. One of the things the strategic plan does is to prescribe a way for NEON to function as an arm of the Campus Committee. This advice came with a number of recommendations for the various roles that NEON should play in the North End.

It is important to note that this document was the first of several documents to prescribe an increasing number of duties for NEON. The increasing number of duties given to NEON (in theory, perhaps not in practice) is a contributing factor to the decline of the organization.

Below is a list of the responsibilities suggested for NEON by the 2003 report.

1. NEON will serve as an organizational, human, and technological base upon which further goals, objectives, and strategies will be based.\textsuperscript{xi}
2. NEON will collaborate with New North Citizens Council to identify community leaders\textsuperscript{xii}
3. NEON will be trained in community organizing\textsuperscript{xiii}
4. NEON will build leadership across a range of services including police, school board, etc.\textsuperscript{xiv}
5. NEON will work directly with Campus Committee to carry out legwork of making the center a reality.\textsuperscript{xv}
6. NEON will develop a new outreach form to use to collect data for the Campus Committee.\textsuperscript{xvi}
7. NEON will collaborate with local agencies to coordinate efforts and develop a mentoring program and identify individuals who want to mentor and families in need of mentoring.\textsuperscript{xvii}
8. NEON will identify tutors and students for classes in technology\textsuperscript{xviii}
9. NEON workers will carry out surveys on job potential and identify local assets.\textsuperscript{xix}
10. NEON will do outreach to determine need for transportation.\textsuperscript{xix}
11. NEON will determine where security cameras will be placed for Campus Concept.\textsuperscript{xxi}
12. NEON will sponsor zone-based dialogues identifying leaders who are concerned about family violence.\textsuperscript{xxii}

What is noteworthy here is not the number of roles that are given to NEON but that none of these roles are specifically related to the original vision of NEON as a group of community health outreach workers. While NEON workers did not undertake the tasks listed above, other responsibilities were given to NEON because various grants required them to do so. These activities include but are not limited to enrolling people in the Mass Health Plan, searching for substance abusers, and activities related to the local...
schools. The increasing responsibilities given to NEON directly contributed to the decreased productivity of the organization by forcing the outreach workers to undertake tasks dictated by grant funding.

The Reality of NEON

There was a dream to have one community health worker for each of the ten zones that were established. The closest NEON ever got to that number was seven, during the time when the Waitt Family Foundation funded a great deal of the work. Starting in 2003, as NEON began to plan for its future, and the strategic plan for the North End was released, the organization began to look for funds for its ever-increasing mandate.

The money that was obtained by NEON asked the organization to do many activities, only some of which were mandated in the strategic plan. Going after extensive funding for the various new missions of NEON moved the organization away from its original mission of acting primarily as community health workers.

Over the years, NEON has collected a vast amount of data about residents in the North End, particularly about their health concerns. As of 2003, NEON had reached over 4,000 people. The information collected from people was entered into a GIS system with the help of MIT.

At some point, this information gathering and input into an accessible medium ceased. Most of the service providers do not have access to the data that NEON has collected. The executive directors of several of the service organizations do not know what happens to the data that NEON collects.

The primary function of the NEON outreach workers is case management. Today there are only two outreach workers who go out into the community Monday through Friday around 10 a.m. and return to their office around 3 p.m. During the course of their day, the outreach workers will knock on doors and ask residents if they are in need of help. Sometimes residents will say that they do need help. Other times residents will simply close the doors. Once inside a house, outreach workers will engage the resident in a conversation about the basic services they might need and try to connect them with the appropriate agency. If there is a crisis in the house, which is often the case, the outreach workers will spend hours working with that family until the crisis is resolved.

The outreach workers are concentrating on one zone at a time, trying to work with individuals to gain their trust and to build bridges between themselves and residents. Once a relationship is established, the outreach workers are able to learn about the service-needs of a given family and then try to connect them to the appropriate services. They do this because they feel an obligation to the people in the community.

There is an obligation to the community and clarity of mission when they go out everyday. However, there is no clarity about the purpose of the Campus Committee, the role that NEON outreach workers will play in the committee, or just what the future holds for the organization. The outreach workers do not feel a connection between what they do everyday and the work of the Campus Committee. They do not feel as though their work of building relationships with residents is having any impact on the way that the Campus Committee functions.
Though the plan for the Campus Committee is to have NEON play a significant role in the creation and implementation of the Campus Concept, it is apparent that NEON staff is not clear on their role in this process. Further, they do not feel that their work and effort is valued by the Steering Committee.

There is clear division between those who work for NEON and the executive directors of service provider organizations about the accomplishments and future of NEON. This division will affect any attempt to move forward with a new mission and purpose for NEON outreach workers and will certainly affect any attempt to organize. There are ways to combat this problem, however.
Part 6: Examples of Successful Organizing in Community Building Activities

Many organizations throughout the country that have gone through community building efforts have had to combat divisions in their own community. They have found ways to bring community members together to work with common purpose, setting aside petty politics and personal animosity for improvement of their neighborhoods. What follows are several examples of successful community building activities that have effectively organized communities for change. The main purpose of these case studies is to emphasize a few of the effective techniques for finding leadership and creating strong, community supported institutions.

Perhaps more important, however, these case studies show that in order to use organizing as a tool to create community change and build community, a given organization cannot use a service model. Concentrating on community deficits only leads to increased dependence on services. Each of these organizations recognized that using the assets of a given community is the only way to create positive change.

These case studies are meant to inform the current and future leadership of the Campus Committee. However, current and future leaders should also contact the leaders of these projects to find out more information and determine the aspects of these projects that are most likely to transfer to the North End.

Market Creek Plaza

Market Creek Plaza is a commercial real estate development project in San Diego, CA. It is the first well-known project of its kind to be designed, built, and ultimately owned by residents. The Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Initiative (JCNI), part of the Jacobs Family Foundation, was the catalyst behind the development of the property. Ultimately, however, residents of the surrounding community took responsibility for the creation and development of the project.

The plaza itself is a ten-acre property that includes a grocery store, several restaurants, a fitness center, an open-air amphitheater for public performances and a public art collection. Market Creek is located in the Diamond Neighborhoods of San Diego. The median household income is $32,000 per year, with over one third of households earning less than $20,000 per year. Over 3,000 residents participated in the creation and development of Market Creek. The neighborhood is primarily African American and Latino.

The Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Initiatives came to the Diamond Neighborhoods with the intention of creating a
retail development. A market study estimated that the neighborhood was underserved by about 400,000 square feet of retail space. They thought that they would get some community input for the project so they began an outreach campaign. Workers from JCNI went door to door telling residents about the property and that they wanted their input. JCNI opened an outreach center on the property and began to hold meetings about the future of the development.

However, decisions about the future of the property did not come out of those initial meetings. What became evident to JCNI was that residents wanted to do more than merely attend meetings at the site. As an initial effort to increase resident involvement, JCNI formed an outreach team that was made up of community members. This outreach team initially took responsibility for the design and implementation of a community survey. The outreach team was trained by a local non-profit to create and conduct the survey. This first foray into community responsibility for the project spiraled into community control over virtually the entire project.

Ultimately, because of pervasive resident interest in the development, seven community teams were formed in various fields:

- Outreach
- Art and design
- Construction
- Business development and leasing
- Resource development
- Childcare

As a result of the community ownership over the process of creating the development, several things happened. First, nearly 70% of the contractors who worked on the development were minorities. Second, over 90% of the employees at the grocery store live in the community. These jobs have living wages and are unionized. Third, the community created a tripartite profit-sharing plan that allows revenue from the development to go toward general community benefit, individual owners in the community, and ongoing development.

JCNI learned quite quickly that the only way to sustain community revitalization is if residents of that community own the change. Residents must be responsible for the planning, implementation and assessment of assets. Instead of just providing answers to residents about development, JCNI asked questions. While this process took longer than a normal retail development would have, JCNI believes that the process expanded the capacity of residents in the community and ultimately helped create a more successful development.
language that participating residents understood. All participating parties agree that there will be long-term benefits to the way that the process was conducted, benefits that are equal in value to the development itself.

**Project QUEST**

Project QUEST is a two-year job-training program in San Antonio, Texas that helps improve the skills of low-wage workers while providing them with stipends and child-care services. The program is one of the premiere job-training activities in the country. It is an outgrowth of the Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) program in San Antonio. COPS is affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which is a nationwide group that focuses primarily on organizing activities.

COPS was originally developed as a way to bring marginalized people, particularly Mexicans and Mexican Americans into the political process. Ernesto Cortes, a disciple of the late Saul Alinsky, founded the organization in the late 1970s. COPS uses a model of organizing that relies on religious institutions for creating relationships among its constituents to increase political power. Community leaders work with professional organizers to produce this power. They are a strictly non-partisan organization. Since its inception, COPS has gained close to two billion dollars in development and improvement for its constituents. The organization's motto is: “no permanent allies, no permanent enemies.”

Project QUEST was developed because leaders of COPS began to realize that while there were general improvements in communities throughout San Antonio, there was not an increase in the wages of low wage residents.

Project QUEST was not developed solely by leaders from COPS. Organizers and leaders began the process of developing the program by holding small house meetings with residents who held low wage jobs. Through these meetings, residents were able to hear the stories of others with regard to jobs and job training programs and began to develop a framework for what residents want in such a program.

At the same time, leaders began to do research about employment in the San Antonio region. They also met with local community colleges and experts on labor training. Project QUEST thus emerged from a convergence of bottom-up residential input and top-down input. Partners committed more than 650 jobs for the project. The average wage increase for participants was between $1.36 and $2.42 per hour.

Project QUEST was established as a separate agency from COPS. This was important to the success of the program because it allowed COPS organizers to remain organizers and the professionals in Project QUEST to administer the program. The independent organizational capacity of COPS was important to maintaining funding for Project QUEST.

COPS relies on relationship building as the key to its organizing strategy. It sees its role, primarily as the development of leaders within a given community. COPS organizers begin with the premise that leadership can be learned. They look for people who have some political anger and some obvious desire to improve their surroundings. Organizers help develop leaders by giving them the opportunity to act successfully. COPS organizers believe that “action is the womb of discovery.” Thus, the leaders take responsibility for doing most of the work of the organization.
The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston is perhaps the best example in New England of community development that involved a massive organizing effort. The early history of DSNI ran through campaigns that substantively changed the lives of residents, provided them with the opportunity to shape their community, and brought a diverse group of residents together. DSNI remains one of the most important community organizations in the city of Boston.

After the Dudley Street neighborhood was dubbed the arson capital of the world in 1981, a series of studies by graduate students at MIT, and several meetings organized by local neighborhood organizations, the Riley Foundation became interested in working with the neighborhood. The foundation spearheaded the development of a Dudley Advisory Group that eventually transformed into DSNI. At a meeting in 1985, which the community was invited to, residents demanded to play a larger role in the organization. Eventually, the governance structure of the organization was primarily made up of community residents.

The eventual strategy for the organization was to build short-term victories that would improve the neighborhood with the long-term strategy of improving the cohesion both visually and socially of the neighborhood. Organizing was the primary means of enacting this change. The first major campaign undertaken by the organization was the “Don’t Dump on Us” campaign.

This campaign started after staff from DSNI went door to door asking neighborhood residents about the biggest problems in the neighborhood. DSNI was looking for an issue that would bring residents together and would be relatively easy to win. It turned out that the major issue for residents was all of the trash that was dumped in the neighborhood. Their immediate objective of the campaign was to fence off and clean up vacant lots, which were plentiful in the area. At the kickoff event for the campaign, more than 100 residents showed up and each spoke powerfully about the need to clean up the community. A city official who was present called Mayor Ray Flynn during the meeting and told him about what was going on. Mayor Flynn showed up and told the residents that he would support their effort to prevent dumping in the community.
Following the kickoff, residents participated in a neighborhood clean-up effort. The city contributed tools to help with the clean up. They continued to work throughout the neighborhood in an effort to get rid of abandoned cars and clear houses that had been burned to the ground.

As part of the “Don’t Dump on Us” effort, and perhaps most notably, residents came together and held an action to denounce the illegal trash transfer stations that had emerged in the area. Following this action, Mayor Flynn padlocked all of the illegal trash transfer stations so that no one could dump on them.

Most residents and organizations agreed that the “Don’t Dump On Us” campaign and all the other campaigns conducted by DSNI (including “Take a Stand, Own the Land”, “Building Houses and People Too”, “Dudley PRIDE-People and Resources Investing in Dudley’s Environment”, “Unite the Community, Celebrate our Diversity”, and “Economics with People in Mind) began with the premise that change in the community could not take place without the leadership of the residents. In this instance, the organizations that wanted to create change realized at the very first meeting when residents voiced their dissatisfaction with the organizational structure, that the way to create real change was to allow the residents to take responsibility for the creation and implementation of the organization.

Their organizing process valued the number of people who participated and also the importance of building personal relationships. DSNI realized that only by bringing people together could the neighborhood begin to move forward.

Takeaways

1. Residents of a Given Community Knew Best about their Situations and about the Major issues Facing Them.
2. Process Started from an Asset-Based Approach.
3. There Was Shared Decision-making Throughout the Process.
4. Activities were within the Experience of Participants, but Allowed for Opportunities to Build Skills.
5. Those Who Were Organizers Focused Exclusively on Organizing Activities.
6. Community Members were Given the Opportunity to be Leaders and Chose to be Responsible for the Outcome of these Programs.
Each of these points is a valuable lesson for the Campus Committee as it continues its work and tries to find and develop leadership in the North End community. For this process to be successful, it will be important to create opportunities for residents to take leadership responsibilities. It will also be important to restructure the decision-making processes currently in place.
Part 7: Recommendations

The Steering Committee Should Open Decision-Making Process and Spread Responsibility

Before any organizing effort around the Campus Committee can begin in the North End, the Steering Committee must change its style of decision-making. Currently, all decisions about the structure of the Campus concept, the administration of the Campus Committee, the purpose of the Campus Concept are in the hands of the Steering Committee. A plan has been created by the Steering Committee that discusses how the Campus Committee will be administered, the budget for the process, and the ultimate rules by which the organization will be run.

It is evident from interviews with people outside of the Steering Committee, however, that the process to create this plan was extremely centralized. In fact, over the two years that the Campus Committee has met, decision-making has become more and more centralized in the Steering Committee. This means that fewer and fewer people are involved in the creation of the program and thus invested in the ultimate outcome of the project.

Centralized decision-making is a recipe for disaster in the community building process. Currently, when the Steering Committee makes decisions, they merely report back to the membership of the Campus Committee. It is unclear the extent to which residents are informed of what the Steering Committee is doing if they are informed at all. This type of decision-making is vertically oriented, meaning that it is imposed from the top to the bottom.

The Campus Committee must become a horizontally oriented organization. The organization was started as a coalition, a group of organizations that worked together. The Campus Committee must return to that ideal. Decision-making and responsibility for implementation must be shared. There are people in the community who want to participate in this process and want to have real responsibility for what happens. There are also members of the Campus Committee who do not sit on the Steering Committee who want to have influence over this process. If these groups are shut out of this process, they will eventually turn away from it and refuse to participate.

Some of the desire to hold on to decision-making power may rest with the fact that the primary leaders of the Steering Committee are also the heads of service-providers in the community. Being a service provider requires understanding the needs of the community and responding to those needs. The Campus Committee is not just another provider of services, however. The Campus Committee is a coalition brought together to create change and should see community residents as an asset rather than as a liability.

Action for Change:

1. One of the first steps to take is to change the way that Campus Committee meetings are run. Instead of merely being monthly events where the members of various committees report on the work that they have been doing, they can be forums for discussion. These meetings should be run by a facilitator and not someone from the community. This facilitator should not have a financial stake in the success of the Campus Committee. In conjunction with a facilitator, the Steering Committee should develop agendas that reflect the major issues facing the Campus Committee.
2. Meetings should be held with the purpose of organizing for action. Decisions should be made at Campus Committee monthly meetings. The responsibility for carrying out the actions associated with those decisions made at those meetings should be taken by Campus Committee members.

3. Once responsibility is taken for acting, Steering Committee members should follow-up to make sure that the action has been completed.

Figure 1: Current Campus Committee Structure

![Current Campus Committee Structure](image)

Figure 2: Proposed Campus Committee Structure

![Proposed Campus Committee Structure](image)

NEON

Clarify Job Descriptions

The most recent job description for NEON workers gives them the responsibility for doing health-related outreach, education, and referral in the North End. This description does not include any mention of organizing. Yet there seems to be some sentiment among people on the Steering Committee that NEON outreach workers should also be organizers. NEON outreach workers must have clear roles and job descriptions if they are to effectively do their jobs and work in tandem with the service providers and the Campus Committee.

If NEON workers are health outreach workers, they cannot also be organizers in the traditional sense. In the examples of organizing work in successful community development earlier in this document, we saw how organizing was viewed as an important and independent function of the organizations. Organizing is not just another role that NEON can play.

It is unfair to these outreach workers if they are given a job description that emphasizes public health, when the Steering Committee expects more from them. Further, it is unclear why the current outreach workers did not participate in creating these job descriptions.

Action for Change:

1. The Steering Committee must immediately meet with outreach workers to discuss the job descriptions and the expectations for NEON as it transitions to oversight by New North Citizens Council.
2. Outreach workers should have an outlet for voicing their concerns to the Steering Committee directly on a regular basis, perhaps through a monthly meeting.
3. Training and educational opportunities for NEON outreach workers must be created. These opportunities should be a part of the NEON budget. Benchmarks for achieving certain educational outcomes should be a part of the requirement for being an outreach worker, but must be paid for by NEON or the Campus Committee.

Identify Leaders

Because NEON outreach workers are in the community everyday, they can identify people who are leaders or potential leaders. This does not mean that NEON workers should have the responsibility for training and organizing people in the community. But it does mean that the relationships that they have with community members should be utilized. NEON outreach workers can be given the characteristics of leaders, such as those listed earlier in this document, as a standard by which to measure potential leaders.

Because NEON outreach workers have numerous responsibilities related to health, they need to be able to refer these leaders to a specific body within the Campus Committee so that these leaders can be trained and oriented toward the purpose of the organization. NEON outreach workers must also fully understand the purposes and goals of the Campus Committee so that they can articulate this vision to residents. The relationships that NEON outreach workers have built over the years are critical to the success of the Campus Committee but the Campus Committee must have a vehicle for transforming those relationships into action.

Action for Change:

1. NEON should begin actively looking for leadership within the community.
2. NEON should use current relationships as a stepping-stone to encourage participation in Campus Committee and the implementation of Campus Concept.
3. A clear definition of the Campus Committee and the Campus Concept must be articulated so that NEON outreach workers can use it as they identify and recruit leaders.

Create an Organizing Sub-Committee

When the Steering Committee opens up its decision-making process and brings in potential leaders identified by NEON, it must have a structure in place to meet with residents, evaluate their current skills, and find appropriate places for them to participate. The Campus Committee must have an organizing sub-committee whose sole purpose is to bring in leaders, make them a part of the decision-making process, and offer them training opportunities. Members of the organizing sub-committee must be able to identify the interests of potential leaders and help them create roles in the Campus Committee structure. The work of the committee should be conducted through relational organizing. Members of the organizing committee must be trained themselves in the skills of relational organizing and leadership development.
Action for Change:

1. Identify members of the Organizing Sub-Committee. This sub-committee should include NEON outreach workers.
2. Train members of committee in relational organizing, particularly one-on-one meetings.
3. Organizing Committee must identify roles for members of the committee and create a strategy for its work.

Find and Create Leadership Opportunities

Having an organizing sub-committee requires the Campus Committee to open up opportunities within its structure for residents to play a major role and take responsibility for action. For instance, there is currently a graduate student from the University of Massachusetts who is working on a transportation plan for the Campus Committee. She is using information gathered from resident surveys to inform this plan. However, there is no reason why residents cannot actively participate in the creation of this plan. This is exactly the type of skill-building, short-term activity that can build the confidence of residents and provide them with an opportunity to learn about themselves and their neighbors.

Action for Change:

1. Gather input from leaders who are immediately identified by NEON about the roles that they would like to play.

2. Organizing Committee and Steering Committee must meet to brainstorm roles for leaders that are identified by NEON.
3. Announce several activities that leaders can immediately begin to work on in conjunction with members of the Campus Committee.

Set a Timeline for Implementation

Over the past two years, there have been numerous meetings related to the Campus Committee and the Campus Concept. There has been little action to implement any portion of whatever has come out of those meetings, however. The Steering Committee must create a timeline for implementation. This timeline must be realistic and allow time for participation from community members and shared decision-making.

Action for Change:

1. The Steering Committee must meet to develop a timeline and action plan for implementation of the Campus Concept.
2. The Steering Committee must present their recommendations to the Campus Committee for debate.
3. The Campus Committee must approve the timeline and action plan for implementation.
**Conclusion**

The above recommendations require an immediate change in the way that the Steering Committee, NEON, and the rest of the Campus Committee relate and interact. If the relationships between the three entities and the residents of the North End do not change dramatically, there is a danger that the Campus Committee will not create the kind of change that it seeks to make. The Campus Committee wants to undertake a community building activity that transforms the community in a substantive way. Instituting a program that merely serves the community but is not of the community will just continue the pattern of service that already takes place in the North End. Thus, it is necessary to create opportunities for community members to participate in the creation and implementation of the Campus Concept.

Equally as important, all of these changes require a shift in the philosophy of the Campus Committee. The creation and implementation of the Campus Concept require an outlook that values the assets in the community. This is a great change from the service-provider mentality that currently pervades the Campus Committee. This change will not come easily. Thus, the Campus Committee must immediately try to learn from examples of other asset-based models to create change such as those outlined above. Only with a change in philosophy can a true community building process take place.
Chapter 5 Reflection and Conclusion

Throughout the process of creating this thesis, two important trends have been illuminated. These trends, in general, negatively affect the Campus Committee. First, the communication between organizational actors in the community is poor. Second, the relationships among actors in the community are influenced by the power held by those actors.

While these trends significantly affect the way that the Campus Committee functions, it is important to note that the people who are involved in this process have very good intentions. They are not purposely playing games with the process in order to derail the Campus Committee. The devotion to the community by all actors involved in this process cannot be questioned. Yet, in order to gain momentum for the implementation of the Campus Concept, everyone involved must reflect upon past failures in order to move forward toward a successful outcome.

A Lack of Communication

People who are associated with major service organizations in the North End do not communicate effectively. The actors I spoke with in the community had very strong opinions about the Campus Committee, the North End, and NEON. However, it was clear that their opinions were not articulated to each other. I, as an outsider, was seen as a sounding board for various opinions. As a result, I saw two sides in the North End organizational apparatus. On the one hand are the leaders of the organizations. On the other hand are the people who work directly with the community. These two sides
cannot be described as unified groups of actors, but can more easily be defined by their roles in the community.

The members of the Steering Committee, though not meaning to be, are very secretive. They do not talk about their feelings in public, nor do they talk about the difficulties in Steering Committee meetings. There are fights within the Steering Committee about the direction of the Campus Committee. But these fights are not made public. I can only speculate that they do not show dissent in public because they do not want other people on the Steering Committee to feel marginalized.

On the other side of the organizational fence are the people who work directly with community members. On that side, as I think I showed in my examination of NEON, in particular, there is a great sense of frustration. The people who work in the community have no idea what the goals of the executive directors of the Steering Committee members. This means that they are not sure of the purpose of their own work in relation to the Campus Committee. The direct service workers see that the executive directors are interested in holding on to their power and do not want to share. Though not articulated in this way, they believe that this inability to share power is what prevents the Campus Committee from being successful.

_Campus Committee meeting 4/17/2008, A Step in the Right Direction_

The Campus Committee meeting of April 17, 2008 was different than previous meetings. At that meeting, Vanessa Pabon of the digital stories project, TOLD, began asking questions about the process that the Steering Committee is using to develop the plan for the Campus Concept. Ms. Pabon asked Dr. Scavron, who was running the
meeting, about whether other Campus Committee members would be excluded from the process in the future and whether the Committee would have decision-making power over the final document.

What ensued was a conversation about how much impact the Campus Committee can have on the document that the Steering Committee is creating. On one hand, Dr. Scavron asserted that the larger Campus Committee would have a say over the final product and that their input was indeed valuable. He stated that the Steering Committee feels that it is important to present a product that can be debated rather than trying to create a document in a meeting with dozens of people. On the other hand, Steven Bradley of Baystate Health Center stated that even though the Campus Committee can have an impact on the Steering Committee’s product, all Campus Committee members should keep in mind that the ultimate document must be health related because the funding sources for the Campus Committee want it to be that way.

Ms. Pabon pointed out, through some directed questions, that only a certain group of organizations that sit on the Campus Committee would have voting privileges. This fact was corroborated by Dr. Scavron, with the caveat that the by-laws can be changed to allow other people to vote in the decision-making process.

What is noteworthy here, besides the conversation that took place, is the fact that the debate stopped at that point. There was no action with regard to increased decision-making from Campus Committee members. Nor did anyone else stand up and support Ms. Pabon as she asked her questions. The discussion seemed to be unofficially tabled for the sake of time (since the meeting was supposed to last only an hour, but lasted almost an hour and a half.) Certainly, the fact that the decision-making process was
discussed, can be considered a major step. However, because no action is planned to remedy this problem, there is no certainty that anything will change.

The final agenda item for the meeting on April 17 was supposed to concern issues that are facing the community. I assumed, before ever going to a Campus Committee meeting, that this discussion would have taken place previously and would be an ongoing part of any discussion. However, the organization does not appear to have had a discussion about the issues facing the community. This is an astounding finding. If the Campus Committee and the Campus Concept are a response to the issues facing residents, and the organization has not even discussed those issues, then how can the Campus Concept appeal to what is going on in the community? More troubling about this agenda item is the fact that it was not even discussed at the meeting, because there was not enough time.

It is not enough to have a vague idea of the issues facing the community. Nor is it good enough to assume that everyone at the table understands what the issues are. There must be an explicit discussion about community that relies on the first hand accounts of residents and those working with residents. This discussion must take place to create a process that reflects their experiences and their needs. While resident input may have been gathered several years ago, it is probable that most residents do not have any idea what the Campus Concept is, much less believe that it will reflect their needs.
Relationships and Power

This inability to communicate effectively is due to entrenched relationships characterized by a large power disparity. It is clear that some community members and Campus Committee members fear the executive directors of the service organizations.

If you attend a Campus Committee meeting, you will find little room for discussion. Rarely do people ask any questions. Most attendees, whether happy with the process or not, are content to allow the Steering Committee to move at its own pace. Indeed, at these meetings there is a very collegial atmosphere, one that is extremely relaxed. But because of that relaxation there is no sense of urgency. The only explanation for this relaxation is that there is no incentive to confront colleagues. Thus, the relationships that Campus Committee members have with one another actually inhibit the development of the organization.

There are several examples of the inability to share power. At the meeting on April 17, 2008, the Steering Committee stated that they had not finalized NEON job descriptions. They did not articulate what the sticking points were, but rather that they were hammering out what NEON would do. No one questioned them. The executive director and program leader of NEON were sitting at that table at this meeting. But those individuals have had little if any impact on the way those job descriptions have developed. In fact, until a week before the meeting, Joaquin Rodriguez, the program director of NEON, had not seen his own job description, even though it is fairly certain that he will retain his job. The Steering Committee did not talk to him about what he does and what changes should be made to improve his job. But, Mr. Rodriguez has not confronted the Steering Committee about his frustration either.
In conjunction with this, it is clear that NEON’s move to New North Citizens Council (NNCC) is controversial. Michael Denney of NNCC believes that NEON has not functioned the way that he wants it to function or, more generally, the way that the community needs it to function. Thus, he has taken the opportunity to seize operating control of the organization. There is no way to tell right now whether this is good or bad. However, it is obvious that NEON outreach workers are not happy with this decision. On one hand, Mr. Denney is correct that NEON has not changed the neighborhood. On the other hand, it is unclear what putting it under NNCC will do to change this if the workers are uninformed about the reasons for the move and uncomfortable with their new management. Most troubling is that there is no discussion at all between Mr. Denney and NEON outreach workers.

Confronting Power

After meeting several people who are frustrated with the Campus Committee process, I encouraged them to attend a gathering to figure out steps to change the way that the Campus Committee functions. At our first meeting in early April of 2008, attendees posed several rhetorical questions that tried to get at the Steering Committee’s decision-making process. We determined to actually pose these questions to members of the Steering Committee. However, the meeting participants did not want to ask these questions themselves, but rather they wanted me to ask them. Eventually, I was able to convince them that it would be best if they asked these questions, but not before I learned why they were afraid.
The reason why the meeting participants were hesitant was because they were afraid of being targeted by the Steering Committee. They articulated cases in which individuals had been isolated, or in some cases fired for questioning service providers in other situations. Thus there is a sense that nothing can be done to change the power dynamics in the community. While the April 17 meeting was a significant step, there is no reason to believe that there will be future productive conversations about the decision-making process or any action to follow such a discussion.

Conclusion

Just as in many other limited resource communities of color throughout the United States, in the North End of Springfield, MA there is work being done to improve lives. Service providers in the North End made a progressive choice in creating the Campus Committee and the Campus Concept, both of which encourage collaboration and intend to empower and improve the lives of residents. While the basic structure for such collaboration may be in place, it is evident that the service provider mentality continues to pervade the way that the Campus Committee functions. In the meeting that took place on April 17, several Steering Committee members stated that their creation is a response to previous plans that have been drawn up by various institutions, including MIT, all of which have gathered the input of community members. The implication is that this plan that the Steering Committee will offer is a direct result of community input.

Even if this is true, however, it does not negate the observation of the author that both community members and Campus Committee members do not currently play a role in any decision-making process. Whatever decisions or choices were made in the past
may not be applicable to the current situation. The reality is that there is just no way of confirming how residents and Campus Committee members feel or what they want unless the Campus Committee allows them to take part in the decision-making process and allows them to take responsibility for the implementation of the Campus Concept.

The inability to communicate, the unwillingness to truly collaborate, and the political history of the North End will ultimately have a tremendous impact on the Campus Committee and the implementation of the Campus Concept. While these obstacles are significant, there is hope for the future. Should the Steering Committee begin to look toward its most valuable resource, human capital, as a benefit as opposed to a liability, they will be able to have a significant impact upon the lives of residents.
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