

Appendix H

Resources for Church-Based Community Organizing and Community Economic Development

This section contains information from the Gamaliel Foundation, the Industrial Areas Foundation and the National Committee for Community Economic Development. Similar materials are available on the web sites of the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO) and the Direct Action and Research Training Network (DART). Contact information for these organizations is located on page 4-3. Each of these organizations offers training, technical assistance and networking to congregations on a nationwide basis.

This material is copyrighted by the Industrial Areas Foundation and reprinted here with permission.

Who are we?

The leaders and organizers of the Industrial Areas Foundation build organizations whose primary purpose is power – the ability to act – and whose chief product is social change. They continue to practice what the Founding Fathers preached: the ongoing attempt to make life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness everyday realities for more and more Americans.

The IAF is non-ideological and strictly non-partisan, but proudly, publicly, and persistently political. The IAF builds a political base within society's rich and complex third sector – the sector of voluntary institutions that includes religious congregations, labor locals, homeowner groups, recovery groups, parents associations, settlement houses, immigrant societies, schools, seminaries, orders of men and women religious, and others. And then the leaders use that base to compete at times, to confront at times, and to cooperate at times with leaders in the public and private sectors.

The IAF develops organizations that use power – organized people and organized money – in effective ways. The secret to the IAF's success lies in its commitment to identify, recruit, train, and develop leaders in every corner of every community where IAF works. The IAF is indeed a radical organization in this specific sense: it has a radical belief in the potential of the vast majority of people to grow and develop its leaders, to be full members of the body politic, to speak and act with others on their own behalf. And IAF does indeed use a radical tactic: the face-to-face, one-to-one individual meeting whose purpose is to initiate a public relationship and to re-knit the frayed social fabric.

The living reality of the IAF is overwhelmingly present in the 56 IAF affiliates functioning in 21 states, Canada, the United Kingdom, and German.

Regional gatherings of these local groups – IAF East in the northeast corridor and Southwest IAF in the American southwest – also meet, plan, and take action.

National IAF conducts 10-day intensive training sessions and sets standards for the approximately 150 professional organizers working in the organizing efforts.

What do we do?

IAF leaders and organizers first create independent organizations, made up of people from all races and all classes, focused on productive improvements in the public arena. IAF members then use those new political realities to invent and establish new social realities.

One new reality is the living wage movement in the United States. The first living wage bill was conceived, designed, and implemented by the IAF affiliate in Baltimore in 1994. The second bill was the work of the IAF affiliates in New York City in 1996. Since then, IAF affiliates in Texas, Arizona, and elsewhere have passed living wage legislation.

A second new reality is the presence of thousands of new, affordable, owner-occupied homes – called Nehemiah housing – in parts of Brooklyn, the South Bronx, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

A third social reality is the Alliance School concept that is engaging scores of thousands of parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders in communities all across the southwest and west.

A fourth new reality, still in development, is the large-scale blight removal and revitalization of the cities, well advanced in parts of New York City, now being attempted in Baltimore and Philadelphia.

IAF leaders and organizers offer training opportunities for those with the patience and vision to create new political realities and the passion and discipline needed to generate sustained social change.

The IAF 10-day training is a national event, scheduled two or three times each year, for leaders who bring experience and interest to the training.

Specialized training for specific audiences – professional religious leaders, people interested in public education, those interested in housing revitalization, labor organizers and leaders – are offered on an as-needed basis.

In every region and virtually in every local organization, a variety of local training opportunities are offered: 3-day sessions for advanced leaders, periodic evening training series for new leaders, training focused on congregational or institutional development for congregations that are committed to rebuilding and growing.

Why do we do it?

We do it because we are thankful. IAF leaders and organizers deeply appreciate the democratic tradition that our fathers and mothers worked and fought and sometimes died for. We value the tradition of labor organizing and worker rights that protected so many millions of Americans and helped make humane and shared prosperity possible. We honor the many religious traditions (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, and others) that inform our public action and deepen our understanding. We know we are fortunate to live in a country shaped by these and other extraordinary forces.

We do it because we are angry. We experience daily the obstacles to life, liberty, and happiness's pursuit. Our children attend schools that are sometimes incapable, sometimes unwilling, to provide decent basic education. Our neighbors live in public housing that is poorly maintained, dirty, and unhealthy. Our families walk streets still plagued by criminals and often

ignored by police. Our members work for minimum wage, or poverty wages, or temporary wages, often without adequate benefits. Our cities suffer from flirtations with sports and entertainment boondoggles, while neighborhoods decline and people flee. These and other realities propel us into organized action.

We do it because we are hopeful. We believe that we can overcome the obstacles that are placed in our way. We know that we can build homes, reduce crime, improve and start new schools, reconstruct entire communities, raise wages, and maintain momentum over months and years and decades.

Where do we do it?

The current generation of IAF organizations began in the mid-1970's and was the product of the insight and effort of the person who succeeded Saul Alinsky as executive director of the IAF, Edward T. Chambers. The first three modern IAF groups were the Citizens Organized for Public Service (COPS), in San Antonio, Texas; Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), in Maryland; and the Queens Citizens Organization (QCO), in New York.

Since then,

- 56 local organizations have emerged in regional clusters
- 12 organizations in the northeastern cities and counties between Boston and Washington
- 6 organizations in the south and near south
- 7 organizations in the Midwest in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Nebraska
- 20 organizations in the southwestern states of Louisiana, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico
- 4 organizations in California
- 4 organizations in the northwest, in Oregon and Washington
- 3 international affiliates in Canada, England, and Germany

Those are the geographical locations of IAF organizations.

The social center of gravity is located among the poor, working poor, and working class congregations, communities, and associations in these areas. The racial make up of IAF groups varies dramatically from city to city and region to region, reflecting the mix of people in each locale. Middle and upper-middle class institutions participate as full and equal partners in many IAF groups, bringing their own talents, energies, and concerns.

How do we do it?

We do it with discipline. In IAF organizing, accountability starts from within. A leader's ability to participate in training, relate to followers and fellow leaders, pay dues, and remain focused on clear priorities prepares him or her for an effective role in the public arena.

We do it with chutzpah. We don't let others set boundaries, barriers, and distractions that prevent us from identifying the source of a problem and the shape of a solution. We don't see ourselves as squatters in the public square, but as full owners of what happens there.

We do it with joy. We experience the joy of relating to people unlike ourselves, both within and outside of our organizations. We learn about the richness of other racial and ethnic and religious in an environment of mutual respect and regard. We watch new homeowners turn the key on the

home of their dreams, children graduate with honors after four fulfilling years, grandmothers walk with confidence through lobbies once ruled by gangs, working people take home a wage that supports family life, whole communities rebuilt and renewed. We know what it is to win.

Living Wage

IAF-East affiliates designed and passed the nation's first living wage bill in Baltimore in 1994 and in New York in 1996. IAF affiliates in Texas, Arizona and elsewhere have successfully pushed for living wage legislation in their communities. Today, living wage bills, sponsored by many organizing groups, exist in nearly 100 communities.

Job Training

The affiliates of IAF Southwest pioneered the training and preparation of workers for high-tech and higher-paying jobs through the Quest job training effort. Like the living wage initiative, the original Quest success has led many other organizations and communities to replicate it.

Affordable Housing: Nehemiah Homes

IAF-East created and implemented the nation's first Nehemiah housing effort in 1982 in Brooklyn. Since then IAF affiliate East Brooklyn Congregations has built 2,900 new townhouses in formerly blighted areas there, with another 840 homes now in the predevelopment stage. Another 1,000 Nehemiah homes have been built in the South Bronx by South Bronx Churches. Nearly 900 new homes have been constructed in Baltimore by Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development, 135 homes in Philadelphia by Philadelphia Interfaith Action, and 147 homes are under construction in the District of Columbia by Washington Interfaith Network.

The Gamaliel Foundation

Church-Based Community Organizing

The Gamaliel Foundation exists to support grassroots church leaders in their efforts to build and maintain empowerment organizations in low-income communities.

Background

Fifty years ago, in a “slum” of Chicago, Saul Alinsky experimented with community organizing. By inviting local leaders from several local grassroots organizations, he hoped to empower the people of the community to participate in the decisions which affected them. The most important participation came from the churches; and although the area seemed a most unlikely place for a healthy church, the community was incredibly fertile for church participation, as people were united in the midst of extreme poverty, union battles, and ethnic discrimination.

Why were these neighborhoods so fruitful for creating healthy churches? According to the Gamaliel Foundation, the church was able to flourish because it was built inside an existing community. Schools were within walking distance for mothers and children. Families went to restaurants owned by people in the community. Local sports teams drew children and parents together.

Today, in an age where in an average American neighborhood, 50% of the people there today will have moved within five years; where most people do not work and shop near where they live; and where the divisions between races, classes, and genders have ballooned to cause outright fear and hatred, the ability of a church to form easily within a given community is more difficult. Therefore, the task of the church has changed: it is not only to celebrate community but to create it.

According to the Gamaliel Foundation, there are three essential components to ministry:

1. A church must have a strategy for intentional and intensive relationship building in order to restore the human relationships that have been replaced by televisions, computers, or telephones.
2. A church must have a strategy for the development and involvement of lay leadership so that people can take a meaningful role in the church.
3. A church must have a strategy for effectively impacting the public arena in areas such as health care, crime, or the changing role of women so that the church becomes a relevant part of peoples’ everyday lives.

Community organizing trains individuals to act together to impact political, social and economic conditions. In addition, this organizing must be done in a way which builds up the church. The outcome is church-based community organizing which contributes the following to the building church:

A set of concepts and tools: organizing gives pastors and leaders a framework to think, preach and act effectively in a troubled community;

Programs and vehicles: on a local level, church-based community organizing provides a framework for building relationships, training people in the church, and addressing the social problems which affect the community;

Hope and vision: church-based community organizing is a realistic way to build on the kingdom of God.

Process

The Gamaliel Foundation has developed the following process from their experience with 600 communities in diverse congregations throughout the Midwest:

Several people come together to talk about what's going on in their communities. Together these pastors contact the Gamaliel Foundation and decide if they will utilize its methodology. If they decide to do so, they are encouraged to recruit a minimum of 20 congregations, form a multi-racial and ecumenical sponsoring committee, and raise \$100,000.00.

Next, with the help of the Foundation, they hire professional organizers. The first thing the organizer will do is to meet with every pastor and ten lay people in each church in order to understand and appreciate the history and identity of each congregation. Then with the pastor, they will identify potential leaders for the organizing endeavor.

At a weekend retreat, three to five leaders from each of the twenty churches are introduced to the following central concepts of church-based organizing:

1. A new paradigm which focuses on creating community instead of just ministering to it,
2. Power,
3. Self-interest as a way of naming individual motivation and understanding that of others,
4. One-on-one meetings as a tool for building relationships and evangelizing,
5. Public vs. private relationships as an antidote for the fallacy of building community through intimacy and co-dependency,
6. Issues and actions—breaking through seemingly endemic problems and building them into concrete and attainable goals,
7. Agitation—the art of exciting people's passions, creativity and faith commitment,
8. Elements of a power organization: how to create a vehicle that will enable people to live out their faith in the public arena.

After these leaders spend the weekend learning the concepts and building community among their own diverse churches, they are challenged to recruit 15-100 leaders from their individual churches who will enact the outreach/listening/relationship-building program. The new expanded leaders are then given a four-hour seminar on how to conduct a one-on-one interview, a tool which is used to learn about the history and passions of another person.

This outreach process takes about six weeks, during which 150 to 1500 families are visited in each church. It is incorporated into the church calendar and started with a commissioning service. As a process check, regular meetings are held to ensure that the process is being conducted properly and to begin to assess the reaction from the church members. At the end of the process, individual church meetings are held to determine the internal issues surfaced by the outreach.

Next a large convention is held with all the congregations to decide on the public issues that the organization will begin to address. Usually four are selected around issues such as housing,

crime, transportation, etc. Each member of the convention chooses to become a member of one of these task forces.

A second four-hour training is then held for as many as 300 of these leaders on the art of research and conducting interviews with politicians, CEOs, and professors. This is done so that they can determine who else is doing a similar project, how big is the problem, and who are the people with whom to create solutions. This training ends with a section on how to turn problems into winnable issues. For the next eight weeks after the training, the leaders conduct one-on-ones with public officials.

After these interviews have been conducted and more research has been done, the organization calls its first public auction. Beginning and ending on time with prayer, this is a well-planned meeting with the purpose of presenting the issues and solutions as well as gaining recognition for the organization. During this first organizational meeting, the organization almost always seeks and receives press exposure. As each individual congregation publicly declares its commitment, the meeting is a powerful kick-off to a “new” church.

From the time the pastors meet at the very beginning to the large organizational meeting is a year-long process during which groups of seven leaders are sent to tri-annual seven-day training at the Gamaliel Foundation in Illinois. This intensive training allows for feedback on the process, learning environment, and accountability within the new organization.

Results

People begin to build community between other congregations as well as within their own,

Lay people are being invested in and trained to take up key roles in the church,

The public meetings convey a sense of hope that change will occur within their communities, and

The process puts new purpose into the lives of each congregation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact the Gamaliel Foundation at (312) 357-2639. They are located at 203 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 808 Chicago, IL 60601.

This material is printed with permission from the Gamaliel Foundation.

Similar material can be found on the web sites of PICO and DART (p. 4-3).

The National Committee for Community Economic Development (NCCED)

Resources offered by NCCED include its Faith-Based Academy, Faith in Action Newsletter, national gatherings, and case studies of effective local projects. The NCCED web site includes links to other resources such as the Compassion Capital Fund and Governmental Grants.

What is Faith-Based Community Economic Development?

“Faith-based” community economic development (CED) is a unique subset of CED. Many houses of worship (churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, etc.) create separate entities, which are most often 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations, to conduct their community development activities. In some cases, multiple houses of worship that are in close proximity to one another will collaborate to create a community development corporation (CDC) to serve their shared community. Faith-based community organizations distinguish themselves by operating in a manner that reflects the principles of their faith.

The faith community has a long and rich history of supporting community and social initiatives. In the 1970s, for example, organized religious institutions and faith-motivated individuals infused millions of dollars into social services and community improvement projects. With the growth of the CDC movement in the 1980s, CDCs with congregational or religious linkages became prevalent across the U.S. The 1990s and 2000s have seen an emergence of diverse religious institutions working in community development.

Both faith-based and secular CDCs work to revitalize their communities through activities like creating affordable housing, promoting commercial and business development, providing job training, and other community services.

The National Committee for Community Economic Development (www.ncced.org)