THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

The HUB
Building Healthy Communities

Building People Power: Sacramento BHC

A CASE STORY

A Heartfelt THANK YOU

This case story was possible due to the following folks volunteering to take part in focus groups and/or an interview to provide their reflections on Power Building in Sacramento. Thank you for sharing your story.

Resident Leaders
with Sacramento Area Congregations Together

Sacramento Transit Rider Union Members

Youth Leaders
with East Bay Asian Youth Center: Sacramento

Carl Pinkston
Black Parallel School Board
lenin@igc.org

Cha Vang
Former Executive Director 2016 -2020 & contributor to this story.
Hmong Innovative Politics
HIP contact: Nancy Xiong, ED,
nancy.xiong@hipcalifornia.com

Christine Tien
The California Endowment
CTien@Calendow.org

Elaine Abelaye-Mateo
Everyday Impact Consulting
elaine@everydayimpactconsulting.com

Gabby Trejo
Sacramento Area Congregations Together
gabby@sacact.org

Jovana Fajardo
ACCE
jfajardo@calorganize.org

Kim Williams
Sacramento BHC Hub
kim@sacbhc.org

Leesai Yang
East Bay Asian Youth Center: Sacramento
leesai@ebayc.org

Tamie Dramer
Organize Sacramento
chair@Organizesacramento.org

Case Story prepared by: LPC Consulting, Inc.
tiffany@lpc-associates.com
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Design: Queridomundo Creative LLC

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Introduction

Introduction

This case story describes how the Sacramento BHC shifted from a predominately provision of services approach to restore community health, to a model that places emphasis on community organizing to build People Power and disrupt systems of oppression.

In 2010, The California Endowment (TCE) launched the 10-year Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative to transform 14 different communities "devasted by health inequalities into places where all people and neighborhoods thrive."[1] In 2015, TCE released the Five Drivers of Change that describe how health equity is achieved in the 14 communities. One of the five drivers of change is "People Power." In 2017, TCE released the North Star Goals and Indicators (NSGs) to guide the evaluation of the impact of the place-based initiative. The NSGs include four goals, one of which is: building voice and power for a healthy and inclusive California.

As the BHC initiative has evolved, TCE has placed more emphasis on People Power as a necessary condition for change, as illustrated by its inclusion in both the Drivers of Change and NSGs. The BHC initiative supports People Power by funding organizations to provide residents with "quality over quantity" leadership development, and community organizing training, so they may "occupy positions of influence, and lead locally, regionally and statewide."[2]

This case story describes how the Sacramento BHC shifted from a predominately provision of services approach to restore community health, to a model that places emphasis on community organizing to build People Power and disrupt systems of oppression.

The story is told by recounting how the BHC initiative seeded collaboration among the Sacramento community organizers and why the organizers collaborated to build People Power. The case story also explores how residents' beliefs of their individual and collective power have shifted because of collaborating with a community organizer. The story concludes by describing the outcomes that have resulted from the People Power built through the BHC, and the next steps in the fight for health equity.

This case story was informed by: (1) one-on-one interviews and a focus group with six community organizers representing the following organizations: Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Action (ACCE), Black Parallel School Board (BPSB), East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), Hmong Innovating Politics (HIP), Organize Sacramento, and Sacramento Area Congregations Together (Sac ACT); (2) one-on-one interviews with Kim Williams, Sacramento BHC Hub Director; Elaine Abelaye-Mateo, Principal Consultant with Everyday Impact Consulting; and Christine Tien, TCE Program Manager (3) focus groups with four youth and 16 adult residents who are part of the EBAYC, Sac ACT, and Organize Sacramento networks; and (4) a document and media review.

The organizations who receive funding through the Sacramento BHC initiative are not static. As a result, community organizers Youth Forward, United Latinos, and Brown Issues became Sacramento BHC-funded partners as the research phase of this case story was concluding. The omission of BHC-funded community organizers, both past and present, from this case story, is not a reflection of their value or role in the initiative; but is a result of the timing of this case story, which covers the community organizers funded by the BHC when the research process started. Additionally, there are Sacramento BHC-funded partners who provide leadership development programs for youth and adults, or who provide direct services, but who are not included in the case story because they do not self-identify as community organizers with the goal of building People Power.

The Sacramento BHC is entering its tenth year (planning year included), and much has happened during that time. Like TCE, the importance the Sacramento BHC partners place on the role of People Power for achieving community health has increased over the past nine years. The intent of this case story is to describe how People Power was built and evolved in the Sacramento BHC and is not intended to be a thorough account of all the People Powered campaign wins, losses and challenges experienced along the way. In their own right, every win achieved, or each lesson learned from a campaign that did not achieve the desired outcome(s), could be the subject of a case story.

What is Community Organizing & People Power?

Community organizing and People Power mean different things to different people. Follows is a summary of how the Sacramento BHC-funded community organizers interviewed for this case story describe: (1) community organizing, (2) the role of the community organizer in building People Power, and (3) the importance of People Power for achieving systems change.

Systems of oppression or systems is used interchangeably throughout this case story. Systems of oppression can be defined as the ideologies (e.g., sexism, racism, classism), norms and behaviors (e.g., patterns of inclusion and exclusion), beliefs (e.g., stereotypes), institutions (e.g., schools, prisons, government), and policies that serve to explicitly and implicitly, maintain the power and privilege of a dominant group at the expense of other groups. Systems produce inequalities and different access to resources for communities and have a disproportionately negative effect on low-income communities of color.

> **People power or resident power is "raising the consciousness of people who move an agenda and get the system to achieve their demands."**

People Power or resident power is "raising the consciousness of people who move an agenda and get the system to achieve their demands." Community organizing is a tool for building resident power, and in the words of one BHC grantee, organizers center their work on the "people who are most impacted, to empower them to make the changes they want to see in their own communities, so that they can thrive and be successful."

The Sacramento BHC community organizers identified relationships with residents as the foundation of community organizing. Through relationship building the organizers help raise residents' awareness, so the residents connect their individual issue(s) to the systems of oppression affecting their community. The organizers guide residents:

What is Community Organizing & People Power?

> **"To see that the issue they are facing right now, it is not exclusive to just their family, it is a collective pain, it is not just an individualized pain. Community organizing is about helping people see that the problem they are facing, other families are facing it too."**

Community organizers firmly believe and encourage residents to realize that "residents are the ones with the solutions [for problems] because they are the ones facing the problems." One grantee described the role of a community organizer as:

> **"Helping inspire residents to take on a challenge and fight for change in the community. A lot of community members know certain issues affect the community but are scared or unsure of what to do. Community organizers are there to inspire and help them."**

Building resident power includes, "giving residents the space to figure out what the path for a solution [to the problem] is." Similarly, the responsibility of the organizer "is not to advocate on residents' behalf, but to give residents the skills to be the advocates." To this end, community organizing includes equipping residents with the tools and skills to strategically use their power for positive community change.

People Power is necessary to transform disinvested communities into healthy and thriving communities. Empowered residents will continue to fight for change and will not "let up on the systems" negatively impacting their communities, as illustrated by the following quote:

> **"The system knows that there will be outsiders who will pull together a group of people and rush them to decisionmakers. The system says, "uh huh, I really enjoyed that, your voice is really powerful, I took in your concerns, this is really nice," knowing full well that those groups will go away, and in two or three years everything will be the same. Resident power is not designed for someone to go in, to be the elite, and leave. The residents are still going to be there, whether the struggle is glitzy or highly visible, or out of the range of the camera and visibility of folks. That is real power."**

> **"...residents are the ones with the solutions [for problems] because they are the ones facing the problems."**

Rooted in Those That Came Before Us

Caption/credit

The tactics, strategies and principles of contemporary community organizing are shaped by a long history of communities who fought against a dominant culture typified by colonization and exploitation. This history is the bedrock from which modern-day community organizing emerged. Following is a brief overview of community organizing networks or models that emerged in the United States. The summary is not meant to be an exhaustive or definitive account of community organizing in the United States. The purpose of the summary is to provide a context for the story of Power Building through the Sacramento BHC. By their own account, the organizers interviewed for this case story are either affiliates of, and/or influenced by, the organizing networks and strategies formed over 70 years ago.

While community organizing existed prior to Saul Alinsky, he is recognized as the first to codify, or formally document an organized system or model for contemporary community organizing, when

Community organizing has been, and continues to be, a crucial tool for building People Power in the fight for social and economic justice.

Rooted in Those That Came Before Us

he formed a network or an "organization of organizations," and posited "community organizer" as a job description. In the early 1940s, Alinsky established the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council comprised of representatives from churches, labor unions, and community-based organizations to advocate for expanded social services and educational access in the Chicago area.[3] Later, Alinsky expanded his model to other cities through the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), an organization that remains active across the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and Germany.[4] Alinsky's influence is reflected in other community organizing networks (i.e., national networks that support affiliated neighborhood and community-based organizations across the United States) such as, the Gamaliel Foundation and the Midwest Academy.

Clockwise from top left: Larry Itliong organized thousands of farmworkers, first for the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) and later for the United Farm Workers (UFW). Photo: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University; L-R: Cesar Chavez, Fred Ross Sr., Luis Valdez, and Dolores Huerta, late 1980s. Photo: Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University; An early flyer by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Grenada, Mississippi calling for a Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1968. Photo: Flickr/ Washington Area Spark; Leaders of the Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council join the Packinghouse Workers' picket line at the Chicago Union Stockyards, 1946. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

In 1947, Fred Ross Sr. founded the Community Service Organization (CSO) to organize the Latinx community in Los Angeles.[5] Prior to founding CSO, Ross was the IAF's West Coast Director, and had engaged in social justice activism since the 1930s. Ross revised the Alinsky network model by recruiting individuals to become members of the CSO, rather than building a network of organizations. CSO registered thousands to vote, which led to the first Latino elected to the Los Angeles City Council in 1949.[6] Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta were notable community organizers with CSO.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez resigned from the CSO and started organizing farm workers in California's Central Valley. Dolores Huerta and Gilbert Padilla joined Chavez later that year, and the three founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA).[7] The NFWA leveraged social or familial ties to grow their network of members. In 1965, the 1,200 NFWA members voted to join what would become the five-year Delano Grape Strike started by the Filipino American members of the AFL-CIO Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC).

In 1959, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) established the AWOC. One of the first organizers hired by the AWOC was Larry Itliong, a Filipino American who began organizing agricultural workers in the 1940s. In 1965, Philip Vera Cruz, a Filipino American who for decades was active in the farm labor movement, joined the AWOC. On September 8, 1965, the Filipino American members of the AWOC voted to strike rather than accept lower wages from the grape growers, launching the five-year Delano Grape Strike.[8]

Rooted in Those That Came Before Us

In March 1966, the NFWA organized hundreds of farmworkers to march from Delano to Sacramento, California, where thousands joined to rally. Later that year, the NFWA and AWOC merged to form the United Farm Workers (UFW), and instilled Chavez, Itliong, and Vera Cruz as leaders of the organization. By 1970, most California farmers who grew grapes signed UFW contracts. UFW continues to organize in major agricultural sectors, primarily in California, actively championing worker protection, pesticide, and immigration reforms.

In 1972, priest John Baumann, who worked with community organizing projects in Chicago, founded the People's Institute for Community Organizing (PICO) to provide training and support for neighborhood-based organizations in Oakland, California. PICO eventually shifted to a faith-based organizing model by building a network of congregations of all denominations. The PICO faith-based model draws upon the values of faith to unite people to act around issues, rather than using issues to unite people in action. In 2018, PICO changed its name to Faith in Action to reflect the growth of the organization from a California-based, to a national, faith-based organizing effort made up of 44 affiliated federations and eight statewide networks working in 150 cities and towns in 22 states.[9]

The civil rights movement has also shaped community organizing, in that the values, strategies and networks developed by community organizers through the civil rights movement are inherent in modern-day community organizing. In 1955, Rosa Parks, an African American woman, was arrested for violating racial segregation laws by refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man. Her action spurred the Montgomery Bus Boycott and increased awareness of the civil rights movement. On December 5, 1955, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) formed to guide the bus boycott campaign, and to focus attention on racial segregation in the south. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was elected as the president of the MIA, and became a national civil rights leader and a voice for nonviolent means of protest. The bus boycott ended on December 20, 1956, in response to the U.S. Supreme Court upholding a federal district ruling, which put an end to segregated seating on public buses.

The success of the bus boycott was a catalyst for the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957 to coordinate civil rights campaign efforts. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was elected president of the organization. The SCLC developed a network of affiliates, such as the MIA and churches, rather than developing a network of individual members. In addition to spearheading and supporting campaigns to achieve equality, the SCLC conducted leadership training programs to teach local communities about the philosophy of nonviolent protest. The SCLC has become a nationwide organization with affiliates of different races, religions, and backgrounds throughout the U.S., and continues its commitment to nonviolent action to achieve change.[10] Ella Baker began joining social activist organizations in 1927 and was an organizer with SCLC.

In 1960, Ella Baker left the SCLC to support young Black youth who were engaged in the sit-in movement that began in Greensboro, North Carolina to desegregate lunch counters and change segregationist policies.[11] Baker helped organize the first meeting of what would become the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) formed to give Black youth voice in the civil rights movement. SNCC members had a role in the 1961 Freedom Rides where Black and white activists organized bus trips throughout the South to protest segregated bus terminals and test the Supremes Court decision that segregated interstate transportation facilities were unconstitutional. Ella Baker was also a founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party who opposed segregationist policies, which prevented African Americans from casting ballots in primary elections.

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) was founded by Wade Rathke and Gary Delgado in 1970. The organization acknowledged the influence of both the civil rights movement and Alinsky on the organization. At one time ACORN's membership was comprised of 175,000 families in 850 chapters in 75 cities in the United States who won local, living wage campaigns and led successful voters registration drives.[12] In April 2010, ACORN closed its doors after a whistleblower complaint about financial mismanagement, and a questionable, undercover video sting documenting employee misconduct that generated negative publicity, led to a loss of funding and support for the organization. California ACORN broke away from the parent organization and formed a new nonprofit called the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE). ACCE amended their accounting and leadership practices prescribed by ACORN, to mitigate the mistakes made by the former parent organization. ACCE has five statewide offices, and more than 15,000 members across California.[13]

Community organizing has been, and continues to be, a crucial tool for building People Power in the fight for social and economic justice. Just as those who organized before them, the Sacramento community organizing nonprofits empower people to advocate for equity to restore community health.

Desperate Need for People Power

The culturally vibrant south Sacramento area was hit particularly hard by the economic downturn, as the area is home to people of color who were historically displaced from other areas of Sacramento due to racially restrictive covenants that prohibited the sale or rental of property to people of color, and red-lining or the denial of mortgages or loans to people of color living in certain areas.

Desperate Need for People Power

When TCE's BHC initiative launched in South Sacramento, the Great Recession exacerbated inequality experienced by people of color due to racism and systems of oppression, and further eroded the community's health. The culturally vibrant south Sacramento area was hit particularly hard by the economic downturn, as the area is home to people of color who were historically displaced from other areas of Sacramento due to racially restrictive covenants that prohibited the sale or rental of property to people of color, and red-lining or the denial of mortgages or loans to people of color living in certain areas.

The Great Recession is a period of global economic decline that began in 2007 and technically ended in 2010; although the economic downturn reverberated for another five years during the "recovery" period. The recession is linked to the subprime mortgage crisis and referred to as the second worst period of economic decline in the United States, with the 1930s Great Depression being the first.[14] As a result of the Great Recession, poverty increased by 21%, annual household income decreased by $5,000, and 15.6 million people were unemployed during its peak. While the recession negatively affected many people in the United States, Black and Latinx populations were disproportionately affected by employment loss, wage decreases and homeownership foreclosures.[15]

In California during the Great Recession, median family income dropped by 11% overall, while the median family income of the poorest Californians decreased by 21%.

In California during the Great Recession, median family income dropped by 11% overall, while the median family income of the poorest Californians decreased by 21%.[16] In 2010, California had a $26.6 billion budget gap and future deficits were projected to be $20 billion a year.[17] Despite a higher need for health and social service programs during the recession, the State of California's declining income tax revenue resulted in $5 billion in cuts to health and human services programs in the 2011/12 fiscal year alone. The City of Sacramento was not immune to the economic decline; a study that looked at 150 American cities found that Sacramento was in the bottom half for recovery after the recession.[18]

Between 2007 and 2011, the City of Sacramento revenues dropped by 25%. Spending reductions enacted by the city did not offset the $258 million general fund operating deficits, and the city's reserve funds were almost fully depleted by 2011. The loss in revenue resulted in the city reducing its workforce by 25% or 1,318 full-time positions; eliminating most youth and senior services; reducing library hours; drastically cutting park maintenance and safety; partially closing community centers and clubhouses; closing all community pools; browning out three fire stations, thereby reducing citywide fire and emergency service response times; eliminating the community policing and gang prevention programs, the traffic unit, and reducing the police force by 150 police officers and 150 staff.[19]

In November 2013, the cuts to city services were intensified by the shuttering of five elementary schools in the south Sacramento area by the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) Board of Trustees. The SCUSD Board closed the schools due to under enrollment caused by a declining student population in the Sacramento area, and a substantial deficit from rising costs.[20]

The Great Recession led to further disinvestment in already under-resourced and disinvested communities, such as south Sacramento. The cuts to city and school services occurred during the early years of the BHC initiative, as did the passing of Measure U, a temporary sales tax hike to restore community services. Folks involved in the Sacramento BHC perceived Measure U and the TCE-funded initiative as the vehicle to restore equality, and shift investment to disinvested communities. However, the Sacramento BHC network lacked a robust array of community organizing nonprofits that could mobilize and work in partnership with residents to advocate for equitable investments, services, and programs.

Adding Community Organizers to the BHC Mix

When the BHC started, most folks described Sacramento's organizing culture as "not really existing," or as "very limited" given there was only one "visible" community organizing nonprofit. However, that nonprofit "was shut out in the early [BHC] years" from organizations both inside and outside the BHC network due to conflicts caused by the organization's leadership.

Others relayed "there had been a lot of organizing that had taken place prior to BHC," but it was not "continuous or coordinated." They described the community organizing in Sacramento prior to the BHC as "small, grassroots" neighborhood efforts, or short-lived, issue-based campaigns.

While folks had different opinions about the presence of a community organizing culture in Sacramento when the BHC initiative began, there was agreement that the Sacramento BHC was initially oriented toward the provision of direct services to improve community health:

They described the community organizing in Sacramento prior to the BHC as "small, grassroots" neighborhood efforts, or short-lived, issue-based campaigns.

Adding Community Organizers to the BHC Mix

> **"There was not a conception of what community organizing was … there was not an organizing model per se … It used to be principally service organizations with an outcomes model during the early years of the BHC … As new people came on board and new organizations came and took part in the BHC that started to change."**

The shift from a mostly direct service-oriented BHC partner network, to one that included more community organizing nonprofits, was intentionally orchestrated by Kim Williams, Hub Director; Elaine Abelaye-Mateo, Principal Consultant with Everyday Impact Consulting; and Christine Tien, TCE Program Manager.

According to Tien, from the outset of the initiative, "I was looking to fund more organizing groups. We [TCE] were funding them to hold public agencies accountable." When the BHC started, there were few organizations focused on building People Power in Sacramento. As affiliates of established community organizing groups expanded into the Sacramento-area, and as new community organizing nonprofits formed, Tien would discern if they were the right fit for the BHC. Tien funded community organizing groups with different network structures (e.g., faith, membership, coalition building, or ethnicity-based) whose values aligned with the BHC. As the constellation of BHC partners grew to include more community organizers, Williams, Abelaye-Mateo, and Tien formed the Community Engagement Work Group in August 2012. The workgroup was a strategy for building a community organizing culture in the BHC, which included involving residents in advocating for change.

The workgroup was the first time "all the BHC-funded organizing bodies were in the same room," on a consistent basis. Most workgroup members had not worked collaboratively before, had different organizing philosophies and strategies, yet found themselves tasked with developing a shared vision for community organizing. A BHC partner reflecting on the early Community Engagement Work Group meetings relayed:

> **"Just to get them to a shared definition of organizing, we were like 'oh my, this is going to take a while' because they thought about it so differently. What was cool though, was once you pulled them together and you saw the relationships being built … that is when we saw the shift in the BHC."**

Once the organizers developed trusting relationships, they decided to collaboratively plan and host a BHC Hub Gathering in March 2013. Up to that point, the BHC Hub Gatherings were a venue for residents to learn about the BHC initiative and the programs provided by BHC-funded partners. The Hub Gathering planned by the workgroup was different in that the community organizers structured the gathering to ask for input from residents about the issues they wanted addressed, to inform the work of the BHC-funded partners.

The workgroup's second joint venture was to design and implement a Resident Leadership Academy in February 2014. The organizers developed the curriculum with the vision they would teach residents community organizing skills to cultivate "resident leaders," who would then become advocates for their neighborhood, as well as BHC liaisons. The Resident Leadership Academy included six sessions, and each session was led by a different community organizer drawing upon their specific areas of expertise and organizational strengths.

In 2015, the workgroup disbanded with the goal to incorporate the community organizers into the Sacramento BHC Action Teams. Three of the 13 residents who graduated from the Academy remain active in the Sacramento BHC. Two of the three residents are Leaders with a community organizing nonprofit, and the third is a BHC-funded grantee who builds community through urban farming.

Collaboration = Collective Power

The community organizers who are part of the Sacramento BHC build their networks differently (i.e., organizational affiliates versus individual membership), at times prescribe to different campaign strategies for achieving change (i.e., action versus continued negotiation), focus on different issues, and do not always agree on what is a campaign "win." Despite these differences, efforts to build a collaborative community organizing culture in the Sacramento BHC have been successful. (*See the* Partner Campaign Compendium *at the end of case story that illuminates the differences between the organizations by recounting a campaign led by each organization.*)

The community organizing partners attributed the BHC to providing "a stable space" for the partners to talk with one another and to build the relationships and trust necessary for collaboration. While trust could have evolved slowly from working together haphazardly, the BHC structure was a catalyst to building collective power:

> **"The Endowment and BHC really connected us all and getting to know each other has been revolutionary. It is just like an individual has no power, and so you build a coalition or organizing campaign. It is the same for us as organizations. One has some power, but together we are a lot stronger."**

The community organizing partners attributed the BHC to providing "a stable space" for the partners to talk with one another and to build the relationships and trust necessary for collaboration.

Collaboration = Collective Power

Folks described the Sacramento BHC organizing culture as "more robust than it was 10 years ago." The BHC partners noted that not only "are there more organizations doing community organizing work now, than there were in 2010," but also that, "the level of collaboration across the organizations exists in a way that did not exist in 2010." The community organizers and other BHC-funded organizations are "activating together" in times of crisis and leveraging their assets by co-leading campaigns and jointly devising campaign strategies. One partner reflected:

> **"I see partners talking to each other more now than in 2013. A lot of fights are engaging on different levels, whether city, county, or state, multiple partners are co-leading them … it has been an eclectic group of organizations that are constantly thinking together, and they are true thinking partners."**

Turning to each other as thought partners has also resulted in the Sacramento BHC advocacy campaigns becoming more intersectional in their focus:

> **"It is more than issue based; it is connecting more of the dots. We have talked about tenants and housing, but also how that connects with the school district, the Black community, the homeless campaign."**

The BHC partners share a vision "of a healthy and thriving Sacramento." This has resulted in the development of a "culture of organizing and connection" amongst the partners to achieve their vision. Through informal dialogue the partners discuss pressing issues and "ask each other for help." Informal communication results in the partners having a consistent message, and uniform "asks" when engaging in formal communication, such as meeting with an elected official.

The BHC partners have intentionally moved away from silos (e.g., working on a singular cause) that inhibit open communication, and moved toward "supporting each other on a wide variety of issues." The culture that has developed in the BHC also incorporates "respecting each other's work," which includes recognizing that individual organizations "do not have to lead every struggle," and every campaign. The partners know a supporting role is just as crucial to achieving a win.

The strength of the partners' relationships has been tested a few times in the history of the BHC initiative. In 2013, the BHC-funded community organizers joined a coalition that advocated for the Sacramento Kings franchise owners to enter into a community benefits agreement (CBA) to offset gentrification caused by the new arena. In 2015, the Sacramento Kings instituted a construction apprenticeship program for 70 individuals from 11 high poverty zip codes in Sacramento but did not support the other concessions requested by the coalition (e.g., affordable housing, homeless services, and a small-business loan fund). This caused a split among the BHC community organizers; some supported the apprentice program as a "win," while others continued to advocate for all concessions being fulfilled. The second test came in 2019, when the community organizers who were part of the Housing 4 Sacramento coalition had different opinions about the trajectory of their co-led, affordable housing campaign.

> **"Everyone has a value in every space, every has expertise, and we cannot win without every little piece coming together."**

In 2018, the Coalition collected 48,000 signatures to qualify the Sacramento Renter Protection and Community Stabilization Charter Amendment for the 2020 ballot, which if passed, would limit annual rent increases to 5% a year. In 2019, in direct response to the campaign, the City of Sacramento passed the Tenant Protection and Relief Act, limiting rent increases to 10% a year.[21]

A few of the BHC-funded community organizers decided to support the city's ordinance and ceased advocating to place their initiative on the 2020 ballot; while other community organizers formed a new coalition and continue to advocate for the city to place the initiative on the ballot.

While the first split over the Kings arena CBA in 2015 caused some of the community organizers to stop working together for a brief period, the split over which affordable housing "win" to support in 2019 did not lead to a rift in relationships, nor change the level of collaboration that occurs amongst the community organizers. When asked how they maintain their relationships despite differences, the organizers discussed their commitment to positive change knowing, "there is the next fight and that is more important … if you harbor those resentments, you are not winning." The organizers also reflected on the community conditions in Sacramento that necessitate positive, working relationships among the organizers.

Collaboration = Collective Power

Unlike large, metropolitan areas that are densely populated, Sacramento County is "900 miles with no public transportation," and residents are dispersed geographically. This requires community organizers to work collectively to activate their networks to amass residents for an action, or to give public testimony about an issue. Additionally, Sacramento does not have a large, social activist community, due to the historical absence of a robust community organizing culture. Organizers in Sacramento are helping build advocacy skills of residents who struggle with income and transportation challenges, while also mobilizing them to action. Lastly, unlike other communities, Sacramento has a small number of organizations devoted to community organizing that must work in partnership to achieve change, as illustrated by the following quote:

> **"Since we do not have a lot of organizations doing organizing, we do not have the luxury to say, 'I do not want to play with you, I am going to go over here.' When you are barely over getting a heartbreak with a partner, you already have another fight on top of you."**

The partners acknowledged their "common vision" for "a better and healthier community," and "wanting to make life better and fix the system itself," as their unifying foundation in the face of adversity. There is a commitment to do what is necessary to achieve systems change because the residents "are choking, there are so many pressures they are going through."

The community organizing partners are also aware that the system "is trying to interfere with our relationships" and the "people in power are trying to conquer and divide." This awareness allows partners to focus on the assets each organization brings to their alliance, rather than focusing on their points of difference that can lead to strife. One organizer described this sentiment:

> **"We do not have to agree on everything, we have a bigger vision of what our communities want and deserve … everyone has a value in every space, everyone has expertise, and we cannot win without every little piece coming together … it is a shared understanding that we have something to bring to the space."**

The "People" in People Power

The "People" in People Power

While the community organizers have a high degree of collaboration that fosters joint-led campaigns, residents are the essential element for community change. Below is a summary of the three focus groups conducted with residents who are part of the EBAYC, Organize Sacramento and Sac ACT networks. The focus groups uplifted why youth and adult residents decided to become advocates, how their perceptions of their power shifted while working in partnership with a community organizer, and the skills they learned through organizing and advocacy.

BECOMING AN ADVOCATE

The adult residents interviewed for this case story decided to become a community advocate for a variety of reasons. A few were seeking help to address a personal struggle, as illustrated by the following quote:

> **"The reason I am here [working with a community organizer] is because I live in the Oak Park area. As a parent, I have seen injustice or disadvantages compared to other people I know. It started with a personal reason where my son needed help in school, and he was never able to get it."**

Other adult residents became advocates because they wanted to find solutions to community issues, such as gang violence, immigration reform, public transit, or neighborhood stabilization after the fall out from the Great Recession. A few became advocates because they were a member of an organization that is part of a community organizing network, and they were intrigued by the issues the network was actively working to change, or they were asked to represent their organization in that network.

Regarding the youth residents interviewed for this case story, they decided to get involved in advocacy when a teacher or friend referred them to a program run by a community organizer at their school. For others, a community organizer earned their trust by being consistently present and showing a genuine interest in their well-being, which piqued their curiosity about the organizer's program:

> **"He [community organizer] would always hang out in the same spot in the back of the school. He would walk up to us, shake our hand, and say 'what's up, how are you doing?' You would see him every day at lunch for weeks on end. After two months of seeing him in a row, you wonder, 'What is he doing? Oh, he has a program after school and there is free food. I might as well go and see what's up.' That is how he caught my interest; it was by building trust and after that, providing a character that is easily relatable."**

The youth discussed how over time the community organizer took on the role of a "mentor" or an "older brother, who is just kind of there to watch over you." For all youth residents, the connection with their mentor was a reason they continued to take part in the program. For most youth, engaging with a community organizer and becoming an advocate was an "opportunity to do better" and overcome behavioral issues or failing grades.

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PERCEPTIONS OF POWER: THEN & NOW

The focus group participants reflected on how working with a community organizer and becoming advocates shifted their perceptions of their individual power. One youth resident relayed that before he became an advocate:

> **"I really did not think that my voice mattered … I was like, a voice is just a voice, my voice, it is just another voice, who is going to listen? But then when we started speaking with city council members and you see a little change and it was like, my voice does matter. Your voice does have an impact."**

The "People" in People Power

For others, the community organizing network was a source of encouragement to use their voice in the fight for change. One adult resident discussed how as an undocumented person he drew upon the support of the community organizing network to be a champion for immigration reform:

> **"As an undocumented immigrant, I was afraid to go in front of anything because you are in danger. But I said 'no, I have the support of this organization, we have relationships with immigration attorneys, we have all this kind of support.' So that pushed me to all the way to go to Washington D.C. when DACA was taking place, I went to the Supreme Court … I went there and did what I needed to do. Even if you are afraid, the organization empowers you so much, you do not limit yourself."**

Along with understanding their individual voice and power, the residents also came to recognize the force of collective power to make change. One adult resident described feeling the "opposite of power" before becoming an advocate and uniting people for change:

> **"Now I know that uniting people from my community with the same issue is powerful. Before, the concept of uniting people to build power did not even run through my mind … I did not feel power at all, totally the opposite. I felt like I cannot ask for anything, even though I am upset and even though my children are suffering."**

Several residents highlighted that as a collective, "you feel like a super person when there are 15 people from your organization" in a room advocating for the same goal. Similarly, another acknowledged that although money can buy power, People Power or collective power has more sway, saying:

> **"Power has two things, one you have the money, two you have the people. If you have money, you have power, but if you have people, you can face the one with the money and still make change happen. If you go by yourself, decision makers will say 'next,' but if you have a room full of community leaders and speak clearly, decisionmakers are going to pay attention."**

The "People" in People Power

Residents relayed that after becoming part of an organizing network, they feel like they could meet with an elected official and the official will listen to their concerns because the elected official, "knows that I will report back to my congregation and my community organization."

Focus group participants' opinions of the power wielded by elected officials has also shifted since becoming community advocates. Prior to working with a community organizer, some focus group participants relayed they would not have tried to meet with their elected officials. Others believed, "maybe I could have a token meeting where it is ceremonial and they talk to you, but I did not think they would listen." Residents relayed that after becoming part of an organizing network, they feel like they could meet with an elected official and the official will listen to their concerns because the elected official, "knows that I will report back to my congregation and my community organization."

Prior to becoming advocates, the residents also disregarded the power inherit in voting. Through advocacy the residents saw first-hand the force of an electorate who mobilizes around a common cause. Focus group participants discussed how they came to realize that elected officials need allies and votes to stay in office. Furthermore, their affiliation with a community organizing network connects them to a body of voters that wield power:

> **"Like they [elected officials] know who we are, and they know that we are going to make a change. So, it is either they are going to make that change for us, or we are going to make that change for them. There is no in-between."**

For youth residents, the People Power derived from working with a group of youth was a source of hope for their future because they grasped their ability to actively shape their community for the better. Before becoming an advocate, one youth planned to leave Sacramento for a brighter future elsewhere, but now knows she can be an agent of change:

> **"I was always with the group of friends that wanted to get out of Sac. We did not want to be here because we felt like it is filled with so many things that we do not want for our future life that we wanted to get out …. After joining the program, I see that there are good things that Sacramento has, and that there are changes that we can make."**

The "People" in People Power

Youth also discussed how working with a mentor and a group of their peers on a campaign shifted their belief of youth power, as illustrated by the following quote:

> **"As a collaborative we can do many things together. But one person, you cannot really do anything at all, or, well, you can, but it is extremely hard. That kind of shifted my whole viewpoint because it was a group of like young teens, like us all together, and when we came together, we were so powerful."**

Lastly, one youth, while describing the oppressive circumstance in South Sacramento, noted how community organizing has made him aware that those who are experiencing the issues need to mobilize collectively and use their power to make change within in their community:

> **"South Sacramento is laid out in a way that what you are going to do is laid out for you already in high school. If you are not one of the smartest kids in high school and already set on going to college, you are just going to get lost. And that is kind of sad. And besides being lost, the things in our community are just kind of like a given. You see cops rushing down the street, you hear helicopters almost every day. You do not even react to it, you just know it will be on the news later, it is nothing new. The community must see it as though they are the only ones that can make a change because they are the only ones going through it and being affected."**

SKILLS FOR EXERTING POWER

Residents receive training from community organizers to become effective agents of change. The residents were asked what skills they gained because of working with a community organizer, and their responses are summarized below.

CONDUCTING POWER ANALYSIS: The community organizers taught the residents how to conduct a power analysis to understand how power is exercised, who exercises power, and how power causes or supports the issue identified for change. The analysis also results in a list of allies, opponents, and targets of change to inform effective campaign strategies. Understanding the source of power is a tool because you know where to push on the system "to get resources for my neighborhood, my kids and my family."

SEEKING DIVERSIFIED PERSPECTIVES: By engaging in advocacy, several residents highlighted the importance they now place on understanding other people's points of view. Increased knowledge about an issue leads to cohesive solutions, as opposed to developing change strategies based on a biased or one-sided viewpoint. Rather than only listening to the news, or a politician's spin on an issue, the residents realize issues are "far more nuanced," and try to "understand things more deeply." A few residents also talked about how their quest for knowledge on an issue led to increased understanding of other people's actions:

> **"I saw other people and I got to know them and really understand their story. I was like 'wow, I did not know this was happening. I did not know people go through this.' I thought people live the same life I did. Being able to step outside of my bubble and to understand people's point of view and how they are in a way, and they act the way they do, it was something very memorable to me."**

DELIVERING PUBLIC TESTIMONY: Community organizers also taught the residents how to represent their community by giving effective personal testimony at public hearings, press conferences, or a collective action. Residents noted that the time they are allotted to give public testimony at public hearings is limited, and they had to learn how to tell their story in a succinct manner, while also conveying the gravity of the issue. One resident discussed the importance of a nimble approach to personal testimony:

> **"I learned to make my public comments to the point, and concise, and to make sure that I hit all the high points because I only get two to three minutes to talk. Sometimes they cut it from three to two minutes, so you must be able to adjust."**

The "People" in People Power

HOSTING LISTENING SESSIONS: Residents learned how to conduct a listening session with a high-powered decision maker or elected official. A well-structured listening session, "allows us [residents] to talk about our agenda, without just listening to the politician speak, it is our meeting not theirs." One resident iterated that politicians are accustomed to being asked questions and giving vague or misleading answers, but a research meeting led by residents is, "really focused and powerful." By controlling the meeting agenda and flow, listening sessions are an opportunity to educate decision makers about an issue to garner their support. Residents also discussed the importance of a listening session for discerning if, and why, a decision maker is not on the same page as them on an issue. By knowing a decision maker's points of difference, residents can decide if it is possible to address those points to convert the decision maker into an ally.

PLANNING CAMPAIGNS: While the residents identified individual skills that they learned through community organizing (e.g., listening sessions, power analysis), they also discussed how they learned to weave those skills together to "move an agenda," or plan and implement a campaign. They learned how each skill serves a purpose toward meeting short and long-term campaign goals, mobilizing people to act, and getting decision makers to support change:

> **"Before I began organizing, I had a lot of knowledge from psychology and sociology, but I had no idea how you move people on the ground. You can talk about an issue and understand it, but how do you get people to shift? I thought you could not. But now I see that there actually is a set of strategies that are reliable and creative at times that can shift people's behavior."**

DEVELOPING SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PERSONAL IDENTITY: Like adults, the youth identified the above listed skills as things learned from a community organizer. However, unique to youth was how organizing helped them gain confidence and a positive self-image. One youth described how engaging in organizing helped him realize his potential:

> **"I think most importantly is stepping out of your own comfort zone to see what is around you … it forces you to step out a little bit to get to know how your community is, and see what you can do … it forces you to push yourself more, going out public speaking and organizing stuff. It shows you a lot of potential that you think you did not have, but you actually do have."**

The "People" in People Power

A second described how organizing helped him find his voice:

> **"I never thought I would speak to city council members or the mayor or go to city hall in general. That was never a place for me. Why would I go there? For what reason? But when I actually went there, and I had a reason to - because we were working on the marijuana tax measure - ... that made me come out of my comfort zone to say that, 'I do have potential to talk to them, to tell them what my opinion is, and to use my voice so they could hear what I have to say.' It was a very changing moment for me when that happened."**

SUSTAINING & SPREADING PEOPLE POWER

Nearly all the residents said they would continue to organize or would start their own organizing network if there was not one already present in that community.

To gauge the sustainability of the People Power built with the support of the Sacramento BHC, focus group participants were asked if they would continue to be a community advocate if they moved to another community outside of the Sacramento area. Nearly all the residents said they would continue to organize or would start their own organizing network if there was not one already present in that community. One resident said, "once you get change on the table, there is no way to get out. You are a junkie." Another resident felt a sense of responsibility to use the skills they gained to advocate for the needs of other communities:

> **"I knew nothing about organizing before, I learned all that I can do. Now I have a sense of responsibility around it, particularly if communities are not paying attention to what their elected officials are doing, they are not going to get their needs met."**

Similarly, a youth focus group participant highlighted a desire to use their knowledge to increase resources for others in their community:

> **"I would bring my knowledge and whatever we had to where I am going. Everyone does not have the same resources. They do not have something like a children's fund, but they need it. So, I would do something about it because everyone needs resources. If I have the knowledge of organizing and other communities do not, it is good to share it out."**

People Powered Wins

People Powered Wins

The BHC partners are "amplifying our values in different spaces," as elected officials and high-powered decision makers "are now coming to the BHC because they see the power that BHC folks can bring to the issue."

The community organizing in the Sacramento BHC is driven by a set of values and a shared vision for community change. The BHC partners identified outcomes that are a result of shifting the culture of the Sacramento BHC to a People Powered model. Those outcomes are as follows:

SYSTEMS CHANGE: When the Sacramento BHC launched in 2010, the partners were using a service delivery model to achieve change. Over the past 10 years there has been a shift to a system change model to achieve change, "we can make the BHC healthier by providing the direct service work and band aids, but if we really want to have long lasting impacts and change, we need to target systems."

NONPROFIT PARTNERS JOINING THE FIGHT: Initially, the BHC service provision partners did not engage in advocacy because of the long-held belief that nonprofit organizations could not legally "lobby." The nonprofit partners were also leery of advocating with elected officials or government agencies that may be a source of future funding. Early in the BHC, TCE funded training for the nonprofit partners that outlined how they could engage in advocacy, and when advocacy crossed the line into unlawful "lobbying." Also, as the number of BHC-funded community organizing nonprofits increased and began building collective power, the service provision partners saw how advocacy leads to gaining resources for residents. This has resulted in organizations "that are not organizing nonprofits, but other nonprofits that have a stake in the game," joining BHC campaigns. Although the service provision nonprofits do not identify as community organizers, they take an advocacy role in the campaigns because "they see how organizing compliments the work they are doing."

INFLUENCE WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS AND HIGH-POWERED DECISION MAKERS: The BHC partners are "amplifying our values in different spaces," as elected officials and high-powered decision makers "are now coming to the BHC because they see the power that BHC folks can bring to the issue." For example, a City of Sacramento Councilmember involved BHC housing rights advocates in the development of the tenant relief ordinance; Senator Dr. Pan and the County of Sacramento Health Services Director consulted BHC healthcare advocates on proposed changes to the Sacramento County Medi-Cal provision of healthcare services model; and the SCUSD Superintendent invited the BHC Hub Director to join the African American Achievement Task Force focused on providing policy and program recommendations to provide equal opportunities for African American students.

Although the BHC has access to people in positions of power, that has not translated into easy "wins" for BHC campaigns. The BHC partners know "elected officials recognize that BHC is a loud voice that they will try to use to their advantage." The BHC partners are clear with people in positions of power when they come to BHC with an issue, "this is not you rub my hand, and I will rub yours ... I may help you with this, but that does not mean I will go away on another issue." The BHC has strategically placed themselves in a position with influence, while also holding elected officials and high-powered decision-makers "accountable when they have not served our communities, particularly vulnerable communities."

NARRATIVE CHANGE: Sacramento BHC partners have observed narrative shift at the systems and community levels. As the BHC has built People Power, the partners are reclaiming their narrative:

> **"The narrative has changed in how we define ourselves. For example, referring to people as formerly incarcerated, that terminology was not previously used. Because we want to self-determine ourselves, we do a lot more self-determining in the way we are, and we are breaking the cycle of internalized oppression."**

The narrative around what issues are "health" issues has also changed. In the early years of the BHC, health was conceived as related to healthcare. The BHC narrative of what is considered health has expanded to include issues such as "environmental justice and criminal justice reform" as health issues. With the changed narrative about what constitutes health, has also come a narrative focused on race. The BHC partners and their allies are "talking about equity and race. More of our colleagues are talking about structural change and putting race at the center."

People Powered Wins

When working in the "systems space," the partners have seen how the issues elected officials and high-powered decisions makers are working on, and the language used to talk about those issues, has shifted since the BHC initiative began. One partner reflected:

> **"When you are in systems spaces, people are talking about issues you helped advocate for. You hear things that were not being worked on in those systems when BHC began. They were not talking about healthcare for the undocumented before. They were not talking about our race and ethnicity and how that relates to suspension and expulsions or restorative justice. They were not talking about getting rid of willful defiance."**

CAMPAIGN WINS: The BHC partners have achieved many campaign "wins." While the below resident led wins are noteworthy, they are not a full list of wins achieved because of BHC-led advocacy efforts. These wins are illustrative of the People Powered collaborative culture of the Sacramento BHC.

Getting Measure G on the Ballot: The Sacramento Kids First Coalition gathered enough signatures to place Measure G on the March 2020 ballot, which if passed will establish the Sacramento Children's Fund to fund youth programs in the City of Sacramento.

Cancellation of ICE Contract: The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted to end the Sheriff Department's contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house 165 detainees.

Urban Agricultural Ordinances: The City of Sacramento and Sacramento County both adopted ordinances easing restrictions on, and providing incentives for urban farming.

Healthy Partners: The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors started the Healthy Partners program, which supplies healthcare for up to 4,000 undocumented residents.

Ethnic Studies: The Sacramento Unified School District added Ethnic Studies as a graduation requirement

School Discipline Policy Reform: SCUSD adopted the Whole Child, Student Discipline, and Positive School Climate policies to reduce racial disparities experienced by young women and men of color.

Medi-Cal Expansion: The University of California, Davis Medical Center agreed to begin serving 5,000 Medi-Cal patients.

Rent Stabilization: The Housing 4 Sacramento Coalition gathered enough signatures to qualify the Sacramento Renter Protection and Community Stabilization Charter Amendment for the 2020 ballot.

People Powered Wins

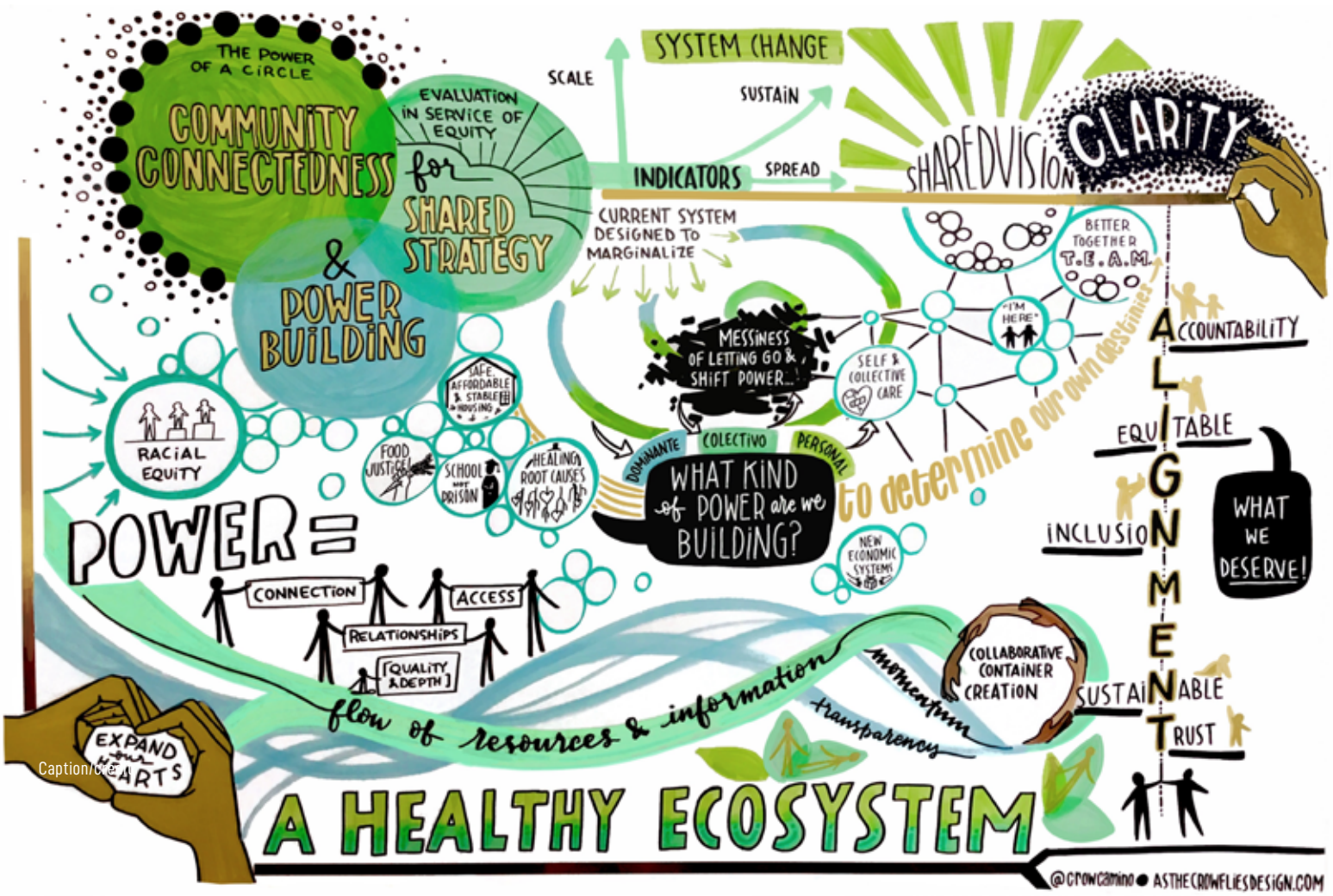
ACTIVATED NETWORKS = MOBILIZED POWER: When BHC began, the Great Recession was negatively affecting families, and unfortunately the economic recovery has brought about added challenges that families must face. However, what has changed is the BHC's ability to respond to crisis and mobilize people. The BHC network includes nonprofit partners and community organizers who work in partnership with empowered youth and adult residents who activate collectively to achieve change. One partner described this evolution and the role of community organizers in that change as follows:

> **"Had a Stephon Clark[a] situation happened 10 years ago; we would not have seen the show of power that took place. Had Healthy Partners[b] happened 10 years ago, I do not think we would have had as large a number of people show up to fight for undocumented people. This has happened because we have a base of community organizers who know how to talk with residents and other organizations and involve them in the campaign for change."**

a. Stephon Clark, an unarmed Black man, was murdered in his grandmother's backyard by police officers who were responding to a vehicle vandalism call. The community expressed their pain, anger, and frustration through a series of demonstrations and marches.

b. The County of Sacramento Healthy Partners program provides healthcare for undocumented residents. The program is a result of a BHC-led campaign to reinstate a program cut during the recession.

Next Steps in the Fight for Health Equity



Caption/Credit

> Community organizing involves building a base with residents and systems leaders through one-on-one meetings to build trust, which is time intensive. Organizers are also pushing on systems of oppression with entrenched "power structures that do not want organizers to be successful," which requires waging multi-year campaigns to achieve a win.

Next Steps in the Fight for Health Equity

The People Power in the BHC is directed at a myriad of issues (e.g., school discipline, criminal justice, health care and land use reforms) and has achieved several positive outcomes. However, the already marginalized communities in Sacramento continue to be "under attack," and issues in need of advocacy arise daily. The BHC partners reflected on how to strengthen the People Power network built in the Sacramento BHC to bolster the fight for equity both locally and regionally. Their reflections are as follows:

ACKNOWLEDGE THE TIME AND EMOTIONAL RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: Community organizers always need to expand their networks given the enormity and complexity of the issues they work on, and because their networks are constantly evolving as systems leaders change and residents "get swept away" from advocacy due to life's struggles.

Folks who are unfamiliar with what community organizing is, or even those who have an awareness of organizing, but have not worked side-by-side with organizers, may not recognize "how resource intensive community organizing is." Like all programs, there is the intensity of obtaining the necessary funding to support the organization. However, unlike other programs, community organizing involves building a base with residents and systems leaders through one-on-one meetings to build trust, which is time intensive. Organizers are also pushing-on systems of oppression with entrenched "power structures that do not want organizers to be successful," which requires waging multi-year campaigns to achieve a win.

Community organizing is also emotionally intensive because organizers are collaborating with individuals who are experiencing first-hand the marginalization and inequity of systems:

> **"They [residents] are coming with the all the heaviness, stress, and trauma of dealing with that issue. To do the work well, it requires honoring the time it takes meeting one-on-one with them where they are at and providing support while you are capacity building with them. It is not just transactional … if you talk to any organizer, I am sure you will hear someone from their community whose car just broke down or who cannot pay rent. Supporting them on that issue is not what community organizers receive funding for, but that is what relationship building requires."**

GROW YOUTH ORGANIZING: While a few BHC partners work with youth to become agents of change, many believe the BHC has "only scratched the surface of developing our youth organizing." The partners believe the BHC would benefit from "centering in on our young people" for greater success and impact. The youth who work in partnership with the BHC-funded organizations have had large roles in BHC campaign wins (e.g., local school discipline policy reform, Measure G), and flourish in an environment where they are receiving the support to realize their strengths, gain stills and exercise their power. In the words of one partner, "if we just gave youth the resources to do the work, and removed the barriers to leadership, I think they could lead us through."

Next Steps in the Fight for Health Equity

PROVIDE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING: Over the past nine years, community organizers have taken a larger role in the BHC. While this illustrates the assets and pivotal role of community organizers, it also tests the capacity of their organizations. With limited budgets community organizers juggle the needs of the residents with monitoring implementation of policy wins, meeting grant deadlines, and fulfilling contract obligations. One partner lamented, "these leaders are taking so much on and think there is more they should be doing ... the community organizers do not have the resources to do the work ... my sense is that the people doing the work are way over capacity." There was agreement among those interviewed for this case story that there is a need to, "build the capacity of the organizations that are doing good work but struggling because they are too small." Capacity building includes not only fund development but allowing organizations the time and energy to reflect on their work because "when they do have time to reflect, they have these amazing ideas and breakthroughs." The organizations would benefit from receiving funding not tied to "one particular issue in one particular time." The organizers need general operating support grants, "to give the organizations the flexibility to move an agenda in the long-term and create collectively and collaboratively."

With limited budgets community organizers juggle the needs of the residents with monitoring implementation of policy wins, meeting grant deadlines, and fulfilling contract obligations.

ADD ORGANIZING PARTNERS TO THE BHC NETWORK: There was agreement that the BHC should expand their network, as there is a limited number of organizations in Sacramento focused on power building. Additionally, the diversity of Sacramento residents necessitates organizations that can support both the individual and shared needs of the various communities:

> **"The beauty of Sacramento is our diversity, but I do not think that the organizations we have in place have the capacity to serve the diversity of our county in the way that they would want to or like to. You take Asian Pacific Islanders, which is a whole big umbrella, and teasing out Asian, Mien, Hmong, Filipino ... who fights for people with disabilities, elderly people, or youth? Ideally you have organizations serving and centering those communities and working collectively toward a broader goal."**

Instill Residents as Leaders: While some of the BHC partners recognize the importance of having those residents most negatively affected by systems leading the work, other BHC partners may not fully comprehend how to organizationally make that shift, or their role in advocating for that shift with systems leaders. The next steps in the fight for equity needs to include all BHC partners advocating for residents to have more seats at the table than system leaders, for residents to be resourced for their time as experts, and for the amplification of resident voices in an empowering and not exploitive way. A first step for BHC partners is to develop a shared understanding of equity, and how to ground their work and organizational culture in equity principles that instill residents as leaders. BHC partners will then have a stronger foundation to inform advocacy focused on pushing system partners to adopt equity as a principle and practice, so resident voices are guiding the pivot for meaningful change.

Persist on the People Power Path

The Sacramento BHC has given rise to a network of partners who have collaboratively woven People Power into the fabric of the Sacramento community. While wins to improve community health were achieved, systems of oppression, the Great Recession and the subsequent recovery, and the national political landscape, continue to drive inequity.

Since the Great Recession, the homeownership rates for communities of color have declined. The proportion of Black households who own a home dropped from 43% in 2006 to 27% in 2015. Conversely, the recovery from the Great Recession has caused an affordable housing crisis. In the Oak Park neighborhood, which has been a geographic focus of BHC-funded work, the median home price has increased 320%, from $62,000 in 2012 to $260,000 in 2019.[22] The median rent in the City of Sacramento increased by 8.2%, the highest in the nation for a metropolitan area, and the county needs 63,118 more affordable housing rental homes to meet current demand.[23,24] High rents and home prices have not kept pace with wages. In 2019, the Sacramento County "Point in Time" count found homelessness in Sacramento increased 19% from the previous year, which was in-part due to the housing affordability crisis.[25]

Furthermore, the policies adopted by the SCUSD School Board to mitigate students of color being disproportionately affected by punitive school discipline policies are ineffective. Despite SCUSD being the 13th largest school district in the state, it suspends more Black males (in number and percentage) than any other school district in the state and has the second highest number of overall suspensions.[26] SCUSD is on the brink of a state government take-over due to forecasted budget deficits. If this happens, the District will have less funding for students and would lose control of how to distribute their funding. This would be an added challenge posed to BHC partners who have tirelessly advocated for district-wide implementation of the school discipline policies passed by SCUSD, which includes positive behavioral interventions and support (pbis) programs for students, and restorative justice and pbis training for teachers.

At the national level, the executive branch of the federal government has pushed to revoke social programs (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and has taken an anti-immigrant stance. Within a month of taking office, the administration signed an executive order that resulted in permanent travel restrictions on nationals from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen. The administration has acted to restrict the flow of asylum seekers at the U.S.–Mexico border, which has included a "zero-tolerance" policy that led to thousands of children being separated from their parents or adult guardians and placed in cages, or detention facilities.[27] These examples illustrate only a small fraction of the administrative actions taken by the current administration, which have been coupled with bigoted "Tweets" and campaign speeches that have correlated with increased racial tensions in the United States by emboldening white supremist groups and causing fear among people of color.

Persist on the People Power Path

Hate crimes (i.e., crimes motivated by the offender's bias against race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity) in the United States increased from 2015 to 2018, reaching a 16-year high in 2018, with a significant increase in violence against Latinx individuals. Physical assaults accounted for 61% of crimes reported, outpacing vandalism and property crimes.[28]

While TCE will sunset their BHC initiative in 2021, the work of the BHC network (i.e., funded partners and residents) to build a Sacramento that is inclusive, equitable and where everyone has voice, will not stop. The BHC network will continue to build People Power to hold decision-makers accountable, to monitor implementation of the policy wins achieved over the past nine years, and to continue to transform the systems of oppression that lead to negative health outcomes. The partners will wield their collective power and examine the intersections between the systems they are trying to disrupt, and the issues they are advocating for, rather than fighting battles in isolation to only achieve short-term outcomes. Just as TCE has come to realize that People Power is a "must-have," for transforming community health, so have the BHC partners, and they are poised to continue building the culture of community organizing and advocacy seeded by the BHC initiative.

The BHC network will continue to build People Power to hold decision-makers accountable, to monitor implementation of the policy wins achieved over the past nine years, and to continue to transform the systems of oppression that lead to negative health outcomes.

Partner Campaign Compendium

The following is a series of brief summaries that recount a campaign led or co-led by six of the organizations that receive BHC-funding to build People Power in Sacramento. The purpose of the summaries is to illustrate the differences and similarities between the organizations. The hope is that the reader will walk away with a more informed understanding of each organization's approach to community organizing and how they build their network, the various issues championed by the organizations, and the communities engaging in systems-change efforts. The wins chronicled below were achieved by the BHC partner leveraging their strengths and working collaboratively.

SACRAMENTO AREA CONGREGATIONS TOGETHER

Founded in 1991, Sacramento Area Congregations Together (Sac ACT) is a multi-faith, multi-racial organization that trains community residents to identify issues and advocate for transformative change. Sacramento ACT aspires to create a "more just and fair community for everyone in the Sacramento region, with a particular focus on communities of color who have experienced historical discrimination and disinvestment."[29] Sac ACT members include 56 congregations that represent the Baha'i, Jewish, Sufi, Unitarian Universalist, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Evangelical and non-denominational faiths who draw upon their religious beliefs as the "moral framework which demands inclusion, justice and equity for all."[30] According to Sac ACT Executive Gabby Trejo, the Sac ACT organizing model is centered on relationships because:

> **"We really believe people do not care what you know until they know you care. When people have been facing different levels of disinvestment in their community and barriers to having a healthy and thriving family, they do not care that I know about power … but when I build a relationship with them, they see that I do not care about a campaign. They see that I care about them, and that campaigns are just one tactic to tackle this Goliath that is the disinvestment of our communities … if we center the work around a campaign, people disappear, but our people who we are in relationship with do not disappear."**

Sac ACT staff guide community residents (hereinafter referred to as Leaders) through a structural analysis of an issue or "how power flows and how decisions are made," as the foundation for building a campaign. Leaders also learn how race plays a central role in the oppression of, and disinvestment in, communities of color. Trejo believes understanding structural racism and how structures pit communities of color against each other, is key to forming racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse coalitions to "build shared power among people." Lastly, Leaders learn how to share their story with decision makers. For Trejo, storytelling is a key skill for Leaders to develop because "people will not remember the statistics, there are data people who can do that. Our people bring the magic of our stories because that is how people can relate." Sac ACT has been a BHC grantee since the outset of the initiative and receives funding to develop resident Leaders who are actively engaging with public officials and pushing on systems, to create change.

CAMPAIGN: ENDING SACRAMENTO COUNTY SHERIFF CONTRACT WITH ICE

After a national prison reform effort failed in 2013, Sac ACT Leaders turned their attention to the conditions of the Sacramento County jail. Coincidently, during that time, Sac ACT began receiving calls from member parishes about the detention of immigrant Latino parishioners by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). According to Trejo the families of the detainees were suffering, as they were unable to pay for rent, and some of the children were traumatized by seeing the arrest of their parent. Sac ACT's Leaders began looking into the arrests and discovered that in 2013 the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department entered a five-year contract with ICE, to house up to 165 detainees in deportation proceedings at the cost of $100 per bed per detainee. The contract was estimated to generate more than $4 million in revenue annually for the county. Trejo conveyed that the ICE contract incentivized the detention of undocumented people:

“There was one case where a person was scheduled for release, but the Sheriff notified ICE, and ICE came in and got them before they left. We could see there was direct communication between the Sheriff and ICE.”

After learning about the “increased detention of people with Spanish surnames by ICE,” Sac ACT Leaders who worked on immigration reform, began meeting with the Sheriff to advocate for ending the ICE contract.

After learning about the “increased detention of people with Spanish surnames by ICE,” Sac ACT Leaders who worked on immigration reform, began meeting with the Sheriff to advocate for ending the ICE contract. The Sheriff would tell the Leaders the county would lose revenue by ending the ICE contract, and that without that revenue, ending the ICE contract would come at the expense of reentry programs. Trejo relayed that this “led to a path of bringing the immigrant and Black community together,” when the immigration and Live Free Leaders joined their advocacy efforts together and began jointly meeting with the Sheriff. The Live Free Coalition focuses on criminal justice reform and advocates that the money saved from decreased incarceration costs due to proposition 47 (which reduced certain nonviolent crimes from felonies to misdemeanors) is used to fund reentry services for the formerly incarcerated.

After making little progress with the Sheriff, Sac ACT organized an action and invited partner organizations (e.g., ACCE, Alianza, Service Employees International Union Local 1000 and DREAMer advocates) to join the campaign. The plan was for Sac ACT Leaders and the partners to ask the Sheriff to commit to ending the ICE contract, and to answer questions about how money saved from proposition 47 was supporting reentry services. Approximately 500 folks from the Black, Latinx and White communities attended the event; however, the Sheriff did not attend, but sent representatives from the department in his stead. The organizers did not allow the Sheriff’s representatives

to speak on his behalf, so his absence was noticed by the attendees. Many organizations and residents mobilized for this action in a show of support, which led the Sheriff to stop meeting with Sac ACT Leaders. Nevertheless, the organizational partners who attended the action committed to joining with Sac ACT in their advocacy efforts, which included meeting with the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors (BOS) to discuss the amoral ICE contract.

In 2018, there was a renewed focus on immigration across the country due to conditions at the U.S.-Mexico border; specifically, the forced separation of children from their parents or legal guardians who sought asylum or entry into the U.S., and the long-term detention of the children separated from their families. According to Trejo, Sac ACT used the outrage over the border to draw attention to the ICE contract, and the treatment of undocumented immigrants locally:

> **"People in Sacramento were upset at what was happening at the border. We were able to say this is not just happening at the border, this is what is happening here too. We were able to shame the County of Sacramento."**

In the summer of 2018, the BOS voted to end the Sheriff's ICE contract after four years of Sac ACT organizing and advocating for an end to the contract. This vote was particularly significant because the BOS went against county staff, and the Sheriff's recommendation to renew the ICE contract. According to Trejo, this win highlighted the long-term nature of community organizing and narrative change work:

> **"That was a huge win, but I think what it really highlights is that it took us four years to organize our people and to create the narrative for our people in the ecosystem."**

THE CAMPAIGN FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM CONTINUES

The Sac ACT-led ICE contract campaign helped to raise awareness about the role of local government in immigration. According to Trejo, "our work created a narrative change on not just thinking 'undocumented immigrants are impacted by ICE,' but the role that local government plays, like the Sheriff and District Attorney." Trejo iterated, the narrative about the role and the power of the Sheriff is shifting, and "people are now willing to question the Sheriff."

For example, in 2018 the Sacramento County Inspector General produced a report critical of the Sheriff's Department's handling of a deadly use of force incident in 2017, which led to the death of Mikel McIntyre, an unarmed black male who was suffering a mental health breakdown.[31] In response to the report, the Sheriff locked the Inspector General out of department facilities and ended his access to personnel and records, claiming that the Inspector General did not have the authority to independently investigate the Sheriff's Department. The issue went before the BOS within a few months of the ICE contract hearing. The BOS voted that the Inspector General did have investigative authority of the Sheriff, a decision that again, went against county staff and Sheriff's recommendations.

"...our work created a narrative change on not just thinking 'undocumented immigrants are impacted by ICE,' but the role that local government plays, like the Sheriff and District Attorney."

A second outcome of the campaign to end the ICE contract was the development of the Sacramento Immigration Coalition. The coalition is a network of organizations that historically have not worked together but have united around the common goal of making lives better for undocumented people. The coalition supported the development of a Sacramento immigration hotline and the City of Sacramento in becoming a sanctuary city.

Despite the wins achieved by Sac ACT and their partners, the fight for undocumented people's rights continues, especially given the national political climate. Sac ACT is researching ICE's planned expansion of operations in Sacramento, and the possibility of setting up deportation proceedings in Sacramento. Currently, undocumented folks are bussed to San Francisco for their hearings. Sac ACT is also working with folks who have received deportation notices whose cases are being processed on a shortened timeline.

BLACK PARALLEL SCHOOL BOARD

The Black Parallel School Board (BSPB) is a community organization that supports the educational growth and achievement of Black students. Founded in 2008, the BPSB advocates for state and local-level school discipline policy reform, and monitors Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) activities and programs to ensure they are compatible with, and support the needs of, Black students. According to a BPSB co-founder Carl Pinkston (Pinkston), the BPSB founders wanted to:

> **"Change the power relationship, to change the power of parents so they can determine the destiny of their child's education, and their community, and their role in education ... we wanted to let people know they have power."**

Pinkston described BPSB's approach to empowering people as "movement building." BPSB recruits new members by developing relationships with parents who come to them for support, and then invites those parents to join the BPSB. Folks who decide to join the BPSB are sworn in at a monthly meeting and become voting members. Board members who show a commitment to doing the work of the BPSB can be elected to the Executive Committee, which is responsible for implementing the decisions made at the monthly Board meetings. BPSB uses a "lead from behind" approach where the members receive training to acquire the skills necessary to be the advocates for change, rather than the BPSB organizers advocating on their behalf. BPSB organizers use reflection as a movement building tool, in that, members reflect on their work to identify best practices and lessons learned to shape future training and campaign strategies. BPSB also builds coalitions to leverage collective power towards systems reform:

> **"We do not believe we can go into battle alone ... we have to have a coalition, a united front ... Organizations have different constituencies, and it makes it a lot easier, as far as mobilization, to bring everyone together for a specific issue. We are more powerful and impactful together, and we also learn from each other."**

BPSB uses a "lead from behind" approach where the members receive training to acquire the skills necessary to be the advocates for change, rather than the BPSB organizers advocating on their behalf.

CAMPAIGN: SCUSD SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY REFORM

BPSB began focusing on school discipline reform in 2011 after hosting a forum on the school-to-prison pipeline (i.e., the systematic use of punitive school discipline policies and practices that remove students of color from the classroom and push them into the criminal justice system). At the forum, formerly incarcerated individuals described how school suspensions led to their incarceration. In response BPSB decided "we are going to have to elevate this area of work." BPSB faced an uphill battle convincing folks school discipline was an issue. SCUSD was closing schools due to budget deficits, and the charter school/school choice movement was gaining momentum, especially with the Black community. According to Pinkston, the idea parents could choose what school to send their children to for a quality education "reverberated with the African American community because schools were not reaching our kids."

BPSB became a BHC-funded partner in 2011 to work on school discipline policy reform at the state and local level. Regarding the local work, BPSB launched a two-pronged approach to build a campaign focused on SCUSD. The first prong was to form the Boys and Men of Color School Push-Out Advisory Committee and the Zero Tolerance Youth Leadership Team (YLT), and the second prong was to take part in the Restorative Justice Collaborative coordinated by SCUSD.

BPSB launched the School Push-Out Committee and YLT to: (1) raise awareness of the issue, (2) better understand how school discipline policies were affecting Sacramento communities of color, (3) develop policy reforms based on community input, and (4) engage community members in placing external pressure on SCUSD by advocating for change. Recognizing that school discipline policies affect racial and ethnic groups differently, the School Push-Out Committee structure included three separate racial/ethnic committees - Southeast Asian, Latinx

and African American – made up of parents and adult stakeholders. Community-based organizations - with established relationships and ties to the three racial/ethnic communities - led the subcommittees. BPSB attempted to establish a Native American subcommittee in partnership with SCUSD staff that did not gain traction. The School Push-Out Committee also had a coordinating committee, led by the BPSB, which was a space for the three subcommittees to discuss the similarities and differences in how their communities are affected by school discipline policies, to inform the development of policy recommendations.

BPSB developed the YLT as a pipeline for creating the next generation of movement builders. Through the leadership program high school students learn how to structure and deliver a presentation, public speaking, action research, and data and policy analysis. The YLT uses those skills to make presentations about the negative impacts of zero tolerance school policies to legislatures, policy experts, and school boards.

As part of their school discipline policy reform campaign, BPSB was a member of the Restorative Justice Collaborative convened by SCUSD to improve school climate and reduce suspensions and expulsion for students of color. As a member of the collaborative, BPSB played a large role in shaping the direction of, and drafting policy language for, one new, and two revised discipline policies adopted by the SCUSD Board in 2014. The policies, which were a result of the campaign spearheaded by the School Push-Out Committee, Zero Tolerance Youth Leadership Team, and BPSB, are as follows:

Whole Child Policy: Directed the Superintendent to reduce racial disparities by establishing a district policy and implementation plan, and to review and revise all other board policies to reflect the Whole Child Policy.

Board Policy 5144: Revised the policy to include a framework for implementing equitable discipline practices and eliminating disparities by minimizing the excessive use of willful defiance as a reason to impose in-school and off-campus suspensions.

Board Policy 5137: Revised the policy to include detailed action steps for creating an effective learning environment by developing social emotional competencies skill sets and a positive school climate and culture.

THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

When SCUSD hired a new Superintendent in 2014, school discipline policy reform was no longer a priority, and the District disbanded the Restorative Justice Collaborative. In 2015, BPSB reconstituted the Collaborative with a grassroots focus. While SCUSD made noteworthy progress with policy reform, the district-wide implementation of those policies is still a challenge. The reconstituted Collaborative coordinated and facilitated by BPSB, advocates for SCUSD to implement the policies passed in 2014 by providing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for students, and Restorative Justice professional development for staff. According to Pinkston, monitoring implementation is key:

> **"The schools who say they are doing restorative justice are just taking their old programs and calling it restorative justice ... Everyone is jerry-rigging implementation ... They would say, 'yes, we have implemented parts of the board policy,' and they have, it is just not with fidelity and implementing it correctly ... as far as training, it is only a few schools and district staff. They receive equity training, but in the training, they do not talk about race."**

In addition to their work in Sacramento, the BPSB has become a leader in school discipline reform. BPSB is involved with the Central Valley Movement Building (CVMB), which is a coalition of community-based organizations that work to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. The BPSB supplies technical support and training to build the capacity of the movement, in part by replicating the BPSB in other communities in the Central Valley.

ALLIANCE OF CALIFORNIANS FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACTION

The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Action (ACCE) was founded in 2010. The member-led, community organization is a "multi-racial, democratic, non-profit that builds power to fight and stand for economic, racial and social justice."[32] The organization is committed to "ground-up organizing" to build a "people's movement" for transformative community change. This is reflected in ACCE's door-to-door canvassing strategy for recruiting residents to become members of the organization, and ultimately Leaders in their community.

ACCE members receive political education and leadership development training and are encouraged to use their skills to organize their communities. ACCE members are taught to use an economic and racial justice lens to examine inequality, and to change the systems of oppression, rather than focusing solely on the issues that stem from inequitable systems.

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ACCE supports the frequent use of direct action and endeavors to shift what their members "believe is possible" through "stories grounded in hope, inclusion and co-reliance." Jovana Fajardo (Fajardo), Director of ACCE's Sacramento chapter, described their organizing strategy as follows:

> **"We [ACCE Organizers and resident members] have one-on-one conversations about what the issues are, how it is affecting them, what is their vision and what they would like to see, then we [ACCE Organizers] agitate them to take action. We then have them start those conversations with their neighbors and start working on collective plans. We do that through regional meetings, neighborhood meetings, and other meetings that organically come out through the neighborhood."**

In 2014, ACCE received their first Sacramento BHC grant, and have since helped residents with establishing community gardens and securing funding for sidewalks. For the past few years ACCE has partnered with residents to advance tenants' rights and protections, and to form tenants unions.

CAMPAIGN: CURTIS PARK SENIOR APARTMENTS TENANTS UNION

In early 2018, two Curtis Park Senior Apartment tenants approached ACCE about the conditions at their apartment community. The residents explained that the apartments were not designed or equipped for senior or disabled tenants, lacked basic safety amenities, and did not have a safety system in place for fires or other emergencies. In addition, the residents could not afford the yearly rent increases.

ACCE began working with the two concerned tenants (hereinafter referred to as Leaders) by supporting their efforts to recruit and organize the other senior apartment community residents. Eventually, all 91 tenants launched a campaign to establish a tenants union. During their campaign, the tenants received notice that their rent was increasing, and two tenants received unfair eviction notices. The Leaders then organized meetings with their City of Sacramento Councilmember, and the property owner, to discuss the rent increases, the unjust evictions, the apartment safety issues, and to advocate for a tenants union. ACCE staff connected the Leaders with Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC) to research their rights and the necessary steps for forming a tenants union. With help from LSNC, the tenants finalized their union bylaws, and with the support of ACCE staff, drafted a demand letter. The ACCE Leaders then organized a direct action and invited the property owner, property manager, their Councilmember, and the media. At the action, the tenants gave personal testimony about their issues, and presented their demand letter to the property owner and their Councilmember.

The tenants were successful in setting up a Curtis Park Senior Apartments Tenants Union, stopping the rent increase and unfair evictions, and getting the landlord to agree in writing to go through the union before issuing any future evictions. Additionally, the property manager arranged for the fire department to supply safety and emergency training for the apartment residents.

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Unfortunately, the ACCE Leaders who led the effort to form the Curtis Park Senior Apartment Tenants Union, could not afford subsequent legal rent increases, and moved out of state to live with family members. There is a housing affordability crisis in the City of Sacramento, and ACCE is part of many efforts to expand the availability of affordable housing, and to protect renters from unjust evictions and rent increases.

In September of 2019, the City of Sacramento passed a rent control and tenant protection measure that prohibits landlords from raising the annual rent more than 6% plus inflation for housing built prior to February 1st, 1995, and evicting tenants without a just reason. The city ordinance was in response to the Housing 4 Sacramento Coalition (of which ACCE was a founding member) collecting over 44,000 signatures to place a rent-control initiative on the 2020 ballot. City officials are asking that the ballot proponents remove the measure from the ballot, due to the passing of the local ordinance. While some coalition members support removing the ballot measure, others do not, and want the ballot measure to go before voters in the November 2020 election. ACCE is one of the organizations that backs voters “deciding what rent control should look like,” and continues to organize members to advocate for the city to commit to placing the measure on the ballot. ACCE is also fighting for stronger, permanent protections for tenants both statewide and locally.

EAST BAY ASIAN YOUTH CENTER

EBAYC (East Bay Asian Youth Center) was founded in 1976 as the "Asian Drop-In Center" by youth who were sons and daughters of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese immigrants in South Berkeley. These young people wanted a place where they would be supported by caring adults in a culturally empowering manner. EBAYC expanded to Oakland in 1988 to address race and gang-related violence and incarceration among the rapidly growing Southeast Asian youth population. EBAYC established an office in Sacramento in 2014 to expand its intensive case management and youth leadership development services for Southeast Asian youth.

EBAYC's work is grounded in a power-building theory of change, which is strongly influenced by the Pacific Institute for Community Organization or the PICO (now known as Faith in Action) community organizing model. EBAYC's power-building theory of change includes six components: (1) invest the necessary resources to build and sustain an organizational infrastructure for community organizing; (2) engage in one-to-one conversations with a large and diverse cross-section of youth and parents; (3) identify shared interests and actionable issues through the one-to-one conversations; (4) convene and support small groups of youth and parents to work on specific issues through a systematic organizing process of research, action, and evaluation; and (5) collaborate with external allies who share common interests and who want to work together to achieve specific policy and systems changes that improve the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and their families.

EBAYC's work is grounded in a power-building theory of change, which is strongly influenced by the PICO (now known as Faith in Action) community organizing model.

In 1996, EBAYC staff in the Bay Area, in partnership with four other organizations, formed a coalition that was successful in getting a ballot measure passed that required the City of Oakland to use 2.5% of its unrestricted revenues to support programs and services for children and youth, known as the Oakland Children's Fund.

In 2014, EBAYC received their first Sacramento BHC grant to empower youth and parents to support policy change in schools. The organization received subsequent funding from BHC to support policy change but with a focus on the creation of a sustainable funding stream for children and youth services.

CAMPAIGN: SACRAMENTO KIDS FIRST COALITION & MEASURE G

In June of 2016, Sacramento voters narrowly rejected Measure Y, which would have increased the tax on marijuana cultivation and manufacturing businesses from 4% to 5%, with the increase in revenue devoted to children and youth services. According to Sacramento's EBAYC Director Leesai Yang (Yang), Measure Y's defeat sparked debate about what to do next. Toward this end, EBAYC organized Southeast Asian youth, primarily from Sacramento's Meadowview and Del Paso Heights neighborhoods, to engage in participatory action-research aimed at answering the question: "What would I do with $10 million to help Sacramento's children and youth?"

In part, this research led the EBAYC Youth Action Team – comprised of high school and college students - to take a day-long, study trip to Oakland to learn about youth-serving programs that receive financial support from the Oakland Children's Fund. According to Yang, the trip was eye opening:

> **"What jumped out to us was that there were so many resources for young people in that area compared to Sacramento, and how funding has helped keep those organizations going, for youth to have resources available, and to have what young people want to be involved in. Our experience brought us to the idea that we can create a coalition to fight for funding and have the same opportunities that the people in the Bay Area do."**

Partner Campaign Compendium

In April 2017, EBAYC convened youth-serving organizations and pitched the idea of forming a "Sacramento Kids First" Coalition to launch a campaign to set up a dedicated children's fund in the City of Sacramento, rather than relying on short-term grants to fund youth programs and services. In June 2017, the Coalition launched, and EBAYC co-led the campaign with Sol Collective, Youth Forward, and Roberts Family Development Center.

Given the defeat of Measure Y, the Coalition decided to move forward with a ballot measure that would only need a simple majority (50 percent plus one vote) to pass, rather than a tax measure that requires the approval of two-thirds of the voters. The Sac Kids First Coalition drafted ballot language that would require the City of Sacramento to set aside 2.5% of its unrestricted revenues (approximately $12 million annually) for children and youth services, with no less than 90% of the fund supporting direct services. As part of the ballot measure, a Citizen's Planning and Oversight Commission appointed by the mayor and city council would create a strategic plan to guide spending, and an annual evaluation would monitor the fund and the impact of the services.

With policy language drafted, the Coalition sought to raise support for the ballot measure. Coalition members met one-on-one with city councilmembers, school Board Members, and community and philanthropic leaders to discuss the need for youth services and programs and their proposal to set up a Children's Fund within the City of Sacramento. The EBAYC Youth Action Team led outreach for, and administration of, a youth opinion survey in October 2017. The survey solicited the opinions of 1,200 youth about the types of youth-serving programs needed in the Sacramento area. The EBAYC Youth Action Team, in collaboration with youth from Sol Collective, Roberts Family Development Center, and Blacks Make a Difference, used the survey results when mobilizing their peers to engage in the campaign, and when advocating with residents, community-based organizations and elected officials to support the fund.

To place the proposal of a dedicated children's fund before Sacramento voters, the Coalition needed 36,000 eligible voter signatures to qualify the measure for the ballot. The Coalition recruited volunteers and raised funds to hire paid signature gatherers to collect voter signatures over a seven-month period beginning in October of 2019. In April 2019, the Coalition submitted over 38,500 valid Sacramento voter signatures, and qualified the measure for the ballot. In November 2019, the City of Sacramento Mayor and City Council voted to place the measure (Measure G) on the March 2020 ballot.

THE MEASURE G CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

The Sac Kids First campaign provided youth with an opportunity to learn new skills, and gain new experience, while being the voice for change. According to Yang:

> **"The campaign really allowed young people to have a foundation for voice, internships, jobs, leadership opportunities, knocking on doors, having a pitch when speaking to voters about the petition. All that the young people gained ... It gave them pride and confidence ... It gave them that passion to fight for the long-term goal and see the journey of how things come to life, and the belief that, if you continue to work hard and stick with it, you can see positive things come out of it."**

While the Coalition has made tremendous progress in the past two years, members will now focus on educating residents about the ballot measure to garner votes. The youth will continue to be the voice of the campaign, using their skills to advocate for voters to pass a ballot measure that could fundamentally alter the financial support for youth programs and services in the City of Sacramento.

HMONG INNOVATING POLITICS

Hmong Innovating Politics (HIP) was founded in 2012 with the mission to "strengthen the political power of Hmong and disenfranchised communities through innovative civic engagement and strategic grassroots mobilization." After taking part in a Southeast Asian Advisory Committee to help inform the legislative agenda of then Assemblymember Roger Dickinson, the HIP founders realized the Hmong community members were able to name issues affecting their community but lacked the experience and capacity to articulate policy solutions that would address the root causes of those issues. Moreover, the community members felt disenfranchised by the existing power structures and were on the outside looking-in when critical decisions about the community were made without them. HIP formed to help residents envision and articulate solutions to improve their communities and build the power infrastructure to ensure that historically disenfranchised immigrant communities would always have a seat at the table. According to Cha Vang, one of the HIP founders, Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) is how the organization uses civic participation to build people power, which is "the core of what HIP does."

HIP formed to help residents envision and articulate solutions to improve their communities and build the power infrastructure to ensure that historically disenfranchised immigrant communities would always have a seat at the table.

Vang described IVE as, "one-on-one conversations and culturally and linguistically tailored programming catered to the communities we are trying to organize." HIP focuses their IVE efforts in geographic areas of the county where there are large numbers of low-income, Hmong and Mien, low propensity voters. HIP goes into the areas of the county and uses voter engagement programs to educate folks about topics such as the importance of voting, the Voters Choice Act, or local and state level ballot initiatives. However, unlike other voter education efforts that end with the election cycle, HIP uses IVE to develop relationships with the community to engage them in issues beyond the ballot box. Vang relayed,

> **"IVE is about building relationships all the time. We contact voters during the election cycle, but we have longer conversations after the voting cycle ends ... we have a lot of one-on-one conversations with these folks who have traditionally been ignored or not engaged in the political process ... IVE is really about building power within our communities so we can engage them in a bigger political realm."**

In 2016, HIP received funding through the Sacramento BHC initiative to increase the representation and voice of the Southeast Asian parent community in decisions around education.

CAMPAIGN: SCUSD DISAGGREGATED STUDENT DATA

HIP initially used their BHC funding to involve Hmong residents in the development of the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP is part of the Local Control Funding Formula which is the basis for dispersing state funds to local K-12 schools. The formula includes the allocation of revenue to support students who are low-income, foster youth, and English Language Learners (ELL). The LCAP gives the community an opportunity to voice how they believe the school districts should support the needs of these three specific groups of students.

When engaging in the LCAP, HIP recognized the need for data specific to the educational outcomes of the Southeast Asian community (who may be low-income and/or ELL), to inform the types of programs needed to help them succeed. However, the only data available was for Asian Pacific Islander or API students, a category which combines the Southeast Asian, Asian, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian students together. According to Vang, disaggregated data is crucial given the Southeast Asian's unique and relatively new (mid-1979)

resettlement to the United States in comparison to other groups, specifically East Asians who began immigrating in large waves in the 1850s:

> **"The history around our [Southeast Asian] resettlement in the United States and being newer refugees, has led to a lot of students coming into school with less knowledge and resources. When our Southeast Asian students and our East Asian students are lumped into Asian, our [Southeast Asian] students were not getting the resources to be successful or interested in school. But we could not prove this because we [Southeast Asian] were being lumped into this category that was showing as very successful in the district."**

The need to highlight the unique experiences of the Southeast Asians gained attention in 2016, when AB 1726 was signed into law requiring the California State Department of Public Health to collect data by ethnicity for specified Asian (e.g., Hmong, Thai), Pacific Islander (e.g., Fijian, Tongan), and Native Hawaiian groups. Prior to the bill being signed into law, the Public Health Department followed what is still widespread practice, lumping those ethnicities into the API category for data collection purposes. While the bill represented considerable progress for obtaining disaggregated public health data, powerful interest groups were successful in removing public education from the bill. With the education system excluded from AB 1726, HIP launched a campaign to prompt SCUSD to disaggregate student data. Vang explained the campaign was necessary because "how do we know if Southeast Asian students are performing well academically or have the resources they need without data?"

HIP started the campaign by meeting with SCUSD Board Members to advocate for nuanced data reporting. Through the LCAP work, HIP developed relationships with education stakeholders, such as Congressman Ami Bera and Sacramento County Office of Education, with whom they were "always communicating the need for disaggregated data." HIP also took part in the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund's social media and online campaign #NotTheSame. The campaign aimed to raise awareness about the different and often unheard stories of struggle experienced by the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and the mischaracterization that they all have access to the same opportunities. While the social media campaign was separate from the disaggregated data campaign, it served to emphasize that the API community is not homogeneous.

HIP was successful in getting SCUSD to disaggregate API data reporting. Vang believes the turning point was the SCUSD leadership change in 2017:

> **"What really propelled the campaign forward was when Superintendent Aguilar came on, that was an opportunity. We sat down with him to talk about needs and he invited HIP to be a part of the Graduation Task Force. We said that we can be a part of this, but we do not have the data to know if our students are doing well or not... that was the tipping point."**

Vang also believes youth were the "driving force" of the campaign, by serving as the "intergenerational bridge" unifying the different generations. Young people can explain the U.S. educational system to the elders who were not educated in, and therefore do not have a contextual understanding of, that system. Furthermore, young people can explain the education system to the older generations in their language (e.g., Hmong). Vang believes that the young people were integral for engaging the elders in the campaign because:

> **"The elders always have this sense they do not have the understanding and education of policies to be involved in making policies and pushing for what they want. So, the millennials have been the generation who understands what power means in the United States, and how we can pull everybody to this space."**

THE CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISAGGREGATED DATA CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

Through HIP's efforts, disaggregated data reporting has become part of SCUSD practices. Vang explained "you can tell at any SCUSD board meeting; any time they release data, they disaggregate data for us." SCUSD's use of data to gauge educational outcomes by race and ethnicity is changing, as illustrated by language in the resolution to establish the SCUSD African American Achievement Initiative Advisory Task Force:

> **"The disparities in performance in markers such as English Language Arts and Math Achievement, … are persistent among historically underperforming student groups … This is also true when data on graduation rates are disaggregated by racial and ethnic categories and Latino/a, African American, Native American, and certain Asian Pacific Islander groups, namely Hmong and Laotian are the lowest performing groups."**

While SCUSD now supplies disaggregated racial/ethnic data when reporting educational outcomes, Vang believes "there is always a need for a reminder" about the importance of disaggregated data. For Vang, the necessity to remind SCUSD and other educational stakeholders about the importance of disaggregated data to tell the story highlights that community organizing work is never truly done. As Vang noted "the hardest part about our work is even when you win, there is more work to do."

ORGANIZE SACRAMENTO

Organize Sacramento was founded in 2012 with the goal of changing people from activists to organizers. According to Tamie, one of Organize Sacramento's co-founders, when the organization was started, there was a need to grow the number of organizers by building the skills of activists, because a small number of organizers "were doing everything in Sacramento." The co-founders' experience with union organizing, and training received from the Midwest Academy, guides Organize Sacramento's training approach, which Tamie described as:

> **"Empowering those who are suffering to correct the problem by teaching them the tactics, and strategies, to solve the problem. You are always training people, and having people learn the techniques within the structure of the work. Then you give them the space to figure out what the path is for the solution."**

Organize Sacramento became a BHC funded partner in 2014 to build support for increasing Sacramento's minimum wage. Since then, the organization has lent support to local and state level initiatives led by other BHC community organizers, while also spearheading local campaigns. Organize Sacramento also supplies public policy training for people who are from low-income communities or communities of color through the Boards & Commissions Leadership Institute (BCLI). Through a five-month BCLI fellowship, the participants learn how to navigate complex and intersecting policy arenas, the culture and language of commissions, and building effective relationships in and outside commissions, to prepare them for serving on a board or commission. BCLI graduates have been elected or appointed to boards and commission including, but not limited to, the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education, and the City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Commission.

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CAMPAIGN: THE SACRAMENTO TRANSIT RIDERS UNION

In 2017, Organize Sacramento received a BHC grant to help residents with forming a public transit riders union. The Sacramento Transit Riders Union (Sac TRU) is as an "independent, democratic, member-run union of transit riders organizing for better public transit systems in the Sacramento."[33] When Organize Sacramento began supporting residents to form Sac TRU, Sacramento's public transit provider - Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT) – had been struggling financially for a decade. The agency's costs were rising, ridership was stagnating, the budget reserves were depleted, and a high-interest line of credit was used to pay the bills. SacRT's solution was to lay off 20 management and administrative personnel, increase fares by an average of 10%, and decrease the frequency of bus service. During all of this, the agency was prepared to give the outgoing Executive Director a lucrative retirement deal.[34,35] Organize Sacramento decided to work on developing Sac TRU because,

> **"There were a lot of problems at SacRT. The agency was almost insolvent, and we were worried that they would continue to privatize services. They had given their Executive Director a huge golden parachute to retire- so big, that over time it could have brought the agency down. It seemed like no one in town was paying attention or interested in working on transit in Sacramento. Because public transit is an integral part of the link for getting people to jobs, and students to school, we decided to get to work."**

Organize Sacramento staff recruited transit riders to join Sac TRU by administering a survey about the conditions of the SacRT system, buses, and light rail cars to 1,000 folks who were either riding, or about to board, a bus or light rail car. Initially, Sac TRU met bi-monthly to build the union, but switched to meeting monthly with the flexibility to "ramp up or ramp down" based on the needs of their active campaign(s). According to Tamie, "at every meeting, [members] are trained in community organizing tactics. We take the opportunity at each meeting... to tell them what they are learning and why they are learning it."

At the monthly meeting, Sac TRU members also review the agenda for the upcoming SacRT Board meeting and decide if there is a pressing issue or concern the members want to address. The members draft a letter for the SacRT Board detailing the union's concerns and appoint someone to attend the Board meeting to testify about the issue. Sac TRU's regular review of SacRT Board meeting agendas, and concerns brought to the union by concerned transit riders, inform Sac TRU's campaigns for change.

Once Sac TRU selects a campaign, the members first try cooperative tactics (e.g., meeting with SacRT Board Members) and then, if necessary, escalate to more adversarial tactics (e.g., action). For example, after unsuccessfully using cooperative tactics to advocate for the repair of a broken elevator intended to aid disabled and mobility impaired individuals to access a light rail station, Sac TRU planned a "tombstone memorial" action. This would be an opportunity for the public to pay tribute to the elevator that would never run again. However, just planning the action put enough pressure on SacRT staff to fix the elevator.

With training and support from Organize Sacramento, SacTRU has become an independently operating transit riders' union. Sac TRU has led campaigns, and supported systems changes proposed by SacRT staff, which resulted in several positive changes to Sacramento's public transit system. These efforts reduced the price of a monthly transit pass, and bus and light rail fares; stopped the closure of a light rail station; purchased equipment to promote access of disabled transit riders; increased the maintenance of bus shelters to improve cleanliness; initiated capital expenditures for repairs of the SacRT office; and optimized bus routes to increase the frequency of bus service.

A few Sac TRU members gained the skills and confidence to become members of the SacRT Mobility Advisory Council whose purpose it is to advise SacRT staff on transit system features for senior and disabled community members. Previously, SacRT staff did not seek input from the Mobility Advisory Council before making systems changes, but the Sac TRU members are using their power to shift the culture and dynamics of the Council, and assert the Council's power:

> **"We have changed the dynamic of the Advisory Council. Not completely, but through building up the leaders (SacTRU members), they are pushing back on SacRT staff ... They could speak at the SacRT Board Meetings, but without them as a group, they did not have as much power. Now, they have the power and comfort of having brothers and sisters that also serve on the advisory council to hold them up and validate them and their concerns."**

THE CAMPAIGN FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PUBLIC TRANSIT CONTINUES

Tamie believes one of the most impactful outcomes of the SacRT campaigns has been the relationships built between Sac TRU members and SacRT staff. The SacRT Board and staff now value the role of the union:

> **"The narrative has changed with the board members because they understand that we are legitimately invested in a better transit system and that a better transit system would reflect on them very well as elected people. They are invested in knowing why we are pushing back ... SacRT appreciates that we know how to build leverage and how to be respected."**

Sac TRU has contributed to several tangible changes for transit riders, but there is still work to be done. SacTRU will monitor the major system overhaul recently completed by SacRT to improve operating efficiency and costs. In addition, Organize Sacramento will work to continue to support SacTRU with the goal of empowering the members to be union ambassadors, and building a transit riding culture in Sacramento.

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