Women Creating Social Capital and Social Change
A Study of Women-led Community Development Organizations

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Preface

This report is the outcome of a collaboration between the Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center, a public policy research center at The City University of New York, and the McAuley Institute, a national nonprofit intermediary based in Silver Spring, Maryland, which focuses on expanding the supply of safe, affordable housing for low income women and children. Over the last decade, The Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center (HSC) has produced a body of urban and state comparative research on education, welfare, and community development, with a focus on the citizen participation of low-income women and people of color. This study follows up on previous studies conducted by the HSC on the role of race and gender in Community Development
Organizations (CDOs). In 1994, Gittell and Covington surveyed several hundred CDOs and found that when women made up a majority of the Boards of Directors of these organizations, they were more likely to pursue a broader community development approach that included community organizing and programs responsive to women, such as childcare and elder care. Later studies conducted by the HSC examined the impact of race and gender representation in CDOs (Gittell, Gross, and Newman, 1994), as well as the role of CDOs in building social capital (Gittell, Newman, Ortega-Bustamante, Pierre-Louis, 1998).

The McAuley Institute specializes in capacity building and in technical and financial assistance for affordable housing organizations led by and benefitting women. In its work with hundreds of organizations across the country, the McAuley Institute witnessed women-led organizations changing law and policies, generating millions of dollars in urban reinvestment, building and rehabilitating thousands of housing units, organizing community residents, creating jobs and consumer cooperatives, and generally improving the quality of life in low income communities across the United States. Yet the McAuley Institute noticed that these significant contributions have often been overlooked, even among women who work for social change.

These diverse experiences and interests coalesced into a unique collaboration between researchers and practitioners. We believe new models of collaborative research can enrich research by allowing community voices to be heard.
Introduction

Democratic Localism

Democratic localism is an important part of the heritage of American democracy. Historically, citizen access and participation in the political and social systems has been through local governments, local organizations and voluntary associations (deTocqueville 1966). The strength of democracy was directly related to the proliferation of local institutions and community-based organizations. These organizations became an integral part of the local communities, reinforced identity with that place, and its culture and values. Membership in these groups, participation in local governance, and access to information contributed to expectations of inclusion, which defined a kind of participatory citizenship. This study provides more insight into how localism effects social change through coalition building among women-led groups and the circumstances under which interaction and joint action occurs.

The early history of the concept of community development has its roots in this strong tradition of democratic localism in the American experience. Citizenship was experienced in local organizations and local government and concerned with community needs. Women in particular, although denied voting rights and equal status in the political system, were community activists, significantly engaged in building community cohesion. They were the foot soldiers in the local charity and temperance and settlement house movements of the turn of the century and were responsible for fundamental change in the approach to the problems of poverty. Their contact with the poor in their deteriorated city neighborhoods led activist women to recognize that the poor were not the cause of their own poverty but rather that the causes of poverty were social. The revitalization and stabilization of neighborhoods and communities became a priority of women’s associations and organizations. In American cities in the 1920s and 1930s city reform was a priority and activist women led tenant and food strikes affirming their commitment to neighborhoods and the needs of the poor.

Community Development Context
In the decades of local movement politics from the 1960s to the 1980s women were major participants in community organizations. In the 1960s and 1970s women were strong advocates for community control of local services and neighborhood preservation. In the 1980s they were among the few activist forces pursuing neighborhood renewal in the face of uncontrolled downtown growth priorities. Their leading role in promoting comprehensive program development in community-based organizations has never been fully recognized nor appreciated. In the last two decades the shift in priorities of community organizations to community development defined as the construction of affordable housing and business development has been resisted by organizations with strong women’s leadership across the country. Our research identifies this resistance to a narrow program of physical development and the heightened pursuit by women-led community development organizations (CDOs) of more comprehensive neighborhood policies. These CDOs included in their definition of community development, issues which directly responded to the needs of women, children and families, even in the face of reduced funding for those concerns. Foundations and governments have only recently begun recognizing the wisdom of those broader concerns. The current emphasis of public policy and foundation funding on comprehensive community initiatives (CCI) echoes the long-term commitments of many women-led organizations.

The focus of community development corporations (CDCs) has changed over the past four decades and has been influenced by a combination of factors including government and foundation policies, funding and the role of intermediaries, and the national political climate. The first generation of CDCs had their origins in the Ford Grey Areas in the early 1960s and included organizations funded by the federal anti-poverty programs of the mid 1960s (Pierce and Steinbach 1987). Zdenek (1987) estimates that about 100 CDCs were created during what he terms the first generation of CDCs, those founded from 1965 to 1975. Many of the organizations of this period started as grassroots advocacy groups that became social service providers to secure government and foundation funding (M. Gittell 1980).

The federal Special Impact Program of 1966 both created CDCs and encouraged community based-
organizations (CBOs) to shift from advocacy to service delivery. Forty-five of the first CDCs received administrative and venture capital investment funding under the Title VII federal program (Zdenek 1987). The strategies funded included acquiring existing businesses, developing new businesses, investing in the physical assets of the community, giving loans and technical assistance to entrepreneurs, and joint assets ventures (Berndt 1977). In the 1970s, the Ford Foundation called together eleven community-based grassroots advocacy organizations from different parts of the country to promote a new agenda of community development for local organizations with Ford Foundation funding. This was part of national push towards building affordable housing and initiating local enterprises and away from advocacy and organizing.

As grassroots CBOs, the first generation of CDCs had depended on a membership base. They promoted advocacy and civic action as a priority based on a comprehensive view of community needs. Relying on a strategy of community mobilization, they created significant social capital through civic actions. In the 1970s, foundations, corporate supporters, and government redesigned the community development agenda to focus on affordable housing and business development, utilizing the concept of CDCs as the agency.

Lemann concludes that the shift in structure and goals of CDCs was a backlash to the confrontational strategies of CBOs in the 1960s and 1970s (Lemann 1994). CDCs would be less likely to challenge the system; they would localize their attention to neighborhood needs, often relying on professional staff to set agendas and goals. The production goals of the early CDCs seemed to be designed to deter strategies of mobilization and confrontation. The CDC movement coincided with the withdrawal of federal government programs and a renewed national political commitment to the market place and private business. City growth policies were encouraged as the CDC movement gave importance to neighborhood development while generally accommodating downtown growth policies.

Social Capital and Women in Community Development
As CDOs are the primary vehicle for development in low-income neighborhoods, scholars have begun to examine them in terms of the degree to which they increase citizen participation, increase civic capacity, as well as stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods through the creation of social capital (Temkin and Rhoe 1998, R.Gittell and Vidal 1998, M.Gittell 1998, 1996). According to Putnam, civic action requires the existence of social capital; he defines social capital as “norms, trust, and networks” (Putnam 1993). As R.Gittell and Vidal note, there has been a “virtual industry of interest and action created around the implication of Putnam’s findings for the development of low-income communities” (R. Gittell and Vidal 1998 14).

In an empirical examination of neighborhood stability, Temkin and Rohe (1998) argued that the creation and existence of social capital is a key factor in determining neighborhood stability. They found that neighborhoods with high levels of social capital thrive and develop, while those with low levels do not. In their words, “building social capital is an effective way to stem a neighborhood’s decline”(1998 62). Furthermore they argue,

> given recent policy changes, organizations in the best position to develop social capital will be neighborhood-based community development corporations. In some cases developing social capital will represent a new responsibility for CDCs, expanding their scope beyond housing development and social service provision (62).

Our research finds that women-led groups define their community development efforts broadly and holistically, and emphasize participation and local democracy. To the extent that women-led groups contribute differentially to the development of social capital by increasing community participation and trust, and by creating community networks and civic action, they represent a model for community development efforts.

**Findings**

The women-led groups included in our study tend to define program areas broadly, encourage participation, and value diversity on their boards and staffs. While women-led groups tend to exhibit the very qualities that have been identified as desirable in CCI initiatives, these efforts and characteristics
have not been adequately valued or widely funded. A Boston Women’s Fund and Women in Philanthropy report found that nationally nonprofit programs for women and girls (NPWGs) were not funded, and that in Boston, as in the rest of the country, funders favored “universal programs.” However “universal programs” which did not consciously take into account women and girls often overlooked or excluded their needs. Furthermore, the examination of NPWGs in Boston, revealed that “NPWGs do not cluster around a set of narrowly defined ‘gender issues’” (Mead 1993 6). Instead, these programs which are often designed and developed by women operate in a wide variety of areas including: housing, education, health, arts and culture, economic development, politics, and leadership training. The defining operating characteristic of NPWGs was “program design rooted in asset models of human and community development; attention to constituents as whole people, not as discrete problem elements; inclusive decision making and participatory management; racial diversity; and a broad range of program foci” (Mead 1993 22). Our study of women-led organizations across the county found that this tended to be true nationally as well. The report argues that it is precisely the qualities that programs designed for and by women and girls exhibit which should make them desirable to funders, given funders own criteria (Mead 1993). We would add that it is also these characteristics of women-led organizations that contribute to the development of social capital and of social change. These findings about Boston resonate with our own about women-led programs nationally and demonstrate the particular social capital building benefits of women-led programs.

Earlier research on the issue of gender in community development found that when women were in leadership positions and comprised the majority of the board, development efforts were more comprehensive than male-led groups (Gittell and Covington 1994; Gittell, Gross and Newman 1994). This study confirms women’s broad, inclusive definition of community development. Women-led CDOs in particular have taken on multiple roles in the community including housing and economic development, organizing, activism and advocacy, as well as human service delivery. The roles the organizations play and the programs which have been established reflect women’s self-described “holistic” approach to community development.
The organizations which included in this study vary greatly in terms of the types of programs they offer and the ways in which they structure their organizations and pursue their goals, however one consistent theme of the interviews was that most women leaders described their approach to community development as “holistic” and argued that it should be centered on changing people’s lives. With a goal of creating change in their communities, women include special programs for women and children which respond to their special needs as an integral part of community development. Although women leaders felt that funders’ evaluations of their programs are focused on quantifiable outputs, they often concentrated on less quantifiable areas such as leadership development and “community empowerment,” as well as on housing and economic development.

Our interviews confirmed other gender specific research on women in organizations as leaders in that our interviewees describe themselves as open, consultative and supportive of staff. Most of them are committed to participation, process, and internal democracy. Furthermore, the majority of the women-led CDOs we studied emphasize community participation from the moment of program design, through implementation and evaluation. Open leadership, representation of the community in CDO governance, and community participation emerged as general attributes of women-led CDOs.

Women’s personal histories were compelling accounts describing the increased self-worth they achieved from their activism and the skills they gained. They talked about their personal development in ways that connected to their communities. Their ability to see the community as an integral part of their own lives was exceptional. This deeper engagement based on women’s unique experience and perceptions is one explanation for clear and identifiable differences in the goals and agendas of the women-led organizations. What these community women bring to their organizations is unique. They are not entrepreneurs and they are not primarily in pursuit of personal advancement or new careers. Their priority is the community and they never see themselves as separate from the community.

We also found that women-led CDOs are creating social capital by developing and nurturing networks between women leaders, between themselves and their staffs and community residents, between their
organizations and other community institutions, and between their CDOs and organizations and individuals outside their immediate community. Community residents who are participants in CDO activities or governance often benefit from these expanded networks. For instance, community residents may meet school and city government officials for the first time, or attend local or national meetings where they expand their social and political networks.

Choosing nine sites for our research allowed us to see differences between communities in the recruitment and support for women leaders in community development. We found that the political culture of the city or region can be important to creating a more receptive and respectful environment for women in community development. In cities where many agencies are headed by women, there are many women elected officials and a strong tradition of roles for women leaders in the city. This environment is clearly conducive to the recruitment of women into leadership positions in community development and the women in those jobs say there are fewer barriers to their assumption of leadership. Also, women leaders fare better where the community development movement has a longer history and a supportive political environment. In cities and regions where the local government is hostile to nonprofit development, women are more marginalized.

While the political culture of a city or region affects women’s leadership in community development, there are barriers that most women we interviewed pointed to regardless of geographic location. Women face the same general barriers that all CDOs face in terms of the difficulty of securing funding, but they also spoke of having to overcome obstacles thrown up at them because of their gender and race. Most women report having overcome many of these obstacles through extra work and perseverance borne of their commitment to their community. Because women-led CDOs represent a model of democratic localism and social capital construction, their strategies and programs are worthy of support and dissemination.

**Faith-based CDOs**

Another important theme which emerged from the interviews was the importance of faith-based CDOs.
Many of the women we interviewed expressed that spirituality was an important factor in their community work, either as a personal motivator or as the foundation for the organizations which they lead. Across the country women spoke of the importance of the church in their communities and in their personal lives. A number of organizations were explicitly faith-based and had been founded by a church or groups of churches, while others were more indirectly connected to a church, or were led and staffed by individuals whose personal faith had drawn them into community work. In some communities we visited, the church was often one of the few, and sometimes the only, institution to which community residents could turn to address housing, economic, and other development needs. In others, it was one of the only institutions which was able to help bridge the gap between community members of different races and ethnicities. In every community we visited, some of the most important community development groups were either based in a church or drew on church members for leadership and support of their organizations.

Faith-based organizations were an important factor in both urban and rural communities and were particularly strong in communities of color. Many of the organizations in the African-American and a few in the Latino communities we visited had a strong religious base and their leaders openly expressed the importance of their faith to their work. Recent scholarship has begun to address the question of the importance of faith-based organizations in community development. Reese and Shields note that while the documentation of the role of the church in social service has been considerable, the examination of its role in housing and economic development remains “anecdotal” (Reese and Shields 1998). It has been noted that in many poor communities only the church remains as a vital and effective institution (Vidal 1995). In their examination of urban church-based development organizations, Reese and Shields contend that “in principle... urban religious institutions appear to be uniquely well-positioned to succeed at urban economic development” (Reese and Shields 1998 4). Our research found that both urban and rural faith-based CDOs are key contributors to community development.
Chapter One
Methodology and Characteristics of CDOs

This study is a collaboration between the Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center, a research center at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, and the McAuley Institute, a national nonprofit intermediary working primarily with affordable housing organizations led by and benefitting women. The research team established a National Advisory Panel of grassroots leaders, policy experts, academics, and funders to provide their expertise to the study. We also convened a cross-site focus group of study participants to further explore key issues arising from the field work. Throughout the research, our effort was to encourage women to speak for themselves and define the issues.

In selecting the nine field research sites, we identified a cross-section of women-led/women-focused organizations in each site through background research, reputational analysis, and suggestions from Advisory Board members. We chose seven urban and two rural sites with a significant presence of women-led organizations. The urban sites were Boston, Chicago, El Paso, Houston, Oakland, Portland, and Washington, DC and the rural sites were the Delta region, including parts of Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana, and Raleigh/Durham and surrounding rural areas. We then arranged to interview a broad range of groups in each site including organizations involved in housing and economic development, as well as domestic violence and human service delivery organizations. We included women-led/women-focused organizations, women-led groups not focused on serving women, and a few male-led organizations, particularly those with significant female participation.

For our purposes a CDC is a community-based, nonprofit, private organization that engages in affordable housing development, housing rehabilitation, or housing advocacy, and often, but not always, economic/commercial development, business enterprise, neighborhood revitalization, job training, and community organizing. We chose the broader term community development organization (CDO), and defined it as including organizations that are concerned with human capital development as well as
physical redevelopment. CDOs are more likely to engage in job training, child care, and community organizing, along with housing or economic development activities. The term CDO encompasses neighborhood-based development organizations (NDOs) and organizations whose constituency is not geographically-based, such as groups focused on women. Lastly, a CBO or community-based organization may be involved in a variety of activities including leadership development, teen mentoring, job training or education, but not engaged in housing development work. These definitions are broad and groups may overlap two definitions, but we found the term CDO to be the most useful for our interest in including a broad cross-section of organizations.

We used two interview instruments, one focused on the collection of data including the organizational history, programs, and budget, as well as on the extent of community participation and leadership practices. The second instrument was organized thematically around issues of race, class, and gender. Both included open-ended and exploratory questions. We sought to understand the attributes of women-led CDOs, including programs and community participation, as well as to learn about women’s motivations for community development work, their leadership styles, and the barriers they faced in the field. Other topics covered in the instruments included networking by CDOs and support systems for women. Subsequently, we sent out a written survey to gather missing quantitative data. In addition, we conducted telephone interviews with selected funders, intermediaries or government agencies in each site.

After the field research was completed, we met with our National Advisory Panel, an outstanding group of women from the community development, academic, intermediary, and funding fields, to discuss our preliminary findings and receive recommendations from the Panel members. A cross-site focus group held a few months later brought together eleven dynamic women leaders from the nine sites to discuss how local political climates affect women’s community work, women as agents of social change, and strategies for furthering women’s leadership. This discussion and further analysis of our interview transcriptions and organizational materials strengthened our conclusion that women-led CDOs are building social capital through a collaborative leadership that hinges on community participation, through
community-driven comprehensive programs, and by expanding networks between women and between CDOs.

Characteristics of the CDOs
The organizations included in this study have developed and implemented a wide range of programs to meet the needs of their communities. To do this they have taken on a variety of organizational forms from more traditionally hierarchical CDC structures to less traditional non-hierarchical collective organizations. Women’s organizations often expand the definition of community development. For the most part, the community development organizations selected were women-led, which we defined as having a female executive director and a board composed of 60% or more women. The average gender composition of the board in the CDOs we studied was 57% women, and 43% men, while the average gender composition of the staff was 78% women and 22% men. We used a broad definition of community development to study a wide range of organizations and to reflect the richness of programs created by women. More than half of the organizations in our sample said they pursued three program areas: housing development, 63%; leadership development, 61%; and public policy advocacy, 55%. The average age of the organizations was 15 years, and included both well-established and newly emerging groups. While the average budget was $1.7 million, this included several large health care organizations. The median budget of $722,500 is closer to the budget of most of the CDOs.

Age and Tenure of Women’s Leadership
The CDOs included in this study ranged in age from newly founded to well established, some of which were over 25 years old. Some organizations had their roots in the inception of the CDC movement and in the social and political movements of the sixties, while other younger groups arose as a response to community-defined needs or were fostered by a specific funding program. Over half the organizations we visited were founded after 1982. Thirty-eight percent were founded prior to 1979, 30% were founded in the 1980s, and 32% in the 1990s. While the median age of the groups was 16 years, a third of the groups were less than 10 years old.
The oldest organization included in our study was the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU) that was founded in Boston in 1877 to assist women in need. WEIU opened the nation’s first credit union in 1913 and ran the nation’s first hot lunch program in the public schools until 1944. Over the years the organization has changed to meet the needs of women and provides transitional housing for battered and homeless women and Family day care training among other programs. The organization is also concerned with advocacy, both in terms of providing a strong voice on issues which concern women, as well as with helping to support and encourage women leaders from the community to advocate for themselves. As one of the first organizations for women and run by women, WEIU has changed over its 111-year history to meet the needs of women and their families in Boston (A Short History of the Union, undated organizational materials; Interview 1997).

1 The tables throughout this section are based on results from a survey, which was mailed to the organizations where we had conducted interviews. N is the number of responses to the survey question.
At least two of the organizations we visited during the field interview phase of our study, the Frederick Douglas Resident Council and the Big River Housing Development Corporation, have since gone out of existence, a stark reminder of the precarious nature of the existence of some community development groups. The Frederick Douglas Resident Council (FDRC) was a tenant organization in a public housing development in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, DC. It was involved in tenant organizing, neighborhood improvement, advocacy, and services. The FDRC was beginning to work with the public schools in the area, and starting to provide summer and after school programs. As an under-funded organization in a low-income and resource-deprived community, the FDRC was struggling to meet its program agenda (Interviews 1997).

The Big River Housing Development Corporation (BRHDC) in Mississippi, at the time of our interview, had just closed the deal to complete its current housing development project. The organization was, however, struggling. When the male director left BRHDC to head another organization, a woman took over the leadership and had worked for the last year without receiving a salary. As director she immediately faced obstacles, including banks and other organizations challenging her authority and a lack of support from local intermediaries whom, she felt, chose to continue their relationship with the previous director at the expense of BRHDC. Without staff or resources she continued working because of the responsibility she felt to the community and to the board members.

While some organizations have been women-led since they were founded, many others, especially some older established groups, have experienced recent transitions from male to female leadership. Organizations such as Mississippi Action for Education (MACE) in Mississippi, The Bridge in San Francisco, REACH in Portland, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) in Oakland, and Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation in Chicago are examples of CDOs undergoing such transitions, and with the exception of Bickerdike, the new leaders were hired from within. Being hired from within, however, did not seem to guarantee acceptance from banks, funders, other community organizations, or even members of their own boards, as a number mentioned immediate
challenges to their authority. In a number of cases, groups that were originally founded by women, chose a man to be the first director. This was especially true as organizations made the transition from unpaid volunteer organization to those with paid staffs.

**Gender, Racial and Ethnic Composition of Staffs and Boards**

Gittell and Covington (1994) identified that when women are directors of CDOs and when they are 60% or more of the board, there are important differences in the types of programs pursued and in the leadership styles and organizational structures. Under these conditions organizations are more likely to have programs which target women, provide child care and elder care, as well as job search, placement, counseling, and referral programs (Gittell and Covington 1994 13). This study, a follow-up to that research, was developed to provide further qualitative analysis to those findings. Organizations selected for this study were chosen based on criteria that included female leadership defined as having a female executive director as well as a majority female board, the desired threshold being 60%. On average the gender composition of the boards of the organizations included in the study were 59% women and 41% men. Eighteen of the organizations studied had boards which were made up entirely of women.

Some interviewees mentioned that their working relationships with female board members were often more comfortable than those with male board members. Some women leaders told us that they consciously and actively recruited women to join their boards.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women as Percent of Organization Boards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizations in the West were more likely to have Asian- and Native- American board members, while in the South, a larger share were African-American. Thirteen organizations had boards which were entirely African-American, five boards were entirely Latino and one was entirely Asian, which was often a reflection of the racial and ethnic composition of the surrounding neighborhoods. While the organizations we interviewed often had boards which were more likely to be representative of the demographic composition of their neighborhoods in terms of race and ethnicity, they were less likely to include representative numbers of low-income community residents, stakeholders, or tenants. However, many interviewees acknowledged that this was an issue of concern to them.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial and Ethnic Composition of Boards</th>
<th>African-Americans</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
<th>European-Americans</th>
<th>Asian-Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The demographic characteristics varied according to the region and neighborhood, although organizations differed in the degree to which they valued creating boards which reflect the racial, ethnic, and income composition of their neighborhoods. Having community residents, stakeholders, and low-income members on the board were also areas where the degree of inclusiveness of the organizations varied. Most leaders we spoke with at least talked about having diverse or representative boards as a goal, even though in practice their organizations may not have achieved it. Some organizations made this broad ranging diversity a conscious goal. As one leader in North Carolina said:

I am adamant about having low-income people on the board and we removed every barrier to that, like paying for baby-sitters and transportation and changing meeting dates. It takes a tremendous amount of effort to keep low-income people on the board (Interview 1997).

For the most part women shared this value, although to varying degrees. A few were less concerned with these issues, and went as far as to use the excuse that it was difficult to find and retain “qualified” low-income or minority board members.

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2For African-Americans and European-Americans N=98, Latinos N=97, and Asian-Americans N=96.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women as Percent of Organization Staffs</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
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<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>32</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=103</td>
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The average gender composition of the staffs was 79% female and 21% male. As was often noted, the fact that the staffs were so overwhelmingly female often reflected not only the fact that women are attracted to working in the community, but also the fact that wages are often low in the community development field and that women are often relegated to low paying fields. For example, some women noted that women had recently replaced men in a number of positions including directorships, after men had left their organizations for higher paying jobs in other CDOs as well as in intermediaries and other agencies. As men moved up, women took over in the positions they had vacated. Numerous interviewees recognized that many of their female staff were drawn to the work because of the possibility of more flexible work hours and a better work atmosphere. Our earlier research found that organizations with lower revenues have staffs with higher percentages of women (Gittell and Covington 1994 17). As one woman put it, “The larger the paycheck, the larger the number of men. I’d like to celebrate the fact that there are lots of women in community development, but it does mean that it’s low pay” (Interview 1997). Another leader noted that women will sometimes take on work regardless of the level of pay. As she put it, “A woman can start something without money. I will work for free.
Men’s tolerance for pain and suffering is a lot lower” (Interview 1997).

Within the organizations which had both housing and economic development as well as service programs, there was a tendency for men to hold positions related to construction and business development and fiscal management, while women were often in the service and support sectors. 32 of the organizations had staffs that were made up entirely of women, of which 14 were either battered women’s shelters or entirely staffed by women by conscious design.

Racial and ethnic minorities comprise a greater percentage of the staffs than of the boards of the organizations we studied (see Table 5). On average, European-Americans made up 25% of the staffs. Of the organizations included in the study, a considerable number of the groups had staffs which were made up entirely of one ethnic or racial group, which often reflected the racial and ethnic composition of the neighborhood in which they worked. Thirty groups had staffs comprised of individuals from a single race or ethnicity; twenty-three were African-American, six were Latino, one was European-American and one organization was 99% Asian American.

The average staff size was 25 including about nine part-time employees, although there was a wide range including a few organizations with a staff of one, and organizations with staffs in the hundreds. Some organizations also rely heavily on mobilizing networks of volunteers to contribute their labor to running programs and constructing homes and developing businesses. Particularly for faith-based groups, volunteers are central to their organizational goals and help enable them to keep housing costs low. For example, Passage Home, a faith-based group in Raleigh, which is a collaboration of six churches, recruits volunteers from the congregations of the member churches. In Portland, Franciscan Enterprises also relies on volunteer labor to do the construction of its housing and commercial ventures. Other organizations mentioned VISTA and AmeriCorps volunteers as important parts of their staff. Volunteers are often an active and important part of an organization and enable groups to keep costs low, overcoming funding constraints while involving community residents.
The issue of volunteer versus paid staff, however, is a complicated one, especially outside the context of faith-based groups, which explicitly incorporate volunteers in activities central to their mission in the community. When some organizations were founded, women who were unpaid volunteers did much of the initial work. Later, when organizations acquired funding and hired a paid “professional” staff, jobs that formerly were done by unpaid women often went to men. This was often true of directorships. There were several examples of organizations which were founded by women but which chose a man as their first paid executive director once funding was obtained. Several women explained that this was done because they felt that the community and other groups would more readily accept a man.

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Other important staffing issues include hiring of community residents and program participants. We asked whether they hire from the community or from program participants and whether they hire people who may not have all the requisite skills in place but whom they are willing to train. In some cases, especially in smaller grass roots organizations, everyone involved was in the process of learning their jobs and acquiring skills. Even in more established groups many women leaders did express willingness and often a desire to hire people from the community and train them. Many interviewees agreed that it was better to find someone committed to the community than someone who had all the technical skills, because those skills could be taught, while commitment to and knowledge of the community could not.

In Oakland, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) recruits at least half of its extensive staff from its program participants, a policy, which is an explicit goal of the organization. One leader said that she hired for “skills” but went on to define the skills which were most important to her as “coming from and knowing the community.” She said that she hired one woman because “she was from the community and has dealt with a lot of issues and has a lot of insight into what is going on. She had great organizing skills that transferred well. We’re now paying for her licensing training to be a real-estate manager.” Another leader said, “One guy [on staff] has an MBA from Harvard and I rely a lot on him for his computer skills, [but] I don’t look for the technical skill or the expertise to be in place--it’s the kiss of death. A better thing to do is to look for people in the community who are motivated to work for the community” (Interview 1997). While this director did hire individuals with professional training and degrees, she sought candidates from the community who had other skills and knowledge which were vital to her organization.

A few leaders told us that they felt that they had to hire people with credentials and traditionally defined skills because of the pressure to successfully complete projects. As one woman put it, “I can’t afford to do it” (Interview 1997). This director felt that she had little choice but to hire staff with degrees and credentials because hiring individuals without them entailed taking too great a risk on multi-million dollar projects. Within the community development field there is, at times, tension between women who are “credentialed” and enter the field with professional and technical training and those who come out of
the community as activists and leaders. Overall, however, many leaders we interviewed valued personal experience and knowledge in addition to, or more so, than specific degrees or credentials.

The Size and Source of CDO Budgets
While the percentages from each source varied, CDOs in our study received their funding from a variety of sources including foundation and government grants and loans. Some organizations raised money through rents and fees, though this was less common. All of the leaders we spoke with noted the difficulty in securing money for their operating budgets. Government programs and community foundations are sources of support for community development efforts, however there are few sources of basic operating support. Organizations have more difficulty securing adequate funding for organizational support, for programs designed specifically for women and girls, as well as for programs which challenge funders’ definitions of community development. Some organizations were attempting to develop programs, which would enable them to be more self-sustaining by offering services for fees or through the collection of rents. A few groups were membership organizations and charged dues, however the fees charged for membership were quite low.

The average budget of the organizations included in the study was almost $1.7 million, however this was skewed by the size of the budgets of several community health organizations (see Table 6). The median budget was $722,500. Thirty-eight organizations had budgets of more than one million dollars, while 19 had budgets of less than $100,000. The highest annual budget, $26 million\(^4\), was at a community health organization. Many women spoke of their frustration with rapidly changing funding trends. They felt that it was difficult

\(^4\) Although the YWCA in El Paso had the highest annual budget of the organizations in our sample, $26 million, it was not included here because our interview was with the directors of two specific programs within the YWCA.
to keep up as particular programs or approaches moved in and out of favor with funders. Leaders told us that they tried not to chase funding or create programs based on funders’ directions. Instead they told us that they first assessed community needs, developed programs to address those needs, and then sought funding. Programs, therefore, were more often based on community need rather than funding availability.

Table 6

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Size of Budgets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $45,000</td>
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<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$45,000 - $199,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>Average</td>
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<td>Median</td>
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N=92

Faith-based Impact on Community Development

Another important characteristic of many of the organizations we studied was the spiritual motivation for
Religious congregations have been integral to the community development movement since its beginnings in the 1960s. Hundreds of community development organizations began life in church basements. Regional and national religious councils, led by such organizations as the Roman Catholic Church’s Campaign for Human Development, have contributed millions of dollars in financial support for organizing and projects. Thousands of local congregations – including affluent suburban churches and synagogues – have supplied staff services, volunteers and meeting space, or prevailed on members to fill collection plates for community programs and projects. Religious involvement is unquestionably a factor in the success of the community development movement over the past quarter century. No one knows the precise number of community development groups at work today; estimates go as high as 8,000. As many as one quarter of these organizations – maybe more – began from a religious base. A far higher percentage of groups receive support from faith-based institutions.

Religious involvement has given community development a spiritual dimension that is unusual among social reform initiatives. Few other issues of importance to low-income America – not child care or workplace development or education – carry so indelible a spiritual link, which runs through the mainstream of the movement. A prime example is the Enterprise Foundation, one of the nation’s largest community development support organizations. Although technically a secular institution, Enterprise’s creation by Jim and Patty Rouse was inspired by the Church of the Savior and its efforts to revitalize a Washington, DC neighborhood. Spirituality pervades grassroots development efforts as well. Many of the women questioned in this study, for example, explicitly said that “faith” sustained them in their work. The response spanned across the boundaries of race, income, religion, and type of organization.

The faith-based legacy, stressing a holistic view of community revitalization, is compatible with the approach women often embrace. The proclivity of many women to strive for consensus and seek peaceful resolution of issues also tends to draw women to community development organizations that have been influenced by a faith-based orientation. And the willingness of faith-based grassroots groups to accept women as leaders offers a valuable proving ground, and many women have gone on to apply those lessons – and the resources of their organizations – to strengthen their communities.
Examples of Faith-based CDOs

Passage Home Community Development Corporation is the only biracial community development group in the Raleigh-Durham area, and was founded by a predominantly white Roman Catholic church and a predominantly African-American Holiness Church. The common ground which a shared faith provided has enabled these European-American and African-American communities to work together effectively in this organization. As director Jeanne Tedrow explained,

My co-founder, Julia Burnette, who is African-American and a member of the Lincoln Park Holiness Church–my own church is Catholic– and I agreed to share what was common to us which was our religion. So, we formed a joint committee of members of the two churches. Julia and I went through board training together. We received our first grants and bought our first house and then came together for the first time for what is now our annual joint worship service with the two congregations (Interviews 1997).

Passage Home now has six formal member churches. Members of the various congregations make up a substantial volunteer labor force who work with homeless and needy families. The organization has grown considerably since its inception and, as Tedrow notes, “the only way to hold together blacks and whites or men and women is to have some kind of glue, for us it is spiritual” (Interview 1997).

In Fordyce, Arkansas, New Horizon Community Development is an example of the important impact a faith-based community development organization can have in a small rural community. Pastor Margaret McGhee is both leader of her church’s congregation as well as the director of the CDC. As the only CDC the community, New Horizon has built critically needed new low-income housing, rehabilitated existing housing, and runs substance abuse and literacy programs as well as the only day care center in the immediate area. Formerly a teacher, Rev. McGhee became a minister and founded both a church and the CDC. While New Horizon has faced many obstacles including, lack of and delays in funding, racism, and the suspicion and hostility of some community residents, Rev. McGhee, believes that “in this business there is risk, but we know the Lord will cover us (Interviews 1997).”
In urban areas as well, groups like The Resurrection Project in Chicago, Franciscan Enterprises in Portland, Northern Area Ministries and the Pyramid in Houston, Claretian Associates in Chicago, and Project Hope in Boston, among others, grew out of communities of faith to establish CDOs which have developed critically important housing services and economic development programs. In Washington, DC Jubilee Housing is an example of the far reaching effects and the importance of faith-based community development not only in terms of the projects which Jubilee undertakes directly, but also in terms of its reach into the community and its impact on other leaders and organizations. Jubilee was often mentioned by other leaders as one of the most important and effective CDOs in Washington, DC and two leaders we interviewed specifically mentioned the personal impact Jubilee Housing and its founder Bob Boulter had on their decision to pursue this work. One leader told us that as part of her “faith journey” she had worked at Jubilee Housing. She then went on to direct another organization. Another leader told us that hearing Boulter speak at an event had motivated her to pursue community work.

In addition to faith-based organizations, women leaders of various organizations readily discussed their own personal faith as a sustaining force in their work in the community. When asked what motivated or sustained them in their work women said that often what had gotten them through their most difficult struggles with bankers, funders and occasionally some members of the community was their spiritual beliefs.
Chapter Two
Women as Leaders of Community Development Organizations

Feminist Theory and Grassroots Women
Feminist scholarship has both made gender “a category of social experience” and has privileged the documentation of women's life experiences (Andersen 1983, cited in Naples, 1998 8). Emerging theorists are taking feminist theory in a new direction by making community and working-class women’s experiences and views central to their analysis (Kaplan 1997; Naples 1998). Making women’s experiences and views central to our analysis allows us to acknowledge differences between women, such as race, ethnicity, class, religiosity, and region, while also acknowledging that there are some commonalities in women’s community work, as demonstrated in our interviews.

Our focus was women's leadership in the community development field and we found that most women interviewed described their approach to community development as a “holistic” or “broad” view, and that their work was focused on meeting community needs, particularly the needs of women and children. Women also gave similar motivations for engaging in community development work, such as changing people's lives, improving their children’s lives, or caring for the community. Although personal life stories were not an original focus of our inquiry, we found that motivations for community work and the way women became involved in community activities were often based on life experiences. Most women described their leadership style as “open” and saw themselves as both supportive of staff members and of community participation.

Established social scientific constructs do not fully capture the expressions of women's leadership, which we encountered. Max Weber’s theory of leadership, for example, contrasted traditional or patriarchal authority whose legitimacy rests upon tradition and the “rule of the master”, with charismatic authority that rests on the perceived magical qualities of a person. In this conceptualization, other people are willing to defer decision-making to the charismatic leader. Weber contrasts both these types of authority with rational authority born of routinization, in other words, a legal authority rather than a
personal one (Weber 1946 295; Kaplan 1998 3-4).

Although many of the women we interviewed brought their personal charisma to bear on their work, they did not encourage others to divest their power of decision-making in them. Likewise, we met some women who were matriarchal in their leadership, emphasizing their age and experience in the community, and sometimes referring to their organization as a family. However, they presented themselves as a resource person to the community. Rather than emphasizing any duties owed to them as individuals, they emphasized service to the community. A very small number of our interviewees emphasized a rational, or in this context, corporate or bureaucratic conception of leadership.

Our findings push us to explore a new conception of leadership based on women's activities. Temma Kaplan argues that women are “promoting new ethical principles as the basis for democracy. Their moral fervor challenges the meaning of human rights and justice as the women have known them (Kaplan 1997 4).” While this aspect of their leadership may be prophetic or charismatic, their egalitarian practices set grassroots women apart from visionary leaders who stand at the head of their community. “Where a grassroots leader seems to enhance the ability of the group to reach a higher moral plane, she doesn’t stand out herself so much as she helps the community come together (Kaplan 1997 4)”

Most of the women we interviewed recognized that they operated differently than most men. Many women expressed the view that this difference is a natural one, arising from women’s “nurturing nature” and from motherhood. Historically, physiological sexual differences have been used by some to explain behavioral and psychological differences between men and women. Early feminist theorists have posited the idea of the sexual construction of gender, arguing that while there are physical differences between men and women, it is the cultural interpretation of these differences that makes up the complex concept of gender. The dualistic conception of gender as dividing naturally occurring feminine behavior from masculine behavior has been attacked by feminist critics who have pointed both to the existence of sexual variation across both sexes, and to the variety of traditionally masculine and feminine behaviors
displayed by both sexes. Some argue for a reconceptualization of gender as a continuum, rather than a duality.

As the idea of socialized differences gained currency, other authors such as Carol Gilligan and Nancy Chodorow studied the way gender socialization produces different systems of morality and different degrees of closeness to others. Many of our interviewees identified the manifestations of these differences in statements about women “caring more” and “being more sensitive.” Kaplan uses the term “female consciousness” to describe the way women use the accepted gender roles of wives and mothers to take action on behalf of their families and their communities in everything from fighting against toxic pollutants to fighting apartheid, or in our cases, in providing housing and feeding people (Kaplan 1997 6-7; Garry and Pearsall 1989). A prime example is that of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo who held illegal public protests at the height of the dictatorship in Argentina. Their status as mothers and their ability to tap into cultural and religious images of the Virgin Mary allowed them to create political space to fight for human rights.

For reasons of history, class, and race discussed below, most of the women we interviewed did not self-identify as feminists. Some women referred to the conscious way in which they would use gender stereotypes to the benefit of their communities. Kaplan found similar examples in the public presentation of the women who organized against the toxic waste dumped in Love Canal; they were willing to appear as victims and even comedic figures in an effort to get positive media attention. A few women we interviewed mentioned the “good cop, bad cop” tactic of sending an aggressive male colleague into a meeting and then finalizing the negotiations themselves (Kaplan 1997 16-44).

On the other hand, community women are not a monolithic group by any means, and other women we interviewed strongly espoused challenging gender roles, putting women out front, and confronting sexism and racism. Many women who did not identify as feminists strongly advocated the rights of women and girls. As Naples puts it, “Political activism is influenced by the dynamics of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and political culture that can only be understood through an embedded analysis that foregrounds
local practices and individual perspectives.” The women we interviewed were in fact operating in very different local contexts and at different intersections of race, ethnicity, and class (Naples 1998 9).

In her critique of socialist revolutions, Maxine Molyneux (1986) differentiated between “practical gender issues”, such as meeting daily needs for housing, day care, and nutrition, and “strategic gender issues” like abortion rights, gender discrimination and other issues traditionally deemed as “feminist.” Practical issues are those that arise out of women’s daily lives and are formulated by the women themselves, whereas strategic gender interests are deduced from an analysis of women’s subordination. Molyneux grants that these distinctions may blur in practice but her aim is to dispel the idea that there is a common “women’s interest” and that gender issues are primary for women at all times. She argues that unity around gender issues has to be constructed across class, race, ethnic, and national differences (Molyneux 1986 282-285).

Molyneaux makes the point that even apparently basic issues such as complete equality with men, control over reproduction, and greater personal autonomy are not supported by all women, not because they suffer from “false consciousness,” but rather “because such changes realized in piecemeal fashion could threaten the short-term practical interests of some women, or entail a cost . . . of a loss of forms of protection which is not then compensated for” (Molyneux 1986 285). Thus, strategic interests need to take into account practical interests and practical interests, in turn, should be politicized and turned into strategic interests, argues Molyneaux. These ideas are supported in our interviews to some extent. Some women would readily identify “community issues” and argue they were working for the benefit of the whole community in meeting daily needs, while recognizing that most of the beneficiaries were women and children. For others, there was an initial hesitancy to discuss their work in terms of gender interests. Gender was often superseded by racial, ethnic, and religious concerns. For instance, a few African-American women in poor communities spoke of the need to promote men in public events. In their communities, young men of color are suffering very high rates of unemployment, murder, police brutality, and incarceration, and it can therefore be considered a practical interest to promote men, particularly in instances where children will be able to see men from their community in a positive light.
Religious prohibitions against abortion, as well as the historical experience of forced sterilizations, can also make issues such as reproductive rights unpopular in African-American and Latino communities (Molyneux 1986 282-285; Davis 1981).

Writers such as Kaplan are politicizing the mostly invisible work that women have performed for their communities:

Recognition of the existence of female consciousness necessitates reorientation of political theory: by placing human need above other social and political requirements and human life above property, profit and even individual rights, female consciousness creates a vision of a society that has not yet appeared. Social cohesion rises above individual rights and quality of life over access to institutional power. Thus female consciousness has political implications, as women’s collective actions have shown... (Kaplan 1995 146).

Naples, for her part, uses the concept of “activist mothering”, in which women redefine mothering as a public rather than a private act. “Activist mothering not only involves nurturing work for those outside one’s kinship group, but also encompasses a broad definition of actual mothering practices” (Naples 1998 114). Social activism, meeting the needs of children, and caring for the community can all be part of activist mothering, and it does not necessarily involve being a biological mother. Several women told us that they were bringing up their children to stand up for themselves or to serve the community. The concept of activist mothering and Naples’s concept of a “feminist neighborhood perspective” will frame some of the discussion of our findings below (Kaplan 1997 1-14).

**Women-run CDOs and Social Change**

The women we interviewed worked in a spectrum of organizations ranging from the more conservative, especially in rural areas and southern cities, to the openly activist and radical. Most of the women we interviewed act as agents of change, even though they did not generally identify themselves as activists or as “political”. However, if we analyze the approaches to community development, the relationships
to the community residents, the styles of leadership, the operation of programs, and the advocacy or leadership development activities, we observe a pattern of activities directed at changing people's lives, the quality of life in a neighborhood, or people's access to resources and institutions. The comprehensive approach to community development, the concern with the process of community development, the focus on community participation, the human-centered and needs-centered programs, the open style of leadership--all these characteristics of women-run CDOs involve change at the level of the organization itself, of the individual participants, of the community, and at the level of the community development movement as a whole. These characteristics also distinguish women-run CDOs from most community development organizations, particularly from most CDCs.

Illustrating her relationship with constituents and discussing community participation, the director of a woman-run Vietnamese refugee assistance organization we interviewed said:

I try to organize a community to have access to things, not to build up a large organization . . . Organizations that depend on politics may not last. Your clients may be poor and powerless but my big thing is to advocate so their voices can be heard in different arenas . . . I have worked to get refugee leaders to participate in all arenas that matter. I am proudest of putting people in places where they can speak for themselves (Interview 1997).

As a result of their approach to community development work, many of the women-led organizations we studied are building social capital through their strengthening of norms, trust, and networks. Robert Putnam defined social capital as “networks and norms that enable participants to act together effectively to pursue shared objectives” (cited in Gittell and Vidal 1998). Women leaders call for the discussion of community issues and create spaces for these exchanges. Community meetings and bringing issues previously thought of as private into the public sphere gives people a chance to come together, exchange ideas, and forge relationships. It creates some community norms and allows for the development of trust between community residents. The existence of norms and trust in turn facilitates the creation of networks that can serve as a basis for social, civic, or political activities.
Another noteworthy change-oriented dimension of many women-run CDOs is their effort to run their own organizations with sensitivity towards their employees. Rather than only apply their values outwardly towards their community work, many women-run CDOs internalize these values. Many otherwise progressive organizations, whether nonprofits, CBOs, private firms, or universities, fall short of their expressed social commitments in their treatment of their employees and in the creation of difficult work environments. In contrast, many women-run CDOs hire people from the community and try to provide an environment in which they can “grow the staff,” in the words of one woman director. Practices such as flex-time, staff development seminars and retreats, comp time, and child care and elder care assistance demonstrate this commitment. There are different degrees of internal democracy, but in general, most directors said they solicit ideas from staff members and encourage discussion and staff participation. The director of one extremely democratic organization told us, “This is a very flat and democratic organization. And we do all sorts of training all year about issues of race, gender, all kind of equity issues. It is one of our core values. We have been able to build this as an organizational culture.”

Naples found that women did not view their work as political because poor women do not see politics or politicians as concerned with their needs. As a marginal group in U.S. society, working class and poor women have not historically experienced effective or meaningful political representation. Their experiences with politics and politicians have been largely negative and they tend to view elected officials as opportunistic and self-serving. In contrast, they view their work in addressing human needs as community work rather than as conventional careerist politics. Naples argues that this is positive in that it represents a redefinition of politics by community women who emphasize life experience and community needs. On the other hand, even longstanding women community leaders considerable community support find it difficult to challenge the political system, though we did find exceptions (Naples 1998 21). Some women publicly confront the political system or participate in it to try to channel resources into their communities through such Federal programs as HOPE VI or the Empowerment Zones. A key factor in this respect is local political culture which plays an important role in creating a more or a less receptive environment for women leaders. Political culture also influences
how women activists confront political issues in their cities or communities.

Profile of La Mujer Obrera: A Commitment to Social Change

La Mujer Obrera (The Woman Worker) is a 16-year-old woman-led organization which was started to protect the rights of Mexican-American women garment workers in El Paso. The founding focus of the organization was to struggle against sub-minimum wages, non-payment of wages, and work speed-ups in the *maquiladoras*, or twin plants, that used to dominate the landscape of El Paso-Juarez. The organization was born out of a successful union drive and the resulting exclusion of women's issues by the new union (Marquez 1995 68). Its activities included political education, leadership development, and strike support. La Mujer Obrera (LMO) first came to national attention in the late 1980s when striking Chicana and Mexicana garment workers staged a hunger strike and chained themselves to sewing machines. The six-month strike was successful. Today the organization has confronted the dismantling of the garment industry by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and re-focused its efforts to include economic development, while holding true to its political and organizing focus. (Interview 1997; Honig 1996 429).

The current coordinator, Maria Flores, described the organization's woman-centered approach and contrasted it with the male-led union:

> The difference with the organizations led by men, it’s a *patrón* (boss)-worker relationship. The methods are very different. They say, ‘We’re with the community, it’s collective work. We make our decisions in the committee of struggle, but now we have a project for a women’s committee. We need more women’. But the leaders are men! We don’t have women represented. On the city council there are only two women. We need this effort, this space.

The educational component of LMO is central to its work. It is based on the theory and methods of popular education in which participants learn through analyzing their own experiences and relating them to social issues. Participants analyze seven basic needs (work, education, health, nutrition, housing, peace, and political freedom) and develop a sense of organizing as a group while learning together. The
curriculum includes material on women’s oppression from the perspective of working people’s rights (Escuela Para Trabajadores, Centro de Trabajadores LMO, n.d.).

LMO has evolved from its labor union roots into a community-based organization focused on defending the human and civil rights of immigrants, women, and workers, as well as to improving their living and working conditions. LMO operates a community center that houses the organization’s headquarters, a food cooperative, a newspaper, and cultural activities, in addition to the women’s leadership development program, education programs, and community organizing that make up most of its work. Men are welcome to participate in LMO, as long as they accept that the top leadership is filled by women (Third Annual Mujer Obrera Award program, 1996; Interview 1997).

A striking aspect of LMO’s work is the development of working class Mexican and Mexican-American women’s leadership. This emphasis on educating and developing each person who comes for services predates by more than a dozen years the new focus on organizing in the national labor movement. Two top leaders of LMO explained to us how the personal attention they received when they first came to the organization was crucial in helping them to develop both their confidence and their skills as leaders. Both women told us that their family life changed as a result of their experiences and that they had raised their children, particularly their sons, to respect women and to defend their rights. One woman told us how she had never realized the problems in her family were due to the oppression of women until her classes at LMO.

My confidence grew and I . . . took the decision to leave [my marriage]. I felt liberated. I had the interest and the desire to be free. It was hard. Paying the bills required two jobs and I stopped coming here. They would go to my house . . . and give me classes. I had the need to develop myself as a leader. I wanted to teach the other women . . . Maria Del Carmen was responsible. She would tell me you can do it. She’s responsible for me being here today. (Interview 1997).

LMO also showcases outstanding women in both the private and public sectors through its annual La Mujer Obrera Awards. The women are nominated by community residents or institutions and must come from a working class or low-income background or family, have worked outside the home, and
have contributed to the community without being recognized so far. During a recent year, all 78 women selected as candidates has their biographies and photos included in a publication and the 14 recipients were featured in a local newspaper article. This type of recognition of women in all walks of life, including volunteers, promotes women’s leadership.

Learning a model of organizing is an integral part of the leadership development training. Work-site protests, protests against NAFTA, as well as in lobbying efforts are all part of LMO’s activities. Members of LMO have met with the U.S. Secretary of Labor and members of Congress. Recently these efforts have been focused on the effects of NAFTA and on the inadequacy of the NAFTA worker re-training programs. LMO recently developed a “Displaced Workers Community Economic Development Initiative” aimed at creating more jobs and economic opportunities for the more than 10,000 workers displaced by NAFTA so far. One section of this plan proposes workforce development, a self-employment infrastructure, building community infrastructure as a development strategy, and light industry development. It features bilingual training programs, a loan fund, and training in the building trades and in home-based child care provision. The City of El Paso borrowed freely from LMO’s proposal without giving the organization any credit. Nevertheless, the women in LMO continue to serve the community with programs while building leadership and organizing for social change.

**Approach to Community Development**

Our interviews with nearly 150 women leaders in community development revealed that their comprehensive approaches to community development have preceded the general movement towards comprehensive initiatives. Community development literature describes a general pattern in which community development organizations started out as advocacy or grassroots groups and became more professionalized and bureaucratic as they increasingly concentrated on physical development projects. CDCs founded in the 1980s often started out with a concentration on “bricks and mortar” and later joined the trend towards comprehensive development, sometimes at the behest of funders (Zdenek 1987; Fisher 1984). Most of the women-led CDOs we encountered did not follow this general pattern.
Rather, most women leaders articulated an approach they termed “holistic.” This broad view of community development integrates economic and social needs on the community level, as well as on the individual level. In describing community problems, many women move quickly and seamlessly from the social to the economic level of analysis, from the individual to the community level, from the personal to the political. As observed by Kaplan, “These women move back and forth between specific requirements for survival and principled demands for general goals such as justice” (Kaplan 1997 7).

In this integrative holistic approach, the connections between such problems as the physical deterioration of buildings and infrastructure, drug abuse, youth violence and unemployment, reduced government spending, and a lack of youth programs are easily made. Most women leaders would place an issue such as domestic violence within the context of women’s oppression and racism while simultaneously offering the particular woman material aid. Our findings resonate with Naples’s finding that women redefined individual problems as collective ones (Naples 1998 149). Moreover, most women leaders humanized their analysis by involving the men and women in their community at the inception of program design and the definition of the organizational mission. Many interviewees expressed both an over-riding concern with the needs of the community residents being central to their mission, and a hesitancy to follow funding streams which might take them away from community-based definitions of need.

For example, when asked how her organization’s housing program started, one woman leader responded:

   The housing program started out of the housing crunch. You have women coming out of drug rehab or other . . . program . . . what are folks saying they need and how can we put it together? We have never chased funding; the funding started catching up with us. For example, economic development. First you need to take care of the family, have a roof over your head, the next step is economic development (Interview 1997).

Another executive director of a neighborhood revitalization group explained how women make a difference in her organization in this way: “. . . if I weren’t here the focus would be on bricks and mortar. The fact that I am here and there are women on the board [makes] the issues of education and
jobs more important. I have to convince people that I am not just personalizing these issues because I have a son” (Interview 1997).

A woman who is director of an urban social service organization in the same city agreed that women made a difference in her organization, but thought that men and women had different priorities: “I’m sure health would not have been high on the list, probably not women and children either. Most of the men tend to focus on jobs and education. We tend to focus on basic human needs like medicine, food, and housing . . . “ (Interview 1997).

An executive director in North Carolina offered the following interpretation of the impact of women leaders:

Women leaders definitely bring a more holistic view. I sought more training. Community development seemed to me almost exclusively brick and mortar and my interest is in the people--and that is what I think women are more interested in, sustaining the people. Women are more likely to involve the stakeholders (Interview 1997).

In practice this approach means that programs are generally designed around specific needs, sometimes determined by formal needs assessment surveys, sometimes by the staff or board’s personal knowledge of the community, and often by both methods. One woman leader in Houston who is struggling against the gentrification of her historic community said:

In nature as women we’re more compassionate. Needs affect women and children. Ask community first what needs are. We took that research and found that need number one was decent affordable housing. Number two business, jobs, and training. Number three, social development, child care, people’s issues (Interview 1997).

Another woman leader in Boston described how community needs are assessed and how projects are carried out: “We also have a mixed-use project. We haven’t defined it yet. We want to involve the community. We’re passing out flyers, door-knocking and doing community meetings. We’re asking
‘what would you guys like to see here?’” (Interview 1997). This organization is taking its cues from the community directly rather than presenting a completed design.

In other instances, to address the needs of battered women, several organizations in Houston and in Portland expanded their program to include housing development. Likewise, organizations involved in housing development broadened their programs to offer on-site child care or job placement assistance when the residents’ needs came to the forefront. Women leaders tend to use the discourse of human needs, personal development, and community well being, not to the exclusion of the discourse on technical housing development and program goals, but rather to describe the ultimate purpose of their work. “If you want to do economic development you need to have education and child care programs . . .” explained one coordinator of a women-led organization (Interview 1997). A woman board member of a male-led organization in which women play a strong role told us,

> It is not about being the best CDC. There was a lot of money given to [a certain area] but it is still bad. It is petty politics, turf competition and stupid attitudes. What we want is the community to change. We want better homes, a lot of self-esteem. We believe that it takes a village (Interview 1997).

This needs-centered approach that most women leaders share may arise from their personal experience with poverty, child rearing, and abuse, or it may result from conversations with individual women and an identification with their practical problems. For instance one long-standing leader told us:

> My basic reason for wanting to work in the Delta is that I grew up here and my parents sharecropped. The reason why I’ve stuck with this kind of work is that I grew up in the farming industry. We grew up and confronted all the issues of poverty. We couldn’t go to school because of farming we had to harvest cotton, we had outdoor toilets. The plantation owner would take all the money (Interview 1997).

Many women leaders expressed that their work is informed by personal contact with community residents and conversations about the challenges in their lives. Organizations such as Austin People’s
Action in Chicago and Housing Our Families in Portland were started by conversations between women meeting in their homes, and in the case of other groups, in church basements. This starting from personal experience or personal conversations leads many women to refer to “changing people’s lives” as the aim of community development work.

Motivation for starting organizations sometimes comes from painful experiences that galvanize women into organizing, as one woman executive director of an established development organization in Chicago told us:

A house two doors down from where I lived, with families with three single women with children burned down. They could not find decent and affordable housing and the City put them out. The building was set on fire by an arsonist. Thirteen children died, and one adult, and one unborn child. That’s what started it. I couldn’t take it. I got pissed off. (Interview 1997).

Other motivations may be less dramatic, but no less concrete. When asked how she became involved in community work, a woman coordinator in a male-led organization stated, “For me having been an immigrant, wanting to work with other women immigrants. I started an ESL (English as a Second Language) program with another organization . . . “ (Interview 1997). A board member in the same organization echoed the personal reasons for her work: “It is part of the culture. We live in communities, for years we have brought up our children in them . . . I owned a house. I decided to stay here and help the community . . . I hope to live to see change in the community--not just in the buildings, but in the people and their attitudes” (Interview 1997).

These statements are in keeping with Gittell, Gross, and Newman’s findings that NDOs with higher percentages of women on their staffs and boards reported a more expansive range of social services, while NDOs with a greater male representation were more likely to be involved in business related activities such as industrial site development (Gittell, Gross, Newman 1994). One battered women’s organization expanded its program and became a housing developer and provider because the group recognized that there was an unmet need in the community:
We knew women who were victims could not afford everything; we kept sending them out with nothing. We had been presenting our problem and men couldn’t understand. [We did it] out of rage, we decided we could. In general, the housing development people we had been talking about needing more affordable housing, low-income tax credits--developers sought us out to get [tax] credits for two apartments with no services (Interview 1997).

Some organizations, such as Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) in Oakland, to name but one have articulated a holistic vision of community development that includes women's self-empowerment. This type of approach meets the participant at a particular place in her or his life and addresses such issues as self-esteem and self-empowerment through consciousness-raising, peer support, and other methods. It may then move to educational or skill-building needs that will help a woman take advantage of job training or microenterprise programs. Many women leaders pointed out that issues such as hunger, a lack of child care, drug abuse, domestic abuse, or untreated mental illness need to be addressed in order for community residents to be in a position to benefit from housing or economic development programs.

Not every woman-led organization may be able to offer such a range of comprehensive services, but the degree of awareness and discussion of the interconnection between the personal, social, and economic issues affecting community residents informs the work and program design of women-led organizations, leading them to value human services. For example, one woman director of a neighborhood-based organization stated, “My first job was in a mental health clinic. The problems that brought people into the office like alcohol and drugs were really symptoms of a lack of jobs and education. I really feel that you can’t just pay attention to bricks and mortar. You need to pay attention to education, housing, and jobs” (Interview 1997).

Even when an organization such as a CDC is focused on development and has been male-led in the past, a new woman director and women on the board may jointly push for either a broader direction or an awareness of social needs. An executive director who has revitalized the community participation
component of an established CDC explained her approach:

My philosophy . . . is that I don’t think a CDC should be doing social service. Why? Because we are a CDC and this community has a lot of social service organizations. We should not be competing for limited sources of funding. We should not be duplicating each other’s efforts but linking with these organizations. What we do is we develop a house and do the credit for building bricks and mortar and that is a concrete success, but the real important part is the leadership development of empowering people by having them work on the committees (Interview 1997).

Women’s holistic approach is often reflected in program design. One example is the microenterprise program run by Elizabeth Stone House in Boston which takes into account the need for a self-empowerment component as the base for learning about developing and running a small business. Awareness of women’s daily struggles includes concern for children and their needs. Jan Stokley, formerly of the National Economic Development and Law Center in Oakland, developed a comprehensive program of child care as economic development. This model has been widely circulated and successfully adopted in several states. Children have also been taken into account in housing design by organizations such as Housing Our Families (HOF) in Portland, which created safe play areas for children, and included small fenced yards outside their rental units in the Maya Angelou Apartments.

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*The Community Development Iceberg*

We Care Community Services is a 25-year old social service organization in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Although the organization is male-led, Administrator Rose Bingham has a vital role in carrying out the group’s mission, approach, and programs. Ms. Bingham addressed our study’s emphasis on gender and on whether women’s unique contributions to community development by drawing the “Community Development Iceberg” reproduced on the next page. This is how she explained women’s approach to community development:
Men see and address what is above the line, the visible part of the iceberg. Women see the whole thing, above and below the surface. Here on the surface are the things that both men and women see as problems--economic factors, educational attainment, health care, substance abuse, and diminished employment opportunities. Men work on the structural solutions and women address more hidden dimensions of the problem. Men work on decent housing, jobs, infrastructure, the cycle of poverty and increased dependence on public support for assistance. Women know you have to address the lack of family support, low self-esteem, sexual abuse, no incentives for change, lack of community involvement, teenage pregnancy, child care, and transportation (Interview 1997).
Even though women leaders explained how meeting human needs informed their programs, many women saw these programs as part of a larger process of change. Naples also found that the resident community workers she interviewed, “perceived their role as social change agents as more important than their career considerations” (Naples 1998 60). Providing housing, jobs, youth programs, advocacy or social services was discussed as a means for rebuilding lives and communities. In this discourse, community development is not merely an industry with numbers of housing units or economic development models as abstract goals, but rather it is part of a larger mission. Many of the women interviewed measured organizational success in terms of the health of the community, empowerment, and increasing women’s self-confidence, as well as by more quantifiable measures. In this view, the paths taken in carrying out community development are seen as important by many women interviewed. As one executive director of a financially successful economic development organization in Houston put it, “Something we learn about the ends justifying the means, for me it’s not true. But I don’t know if that’s because I’m a woman or because of the church. I feel a calling” (Interview 1997).

One director of a battered women’s program in Houston explained her organization’s different model of work in this way, “[It’s a] Feminist empowerment social work model. I’ve worked different social work models. This is the most difficult way of doing social work but this is the best way--to allow her to develop herself. To come to fulfillment. Everything that happens here is entirely client driven.” Women in CDOs are often willing to follow complex models of work that require more labor in order to assess community needs or to help individual clients to develop.

This integrative holistic approach and its human needs-centered, comprehensive, and process-focused nature was often described by the women interviewed in terms of their personal commitment to their work. While a minority of women referred to their work in community development exclusively in professional terms, the vast majority of women interviewed used terms such as “life choice” and expressed the view that women are more “passionate” about community development work. This sense of personal involvement and caring about the community was often described as arising from a “spiritual calling” or out of a sense of responsibility for the community. Less often, women explained
that their commitment to the community was rooted in political beliefs, a feminist ideology, or racial or ethnic identification.

In an example of religious motivation, one woman executive director of a homeless residence said that her work is “following what Christ is asking me to do” (Interview 1997). Sometimes women expressed a combination of motivations for their work. The executive director of a rural CDC explained her religious motivation this way: “I am called to this work and don’t have a choice in it. It is a ministry. This work is the last vestiges of the Civil Rights Movement. If we don’t do it, no one else will . . . I don’t enjoy being on the front lines but I feel I am a warrior” (Interview 1997).

Pursuing a multi-layered approach to development does present some dangers to women-led organizations. As one woman leader at a foundation explained, “It is sometimes a problem that because they’re so holistic in their approach, they’re dealing with issues that are beyond their staffing and funding capabilities” (Interview 1997). A woman program director at the same foundation added,

> There is a pile of dollars that becomes available in a certain area when in fact they should be doing other things, like having a development director instead of just continually doing programs because when the dollars dry up, the programs dry up. Organizations in specific geographic areas that can link their services, housing, child care with other groups are in a better position (Interview 1997).

A further challenge is that the complexity and level of work involved in carrying out comprehensive programs, meeting individual women’s needs along with community needs, network building and political involvement, requires extensive human and financial resources.

**Life Experiences of Women Leaders**

Women gave compelling accounts of how they became leaders, and while the empowerment process of women is varied, the common thread is increased self-worth and skills forged through a combination of personal development and community work. Some women leaders described coming out of poverty and being on public assistance in the past as experiences that have shaped their work. Other women
shared their stories of how they left abusive relationships and how they have carried this experience into their work. Other researchers have also found that women who reside in the communities where they work often cite the experience of having grown up poor and facing discrimination as making them more sensitive to community residents (Naples 1998 37).

Women’s life experiences help define the community development process they implement, as well as leading them to combine personal development and community development. There is a generally identifiable pattern in the life experiences of the community women leaders we interviewed. Typically, women described growing up in a poor neighborhood and experiencing economic and social problems firsthand. Either a catalytic event or a supportive mentor brought women outside their private concerns and into community life. Events involving children and schools, or abuse, divorce and unemployment often preceded women's involvement in a public meeting or protest, which then led to further community involvement. Other women described trying to meet a community need and organizing with other women to provide services.

One woman working in Boston told us, “I live and work and do my activism all in the same place. I first came as a volunteer when my kids were old enough. I wanted to work with women who had been through the same struggles that I had been through . . . gender discrimination, sexual abuse, drug problems, issues of sexuality, lesbianism” (Interview 1997).

The networks that women form from such struggles and other life experiences take them out of their homes and allow them to form ties beyond their families. Granovetter and other authors have described the importance of “weak ties”, which are ties outside the family, on opportunities available for job seekers. R. Gittell and Vidal have applied the concept to social capital, arguing for the importance of weak ties to community development (Granovetter 1973; R. Gittell and Vidal 1998 20-21). Weak ties can form the bases for coalitions in which joint efforts achieve community change. Several women CEOs discussed their networks with other women leaders of local organizations as the basis for communication and action. The Chicago Women's Foundation sponsors an Executive Directors Round
Table where women directors can connect with each other and receive information and support (Interviews 1997).

Women described informal networks as more important for them in terms of day-to-day support and activities than formal networks. These informal networks are usually made up of friends and colleagues of both sexes. In personal interviews, women in Oakland, Boston, and Portland, mentioned being informally networked with women more than women in other cities. The historical prominence of women in positions of power in these cities suggests that city political culture is an influence on women’s roles in CBOs. Many women mentioned networks of friends as important support mechanisms. Other women referred to churches and religious communities as networks for action and support. While most of the CDOs we visited did have formal relationships with other CDOs, city or state agencies, or coalitions of community groups, when women leaders were asked in interviews who they network with, they usually pointed to their informal networks first. One interviewee in Chicago told us, “Women are better able to share power,” as she described having luncheons with other women community leaders in her area of the city to “share what we know.”

In the process of becoming active outside their homes, some women described initial feelings of inadequacy or of being afraid to speak in public. Women told us that they gradually gained self-confidence through increased activities, and that they gained new skills either through experience or mentoring. Women who have become leaders through community involvement tend to keep this experience at the heart of their leadership by viewing uninvolved community residents as potential leaders, just as they themselves were once uninvolved. Furthermore, since these organic leaders developed in trying to meet community needs, most stay focused on the community rather than on building their careers. “I don't want fame. A lot of people join . . . to run for office. That's not me,” was a typical comment.

I was active in the church choir, later on I began teaching the church catechism classes. I didn't feel I had the leadership to get involved. We were going to meetings, getting oriented, becoming aware of issues in the church, the city, learning about the laws . . . The community was getting left out . . . In the beginning you feel your education isn't enough
Many women mentioned religious or spiritual beliefs as a primary source of motivation for their work. Even in CDOs that were not faith-based, many women mentioned that they either felt “called” to do the work or were carrying out what they believe God wanted them to do. Women also brought up spiritual beliefs or church in response to questions about where they get support for their work. One woman told us, “Growing up poor in Mississippi, I understood what poverty was and I felt called by God to give something back” (Interview 1997). Another leader of an extremely successful CDC in a rural area said that she “was called into the ministry” and that her ideas for the organization came from spiritually-inspired messages. This “spiritual calling” was cited as motivation for community work by many women who view their faith as central to their community work, often as a sustaining force.

Women leaders start from their varied life experiences as the bases for addressing community problems. Moreover, they tend to remain focused on the local community rather than viewing community development work as a rung on the career ladder or onto other sectors. As one woman put it in describing her organization’s cooperative housing model, “As a single parent it is a blessing to have lots of people around . . . this is emerging out of our lives and our own beings because we are women” (Interview 1997).

There were also a significant number of women leaders who gained advanced degrees and who subsequently became involved in community development. Some women leaders left their communities to receive professional training and then returned to work in community development. A few women had successful careers in law, real estate, or finance and chose to leave them for community development.

**Profile of Rev. Margaret McGhee**

The Rev. Margaret McGhee, director of the New Horizon CDC in Fordyce, Arkansas is an example of the strength and importance of faith-based leadership and the power and impact faith-based
development can have in communities. Originally a school teacher who taught for 15 years, Rev. McGhee not only had calling to become a minister and found a church, she also felt that work in the community was to be part of her ministry. At the time she decided to enter the ministry she belonged to a Baptist Church which did not accept women as ministers. As she told us, “I was called to an open ministry of blacks and whites...I didn’t want to be just another little church. I wanted to be able to make a difference. It was a hard walk because there were no women pastors and I started the church with 6 people.”

Rev. McGhee’s vision for her community is broad and compelling. Her passion and commitment to her work and her community has inspired New Horizon’s staff and its numerous volunteers and has commanded the respect of Fordyce’s elected officials and business owners. The fact that the Rev. McGhee lives and works in the community is critical to the success of her organization and her work. The lack of involvement of other ministers in the community was part of Rev. McGhee’s motivation to become a minister and to found her church and the CDC. Many other African-American ministers in Fordyce are part-time and commute in for Sunday services. She also notes that there is little involvement by white churches in community development, especially efforts which benefit African-Americans. Very little was happening in Fordyce that benefited African-Americans until New Horizon CDC was founded. Rev. McGhee recognized that participation of people living in Fordyce would be critical to the success of any community development efforts. Her personal commitment and drive sets an example for others and are the root of New Horizon CDC’s success.

In a community with few resources at its disposal, Reverend McGhee has succeeded in putting together a staff and an organization which has built new low-income housing, rehabilitated existing housing, created a day care and child development and day-care center, and offers various service programs including substance abuse counseling and adult literacy classes. Like many small towns, there are a number of vacant and underutilized buildings in the downtown area for which Rev. McGhee already has plans, including turning one into transitional housing for women. As Rev. McGhee points out the effects of New Horizon’s activities are far reaching:
...What New Horizon is doing is having a political impact on the community. Even though the Mayor and the community people aren’t directly doing it, they can point to it. I’ve had direct contact with the Governor and the Republican Mayor. I was the only woman invited to a meeting with the Governor and 17 ministers. I was the only black woman pastor.

As the only CDO in Fordyce, New Horizon CDC has been a vital resource to the African-American community and has helped to strengthen existing relationships among community residents and form the basis for new networks.

At times New Horizon CDC has faced resistance and hostility to its work, which Rev. McGhee describes as being sometimes race-based and at other times arising out of opposition to the idea that New Horizon’s community development efforts are not the proper work of the church. As Rev. McGhee argues however,

> A lot of people may not think that this is the work of the church, but I say what would the Lord be doing if he were here now? He would be building low-income housing and feeding people. The ministry is outside of the pulpit. Our biggest prayer is that people can lay aside differences and come together to meet the needs of the less fortunate that are there. I say see what one little person is doing; just think what we could do if we all worked together (Interview 1997).

Rev. McGhee notes that there are no black owned businesses or black elected officials in Fordyce and speaks of having earned the respect of whites in her community who now support New Horizon’s community development work, although incidents of racism and opposition occasionally still occur. Rev. McGhee’s approach is to deal with it directly and practically. “My thing is that if I say anything, I will ask [myself] will it hurt more not to. I want to sit down with the gentlemen and works things out.... I ask...how can we work things out and work together” (Interview 1997).

Rev. McGhee’s vision for her community and New Horizon’s comprehensive, holistic approach to community development is a reflection of both the tremendous need of community residents and an approach that views those needs as a complex set of issues which are linked and must be addressed at
the individual as well as community level. Literacy training and substance abuse counseling, for instance, are considered as fundamental as day care provision and housing development in order for the community to thrive.

New Horizon’s work has strengthened important networks and bonds within the African-American community and has also created new links outside the group with elected officials and other community residents. These links outside one’s immediate group have been termed “bridging capital” (R. Gitt). Networks outside the immediate community are also being forged as New Horizon CDC begins to work and partner with groups in other communities starting their day care and other programs. Underlying New Horizon’s CDC’s efforts is the faith-based nature of the organization as well as the personal faith commitments of Rev. McGhee, New Horizon’s staff and volunteers as well as the community participants. Faith has helped them overcome numerous, seemingly insurmountable obstacles and sustained them in their work.

**Women’s Leadership Style**

There is a continuum of leadership styles in the women-led organizations we interviewed, ranging from a traditional/hierarchical model to a more inclusive, collective, “feminist” model. Some organizations are run according to a traditional corporate model and some are run collectively, with most falling somewhere in between. Women assume their authority in a number of different ways and with varying degrees of comfort. Some women express discomfort with assuming the role of a leader and either stay in the background or promote someone else to act as a spokesperson, while others take visible, active leadership roles.

Naples’ concept of “activist mothering” is useful in analyzing our findings about women’s leadership. According to Naples, activist mothering is nurturing work that occurs outside the family, as well a redefinition of mothering practices (Naples 1998 114). It encompasses working to meet community needs and bringing up children to struggle against oppression or to serve the community. This is particularly significant for women of color who use their own mothering practices in the struggle against
racism. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and bell hooks (1990) have examined both parenting as a survival strategy and the presence of “other mothers” in African-American communities. Several women told us that they were raising their children to be proud of their identity, and some mentioned raising their sons to respect women (Naples 1998: 115).

Most women leaders identify themselves as open and supportive, and many seem non-authoritarian and sensitive to staff needs. This was reflected in the physical organization of the office, the number of staff meetings and the quality of staff participation, a concern with staff education and training, as well as in flexible work arrangements. For instance, one woman director told us, “I see myself as a bridge builder, to bring people to the organization and connect them both in terms of the board and staff.” Naples also found that women saw themselves as more concerned with consensus building and community participation than men (Interview 1997; Naples 1998: 90).

Issues of leadership relate directly to cultural ideas about women, allowing women to draw on a tradition of women leaders or matriarchs in their communities, but also forcing them as women to negotiate their role within the community. As one woman told us, “The fact is that as an Asian woman, to be well-known is trouble. You have to be effective but not in a way that draws personal attention to yourself . . . You have to balance the cultural idea of women not showing off” (Interview 1997).

The word leadership is difficult to define in different cultures. Asian women are in a double bind because they have to do more than men do but not look like it. I am trying to develop a cross-cultural leadership style for women that is nurturing, that empowers women and men, that concentrates on the whole system, not just gender (Interview 1997).

This negotiating of leadership roles cuts across cultures as women both confront cultural expectations and draw upon cultural traditions of female leadership for strength. Some Latinas told us about confronting difficult expectations of them as perfect wives and mothers. Some women used traditional views of mothering to justify their care for the community, while other challenged the expectations more directly. Some African-American women stated that they were challenged by ministers who felt their traditional role was being usurped, while others felt overwhelmed by the community’s reliance on them.
We interviewed only one Native-American woman, but she also expressed that she encountered opposition to her leadership. We also found that European-American working-class homemakers had to struggle against isolation and dominating husbands in order to gain the freedom to leave their homes to attend meetings (Interviews 1997).

Some women we interviewed stated that they experienced family conflicts as they took on added responsibilities outside the home. Increased self-worth and new skills either caused women to question traditional power relations within the home or else brought them into conflict with husbands or relatives who did not approve of their new activities. Some women described being criticized by their older female relatives for not caring appropriately for their children or by their husbands for not spending enough time with their family. “I was an outcast,” is the way one woman leader told us she felt in her family. Even when the husband himself is an activist, problems may arise. As one Latina told us, “[He] liked what I thought, but then it was different to do it.” These conflicts sometimes led to separation and divorce, as the following narrative by the director of a woman-focused organization illustrates:

My life changed because my kids were grown. I gave 100% of my time . . . I spend a lot of time here. Sometimes your husband doesn’t expect you to succeed. It caused us to separate . . . He wanted to compete . . . I always thought he was so great. I was a shy person and quiet. I believe so strongly in what I’m doing that it pushes me to do other things. I had to speak to a hospital board . . . they took me in and I talked to the President of the Board. I was a volunteer! ... A woman is like a rose. It’s a bud with no water and no light--if you give her freedom, air, food--it’ll open up. I think women are like that; they can bloom (Interview 1997).

Various cultural and gender norms that limit women’s leadership force women to renegotiate their leadership roles in their communities. Women’s multiple points of entry into the field—through community work, formal education, or a combination of both, also affects women’s leadership.

**Credentialed vs. Non-Credentialed Women**

In the 1960s, authors such as Arthur Pearl and Frank Riessman argued that “non-credentialed resident
workers possess a greater investment in the well-being of their communities than workers who do not live in the communities,” and that community residents more readily identify with someone from the same background (Naples 1998 2). The philosophy of the value of resident community workers’ participation can be traced back to Clifford Shaw’s Chicago Area Project in the 1930s. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Lloyd Ohlin and Richard Cloward stressed the importance of community-based organizations. Marilyn Gittell emphasized the importance of citizen participation in 1980 and has continued to do so since (Gittell 1980).

Our interviews suggest that women who are professionally trained as city planners, architects, public officials, and those with a background in finance are socialized by their profession to be different in their leadership style than women who came to community development through community activism. Women leaders who are not activists tend to emphasize expertise above participation and have a more procedural style of leadership, while activist women tend to emphasize organizing and mobilization.

A number of women leaders described the importance of education to them personally as well as how it can pose a barrier to women in community development. Women directors described encouraging community volunteers and staff members to complete their high school diplomas and go on to college. One director in Chicago told us, “When I first started, whatever I said wasn't credible because I didn't have a degree. If I tell you something, I have lived this. This is what I've experienced. Why do I need a degree?” Nevertheless, this director now holds both a B.A. and an M.A. in Community Economic Development.

While women community leaders value formal education, many leaders place commitment to the community and life experience above credentials. There were a number of women leaders who started out as activists or community workers, as in the example above, and then either left to go to college or went to college while working in a CDO. These women tended to maintain a focus on community participation rather than on professionalization and bureaucratization of the organization. A number of women expressed the view that credentials and training could be beneficial if it was defined by community needs and informed by knowledge of the community.
Chapter Three
Women Creating Social Capital

The majority of women-led community development organizations we studied are creating social capital through leadership, programs, community participation, and networking. Collaborative styles of leadership encourage internal democracy in CDOs, resulting in increased participation of community residents on boards and staffs. This high degree of community representation translates into programs being designed to respond to the needs of the community. Holistic programs that build in participation allow for greater communication between community residents, thus contributing to the creation of norms and trust. These highly effective and representative organizations also build social capital by creating networks at many different levels.

Women leaders often have networks of women friends who support them personally, and many encourage the formation of these networks by women staff members or by mentoring younger women in the community. Some also participate in networks of women doing community work, though not necessarily development work per se. Most of the CDOs have relationships with other organizations in their communities such as churches, cultural institutions, CDOs, and other community-based organizations. Some CDOs enjoy relationships outside their communities, in city-wide organizations, with foundations and banks, with local elected officials, and with city agencies. A few have networks at the state level or with state legislators. Building networks at many different levels is essential in creating social capital.

Expanding Community Participation
In *Making Democracy Work*, Robert Putnam argues that social capital, defined as “. . . features of social organization, such as norms, trust, and networks,” makes coordinated social action possible. In his classic study of Italian democracy Putnam concludes that the greater responsiveness of northern Italian regional governments is attributable to the history and tradition of strong associations and participation in voluntary groups in those regions (Putnam 1993). Accumulated social capital in those
communities is what “makes democracy work.” Another theorist of democracy, Benjamin Barber, writes about the differences in strong and weak democracy, which hinge on the elements of citizen participation, assembly and association, and the differential effect of those processes (Barber 1984). Strong democracy results from greater emphasis on participation and association.

Most of the research on organized groups stresses the general behavior of organizations; it does not distinguish the effect of external or internal social variables (Olson 1967). More recent research describing women’s organizations and leadership characteristics has provided important insights into differences in behavior and styles of management in organizations as a result of women’s socialization in American society. Our own research on women’s roles in community development suggests that race, class, and political cultural differences of women in these organizations is of some importance. Most gender studies conclude that women place stronger emphasis on common goals and are more likely to engage in collective decision-making and accept or promote social and institutional change. Our research confirms this conclusion (Bookman and Morgen 1988; Kanter 1977; Tronto and Cohen 1997; Naples 1998; Kaplan 1997; cited in Gittell 1998).

The literature on community organizations and community participation recognizes the strong relationship between citizen participation and local democracy. The shift towards identification with a group, sharing values, and developing trust is significant to the creation of social capital and to civic action. The accumulation of social capital is an outcome of association, which can be called upon for civic action. Members acting together in association with common values and norms are able to build networks among themselves and with others, further increasing the strength of their social capital. Networking leads to coalitions and increased status and the power to influence decisions and public policies, although the path may be more difficult for some groups than others. Citizens working in groups together can build political capital, either because they can translate that identification into votes or because of their capacity to transform the organization into an effective pressure group (Gittell 1998).

From a political perspective, it is the differences in the purpose, values, and networks of associations
and organizations and, most importantly, how they use them, which gives meaning to their efforts. Because social action goes beyond individual acts to include political participation, it has significance for those interested in the use of social capital for political purposes.

Putnam argues that the denser the networks in a community, the more likely that its residents will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit. Dense networks will both increase the costs of defection for the individual, and build up reciprocity, because a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness will be important in this context. Furthermore, networks will increase communication and information about the trustworthiness of potential partners. Networks also represent the past success and future possibility of collaboration. “If horizontal networks of civic engagement help participants solve dilemmas of collective action, then the more horizontally structured an organization, the more it should foster institutional success in the broader community,” according to Putnam (Putnam 1993 173-176).

Most of the women-led CDOs we studied are building social capital by increasing the trust, norms, and networks in their communities. Many of these organizations enjoy relatively high degrees of internal democracy, or are horizontally structured and are thus better able to establish egalitarian relationships with community members. The woman leader's identification with the community and rejection of professional barriers helps establish trust between her, her staff, and the community at large. The focus of most women-led organizations on human development and developing relationships further increases the level of trust and creates a space for discussion of community and family issues, contributing to the creation of norms. Furthermore, women-led organizations are promoting networks within and outside their communities.

For instance, several organizations in communities in different regions of the country told us how through the process of women coming out of their homes and meeting together to talk, a high incidence of domestic violence was revealed. Through discussion, and with the support of activists and community workers, women arrived at the norm that no one deserves to be beaten and they were able to receive
support in leaving abusive relationships. An effort was then made to educate the community at large about this issue. A further example of the effectiveness of social capital created by this inter-action and communication was the civic action outcome; women in these communities went on to advocate for domestic violence shelters which resulted in state policies supporting these shelters. The women-led domestic violence movement in parts of Portland, Oregon is now at such an advanced stage that women leaders can see its metamorphosis from movement to institution:

It was a grassroots movement of women of color, lesbians and low-income women who really looked at domestic violence as a socially and economically based system of oppression. It started out as a movement. When police and doctors take it and make it a medical or a crime model there is a degree of professionalization and institutionalization . . . We call ourselves a social change agency and a feminist agency (Interview 1997).

The profiles below describe how women-led organizations both structured their organizations horizontally, and created an atmosphere conducive to increased trust and networking. Through listening to community residents and encouraging volunteers to participate, women-led CDOs open more avenues for community residents to participate collectively in activities for the community. Through participation in the CDOs, community residents can also expand their networks beyond their immediate community. For instance, in attending public meetings, community members gain increased access to other organizations and to elected and appointed officials. Similarly, by participating in a training session conducted by a consultant, or working on a project assisted by an outside facilitator, social networks are expanded beyond the neighborhood or even the city.

Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS), a multi-service housing organization in Oakland considers itself a “teaching” organization and as part of this approach, secures training for its members to become facilitators or consultants for the group, rather than having to rely on hiring outside consultants. When we interviewed the executive director, she explained that they were in the process of choosing eight members to go through leadership facilitation and conflict resolution training. BOSS also sent a small team to the Women’s Conference in Beijing, China (Interview 1997).
In the mostly poor and working class communities which we visited, women have historically been marginalized by virtue of their class, gender, and race status. Most of the CDOs we studied operate in a context in which their community members suffer from structural unemployment and underemployment, from a lack of adequate public education and health care, from deteriorating housing and declining infrastructure, from both institutional racism and outright bigotry, from gender discrimination and violence, all exacerbated by declining public investment and a political climate that renders poor women invisible at best, criminal at worst. In this context, the content, or meaning, of cooperation is vitally important.

The women we interviewed shared their passion for their communities with us, and communicated the tremendous urgency of meeting human needs and improving declining neighborhoods. Some women told us it was literally a matter of saving people’s lives. In their communities, participating in organizations and nurturing one another is not simply a civic exercise, nor an activity of leisure. It is an emergency response to the failure of the economic and political systems to meet their most basic needs. As such, their activities are political in nature, if we take politics at its root to mean the relations between people in society. In this context, social capital is not created solely as something to make life more pleasant, but rather to foster participation in organizations that by building networks and civic action often lead to social change. Analyzing the work of women-led CDOs in building social capital confirms for us that community participation is the main vehicle for the creation of social capital, and that participation often strives for social change and is ultimately political.

Identification with the Community

One of the most striking characteristics of women's work in community development is a preoccupation with community participation. This focus on community participation flows naturally from women’s approaches to leadership. As discussed previously, we found women leaders to be closely identified with their communities, viewing their work as a life choice and exhibiting great levels of commitment to
the community members. Many women leaders maintained close relationships and open communication with community residents. Programs were designed around community needs precisely because staff members communicated with the community residents, or were, more often than not, residents themselves. Most of the women-led organizations we studied were committed to facilitating community participation.

Women’s identification with community residents was evident in an approach to the provision of services that breaks down the conventional perception of clients as subjects to be acted upon. Even women-led organizations working with extremely vulnerable people in social work settings espoused this view. For example, the battered women’s program of Northeast Area Ministries in Houston uses a “feminist empowerment” model in which women seeking assistance are encouraged and supported in making their own decisions. “This is the most difficult way of doing social work, but this is the best way-to allow her to develop herself. To come to fulfillment,” explained the director of the program. The model works by supporting women in making small decisions when they first come in for help, rather than by presenting one choice. The director referred to this as part of a “development lifestyle” (Interview 1997).

In analyzing African-American women’s community work, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes describes this as doing things with, rather than to or for the people served. Because many of the women we interviewed (of different races) live in the communities they work in, there is less of a professional distance between them and the community members. An identification with and a respectful relationship with the community members provides the foundation for community participation in the organization (Townsend Gilkes in Bookman and Morgen 1988 57-61).

**Breaking Down Professional/Non-Professional and Public/Private Dichotomies**

This close identification with the community and personal commitment on the part of the women leaders means that there are generally few barriers between their personal lives and their community work. One
Mexican-American head of a community-based prenatal and parenting support group in Houston described how she and the women who volunteer with her see themselves as a resource to community members at all hours. She recounted one incident in which a volunteer saw a mother and her children crying at a bus stop after working hours. The volunteer brought the woman and her children to the agency and phone calls were made until 7 p.m. When no shelter space was found, the volunteer took the woman and her children to her mother’s home. Another time newly arrived immigrant men stopped by and asked for work. The director had no jobs for the men, but she gave them sandwiches and used clothes (Interview 1997).

Our findings resonate with Townsend Gilke’s description of the way African-American community workers did away with the “compartmentalization between the professional, political, and social activities (in Bookman and Morgen 1988 57).” A close identification with the community and personal involvement with community members chips away at traditional definitions of professionalism and the public/private dichotomy, thus opening more space for participation by non-professionals. Furthermore, valuing a community member’s personal life experience also encourages participation. One woman in El Paso described being asked to testify at a Water Department meeting in Austin because she had spoken at a public meeting as an event that propelled her into further action. “I went to Austin. Two minutes to give my little speech . . . I felt little--a woman and a Hispanic--[there was] a lady from the Health Department. When I saw that lady stand up and support what I said!” This woman, along with other organizations, contributed to the colonias finally getting water (Interview 1997). We encountered numerous examples in which directors and their staffs foster community participation by identifying with the community, enjoying open communication with community members, and creating an atmosphere where non-professionals feel welcome and their experience is appreciated.

Martha A. Ackelsberg has argued that women’s community work and activism point to a new conception of politics and democracy. In her analysis, women’s community work challenges the “public/private split” by bringing human and economic need issues out of the household and making
these needs the subject of common struggles. The issues that affect most women’s daily lives, decent and affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, quality health care, day care and education, to name a few, are increasingly defined as private issues outside the purview of government or politics. As Ackelsberg states, “these ideological separations limit both the agenda of politics and the likely participants” (Ackelsberg in Bookman and Morgen 1988 301). The women we interviewed focused their work on issues such as the ones listed above, and in doing so they not only emphasized the commonality of problems previously viewed as private, but they also encouraged participation by women who had not seen themselves as public actors.

**Human Development Rooted in Relationships as an End**

Women-led organizations invite participation precisely because they focus on the “daily life” issues that affect most community residents, and particularly community women who are generally the primary nurturers and household managers. But these issues are not seen as ends in themselves, and women refer to human development or growth as something above and beyond providing services or working on programs. As one woman described her organization, “Its strength is that it’s a sisterhood of friends.” Feminist theorists have argued that women’s activism reflects the view that the desire for connection and relationship is a human need, not simply an instrument for attaining individual ends.

Most of the women we interviewed live in communities that have been politically marginalized because of their poverty. These women may have acted initially out of concern for their own families’ basic needs, but they inevitably spoke of their organizations meeting community needs, and often referred to the connections forged with other women and the community-wide relationships formed as valuable. Women’s efforts at developing relationships and networks foster community participation; as such women do not behave merely as individuals, but rather act as communities.

**Profile of Participation: The Neighborhood Pride Team**
The Neighborhood Pride Team (NPT) is a grassroots membership organization working to decrease poverty and increase self-sufficiency in the predominantly white, working-class and poor Brentwood-Darlington and Lents neighborhoods on the outskirts of Portland. The group was founded as a nonprofit in 1994 and became a CDC in 1995. Its main program is “community organizing centered on building relationships between neighbors and focusing on the empowerment of women.” The organization prioritizes developing leaders and its literature spells out that members will run meetings, write agendas, chair committees, organize events, and speak in public (Six Questions You’ve Been Meaning to Ask About The Neighborhood Pride Team, undated organizational description).

NPT’s motto is “Each one teach one” and its mission statement explains that it helps residents work together. The Neighborhood Skills Center operated by NPT provides information and referral, computer classes, 22 week training in developing a home business, a job bank, and a neighborhood skills exchange (Six Questions You’ve Been Meaning to Ask About The Neighborhood Pride Team, undated organizational description).

The analysis that NPT puts forth in its literature is sociological, economic, and political. It explains a dual culture in the neighborhood, consisting both of “blue-collar families” who own their homes and a group living in entrenched poverty and suffering from substance abuse, domestic violence, and child abuse. Both groups share “a total mistrust of government, a rugged individualist outlook, and a fondness for their neighborhood,” states NPT’s literature. The area was recently annexed to the city and this contributes to the residents’ suspicion of government. NPT isolates eight neighborhood needs: hope and trust among neighborhood residents, basic skills levels for living wage employment, leaving dependence on government assistance through jobs or self-employment, substance abuse treatment centers, domestic violence shelters, an end to domestic violence and child abuse, affordable housing, and child care. NPT officially chooses to work on the first three issues, but in practice it deals with all the issues in the neighborhood (Mission and Philosophy, Neighborhood Pride Team, undated materials).
Molly Cooley, the director of the organization, had volunteered for Multnomah County in an HIV peer education program for women, and she and other volunteers decided to expand their focus to neighborhood activism. In working on HIV education in a community with a high rate of IV drug use, Cooley and others organized house parties and a peer network emerged that was to form part of the board of NPT. Cooley argues that the federal government uses community residents as guinea pigs for low-quality research and wastes money duplicating the work of community women. “I decided they weren’t using this neighborhood . . . [we’re doing] community organizing training. We want to make a better life for ourselves,” she told us, explaining how they had creatively used existing funding or HIV education to form a peer network. While going door-to-door doing HIV education, Cooley and others discovered domestic violence every third or fourth household in the neighborhood. Cooley explains that women were isolated with no job skills in a local semi-rural culture of overt male domination (Interview 1997).

The women who came together to form NPT were a mix of middle-class volunteers, community workers, and teenage mothers. Some of the women had either worked together or were friends. Cooley had a “whole sense that women could have jobs with meaning and economic empowerment,” but she hung back and encouraged a “very organic and slow” development of the group. For instance, the group spent a year designing their logo, but this exercise was very important to the neighborhood women, as it both built trust between the women and allowed many of them the first opportunity to participate in a group outside the confines of their homes, much less to be heard and speak in a public setting. The process, as Cooley put it, “...was a deeply emotionally satisfying thing.” The members then went on to participate in a crafts fair, launched a voter registration drive, completed a landscaping project for another community organization, and catered events to raise money (Interview 1997; Neighborhood Pride Team History, undated materials).

A male mentor shared “The Future of Low-Income Neighborhoods and the People who Reside in Them” by John McKnight with the group. McKnight’s argument that the people who reside in low-
income communities are more qualified to solve neighborhood problems than outside experts resonated with the women in NPT. The women had already been building on the talents and interests of local residents, as advocated by McKnight’s capacity building approach, so they all read his two books and spelled out capacity building in every aspect of their work. The women adapted a capacity inventory designed by McKnight and John Kretzman and secured funding from the City of Portland to administer the inventory to 120 households. Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed wanted basic computer skills and 42 percent wanted to learn how to run their own business. The high school drop out rate in the neighborhood is 33 percent and most of the neighborhood women were intimidated by the idea of attending the community college, leading Cooley to secure a free space in the Church of the Nazarene and free computers and typewriters through former colleagues (Interview 1997).

NPT was advised to become a CDC and received support from Nick Savi, Director, Rose CDC; Kay Solh, Director, Technical Assistance for Community Services; Don Neureuther, Director, the Neighborhood Partnership Fund; and Pat Rumer, Director of the Community Development Training Institute at Portland State University. Cooley expressed a desire to keep the organization from becoming funding-driven. She emphasized the importance of building relationships and stated that being a “sisterhood of friends” was their strength. “Interesting process to have me be a friend in the neighborhood and then for me to become a professional,” she said, reflecting on her growing expertise in community development. However, she proudly describes her board as a strong one that initially tried to micro-manage everything she did. NPT is trying to stay true to its neighborhood roots and open to participation while experiencing the growing pains and new demands of becoming a CDC (Interview 1997).

NPT’s history as a slowly evolving group of neighborhood women who assessed and tried to meet some of the community’s needs made it a highly participatory organization, but none of this would have been possible without the group’s ability to gently draw out women from restrictive home environments and nurture their leadership. This process occurred within the context of a natural development of
friendships which in turn led to relationships with more and more people outside the women’s immediate families. This process brings to mind Ackelsberg’s analysis of women activists’ focus on connection and relationship, but it also sheds light on what could be termed the building blocks of social capital as described by Putnam and others, namely trust, shared values, and networks.

Cooley is very clear on the social and political value of building social capital:

> We want to be an organization that stays grounded in the neighborhood. We want somebody to pay us to do [the] hard labor of maintaining relationships. You want it to be functioning and effective--give us the time and space to build relationships (Interview 1997).

NPT is currently seeking funds to establish an Entrepreneurial Training Program that would include two incubators, one for business support enterprises, and one for small manufacturers of wood crafts, a popular hobby in their community (Neighborhood Pride Team Organizational Description, no date).

**Process of Participation: Listening and a Collaborative Atmosphere**

Everyone comes with their own experience. If you talk to them long enough, everyone has an idea about what they want for the community. As neighbors, by communicating you have tremendous power to fight the powers that be. Neighborhood consensus is very important and powerful, as if knowing, talking and dreaming together--it is a process of building a community. The key is finding out what strengths people have, coming to the table as equals, and being sincere. (Director of Organizing, Boston CDO, Interview 1997)

The specific ways in which community participation is achieved are rarely examined. Usually the focus is on a checklist of tactics for participation such as attendance at meetings, work on committees, and rotation of meeting responsibilities. While these activities are indeed indicators of efforts at community participation, more qualitative measures are needed. For instance, how is an atmosphere conducive to meaningful participation achieved? Some of the women-led organizations we visited created an
atmosphere that made community women feel more comfortable than others and some women leaders appeared better able to develop grassroots leadership than others. One point of departure might be a focus on listening to people carefully. Feminist writers have described this as the way in which some women engage in exploratory listening and talking. Establishing a dialogue is described by some women leaders as a first step in creating a collaborative environment. Belenky, Bond, and Weinstock call this practice “developmental leadership,” a practice we found in many women-led organizations.

As their primary goal is to bring the silenced into voice, the homeplace women are always on the lookout for those who are hanging back, always figuring out ways that these people might be drawn into the conversation. Their most basic tool for generating a dialogue is the kind of open-ended question that invites discussion, reflection, and careful listening (Belenky, Bond, and Weisntock, 1997 269).

The Family Day Care Training Project in Oakland puts this philosophy into practice in the way it works with women on public assistance who are starting day care centers. It builds on women's commitment to their own lives and begins by listening to the women's life histories, goals, and dreams. There is an emphasis on peer support as the most important element in developing women's leadership. “Women are often fearful to identify as leaders who are capable, confident, and therefore feel isolated,” explained Director Noa Mohlabane. Three program participants described their experiences of feeling listened to and valued in the organization and called it “a new role modeling.” These women are now running successful businesses and enjoying a support network (Interviews 1997).

The most common response to question of how the community participates was, “We ask people what they want.” Questionnaires and surveys are a common way of eliciting participation, particularly when the results are discussed with the community residents. The head of one extremely participatory organization stated that, “we do extensive intake and follow up interviews . . . we hire the participants and get them on the board” (Interview 1997).

The Warren Family Institute in Warrenton, North Carolina carries out this approach. Director Cathy Lawrence described how they “involve the stakeholders” by having advisory committees for every
program. These committees, made up of community residents, “created teams to go out into the community and do focus groups,” explained the Director. For instance, the Youth Development Program had 60 slots to fill for its summer youth program and the advisory committee conducted the interviews to fill these slots. Residents were integral to the process rather than simply consultative.

A number of leaders described the importance of creating multiple opportunities for stakeholder involvement. Flexibility is an important requirement for participation. As one woman leader in Boston told us,

> What I think gets people to participate is that you have to give them lots of options to plug in; give them lots of ways to freely float in and out . . . We try to pull in participants when we’re planning projects to let us know what they want (Interview 1997).

Stakeholder involvement throughout the design, development, and implementation process of program development is seen as essential.

This type of developmentally focused leadership is practiced by leaders who listen to women tell their personal stories and try to see their viewpoint. It also involves focusing on the woman’s strengths rather than criticizing her weaknesses. Organizations that are truly participatory provide support for ideas to grow, rather than simply bringing in community members to help carry out tasks.

**Volunteering as Ownership of the Organization**

Community participation often involves attracting volunteers and developing their capacities and leadership abilities. As one woman leader in Houston told us, “Volunteers get the first response. We would close in one day [but for them]. We could not run programs” (Interview 1997). In the most participatory organizations, women often start out as participants at a meeting or event, then move on to volunteer, and sometimes end up on the staff or the board.

When community members are consulted about projects, they often want to collaborate, and it is precisely this collaboration which deepens their commitment to the organization and to the work. CDO
leaders also view volunteering as an opportunity for leadership development and even job training. As Sylvia Costillo told us about in Houston, “There are no job training programs. We train them here . . . We mentor the mothers. We want to take the volunteers to another level--find a job and leave us” (Interview 1997)

Participatory organizations build human development into all their projects. Pamela Jones from the New Columbia Community Land Trust in Washington, DC described this process as, “The residents are part of the development team, too. This is key to their empowerment and ability to take over and then manage the property at the end of the construction period.” These are the organizations which, “whether they are launching a new community service, a folk festival, or a theater piece, the ultimate aim of their projects is the development of people and communities (Belenky, Bond, and Weinstock 1997 273).” We would add that it is the building of social capital as well.

**Community Organizing**

Community development organizations which engage in community organizing, including both constituency building and mobilization, pursue participation. Community organizing ranges from a focus on mobilization for action, particularly protests, to an emphasis on constituency building through leadership development and nurturing networks. In our sample, organizations that focused mostly on housing development tended not to engage in community organizing, but there were exceptions such as Madison Park CDC in Boston, WECAN in Chicago, Passage Home in Raleigh, New Horizon CDC in Fordyce, Arkansas, Voices of Calvary in Mississippi, and East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation in Oakland. The Director of Madison Park described an approach to participation in which residents of the CDC’s four properties were invited to meetings: “We want to try to get the residents to rise above property issues and organize. We physically knock on doors . . . we build bridges . . . we’ve formed a couple of coalitions that have brought people together” (Interview 1997). Mattie Butler, executive director of Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors (WECAN) in Chicago, described how her organization informed neighborhood residents of activities at the city level.
that affected their community. For example, WECAN was one of the lead organizations in applying for
the Federal Empowerment Zone designation, but was then marginalized in the allocation of programs
and money by local rivals allied with the mayor. WECAN mobilized community members to attend
meetings at City Hall, as it had done many times in the past (Interview 1997).

In an example of constituency building, WECAN joined a citywide coalition of groups opposed to the
demolition of the particular stations along the city's elevated train rapid transit system. A powerful group
of ministers within WECAN's neighborhood supported closing down the Dorchester station of the
Green line of the “El” and garnered support from city planners and other officials. WECAN educated
the community about the issue, collected signatures and spoke at Planning Commission meetings. It also
joined forces with community groups in other parts of the city, such as the Lakestreet “El” Coalition.
Although the demolition of the station will proceed, the experience of coalition building was not lost.

Another example of community organizing is one of the latest efforts by Dudley Street Neighborhood
Initiatives. Building on past successes, they have continued to organize their community. The school
organizer told us that a school in the neighborhood was going to be closed. “We stopped it. We just
got a $65,000 grant to put up a mural in front of the school (Interviews 1997).” Organizing is an
ongoing process.

For some, organizing is a specific program to be developed and implemented, but for others it is integral
to their work and viewed as part of everything they do. Cathy Lawrence from the Warren Family
Institute said, “We consider all of us organizers. We’ve used resources to do training. We’ve invested
very heavily in staff development” (Interview 1997).

Programs

The organizations included in this study have developed and implemented a wide range of programs to
meet the needs of their communities. Women’s organizations often expand the definition of community
development and, for the purpose of this study, development was defined broadly in order to take into account both activities traditionally considered development, as well as those activities which have sometimes been overlooked. Through their work and their very approach to work in their communities, women create social capital, increase civic capacity, and create social change. Women are working within and as leaders of CDCs, service agencies, as well as in advocacy and organizing groups to effect change. The women leaders interviewed for this study represent organizations with a wide range of programs reflecting women’s assessments of, and attempts to address, the complex needs of their communities. In communities where even basic needs such as access to water, adequate food, or housing are not being met, it is often women who are organizing and leading the efforts to address these conditions. In areas such as El Paso, the Mississippi Delta, and North Carolina, women are working to counter the effects of poverty exacerbated by recent welfare reform and worker displacements as a result of economic restructuring spurred on by NAFTA and other factors.

Through the creation, development and implementation of programs, women are creating social capital in their communities. Putnam identifies two main types of social capital, that which solidifies ties between people within a group or community who previously knew each other, what R. Gittell and Vidal (1998) call “bonding capital” and that which creates ties between individuals and groups who did not previously know each other, which Putnam calls “bridging capital.” The programs created by women are often integrative, comprehensive, responsive to the needs of women and girls and often help to build important networks both within their communities and beyond. Integrative programs combine a concern for people at the individual as well as community level. Programs designed by women often recognize the multiple needs of the community. Because of their inherently comprehensive approach to community development, programs developed by women-led organizations are an important and vital source of social capital in their communities. A concern for processes as well as outcomes is often built into the design of various programs. This focus on participatory process helps strengthen individuals’ bonds with each other, their communities, and important individuals or groups outside their communities.
Women are also likely to recognize that the needs of women and girls require an explicit focus.

Across the country, women are developing creative and innovative programs. The CDOs included in this study ran dozens of programs in areas such as housing development, financial services, job training and employment, organizing and advocacy, and human services. Women were also designing more directed programs such as teen leadership and self-esteem development, microenterprise programs for low-income women, women on welfare discussion groups, day care training as well as housing and economic development programs. Often these programs are a mix of advocacy, organizing, service delivery, and development. The conditions in which the CDOs operated also varied greatly. In Oakland, BOSS had a highly articulated network of partner organizations, with which it was working, while other groups such as New Horizon in Fordyce Arkansas were, in effect, the only organizations engaging in development in their area.

Table 7

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Perhaps the most compelling characteristic of the programs run by women-led organizations is the
degree to which they often simultaneously create both bonding and bridging capital, are comprehensive and integrative, are responsive to the needs of women and girls, and are particularly innovative in their approach. Because of the very way in which women-led organizations identify and address the concerns of their community it is important to note that the programs which they design are complex and have both intended and originally unintended positive outcomes which build social capital. For example, a program to assist women who are seeking employment may also lead to the development of contacts and solidify women’s networks in their community. Also, while it is important to highlight and discuss some of the particular programs which women-led CDOs are running, most of the organizations ran a number of different programs on their own or partnered with other community groups to addressed a variety of concerns and needs.

**Programs Which Create Bonding and Bridging Capital**

*Organizing and Advocacy*

Many interviewees told us that organizing and advocacy are under-funded and undervalued by most foundations and intermediaries, but that they continue to see these as a critical and integral part of their community development work. Some CDOs considered organizing integral to their mission and worked with their community as a whole building networks with other groups. Others limited their organizing efforts to working with their own tenants or program participants. Some of the CDOs we studied defined themselves primarily as organizing groups, such as Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiatives in Boston or the Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland. Other CDOs that pursued comprehensive development often had paid organizers on staff who worked directly with an organization’s own tenants and program participants. At times these groups also worked with the community as a whole. Few organizations viewed organizing and advocacy as completely beyond the scope of their activities.

Just over half the leaders we spoke with said that they engaged in advocacy. Most often women-led groups were working in the areas of housing and economic development policy, issues of domestic
violence, access to health care and welfare policies. Advocacy work is done in response to the local effects of national policies or specific local policies or issues. Advocacy activities included producing reports about issues, testifying before city and state legislators as well as organizing community members to lobby city and state legislators. While leaders were often called upon to serve as advocates, many were concerned with increasing opportunities for women and other community residents to speak for themselves.

Southerners for Economic Justice (SEJ), a 20-year old organization in North Carolina, has been organizing and advocating workers’ rights and economic and welfare policy issues with an emphasis on women, children, and people of color. Specifically, they conduct local organizing and advocacy around welfare and wage issues in response to the effects of policies such as recent welfare reforms and NAFTA. SEJ has carried out large-scale education campaigns, worked with local churches, union members, and other activists around specific struggles such as low-income tenant housing councils and on issues of community control. They have also established a Women on Welfare Roundtable where women meet in small groups to discuss the effects of welfare reform and possible responses to policy changes. This group of women was organized in response to the punitive nature of welfare reform to provide support for the participants and enable them to become advocates for themselves and other women on welfare.

La Mujer Obrera (LMO) is a women-founded and women-led worker-organizing group which works primarily with Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in El Paso. Since 1981, LMO has been organizing workers in the garment and other manufacturing industries who have been increasingly displaced by plant relocations. LMO’s work has involved organizing protests against NAFTA and its effects. La Mujer Obrera has challenged the ways in which retraining and education programs have been designed, funds have been distributed, and requirements for those programs have been determined. By organizing workers and those who have lost their jobs, continually protesting and speaking out, and by pressuring the state and local government La Mujer Obrera calls attention to the affects of NAFTA and puts pressure on the public and private sectors to meet the needs of women and displaced workers.
Recently, LMO has also worked on developing and incorporating a specific community development entity.

Other CDOs with more traditional housing and economic development approaches have also found ways to incorporate organizing strategies into their development efforts despite the lack of funding. Some CDOs have chosen to make organizing an explicit part of their program and have organizers on staff regardless of the difficulty in obtaining funding for this type of work. Dorchester Bay, a CDC in Boston, has organizers on staff and benefits as well from the director’s own background in community organizing. Another example is Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, a membership-based organization in Chicago which is concerned with increasing participation and working to “recruit, organize, and train” tenants who will then work with the community as a whole.

In some cases the very existence of an organization is evidence of community organizing efforts which were necessary in order for that organization to come into existence. In the South in particular, political and other organizing was the basis for the development of many CDOs. In North Carolina, Passage Home is one of the first CDOs in the state to have been intentionally founded as a biracial organization. Its founders attribute its success to the fact the organization is also faith-based, a fact which may help the organization reach out to other ethnic and racial minority groups whose population within the state is growing. Its existence is evidence of the considerable amount of community organizing which had to be done in order to establish the group. Passage Home has also worked to have an organizer on staff who works directly with tenants in an apartment complex in Raleigh, which it partly owns. The position was originally an internship, but Passage Home secured funding that enabled them to continue to have an organizer on staff in a full-time paid position.

**Housing Programs**

Housing programs developed by women-led organizations were often comprehensive and integrative, taking into account the multiple issues that are necessary to address to insure that a family will not only be able to obtain a home, but also that they will be able to thrive in it and in the community.
Organizations which were building housing benefited women either through an explicit focus on the needs of women and children or less directly, by creating affordable housing for low-income people. The housing programs run by CDOs in this study included construction of new single family homes for purchase and multi-unit developments for rent. There were also rehabilitation and weatherization programs for existing housing. Women-led organizations also concentrated on the need for transitional housing for the homeless, battered women’s shelters, housing with supportive services for the mentally ill or those recovering from substance abuse, as well as housing for people with special needs such as the elderly. In some areas women-led groups are some of the only organizations taking on the “tough cases” such as housing for recovering addicts, the mentally ill, and women who have recently been released from prison. Organizations developing housing have had an important impact not only by providing new affordable housing where there was none before, but also by confronting entrenched local and state bureaucracies. These CDOs had to confront the effects of poverty and racism in order to get projects completed. Civic action and the mobilization of human and financial resources to build housing, creates social capital in these communities.

In addition to creating much needed low-income housing, many housing development programs go beyond a focus on unit production. In many communities, housing development programs represent some of the most significant, if not the only, low-income housing development efforts and are also important sources of social capital. In Webb, Mississippi for example, the Tallahatchie Housing Corporation (THC) built the first housing constructed since 1976. The multi-family rental units which they built are the first apartments Tallahatchie has ever had. The organization is membership based and has a “family counselor” on staff who assists prospective tenants with budgeting, paying bills and job counseling. Tenants go through a 15-hour orientation, the main purpose of which is to explain that the new housing is not supposed to be a “stop-in place, but a move-in place.” Often, individuals and families have had to settle for temporary, overcrowded living arrangements which obscured the severity of the housing crisis in the county. It was important to change the way the county and the state measured housing needs, because people with a roof over their heads were not necessarily considered
homeless, no matter how temporary or overcrowded their living situation. THC’s work also involves getting the residents involved politically and holding elected officials responsible to the community as a way of ensuring increased funding after years of neglect. THC’s housing programs solidifies bonds among community residents and brings them into contact with new networks. This direct political involvement demonstrates the existence of social capital in the community organizations.

Micro-Enterprise and Business Development

In North Carolina, the Wilson Community Improvement Association (WCIA) began a microenterprise loan fund in 1989 and has succeeded in creating and strengthening relationships among new business owners as well as creating new networks of relationships and contacts with new networks. The program was established because of the difficulty many groups and individuals in the community have had in obtaining loans from banks and other traditional lending institutions. As in the Women’s Business Opportunity Program (WBOP) of Elizabeth Stone House in Boston, participants are given assistance in designing business plans and also receive input and guidance from their peers. Through WCIA, new business owners also have access to business and technical assistance providers. Loans are available at three points in the business development process and they range in size from $1,500 to $8,000. The program is designed to assist aspiring small business owners from the beginning stages of creating a business plan through the later stages with classes and workshops as well as providing networking opportunities with other business owners. If necessary, WCIA will also provide referrals to experts in the business owner’s particular field.

The Mercy Business Development and Training Center in WCIA’s newly rehabilitated facility houses their Small Business Training and Technical Assistance program as well as a job skills training program to further assist business owners. Groups such as the BB&T Bank, the City of Wilson, and the Wilson Community Technical College’s Small Business Center are also tenants in the new center and have agreed to provide technical assistance as needed at the Mercy Center. The WCIA program facilitates connections between small business owners and other community organizations, institutions and
resources, as well as between the entrepreneurs themselves. The networks developed through the peer support groups among the business owners and their peers is an example of bonding capital, while the contacts with local banks, city officials and the community college is evidence of bridging capital.

Child Care

In Portland, Franciscan Enterprise is addressing community child care needs as part of a project sponsored by the National Economic Development and Law Center which was one of the organizations to successfully argue that child care is integral to economic development. After a year-long community assessment process, Franciscan Enterprises recognized that child care was a major concern in the neighborhood. Franciscan Enterprise partners with child care providers and trainers and operates a Child Care Provider Loan Fund and Business Development Program which serves to link the CDC with the child care providers to meet the needs of the community. Rather than go into the child care business themselves, they decided to partner with existing programs to increase the availability of affordable, quality child care in the neighborhood, as well as increase the economic opportunities in the community.

Working with the community through the assessment process, linking child care providers and trainers and providing loans and technical assistance has brought new resources into the community in both in terms of generating economic output and creating both bonding and bridging capital. The networks and relationships strengthened through the assessment process created and strengthened important bonds within the community and led to the creation of larger networks of relationships outside the immediate community as further resources were sought to meet child care needs.

In Fordyce, Arkansas, the New Horizon Community Development Corporation (NHCDC) created and operates its own child development and day care center as part of its comprehensive community development program. New Horizon identified three important needs in their community: decent affordable housing for low-income people, access to services, and child care. While there were a couple of day care centers in the area, they were financially out of reach of most of the African American community. With few other organizations to partner with or resources to tap into, NHCDC
decided to create their own center. Within two months of opening, 53 children were in day care and the child care center was linked to their transitional housing for women. While women are in the transitional housing, they have access to subsidized day care, education programs, job referral, and counseling, giving them more comprehensive services. Day care is an important source of parent networking and trust building for the women and the community and can be seen as creating bonding and cohesion in the group.

**Youth**

In North Carolina, the Warren Family Institute (WFI), runs an innovative summer enrichment program which was based on a design called “tiered mentoring.” According to statewide rankings, Warren County ranks last in terms of education. Concerned that high school students had few positive role models or mentors, WFI created the summer enrichment program to bring college students to Warren County to work with high school students. In 1997, 25 of the 45 volunteers were Warren County high school graduates, and the balance were AmeriCorps volunteers. Before WFI established its program, few college-age students chose to return to the community due to a lack of summer employment opportunities. While the program helps high school students finish their degree, it also features an important leadership development component for the college students who return to Warren County. They arrive in Warren two weeks early in order to help design the summer program. The program also works closely with parents. WFI is beginning to work in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classrooms which have been identified as critical drop-out prevention points. The participants are especially conscious of their role in the community and their need to build trust with the parents and student participants.

**Healthcare and Human Services**

A major area of activity for the CDOs in our study was human services. Programs included parenting support, health care, elder care, substance abuse counseling and referral, direct emergency aid, and arts, crafts, and cultural programs. These programs are often developed by communities which organize around particular issues or needs. All of these services add to the interaction of participants and the
creation of new networks. While meeting the needs of low-income communities, these service programs also create bonds among community members and, where they are part of larger more comprehensive programs of community development, help to link communities with new resources and networks. Some CDOs have focused exclusively on service provision while other organizations have integrated services with housing, economic, and other development programs as part of their strategy of community development.

In Chicago, the Austin People’s Action Center (APAC) was established in 1980 as a social service agency to directly assist low-income families in need. APAC is concerned with providing individuals with food, clothing, and housing and helping them to find employment. APAC fought for and eventually won a WIC Food Center for their southwest Chicago neighborhood. Aside from running the large food center which is equipped to provide child care while shopping, APAC also operates an emergency food pantry. Concern about a lack of access to health care and the impact of AIDS in the community has led to the creation of programs such as family case management for pregnant women and women with infants and health and housing services. APAC currently has three housing programs: a transitional program for homeless families, a program which helps to meet the needs of individuals who are HIV positive or have AIDS, and a HUD sponsored program designed to provide home ownership opportunities to formerly homeless and low-income individuals and families. As director Cynthia Williams explained, “We originally started out as more of an organizing group, but in order to empower people you need to feed and clothe and house people” (Interview 1997). While services are being provided, community residents become part of the organization and strengthen relationships within the organization and the community.

Health care was a major concern for a number of groups. In Oakland, La Clinica de la Raza was established in 1971 by activists, students, and health professionals who began organizing in East Oakland in response to Latinos’ lack of access to health care or to doctors who spoke Spanish. La Clinica has a comprehensive focus on health and access to health care of the community as a whole. It
primarily serves the Latino community in East Oakland. Offering a variety of services, La Clinica now employs 250 people, 85% of whom are women. La Clinica places a strong emphasis on the health of women and children and on preventive medicine. Other important components of their programs include community health education and outreach programs, and a clinic specifically designed for teens and school-based health care outreach in two area schools. Through these programs linkages are formed with other local agencies and across populations in the community.

**Comprehensive and Integrative Programs**

Of the groups included in our study which engaged in housing development, few focused solely on the production of housing units. Most groups approached housing development comprehensively, integrating housing development into a broad program of community development and service provision. Groups which contribute more to the development of social capital are those which engage the community and encourage participation while developing housing and programs which support residents in that housing. These groups are more locally based, tend to operate on a smaller scale, and define the purpose of their organizations in broader terms. While these programs are comprehensive and integrative, often they also build bonding and bridging capital as well as address the particular needs of women.

In Portland, Housing Our Families (HOF) is a grass roots women’s organization which is concentrating on affordable rental housing. HOF contributes to the development of social capital in its community not only through the creation of housing which meets the specific needs of women and children, but also by encouraging the participation of women in their community and in the organization. HOF is as concerned with women as individuals as they are with meeting their housing needs. HOF takes the specific needs of women and children into account by including such things as yard space and washers and dryers in the housing they build, as well as by building rental units large enough to accommodate families. While other groups were focusing on low-income home ownership, HOF chose to focus explicitly on creating rental units in recognition of the fact that families headed by women are more likely
to be poor and often do not meet income requirements for home ownership programs. They also explicitly focus on the empowerment of women and on the development of women’s leadership through the involvement of tenants on residents councils and inclusion on the board, as well as participation in other programs. HOF also has a commitment to maintaining a board which includes a majority of low-income and community residents.

Employment and job creation is an important activity of many groups across the nine sites we visited. Many cities and regions are dealing with staggering losses of jobs due to plant closings and relocations, compounded by a lack of access to training and education and the pressures of welfare reform. Changes in welfare policies, in particular, have increased pressures on women, especially those who may have been out of the job market for years or who are in need of skills training. Often, women-led organizations attempt to address the problems of unemployment and underemployment by looking at the community as a whole and asking what is necessary to help stabilize it. They are also aware that women may need special assistance in entering or reentering the job market. They do not seek specific program support separate from building a base of trust and bonding in organizations which can act in association with each other.

In Chicago, Southwest Women Working Together (SWWT) focuses its programs on transitional housing for families in crisis, counseling, advocacy, and other services. It also runs a “Women’s Employment and Training Program” that helps women find and keep jobs with which they can support their families. The program provides pre-employment counseling, skills assessment, job readiness training, and assistance with job placement. The program also makes referrals to training and educational opportunities. Perhaps most importantly for women who have been homeless or unemployed or have survived domestic abuse, there is a support system and comprehensive approach to addressing their needs including a three-week job readiness workshop which addresses issues such as self-esteem, decision-making, and stress management, as well as resume writing and interviewing. Women-led programs, especially those addressing the issues and effects of domestic abuse recognize
that women who wish or need to reenter the job market confront a complex set of issues and that an integrated approach is necessary.

**Programs Responsive to the Needs of Women and Girls**

*Domestic Violence*

Battered women’s shelters is an area where women-led organizations are clearly responsive to the needs of women. They can also have an important impact on community development and on the creation of social capital. For example, in Pasadena, Texas near Houston, The Bridge began operating a battered women’s shelter in 1979. Over the years they have expanded their capacity to provide housing for women and children as well services for residents and non-residents. The Bridge recognized, however, that women’s need for housing assistance went beyond what could be provided at the shelter. The Bridge joined with 13 other shelter providers in the Houston region to create Woman, Inc., an organization whose mission is to create transitional housing for women and children living in shelters. Woman, Inc. created affordable transitional housing with two- and three-bedroom units large enough for women and their families. Like other battered women’s shelter providers we visited, The Bridge recognizes that women escaping situations of abuse require assistance and services that go beyond providing a safe place to stay. They have sought to expand their programs to help women connect with needed services and other agencies as well as with greatly needed job and job training referrals. The Bridge also works closely with Woman, Inc. and other women’s shelter and transitional housing and service providers in Houston, creating an important network of providers which attempt to meet the needs of women and their children.

*Youth*

In each of the nine sites we studied, women-led CDOs were concerned with the lack of programs for teenagers. Women-led organizations recognized that teenagers are the future community citizens and leaders and that it is essential to create programs to engage them as part of the community. These CDOs developed programs accordingly. Some programs targeted young girls in particular. These
programs were unique in their focus on issues specific to the needs of women and girls and were focused on empowerment, leadership development, and issues of safety.

In Portland, Sisters in Portland Impacting Real Issues Together (SPIRIT) is an independent organizing project working with women and girls around issues of leadership development, education, and violence against women. SPIRIT is a membership organization and 70% of its members are teenage girls, with the balance comprised of their mothers. Speaking and working with teenagers revealed a need to document and prevent violence against girls both in schools as well as elsewhere in the community. Through discussions among the girls, “community speak outs”, and education programs, SPIRIT is helping to create a space where girls can speak out, find support, network, bond together, and define ways to address the issues that concern them. As a membership organization, SPIRIT creates a network of support for young women and encourages them to become engaged in a discussion about community issues, making them more sensitive to the local community and supporting them to be vocal about their concerns and needs.

In Boston, the Quincy-Geneva Housing Development Corporation runs a number of programs with and for children in their South Boston neighborhood including day care and after-school learning programs. Like SPIRIT in Portland, they are also working specifically with teenage girls on issues of empowerment and self-esteem. Girls Identifying Resources and Life Skills (GIRLS) was originally a five-year pilot program to work with girls between the ages of 11 and 16 to help prevent substance abuse, and pregnancy and to improve self-esteem through counseling and support groups. The girls put their own stamp on the project emphasizing the bonding aspects of their relationships. They created their own newsletter and become “peer leaders” and “peer mentors” to work with other girls in the community. The program also encourages girls to look at future career options. Girls participate in activities outside of the neighborhood and have thus developed new networks among larger groups of young women, which forms the basis of new social capital in a broader community.
Innovative Programs: Leadership Development and Women’s Empowerment

Leadership Development

The support of community leadership is critical to making change in communities and creating social capital. Many of the women we interviewed emerged as leaders in their community as a result of organizing around specific issues or needs. Many women recognized the importance of focusing on women’s leadership in particular and spoke of the difficulties they faced as they became leaders. They also recognized that often women are not encouraged to take on these roles and were concerned that they help to support and encourage future leaders to follow the non-traditional paths they had followed. One woman described becoming a leader of a CDO because people in her community had always turned to her and her family for help. As she put it, “I started the agency out of my house. It was just part of a natural part of what our family did.” Another woman described the process of becoming active on a CDO board in the following way:

There was no real organization at first--it was kind of hit or miss. Everyone sort of started gravitating towards me. Maybe because I had a big mouth, they kept saying we need you on the board. I kept saying no. I just wanted my little corner to be perfect ...I wasn’t concerned with the larger issues.... I was recruited on the board by the previous president.... It kind of makes you feel like you owe a little bit...It was a little intimidating at first. I learned that you have a voice and they can’t ignore you, they have to listen (Interview 1997).

Many women leaders described themselves as supporting and encouraging leadership development, especially women’s leadership. Leadership development efforts were both formal and informal. Some organizations had leadership development training programs, while other women spoke of trying to mentor younger women coming up in the field. Some described the practice of sending staff or community members to meetings and conferences in their place and giving them opportunities to speak for themselves and to take on leadership roles. Many women leaders said they were concerned with helping women to become advocates for themselves, to speak at meetings, and to gain the confidence to be leaders in their communities. These efforts to support women’s leadership are important and often innovative.
In El Paso, women’s leadership development is an important component of La Mujer Obrera’s community programs. Explaining that La Mujer Obrera is an educational organization, one woman said, “I am very happy that leadership development exists... to educate, to consciousness-raise, to know the reality. That is what we are doing here. Here one feels that one is somebody... We need to know where we are going--to blaze a trail. As women we shape society.” Because members arrive at different levels, they are invited to become part of the *comité de lucha* (committee of struggle) where they attend classes once a week. Once they have completed the program, the membership elects the board and they becomes part of the team which prepares the classes for the next group. As members they participate on committees and make presentations. The program involves personal development and empowerment in the context of political and labor organizing.

Another Latina organization in Chicago, Mujeres Latinas en Accion has established a Latina leadership program. Mujeres’ programs focus on providing services to women and their families around issues of domestic abuse, poverty, and financial emergencies. The leadership program is a direct example of creating social capital in a community. As one staff member described it, “Our programs were more intervention and this [new program] would be about development.” The idea was to have a program for women who wanted to become more involved once they had resolved their personal and family crises to some degree. The program also recognized the fact that women were already taking on leadership roles in their communities but that their activities were not generally recognized as leadership.

As a staff member described, “The funders were telling us that this is not leadership development, it is self-esteem [building] because they didn’t consider women in the home and in the PTA as leaders.” The program is based on the idea that women have many important skills which they bring to community work as well as a strong desire to work in their communities. While graduates from the leadership program are active in the community in a number of ways, some graduates have became candidates for the school board. The trust created is based on networks they have built within their organizations, or what is referred to as bonding capital, and it is used to create bridging networks outside of their...
organizations (R. Gittell and Vidal 1998).

In Oakland, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) established a Leadership Development Institute led by its constituents as part of its community organizing efforts. The Leadership Development Institute, along with its other programs, consciously creates social capital. The goal of strengthening democracy and creating change is explicit. BOSS literature argues that “leadership development is the main vehicle for encouraging applied democracy and civic participation,” and that “real systemic change can only happen when leadership and is practiced at all levels: in our constituency, among our staff and board, [and] among our partners in the larger community.” Like La Mujer Obrera, BOSS’s leadership development program includes skills building and peer training. The community organizing efforts include a speakers bureau, popular education, direct action, and community outreach. Their goal is to have current participants build their skills and community activism to a level where they will train future participants before moving on to permanent employment.

**Childcare**

Women-led organizations across the country have focused on child care both in terms of providing services and as an economic development and empowerment strategy. Programs which combine service provision, development, and empowerment are creating social capital by creating new community resources, ties, and networks. Women-led organization have designed programs which create peer networks and support women’s empowerment by helping women to become economically self-supporting and, in some cases, to pursue further academic and other training. These programs, which work with women as individuals, create networks of peer support and increase women’s contacts beyond their immediate networks, are an important approach to addressing child care needs as well as economic development in communities.

In Oakland, the Family Day Care Development Project (FDCDP) is an example of a day care program which goes beyond a service provision focus and creates social capital. FDCDP, which trains women
to become licensed child care providers in their own homes, is as much about individual and community empowerment as it is about child care provision. Working with women living in or near public housing, it provides training in the native language of the participant, meal reimbursements, and mini-grants to cover start-up costs. A key aspect of its program is its leadership training through peer support groups. Women participants described how this peer support had enabled them to succeed. In addition to providing training for women in the program, there are also programs in place for the parents of the children who use the day care services. Free services such as referrals to community services and job training, assistance with resume preparation and interview skills, and child care subsidies while the parents are in training programs are in place to help the families and the community beyond simply providing affordable quality child care. This aspect of FDCDP creates bonding capital among participants through its peer support networks and through strengthening relationships within the community between providers and parents.

By linking with the local community college, FDCDP creates bridging capital as well by facilitating relationships, contacts, and networks beyond the immediate community of child care providers and parents in the community. The community college offers program participants an opportunity to continue training and earn an Associate’s Degree. The training program’s curriculum was approved to meet the state’s early childhood education requirements and women who wanted to continue at the community college were able to transfer credits. Participants in the day care training program, some of whom initially did not have a high-school or GED degree, now have an opportunity to pursue a degree in higher education and are exposed to new contacts and networks beyond those created and strengthened through their participation in the day care training.

**Micro-Enterprise and Business Development**

Many groups have recognized that while there is a great need for housing, jobs, and services, there is also a considerable need for financial counseling to facilitate the purchase of homes and for small businesses creation. Many groups have home ownership counseling programs to assist potential
homeowners. Some organizations have chosen to offer not only technical assistance and business planning services but also direct loans to individuals and groups interested in starting up small businesses. Some groups have adopted a strategy which encourages self-sufficiency by supporting small business development. Holmes notes that, “in the early 1990s women-led nonprofits in Chicago and the South began to test and adapt micro-enterprise models such as those which have been successful in developing countries (1998 6).” These programs focused on creating self-sufficiency through home-based businesses. As Holmes points out, however, “CED professionals who favor industrial development for job creation were resistant to the decentralized microenterprise development strategy (1998 6).” Recently, however there has been considerable support for microenterprise approaches to development.

Although the overall success rate for new small businesses is low, many women’s microenterprise loan and development programs are attempting to address problems with organizational support systems including helping to secure financial support for new businesses especially where those individuals or groups do not meet lenders requirements. Servon notes that “encouraging entrepreneurialism is risky business particularly when undertaken with disenfranchised populations” and that “the relationships required to succeed require trust, the pay off is long-term rather than short term (Servon 1997 89).” While those who support microenterprise as a development strategy often promote it based on its potential for economic development and revitalization, the example of such programs among the groups in this study demonstrate that it is the long-term benefit, the creation of networks, norms, and trusts, which is one of the greatest potential benefits of this strategy because it is a source of social capital.

In Boston, Elizabeth Stone House’s Community Education for Economic Development runs two programs, a Personal Economic Planning Program (PEP) and a Women’s Business Opportunity Program (WBOP). PEP is a four-session economic literacy course which focuses on goal planning and identifying and pursuing resources towards a personal economic development strategy, while the WBOP program concentrates on economic literacy with the goal of facilitating the establishment of new businesses. Holmes describes the experience of a group of nine women from the Transitional Housing
Program (THP) who decided they wanted to start their own business. Initially the group of women participated in a seven-week course. Four of the women decided to continue working together:

[They] explored real estate, tested various aspects of their business plan for feasibility, produced dances in different venues throughout the community, and organized a boat cruise on the Boston Harbor. They paid themselves a one-hundred dollar weekly stipend from the grant monies and each worked twenty hours for the co-op. They rotated responsibilities so that each member would gain experience in bookkeeping marketing, production, etc. (Holmes 1998 13).

Ultimately after a process of program evaluation and a move to a for-profit focus, three of the women continued to work together for a year after which the remaining women separated to deal with other issues. Through the development of new skills as well as new relationships and bonds with each other and the community, the women participants created new networks of support and trust.

Internal Democracy and Community Participation

Our interviewees noted that their organizations are participatory and internally democratic. Women leaders often describe themselves as open and collaborative in terms of leadership style. Interviewees also said that they are directly concerned with recruiting and hiring and give a great deal of attention to staff development. In order to increase staff input into decision-making and program development they hold many staff meetings and design other ways in which staff can participate. While some groups were more hierarchically organized, many organizations had established specific structures and formal procedures that encouraged staff participation. However, some leaders said they encouraged participation informally, through what they described as an “open” leadership style. Factors such as ideology and an explicit commitment to principles of collective decision making and feminist theory, also had an impact on efforts to promote staff and board participation. Organizations that were less activist and more traditionally professional and development-focused tended to be less internally democratic and less concerned with staff participation.

Encouraging Staff Participation
Women leaders often described themselves as willing to delegate responsibility and support staff members, encouraging them to take the initiative. Most women were concerned with staff training and with increasing staff participation in program development and policy decisions. One leader in Oakland described herself in this way saying, “I have an open style. I am very flexible--people function independently.” She also said that an annual board/staff retreat and annual staff retreats were established to encourage staff participation. She noted that as the organization grew and “middle managers” were hired there were some “growing pains” which required additional staff training in order for the staff to learn to work together. Staff training and retreats contribute to the cohesion of the organization and the bonding of the staff.

Of the CDOs included in the study, Elizabeth Stone House (ESH) in Boston is perhaps the most illustrative example of a non-hierarchical, collective organizational management model. ESH has no executive director and defines their unique organizational structure as the “Shared Administrative Model.” All full-time staff participate in executive decision-making through weekly planning and evaluation meetings and are collectively responsible for evaluation, and personnel issues as well as for working with the board. While the model was originally conceived when the organization had a staff of only six, it has been adapted with difficulty to accommodate the increasing number of staff and program areas. Making the transition to a larger organization and holding true to the model has been a challenge to the members. Recent changes have allowed decision-making to be decentralized, and power remains shared. Work planning, supervision and issue identification takes place in team meetings. Each team sends a rotating representative to a weekly meeting where the various activities of each team are reported and discussed and where there is opportunity for input from members of other teams. In addition, there are procedures in place for staff to meet on an “as needed” basis as well as for quarterly meetings of the entire staff to provide evaluation of issues, procedures, and organizational direction. ESH thoroughly articulated values and corresponding structures and procedures that ensured decentralization of power and staff participation in decision making. The democratic and open structure of the organization makes decision making more thoughtful but also more complicated.
Encouraging Participation on Committees

In Oakland, BOSS is restructuring itself over a four-year period to better reflect and put into practice its core values of participation and engagement, and to consciously decrease the hierarchy within the organization. BOSS’s mission has always centered on community participation and involvement and they hope to better achieve these goals by moving from a “regional, program-based model to one based on strategy and participatory process.” The change involves creating teams in four areas: economic development, support service, housing, and community building. Each team will include team leaders, staff, constituents, and outside experts. An important component of the team concept will be direct feedback from the constituency and community which will impact the planning process and program content. The entire “organizational structure is led by a Leadership Council representing all internal stake holders and key external partners.” This reorganization represents an effort to adopt new strategies to meet funding and other challenges in keeping with BOSS’s stated values of community participation and constituent involvement.

Encouraging Participation Through Membership

The organizations which work to actively engage the community and their constituents in organizational and program development do not view “the community” as external to the organization, but instead as a foundation for the organization itself. Community participation includes having community residents and stake holders on the boards and staffs. There are also formalized structures for community and constituent participation through resident surveys, board elections, community meetings and training. Having a membership base is another way to encourage participation. For example, as a membership organization, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation places the tenants, community residents and the staff at the top of its organizational structure. The board of directors is then made up of community residents, which includes tenants. Each housing site has a tenant council that sends a representative to the rental housing steering committee which also includes a board representative and other community members. Many of the women we spoke with espoused a conscious commitment to creating highly
articulated structures for participation and although they did not define what they were doing as building trusts, norms, and networks, their creation of social capital in that process was evident in their actions.

**Representativeness and Participation: Profile of Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation**

The Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation (BRC) in Chicago is a 30-year old membership organization that develops and manages both single-family housing and rental units in a historically Puerto Rican area. Bickerdike's governance structure builds in a high degree of community representation and participation at all levels of the organization. BRC's organizational chart depicts the membership--made up of tenants, community residents, and staff--at the very top. The next tier is the board of directors, fifteen people, half of whom are residents of BRC housing and all of whom live or work in the neighborhood. More than 50 percent are women and it is one of the few boards on which African-Americans and Latinos serve together. As the director told us, “over 50 percent of the Board are low-income by Federal poverty standards.” The president of the board is an African-American woman and the director is a Latina. A mix of tenant representatives, board representatives, and community residents serve on the Rental Housing Steering Committee and on the ten committees under it. Furthermore, the housing itself is divided into 13 councils and each council elects a representative to the CDC, and the tenants themselves help manage the buildings (Interview 1997; Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation Organizational Chart - Resident and Community Involvement, no date).

Although these structures encouraged participation, when a new female director with an organizing background replaced a male director with a 17-year tenure, she emphasized community organizing and increasing both the racial diversity of the board and the power of the women on the board. She attributes these changes both to her gender and her organizing background. The organizing office was restructured and a grant was secured for another tenant organizer, and the Youth Council was reorganized to put the youth in charge of it. “One of the special things is that the kids make lots of decision that maybe we wouldn't make, but they've made a lot of fine choices which provide alternatives to gangs, and . . . it's not just 'we can help you' but . . . the kids are in charge” explained executive
director Joy Aruguete. Another innovation was the Mediations Committee composed of ten residents of BRC housing. This Committee received training from the Center for Conflict Resolution and now facilitates tenant-tenant and tenant-community conflict (Interview 1997; United We Stand Bickerdike 1996 Annual Report).

BRC has also focused on developing leaders to organize against gentrification. The organization has taken a very clear position in challenging Mayor Daley's support of “mixed income community” development. The West Town, Humbolt Park, and Logan Square neighborhoods are a highly desirable real estate market because of their proximity to downtown and to major highways, and the accessibility of a train line. According to BRC, Alderman Jesse Granato is supporting Mayor's Daley's efforts on behalf of gentrification and has blocked Bickerdike's attempts to buy city-owned lots for development of affordable housing. Specifically, a group of community residents is fighting to restore Department of Housing support for the Erie Co-op, a limited equity cooperative multiple-site development. The Erie Co-op Steering Committee has gotten the issue of affordable housing in the local media many times, coordinated demonstrations, and testified before the City Council. The committee members have also met with public officials such as Alderman Jesse Granato, U.S. Representative Luis Gutierrez (former board member), and Department of Housing Commissioner Julia Stasch (Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation 1997 Annual Report).

The executive director clearly spells out a principled position in regards to “mixed income communities.” While Bickerdike believes in redevelopment and the creation of opportunities and a mixed income population, it differs with the Mayor on the way to achieve this. The Mayor advocates bringing middle and upper income people into a low-income area, but this creates gentrification and displacement of the existing population. Aruguete points out that neighborhoods then simply become neighborhoods in transition. In the case of the BRC service area, some of the new property owners joined with the Alderman in opposing the affordable housing co-op (Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation 1997 Annual Report).
Bickerdike favors raising the incomes of the current population through economic development, and points out that while new residents should not be barred, neither should old residents be forced out. “This must include specific efforts to maintain a quality affordable rental housing stock and the promotion of specific affordable home ownership opportunities and property tax relief, whereby lower and moderate income individuals and families can stay and enjoy the fruits of living in a mixed income community, such as better schools, libraries, increased public safety, etc.,” writes Joy Aruguete (Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation 1997 Annual Report). What makes BRC stand out is that they are mobilizing community residents to advocate for themselves and creating social capital in the process. The high degree of community representation in the organization, coupled with an interest in community organizing, gives rise to meaningful participation.
Building networks among community groups and individuals is fundamental to social change in a community. Earlier survey research (Gittell and Covington 1994) showed distinctive differences in the kind of networking engaged in by male-led and women-led organizations. Recent scholarship has focused on social capital and community development in low-income communities (R. Gittell and Thompson 1998, Briggs 1998, R. Gittell and Vidal 1998). R. Gittell and Vidal (1998) make the distinction between bonding capital, what they call, “social bonds,” or the strong ties between individuals and groups within communities and bridging capital, or “bridges.” Granovetter (1973) calls these “weak ties”, the outwardly focused connections to resources and political networks. We found that women-led organizations were networked with each other, with local and state political officials, as well as with funders and intermediaries. Women leaders themselves participated in formal and informal networks of support with other women in their communities, and women-led CDOs worked collaboratively and participated in coalitions.

Networking varied by community based on differences in political culture. In communities where the political culture created an environment of trust and coalition building, women-led groups exhibited a high degree of networking evidenced by work in coalitions, collaboration on projects and programs, as well as effective communication among groups and between groups and elected officials. A history of activism and political involvement by women also supported women’s leadership in CDOs. Longstanding relationships based on the networks among leaders in some regions resulted in explicit and understood agreements not to compete for funding or particular projects. In areas such as North Carolina and Portland, organizations networked effectively with each other, city and state officials, and funders.

Women’s Organizations and Women’s Networks
As a group, battered women’s organizations exhibited a high degree of networking. Many battered women’s groups networked effectively with each other as well as with statewide advocacy and policy groups. This is partly a function of the political and social movements out of which they grew. Organizations often network to provide referrals to other shelters if a woman comes to one that is full. Also, battered women’s groups are often expressly feminist and politically active because of the need to change laws to protect women in situations of domestic violence. Furthermore, they understand the need to link shelters with other levels of women’s needs including transitional housing, psychological services, and financial assistance, among others.

In Portland, the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Bradley Angle House, The Rose, and other groups in the city and metropolitan region work to meet the needs of women in crisis. By its nature, this work lends itself to networking as a way to know what resources are available and where. With high occupancy rates it is essential to know to which facilities women can be referred. Political activism and advocacy are also common practices as programs for battered women continue to be ignored and under-funded and as laws fail to protect women.

Women also often talked about the importance of both formal and informal personal networks of support. Some women also referred to personal networks of women that may lie outside the community development sphere. In Chicago, the Chicago Foundation for Women sponsored a formal network through an executive director’s Roundtable for new and emerging leaders. In the Delta we spoke to one woman leader who was part of the Northern Mississippi Women’s Leadership Development Network. She credited the Network with supporting her in her work within her own small community. Other women described informal networks of friends and peers who helped to support and sustain them in their work. One woman specifically described the importance of her circle of women friends as a support—they were not even necessarily in leadership but they provided encouragement when often she found little from other community leaders.
Most of the CDO directors we interviewed were familiar with the other community-based organizations in their communities and often in their area as a whole. Many mentioned relationships with a host of organizations and institutions. Directors often sit on several boards in an effort to solidify network relationships. The director of one of the largest CDCs in Houston told us that she was part of the national faith-based committee of the National Coalition for Community Economic Development (NCCED). “Networks are important to me . . . you can get tunnel vision . . . It's very important to me to know what's going on [in the rest of the country],” she commented. Pamela Jones from the New Community Land Trust in Washington, DC said, “We collaborate on every project. We do not act as our own developers, but we partner . . .” (Interviews 1997).

**Table 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups in Network Relationships:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy Groups</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCs and Eco. Dev. Agencies</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Institutions</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Groups</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Organizations</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Number of Relationships</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a written survey questionnaire subsequently filled out by 108 of the groups we studied, 78 percent of the groups responded that they had network relationships with community-based organizations and 66 percent with CDCs and economic development agencies. Sixty-eight percent responded that they had relationships with advocacy groups. Sixty-two percent said they were networked with government agencies, while 60 percent said they were with educational institutions. While 59 percent told us they had relationships with religious institutions, 58 percent responded that they were networked with women's organizations and business groups. Only 28 percent stated they had relationships with labor organizations (See Table 8).

While most CDOs responded in writing that they enjoyed a wide variety of network relationships, in personal interviews directors and staff members emphasized what they described as “informal” network relationships more than formal networks or coalitions. Support networks between women directors of CDOs or friends in other fields were usually mentioned first by our interviewees when questioned about networking. Most women also emphasized networks within the CDOs neighborhood.

### Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in Coalitions With</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCs and Eco. Dev. Agencies</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Institutions</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>57%</td>
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Participation in Coalitions With:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Relationships</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=108

Many interviewees also told us that their organizations participated in formal coalitions, with varying degrees of effectiveness and intensity. Of the CDOs that filled out the questionnaire, 89 percent were in coalitions with community-based organizations and 69 percent with CDCs and economic development agencies. Sixty-six percent told us they were in coalition with government agencies. Fifty-eight percent of the questionnaire respondents are in coalition with educational institutions and businesses, while 57 percent are in coalition with advocacy organizations. Fifty-three percent have network relationships with religious institutions, and 53 percent are networked with women's groups. Only 19 percent are in coalitions with labor groups.

While most women-led CDOs are networking with community organizations and other agencies, directors did tell us that they have less access to political leaders, government officials, corporate executives, and other powerful groups described as “boys clubs.” Some intermediary organizations can undermine the creation of networks by marginalizing women and limiting their contacts. However, the North Carolina Community Development Initiative, Fund for the Mid-South, and the McAuley Institute were mentioned as fostering women’s networks. Race and ethnicity also play a part in narrowing networks and access to decision makers and resources. Women's access to these power players does vary from city to city and from region to region. Both political culture and the age of the community
development movement affect women's access to these elite networks.

There is evidence, however, that thoughtful coalition-building at the state level can open doors for women and have a significant impact on the community development movement. This occurred in North Carolina when the Legislative Black Caucus initiated a major funding program for support of community development at the behest of a network of experienced activists. In some states where there is a history of women holding political office and leadership positions in local intermediaries, women-led organizations have easier access and more networks. Among the cities and regions we visited, Portland was an example in this regard.

The ties among individuals and groups within a community are the foundation for the creation of social capital. These “weak ties” help make social change in communities possible. Our research revealed that some cities and regions were more open to and supportive of women’s leadership in community development and fostered the development of important networks. Where the local political culture supported women’s leadership in community development and in politics, women had greater access to networks of officials and funders.

**North Carolina: Networks and the Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement**

North Carolina was notable among the sites we visited in terms of the degree to which the organizations were networked with each other and with elected officials, particularly at the state level. Through an effective state-wide association of CDCs, as well as funding from the state government, the community development movement has grown and intensified while at the same time becoming more coordinated and networked. Although these networks and support for community development were not explicitly focused on women, they were clearly instrumental in the organizing movement as well as the establishment of community development groups as well as the network of CDCs. African-Americans and African-American women in particular, have played and continue to play a central and instrumental role in community development in North Carolina.
Many CDOs and intermediary directors as well as elected and appointed government officials have longstanding relationships with each other dating back to the Civil Rights Movement. In fact, so many of the local leaders in the community development field can trace the roots of their relationships to the 1960s, that one described community development in North Carolina as the “last vestiges of the Civil Rights Movement.” The legacy of the voter registration drives, community organizing, and legal activism of the Civil Rights Movement is the foundation for the present-day community development movement in this state. The importance of the connections and relationships between leaders can be seen, for example, in the number of leaders who serve on each others boards and the fact that most of the leaders we interviewed were quick to point out and stress the value of these relationships.

In addition to the existence of longstanding relationships among organizers and leaders, several key factors contributed to the development of an effective network of leaders and CDOs in North Carolina. These included the effective legal activism of North Carolina Legal Services, the presence of local progressive funders, and timely funding from a national intermediary. The first step in North Carolina was an emphasis on the registering of African-American voters and the election of African-Americans to state-wide office. In the late 1980s, the Legislative Black Caucus pushed a major state funding bill, the North Carolina Community Development Initiative (NCCDI), through the legislature, which was the basis for the development of the majority of CDCs now in existence in North Carolina. The NCCDI secured funding for both established and emerging community development groups. Several of the CDO directors we interviewed were involved in drafting the funding bill, and virtually all were involved in the organizing which preceded it and had often worked together in numerous capacities. As Andrea Harris, now director of the Minority Business and Economic Institute, explained, “What happened in North Carolina was no accident.”

Many of the leaders we interviewed had worked either directly or indirectly with North Carolina Legal Services. In the early 1980s, Legal Services decided to allocate a portion of its budget to community
development advocacy and training. In 1985, they formed a partnership with LISC in rural North Carolina and sponsored community economic development training in four counties over a three-month period. At the same time, Legal Services began to challenge North Carolina’s banks under the Federal Community Reinvestment Act (1976) in order to push the banks to fund community development efforts. By 1986 agreements had been signed with several banks which began to fund and implement community needs assessments according to the CRA.

In 1989, the North Carolina Association of CDCs (NCACDC) was founded with 11 statewide members. It has now grown to a membership of 41 CDCs and nine affiliate members made up of funding and organizing groups as well as other non-profits and is coordinated through regional offices. One leader noted that an important goal of the effort was to ensure that “we would never allow a funder or a legislator to cause us to pull against one another when it comes to going after funding.” According to the interviews, this seems to be the case. Cooperation between groups is both formal and informal and is based at least in part on the established relationships among leaders. Currently, emerging and young CDCs can receive funding and support through the North Carolina Association of CDCs, while older, more established CDCs receive support through NCCDI, whose president, Abdul Rasheed, has played an instrumental role in Community Development in North Carolina. Many of the women leaders we spoke with were quick to note Rasheed’s involvement with their organizations and throughout the state. The continuing networks between elected officials and community development leaders and activists have helped to create continuing support for community development efforts.

Community development in North Carolina has also been positively affected by the commitment of local funders and intermediaries. Most of those we interviewed mentioned the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation as having provided important funding for their organizations, including funding for operating budgets (which is often limited), and paid sabbatical program for executive directors. Another important point of connection for a number of leaders in North Carolina was participating in the Community Development Training Institute (CDTI) program.
CDTI’s Community Economic Development Studies Program helped to establish relationships between community leaders as well as create a cadre of leaders who shared similar approaches and goals for community development in North Carolina.

Among the nine sites included in the study, North Carolina had the most highly articulated and effective network of leaders at the state level. Unlike some areas where the association of CDCs was essentially an umbrella-trade organization, NCACDC was an important part of the networking infrastructure. Although not devoid of tensions between leaders, especially between those leaders who were native to North Carolina and those who were identified as “outsiders”, networks among leaders are solid and contribute effectively to the success of community development efforts. Throughout the state, women were and continue to be instrumental in maintaining the community, political and economic networks that support community development.

**Networking in Oakland**

The activist tradition of Oakland has forged ties between many older women-led organizations, but there are also young women participating in both informal and formal networks. There are local networks within African-American neighborhoods, as well as within the Latino and Asian-American communities. Furthermore, there are efforts at city-wide and even regional multi-cultural organizing. On the other hand, women leaders expressed that they feel removed from most local elected and appointed public officials, a group often described as a “boys network.”

There is also a high level of organizing and social action taking place in Oakland. Many organizations are involved in both constituency building and mobilization, with an emphasis on leadership development. Also, there is less of a tendency to shy away from advocacy and from taking political positions than there is in other cities. However, these activities are not usually directed at electoral politics or the city government.
Boona Chema, Director of Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS), explained that since her organization sees itself as operating on a countywide level, they network with all types of groups from Contra Costa to San Francisco. Ms. Chema stated that she participates in a group of 12 organizations under the auspices of the Roberts Foundation, but that only three of these are led by women. She also expressed that she is still organizing and personally knocking on doors on a lot of issues. When the City of Berkeley voted for police intervention as a strategy to deal with the homeless, BOSS worked with the ACLU and got the policy reversed (Interview 1997).

Jane Garcia, executive director of the Clinica de la Raza, told us that the health clinics formed the Alameda County Health Consortium in order to leverage funds. According to Ms. Garcia, they were able to demonstrate the desire and plan for collaboration with other health agencies and therefore secured crucial funding because traditional hospitals and Alameda were not sensitive to minority health issues. Although she found it easier to network because of the managed care structure, she objected to the way in which the business venture was emphasized above the establishment of relationships. She stressed that managed care encourages a struggle for market shares while refusing to deliver care to immigrants and indigents.

Ms. Garcia also indicated that she collaborates mostly with other organizations run by Latinos, but that they have collaborated with Asian Health Services. The mentorship of Arabella Martinez, executive director of the Spanish Speaking Unity Council, has been very important to her. “There was a marked difference when we began to work woman to woman. It could be contributed more to personality than woman bonding” (Interview 1997).

Luz Alvarez Martinez from the National Latina Health Organization told us that training opportunities and conferences had been important to her. “You go to a conference and you get exposed to new ideas . . . see how the world works . . . we go to work with the banks, the Planning Department, CEDA. We learned it is in the doing, networking,” stated Martinez. Although her organization is
national, she felt it was important to stay connected to the local network of community leaders.

**Portland: Progressive Women's Networks**

In Portland women have a tradition of holding leadership roles and enjoying access to policy makers. Women’s networks are highly developed. Women we interviewed recognized the presence of progressive women in elected office as a factor contributing to a climate conducive to and supportive of women’s leadership. The existence of supportive local funders, network organizing groups, and training and technical assistance groups, many of which are run by women are also factors supporting networking and women in community development in Portland. These groups included: the Neighborhood Partnership Fund, (now run by a former Portland CDC director), the Community Development Network (which works to formally build a network of community development groups), and local training and technical assistance providers such as the Community Development Training Institute at the University of Portland and Technical Assistance for Community Services (TACS), both of which are run by women. TACS in particular was founded in response to what was seen as a need for business and technical training geared specifically toward women who lacked this expertise. Some also pointed to the positive influence of a national intermediary, the Enterprise Foundation, as helpful to the development of Portland’s particular climate of community development.

Portland’s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) limits the amount of available property for development projects. In a different political culture this could give rise to competition between groups, however, for the most part, this has not been the case. One leader described her relationship with other community development leaders as so comfortable that she could pick up the phone and ask another leader if he or she were going to “go for” a particular property. They could then work out a mutual arrangement rather than compete with each other. Another leader in Portland described her relationship with the other CDC directors in her neighborhood as familiar and based on trust, which meant that she could simply make a phone call to initiate deals, clarify positions, or discuss collaboration. She did however remark that while these relationships had been built and solidified over time, recent changes in leadership
in all three CDCs in her neighborhood meant that these relationships would have to be rebuilt. One factor contributing to the problem she said, was then fact that the new leaders of these CDCs came from outside the community. She noted that the new leaders were currently engaged in learning their communities and defining their “turf”, making immediate continued collaboration difficult.

The example of Portland points to the importance of history of long standing relationships and continuity of leadership within the community as well as the value of women in political office and in key positions of power. In our interviews with women-leaders in Portland they often remarked that while the leadership of CDOs, networking and technical assistance groups was for the most part female, the leadership of the major local funders was male. While some women leaders noted that it certainly would be nice to see women in those leadership positions as well, they felt that the fact that the men had formerly been leaders of major CDCs in Portland and had long standing ties to the community would have a positive effect on community development efforts and the relationship between the CDCs and citywide intermediaries. However it was clear from our interviews that the political culture of Portland supported women’s leadership and that women were a vital part of the community development landscape.

Conclusion

Women CDO leaders are building social capital by offering collaborative leadership, including community participation in program design, and by constructing networks. A collaborative view of leadership and a holistic approach to community development make community participation possible, while a focus on leadership development and community organizing produce meaningful participation. Community participation in CDOs increases trust in the community, while communication and working together cements that trust and helps bring forth common norms.

Women’s networks with each other give them the personal support they require to be leaders, and for women with limited networks, often provide the first step towards broader community involvement. The CDOs networks with other organizations in the community create trust at an organizational level
and expand the social capital of the community. Networks outside the community can increase access to decision-making and resources previously unavailable to the particular community.
Chapter Five

Barriers to Women in Community Development

This study follows our earlier work which showed the positive results of women’s leadership in CDCs. We found that when women made up more than 60 percent of the boards of CDCs, policies were more responsive to community needs, as well as more likely to adopt comprehensive social service programs. In this study we used a qualitative approach to determine some effects of women’s leadership in CDOs, as well as what kind of barriers women faced in their work. Women told us about a variety of barriers, some of which were the same general barriers noted by almost all community development organizations and leaders, but others which were closely related to gender and race. Interviewees were quick to point out that while they often struggled with obstacles, they had been able to overcome them in many cases. Many women recognized that barriers due to prevailing perceptions about women in the community development field often remained an underlying condition with which they had to contend. At the same time, they expressed the idea that women, in particular, are willing to “go the extra mile” to accomplish their goals. This perseverance means that women leaders often succeed in creating effective and innovative programs in spite of the difficulties they face.

We were told of general barriers that included the lack of adequate funding for day-to-day operations, the institutional barriers to access to information, the complexity of the process of fund raising, the difficulty of creating change, and frustration about the low level of community participation. Low salaries for staff, the lack of access to power and resources, and the magnitude of the job to be done were also some of the general barriers mentioned. Once women had described these general barriers and are pressed to think about barriers which are specific to women, many of the respondents were quick to recognize personal, gender, class, and cultural barriers. These included a lack of child care, a lack of freedom to leave domestic responsibilities, and feelings of powerlessness. Some women, especially those new to the development field, describe initial concerns about the perception that they are inadequately trained and have limited experience. Some women expressed that a lack of familiarity
with professional jargon and terminology, especially of the construction and financial organizations with which they have to communicate, had been a problem. The perception that women lack the necessary skills to work in the development field is barrier to be overcome both because of the way women leaders are treated, and also because some women had to struggle not to internalize this perception of their skills and abilities.

Many women leaders agreed that there is a marginalization of women-led CDOs by various institutions, political leaders, and other male-led CDOs. Women often refer to an “old boys network” of politicians, appointed officials, funders, and other CDO leaders from which they are often excluded or included only with great difficulty. Women leaders note that they often have limited access to elite or power networks which marginalizes them in their organizations and in the arena of community politics.

Importantly, a number of interviewees suggested that women suffered from the failure to “showcase” their own successes and accomplishments in community development and to promote women’s values, issues and concerns. Some women argued that the various misperceptions and under-valuing of women’s contributions to the field could only be dispelled by promoting women’s particular strengths and the unique perceptions, values and energy which they bring to their work.

**Defining Development Differently**

Women perceive that their broad conception and definition of community development is itself a barrier within the community development field. This is compounded by the fact that traditionally many in the field have placed a higher value on technical skill than on grassroots experience and advocacy. Some women argued that special efforts were necessary to create room for women to be heard and to put their own imprimatur on development theory and policies. Others felt that women are criticized for reaching out, for wanting to do too much, and for broadening the concept of community development. Moreover, because there is an emphasis on technical skills that discounts grassroots experience and advocacy, women often find that both their definition, and solutions for the issues in their communities
are neither recognized nor considered significant. Many interviewees said that sometimes there was a communication problem with banks and funders because women approached community development and created programs that did not always fit funders’ and bankers’ expectations. Women repeatedly told us that their approach to community development was “broad” and “holistic.” This was problematic we were told, because “women’s focuses are multiple [and] most people want to hear focus”(Interview1998). Foundations and other funders often measure success in quantifiable terms such as units of housing produced, loan given, or jobs created. The difficulty can be as fundamental as the way in which an organization defines and targets its service population. One group in Portland told us that they ran into trouble because they defined their target population based on gender and therefore did not limit their work to a specific neighborhood and the funders expected organizations to define their target service areas geographically.

Several women told us that they viewed the general lack of recognition of women's accomplishments in the field of community development as an impediment. The efforts of women who do work in their communities are rarely acknowledged and often undervalued because they do not have the opportunity to publicize their efforts, the programs they implement, or their innovative leadership and management styles. One woman who has been working in her community for over 25 years felt that:

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\text{We need to do more to showcase women’s leadership. I would really document women’s experience. Whether at a conference or part of public relations...I run into women all over the US who have done work in their communities who have received no credit for the work they’ve done (Interview 1997).}
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Another argued that “one of the characteristics that women have is ‘we’ll do it even if we don’t get the credit.’ The belief and the reward system is not intrinsic and we probably don’t seek the credit as much as we should” (Interview 1997). A number of women mentioned not receiving credit for their ideas or having their ideas stolen and used by others after their own proposal had been rejected.

Women noted that they themselves were not in the habit of taking credit for their own accomplishments.
Some felt that women in community development did not value their own work enough and feared that “if they ask for too much they’d be out of a job.” Many said they often worked quietly and sometimes “behind the scenes” to get things done. Ultimately we were told,

We have to be stronger advocates for ourselves. We need to show we are comfortable in these roles, say we are doing things that matter. We never get attention directly, but it is important to begin to. We need to promote what women can do, if we are going to think about getting money for projects we are going to have to move to a higher level of activity (Interview 1997).

Women we interviewed felt that women had a particular approach to community development and had a different programmatic emphasis and leadership style. Without greater recognition of their unique contribution to the field, the work that women do will continue to be undervalued and ignored. Many interviewees stressed the need not only for women’s stories to be told, but most importantly, that women be the ones to tell them.

**Funders, Government, and the Construction Industry**

Many women interviewed said that the male-dominated construction industry and funders, including various financial institutions, government agencies and foundations, were particular obstacles to their leadership in CDOs. They often described situations where they had to “prove themselves” and demonstrate that they “knew what they were doing.” Many women felt that the initial assumption of bankers, funders, and contractors was often that they were not competent and were only treated as such after they had demonstrated their abilities. *Some* women also felt that banks and foundations were scrutinizing their organizations and their leadership more closely than that of male-led organizations. These leaders told us that they were asked to account for themselves in ways male directors were not. This was especially evident in situations where the women took over leadership after having served for years as assistant director in the same organization (Interviews 1997).

Because women first determine what is needed in the community and then seek funding, they must often
work hard to maintain their broad vision of community development given funding limitations and the objections to broadly defined development efforts which do not conform to expected categories. Although comprehensive development is the goal, some women we spoke with described tensions both with funders and within their own organizations arising out of the multiple roles the organizations play. In groups which engaged in several program areas such as housing and service delivery, some interviewees explained that internal opposition to certain programs arose when some members of the board or staff valued “bricks and mortar” over services and viewed these areas as separate concerns. Funders can also create difficulties by relying exclusively on measures of success such as number of housing units or jobs produced and by being less willing to fund those programs such as community organizing or leadership development which are less quantifiable. All too often the funders’ focus was often still on bricks and mortar, jobs created, or loans given, rather than on less quantifiable measures such as leadership development, community organizing, or empowerment.

A number of women who became directors after the departure of male leaders told us that they faced difficulties with funders, state and local government, and with other community organizations, which their predecessors had not. One woman who had been assistant director of her organization for years felt that her leadership was immediately challenged when she became director. As she described, “I was named interim [director] and the bank president called on the phone and wanted something and he got nasty. I’ve gotten respect from most of the folks in this area. I am not a pushover but I am not nasty.” Another problem arose over a cultural event the group had sponsored for many years. Until she became director, the festival had always received funding from the state. While she attributes this partly to racism because many whites in the community who wanted the event turned over to the city and had pressured the state, it was not until a woman took over as director of the organization that funding was denied (Interviews 1997).

Another woman told us that when the previous male director left and she was hired as director, the city’s development commission froze all the organization’s projects. The commission wanted her to
demonstrate that she was competent to handle the organization’s projects currently in development. Even though the previous male director was responsible for leading the organization into financial difficulty, the commission had not questioned his leadership. She told us, “They made me come in and give a presentation... It was a totally sexist move.” After her presentation, to support her, the staff gave her a top hat and a cigar. Another leader in the same city said that she felt that the previous male director had survived only because of his political connections and ability to attract funding which had bailed him out of trouble on a number of occasions. Far from adding to the organization’s financial woes, the new director turned the organization around, because “she paid attention to the details and made sure that meant asking ‘Is this financially feasible?’” (Interviews 1997).

One director in Boston said that she ran into difficulties with lenders who seemed to have trouble with the idea of financing a joint project between two women-led organizations. As she explained, “The barriers are not explicit. It may be harder to establish credibility for example. We started hearing from the lenders that we might not be a strong enough team because we’re partnered with [another women-led group].” Both groups were well-established, financially sound and had long track records of success in their communities.

A woman in Houston said that her “worst problem was with a banker. He wanted to make sure that there was not enough money. He wanted [an] inventory of pencils! He would call here all the time and I would have to deal with him” (Interview 1997). This added “accountability” clearly frustrated women who resented having additional work required of them and not of their male counterparts, forcing them to devote time to tedious and unnecessary exercises.

While we found that men are often hired as the first paid director of an organization, there were several examples in our study of women who were hired as directors of organizations in financial trouble. Regardless of whether the organization was in financial trouble, when they took over, many women told us that they were held accountable in ways that their male predecessors were not, although a few women did note that increasingly they were able to work with women at banks and foundations which,
in some cases, was helping to diminish the problem. In some cases, women who took over organizations which were struggling financially, did so out of their strong sense of commitment to the community and to the staffs and boards of the organization. One woman in Mississippi told us that while she did not blame her male predecessor for leaving, she could not have abandoned the members of her board who were “senior citizens, pastors and preachers who don’t know about housing and nonprofits,” without seeing their major construction project through to completion. This commitment came at considerable personal cost to herself as she worked for an entire year without being paid a salary and as she put it “it has taken a lot of energy and time. With this project it was everyday. What I have done for the last year is invest in [my community] (Interviews 1997).”

Some leaders did tell us that particular funders, or particular individuals within these institutions, had been supportive of their leadership and the programs they pursued. For instance, a number of interviewees in North Carolina told us that the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation plays an important role in community development in the state. Elsewhere, other women noted that increasingly they were able to work with women within foundations, banks, and other institutions and as a result they tended to face fewer obstacles. The existence of foundations and other funding organizations such as the Women’s Institute for Economic Development and the various women’s foundations in the cites we visited, which are explicitly women-focused, is also an important part of the funding picture.

Interviews were conducted with funders in each of the sites we visited, and while the particular funders we spoke with are perhaps more attuned to the needs and concerns of women, for the most part they continued to fund women-led and -designed programs on a defacto, rather than explicit, basis. As one interviewee put it, “The confusion for me is that if you read our guidelines, we wouldn’t say that we have a special area of grant making that focuses on women and girls. Instead, a gender lens is applied across all areas of grant making.” Other funders told us that they were aware that the groups they were dealing with were increasingly women-led, but they did not specifically fund programs for women and girls (Interviews 1997).
Importantly, among the funders we interviewed there was evidence that in recent years their definition of community development had moved toward a more comprehensive one, in line with women’s holistic approach. However, given the degree to which women leaders told us that they continued to have difficulty with funders who did not recognize the programs they wanted to pursue as feasible and important, as well as those who expressed the feeling that their leadership was not always readily accepted, work remains to be done in order to continue the trend towards increased funding for programs for and by women.

Universally, women leaders said that the male-dominated construction industry was an obstacle. Several respondents described explicitly negative attitudes regarding women in project development roles. As with financial matters, women felt that the general assumption with contractors was that women didn’t know anything about construction. Many women described situations in which contractors often expected to deal with men. One leader in Chicago told us about meeting with a contractor who encouraged her to hire a project manager. The contractor assumed that the project manager should be a man and failed to recognize that a woman he had already been dealing with was in fact the project manager. Another woman in Chicago explained,

> I think there is a greater entre for women in the social services probably because there are more males in the CDC world and certainly in the construction business. [It] is far more dominated by males. I think that when I came here there was an idea that there would not be a continuation of housing or programs that were viewed as male. On the staff among the men there has come to be a great deal of respect...it took me a while to get comfortable going to construction site. I mean, I have a background in construction and it was still hard (Interview 1997).

A leader in Boston described the difficulties she had with men who assumed that she wouldn’t be familiar with the technical aspects of construction and who also seemed to feel that it wasn’t proper “women’s work.” As she described:

> The resistance I have encountered from men has been more along the
lines of I’m getting too big for my britches…. It’s more in terms of questioning my capacity, like architects who don’t think I know what needs to be done, and yes, I do (Interview 1997).

Another director in Mississippi told us that she had also encountered difficulties with the construction industry:

I have an all-female office, we have one male that we hired last year. We have to work to prove ourselves—especially in the construction field-- they want to ‘BS’ with us and they come back with these outrageous bids. That is in addition to being a black woman. Unfortunately, in our area they see our organization as competition rather than as a partner (Interview 1997).

While women described difficulties with contractors, they did feel that after working with them and developing relationships, these obstacles were diminished. However, the general perception and initial assumption of many male architects and contractors is that the “bricks and mortar” part of community development is a male domain. One woman in Louisiana told us that combating this perception was part of the reason why she pursued a job in housing development. As she described, “I applied and took the job mainly because no one here thought a woman could do it. For more than a year and a half, he wasn’t able to get the housing rehab off the ground. In three and a half months, I got it started.” She adds that,

Women are still not seen as capable of doing this work by many people, men, and bankers. It is o.k. within the community development networks but not outside of it…. I have learned the field first hand by doing. I climb on roofs. I go to all the project sites. I work crazy hours…. (Interview 1997)

Many of the women we spoke with echoed her feeling that, “It is a great challenge for women to be doing community development and housing especially. Even if you are well qualified, it takes a change in people’s attitudes” (Interviews 1997).

As with funders and the banks the entrance of more women into the construction field is an important
part of the solution to the problem. A creative attempt to overcome women’s economic inequality could end up helping to break down the barriers identifies in the construction field. The work of Chicago Women in Trades which trains women to work in construction and other non-traditional fields, as well as that of Wider Opportunities for Women in Washington, DC on the national level, are directed towards increasing the number of women contractors, electricians, metal and construction works. Breaking down the barriers to women in community development is an integral part of the broader struggle for women’s social political and economic equality.

**Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Class**

In each site we visited, women of color told us that their race or ethnicity along with their gender were the basis of obstacles which they faced. They described racist opposition to African-American women and Latinas in leadership roles which could be either overt or subtle. Some Latinas told us that they felt funders did not want to fund them. African-American women as well told us they often confronted the “double barrier” of race and gender. Many told us they continuously had to confront opposition to their work as a result of race, ethnicity, and gender based stereotyping. In some cities or communities, it was noted that all of the resource groups, banks, foundations, local governments, and intermediaries are led by males, making gaining access or support difficult. Many noted that because white men who are part of the “old boys network” are in decision making positions their personal prejudices against women, African-Americans and Latinos can have a real impact. Discrimination is based on race, ethnicity, and gender.

In a significant number of the organizations women must work with, there are prejudices against working with women in leadership positions. The women we interviewed reported that some men had specific expectations about what roles were acceptable for women and believed that women’s knowledge of the community development field was limited. One woman, African-American woman, who dealt primarily with white men said she felt that they could not accept that “women without an education could do anything or know very much”, although this was often true even of women who had
the necessary skills, education, or training (Interview 1997).

While some women of color felt that racism or ethnicism was a more significant barrier than gender, many told us that the issues were complex intertwined. They described that in some situations race or ethnicity was the primary obstacle, while in others it was gender. Some considered discrimination based on race or ethnicity as a constant underlying barrier which necessitated that they be aware of the dynamics of the different situations in which they found themselves. One African-American leader in Oakland told us that, “there is no way to separate them [though] they may have a separate impetus.” Some women told us that they felt gender presented a barrier within their own community. As another African-American leader in Boston put it, “It is hard to sort out why there are obstacles. I have most often felt that being a minority female has been an obstacle when working with African-American male developers. White men will give you the respect because they are scared of you.” Still another African-American woman in Chicago had a different experience asserting that “some [barriers] are gender-based. In the case of working with older white men, they didn’t want to have a young African-American woman out-of-towner having any input.” In different situations, gender, race, or other factors, such as “being an outsider”, were at play; however, for many women of color, race and gender were paramount (Interviews 1997).

An African-American leader in Washington, DC described an example where clearly both race and gender were obstacles. While she employed various strategies to over come the gender barriers such as seeking out women in the various institutions she deals with or taking male board members along to meetings, it is evident that she views racism as a major issue. As she describes it,

Race and gender are both big barriers in this city. I’ve actually gone into a meeting with a pro forma and people...bankers...have actually said, “How did you learn about the secondary market?” or some such thing. Sometimes I bring a [male] board member along. I take the same pro forma and there are no questions.... It may just seem like too complex a deal to be done by a black woman. I can have everything right, all the numbers, all the strategies, but if there is a typo because we have been working like crazy to put the deal together, then they say I
can’t add. It might be faster if it was all men, because the decision makers at City Hall are all men. What I do is find the program level staff who are women and convince them (Interview 1997).

Another African-American leader summed up the issue succinctly: “Women leaders cannot get funding for the work that men get. It is even worse for African-American women.” A different leader felt that racism had, at least in part, led to African-American women’s strong involvement in community development:

Race brings its rewards and challenges. Now, the racial tension that exists in the world also exists in advocacy and in the community development world. African-American people are questioning white people coming in and directing and studying. If they come in to the community, they want the money shared with the community. The problem with white men is that if they are right, why is the world in this shape? It has made African American women more assertive and aggressive about taking control… White organizations always had more resources and make black organizations look like they are coming up short (Interview 1998).

While the effects and implications of racism and ethnic discrimination were an issue to varying degrees in every site we visited, the Mississippi Delta and Texas are particularly striking examples of the intensity and complexity of opposition to women in community development. In the Mississippi Delta, many African-American leaders felt that the continuing effects of the history of poverty and racism were often a more significant barrier than gender discrimination. In El Paso and Houston, there is race-, ethnicity-, and class-based opposition to the community development work of women. In El Paso, the worker re-training programs instituted to erase the effects of NAFTA were not available in Spanish. In Houston, the business community dominates the economic landscape and there is little political support for community development. Many leaders of color in these communities were explicit about their lack of political access and the opposition to their work by city, county and state governments and local banks which arose primarily as a result of racial, ethnic, and class discrimination.
Women leaders know that overcoming the effects of poverty, the under-funding of education and the lack of sustained investment in African-American communities which are the result of racial and ethnic discrimination requires a substantial commitment of resources, people, and time. Especially in the rural areas, education, jobs, and housing were considered critical to ending the persistent effects of the plantation economic system. So pernicious was the legacy of the plantation economy that the recent development of casinos in Tunica, Mississippi was viewed by some as the most important recent economic change in the region because it meant that workers, for the first time, had an alternative to agricultural work on the plantations. Even though crime, drug use, and prostitution had increased with the development of the casinos, many felt the benefits far outweighed the drawbacks.

Interviewees in the Delta often focused on education as a critical issue for their communities. One African-American woman speaking of racial barriers told us, “I have a vision for us but it has not been attained. There has been movement. I think education is the key. My vision always comes back to education. Right now we have too many children born without hope. It is the result of the economy and years of racial bitterness.” Another said of her community “there is still a deep racial divide in this town. The residential areas are segregated. The white community is on the other side of the bayou from town. This affects the school. We are very far behind in education....” In one area a new public school was being built which would primarily serve white families, while a few miles away an African-American school was holding chemistry labs in a closet due to a lack of space and had canceled basic math classes because they did not have the money to hire a teacher.

Another African-American leader in the Delta described her experience with the overt racism of white-owned banks which were refusing to give her a loan even though her application and financial plans were solid. Her attempt to circumvent the banks in Mississippi was then used as the basis of a complaint regarding the organization’s financial activities to the federal agency which had given them the grant. She told us:

The barriers are more racial than gender. With the banks, no one would make us a loan to buy the building. They were not used to
dealing with nonprofits. They asked for all kinds of documentation. [We] ended up going ... [out of state] to a black-owned bank. They only looked at our credit report. We canceled our other accounts and opened an account at [this bank]. When we did that, they filed a complaint... because I took the money across state lines (Interview 1997).

An investigator was sent but after the books were examined, there was no objection to the group’s financial decision.

A white woman working in a faith-based organization in Mississippi described overt white resistance to community development efforts on the part of African-Americans which included whites dropping out of groups led by African-Americans, white groups applying for funding which they didn’t intend to use in order to prevent it from being awarded to African-American groups, and even attempts to sell African-American groups substandard building materials. While women acknowledged the gender barriers to their work, from their discussion it was clear that they felt that racism was often the primary barrier with which to contend.

Texas provides another example of the multiple and intertwined barriers of gender, race, ethnicity, and class. Here, as in other sites, for both African-Americans and Latinos, gender was often the secondary barrier though both were recognized as barriers. Some felt that African-American groups were better connected politically than Latino groups. Language was also an issue as there was clear discrimination against those whose first language was Spanish and those who did not speak English at all. Latinos in Texas often faced open hostility and opposition to their work. One woman in El Paso noted that “sometimes conscious and unconscious activities exclude people [such as having] hearings in English only, held in the middle of the day....” In Spanish speaking communities there is often no community development training, information or other services offered in Spanish. Another leader from El Paso told us that often city and other officials don’t want to work with her group because

They think we don’t have the capacity; we don’t have the language. I’ve been living in El Paso for 25 years and I don’t have the language because I haven’t needed it ...we don’t need it in El Paso. We’re 80%
of the population. But it is a problem for effective change--economic, political and social change because to the government we’re no one. They see us as not having the ability to do economic policy (Interview 1997).

The federal money for job re-training in El Paso is tied to onerous and exclusive language and prior education requirements. Citizenship requirements preclude some from benefiting from training, though the vast majority of displaced workers are citizens and legal residents. People who have worked in factories their entire lives whose jobs have now moved abroad have no access to what training and assistance are available because of language.

Where gender discrimination has been a particularly significant barrier, women have sometimes used perceived male power and authority to their strategic advantage. Women have on occasion turned to men to lead organizations or community organizing efforts which they themselves had begun, often without the involvement of men. One woman in Chicago, who had been working with a group of women doing an organizing campaign, said that although the effort for the most part involved only women, when “we got a meeting with the mayor, ... the organization wanted a man [to go to the meeting]. It had to do with their perception that a man would give more credibility to their organization and would attract other men. It has to do with our own perception in society that men have power” (Interview 1997).

In Houston, an African-American woman who is an assistant director in a male-led organization explained that while there were many women in community development, there was still the perception that men, especially white men, should be doing the work especially housing and economic development. She used the example of another group led by a white male to describe how leaders calculatedly attempt to circumvent obstacles based on race as well as gender. As she described, “there is still a strong preference for men to be doing this work. One [white male] leader has a very good female staff, but he is in the lead publicly as a white male, because that is what it takes to do and say some of the very progressive things they are doing.”
Another common strategy which women of color sometimes used was that of taking men with them to meetings with bankers and funders in order to be taken more seriously. A number of women we spoke with said that gender was such a barrier that they took men with them to meetings because they knew that “when a woman says it, it is ignored; when a man says it, its is listened to.” One woman in Chicago said, “A lot of times I’ll have an idea and I say it, but if a man says it they take it more seriously. Sometimes we have a man propose something so it is taken seriously.” Another woman from Mississippi said that she sometimes took men with her to meetings but made sure that it was clear who was “in charge”. As she put it, “If a man did the same things that I do, it would be seen differently. Gradually as people get to know me the situation improves. But I often have to take men with me in difficult situations. In one case, in meeting on a big project, I took three guys with me. The men in the room feel more confident when there are men there, but I am careful to show that I am leading (Interviews 1997).”

One director in North Carolina highlighted the impact of race and gender. While at times it was expedient to have a male deliver “the message”, it was even more so to have a white male deliver it:

My experience has been that while I find myself in a lot of places because I represent the minority business community, I find myself in a lot of places as the only woman and the only minority. You are there but you are not necessarily respected. You have to work hard to establish trust because as a person of color you are viewed as a revolutionary.... sometimes I have to use a white male to be a messenger (Interview 1997).

In Houston, another woman, who is an assistant director in a male-led organization, argued that gender has not been a barrier and her race has been a benefit in her Houston community. Although she acknowledges the existence of both race and gender barriers for others, what has made the difference for her, she argues, is that, “I’ve been well accepted because I am native and I’m black. [The executive director] is from a white affluent family and is well received in the community.... [He] has demanded that they respect me.” She feels that the race, class, and gender of her boss has strengthened her authority.
in some situations, while her own race has been most important in others.

Personal, Societal, Cultural Barriers

Because of discrimination against and marginalization of women, as well as the undervaluation of women’s work, interviewees identified strengthening self-esteem as a critical factor both for themselves and for program participants. To this end, women-led organizations incorporate many creative programs and approaches to achieve these goals. Many women leaders spoke of issues in their family, personal, and professional lives that had caused them to lack confidence or were obstacles to their involvement in the community. The lack of accessible, adequate child care as well as spouses or partners, who were not supportive, and members of the community who resisted women’s leadership continue to be barriers to some.

Women described themselves as having been initially hesitant to assert themselves or express their ideas because they felt that they did not have adequate skills or knowledge. However, once they had gained experience, acquired knowledge and had the support and encouragement of their colleagues, they overcome these concerns. One interviewee described her initial reticence and hesitation at meetings and other events. The biggest obstacle she said was

¼ Being afraid to speak up, to voice your own opinion. Now I feel comfortable voicing my opinion or answering questions. When I walk in to the office of a funder I feel confident. I can answer questions and it surprises them. Maybe they expect you won’t know. Women are now realizing that they know more about what is going on in the community...Sometimes you look around and say wow, there is an awful lot of women here, but it is going to take time (Interview 1997).

Women from all over the country and from differing racial, ethnic and class backgrounds told us that they, and many women they knew, had struggled with learning to value their own experience, values, and judgments which were often undervalued and even rejected by others. One organizer noted that self-esteem was an important issue, especially “if you’ve been discouraged from speaking your mind for
years, or sometimes you’re the only voice, or if you have someone in a leadership position who is really not listening to everyone. We’ve seen a lot of positive things, but yes, people do get discouraged” (Interviews 1997).

Asserting authority in leadership situations was something with which women said they sometimes had difficulty. They also distinguished between styles of male and female expressions of leadership and authority. Some women spoke of previous male directors as “command and control types” who would micro-manage the staff. Women said it took time for them to learn to be comfortable with their own authority. One woman summed up women’s self-esteem and power issues: “Probably the most effective women leaders don’t see themselves as leaders. Women don’t like the issue of power because it has been used in such destructive ways.” But eventually, as another woman said, “You have to learn how to stand up for yourself and be assertive. It is difficult being a woman leader. It’s difficult getting funding and getting respect (Interviews 1997).”

Often women said they found themselves in situations where they were the only woman or where they did not feel comfortable. Sometimes there was overt sexism such as the case where the only woman at a meeting was asked to take notes. At other times just being one of only a few women in the room was enough to make them feel uneasy.

Women respondents also identified barriers such as getting the freedom to leave their homes, child care, and feeling powerless as barriers to their leadership and participation in community development. Women talked about the need for more flexible work arrangements because they are primary care givers. Directors’ positions often require extensive attendance at night meetings, which is difficult for women caring for young children or elderly parents. Other staff positions are full-time as well, closing off options for women with families. In many cases activist women who have invested time in organizations over the years suffer when funding leads to full-time professional staffing and they are displaced. Too often funders want to see full-time professional staff and do not appreciate the value of encouraging part-time staffing.
Women leaders were trying to make sure that child care issues, single motherhood and other factors did not prevent women from participating, but acknowledged that the barriers often remained significant. As a woman in Boston explained, “for women, many are single moms so they have two jobs. If you have a significant other who believes that your position is in the home. We aren’t doing as well with that but we can have some meetings at home” (Interview 1997). A few directors said that they specifically made sure that staff who worked late because of meetings or project deadlines took comp-time. They also said that they tried to be flexible with work hours and arrangements especially for staff with families.

Because community development is rarely a 9 to 5 profession many women, especially women who are primary care givers, struggled with the demands of their jobs. As a woman, one leader told us,

You’re just more conscious--we have flex time and benefits--if you’re having family problems, someone is sick or you’re having problems with the sitter, maybe you’ll work 30 hours a week until you get it sorted out. We tried to be more flexible and practical...I’ve seen how a lot of good women get edged out. You can’t expect people to work more than full-time. If people stayed here until 9:30, if the need to stay home until noon that’s o.k. (Interview 1997).

A number of women also made specific mention of the issue of “burn out” as well as women’s tendency to ignore their own personal health. It was noted that women often overextend themselves, and lack adequate personal support which at times leads to burn-out. A few leaders spoke specifically of making sure to take time for themselves to “recharge their batteries” so that they themselves did not “burn out.” Though concerned for their staffs, some women also wanted to ensure their own ability to continue to perform in their jobs and not allow the long hours and numerous demands to become a barrier. While they often enjoyed the flexibility of their jobs, they were conscious of the fact that their work was extremely demanding and potentially exhausting. One woman in North Carolina praised the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for its sabbatical program which provided her with a grant to take time off. Another woman received a grant for a sabbatical which she was using to work in a community development organization in another state, on a project of particular interest to her. Another woman who had not taken a sabbatical agreed that they were beneficial and also felt that taking time for yourself
in other ways was important as well:

I think that the whole idea of sabbaticals is a healthy thing. When I was on maternity leave, the ship kept moving forward but I was sort of like the rudder. With night meetings and I was working a lot, I try not to come in on Fridays especially when there are a lot of night meetings. I respect that and I really encourage people not to work more than 40 hours (Interview 1998).

As women broke out of traditionally defined roles to work in their communities they often encountered resistance from their families as well members of their community. A number of women described spouses who, at the very least, “expect you to be home.” “Your own family sets up barriers, [They say] ‘You’re late and we didn’t eat.’ You have to leave the food prepared before you leave,” said another. One Latina in Chicago told us “I think that Hispanic women are intimidated or dominated to stay at home. It is an individual decision but they have a voice --we have to get them to speak up.”

While not all women were always as open and forthcoming about their personal lives, we found that this type of intimidation was a concern for women of varying ethnic, and racial backgrounds.

Clearly many women who challenged traditional roles by working in their communities and taking on leadership responsibilities face resistance from their families and other members of their communities which could be either subtle or overt. Opposition to their work in communities took many forms ranging from a lack of support, to discrimination, to threats of and actual physical violence. Women spoke of marriages ending, and situations of domestic violence developing. Some Latinas, for example, told us of spouses who discouraged or were hostile to their participation. Some African-American women spoke of ministers in their communities who did not support their efforts because they did not see it as “proper women’s work.” Another woman in a white working class community told us that the “first barrier was getting women out of their houses” and that even the best spouses often had sexist attitudes. As a result, many women in her community had not worked outside their homes and some, perhaps as many as a third, were living in situations of domestic violence. Whether it is husbands, ministers and community members, contractors or funding and lending institutions, women continue to
struggle with opposition to their challenge of traditional cultural and societal gender norms.

Education

Many of the women described their difficulty in gaining experience, having access to education and acquiring skills as a result of the time they must devote to their own children and the lack of day care facilities, but they also emphasized the lack of support for the education of women in general and of low-income women particular. Respondents cited a lack of education at the high school as well as college and professional training levels as a major barrier. Changes in welfare legislation are certain to intensify these barriers, as women on welfare are being forced to engage in workfare and many are being pushed out of college and post-secondary education.

The issue of education and training is a complex one. There is a both a need for increased access for women to education and training in community development, as well as for increased recognition of the skills and experience many “non-credentialed” women bring to the field. Interviewees often indicated that they were committed to recruiting staff from the community and giving recognition to experience based skills. However, they also saw the failure to provide the opportunity for further education as a significant barrier to women’s advancement in community development. Women often told us that they felt they needed a degree so that funders, officials, and other leaders would take them seriously and that women without degrees are often not viewed as competent. As one woman bluntly told us, “When I first started, whatever I said wasn’t credible because I didn’t have a degree” (Interview 1997).

Some women, however, view the reliance on degrees and credentialing itself as problematic. One leader in Portland said, “One of the biggest barriers is getting people to look at experience based skills. If you look at the ads in the paper, you need to have a BA or an MBA, Even a BA is a barrier to some people who have [valuable] life skills. You need to be willing [as a leader] to invest in people’s training who have the [life] skills.” For this leader, the most important thing was to look for those who had a knowledge of, and were residents in, the community, and who had skills which were transferable and to
provide them with an opportunity. Another leader in North Carolina told us she felt that when hiring staff, it was more important to hire people she knew she could work with, rather than someone with a degree. As she put it, “I try to surround myself with people I know, that I can trust, that I have a history with. I don’t hire people for degrees, I hire for heart and for trust—you can learn the skills.” Another leader agreed arguing that “The main thing is that you have to have a commitment to find people and give them the support and the training that they need. (Interviews 1997)”

Only a few of the women we interviewed were of the opinion that they couldn’t afford to hire people without degrees. One particular woman, the director of a more traditional CDC, felt that because so much money was at stake and projects were underway, they could not take the chance of hiring someone with out a degree and training them. Women who were credentialed themselves and came out of a professional rather than activist and organizing background were more likely to view degrees as requisite. Many women, especially those with organizing and activist backgrounds, did value experience based skills and felt that one of the most important criteria for hiring was a knowledge and experience of the issues and needs of the community.

**Lack of Appropriate Technical Assistance and Training**

Many respondents cited short-term training needs, in addition to access to education, as a barrier in their work. Women in smaller cities and in rural areas where technical assistance is less available were particularly vocal about this barrier. Women who had already participated in city, intermediary or foundation-sponsored training, on the other hand, tended to reject the notion that more training was needed. They were also critical of training organized by technical assistance providers who came from outside the community and designed programs which ignored the specific needs of their community; this type of training assumes local groups are not capable of identifying needs and designing solutions for themselves. However, women also used training programs to facilitate leadership development and the hiring of individuals without formal degrees or prior experience. As one leader put it, “There are people who have gone to the right schools..., but you can’t really tell. I mean the head of the leadership council doesn’t even have a BA. The person who is heading a division of 65 [housing] units has a BA in English
Some women were open both to running their own training programs for their own staff as well as to working with outside technical assistance providers as long as that training addressed their specific needs.

Women who felt that they lacked necessary technical assistance identified institutional barriers such as a lack of information about community development, the jargon of development, and the process of applying for funding. Often cited was the need to develop writing and other skills on the job, and some women suggested that special courses on community development designed to meet their specific needs would be helpful. While this was especially true of women who were new to the field or had little background in community development, even women who had exposure, access, and a background in community development felt they could benefit from some types of technical assistance.

In Oakland, BOSS is continuously organizing and running its own training programs as well as working with outside consultants. The director considers her group to be a “teaching organization” BOSS has a nine-month leadership development course for “clients.” As the director explained, participants “organize days and take responsibility for a training. Half has to be at the organization, half has to be about a strategic place. Everybody gets the experience of being in front of people, to be critical thinkers. We do a lot of teaching in this organization--and learning” (Interview 1997).

Lack of access to education, and especially training in the community development field, was cited as an important barrier because they “are the time tested barriers to women.... education and training are important....leadership develops from the ground up and being able to be heard is important. For women to get involved it takes time and effort.” However, women wanted specific programs because they “need financial and technical training that is geared especially for them. Not the level of the material, but [done] in a setting that is supportive and assumes success.” There was a clear recognition that gaining access to necessary education and technical information was critical:

Class and education are the primary barriers for women’s leadership.
[Lots of women] want to help the community. It is not a lack of motivation courage, or belief in themselves, but a lack of technical assistance (Interview 1998).

One director of a health clinic felt that it was important for women to be involved in the creation of training institutes and programs to influence the curriculum. She argues that training for women should focus on managing organizational change, dealing with conflict resolution, understanding customer satisfaction, facilitating negotiations, and securing organizational funding.

Many leaders agreed with the woman in Boston who told us,

One thing that I have always felt is that unless you know community development, it is hard to learn things like financial packaging. They [the foundations and funders] could do a survey course to tell us what’s going on, what programs are run, this is out there, this is how to address this problem (Interviews 1997).

Another woman felt that the technical and financial aspects of community development should not be an obstacle at all. She felt that funders and other community development professionals “keep it a big mystery. Us ordinary people can do it.... I am amazing myself (Interview 1998).” Whether done within an organization, or in collaboration with external technical service providers, training and technical assistance were seen as valuable tools provided the curriculum was not imposed from the outside and reflected and addressed the needs and concerns of community women.

**Local Political Networks**

Political barriers included both a lack of networks with government officials and financial institutions, as well as a marginalization that some leaders felt was a punishment for their political positions. The political culture of a region was a factor in the degree to which women were networked, or encouraged or supported in their leadership. In areas where there was a history of women in leadership positions or in political office, women faced fewer barriers. Most often women were concerned that they were not “plugged in” to networks of city and state political officials which they felt limited their access to funding and other resources. Women in some cities felt they suffered because they were “outside the system.”
Race and ethnicity were also critical factors in barriers to political access. Some women felt that there were consequences to challenging the political system and expressed the idea that getting involved with politics could be problematic, while others were concerned that they were not more networked.

In the Mississippi Delta, where community development efforts were often implemented in spite of political opposition drawn on racial lines, it was a difficult balance. One leader told us, “In our business, basically you can’t afford to be political, but you have to have relationships. We have finally learned the inside track . . . We got some funds . . . years ago. This year we did not get the contract. I know it was a good proposal (Interview 1998).” In her case, even learning the inside track and having connections was not enough to ensure ongoing support of her organization. Other women spoke of efforts to undermine some community development groups by denying or limiting funds and through creating new regulations. In Mississippi, where state funds are distributed through the county, one leader told us that rather than give money to a community development group, the county returned the money back to the state. Another woman told us that nothing had changed in her county until African-Americans were elected to office.

Recent organizing efforts in Mississippi by Southern Echo and others have once again begun to mobilize and register African-American voters. Earlier efforts by groups such as Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE) had succeeded in registering thousands of African-American voters, however, it was clear from our interviews that many African-Americans in community development were still dealing primarily with white elected and appointed officials. In North Carolina, voter registration drives and civil rights activism culminated in the election to state office of a number of African Americans who formed an important and effective caucus within the legislature. The Legislative Black Caucus in North Carolina, urged on by activists and community developers, worked within the legislature to fund community development. The North Carolina Community Development Initiative (NCDI) is also a critical piece of the community development picture in the state. While similar efforts are under way in Mississippi, to date they have not resulted in similar legislation and the ultimate impact of this recent political mobilization is unknown at this time.
While race was an important factor in political access, in other areas, women considered gender the key barrier to political access. As one leader told us, the primary problem was “access-- picking up the telephone and speaking to someone, networking. Men have networks. Women first have to deal with finding out who is the access person and then they’re walking in as a woman with a set of issues” (Interview 1997). Many women felt there was an “old boys network” of which they were not a part. One leader told us that she felt her funding was taken away because she did not have the necessary connections:

[There is a ] good old boys network [of] political power. We don’t have it. One of the things that I am dealing with is we got a one year operating grant and they’re not going to renew our grant. They’ve already decided to give money to groups with political connections (Interview 1997).

There was evidence that women may be “punished by the system” through loss of funding or isolation from important networks, especially if they are seeking social change. Groups which organize and demonstrate felt that their efforts were scrutinized more closely than those of other groups and that foundations, as well as state and local funders and politicians, were reluctant to work with them. One group organizing workers told us that their work in the community has begun to change some attitudes although some political difficulties remain. In her words,

On the political side, the barrier is that they don’t want to invest in Hispanic workers. The foundations don’t want to invest. When we request funds the rules are very strict. Sometimes they see us as women workers [and look down on us] now they see us differently. We are ready to talk to everyone. Since we are [who we are] they don’t take us into account as if we were naughty (Interview 1997).

Another Latina in Texas told us that while seeking special permits for a project in a specific district, a member of the city's planning commission-distributed fliers stating that she was a Communist from Nicaragua.
Women activists and community development professionals often encounter opposition to their efforts. Some women challenge the status quo to effect political change either though protests, legal challenges or by challenging the expected gender norms and limitations imposed on them by their communities. While it is clear that the lack of access to important networks of power, finance, and influence is a significant barrier, women leaders and women-led organizations participate in multiple networks. These important formal and informal networks of women leaders of community institutions and organizations are a source of strength and an important resource within the community.

Conclusion

While the discussions with women concerning the barriers they face in community development work were extensive and detailed, it is important to keep in mind the many remarkable and inventive ways women have often found to overcome them. This is not to say that racism, gender discrimination, and other barriers no longer pose a problem or that they are easily circumvented, for clearly this is not the case. Certainly, societal proscribed and institutionally based barriers to women in general (and to women of color in particular) remain considerable. However, while the women leaders we interviewed were forthcoming and quick to identify the obstacles they had faced and often continued to face, they were just as quick to point out that they had not let these barriers stop them from achieving their ultimate goals. Through their innovation as well as their tenacious persistence women-led organizations have succeeded in creating critical change in their communities.
Conclusions

Women play a key and unacclaimed role in the community development movement. We found that most women-led CDOs are at the forefront of community development, both philosophically and programmatically. Most women-led organizations resisted the shift away from advocacy and activism that the legal and funding structure of CDCs imposed on community groups in the 1970s. This resistance had varying levels of success, given the politically conservative and fiscally restrictive environment of the 1980s. Nevertheless, most women-led CDOs kept community participation, comprehensive need-based programs, and networking at the core of the organizations. While the general trend, particularly for CDCs, was to professionalize community organizations and narrow their scope, most of the CDOs in our study either hired from the community or secured credentials for existing community leaders. Likewise, women-led CDOs preceded the move towards Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI) by extending themselves and running both human services and physical development programs.

The participatory structure of most of the CDOs in our study and the way the organizations built participation into their programs created a democratic space where community residents could both form ties with each other and develop as individuals while collectively working for the betterment of the whole community. Multiple layers of unofficial networks were created, such as those of community residents with each other, ties between community residents and CDO staff members, and relationships between CDO directors and community residents or directors of other organizations. CDO activities also brought individuals and the organizations themselves into official networks, such as coalitions, or cases in which members represent the CDO at public events or meet with public officials. Women-led CDOs are building the norms, trust, and networks that are essential to social capital, and they are also engaged in civic action for social change.

Although most of the women we interviewed are not conventionally political, their commitment to their communities compels them to work for social change. Because of their historic exclusion from
the political system they see their work as “apolitical”. They generally stay in their communities and work for change at an individual, organizational, and societal level. At an individual level, women work to empower and educate themselves and their friends and neighbors, often questioning gender roles and power relations in the family. The work of the organizations themselves often challenges the distribution of resources and the status quo in a neighborhood or service area, while the CDOs advocacy and coalition work pushes for institutional change. The programs themselves tend to be change-oriented. We found that many of the women-led CDOs have comprehensive and integrative programs that are often innovative, create bonding and bridging capital, and responding to the needs of women and girls.

Despite their accomplishments, the women interviewed do face barriers in their work, which sometimes limit their effectiveness. Racism, gender discrimination, and class marginalization are manifested in specific ways in community development. Many women in many communities of color, particularly in the Southern cities and rural areas, are not politically connected to the elected officials and agency heads who approve city contributions to community groups, service contracts, and real estate development deals. CDCs sometimes face opposition to low-income housing developments from white neighborhood groups and CBOs confront anti-homeless and other prejudiced attitudes in trying to offer their services. The male-dominated construction industry often poses difficulties for women who must prove they have the knowledge to direct development projects. Funders and bankers sometimes do not fund women-led organizations because they have traditionally been focused on quantitative measures of success rather than qualitative ones. Women’s holistic view of development and comprehensive programs requires a different set of measures. Although the funding picture is a complicated one and some funders are increasingly supportive of women-led CDOs, some of the women we spoke with described instances of direct hostility and ill treatment.

The city bureaucracy also posed its own set of barriers for women. Women are often not part of the “old boys” network in which established male directors enjoy social and business contact with elected officials, agency heads, and mid-level bureaucrats. If the political environment is hostile to nonprofit development, as it generally is in Texas for example, women face most of the obstacles put up by the
city government. This is compounded by the racism and sexism of individual officials. Political opposition coupled with the legacy of racism was also an important factor in the Mississippi Delta, while the case of North Carolina demonstrates how political organizing can help overcome resistance to community development.

Class position affects women at many levels. At an individual level, a lack of affordable child care is a critical need for women who are often also caring for an ailing parent or relative. Working-class and poor women also face tremendous challenges in pursuing an education. Experienced and talented community activists who wanted to enter the community development field often encountered the negative attitudes of professionals who put up additional barriers by using jargon and making the process of development appear very difficult. Technical training was not always tailored to community women’s need and desires and often was not accessible. For instance, some women pointed out that they did not have the money to travel to training sessions and conferences nor could they afford the luncheons and social activities associated with those activities. However, women were quick to point out that certain intermediaries were sensitive to their needs and offered appropriate training. Another class barrier is the low salary level in community development. Working-class and poor women who have had access to higher education and meet the often arbitrary credential requirements for directors positions cannot afford to support their families and pay back their educational debt on a low salary. On the other hand, long-standing community leaders who have gained appropriate training are often better-equipped to lead CDOs than professionals with little community experience.

It is impossible to isolate the barriers since they are a combination of race, class, and gender dynamics, yet is clear that women face challenges men do not. For instance, in several communities, women of different races and ethnicities have limited personal freedom to leave their homes for meetings and community work. While they often gain more freedom through struggle and with the support of women in the CDOs, this basic lack of freedom cannot be ignored. Domestic violence and abandonment are different sides of the coin of gender oppression and we interviewed women who had experienced one or the other or both. A former director of a CDO we visited was murdered by her male partner on the
eve of her departure to a conference. Despite her involvement in the community development movement, her semi-rural community did not have access to a battered women’s shelter. Women also carry the majority of the weight of domestic labor and child rearing responsibilities. Moreover, they are often held to impossibly high standards as partners, wives, and mothers, and face community disapproval if they don’t fulfill these roles according to cultural norms. These barriers affect the work of the CDOs and they are added to the general conditions of poverty, unemployment, government disinvestment, and deteriorating infrastructure that the CDOs must contend with.

Until recently, the community women we interviewed have been excluded from most feminist literature, yet their contribution to improving women’s lives often involves feminist practice and results in women’s empowerment. The women we interviewed espoused Kaplan’s view of social rights as placing human need above other requirements, human life above property, and emphasized social cohesion and quality of life (Kaplan 1995 146). Although most of them do not identify as feminists, they make the personal political in a variety of ways. The women we interviewed often faced resistance in their families as they tried to act out their core values and work for the community. They usually confronted this resistance and overcame it, sometimes at a high personal cost. When they drew other women out of their homes to meetings and activities, they tended to utilize a sensitivity, openness, and attention to process characteristic of feminist organizing. Programs were designed to meet the needs of women and children and community women were often empowered by their participation. A public space was created for the discussion of formerly personal problems such as domestic abuse. Moreover, social problems were no longer viewed exclusively as individual moral failings, but rather as injustices to be confronted either through service provision or community organizing, and often both methods.

The level and quality of the activities of women-led CDOs have a great deal to contribute to both community development literature and feminist analysis. Our examination of the characteristics of women’s leadership, the programs of women-led CDOs, their networking activities, their role in community participation, and the barriers they face, may serve as a step in recognizing community women’s voices, but many issues remain to be explored. The intersections of race, ethnicity, and class
in particular deserve further study. We found women drawing on their specific cultural traditions as a source of strength while confronting sexism in their own community. The ways women of color confront racism within and outside the community development movement while maintaining community unity also merits further study, as does the impact of class in community organizations.
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Appendix A
Interview Instrument

Interview Instrument
Women and Community Development Study

The interviews should help us answer broad questions such as:
What effect do women have on community development?
What are the major barriers for women controlling NDOs?
Once women are in control, what are the major barriers to implementing policies for women
What differences do women-run NDOs exhibit?
Are they more sensitive to the community?
What are the factors that encourage women to take leadership?

I. Organizational Profile
Objective: To gather basic information about the NDO, including programs, representation, and organizational barriers.

Materials to be compiled prior to the interview:

Background Information
Organization, Name, Title, Address, Phone.
Mission statement and informational pamphlets
Budgets
Board Meeting Minutes
Annual Reports
Funding information: What percentage of funding is from state, city, federal, and foundations respectively?

Staff, Board, and Membership/Service Population Data
Get number, gender, race, ethnicity, and length of service of staff members and board members.
Same information for organizational membership, if it is a membership organization.
(If printed materials not available before interview, obtain during interview.)

Interview Questions:

Organization Service Area and Population
What are the boundaries of the area that you serve?
What are the boundaries of this neighborhood?
What is the gender/racial/ethnic breakdown of the population you serve/work with?
**History of Organization**
What is the mission of the organization?
What year was it founded?
Why was it founded?  Who founded it?
Are the founders still involved?  If not, why not?
Has the organization changed its mission since its inception?

**Programs**
Has there a change in your programmatic focus over time?  Why did the change take place?
How do you determine which programs to do?
What are your program areas?
(Get descriptions of programs and details on quantifiable outputs).
Housing: number of units built or rehabbed?  (Visit sites). Is it enhanced housing?
Economic development: amounts lent, number of business helped or created?
Community organizing: types of campaigns, results, numbers of people involved?
Child care: how many children served, quality of care?
Job training: how many people trained and in which areas? How many people placed in jobs? Any idea how long they stay employed, follow-up system?
Counseling/Referrals: approach and number of people counseled?
Housing Advocacy: activities, numbers of people helped, and/or litigation won?

**Programs Targeted to Women**
Are any of your programs targeted towards women?  Why or why not?
Which programs?
How were the decisions to target programs to women made? (board, staff, CEO).
Are these programs a priority?

Do your programs target any other particular groups?  Which groups?
How do you determine which groups?

**Community Organizing**
Do you do community organizing?  How do you do it?
Do you do tenant organizing?  Do you do advocacy?  In which areas?
What does community empowerment mean to you?
Which of your programs would you consider most important in empowering the community?

**CEO**
(Note gender, race, age)
How long have you been with organization?
How were you hired?  (By the board, by the staff, by the community, by the former director)
Promoted from within or hired from outside?)
What is your previous experience? (Activist, social worker, manager/administrator, other)
Where did you go to school? (Note level of education)
Do you live in the live in community, and if so how long have you lived here?

Board
How are board members appointed? Any restrictions? (e.g. foundation diversity requirements)
How many women are on the board? How many women of color?
What is the background of the board members? (race, ethnicity, professions)
Do they live in the community?
How often does the board meet? Do they meet during the summer?
How many members usually show up? Are they the same members each month?

Staff
Who hires the staff?
How many women are on staff?
How many have college degrees? Live in the community?
How many volunteers work here and what is their gender?

Funding
If you had sufficient funding, what would be your priorities?

II. Collaboration and Leadership Style
Objective: To ascertain level of internal democracy, models of leadership, and any barriers to

Participation
How does the community participate in determining the priorities of the organization?
Specifically, how are the community residents involved in each of your program areas?
Is there a community resident leadership development component in any program areas?
Does the organization recruit, develop and train new leadership?
How are opportunities for leadership identified within your organization and in the community?
Does the NDO provide training for residents?
How has this NDO increased community participation?
How do you draw out and encourage potential women leaders from the community? What about within your organization?
What kind of programming would assist women in learning to work collaboratively?
How do you encourage leadership by people of color?
Does your group do any multi cultural or multiracial projects?
Are there bilingual materials available for community residents?

CEO
How is the NDO’s policy initiated, approved, implemented, and evaluated?
(Is it a hierarchical or collaborative model? Note any innovative management models)
What is the relationship between the board, board chair, and CEO?
On what do you spend most of your time? (Policy, administration, budget, external relations)
Does it make any difference to your leadership that you are a woman?

**Board**
Has there been any change on the board since inception?
At what point did you notice a change?
(If the board changed from mostly male to more than half female) Did you notice any differences?
(If not answered in detail before) Does the board appoint the CEO? Or is that person elected by membership? Or some other way?
Has the board ever removed a CEO? Why?
How active is the board in the NDO generally?

**Staff Collaboration**
How often do you have staff meetings?
What kinds of decisions are staff members involved in?
Do staff members ever propose programs?
Do your staff members work in collaboration or individually?

**III. Individual Change**
   **Objective:** To report personal changes experienced by women leading and participating

**Personal History and Networks**
What is your family background?
Which organizations were you involved with before this one?
Do you belong to other community groups?
Are you personally active in a political party? (not as an NDO representative)
What is your motivation in working for this organization?
What does community development mean to you?

Have you experienced any personal changes before or after becoming CEO of this organization? What do you think caused these changes?
Do you think you make a difference to your community? Why?
What, in your opinion, motivates women to change?

**IV. Local Context**
   **Objective:** To describe the environment the NDO functions in, particularly in terms of the presence of coalitions of NDOs, the availability of funders and intermediaries,
What would you identify as the neighborhood's most important problems/needs?
How have the needs/issues of women in your community changed over the last 10 years?

How would you describe relations between the different racial and ethnic groups in your neighborhood?

**NDO Networking**
Do you work in collaboration with other organizations on any programs?
Who works with you well and who doesn’t?
What types of groups do you work with?
(community based service organizations, development organizations, hospitals, churches, schools, libraries, sports clubs, PAS, recreation centers, health advocacy, youth clubs, women’s groups, immigrant groups, labor union locals, racial and ethnic groups?)
Are there any lists or directories of organizations in your neighborhood?

Was there a specific event such as a community struggle for better city services or an incident in one of the schools that resulted in your NDO cooperating with one or several of the other neighborhood groups?
Was there an event that resulted in conflict between your NDO and neighborhood groups?

Do you meet formally or informally with the leaders of other NDOs or of CBOs?
Do you think community leaders are divided?
Do they form alliances?
Which leaders do you think form alliances of this type?
Are there any groups which are left out?

**Networking with Political Officials and Agencies**
Which governmental offices/agencies are in the neighborhood?
What is the organization’s relationship with political representatives? (Note elected officials)
How supportive do you think elected officials are of your work? How do they show support? (Help with funding)

**Coalitions**
Are there any NDO networks or coalitions in the city? Neighborhood?
Are there any issue networks or coalitions?
Who created the networks?
Were intermediaries involved in creating the networks?
Are there any women’s coalitions in your neighborhood or city? Which ones?

Does your NDO work within networks or coalitions to change city, state, or federal policy?
Was foundation funding the catalyst for these coalitions?
**Funding**
What are your major sources of funding?
How much does funding influence your programmatic choices? For example, if funding is removed for a particular program, do you stop the program?
In general how much do you think NDOs are influenced by funders and intermediaries? (Thoughts on LIST, Enterprise, local foundations etc.)
Is funding influenced by the gender or race of the CEO or board members?

V. Barriers

**Organizational Barriers**
What would you say are the obstacles that you face as an organization?
Are there new obstacles that weren’t there ten years ago?
Where do difficulties occur in your external relationships? With banks, mayor, local agencies?
(When applicable) Does your organization experience particular difficulties because it is women-led?

**Barriers to Collaboration and Leadership**
What obstacles to collaboration has your organization encountered?
What about barriers to leadership development?
Have there been obstacles to collaboration or leadership development that you think were particular to women?

**Individual Barriers**
What personal barriers have you faced as an NDO leader?

**Network Barriers**
Are there barriers in funding because you are women?
Are there barriers in outreach to government agencies and elected officials?
Any barriers in contact with LISC or Enterprise?
What about contact with women’s organizations?
Are there barriers in your contact with the community because you are women?
Are there barriers in forming or working in coalitions?
What about in working with universities?

**Future Directions**
What suggestions would you make to help overcome the barriers to women’s involvement and leadership in community development?
Is there anything else you want to tell us that we haven’t asked you?
Appendix B
Interviewees and Organizational Affiliations

Interviewees (Organizations and Individuals by Site)

Boston, Massachusetts

**Boston Aging Concerns, Young and Old**
United, Inc. (BAC-YOU)
Janet Van Zandt, Executive Director

**Boston Foundation**
Prentice Zinn, Program Associate

**Boston Women’s Fund**
Jean Entine, Executive Director

**Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC)**
Charleen Regan, Senior Program Manager

**Community Education for Economic Development**
Elizabeth Stone House
Laurie Holmes, Coordinator

**Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation**
Jeanne Du Bois, Executive Director

**Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiatives**
Roz Everdale, Director of Organizing
Che Madyun, former Board President
Zaida Vides, Coordinator of Girls Leadership

**Fenway Community Development Corporation**
Ellen Caraccilo, Director of Development
Carrie Dalrymple, Resident and Family Coordinator

**Madison Park Community Development Corporation**
Danette Jones, Executive Director

**Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation**
Evelyn Friedman-Vargas, Executive Director

**Project Hope**
Sr. Margaret Leonard, Executive Director

**Quincy-Geneva Housing Corporation**
Marilyn Sanchez, Office Manager
Pearl Plange, Clerk of Board of Directors
Claudia Owumi, Director of Resident Services
Mary Knight, former Board Member

**Zaida Vides, Coordinator of Girls Leadership**
Shelter, Inc.
Susan Duley, Executive Director

Women’s Educational and Industrial Union
Mary Lassen, Executive Director

Women’s Institute for Housing and Economic Development
Jean Kluver, Executive Director
Lynn Peterson, Development Specialist

Chicago, Illinois

Austin People’s Action
Cynthia Williams, Executive Director

Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation
Joy Aruguete, Executive Director

Chicago Foundation for Women
Christine Grumm, Executive Director
Joyce Love, Program Director, Executive Director’s Roundtable

Chicago Women in Trades
Lauren Sugerman, Executive Director

Claretian Associates
Donna Drinan, Executive Director

Deborah’s Place
Pat Dowell-Cerasoli, Executive Director

Patricia Crowley, Executive Director
Audrey Thomas, Assoc. Director for Programs

Development Corporation North
Dorothy Gregory, Board Member, Neighborhood Capital Budget Group and Development Corporation North

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Andrew Mooney, Program Director

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Susan Lloyd, Director of Building Community Capacity, Program on Human and Community Development

Mid-South Planning and Development Commission

Mujeres Latinas en Acción
David Sinski, interim Executive Director
Marta Cerda, Board President
Neusa Gaytan, Youth/Family Coordinator
South Chicago Neighborhood Housing Collaboration
Cindy Larson, Executive Director

The Resurrection Project
Rose Dominguez, Board Member
Susana Vasquez, Research Development Director

Southeast Chicago Development Commission
Lynn Cunningham, President

Southwest Women Working Together
Shelley Crump, Executive Director

Woodlawn Development Associates
Juanita Burris, Executive Director

Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors (WECAN)
Mattie Butler, Executive Director

Delta Region: Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana

Big River Community Development Corporation
Sharon Johnson, Executive Director
Marks, Mississippi

Delta Research Education and Development Foundation (DRED)
Vickie Robertson, Executive Director
West Memphis, Arkansas

Communities Collaborating for Economic Development, Cheneyville, Louisiana
Mordessa Corbin
Gilbert, Louisiana

First American Bank
Cindy Ayers-Elliott, Chairman and CEO
Jackson, Mississippi

Foundation for the Mid South
George Penick, President
Sherrie Pugh, Program Officer
Jackson, Mississippi

Greater Greenville CDC
Torris Purnell, Housing Development Manager
Greenville, Mississippi

Hope Center
Flodene White, Director
Cullen, Louisiana

Mississippi Action for Community Education
Ruby Buck, Executive Director
Greenville, Mississippi

New Horizon Community Development Corporation
Rev. Margaret McGhee
Fordyce, Arkansas
Nellie Johnson Village
Sr. Gus Griffin and Sr. Angela Susalla
Tunica, Mississippi

Northeast Louisiana Delta Community Development Corporation
Benita Young, Housing Coordinator
Tallulah, Louisiana

Northern Mississippi Leadership Project, Women’s Leadership: Tunica, Walls, Hernando and Holly Springs
Helen Love, Hernando Organizer
Hernando, Mississippi

Outreach Community Services
Georgia Gaines, President
Lake Providence, Louisiana

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
Dianne Williams, Senior Program Officer
Little Rock, Arkansas

Sacred Heart Southern Mission
Morgan Billingsly, Director of Housing Services
Sr. Marianne Guthrie
Patricia Hines Center for Neighborhoods
Walls, Mississippi

Tallahachie Housing
Rochella Cole, Housing Director
Webb, Mississippi

Voice of Calvary Ministries
Lee Harper, Executive Director
Jackson, Mississippi

We Care Community Services
Rose Bingham, Administrator
Vicksburg, Mississippi

El Paso, Texas and surrounding colonias
State Representative Norma Chavez
El Paso

El Paso Collaborative for Community and Economic Development
Rose Garcia, Executive Director
El Paso

Lower Valley Housing Development Corporation of El Paso
Nancy Hanson, Executive Director
Fabens

La Mujer Obrera
Maria Flores, Coordinator
Cindy Arnold, Economic Development Coordinator
Refugio Arrieta, Chair, Board of Directors
El Paso

Meadows Foundation
Dee Pascal, Senior Program Officer
Dallas

Organización Progresiva de San Elizario
Daniel Solís, Construction Specialist
Angel Gonzalez, VISTA Supervisor
Linda Banuelos, VISTA Volunteer
Sofía Milo Carillo, VISTA Volunteer
Martha Gomez, VISTA Volunteer
Maria Ortiz, VISTA Volunteer
Magda Salido, VISTA Volunteer
Estella Velasco, VISTA Volunteer
Irma Villa, VISTA Volunteer
Graciela Acosta, VISTA Volunteer
San Elizario

Southside Low-Income Housing Development Corporation
Carmen Felix, Executive Director
El Paso

Sparks Housing Development Corporation
Irma Perez, Executive Director

El Paso

University of Texas at El Paso
Center for Sustainable Neighborhoods
Public Policy Research Center
Department of Political Science
Prof. Patricia Fredericksen
Sandra Sanchez
El Paso

Women in Action
Belen Germán, Coordinator
San Elizario

YWCA Home Ownership Center
Joanna Guillén, Coordinator
El Paso

YWCA Teen Pregnancy Program
Mary Lacey, Coordinator
El Paso
Houston, Texas

Avenue Community Development Corporation
Mary Lawler, Executive Director

The Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc.
Linda Madeksho, Executive Director

De Madres A Madres
Sylvia Castillo, Executive Director

Dubuis Fund
Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston
Barbara Aires, SC, Coordinator

Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation
Kathy Flanagan-Payton, Executive Director

Freedmen’s Town Association, Inc.
Gladys House, Executive Director/Founder

Greater Houston Urban Redevelopment Corporation
Andrea Cooksey, Executive Director

Greater Park Place Community Development Corporation
Antonia Cahn, Executive Director

Houston Area Women’s Center
Ellen Cohen, Executive Director

Houston Endowment
Donald Shepard, Grant Officer

Northwest Assistance Ministries
Rebecca Mathis, Executive Director

Pyramid Community Development Corporation
Tina Moore, Executive Director

Sunnyside Up Community Development Corporation
Rick Dyson, Executive Director
Toni Lockett, Assistant Director

Third Ward Community Development Corporation
Marvalette Fentress, Executive Director

Woman, Inc.
Marion Fischer, President
North Carolina

Down East Partnership for Children
Henrietta Zalkind, Executive Director
Rocky Mount

The Women’s Center of Wake County
Jean Williams, Executive Director
Raleigh

Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Gayle Williams, Executive Director
Winston-Salem

North Carolina Department of Commerce
Susan Perry Cole
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Community Development
Raleigh

North Carolina Hunger Network
Shirley McClain, Executive Director
Raleigh

North Carolina Institute for Minority Economic Development
Andrea Harris, Executive Director
Raleigh

Passage Home
Jeanne Tedrow, Executive Director
Raleigh

Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation
Joyce Dickens, Executive Director
Rocky Mount

Self-Help
Kate McKee, Associate Director
Durham

Southerners for Economic Justice
Cynthia Brown, Executive Director
Durham

Warren Family Institute
Cathy Lawrence, Executive Director
Warrenton

West Greenville Community Development Corporation
Barbara Fenner, Executive Director
Greenville

Wilson Community Improvement Association
Fannie Corbett, Executive Director
Barbara Blackstone
Wilson
Oakland, California

Asian Health Services
Sherry Hirota, Executive Director

Bridge
Carol Galante, CEO

Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS)
Boona Chema, Executive Director

Center for Third World Organizing
Rinku Sen, Co-director

Community Economic Development Agency
Elissa Brown, Title XX Program Manager

East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
Lynette Lee, Executive Director

Enhanced Enterprise Community
Community Economic Development Agency
Margie Ellis, Board Member
Njelela Kwamilele, Policy Board Co-chair
Barbara Montgomery, Board Member
Queen Thurston, Board Co-chair
Kathy Washington, Board Member

Family Day Care Training Project
Noa Mohlabane, Director
Gloria Alexander, Program Coordinator
Laura Jimenez, Monitor, Child care program
Elvira Sanchez, Assistant Administrator
Lanetta Moore, Participant
Jacari Ford, Participant

Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Foundation
Diana Bermudez, Program Officer

Jubilee West
Gus Newport, Executive Director

La Clinica De La Raza
Jane Garcia, Executive Director

National Economic Development and Law Center
Jan Stokley, Manager, Childcare Project

National Latina Health Organization
Luz Álvarez Martínez, Executive Director

Narcotics Education League
Regina Chavarin, Executive Director

Oakland Chinese Community Council
Corinne Jan, Executive Director

Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation
Rosario Flores, Program Manager

Spanish Speaking Unity Council
Arabella Martinez, Executive Director

University Avenue Housing
Susan Felix, Executive Director

Urban Strategies Council
Maria Campbell-Casey, Executive Director

Women’s Economic Agenda Project
Ethel Longscott, Executive Director
Portland, Oregon

**Bradley-Angle House**  
Jeannie LaFrance, Outreach Program Coordinator  

**Oregon Community Development Training Institute**  
Portland State University, College of Urban and Public Affairs  
Prof. Patricia Rumer, Director of Community Programs, School of Extended Studies  

**Franciscan Enterprises of Oregon, Inc.**  
Karen Voiss, Executive Director  

**Housing Our Families**  
Alberta Simmons, Founding Member, Board of Directors  

**Low Income Housing for Native Americans**  
Julie Metcalf, Executive Director  

**Neighborhood Partnership Fund**  
Kathy Kniep, Program Officer  

**Neighborhood Pride Team**  
Molly Cooley, Executive Director  

**Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence**  
Margaret Brown, Executive Director  

**Portland Community Reinvestment Initiative**  
Maxine Fitzpatrick, Executive Director  

**Recreation, Education, Access, Community Housing (REACH)**  
Dee Walsh, Executive Director  

**The Rose**  
Jennifer Nielsen, General Manager  

**Sabin Community Development Corporation**  
Diane Meisenhelter, Executive Director  

**Sisters in Portland Impacting Real Issues Together (SPIRIT)**  
Sandra Davis, Executive Director  

**Technical Assistance for Community Services**  
Kay Sohl, Executive Director
Washington, DC

Arlington Housing Corporation
Lou Ann Frederick, Executive Director
*Arlington, Virginia*

Building Futures
Kathryn Stephens, Executive Director
Julia Moran Morton, Housing Specialist

Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
Karen Kinney, Program Officer

Coalition of Nonprofit Housing Developers
Olive Idehen Akhigbe, Executive Director

Martha Davis, Consultant

Frederick Douglass Resident Council
Brenda Graham, President

Hannah House
Margaret Bush-Ware, Executive Director
Roxanne Murray, Program Director

Housing Opportunities for Women
Nancy James, Executive Director
Mary O’Melveny, Board President

Jubilee Enterprise of Greater Washington
Louise Stoner Crawford, Program Director
Sheila Royster, Director of Community Management
Robert Boulter, Executive Director

Manna, Inc.
Rozanne Look, Director of Housing Development

Marshall Heights Community Development Organization
Lloyd Smith, Executive Director
Ruth Dyson, Vice Chair of Board
Aretha Frizzell, Treasurer
Natalie Greene, Recording Secretary

Miriam’s House
Carol Marsh, Executive Director

Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. of the National Capital Area
Angela White Narain, Executive Director

New Columbia Community Land Trust
Pamela Jones, Executive Director

Vietnamese Resettlement Association
Kim Cook, Executive Director
*Falls Church, Virginia*

Wider Opportunities for Women
Lina Frescas Dobbs, National Executive Director
Bernadette Gross, Local Program, Nontraditional Skills Specialist, National Literacy Project Consultant

Falls Church, Virginia

Wider Opportunities for Women
Lina Frescas Dobbs, National Executive Director
Bernadette Gross, Local Program, Nontraditional Skills Specialist, National Literacy Project Consultant
Appendix C
Advisory Panel

National Advisory Panel

Prudence Brown
*Chapin-Hall Center for Children*
New York, New York

Barbara Burnham
*Greater Miami Local Initiatives Support Corporation*
Miami, Florida

Rose Dominguez
*The Resurrection Project*
Chicago, Illinois

Hattie B. Dorsey
*Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership*
Atlanta, Georgia

Robin Ely
*Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs*
New York, New York

Denise Fairchild
*Community Development Technologies Center*
Los Angeles, California

Ruth Goins
Consultant
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Gloria Guerrero
*National Rural Development & Finance Corporation*
San Antonio, Texas

Janice Jones
Consultant
Oakland, California

Lynette Lee
*East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation*
Oakland, California

Nora Lichtash
*Women’s Community Revitalization Project, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Ruth Román
*The Ford Foundation*
New York, New York

Patricia L. Smith
*National Congress for Community Economic Development*
Washington, DC