

# CROSSING BOUNDARIES, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Alliance Building for Immigrants Rights and Racial Justice



# CROSSING BOUNDARIES, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Alliance Building for Immigrants Rights and Racial Justice



*Crossing Boundaries, Connecting Communities: Alliance Building for Immigrant Rights and Racial Justice* was published by the Black Alliance for Just Immigration and funded by the Hill Snowdon Foundation, Open Society Institute and Public Interest Projects.

Project Director	Gerald Lenoir, Black Alliance for Just Immigration
Interviewers	Rev. Deborah Lee and Chad Jones
Report Writer	Rev. Deborah Lee
Editor	Gerald Lenoir
Proofreader	Karen Dalton
Design and Layout	Tactile Pictures, Petaluma, California
Printer:	ScanArt, Emeryville, California
Project Committee	Naomi Abraham, Public Interest Projects Ann Bastien, New World Foundation Julia Beatty, Twenty-first Century Foundation Larisa Casillas, Common Counsel Foundation Melanie Cervantes, Akonadi Foundation Shona Chakravartty, Hill-Snowdon Foundation Charles Fields, The California Endowment Daranee Petsod, Grantmakers Concerned for Immigrants and Refugees Maria Teresa Rojas, Open Society Institute Marisol Ramos, New World Foundation Eric K. Ward, Center for New Community

Thanks to all of the organizations that participated in the interviews for this report. Thanks also to Lori Villarosa of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and to Manuel Pastor and the staff of the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity at the University of Southern California for their input. Photographs were provided courtesy of the organizations interviewed. Photographs from the Beloved Community Center were taken by Lewis Brandon III; Broderick Webb provided photos for the Power of a Million Minds Collaborative.

For more information about this report, contact:  
**BLACK ALLIANCE FOR JUST IMMIGRATION**  
1212 Broadway, Suite 812, Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 663-2254

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Executive Summary	1
Introduction and Key Findings	3
Beloved Community Center	7
Black Alliance for Just Immigration	10
CASA de Maryland	13
Center for Intercultural Organizing	16
Families for Freedom	19
Garden State Alliance for a New Economy	22
Highlander Research and Education Center	26
Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance	29
Midwest Immigrant Health Project	32
Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance	35
National Domestic Workers Alliance	39
People Organized to Win Employment Rights	42
Power of a Million Minds Collaborative	45
South by Southwest Experiment	48
Sunflower Community Action	51
Voces de la Frontera	54
Recommendations to Funders	57
Appendix I: Organizations Interviewed and Contacts	60
Appendix II: Organizational Resources for Cross-Racial Alliance Building	62
Appendix III: Interview Questions	67

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---



Young demonstrators march at an immigrant rights rally in San Rafael, California.

*“We cannot help build a strong movement for immigrant rights if it is not also connected to a broader movement for racial and economic justice for everyone.”*

—Mónica Hernández, Highlander Education Team member

Over the past several years, there has been a growing recognition among both immigrant rights activists and leaders and African American leaders of civil rights, racial justice and faith-based organizations, that cross-racial/cross-ethnic alliance building is key to winning social reforms to benefit all people of color in the United States. As a result, there have been a plethora of initiatives taken to build these alliances and to educate activists and grassroots communities.

*Crossing Boundaries, Connecting Communities: Alliance Building for Immigrant Rights and Racial Justice* is a snapshot of sixteen of the organizations that reflect this growing trend. While they are varied in size, scope, age, geographic location, program, organizational models, and racial/ethnic composition, what they have in common is a conscious program of cross-racial/cross-ethnic, cross-nationality alliance building. From their vantage point, the immigrant rights movement is part of

a larger racial and economic justice movement that is fragmented and in need of analysis and action to cohere. Cross-racial alliance building also emerges as a key strategy in promoting and strengthening the integration of immigrant newcomers into receiving communities.

Using a uniform set of questions (See Appendix III), lengthy telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of the selected groups. The groups represent a diversity that reflects the national trends and methodologies. These organizations also work in a variety of settings, including organizing in high schools and neighborhoods, in faith-based institutions and secular community organizations, and at workplaces and within an industry.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

*Crossing Boundaries* presents case studies of the alliance-building work of the organizations and extracts their methodologies and lessons learned. The five main recurring themes that emerged from the interviews are:

- Establishing a cross-racial alliance-building framework as central to the organization and to the understanding of staff is key.
- Language is one of the major barriers and challenges to alliance building.
- Political education is important to establishing a shared racial and economic justice analysis.
- It is important to take time to develop personal relationships and trust between staff and members and all levels of an organization as well as with allies.
- Alliance building and educational work should be tied to concrete campaigns.

Out of the interviews, nine recommendations to funders were articulated (not in order of priority):

- Support solidarity and relationship building activities.
- Support the efforts of African American groups to build alliances with immigrant groups.

- Become catalysts for cross-racial dialogue.
- Invest in the development of cross-racial analysis and education.
- Invest in experimentation and new approaches.
- Provide resources for leadership development and the engagement of young people.
- Help build the capacity of organizations to provide translation and interpretation.
- Support the use of culture and art as relationship building tools.
- Provide general support for movement building spaces and convenings.

*Crossing Boundaries* is a rich compendium of experiences and lessons from a segment of frontline groups on the ground organizing, educating and building. It is designed to be a resource for funders interested in providing resources for cross-racial alliance-building work as well as for organizations in the field that are grappling with ways to approach this crucial movement-building work. We hope that this report provides information and insights that are useful and timely for both audiences.

# INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

---

*“Race and racism are key defining features of U.S. society. Therefore, the struggle for justice must employ effective strategies to build alliances across communities that are affected by racism.”*

— Gerald Lenoir, Executive Director, Black Alliance for Just Immigration

Throughout the country, often in geographic areas where you would least expect it, immigrant rights groups and programs on the ground are reaching across the barriers of race, ethnicity and nationality to build alliances with native-born African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, Arabs and Caucasians and within diverse immigrant communities.

Likewise, African American-led social justice groups are reaching out to people of color and immigrant communities across the racial divide. While the struggle for fair and just immigration reform is the major focus, increasingly these groups are expanding their agenda to take on issues of mutual interest to them and their alliance-building partners—jobs, health care, police accountability and housing, to name a few. Alliance building is consciously used to counter immigration as a wedge issue that pits African American and immigrant communities against each other for jobs and resources, as well as to foster immigrant integration into the larger socioeconomic and political landscapes.

*Crossing Boundaries, Connecting Communities: Alliance Building for Immigrant Rights and Racial Justice* is not meant to be a comprehensive or exhaustive study of all the efforts taking place around the country, but rather it is an attempt to capture the variety of ways that cross-racial alliance building is happening on the ground in urban and rural areas across the country—the Midwest, East and West Coasts, and the South and Southwest. Although many more were initially identified, ultimately sixteen groups participated in interview that provided the basis for this report.

The criteria for selecting groups to be interviewed were:

1. a group had to be using cross racial/cross-ethnic alliance building<sup>1</sup> as a deliberate and articulated strategy to build power at the community level;
2. the groups as a whole had to represent a broad geographic spread;
3. they also had to represent the racial, national and ethnic diversity of the movement with special attention to groups led by African Americans and black immigrants; 4) there was a bias toward newly emerging or lesser-known groups, although a few long-standing groups were interviewed (Some more widely recognized organizations that also have strong lessons are included in Appendix II) ;
4. youth-led and women-led organizations and programs had to be represented; and
5. a variety of methodologies and approaches had to be represented.

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term “cross-racial alliance building” is used as a shorthand for a much more complicated and diverse practice of building connections across racial, ethnic cultural and national boundaries.

INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

---

The report focuses on partnerships between immigrant/newcomer and native-born communities, primarily communities of color. The immigrant communities are often embedded in longstanding communities, many of which have been here for generations or before the United States was a country.

Some of the alliance-building efforts are also between newcomers and native-born peoples within the same racial group (for example between African immigrants and African Americans or between Latino immigrants and Chicano/native-born Latinos).

Based upon these criteria, representatives of these groups were interviewed:

- Beloved Community Center (BCC)**  
Greensboro, NC
- Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)**  
Oakland, CA
- CASA de Maryland (CASA)**  
Takoma Park, MD
- Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO)**  
Portland, OR
- Families for Freedom (FFF)**  
New York, NY
- Garden State Alliance for a New Economy (GANE)**  
Newark, NJ
- Highlander Research & Education Center (Highlander)**  
New Market, TN
- Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA)**  
Los Angeles, CA
- Midwest Immigrant Health Project (MIHP)**, Emporia, KS
- Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA)**  
Jackson, MS

**National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA)**, New York, NY

**People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER)**, San Francisco, CA

**Power of a Million Minds Collaborative (PMMC)**, New Orleans, LA

**South by Southwest Experiment (SxSW)**, Jackson, MS, Albuquerque, NM and San Antonio, TX

**Sunflower Community Action (SCA)**  
Wichita, KS

**Voces de la Frontera (Voces)**  
Racine, WI

In response to a series of questions posed by the interviewers (see Appendix III), representatives related their organization's history and their efforts to build cross-racial alliances. The focus was on distilling the groups' alliance building methodologies, factors for success, educational and training activities organized and curricula used, lessons learned, and future plans.

From the lessons learned by the organizations, five consistent themes emerged:

*Establishing a cross-racial alliance-building framework as central to the organization and to the understanding of staff is key.*

The presence of a foundational framework for cross-racial alliance building was a key factor of success (BAJI, CASA, CIO). This understanding and commitment to the fundamental importance of working cross racially must be fostered among staff and members. Several organizations fostered a sense of common and shared identity that cut across racial lines, for example, a new cross-racial identity as workers (GANE, MIHP), residents of a neighborhood



## INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

---

(KIWA), or families that are facing deportations (FFF).

It was also noted that this framework cannot just focus on the commonalities but must honestly address the differences as well. “If we pretend that there are not differences, people know they are being fed a lie.” (POWER) A framework for cross-racial alliance building demands precise language to talk about how economic exploitation, racism, migration and displacement, impact different groups of people in different ways.

*Language is one of the major barriers and challenges to alliance building.*

Although groups stressed that bridging the language gap is very difficult, they also recognized that translation and interpretation are important factors for success in alliance building. It requires a corps of multilingual staff or volunteers, and a strong commitment of time and resources to make this a priority and a political commitment (KIWA, FFF, NDWA, MIHP, Highlander). In one group, translation became a source of conflict that spawned deeper discussion about what it means to be a multiracial organization (POWER). Interpretation and translation are not only technical but also cultural. Providing these services reflects a principle of full participation of all members (KIWA).

*Political education is important to establishing a shared racial and economic justice analysis.*

Many groups have adapted existing curricula or developed their own pedagogical and popular education resources to address their specific audiences (Highlander, CASA, CIO, BAJI, NWDA). Some organizations have developed yearlong political education courses and stressed the importance of discourse and relationship building over time as very valuable (Highlander, CIO,

POWER). Other groups devote just a weekend a year to political education training or do political education in the day-to-day workings of a campaign (BAJI, NDWA, Voces). Many want to be able to provide more hours of ongoing political education. They also spoke of a desire to systematize curricular materials. Key topics and themes that helped to foster cross-racial alliance work, especially between African Americans and Latino immigrants include: Analysis of the shifting U.S. economy (de-industrialization, labor history, changing nature of jobs, impact of free trade on immigration and job loss in the United States);

- Changing dynamics in international economies, particularly in Latin America, and the Caribbean (the impacts of national debt and free trade policies on farmers and local economies);
- History of the slave trade and colonization;
- History of racism against people of color in the United States and its ongoing legacies;
- History of U.S. and international peoples’ cross-racial struggles;
- Roots of migration internal to the U.S. and internationally.

*It is important to take time to develop personal relationships and trust between staff and members and all levels of an organization as well as with allies.*

All groups spoke of the importance of taking time to develop relationships and build trust across different racial lines, not just in the staff, but also in their memberships and at all levels of their organizations. It takes time to really learn about the different realities in which people are living. It takes to time to share personal stories and histories and to appreciate cultural and religious differences.

## INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

One group, the Power of a Million Minds Collaborative, spent an entire year just to develop relationships. Others organizations have used potlucks, cooking contests, shared music, drama, dance and art to bring people together. Over three and a half years, 300 members of the boards, staffs and membership of the three groups that make up South by Southwest participated in exchanges in Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas to build deep relationships and solidarity among the groups.

It is noted that much of the success of a number of these organizations' current work is built on previous working relationships among staff and key players working in different arenas. (BCC, BAJI, MIRA, SxSW) These pre-existing relationships laid a foundation for groups to take on their current work on immigration.

*Alliance building and educational work should be tied to concrete campaigns.*

While relationship building outside of campaign work is important, anchoring the alliance building and political education work in concrete campaigns is also critical. It may be valuable for groups to have their own campaigns on issues that most directly affect them and their specific constituencies but they must find opportunities for shared campaigns with alliance building partners (GANE, CIO, POWER, VOCES, SCA). Examples of common campaigns have been on immigration reform, educational equity, police accountability and transportation justice.

Out of these findings, the groups interviewed made the nine recommendations to funders interested in supporting cross-racial/cross ethnic alliance building. The details of the guidance offered by the interviewees are contained in the section, "Recommendation to Funders" that follows the case studies.



Members and supporters of the Center for Intercultural Organizing gather in Portland, Oregon.

## BELOVED COMMUNITY CENTER

---



*“We create community one person at a time. That builds stability and longevity and the mechanism that holds us together. Facebook and twitter can’t replace that.”* — Arletha Jowers, BCC Community Education Organizer.

### BACKGROUND

Beloved Community Center (BCC) is an African American-led faith-based organization founded in 1991 in Greensboro, North Carolina. It is rooted in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision of beloved community and the scriptural foundation that “We are all God’s children and should be treated equally.” Founding members of BCC, including its Executive Director Rev. Nelson Johnson, were actively involved in the sit-ins and Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina during the 1960s. In the context of today’s racially and culturally diverse Greensboro, BCC is a space for people, community organizations and faith-based groups to address social and economic justice concerns in the city and across the state.

BCC’s mission is to build community over and against the forces that divide the community against itself and to recognize the dignity and worth of all people. Since its founding, BCC started a homeless hospitality house, initiated the Greensboro Truth and Commu-

nity Reconciliation Project, and supported worker and living wage issues, helping to form the Southern Faith, Labor, Community Alliance in 2000.

In 2005, BCC played a key role in a successful campaign at Smithville Foods, a pork processing plant. Employees there fought against the company’s practice of paying North Carolina workers substantially less than its workers in other parts of the country and using threats of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids to intimidate immigrant workers to keep them from voting for a union. BCC partnered with United Food and Commercial Workers and helped to focus the attention of black clergy on unionization efforts at the plant.

### CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

Out of the Smithville Workers Campaign and as a result of the intensification of anti-immigration sentiment in North Carolina and across the nation, BCC

BELOVED COMMUNITY CENTER

---

initiated its Black and Brown Alliance work. The goal is foster understanding of the differences and commonalities between African Americans and Latino immigrants and to build stronger relationships between the two communities.

In 2008, at a time when Latino immigrant communities were under attack by ICE and local law enforcement agencies, BCC, in conjunction with groups across the state, organized a major Black-Brown Conference to address the “urgent need to unite.” Three hundred faith leaders, labor and community activists, youth and students attended the conference, whose sponsors included Faith Action International, Black Workers for Justice, Pulpit Forum of Greensboro, AFL-CIO, and the North Carolina Latino Coalition.

The conference began with African American and Latino welcoming ceremonies and an elaborate evening of sharing of African American and Latino cultural and spiritual heritages through worship, music, song, dances and spoken word. Prominent African American and Latino ministers gave messages focused on immigration, pushing the audience towards finding common moral ground and addressing the lines that have been falsely drawn between peoples.

Conference speakers elaborated on the shared histories of black and brown communities in North Carolina characterized by “violent conquests and oppression beginning in 1492 and reflected in the overthrow of the Wilmington black and white fusion government in 1898<sup>1</sup>, the brutal 1979 murder of five labor and community organizers in Greensboro, and the current escalating abuse of Latinos...” One speaker spoke about the similarities between the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act and 287(g) Agreements<sup>2</sup> provisions that are being implemented in North Carolina counties. Presenters

---

1. A progressive, democratically elected local government in Wilmington was overthrown by white supremacist mobs.

also addressed common issues of concern such as youth education issues, law enforcement misconduct, and workplace issues. Following the conference held in Greensboro, educational roundtables and dialogues were held in three different regions around the state.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**It starts with building community and relationships.** BCC’s power is in building community in all that they do and in instilling a sense of a common purpose, i.e., the fight for everyone’s dignity and self-worth. For BCC this means working locally, building relationships, having conversations and being present.

“We create community one person at a time. That builds stability and longevity and the mechanism that holds us together. Facebook and twitter can’t replace that,” says Arletha Jowers, BCC Community Education Organizer.

BCC creates spaces and processes for community conversation in their weekly two-hour community meeting where anyone—farm laborers, Latino immigrant workers, African immigrants and local U.S. citizens—is invited to bring concerns and issues. BCC also has created specific trainings and sessions in African American and Latino churches to promote understanding in the community about immigration.

---

2. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 made any Federal marshal or other official who did not arrest an alleged runaway slave liable to a fine of \$1,000. The suspected slave could not ask for a jury trial or testify on his or her own behalf. In addition, any person aiding a runaway slave by providing food or shelter was subject to six months’ imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine. The 287(g) Agreements are contracts between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local and state law enforcement agencies to enforce federal immigration laws.

BELOVED COMMUNITY CENTER

*“Black and brown collaboration is more than just joint campaigns but a commitment to knowing and loving each other, worshipping, praying, holding conversation and engaging in other creative practices that nurture our humanity.”*

—Wesley Morris, BCC Community Organizer

**Spiritual Underpinnings can help to anchor alliance-building work.**

BCC’s work is grounded spiritually in the radical message of Christian scripture and the vision of beloved community, which was articulated by Dr. King and Cesar Chavez. Black and brown collaboration is seen as more than just joint campaigns but a commitment to “knowing and loving each other, worshipping, praying, holding conversations and engaging in other creative practices that nurture our humanity.” BCC has meetings in black and brown churches and helps people hear stories of other people and identify with them as brothers and sisters.

“It is work that transforms and touches peoples lives. Beloved community is not a what, but a how. It is how you assist when someone needs help. It’s a way to do spiritual care,” says Wesley Morris, BCC’s Community Organizer.

FUTURE PLANS

Through its Black and Brown Alliance work, BCC will continue to organize protests and community meetings with local sheriffs to address 287(g). BCC is also in the process of helping to build a movement of black and brown students to carry on the spirit of the 1960s sit-in movement. BCC’s weekly meetings for people to bring forth community issues has led them into solidarity work with a Latino street organization, the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation, which has called for peace between gangs on the streets but has been under attack from law enforcement.

BCC, in partnership with the Farmworker Labor Organizing Committee, will also continue its engagement in a grassroots campaign to hold RJ Reynolds American Tobacco Company accountable for the conditions in the tobacco fields of eastern North Carolina. BCC produced a documentary film that documents the slave-like conditions in the farm camps and contains workers’ testimonies of grievances and sicknesses. BCC organized a vanload of African American pastors to visit the farm camps and helped them to see the conditions of the predominantly Latino immigrant workers as a civil rights issue.



# BLACK ALLIANCE FOR JUST IMMIGRATION



*“Relationship building is a necessary ingredient of alliance building. Durable alliances have to be built on trust and people don’t trust you unless they know you over a period of time.”* —Gerald Lenoir, BAJI Director

## BACKGROUND

The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), founded in 2006, is the only predominately African American organization in the country to have support for immigrant rights in its mission. BAJI organizes dialogue and promotes cross-racial alliance building between African American and immigrant communities. The group seeks to build a core of African Americans who understand the underlying issues of racism and economic globalization and are committed to progressive immigration reform and building alliances with immigrant communities around a range of issues.

The roots of BAJI began with efforts to organize conversations between African Americans and black immigrants through a series of Africa Diaspora Dialogues initiated by the Priority Africa Network. These conversations brought together African Americans and black immigrants from

Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America to address the myths, stereotypes and the issues that often divide them.

Three years of dialogue which deepened understanding and relationships between immigrant and non-immigrant black communities helped to form a foundation out of which BAJI emerged, calling for greater engagement and alliances with the broader immigrant community. BAJI’s founders are two black ministers, one a long-time U.S. civil rights leader and the other a South African immigrant, and many of its core members are seasoned racial justice community activists who have long-standing working relationships.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

“Immigration is a racial justice issue,” says Gerald Lenoir, BAJI director. Understanding how racism and

## BLACK ALLIANCE FOR JUST IMMIGRATION

---

the policies of economic globalization similarly impact African American and immigrant communities forms BAJI's key framework for alliance building work. Using dialogues, presentations, workshops, publications, technical assistance and trainings, BAJI has developed ways to discuss this framework in the African American community sensitively and effectively.

An example of BAJI's methodology are its small group "Conversations about Immigration" held in African American churches which allow people to speak, vent and express their emotions about immigration. As Latinos are quickly becoming the largest racial minority in United States, perceptions among many African Americans of Latino immigrants taking jobs, taking over their communities, seemingly "jumping the line" and perpetuating racism towards African Americans are not uncommon.

*"Our role is to provide a framework or in some cases, deconstruct the myths that they've heard."*

— Phil Hutchings, BAJI Senior Organizer

"We don't try to answer point by point, but try to help people to see: "What is the larger picture? Why are people migrating?"", says Lenoir.

BAJI facilitators introduce the concepts of economic globalization, which in the 1970s caused many U.S. corporations to move manufacturing operations and good jobs to Latin America and Asia, resulting in greater unemployment and economic displacement in the African American community. Parallels are drawn with the policies of economic globalization today that often force people in the global south to migrate to the United States.

"Our role is to provide a framework or in some cases, deconstruct the myths they have heard," said Phil

Hutchings, BAJI Senior Organizer. BAJI also stresses that the attack on immigrants of color has a racial dimension to it and points out that African Americans have a moral imperative and a self-interest in fighting racism in all its forms.

Another example of BAJI's educational method can be seen in a forum conducted for the Ironbound Community Corporation (ICC) in an economically depressed African American community in Ironbound, a neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey. Twenty-five African American housing project residents attended the event. The training brought out parallels between African American experiences of migration, exploitation and racism and the experiences of today's immigrants of color.

"Rather than talking about immigrant rights immediately, we showed a documentary film about the first Great Black Migration internally in the U.S. after World War I. This got people started talking about their own migration stories often due to racism and economic factors," says Lenoir. "Then we talked about immigration and folks began to see that African Americans should be concerned with attacks on immigrants too."

ICC organizers report that African Americans who attended the forum showed a greater willingness to work with Latino immigrants in the community and stressed the importance of translation services for immigrants at all the meetings. BAJI is working with organizers to develop African American-immigrant dialogues and opportunities for building alliances in the context of concrete initiatives and campaigns.

## BLACK ALLIANCE FOR JUST IMMIGRATION

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Building strong relationships is key to building strong alliances.** BAJI values building relationships as a foundation to building alliances, creating ways for African Americans and immigrants to hear each others' stories, in order to build strong relationships on the ground.

"This is often over food, music and culture, as much as it is at meetings," says Hutchings.

**The leadership of black immigrants is important in alliance building with African Americans.**

In April 2009, BAJI, the Third World Coalition of the American Friends Service Committee and the Which Way Forward program of the Center for New Community convened the inaugural meeting of the Black Immigration Network.

BIN is a vehicle for bringing the African Diaspora together around a common agenda to share strategies and resources and to collaborate on program and campaigns. By raising the visibility of black immigrants within the black community, immigration become more real, breaking down the notions of immigrants as "the other." BIN is also a platform to insure that black immigrants are better represented on panels and decision-making in the larger immigrant rights movement.



## FUTURE PLANS

Since February, 2010, BAJI and its partners, the Interfaith Committee for Workers Justice of the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE) and the Interfaith Communities United of the East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO), have convened monthly meetings of a group of 18 African American pastors from Oakland and Berkeley. The ministers have agreed to work with the groups in educating their own congregants on immigration issues and in creating

dialogues with Latino ministers and immigrant churchgoers.

And in February 2010, BAJI began a training and political education program for black immigrant youth and African American youth at Laney College in Oakland. The goal is to create opportunities for dialogue and collective action on issues that affect both groups.

BAJI will continue its work with the Ironbound Community Corporation in Newark and will do similar work in Los Angeles. The organization is also developing written curricula for its education work in African American faith-based groups and its trainings for community organizers and students.

Finally, BAJI is working with partner organizations to consolidate the Black Immigration Network as a viable alliance and to convene a follow-up national meeting.



# CASA DE MARYLAND

---



*“Together our communities are much more powerful than separate. Building alliances built on a strong foundation of the history of racism and racial oppression, and how that connects to present day tensions is key to effective organizing.”* —David Thurston, *CASA Anti-racism Organizer and Educator*

## BACKGROUND

CASA de Maryland is a Latino immigrant organization founded in 1985 to respond to the human needs of thousands of Central Americans refugees arriving in the Washington, D.C. area. Today, CASA is the largest Latino and immigrant organization in the state of Maryland, offering a wide range of services and programs to help low-income women, workers and tenants be self-sufficient and improve their economic and social well being.

CASA’s programs include social services, public health services, primary health care, legal services, education and advocacy. The organization operates three workers’ centers and a community education center that

provides vocational training as well as courses and workshops on financial literacy, citizenship preparation, literacy and computer skills. CASA also emphasizes leadership development, community organizing and political action with its members.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

The relationship with the African American community is a central part of CASA’s work and priorities. Towards the end of the 1990s, due to strained relations between African Americans and Latinos, CASA began reaching out to NAACP chapters in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. Since then, CASA staff and leadership have worked together with the NAACP on

## CASA DE MARYLAND

common campaigns related to community development, housing, police brutality, racial profiling and voter registration.

A forging campaign was initiated after the police killed a Latino man and correctional officers killed an African American man. The partnership with the NAACP and a broad grassroots coalition brought together the African American and Latino communities, both affected by police brutality, in a campaign for police accountability. The positive results of this campaign and CASA's partnerships with African American leaders taught CASA members that this alliance was critical in order to have influence in the counties where CASA works and revealed what it means to win "real gains." It was equally important to African American leaders that CASA was with them on issues affecting their communities.

In 2008, CASA hired a dedicated staff member as an antiracism educator and organizer devoted to deepening and developing relationships with African American congregations and leaders. The goal is to go beyond the limited joint events and press conferences and develop a "deep rooted understanding of where African American leaders are coming from in order to have solid working relationships," according David Thurston, an African American who was hired in the new position.

CASA's antiracism work is guided by a local steering committee of African American and immigrant leaders. In the first three months of the project, CASA constructed a database and made first contact with 60

African American congregations in Prince Georges County, initiating conversations about immigration reform.

CASA began its Crossing Borders Project in August 2008 with financial support from the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office and the Ford Foundation. This project is primarily aimed at improving relationships between Latino immigrants and African Americans in Baltimore City and Prince Georges County. It focuses on promoting greater cultural awareness to dispel misperceptions and fostering understanding and a sense of common struggle

between the two communities.



The Crossing Borders multicultural curriculum was developed by CASA in collaboration with the Center for Community Change and the Fair Immigration Reform Movement with funding from the Montgomery County Department of Housing

and Community Affairs in order to help eliminate the roots of tension between the African American and immigrant communities. The curriculum structures discussion about recent demographic shifts among African Americans and Latino populations; a historical timeline of African American and immigrant experiences; five dimensions of African American and immigrant tensions; the interplay between jobs, race and immigration; and the process for moving from dialogue to action. In 2009, CASA trained 70 African American and immigrant leaders, youth, parents and staff members using the curriculum.

## CASA DE MARYLAND

---

CASA developed a sign-on letter for African American congregations to support for the national March 21, 2010 Washington D.C. Mobilization for Immigration Reform. The letter framed the mobilization's theme as "Jobs and Immigration: Full Employment & Full Citizenship," attempting to link two goals and two communities. This full employment and full citizenship message connects the impact of the exploitation of workers made possible in the current immigration system with the driving down of wages for all workers. Underlying this message is another message, i.e., that with just immigration reform, workers would be free to organize for fair market wages and competition between workers of different legal status would be reduced, benefiting African American workers.

The goal of CASA's work with African American congregations and communities is to have deep and meaningful relationships with African American leaders in the county and to lay the groundwork for consistent social justice work that Latino and African American communities can organize together, addressing health care, affordable low-income housing, police brutality and other issues.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Immigrant rights organizations must understand more deeply the perspectives of the African American community.** It is important for immigrant organizations to deepen their own understanding of the historical roots of African American oppression in order to understand where the pushback comes from in African American communities around immigrant rights.

"There may be resentment as immigrants are demanding rights and equality where African Americans still have not achieved full equality," says Thurston.

**Immigrant rights organizations must support issues important to the African American community.** Standing side-by-side with African Americans in support of issues important to their community goes a long way in demonstrating the power of cross-racial alliances.

## FUTURE PLANS

CASA plans to implement a short Immigration 101 training in African American congregations that addresses the roots of job competition and racial divisions.

CASA's primary base is in Latino immigrant communities but also includes West African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants. CASA will also be developing a program to support the voices of black immigrants within the organization.

# CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL ORGANIZING



*“When we formed our organization, we asked what is missing in the movement? What is missing is alliances cross-culturally. There is so much fragmentation in the social movement. We cannot be a social justice movement and at the same time be fragmented. We need to bring communities together.”* —Kayse Jama, CIO Founder and Executive Director

## BACKGROUND

The Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO) in Oregon emerged out of Portland’s immigrant and refugee community to address incidents of harassment and discrimination. In the midst of the anti-Muslim climate of hostility following 9-11, a prominent Somali community leader, the head of the Islamic Center of Portland, was arrested at the airport under false claims. This was the impetus for CIO’s first cross-cultural organizing, action and march in front of the federal building in 2002. Since then, CIO has intentionally been a multiracial, multicultural membership organization led by and rooted in immigrant and refugee communities.

CIO does not represent any one group, but represents a cross-cultural spectrum of communities and aims to “build new organizers and new faces for the movement.” Today, the organization’s membership totals about 500 and includes people from 67 different countries, including Somalis and Ethiopians, Congolese and Liberians, Mexicans, Koreans, Palestinians and Afghanis, native peoples, African Americans and white citizens. As the organization considers speaking English a privilege, CIO strives to provide translation and interpretation for its leadership development program and organizing campaigns.

## CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL ORGANIZING

---

### CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

CIO's methodology is based in educating and building a shared analysis within the community before launching a campaign. Central to CIO's analysis is an understanding of racial justice.

"Every single piece of work or campaign is viewed through a racial justice lens and a multiethnic/multi-racial analysis," says CIO founder and director, Kayse Jama. Jama admits that even among immigrants and refugees this can be a challenge, as refugees from Europe and refugees from the global south have different understandings of racism and colonialism. Class differences also exist within the refugee community based on skin color and education.

In 2006, CIO brought together 22 leaders from different immigrant and refugee communities to launch a strategic citywide campaign to protect the rights and liberties of the immigrant and refugee community, to better include them in civic/public life, and to provide specific strategies for improving government processes and services. The group hired five organizers from African, Arab, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino and Slavic backgrounds who conducted community-based research with 1,000 immigrants and refugees. The leaders then selected ten issues shared in common that impacted newcomers across their respective communities to take to the city officials of Portland.

The strategic campaign, taken up by immigrants and refugees from diverse countries of origin, all advocating collectively using cross-cultural analysis, was an effective and powerful experience. Portland officials had never witnessed the community coming together saying the same thing.

"It scared them and laid a foundation. It communicated to them that this is a movement," says Jama. CIO's cross-cultural organizing has had a significant impact in the city of Portland. It has led to the passage of a resolution to protect the rights of all immigrants, the eventual establishment of a Human Rights Commission and an Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs for the City of Portland (2008), permanent city funds for immigrant and refugee leadership development, placement of more immigrants and refugees on boards/commissions, improvement in services, and several other initiatives currently underway.

CIO has likewise been successful at the state level. In 2009, CIO partnered with several other organizations led by people of color to advocate for the inclusion of specific racial justice language in Oregon's successful health care reform bills. This important victory will reshape the way Oregon provides healthcare to people of color, immigrants and refugees.

Also in 2009, in cooperation with the Urban League of Portland and the Black United Fund of Oregon, CIO held a series of three dialogues between the African American and African immigrant communities to explore how the communities can be allies to one another. The first dialogue included fifteen African Americans and fifteen African immigrants. The second and third dialogues gathered sixty-seventy people each.

The dialogues addressed the shared histories of oppression, divisions and commonalities between communities, and understanding the U.S. system of racial oppression. Participants spent time in mixed groups in honest discussion about oppression and internalized oppression. The final dialogue included celebrating cultural gifts and differences as well as the teaching and learning of African and hip-hop dances.

CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL ORGANIZING

---

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Training immigrants and refugees as leaders is central to building alliances across these communities.** CIO has a yearlong program called PILOT (Pan-Immigrant Leadership and Organizing Training) to strengthen immigrant and refugee leadership. Last fall PILOT graduated a diverse group of 20 leaders from 16 different countries from social agencies, mutual aid organizations and other groups.

PILOT has modified the BRIDGE curriculum of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights to reflect the local racial history and policy. It includes Oregon's Ku Klux Klan history and the Native American experience of children forced into federal government boarding schools as a way to link immigrant and refugee issues to the African American and Native American communities. Immigrant leaders are now serving on City of Portland committees, organizing their communities, growing social justice organizations, and empowering immigrants and refugees throughout the state.

**Training non-immigrant allies is also essential to building strong cross-racial alliances.** CIO conducts a parallel popular education course called RISE (Refugee and Immigrant Solidarity Education) for non-immigrant U.S.-born allies to teach people "how to be good allies in the struggle for immigrant and refugee rights." The six-week-long, twelve-session program addresses the global and political dynamics of immigration as well as the racial basis of U.S. immigration policy. It equips participants to be engaged allies advocating for immigrant and refugee issues.

CIO incorporates allies in its work, creating space for them to gain exposure to the issues and contribute in appropriate ways, such as volunteering during campaigns, canvassing and providing logistics support. Over 150 allies have gone through the RISE program.

**Building a shared analysis is the foundation for strategic alliances.** CIO considers its work of "building strategic alliances among communities" as distinct from coalition work. Building an inclusive movement across communities means starting from scratch and bringing people to the table as equals, according to Jama. It also means going deeper and allowing the space and time for cross-cultural analysis building and dialogue.

"Once there is a shared analysis about the root causes, everything else is easy. People will see the intersectionality," says Jama. "A strategic alliance focuses on issues that impact immigrants and refugees across communities." For example, the Portland City Council resolution proposed by CIO was inclusive of the issues not just affecting documented immigrants but also those faced by undocumented immigrants and Muslim immigrants.

## FUTURE PLANS

CIO's next steps include further developing its on-site, member-run media center, which amplifies strategies for cross-racial alliance work and the collective voice and perspectives of the immigrant and refugee community. A weekly community radio show, "Common Sense and Movement Building" already does this and CIO plans to conduct further media skills training in the immigrant and refugee community. CIO's organizing work on the horizon is to address statewide policy issues across communities and cultures. CIO also hopes to extend the dialogues begun with African immigrants and African Americans in order to include Latino and Asian Pacific Islander communities.

# FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM



*“We have to avoid the trap that one group is more deserving than another. We advocate that we all need justice and relief so we won’t be pitted against each other.”*

— Janis Roshuevel, FFF Executive Director

## BACKGROUND

Freedom for Families (FFF) is a network of families facing deportation who provide support, education, organizing and resources to other families at risk of deportation. FFF, formed in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, is an advocacy group for immigrants facing deportation and their families. In time, FFF evolved into one of the few organizations advocating for immigrants with criminal convictions, a group at high risk of deportation and one of the most marginalized groups within the immigrant population.

Since 2001, under the Bush and Obama administrations, deportations have increased annually, particularly targeting people with criminal convictions. The drastic overhaul of immigration laws passed under President Clinton in 1996 significantly expanded grounds for deportation impacting people with criminal convictions in some of the harshest ways.

The formerly discretionary system was replaced with mandatory detention and deportation. No distinctions are made if convictions are minor, if the convictions occurred 30 years ago, or if time has already been served. There is also no consideration for family ties, parents of U.S.-born children or established ties to the United States. As FFF is by and for people directly affected by these policies, ending deportations is the primary goal of the organization’s work.

“In New York City, immigration and who gets deported is a black issue,” says Janis Roshuevel, FFF’s Executive Director, “because black folks are disproportionately targeted by the criminal justice system and an overwhelming number of New Yorkers end up in deportation proceedings via interaction with the criminal justice system.”

FFF is made up of 35 active families, 15 member leaders and a base of 100. It reflects the multiracial

## FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM

diversity of those at risk of deportation in New York City. Sixty-five percent of FFF's members are English-, Spanish- and French-speaking Afro-Caribbeans. The remaining families include Latinos, West Africans, Chinese and South Asians. FFF members are both documented and undocumented immigrants and eighty percent have criminal convictions. FFF is allies and partners with the Detention Watch Network and the Drug Policy Alliance and is a resource to New Sanctuary Movement congregations in New York City.

In partnership with the Immigrant Defense Project, FFF developed *Deportation 101* in 2005, a valuable resource guide on the deportation system with strategies for anti-deportation organizing. Hundreds of organizational representatives, service providers and organizers have taken the seminar that FFF has conducted in cities including Boston, Miami, Atlanta, New York and Washington, D.C.

In 2009, FFF launched a training of trainers so that members and allies could teach the *Deportation 101* curriculum. Trainees met for three hours each week over the course of ten weeks. The first class of eight trainers graduated last fall and are now available to provide training and to speak at community presentations, churches and colleges.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

“Deportation is a cross-racial issue from the beginning,” says Roshuevel. “The biggest challenge is not racial but the divisions over who is worthy of relief from deportation.”

This division is reflected in comments of people who say, “I just came here to work and I am not a criminal. I deserve relief.” And others who say, “I did not come illegally. I have been here for 30 years as a permanent

resident. I have one conviction and served my time. I deserve relief.”

“We don’t make a distinction,” says Roshuevel. “We have to avoid the trap that one group is more deserving than another. We advocate that we all need justice and relief so we won’t be pitted against each other.” Families come together in monthly Family Meetings, which are support, networking and resource spaces. They also meet at weekly deportation resource clinic collectives where FFF staff and members share their knowledge about how to navigate the criminal justice and immigration detention systems with people in crisis. At the clinic, people who have different levels of knowledge come together to better understand the system.

*“We show that we’re all being criminalized and we all deserve due process, discretion in the system, and the consideration of family unity. We all deserve to be treated justly.”*

— Janis Roshuevel, FFF Executive Director

Every person is placed on the criminal justice map and/or the immigration map. At the clinic, experienced participants walk through and explain what happens when someone goes through criminal justice and immigration processes. Participants learn their rights and become aware of how to navigate the system. They are also encouraged to be involved with FFF’s advocacy campaigns or mobilizations on particular cases. FFF also sponsors a monthly radio show called the “War on Immigrants Report”.

The guiding principles of FFF’s work are family unity and an end to enforcement that targets immigrant people of color. FFF’s discussions among families build common understanding of how all immigrants



## FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM

---

are criminalized in different ways. FFF shows the criminalization of immigrants at different points, whether at the border, at their home or workplace, or when they are racially profiled and arrested on the street.

“We show that we’re all being criminalized and we all deserve due process, discretion in the system, and the consideration of family unity. We all deserve to be treated justly,” says Roshuevel. FFF problematizes the criminal justice system and critiques the structural racism embedded in the criminal justice, immigration and deportation systems.

In addition to its direct work with families, some of FFF’s biggest educational work is to transform perspectives within the mainstream immigrant rights community that often excludes issues of immigrants with criminal convictions. FFF brings the stories of its families and a critical perspective focused on the importance of due process, family unity, judicial discretion and end to hyper-enforcement in any reform of federal immigration laws.

“We have to point out that reform is not just about legalization. “You can still have a green card and get deported,” says Roshuevel.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**The people affected should lead the movement for change.** FFF’s work is driven by the people directly affected by the issues, who have keen knowledge and political analysis because of their interaction with immigration and law enforcement systems. Its effective educational materials and accessible resources come out of members’ direct, lived experience and knowledge. Trainings are very practical and immediately helpful. Based on FFF families’ experiences, they helped draft the Child Citizen Protection Act (HR

182) introduced by New York Representative José Serano (D-NY) to give immigration judges the authority and discretion to prevent the removal of a parent of a U.S. citizen child if it is not in the child’s best interest.

## FUTURE PLANS

FFF is working to build up its base and to get more members to be leaders and activists. It has also started to work with 40 black immigrant pastors in Brooklyn called Churches United to Save and Heal (C.U.S.H.), which focuses on stopping the criminalization of immigrants and support for just and inclusive immigration reform for all immigrants. FFF would like to formalize its political education curriculum and is also working on developing Deportation 102 for advanced practitioners.

# GARDEN STATE ALLIANCE FOR A NEW ECONOMY



*“Building cross-racial alliances is an ongoing process. Alliances are very hard work but it’s worth it. With strong alliances, it’s easier to reach our goals.”* —Wayne Richardson, President, Laborers Local 55

## BACKGROUND

The Garden State Alliance for a New Economy (GANE), a chapter of the national Partnership for Working Families (PWF), is an alliance between labor unions and institutions based in African American and immigrant communities. The four-year-old alliance has created a strong and united voice for good jobs, living wages and equitable economic development in northern New Jersey.

GANE’s founding members are: ACORN, the Laborers Union, the New Jersey Environmental Federation, New Labor (an immigrant organizing group that runs worker centers), Reverend Maristela Freiberg of Grace Community Lutheran Church (a hub of immigrant organizing in Newark), Service Employees International Union, the Teamsters, United Food and

Commercial Workers, and UNITE-HERE. GANE’s work brought in new partners based in the African American community.

One of the dynamics GANE is transforming in New Jersey is the tension between African American and immigrant communities, which are both struggling at the bottom of today’s economy. The 1990s saw an influx of immigrants, predominantly from Latin America, entering the regional economy at a time when manufacturing and union jobs for African Americans had disappeared, leaving many with few work options. As Newark faces high unemployment particularly among African Americans, immigrants dominate low-wage service sector jobs. As one Newark native expressed it, African Americans looking for work have been “shut out by unions, undercut by immigrant labor as well as work relief programs using prison labor for \$1 an hour.”

## GARDEN STATE ALLIANCE FOR A NEW ECONOMY

Labor unions have been successful in organizing recent immigrant workers but recognize that broader public support for any campaign requires building stronger alliances with African American and working class white communities who feel threatened by the demographic change. GANE's focus has been to build a foundation of shared trust and deep alliances among African-American communities, immigrant communities and labor unions as it organizes in new ways to create high quality blue-collar jobs for African American and immigrant working families.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

In August 2008, GANE launched an advocacy campaign with a new multiracial union focused on the residential construction industry for policies that would benefit both existing immigrant workers and unemployed or underemployed African American workers. In northern New Jersey, the residential construction labor force is comprised of ninety-eight percent Latino immigrant workers, many of whom are day laborers working at minimum wage with no benefits and under precarious safety conditions.

“We wanted to do something different,” says Wayne Richardson, GANE staff member at the time, and now president of the new union, Local 55 of the Laborers International Union of North America. “We had to repair and mend fences and bridges with the union and community because of mistrust. We had to get real community partners.”

GANE began by bringing in Christian, Muslim and other clergy as well as environmental justice groups to build support for the common goal of creating good jobs for local residents. African American community development organizations and congregations helped to recruit African Americans who had never had

formal construction training or union work, including ex-prisoners in re-entry programs and others who had been historically shut out of the industry.

*“As we gathered in front to prepare for the action, one guy in our group, Ed, began to rail against immigrant workers who are working for pennies. He was an experienced carpenter and could not get any work. One of the others in our group got angry and said “So, Who loses?” Ed stopped and grinned, and said “We all lose.”*

—Kate Atkins, former Director of GANE

The formal training combined specific construction skills and education. Training to help build cross-racial unity between African American and Latino trainees included a three-part education series tapping experienced facilitators and educators—Bernard Moore, who was then working with UNITE-HERE; Gerald Lenoir of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (also profiled in this report); and Mayron Payes of the Center for Community Change. The first session was attended by 30 African Americans. Ten Latino immigrants attended the second session from the workers centers. The third session brought 18 Latino and African American trainees together to learn construction skills and a framework for understanding “race, immigration and work”.

Key components of the session covered the history of union labor and its dynamics with different immigrant communities; the historical struggle of African American workers to get into trade unions; the impacts of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), especially the loss of U.S. manufacturing

GARDEN STATE ALLIANCE FOR A NEW ECONOMY

---

jobs; the impact of trade policies on Latin American economies, in particular, how they force many people to migrate to the United States; the purpose and benefits of unions; and who benefits from pitting one group against another for jobs.

Trainees shared common experiences of discrimination they face living with the labels of “illegal” for immigrant workers and “ex-felons” for African Americans. They also broke down false statements such as “African Americans are lazy” or “they’re taking our jobs” with a deeper analysis and gained new perspectives on each other.

One exercise, the Diversity Puzzle, involved using a series of poster-size pictures. One picture is of immigrant workers at a march carrying a sign “United We Dream.” Another is a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering his “I Have a Dream” speech. A third is a picture of an African American man from the 1968 sanitation workers’ strike in Memphis holding a sign with the words, “I am a Man.” Pictures are cut up into puzzle pieces and handed out to participants who must find others who have pieces of the same picture and together they put the puzzles back together. In mixed-groups, the puzzle-mates discuss the questions: What was Dr. King’s dream? What is the status of it? Is the dream different for African Americans and immigrants?

The new multiracial union, Laborers Local 55 based in Newark, was begun with the first trained workers — 22 African Americans and five Latino immigrants from the day laborer’s center. Today it incorporates the entire state of New Jersey and Delaware and has around 150 African American and Latino members.

As the residential housing construction market fell due to the recession, Local 55 found a new opportunity to find work for its members because of the federal stimulus money coming to the State of New Jersey for weatherization. Working with GANE, the union organized a successful nine-month campaign for a state policy that requires weatherization contractors to pay a living wage of \$17 an hour, provide workers access to training, and hire fifty percent of their workers from low income neighborhoods and from those new to construction. The hope is that these new standards for weatherization contractors will help to shift the standards in construction industry as a whole.

Following up on this success, the New Jersey Building Laborers Training Fund partnered with the Black Ministers Council, vocational/technical schools and Local 55 to secure \$2.9 million for weatherization training for the whole state of New Jersey. The first pilot program was completed in January 2009, providing training connected to good jobs, union membership and a career. In the next two years, the Laborers Training Fund will train 600 people, a mix of African American, Latinos and Caucasians in weatherization with skills that will transfer into residential construction when that market rebounds.



## GARDEN STATE ALLIANCE FOR A NEW ECONOMY

---

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Structured dialogues during a campaign and throughout are critical.** It is important to carve out time for structured dialogues. GANE did three during their nine-month campaign. GANE leadership said that seven dialogues would have been optimal in order to give trainees more time to talk and discuss issues together. Skilled and experienced facilitation and resource people to conduct the trainings was key.

*“[A common framework] provides a new perspective other than Us vs. Them. It helps people to see how the system works to divide us and that everyone has a right to work and feed their families.”*

—Wayne Richardson, President, Laborers Local 55

“We were always reminding people of our dialogues. It encouraged everyone to be thoughtful. It slowed us down, made people less goal oriented, and brought a deeper analysis to all staff and leaders,” says Kate Atkins, former Director of GANE. She also stresses the importance of doing dialogues in the context of concrete organizing campaigns versus dialogues in a vacuum. “If you dialogue in a vacuum, people don’t have enough motivation to push past things. In a campaign you get to see through action how it plays out.”

**Establishing a common framework on race, immigration and work is also essential.** This framework and training content helped to create a sense of shared struggles as workers and an awareness of how race is used as a tool of economic oppression to keep low-income working people divided. Building people’s identity as workers has also helped to open up common ground and shift hardened assumptions.

“This provides a new perspective other than Us vs.

Them. It helps people to see how the system works to divide us and that everyone has a right to work and feed their families,” says Richardson.

### FUTURE PLANS

Local 55 is charged to find employment for ninety percent of the graduates of its weatherization training programs and is actively seeking contracts to find trainees and Local 55 members work in weatherization, green jobs and residential construction. Based on the policy it won, GANE and the Laborers International Union of North America is pushing for a wage and benefit standards policy broader than weatherization jobs in Newark. The New Jersey policy is the pilot for a national proposal that has been brought to President Obama to create a competitive grant program for cities to set up weatherization programs that hire local residents, pay union-scale wages and benefits, and have strong local hiring requirements.

# HIGHLANDER RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER



*“Cross-racial alliances are critical to building stronger organizations and a stronger movement. You cannot have a successful social justice movement if you do not build these alliances.”*

—Mónica Hernández, Highlander Education Team Member

## BACKGROUND

Since 1932, the Highlander Research and Education Center based New Market, Tennessee in Appalachia and the South has helped build cross-racial alliances between African Americans and whites in the labor and Civil Rights Movements. Since the mid-1990’s in response to two factors: 1) the loss of jobs and closure of factories moving across the border to Mexico; and 2) the growing influx of Mexican and Central American immigrants into the region, Highlander began to address immigration in its popular education and leadership development work.

Highlander implemented a two-year Immigrant Leadership Development Institute from 2004 to 2006, targeting Latino immigrants and focusing on organizing skills and political education designed to help participants understand how their struggles intersect with those of other oppressed communities. Highlander

was instrumental in the convenings that founded the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), the first statewide immigrant rights coalition in the South, reflecting the multiracial immigrant and refugee community in Tennessee.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

Over the past decade, Highlander’s work on immigration has evolved. “We have re-framed how we think of our immigration work from a predominant focus on grassroots immigrant leadership to a wider use of a framework based on the intersections between race, migration and globalization.” says Mónica Hernández, member of Highlander’s Education Team.

“My African American colleagues at Highlander raised concerns that the way most immigrant rights work is framed does not leave room to acknowledge how

## HIGHLANDER RESEARCH &amp; EDUCATION CENTER

immigration affects other communities too, especially African Americans,” Hernández continues. “We cannot help build a strong movement for immigrant rights if it is not also connected to a broader movement for racial and economic justice for everyone.”

*“We have to break divide and conquer strategies that lead one side to say, ‘Those people are taking our jobs’ and the other side to say, ‘Those people don’t work hard enough.’”*

—Monica Hernandez, Highlander Education Team Member

Today Highlander’s immigration work is deliberately multiracial, identifying areas of potential conflict and collaboration among the different racial and ethnic groups in the Southern region. “Thinking of the immigrant and black community as mutually exclusive is inaccurate and shortsighted,” says Hernandez. “We have to break divide and conquer strategies that lead one side to say, ‘Those people are taking our jobs,’ and the other side to say, ‘Those people don’t work hard enough.’” Education and organizing rooted in understandings of globalization, migration and race, helps to forge new alliances between black and immigrant workers.

Highlander’s yearlong leadership and organizing school “Threads,” like its name suggests, threads across races, generations and issues to knit communities together. Participants include African Americans, immigrants/refugees and whites from across the Southern region, especially from the Deep South and Appalachia. Threads’s 2010 theme is economic justice with participants coming from Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky and South Carolina. Participants come from grassroots organizations engaged in a wide range of issues, including mountaintop removal, immigrant and refugee rights, juvenile justice, food justice, predatory lending, transgender justice, workers rights and educational equity.

A multiracial analysis is the underpinning of Highlander’s leadership development programs and recruiting strategy. Through popular education, participants in Threads connect to each other’s stories, build an analysis around power and oppression, and develop relationships over time. They begin to see how their specific issues are part of a broader long-term struggle for democracy, human rights, and economic, racial and social justice.

In teaching about immigration, for example, globalization is understood as both causing job losses in the South as well as economic crises in other countries, which force people to migrate in search of work. An analysis of the history of oppression and resistance of the African American community in the South is another central component.

During a Threads session from the previous cycle, several leaders working in the immigrant community shared their experience of a recent raid by Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) in their community. Non-immigrants in the group who had little understanding of the issue of immigration were stunned and confused. They asked questions like: Why would people want to be here when they are treated this way? Why do they stay here?

By the next time the Threads participants met, several of the African American participants from the Gulf Coast shared how they had been significantly impacted by the discussion on immigration. Rethinking their views about immigration, they were able to connect the issue to what they experienced during and after Hurricane Katrina. A later training session was held in Biloxi, Mississippi and immigrant participants were able to see and understand the depths of the devastation of Katrina and the ongoing issues in the Gulf Coast.

HIGHLANDER RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER

---

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Immigrant rights must be situated within the broader struggle for social justice.** Highlander’s curriculum and analysis helps immigrant participants locate their struggle in the broader context of social justice movements, the history and legacy of the South, and the history of resistance and struggle against racism. Participants are able to see that “it is broader than a campaign for legalization” and are able to identify how a specific campaign needs to be connected to a longer-term struggle.

Highlander develops popular education tools around race, globalization and migration that help communities gain a deeper understanding of the devastation left behind by hundreds of years of colonization and imperialism that still reverberates today.

**Conversations about race are essential to building alliances.** According to Highlander staff, one of the biggest obstacles to cross-racial alliance building is the lack of a shared understanding about race and racism. To address this, Highlander is holding conversations about race within the Latino community to address the myth that “racism does not exist in Latin America.” Direct conversations about how racism impacts communities in different ways are as necessary as the acknowledgement that the struggle for racial equality for African Americans is still incomplete. In order to do bridge building, Highlander creates spaces where groups can talk amongst themselves about the issues and then come together.

**Youth and young adult leadership development is critical for the future of movement building.** Highlander’s youth program, Seeds of Fire, creates opportunities for youth to find their own voices and leadership. This multiracial summer leadership program for white, African American and immigrant youth of diverse backgrounds develops strong connections

and parallels between issues of education and juvenile incarceration. Youth build a shared power analysis, understand the connections among oppressions and forms of exploitation, become aware of the history of people’s movements, and gain skills for cultural work, leadership and organizing.

Highlander also works with adult allies to create space for youth voices and leadership in their organizations. Highlander intentionally recruits a high percentage of young adults for every workshop.

“Youth and young people are able to take this notion of working multiracially to a whole other level,” says Hernández, “and they offer the best hope for building an intergenerational, multiracial, multi-issue movement for racial and economic justice.”

**A commitment to providing translation and interpretation services is a prerequisite to effective cross-racial alliance building.** Highlander established the groundbreaking Multilingual Capacity Building Program to expand the pool of social justice interpreters and translators in the region. The program also helps social justice organizations think about interpretation and translation as important tools that allows all participants to bring their whole selves to the table and be equal partners, even when they speak different languages.

## FUTURE PLANS

Highlander will undertake a strategic planning process in 2010 to focus on further developing its framework of race, migration and globalization as well as redesigning strategies and identifying additional tools. In partnership with others, they will continue to develop educational tools to address the realities and dynamics of race and racism in immigrant and refugee communities.



# KOREATOWN IMMIGRANT WORKERS ALLIANCE

---



*“Organizing people across different lines of diversity is how we are going to be able to confront the powers that be, especially in Los Angeles. The evolution of the Civil Rights Movement requires us to think about how to build solidarity across different racialized ethnic groups.”*

— Eileen Ma, KIWA Campaign Director

## BACKGROUND

Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA) was founded as Korean Immigrant Advocates by progressive Korean immigrant and Korean American activists just prior to the Los Angeles civil unrest of 1992. Though its initial goals were to address the lack of accessible services for Korean immigrants in the community and support the interests of low-income Korean workers, building alliances with other communities of color has been a hallmark of KIWA's work. It has worked with the Community Coalition of Los Angeles fostering alliances between Korean and African American communities. KIWA also has a track record of organizing Korean and Latino work-

ers in successful industry-wide campaigns for garment, restaurant and grocery market workers.

In 2006, Korean Immigrant Advocates officially changed its name to the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance to better reflect its shift from issues faced by Korean immigrant workers to those that confront the broader community. “Koreatown has always been a multiethnic, working class community,” says Eileen Ma, KIWA's Campaign Director. Koreatown has long been a first stop for recent Mexican, Central American, and Korean immigrants. While Korean businesses have visible prominence on Koreatown's main thoroughfare, the residential population is fifty percent Latino and twenty-five percent Korean. Its other

## KOREATOWN IMMIGRANT WORKERS ALLIANCE

residents include significant numbers of Bangladeshis and African Americans.

KIWA's membership has slightly more Latinos than Koreans, reflecting the neighborhood demographics. "A multiethnic approach to our work is crucial so that we don't breed exclusive thinking about who belongs in this community and who doesn't," says Ma.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

KIWA promotes the concept that residents and workers should have input and set standards for the kinds of jobs, wages, affordable housing and development in their community. Its organizing committees currently focus on tenant organizing to address the high rents, overcrowded conditions and threats of displacement that workers residing in Koreatown face. The KIWA Neighborhood Organizing Committee is a tri-lingual committee that focuses on tenants rights and housing issues.

KIWA's organizing proactively outreaches to multiracial residents. Meetings and activities are conducted in English, Korean and Spanish. Monthly tenants' meetings bring together twelve to fifteen people across racial and cultural lines to share food and personal experiences, learn about local threats to affordable housing, discuss tenants' rights and develop campaign strategies.

Other committees address workers rights issues and immigrant issues. Committees come together periodically for community building activities to discuss educational or cultural topics, such as workers' rights issues, immigrant issues, and the commemoration of the sa-i-gu Los Angeles civil unrest.

KIWA's organizing style focuses not just on sharing

information but also on facilitating interaction and relationship building in a deliberate way. Though Koreatown is a diverse community, there are not many opportunities for people to interact at a deeper level. Members are drawn to the multilingual meetings and the deliberate effort to get people from different cultures to engage.

KIWA has often used participatory exercises where people draw their experiences and aspirations to help them bridge the language divide. For example, at a meeting of a committee advocating for a new park in park-poor Koreatown, participants were asked to draw "What do you want in your park?" on a collective piece of paper. In another committee, participants were asked to draw how they would depict a particular problem in their home if it were an ailment in their body? Unity is built around the concepts that low-income residents and families share common experiences and the necessity to confront issues together.

"We are constantly reminding people we are in a multiethnic city. We have different experiences and slightly different stories that are somehow connected," says Ma.

KIWA is one of a handful of organizations with a multiethnic character in Los Angeles. They reflect an uncommon alliance between Korean, Latino, Bangladeshi and African Americans. Their multiethnic presence at actions and rallies is one that has forced city council members to take notice as they have advocated together for Koreatown neighborhood issues.

Last year, KIWA engaged in a campaign to preserve rent-controlled buildings and was able to prevent the demolition of several residential buildings slated to be turned into parking lots. KIWA's tenant committees also participate in a national coalition, Right to the City Alliance, where they connect to other tenant rights groups.

## KOREATOWN IMMIGRANT WORKERS ALLIANCE

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Organizational clarity and a commitment to being multiracial is an important starting point.** KIWA staff has had numerous internal discussions about what it means to be a multiracial organization and how to express this commitment. “In everything we do, such as the annual anniversary dinner, we have to intentionally make sure it’s not too Latino or too Korean. We have to make sure it projects who we want to be.” All of KIWA’s organizing committees, even the monolingual ones, have intentional discussions about what it means to be part of a “multiethnic community union” in a multiethnic city.

**Providing translation is critical to successful alliance building.** KIWA has learned that you can’t cut corners on translation. It is the most important and the most logistically challenging part of the work. This requires a fluent bilingual staff or a solid core of volunteers who can translate simultaneously and can translate written documents. A little is not enough, according to Ma.

“Everything from start to finish must be multilingual—the agenda, every handout, every piece of material, everything you do. The best meetings happen when all the preparation has been done.”

**Cultural translation is important as well. It is essential to be aware that beyond language translation there is also the issue of cultural translation and cultural differences.** When there is a language barrier, unspoken gestures can become important, such as eye contact, body language and how people greet each other and interact in meetings. Stereotypes and cultural assumptions need to be addressed. It is important to have people who can help bridge cultural understandings and to develop trainings around them.

### FUTURE PLANS

In the next year, KIWA plans to finalize a curriculum to make its leadership development training more uniform. The organization will continue to focus on housing and equitable development work with the goal of expanding and building a powerful base of members and leaders.



# MIDWEST IMMIGRANT HEALTH PROJECT



*“When two different racial groups come to a realization that they have the same struggle and they say let’s continue to work together, it is a powerful moment.”*

— Carlos Rich, Iowa Organizer, Midwest Immigrant Health Project

## BACKGROUND

The Center for New Community’s Midwest Immigrant Health Project (MIHP) works in the states of Iowa, Missouri and Minnesota organizing low-wage immigrant workers in meatpacking and processing plants where there are no unions. Many small rural white Midwestern towns have experienced dramatic demographic changes in the past decade and are now majority people of color.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

MIHP’s experience in building alliances between Somali and Latino workers originated in a meat packing plant in Emporia, Kansas in 2008. As the pre-

dominantly Latino workforce became more vocal and organized, plant management fired nearly 250 Latino workers, replacing them with 200 Somali refugee workers. In time, conflict and divisiveness between the two groups of immigrants emerged. By law, Somali workers, who are Muslim, are allowed to pray at specific times during the workday. However, the plant refused to slow down the pace of the processing line, creating resentment and even more pressured and dangerous labor conditions for Latino workers left on the line.

MIHP took slow and deliberate steps to bring the two groups together to improve relations, including a potluck between Somali and Latino leaders and several meetings to discuss and share differences of religion, diet and culture. MIHP’s methodology is rooted in creating neutral political spaces where immigrants can

## MIDWEST IMMIGRANT HEALTH PROJECT

---

talk about work issues. These meetings became a place to deepen understanding of the roots of interracial and intercultural conflicts in the plant.

“We talked about why Muslims have to pray throughout the day and helped to show that it’s not the Somalis fault. It seems like the plant does not care about workers. They won’t slow down the line for anybody,” says Carlos Rich, Midwest Immigrant Health Project, Iowa Organizer.

The dialogues and bridge building helped the two groups to find common ground as workers “working hard to feed their families.” Unfortunately the Kansas plant downsized and many Somalis from the Kansas plant migrated to Minnesota and other surrounding states. However, the important lessons and alliance building between Somalis and Latinos continues and is expanding regionally. MIHP has hired a Somali organizer to work in Wilmar, Minnesota.

In each state where MIHP organizes—Minnesota, Missouri and Iowa—immigrant members have formed Health Action Councils to address a wide range of health and safety issues in the workplace. From June 2009 to January 2010, MIHP sponsored three regional Health Action Council meetings bringing together Somalis in Minnesota and Latinos from Missouri and Iowa to address common concerns.

Using three-way translation in English, Somali and Spanish has slowed down the conversation but ironically has fostered deeper listening and understanding between the groups. “It took longer but everyone had a better understanding of what was said,” says Rich.

Awareness that other workers of a different race and religion are dealing with similar issues has helped to build solidarity and inspiration between the two communities. Said one Somali worker to Latino workers at the meeting, “Brothers and sisters, we are with you in your struggles.”

The meetings have resulted in a plan to bring in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) trainings and build alliances with health departments and the faith communities. “When two different racial groups come to a realization that they have the same struggle and they say let’s continue to work together, it is a powerful moment,” says Rich.

Health Action Councils’ successful campaigns have led to workers achieving greater respect from their employers, including a small raise, the right for Somali workers to pray during the work day, the right to bring in their own food for lunch, the right to go to the bathroom freely, as well as improved plant safety.

MIHP also has a project in Columbus Junction, Iowa. In the 1980s, a pork processing plant now owned by Tyson Foods opened up and began to recruit immigrants from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. These early immigrants have since settled and established roots there. In 2008, because of federal crackdowns and fears of raids on undocumented workers, the plant fired hundreds of Latino workers, replacing them with African American males recruited from South Chicago to work with the remaining Latinos in the plants. In mid-2009, recent refugees from Burma with no English language abilities were brought in as a third group of workers.

This practice is a formula to pit immigrants, refugees, Latinos and African Americans against each other inside the workplace. Using its relationship-building techniques, MIHP has developed programs and strategies to build worker alliances and win campaigns to improve working conditions inside the plants.

## MIDWEST IMMIGRANT HEALTH PROJECT



nizing style, the organizer’s role is to listen and understand what the workers want and help them connect to relevant entities or resources that will help them reach their goal.

“It is most valuable when workers can concretely show they have their own space, have achieved their own victories.”

## FUTURE PLANS

MIHP is proud of the steady progress they are making and will expand their work to create stronger bonds between Latino, Somali, African American, Burmese and other workers. With the experience they have gained in the last eight months, the plan is to expand the alliance building work to other areas in the Midwest, such as Western Kansas where there are many Latinos and Somali workers.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Time and effort building relationships is well spent.**

MIHP’s organizing approach emphasizes building relationships. Organizer Carlos Rich spends many weekends at the laundromat doing his laundry when the plant workers are doing their laundry, talking to them and building relationships with them. Trust takes time but investing time and effort pays off in the end.

**Transfer the power to workers. “After you develop relationships with them, transfer the power to them,” says Rich.**

“Most people want to do that, but don’t.” MIHP’s practice allows workers Health Action Councils to determine their issues, think about solutions, and figure out what they need to do. In MIHP’s orga-

# MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ALLIANCE

---



*“We not only build the power of immigrants for immigrants, but for that power to enhance the struggle of African Americans with whom they share much in common. We want to connect people together who will be able to take power from the white supremacist oligarchy in the state.”*

—Bill Chandler, MIRA Executive Director

## BACKGROUND

The Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA) comes out of the rich soil of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi and the history of partnership between unions and black legislators to improve workers’ wages and rights in the State over the past twenty years. In 2000, Bill Chandler, a longtime white union organizer in the South, called together clergy, UNITE-HERE organizers, auto and communications union workers, and leaders of the NAACP, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Republic of New Afrika, the Gulf Coast Latin American Association and the Mississippi Hispanic Association to

establish MIRA to advocate for the human rights of immigrants and all workers in Mississippi.

The rapidly growing Latino U.S.-born and immigrant populations faced many challenges as they begin to work in a system set on maintaining Mississippi as a low-wage state. Immigrant workers, especially those who are undocumented, face ongoing exploitation and unpaid wages. Often when they try to confront their abusive conditions, employers set them up for arrest and deportation.

In 2008 in Laurel, Mississippi, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers (ICE) executed the largest raid at a single workplace in U.S. history, detaining

## MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ALLIANCE

about 600 electrical plant workers. School districts in Laurel, Jackson and other places in Mississippi have refused to enroll Latino students.

As a membership-based organization, MIRA supports the needs and rights of the immigrant population by providing legal services, organizing, advocacy and public education. MIRA has organized successful direct actions by workers picketing contractors' homes and casinos over unpaid wages. Through these direct actions, workers have been able to recover over one million dollars of back pay. MIRA's pressure on the Department of Labor has forced them to increase their number of bilingual investigators, which was previously one.

## CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

MIRA's goal is not only to address the abuses of immigrant workers but also to build a multiracial coalition of African Americans, Latinos, Vietnamese and progressive whites that will help to bring about progressive change in Mississippi. In a state where ninety percent of white voters vote for Republican and white candidates, the shifting demographics speeds up the potential for Mississippi to become a majority people of color state.

"We not only build the power of immigrants for immigrants. That power can enhance the struggle of African Americans with whom they share much in common. We want to connect people together who will be able to take power from the white supremacist oligarchy in the state," says Bill Chandler, MIRA's Executive Director.

MIRA's work with immigrants focuses on organizing them to demand their rights as workers. At the same

time, MIRA helps immigrant workers to locate their struggle in the context of the ongoing struggle in Mississippi of working people and African Americans dealing with the same issues of exploitation and racism. MIRA's board chair is State Representative Jim Evans, a national AFL-CIO organizer and a leader in the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus. He and the Caucus have shaped the MIRA's effective legislative strategy. MIRA actively educates and partners with the Legislative Black Caucus to stop anti-immigrant legislation aimed at driving Latinos out of the state.

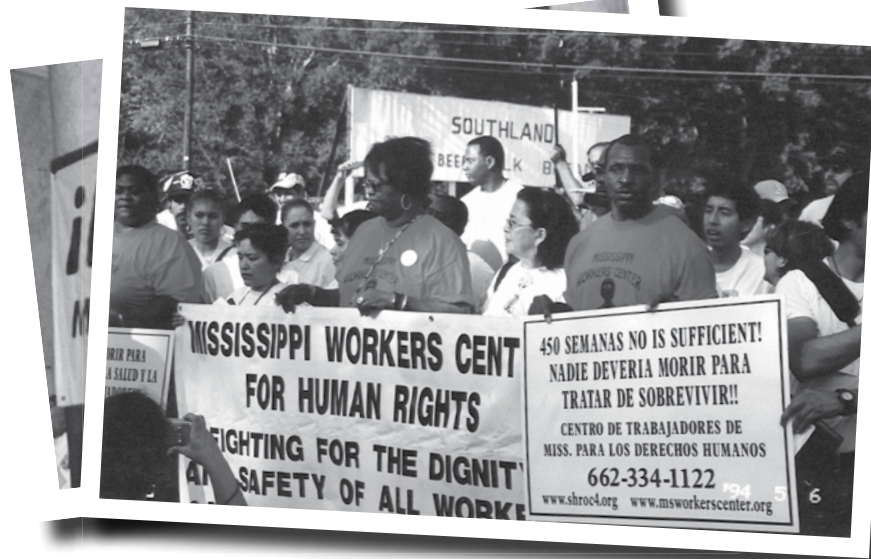
Since MIRA began its work, white supremacist legislators have introduced 230 anti-immigrant bills, including bills to criminalize undocumented workers and English-only laws to deny services and discriminate against immigrants. With the leadership of the Black Caucus, nearly all of the anti-immigrant legislation has been defeated.

In February 2010, MIRA organized its annual Civic Engagement Day and brought 200 immigrant workers, ninety-eight percent of whom were undocumented, from Gulfport/Biloxi, Laurel/Hattiesburg, and Pascagoula/D'Iberville and other parts of Mississippi to the State Capitol. They were welcomed by the Black Caucus and the Speaker of the House and because of the support from the Black Caucus and workers in the capitol building, they did not have to go through security. Immigrants heard from Black Caucus members about the similarities in the history and struggles of immigrants and African Americans and deepened their understanding of what the Black Caucus does and why it exists.

"The leadership that the African American community has provided over the decades has expanded the rights of everybody else, including white working class people, whether it be voting or economic rights," says Chandler.



## MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ALLIANCE



Immigrants met with 40 legislators, sharing their immigrant experiences and concerns about labor and human rights and access to education. MIRA's organized policy advocacy resulted in the defeat of the 16 anti-immigrant bills introduced in 2010, including a 287(g) agreement for police cooperation with ICE. It also has resulted in the passage of four bills authored by African American legislators that grant drivers' licenses to immigrants without social security numbers (including refugees, asylees, students and people with work authorizations), provides bi-lingual court interpreters, and guarantees access to public education for children of all races and nationalities regardless of status. These bills are now Mississippi law.

MIRA is also working with Southern Echo, a predominately African American organization, to get a complete and accurate count in the 2010 Census. An accurate census account of African Americans and Latinos could significantly affect reapportionment of legislative districts in favor of communities of color.

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Connecting the struggle of African Americans and Latinos is essential.** MIRA's four bilingual organizers constantly connect the struggle of African Americans and Latinos in their door-to-door organizing and building of MIRA's predominantly Latino membership base. As they organize Councils of Activists in neighborhoods, they teach civil rights history to Latino immigrants and connect immigrant rights with ongoing struggles of people of color in the United States through their newsletter, articles and discussions. MIRA's bi-monthly, bilingual newsletter is distributed in Latino and African American communities.

MIRA's education and analysis draws on the 1830s-1860s history of the Mexican army and Mexican citizens freeing 5,000 Africans enslaved on white plantations in what is now south Texas after Mexico abolished slavery. A key historical parallel is the shared history of violent pogroms and lynchings by the Texas Rangers and the Ku Klux Klan attempting to drive Mexicans and African Americans out of the South.

MISSISSIPPI IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ALLIANCE

---

MIRA has held four Unity Conferences, each bringing in several hundred participants to foster alliance building among Latinos immigrants, African Americans, Asians and African immigrants and to discuss local and national issues.

**An integrated staff and board help to build an integrated movement.** MIRA has a policy to have integrated staff. “MIRA’s Legal Services Project is led by African American woman, so that when immigrants come to get legal support, they see who we are by seeing our staff,” says Chandler. MIRA’s 15-member board is made up of seven Latinos and seven African Americans/Africans and one white member.

**Cross-racial partnerships can lead to victories.** Besides its successful and innovative partnership with the Black Caucus, MIRA has active and successful partnerships with the NAACP chapter on the Gulf Coast to address racial profiling, establish jobs programs, and build a multiracial coalition in the wake of Katrina. The NAACP in Biloxi has participated in MIRA’s advocacy efforts with state and city governments.

## FUTURE PLANS

MIRA’s ongoing legislative work includes proposing legislation to set up a Department of Labor (Mississippi is one of the few state without one) and a framework for bilingual education in the state. Locally, MIRA is working on anti-racial profiling ordinance in Jackson modeled after an ordinance in Detroit which protects both African Americans and immigrants. In addition, MIRA is contemplating a lawsuit seeking state funding for court interpreters. MIRA will also continue its opposition to 287(g) agreements and racial profiling.

# NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE

---



*“We connect the history of slavery, when slaves were first brought into this country. Women were placed to work in the homes as domestic workers and men were placed in the fields as farm workers. Much of the same exploitation and abuse is still going on now.”*

*—Joycelyn Gill-Campbell, Organizer, Domestic Workers United*

## BACKGROUND

The National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) unites 30 domestic workers’ organizations in 15 different cities that are working to improve the living and working conditions of domestic workers across the country. There are an estimated two million domestic workers in the United States, mostly working in private homes. The majority are immigrant women of color.

Founded at the 2007 U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, NDWA sets a national agenda for a workforce of nannies, housekeepers and caregivers of the elderly and develops campaigns to create fair labor standards and protections for an industry, which has been historically excluded from U.S. labor laws. Alliance member organizations work with Caribbean, African, Latin American, Filipino, Chinese, and South Asian women

workers and share a common analysis of globalization, racism and patriarchy that impact immigrant domestic workers’ lives.

Founding organizations of NDWA include Domestic Workers United (New York, NY), Mujeres Unidas y Activas (San Francisco Bay Area, CA), CASA de Maryland (Silver Spring, MD), Damayan Migrant Workers Association (New York, NY), People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER in San Francisco, CA), Day Labor Program Women’s Collective of La Raza Centro Legal (San Francisco, CA), CHIRLA (Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles), Unity Housecleaners Cooperative of the Workplace Project (Long Island, NY), Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees (Brooklyn, NY), Andolan – Organizing South Asian Workers (Jackson Heights, NY), Las Mujeres de Santa Maria (Staten Is-

## NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE

land, NY), and Pilipino Workers' Center of Southern California (Los Angeles, CA).

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

The Alliance held its first ever National Congress at New York's Barnard College in June 2008. One hundred participants from 10 cities and 18 workers' organizations around the country attended the three-day gathering. Translation was provided in Hindi, French, Swahili, Chinese, Spanish and English. At the Congress, participants shared best practices, curricula, information on green cleaning, and organizing experiences. The Congress also deepened a shared political framework and analysis.

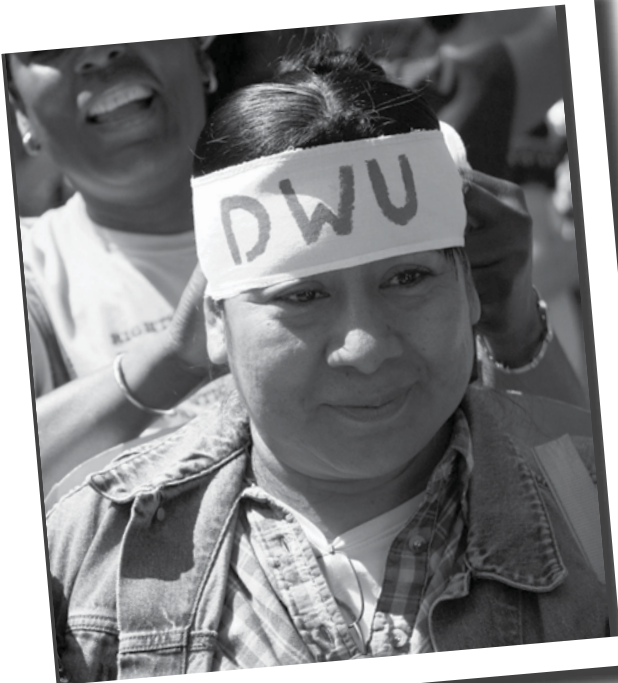
"The Congress made the connection between advancing our rights and welfare and giving a global perspective on the roots of our problems," says Joycelyn

Gill-Campbell, an organizer with Domestic Worker's United in New York, which helped to organize and host the Congress.

Educational workshops developed by the member organizations addressed the history of the domestic workers' industry beginning with the slave trade and connecting it with modern-day globalization. "We connect the history of slavery, when slaves were first brought into this country. Women were placed to work in the homes as domestic workers and men were placed in the fields as farm workers. Much of the same exploitation and abuse is still going on now," says Gill-Campbell.

Workshops provide a deeper understanding of 1) free trade and globalization policies that have displaced labor; 2) racism and patriarchy that has persistently devalued domestic work; and 3) the historic exclusion of domestic workers from basic workplace protections and labor standards for fair wages and collective bargaining. The political education and framing of domestic workers' struggles have empowered many undocumented women workers to speak openly about the injustices they experience on the job.

"When people realize that globalization has hurt them and put them into these categories, they are more willing to speak out," says Gill-Campbell. "Knowing that there are organizations like the Alliance willing to stand in solidarity with them against these injustices helps them overcome their fears as undocumented workers," she adds.



## NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE

### LESSONS LEARNED

#### **Culture work is important to building alliances.**

“We build unity through culture,” says Gill-Campbell, “through dances, story, poetry, music, readings, improvisational skits about ‘Coming to America.’” Culture allows the women to express themselves and their story. “It is important to keep their cultural expression and talent alive so they feel connected to their country. It keeps them in touch with who they really are.”

Founding NDWA member Domestic Workers United has a Culture Committee and a bilingual (Spanish-English) choir. At NDWA gatherings, each of the member organizations performs and shares a part of their cultural heritage.

#### **Participatory democracy strengthens alliances.**

NDWA emphasizes leadership development that supports the political development of domestic workers in the organization and the broader movement. Practicing participatory democracy, the structure of the Alliance facilitates the involvement and leadership of the member organizations and their individual members in the building and strengthening of the overall alliance.

**Broadening alliances increases power.** NDWA prioritizes movement building among domestic workers and other communities and workers in struggle. For example, the Alliance has entered into an historic partnership with the AFL-CIO in a campaign aimed at passing the Convention on the Rights of Domestic Workers at the International Labor Organization (ILO). The AFL-CIO will open up its delegation to domestic workers and NDWA as a non-affiliate to participate in the discussions at the ILO in Geneva. The partnership is serving as a model for building a labor movement that represents the interests of all workers.



### FUTURE PLANS

The National Domestic Workers Alliance is advancing campaigns at local, national and international levels. It is supporting campaigns in California and New York for the passage of a Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights as well as other statewide legislative proposals to develop industry labor standards and basic protections which have never before existed in the history of the United States. The New York State bill is poised to pass during the 2010 legislative session.

NDWA has also launched a national campaign to push for regulatory reforms at the U.S. Department of Labor that would significantly improve the lives and working conditions of domestic workers throughout the country. Finally, the Alliance is working with domestic worker organizations and unions around the world to ensure the successful passage of a strong Convention on the Rights of Domestic Workers at the International Labor Organization in 2011.

# PEOPLE ORGANIZED TO WIN EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS



*“Helping people understand the world differently through political education is critical to building unity. We’ve all been fed lies, but lasting unity is based on our ability to connect our struggles to other the struggles of other people of color.”*

—Steve Williams, POWER Co-Executive Director

## BACKGROUND

People Organized To Win Employment Rights (POWER) began in 1997 with a vision of building unity between African American and Latino low-income workers and tenants to fight the root causes of poverty and oppression. “Having an analysis that working class and people of color had to come together to fight the root causes pushed us to do the difficult work of bringing African Americans and immigrants together,” says Steve Williams, POWER co-Executive Director and co-founder.

POWER’s analysis of the root causes points to the changing nature of capitalism that has altered the state of work, leaving more and more people in a permanent state of poverty. This analysis also articulates the negative role that the United States has played impacting economies throughout the global south, forcing more people to come to the United States and compete

for low-wage jobs. POWER began organizing welfare recipients who, due to the 1996 Welfare Reform Laws, were required to do workfare jobs previously done by union workers. Since then, POWER members have waged over 20 campaigns addressing the shifting economic and political terrain impacting the lives of working class people.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

In 1999, an increasing number of Latina women, many undocumented, whose children were in the public welfare system, became involved in the organization. As the number of Latinas grew, misperceptions and tension between Latinas and African Americans became more acute. Some African Americans voiced complaints over the cumbersomeness of translation at the meetings. Many of the Latinas articulated sharp critiques of the African American community: “They have papers and

## PEOPLE ORGANIZED TO WIN EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

speak English. The only possible explanation for why they don't have jobs must be because they are lazy."

"We turned to political education to address the friction between members. It was a turning point for the organization where we could have split apart," recalls Williams. POWER initiated a mandatory 10-week process for the leadership of the organization, ten African Americans and ten Latinas. Leaders were told that at the end of the 10-weeks they were to make the decision whether or not POWER should continue to be a multiracial organization or split into two ethnic specific groups.

In the first session, the group broke into separate African American and Latino groups, where they each talked about the key problems in their communities and what their perceptions of the other group were. The first session was followed by two sessions where leaders studied the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the history of African Americans, and viewed a film clip from Alex Haley's *Roots*.

"Many of the Latinas said they had no idea about the particular experience of African Americans and slavery. They had thought that African Americans were just another immigrant group who had come to the United States at an earlier time. "They had not been aware of the clear legacies of slavery," says Williams. This was followed by four sessions of study about the history of U.S. military and economic interventions throughout Latin America, focusing particularly on Nicaragua, including a film about a Nicaraguan revolutionary's personal story.

"For African Americans this was profound. Many had thought that Latin American countries were poor countries because people were lazy, and that people were coming to the U.S. to take advantage of gains that had been won through the Civil Rights Movement," says Williams.

The final session mirrored the first session with people reviewing the top concerns of their particular communities and revisiting the future of the organization. The leaders unanimously voted for POWER to continue to be a multiracial organization. Through this process, POWER staff and leadership sharpened their collective analysis about the nature and history of US imperialism, white supremacy and patriarchy.

This experience has led to a deeper political consciousness among POWER members of the value of being a multiracial organization. Individual members have taken a leading role promoting multiracial alliances throughout the larger movement. African American POWER members have become advocates of language rights and translation for non-English speakers in other community meetings and formed an African American contingent in the marches for immigrant rights. Latina POWER members have stood up against anti-black racism within the Latino community. As they have discussed the need for legalization of undocumented workers, they have connected that issue to the larger fight for the political enfranchisement of those with felony convictions who are denied the right to vote.

When POWER's Latina Women Workers Project waged a campaign targeting the San Francisco Police Department for the systemic impoundment of cars driven by undocumented drivers, they chose the term "racial profiling" in the name of their campaign to connect with the experiences of African Americans. Though other members of immigrant rights groups were reluctant to link the issue to racial justice, the women were insistent.

In 2005, POWER began two organizing campaigns that focus on separate issues directly affecting their different member constituencies. The Bayview Organizing Project organizes low-income residents against gentrification in the last remaining African American neighborhood in San Francisco. The Women Workers Project organizes Latina domestic workers.

## PEOPLE ORGANIZED TO WIN EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

---

POWER recognizes the importance of people working on campaigns that most directly affect them. At the same time, the organization has been intentional in creating opportunities for members to build relationship, deepen political education together, and engage in common campaigns. Amandla is a POWER project that brings together leaders in each of the campaigns to address issues of concern to both their constituencies. In 2007, Amandla African American and Latino members joined the successful campaign to kick Junior ROTC out of San Francisco schools.

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Analysis and ongoing political education are essential to building multiracial unity.** POWER's ongoing political education has been critical to sharpen people's consciousness, provide tools for understanding the world, and develop leadership.

The POWER University 100 series is a nine-week class geared towards new members to introduce the idea of multiracial unity and the importance of organizing in the changing economy and to teach practical skills. The POWER University 200 Series is for emerging leaders in the organization to learn about the ways in which patriarchy, white supremacy, imperialism and the U.S. social movements impact working class people's lives.

Fantastic Fridays is a discussion space for members to talk about issues happening in the world. In the Harriet Tubman Book Club, members read and discuss books about different social movement histories in the world and how they relate to experiences in the United States. In 2006, POWER published its own book, *Towards Land, Work & Power*, offering a platform to unite African American, Latinos and other communities of color.

**Addressing differences in how racism and economic exploitation are experienced by different racial groups is important.** POWER has learned that it is important to directly address the different realities that racial groups experience instead of just talking about the similarities. Addressing the differences is an important step to seeing the common root causes of a system that exploits low-income workers in different ways.

For example, in terms of jobs and employment, the African American community experiences high levels of unemployment and structural dislocation from the formal workforce. In the Latino community, people are working several jobs, overworked, but underpaid or not paid at all.

"We have to acknowledge the differences and deepen our ability to explain the different realities and talk about where those differences came from. Only then people are willing to move forward," says Williams.

**Interpersonal relationships matter in building alliances.** A large part of political solidarity work is building interpersonal relationships. "People have incredible solidarity and respect for each other's food," says Williams. Through cooking contests, sharing food and playing charades across language barriers, people have built social bonds with one another. The cross-racial relationship-building skills have proven valuable as POWER expanded its multiracial unity building to include low-income Chinese workers from the Chinese Progressive Association.

### FUTURE PLANS

POWER is determining what the next joint campaign will be that will benefit both the Latino and African American communities, possibly focusing on jobs or free public transportation.



# POWER OF A MILLION MINDS COLLABORATIVE



*“We’ve got to break down cultural stereotypes. Instead of going to a forum and trying to explain, we’ve got to show them how we are similar and what makes us unique. We showed them that we may look different but we share the same struggles as other young people.”*

— Minh Nguyen, Executive Director, Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association

## BACKGROUND

The Power of a Million Minds Collaboration was formed in 2008 bringing together several youth organizing groups from across New Orleans with a shared commitment to increase educational equity and to change the future for young people in the city. Organizations in the collaborative include the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA); Fyre Youth Squad (FYS) and Young Adults Striving for Success (YASS), projects of the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, which are both predominantly African American; Kids Rethink New Orleans (Rethink), which has a diverse group of members; and the newest member added this year, the LatiNOLA Youth Leadership Council of Puentes New Orleans. Each of the organizations has its own particular emphasis but shares a common commitment to

education reform in New Orleans. YASS focuses on education and juvenile justice. Rethink advocates for a youth voice around the rebuilding of New Orleans’ public schools. VAYLA concentrates on youth empowerment, education and environmental justice. FYS focuses on education and economic disparities, and LatiNOLA directs its efforts toward improving education and language access. They all share a commitment to be safe spaces for queer youth.

The cross-racial collaborative offers promising potential in a city where racial divisions are entrenched, schools are largely segregated, and tensions have emerged among Latinos, Vietnamese and African Americans. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, an influx of migrant and guest workers, predominately Latinos, came to New Orleans to work in construction and rebuilding the city. The Vietnamese com-

## POWER OF A MILLION MINDS COLLABORATIVE

munity arrived in New Orleans in the mid 1970s at the end of the Vietnam War. At that time, about 2,000 Vietnamese refugees were resettled into Section 8 housing in remote East New Orleans, where they established their community.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

Cross-racial alliance building is a new experience for many of the youth in the collaborative. For VAYLA's executive director, Minh Nguyen, who was born and raised in New Orleans, working together across racial lines is a dream come true.

“I first started my education in a predominantly African-American elementary school, then an all Caucasian private school and I lived in the Vietnamese community. My parents worked in an African American community and I have been exposed to the Latino community. I have personally seen all the parts of our community but I've never seen everybody in the same space working together.”

The first year of the collaborative emphasized becoming more aware of one another's issues and communities. Each organization committed to attending regular meetings of the other organizations to learn about their missions and campaigns and to observe their different and similar styles of leadership and work. Each organization also hosted a big social event for the others to attend and meet their communities. VAYLA invited others to attend their annual Halloween festival. FYS held a big concert and Rethink invited the other groups to a picnic.

“We've got to break down cultural stereotypes. Instead of going to a forum and trying to explain, we've got to show them how we are similar and what makes us

unique. We showed them that we may look different, but we share the same struggles as other young people,” says Nguyen.



By visiting one another's communities, youth got to see different realities in the city and different community youth spaces. FYS meets at John McDonogh Senior High School in the Tremé neighborhood, YASS is in the Central City, Rethink is based downtown, LatiNOLA is in Gert Town and VAYLA is in New Orleans East.

In January 2010, the Collaborative held its first three-day retreat that brought together 40 African-American, Caucasian, Latino, and Vietnamese youth, ranging in age from preteens to early twenties. A cross-racial committee of youth had spent nearly a year meeting biweekly to plan the retreat. At the retreat, participants were placed into groups mixed by organization and gender. The agenda included youth-led trainings on policies, organizing strategies and identifying issues of common concern.

In this short time as a collaborative, the executive directors and youth leaders of the organizations have formed strong bonds of friendship and support. They have been meeting biweekly, writing grants with each other on behalf of the collaborative, and leveraging staff and other resources to support common work. Collaborative members participated in a photography

## POWER OF A MILLION MINDS COLLABORATIVE

---

project exhibited at City Hall called “Through the Youth Lens,” featuring photos of the conditions in their schools. They also were organizational hosts of the Youth Organizing Convening that brought together representative of 125 youth organizations from across the country in New Orleans. Collaborative members also support one other at press conferences and campaign events.

Nguyen reflects, “Instead of us fighting as multiple organizations, we are now fighting as one large voice. They see Vietnamese, Caucasian, African American, Latino and others. It says: You mess with one of us, you mess with all of us.”

### LESSONS LEARNED:

**A foundation of strong relationships must anchor a cross-racial alliance.** The Collaborative has taken the time to form a strong foundation of interpersonal relationships that has created the motivation to invest in building the alliance. This has helped to break down stereotypes not only among youth but has also impacted parents and elders in their communities. Nguyen recounts the experience at the funeral of a Vietnamese youth that was attended by African American youth. When the Vietnamese elders in the community saw other youth of color crying and showing sympathy, it changed their perceptions.

**Providing transportation is important to insuring participation.** One of the main challenges the Power of Million Minds Collaborative faces is transportation. Getting youth who live racially and regionally separated to come together for youth meetings is a key part of the Collaborative’s strategy. However, the lack of good, reliable, and affordable public transportation in New Orleans stretches organizations’ resources and staff capacity.

### FUTURE PLANS

Out of the retreat, the Collaborative will be launching a joint campaign around educational equity in the city of New Orleans and will continue the effort to shape the future of youth.

# SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST EXPERIMENT



*“Through the South by Southwest activities and processes, we’ve become more aware and understanding of immigrants and native peoples within Mississippi. It has made us better allies for immigrant and indigenous rights.”*

—Leroy Johnson, Executive Director and cofounder of Southern Echo

## BACKGROUND

South by Southwest Experiment (SxSW) is a shared program of Southern Echo based in Jackson, Mississippi, Southwest Workers Organizing Project (SWOP) based in New Mexico and the Southwest Workers Union (SWU) headquartered in San Antonio, Texas. All three organizations have long established track records building grassroots leadership and community change.

Southern Echo, formed in 1989, is an education and training organization that develops grassroots leadership in the African American communities in rural Mississippi. SWU was founded in 1988 to organize and build leadership of predominantly Latino low-income workers, youth and families for worker rights

and economic and environmental justice. SWOP has been organizing and empowering low-income communities and communities of color across the state of New Mexico since 1980. Leading staff of the three organizations have had long-standing relationships and ongoing dialogue about connecting black, brown and red communities and struggles.

In the wake of the natural and human-created disasters of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the three organizations organized a People’s Freedom Caravan of volunteers from New Mexico, Texas and Mississippi to the Gulf Coast to address some of the immediate human needs.

## SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST EXPERIMENT

---

### CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

Out of the Caravan experience, in 2006 the three organizations began SxSW to develop sustained work to connect peoples and communities across racial, cultural, language and geographical barriers that tend to divide communities in the South and Southwest. The intention was to go beyond the alliances and collaboration that they had done together in the past to build a deeper process of partnership and trust.

The program began with three to four staff from each of the three organizations coming together for a retreat to deepen relationships and organizational understanding. This involved a layered process of three days of storytelling, listening and mapping. They began with sharing their personal life road maps and what brought them to the work they do. This was followed with sharing organizational road maps that spoke of the people, conditions and history that brought the organizations into being. Lastly they shared road maps, timelines and histories of each state.

“By the end of three days, we had a complex road map that spoke to who we are as people, what we are as organizations, and where we come from,” recalled Leroy Johnson, Executive Director and a founding member of Southern Echo.

Based on the transformative experience of that first retreat, the three organizations made a commitment to replicate the exchanges beyond the level of staff and include board members, youth and elders in their respective organizations. “We pledged that whenever we got together we would have at least 45 people. Each organization would bring 15 people from each state from their membership and partner organizations,” says Johnson.

Despite the cost and difficulty of bringing large groups of people together across state lines, in three and a half years, SxSW held six gatherings throughout the three states bringing together a total of 300 people. The exchanges incorporated a process for sharing individual, organization and historical state road maps and discussing common historical realities of colonialism, slavery, and racial subjugation of African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans across the Southwest and South. They also included the sharing of cooking and cultures. Groups brought bands, taught line dances, and barbecued for each other.

“It’s not just talking about who you are, but sharing the living out of who you are,” says Johnson.

The result has been not just the building deeper cross-racial organizational relationships with one another across states, but also greater cross-racial alliances within their individual states. “Through the South by Southwest activities and processes, we’ve become more aware and understanding of immigrants and native peoples within Mississippi. It has made us better allies for immigrant and indigenous rights,” says Johnson.

In 2009, SxSW gathered together 50 persons from across the three states, half of whom were young people ages 13-21. They discussed and developed four areas of joint work that will be carried out by cross-regional committees. These include the People’s Freedom Caravan II traveling from New Mexico, Texas and Mississippi to the 2010 U.S. Social Forum in Detroit to be organized by the youth; a curriculum based on the SxSW process developed over the past four years, addressing shared history and shared strategies for coming together; census and redistricting work; and developing new models of local democratic governance and community budgeting.

## SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST EXPERIMENT

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Alliances built upon relations are stronger than those that are issue-driven.** SxSW was committed to a process that was driven by relationships. They learned that it takes time to time to build trust and not to let the issues or funding to drive it. Often the process was not funded, and they had to rely on using general support and t-shirt sales. They learned that if the relationships are solid and built on love for each other, that the commitment to each other will be there across time.

**The exchange of culture and sharing food are important ways to build relationships.** The sharing of food, music and culture is just as important as sharing analyses and political perspectives. Through the intentional

SxSW process, people could share who they really are and develop strong bonds.

**Developing youth leadership can help push the alliance building process.** Youth leadership and inter-generational gatherings and processes are important to SxSW, though leaders admit that they have been challenged to be responsive to young people. “The pace they pushed us is faster than we knew we could go,” says Johnson. In SxSW, the young people have played an important role in documentation, technology transfers and organizing.



# SUNFLOWER COMMUNITY ACTION



*“Cross Racial Alliance building has expanded our organization’s vision of itself and its mission. As multiracial people fighting for change, we have more power!”*

*—Dorlan Bales, Development Director, Sunflower Community Action*

## BACKGROUND

Over the past ten years, Sunflower Community Action (SCA) has become a multiracial community organizing and advocacy organization in the state of Kansas. Begun as a predominantly African American group with a handful of whites, SCA began tackling issues of concern in Wichita’s African American neighborhoods, such as the unequal distribution of city services, negligent landlords and abusive utility company practices.

In 1999, SCA’s board, at the time comprised largely of African American neighborhood leaders, made the decision to hire a Latino organizer to organize Hispanic<sup>1</sup> people moving into Wichita. This decision to become

<sup>1</sup> SCA uses the terms “Latino/a” and “Hispanic” interchangeably. This report reflects the terminology used by the interviewee.

a multiracial organization stemmed from an awareness that Hispanic neighbors were facing the same issues and that “in order to fight on broad issues in the city, it would take more than black folks to fight it,” according to SCA Development Director Dorlan Bales.

## CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

Today SCA has 730 members, half of whom are Latino, about thirty percent black and twenty percent white. There are two Hispanic and primarily Spanish-speaking chapters, a mostly black chapter, a student chapter and a new chapter emerging in Northeast Kansas that is racially mixed. Each chapter identifies its own key issues, yet chapters often support one another’s campaigns.

## SUNFLOWER COMMUNITY ACTION

In 2003, the Hispanic chapter identified three issues: 1) the lack of access to drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants; 2) the lack of access to bank accounts by undocumented immigrants; 3) the lack of capacity of state offices and departments to serve Spanish-speaking residents due to the dearth of translation services and staff awareness. These were issues that could not be addressed locally but required advocacy at the state level, which lead to SCA's first big state rally in Topeka in 2003 focused on immigrant rights. Black members of SCA supported the rally and stood together with Hispanic chapter members.

In total, 2,000 people attended in freezing temperatures, 1,500 whom were Hispanic, plus 500 who were a mix of blacks and whites. This sizable demonstration of a cross-racial alliance shocked Kansas legislators and led to passage of in-state college tuition rates for undocumented Kansas high school graduates.

Leadership development and training is a key component of SCA's organizing work. Once or twice a year, SCA conducts a twenty-hour Democracy School for its members attended largely by African Americans and Hispanics. Based on a curriculum developed by the Center for Community Change, the trainings start with history. The curriculum lays the theoretical ground work beyond any one issue, framing a history of struggle from the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, to Cesar Chavez and the farm worker movement, to the

role of young people and the immigrant rights movement.

“Brown people often don't know much about the Civil Rights Movement and black people don't know much about current immigration struggles and abuses. Once they hear those stories, they see how much they have in common,” says Bales.



Unity and cross-racial understanding between the chapters is built through other leadership trainings and Saturday meetings that bring the chapters together to tell their stories (with translation) and to develop strategies.

SCA has continued to organize cross-racially and advocate for joint concerns at the state capitol, every year selecting two or three of the most pressing issues identified by the membership. Cross-racial alliance building has helped SCA go broader than Wichita.

“Before that, we were just an organization in one neighborhood. Going multiracial helped us to think of the whole city and now we see ourselves as a state level organization working on state level issues,” says Bales.

SCA is also part of the National People's Action, a network of 26 mostly African American and white organizations in 16 states that has historically addressed lending and housing issues. SCA provides NPA's strongest leadership on immigration rights issues.



## SUNFLOWER COMMUNITY ACTION

---

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Focus on shared struggle. SCA focuses on the commonality that is bigger than either of the two interest groups.** SCA has campaigned on issues that members share in common across the racial divide, such as predatory lending, foreclosures, racial profiling and police accountability. After three years, SCA, together with partner organizations, won a campaign for greater police accountability. Video cameras have been installed in Wichita police cars as a pilot program with plans to expand it.

**Think bigger and partner with others to win.** Even a small organization can think bigger and look for people outside their own group to partner with and expand their work. “You don’t need to wait until you are big to do this. Partner. Open up your group by making translation available. Give new folks leadership opportunities,” says Bales.



### FUTURE PLANS

Hispanics in Southwest Kansas asked SCA to help them to organize into a chapter and a new chapter is forming in Northeast Kansas. With these two new additions, there will be an SCA chapter in each of the four congressional districts in the state. This will enable SCA to flex more muscle as a statewide organization. Goals include increasing membership to handle multiple issues on SCA’s agenda and to possibly start an SCA sister organization in Oklahoma.

# VOCES DE LA FRONTERA



*“Cross-racial alliances have made us a stronger organization, and the diversity has strengthened our campaigns.”*

*– Jeanne Geraci, Voces Associate Director*

## BACKGROUND

Voces de la Frontera in Wisconsin is a membership-based organization that educates low-wage and immigrant workers about employment rights and promotes grassroots immigrant leadership. Voces operates workers’ centers in Milwaukee and Racine and is a regional leader in statewide immigrant reform campaigns. Emerging out of a Latino American history class at a Racine high school in 2003, Voces founded its first youth chapter for Latino students, called Students United for Immigrant Rights (SUFIR). Voces now has ten high school chapters in Milwaukee and Racine ranging in size from 5 to 30 core members.

## CROSS RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

Voces’ leading cross-racial alliance building work has been at the high schools through the youth chapters.

In 2006, the teacher-adviser to SUFRIR taught an African American history class at a Racine high school. Students in the class formed an African American student civil rights club called Students United in the Struggle (SUITS), which was modeled after SUFRIR. The two clubs began supporting each other’s events and since 2006 have cooperatively participated in three successful campaigns together.

## VOCES DE LA FRONTERA

---

In 2003, SUFRIR began organizing a campaign for in-state tuition fees for undocumented immigrant students. Together, beginning in 2006, SUFRIR and SUITS led mobilizations, lobbying and testifying at the State Capitol in Madison.

In 2007, SUITS initiated a campaign pushing for the recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a school holiday in the Racine Unified School District. Supported by SUFRIR, SUITS organized a citywide signature campaign. At school board meetings, Latino students testified that “the many issues Martin Luther King advocated for are still issues right now in Racine.”

In 2008 both groups worked together in a massive get-out-the-vote campaign involving a racially mixed group of 400 students in Racine. The core of 30 SUFRIR and SUITS students held meetings to plan the campaign strategy and events.

“It was a united effort,” says Melanie Benesh, Voces Youth Organizer. “The students decided that it would make a stronger message to go out knocking on doors in multiracial teams to reflect the racial unity that the city needs to see,” says Benesh.

Leadership training and learning about each other’s issues happens contextually during biweekly chapter meetings or during the course of the campaigns. Voces also conducts a leadership retreat every year bringing Milwaukee and Racine youth members together. The political education curriculum addresses racism, oppression and the role race has played to keep people divided. Students watch several videos about youth organizing, including “The Truth about Blacks and Latinos.”

The year 2009 was a year of victories. The two-year student-led campaign for the Martin Luther King Day holiday was victorious. January 2010 was the first

time the holiday was recognized. Students helped to plan Racine’s first all-day celebration event, including a morning of community service, an afternoon of social justice workshops, and an evening community banquet, which expressed a message of African American and Latino unity. In 2009, the students also won the campaign for in-state tuition for undocumented students in Wisconsin with the passage of a bill in the state legislature.



The impact of the cross-racial alliance has been significant in the lives of the students themselves. Friendships have formed and racial barriers are breaking down in the high school where the demographic of the school are forty-five percent white, thirty percent African American and twenty-five percent Latino.

“When we build leadership among African American and Latino students, it helps to break down the segregation within the schools, says Benesh.” “The minority students are the most isolated students in the school. When they see students of different colors fighting for them, it helps them academically and encourages them to become leaders. It has changed the culture of the school.”

In 2010, the students at Racine High School requested that they no longer have two separate clubs and voted to combine the Latino and African American clubs under the new name Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES!). The group’s members are Latino, African American and white. Several of the other Voces chapters are also becoming multiracial and adopting the new name.

VOCES DE LA FRONTERA

---

*“When we build leadership among African American and Latino students, it helps to break down the segregation within the schools. When students see students of different colors fighting for them, it helps them academically and encourages them to become leaders. It has changed the culture of the school.”*

—Melanie Benesh, Youth Organizer,  
Voces de la Frontera

## LESSONS LEARNED

**Providing opportunities for cross-racial contextual learning is important to relationship building and alliance building.** Each year Voces conducts a Leadership Trip to Washington, D.C. for a group of ten youth leaders that is invaluable for deepening personal relationships, bonding and learning. This year it was an intentional mix of students of different races and academic achievement levels. Students meet with representatives of the Center for Community Change, the Washington bureau of NAACP, United We Dream (Dream Act students) and the Holocaust Museum.

**High schools are excellent places for alliance building.** High schools are locations of great potential to build multiracial alliances among students. Voces credits the strong relationships it has with teachers within the schools. Every new student chapter of Voces was initiated by a student or teacher. The teacher-advisors for the clubs have been instrumental in getting students involved and shaping the consciousness of students through the content of their classes.

**Find a unifying issue.** It is very important to find a unifying issue that equally affects both communities and promotes strategic unity. Though Voces’ primary goal is immigration, they have found other issues to build bridges with the African American community such as school board issues, job creation and civic engagement.

## FUTURE PLANS

Racine’s unified student chapter under their new name YES! is selecting their next multiracial justice issue campaign. They are considering educational spending, racial profiling and the role of the police in high schools. In addition, they continue to work on immigration reform and the Dream Act.

Voces is working on further developing and expanding its political education curriculum for adults and youth. Voces also plans to develop more workshops to go beyond the annual leadership retreat.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUNDERS

---

The experiences of organizations profiled in this report suggest that building cross-racial alliances, though challenging in every instance, strengthens organizations, builds more successful campaigns, and enhances movement building across cities, states and regions. The impact of these alliances reverberates far beyond merely garnering more support for immigrant rights or an African American issue. These alliances are weaving a much stronger social movement for economic, racial and social justice.

The participants in this report recommended that cross-racial alliance building can be strengthened by philanthropic support in the following ways:

*Support solidarity and relationship building activities.*

The majority of the groups interviewed said that funders should support the building of solidarity and relationships between and among racial groups. The process of building unity, relationships and solidarity is as important as the product or campaign. These processes are crucial to building shared interest, common identity and effective campaigns.

*Cross-racial alliance building work takes time and requires intentionality and commitment, so long-term strategic funding is important.*

Immediate results may not be apparent, so it is important for funders to see and appreciate the small movements happening on the ground. Funding cross-cultural work and processes that build understanding and unity is valuable.

As Leroy Johnson of Southern Echo (SxSW) put it, “Relationship building and alliance building have to be

sustained over periods of time. It’s taken us hundreds of years to get into this mess; it will take more than three years to get out of it.”

Solidarity that is focused not just on supporting one another’s issues but that is also rooted in deeper relationship and analysis of common struggle can lay the groundwork for decades of partnership and social change. The fact that several of the organizations outlined in this report emerge out of past alliances and working relationships shows that investing in the development of strong leaders rooted in cross racial analysis strengthens the broader social movement.

*Support the efforts of African American groups to build alliances with immigrant groups.*

A great deal of the funding for cross-racial alliance building goes to immigrant rights organizations, particularly those attempting to build relationships with African American communities. BAJI and Highlander were especially vocal in saying that increased funding should also go to African American-led groups that have alliance-building initiatives with immigrant groups, especially in the U.S. South. Alliance building efforts have a much greater chance of success if both sides of the equation have adequate dedicated resources. Organizations should also be supported to hire staff people of other races to do cross-racial alliance building work.

*Become catalysts for cross-racial dialogue.*

Funders can do more than fund projects. They can be a catalyst for cross-racial dialogue and learning. Funders can create valuable spaces and opportunities that support critical dialogues between African

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUNDERS

Americans and immigrants or immigrant rights allies and criminal justice advocates. Groups like CIO, Highlander, Power and the SxSW collaboration have created very powerful spaces for dialogue that have opened up opportunities for deeper cross-racial understandings of historical and cultural contexts across many divides.

*Invest in the development of cross-racial analysis and education.*

Funders should invest in cross-racial analysis development, education and training for staff, members and constituents as a cornerstone of success for cross-racial alliances and campaigns.

They can help grassroots organizations hire skilled facilitators and educators, an expense they might not otherwise be able to afford. Funders can also support the development and systematization of in-house curriculum modules that address specific audiences and particular regional or political contexts.

Investing resources and time in solid and ongoing educational processes pays off. Providing funding for travel and peer exchanges to allow groups to develop relationships at both the personal and organizational level, like SxSW, can also be a worthwhile investment.

*Invest in experimentation and new approaches.*

Funders should invest in experimentation and new approaches. Organizations that have formed cross-racial alliances in their organizations, regions or across the country have done so in response to shifting circumstances, crises and new opportunities. Funders can invest in experimentation, new approaches, practices and methodologies which organizations develop to adapt to shifts in their demographic, economic and

political contexts. For example, SxSW is an initiative that is largely unfunded. The partners could have greater impact if more resources were available. Much of BAJI's approach has also been developed through trying different approaches and assessing what has had impact.



African American ministers from Oakland, Calif. march with local Latino ministers in Phoenix on May 29, 2010 against SB1070.

*Provide resources for leadership development and the engagement of young people.*

Investing in the leadership development and engagement of young people connected to larger organizations and movements taps a rich potential for cross-racial alliances and long-term social change. Highlander, POWER, Power of a Million Minds, SxSW and Voces all joined in making this recommendation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUNDERS

---

*Help build the capacity of organizations to provide translation and interpretation.*

Several of the groups, including Highlander, POWER and KIWA have placed a premium on high-level translation and interpretation services as a prerequisite to effective relationship and alliance building. They have devoted scarce resources to insure that their members and constituents can communicate with one another.

*Support the use of culture and art as relationship building tools.*

The Power of a Million Minds Collaborative is the most obvious example of the value of groups and individuals coming together for cross-cultural understanding and relationship building. SxSW also exemplifies the results of coming together without an immediate campaign.

Groups such as POWER and Voces have also made culture and art an integral part of their approach to relationship building.

Food sharing, story telling, and cultural exchanges can be entry points into establishing deep and long lasting relationships across racial and ethnic divides. These encounters may not yield immediate results in terms of a winning a campaign or a policy change. However, in the long term, they can produce lasting bonds of friendship and solidarity.

*Provide general support for movement building spaces and convenings.*

Gatherings at the local, state and regional levels can be a boon to movement building, as groups come together to build relationships, exchange strategies and share resources.



A delegation of African Americans and black immigrants led by the Black Alliance for Just Immigration gather with members of Coalición de Derechos Humanos at the border wall at the U.S.-Mexico border near Tucson.



# APPENDIX I:

## ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED AND CONTACTS

### **Beloved Community Center (BCC)**

P.O. Box 875, Greensboro, NC 27402  
[www.belovedcommunitycenter.org](http://www.belovedcommunitycenter.org)  
 Phone: (336) 230-0001

Wesley Morris, Community Organizer,  
[wesleym@belovedcommunitycenter.org](mailto:wesleym@belovedcommunitycenter.org)  
 Joseph Frierson, Greensboro Truth and Community  
 Reconciliation Project Coordinator,  
[josephf@belovedcommunitycenter.org](mailto:josephf@belovedcommunitycenter.org)

### **Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)**

1212 Broadway, Suite 812  
 Oakland, CA 94612  
[www.blackalliance.org](http://www.blackalliance.org)  
 (510) 663-2254

Gerald Lenoir, Director,  
[gerald@blackalliance.org](mailto:gerald@blackalliance.org)  
 Phil Hutchings, Senior Organizer,  
[phil@blackalliance.org](mailto:phil@blackalliance.org)

### **Casa de Maryland (CASA)**

734 University Boulevard East  
 Silver Spring, MD 20903  
[www.casademaryland.org](http://www.casademaryland.org)  
 (301) 431-4185

David Thurston,  
 Anti-racism Organizer and Educator

### **Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO)**

700 N. Killingsworth Street  
 Portland, Oregon 97217  
[www.interculturalorganizing.org](http://www.interculturalorganizing.org)  
 (503) 287-4117

Kayse Jama, Executive Director,  
[kayse@interculturalorganizing.org](mailto:kayse@interculturalorganizing.org)

### **Families for Freedom (FFF)**

3 West 29th Street  
 New York, New York 10001  
[www.familiesforfreedom.org](http://www.familiesforfreedom.org)  
 Phone: (646) 290-5551

Janis Rosheuvel, Executive Director,  
[janis@familiesforfreedom.org](mailto:janis@familiesforfreedom.org)

### **Garden State Alliance for a New Economy (GANE)**

401 Avon Ave. Newark, NJ 07108  
[www.ganenj.org](http://www.ganenj.org)  
 (973) 623-0967

Wayne Richardson, President, Laborers Local 55,  
[wayne-richardson@hotmail.com](mailto:wayne-richardson@hotmail.com)

### **Highlander Research and Education Center**

1959 Highlander Way  
 New Market, TN 37820  
[www.highlandercenter.org](http://www.highlandercenter.org)  
 (865) 933-3443

Mónica Hernández, Education Team,  
[Hernandez@highlandercenter.org](mailto:Hernandez@highlandercenter.org)

### **Koreatown Immigrant Worker's Alliance (KIWA)**

3465 West 8th Street, 2nd floor,  
 Los Angeles, CA 90005  
[www.kiwa.org](http://www.kiwa.org)  
 (213) 738-9050

Eileen Ma, Campaign Director,  
[Eileen@kiwa.org](mailto:Eileen@kiwa.org)

### **Midwest Immigrant Health Project (MIHP)**

#### **Center for New Community**

P.O. Box 479327  
 Chicago, Illinois 60647  
[www.newcomm.org](http://www.newcomm.org)  
 (312) 266-0319

Carlos Rich, Iowa, Immigrant Organizer,  
[carlos@newcomm.org](mailto:carlos@newcomm.org)



APPENDIX I: ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED AND CONTACTS

---

**Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA)**

P.O. Box 1104  
Jackson, MS 39215  
www.yourmira.org  
Phone: (601) 968-5182  
Bill Chandler, Executive Director,  
b.chandler@yourmira.org

**National Domestic Worker's Alliance (NDWA)**

c/o Mujeres Unidas y Activas  
3543 18th Street, #23  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
www.nationaldomesticworkeralliance.org  
(510)7 61-6392  
Jill Shenker, NDWA National Organizer,  
jillndwa@gmail.com  
Joycelyn Gill-Campbell,  
Domestic Workers United Organizer,  
(212) 481-5747,  
joycedwu@gmail.com

**Power of A Million Minds Youth Collaborative (PMMC)**

c/o Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association  
of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO)  
P.O. Box 870366  
New Orleans, LA 70187-0366  
www.vayla-no.org  
504-253-6000  
Minh Nguyen, Executive Director of VAYLA,  
minh@vayla-no.org

**People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER)**

335 South Van Ness Ave., 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
www.peopleorganized.org  
(415) 864-8372  
Steve Williams, Co-Executive Director,  
steve@peopleorganized.org

**Sunflower Community Action (SCA)**

2201 E. 13th Street  
Wichita, KS, 67214  
(316) 264-9972  
www.sunfloweract.com  
Dorlan Bales, Development Director,  
dorlan@sunfloweract.org

**South by Southwest Experiment (SxSW)**

c/o Southern Echo  
1350 Livingston Lane, Suite C  
Jackson, MS 39213  
www.southernecho.org  
(601) 982-6400  
Leroy Johnson, Executive Director,  
leroy@southernecho.org

**Voces de la Frontera (Voces)**

1027 South 5th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53204-1734  
(414) 643-1620  
www.vdlf.org  
Jeanne Geraci, Associate Director,  
Jeanne@vdlf.org  
Melanie Benesh, Youth Coordinator,  
Melanie@vdlf.org

## APPENDIX II:

---

### ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

---

**Applied Research Center (ARC)** is a public policy institute advancing racial justice through research, advocacy and journalism. ARC produces materials and research on race, immigration and multiracial organizing available online, including ColorLines, a national newsmagazine on race and politics.

**www.arc.org**

Rinku Sen, President and Executive Director  
32 Broadway, Suite 1801  
New York, NY 10004  
p. 212.513.7925  
f. 212.513.1367  
arcnt@arc.org / arc@arc.org

**Association of Black Foundation Executives** has been championing the interests of Black communities within the philanthropic sector. ABFE is one of many leaders in the field who have participated in a broad movement to direct more philanthropic dollars to black men and boys. They create professional training programs and initiatives, support collaboration, sponsor learning opportunities, and distribute a series of annual briefing papers that identify priority issues in Black communities and make recommendations for strategic philanthropic investments to address those issues.

**www.abfe.org**

Susan Taylor Batten, President and CEO  
333 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor  
New York, New York 10001  
p. 646.230.0306  
f. 646.230.0310  
information@abfe.org

**Center for Community Change (CCC)** strengthens, connects and mobilizes low-income grassroots groups across race and ethnicity. CCC has produced several curricular resources useful for cross-racial alliance work. *Crossing Borders (Cruzando Fronteras): Building Relationships Across Lines of Difference*, a curriculum developed in collaboration with Casa de Maryland, addresses recent demographic shifts among African Americans and Latino immigrants, the historical antecedents to existing tensions between African Americans and Latino immigrants, the interplay between jobs, race and immigration, and the process for moving from dialogue to action. *Black Brown & Beyond* and *Democracy Schools (Escuelas Democracia)* are additional curricula. Their website also lists resources on “African American-Immigrant” issues and multiracial and multiethnic alliances.

**www.communitychange.org**

Deepak Bhargava, Executive Director  
1536 U Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
p. (202) 339-9300  
f. (202) 387-4892  
info@communitychange.org

**Center for Third World Organizing** is a racial justice organization led by people of color that provides training and resources for direct-action organizing in communities of color and multiracial organizations.

**www.ctwo.org**

Danielle Mahones, Executive Director  
1218 E. 21st Street  
Oakland, CA 94606  
p. (510) 533-7583  
f. (510) 533-0923

## APPENDIX II: ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

---

**Colectivo Flatlander** was founded in 2002 by immigrant and Chicano organizers and provide grassroots immigrant rights groups and organizers with tools, political analysis, training opportunities and spaces for dialogue modeled on popular education principles. Colectivo conducts Spanish and bilingual workshops and produces resources for popular education and community organizing.

**[www.colectivoflatlander.org](http://www.colectivoflatlander.org)**

PO Box 2546  
Kyle, TX 78640  
p. 512-644-8035  
[colectivo@colectivoflatlander.org](mailto:colectivo@colectivoflatlander.org)

**Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (Community Coalition)** works with African American and Latino residents to create, influence and change public policy to transform the social and economic conditions in South Los Angeles towards safe neighborhoods, quality schools, a strong social safety net and positive economic development in order to reduce crime, poverty and substance abuse.

**[www.cocosouthla.org](http://www.cocosouthla.org)**

Marqueece Harris Dawson, President and CEO  
8101 S. Vermont Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90044  
p. (323) 750-9087

**Grantmakers Concerned for Immigrants and Refugees** helps funders connect immigrant issues to their funding priorities by serving as a forum to: 1) learn about current topics through in-depth research, data and tools tailored for grantmakers, 2) connect with other funders through events that examine major immigration trends and their impact on diverse communities and 3) collaborate with grantmaking colleagues on strategies that strengthen immigrant-related funding locally and nationally.

**[www.gcir.org](http://www.gcir.org)**

Daranee Petsod, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 1100  
Sebastopol, CA 95473-1100  
p. 707-824-4374  
f. 707-581-1716

**Highlander Research and Education Center** conducts research, develops organizing and educational strategies, collects and produces resource materials for popular educators and organizers, and sponsors popular education programs that support grassroots activists and community leaders in the South. Highlander has developed numerous curriculum modules on race, globalization and immigration. The Across the Races & Nations: Building Communities in the US South project offers online bilingual resources on immigration and collaboration in the Southern United States, as well as film and print resources on multiracial organizing.

**[www.highlandercenter.org](http://www.highlandercenter.org)**

Pam McMichael, Director  
1959 Highlander Way  
New Market, TN 37820  
p. (865) 933-3443  
f. (865) 933-3424  
[hrec@highlandercenter.org](mailto:hrec@highlandercenter.org)

**Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP)** promotes stronger partnerships between organized philanthropy and Latino communities. HIP sponsors regional, national and international conferences and briefings, research and publications, professional development programs, as well as provides referrals for foundations seeking Latino staff and trustees.

**[www.hiponline.org](http://www.hiponline.org)**

Diana Campoamor, President  
55 Second Street  
Suite 1500  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
p. (415) 837-0427  
f. (415) 837-1074

APPENDIX II: ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

---

**Kirwan Institute** for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is an interdisciplinary research institute at The Ohio State University that generates and supports innovative analyses of the dynamics that underlie racial marginality and undermine full and fair democratic practices in the United States and throughout the global community. Its work informs policies and practices to produce equitable change. Among its many publications is *Building Successful Alliances between African American and Immigrant Groups: Uniting Communities of Color for Shared Success*.

**[www.kirwaninstitute.org](http://www.kirwaninstitute.org)**

John A. Powell, J.D., Executive Director  
Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity  
433 Mendenhall Laboratory  
125 S Oval Mall  
Columbus, OH 43210  
p. 614-688-5429  
f. 614-688-5592

**Leadership Conference on Civil Rights** is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. The coalition's website includes reports and curricula, including a Civil Rights 101 resource.

**[www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)**

Wade Henderson, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund  
1629 K Street NW  
10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
LCCR phone: (202) 466-3311  
LCCREF phone: (202) 466-3434

**Miami Workers Center** is a strategy and action center organizing the collective strength and voice of women, working class, and low-income people to confront critical issues of poverty, racism, and gender oppression. The Center actively builds coalitions and enters alliances to amplify progressive power and win racial, community, social, and economic justice and is committed to community organizing, leadership development, communications, and coalition building strategies.

[www.miamiworkerscenter.org](http://www.miamiworkerscenter.org)  
Gihan Perer, Executive Director  
6127 Northwest 7th Avenue  
Miami, FL 33127-1111  
p. (305) 759-8717

**Multiethnic Immigrant Worker Organizing Network (MIWON)** is a long-term strategic multiethnic network of immigrant workers centers in Los Angeles. As a coalition MIWON members support each other's immigrant worker campaigns, work together on issues of immigrant rights and legalization, and cultivate the relationships of workers of different races and ethnicities. MIWON is an alliance of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of L.A. (CHIRLA), Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA), Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEP-SCA) and Pilipino Workers Center (PWC).

**[www.miwon.org](http://www.miwon.org)**

Jonathan Santi  
153 Glendale Boulevard, 2nd Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
[outreach@miwon.org](mailto:outreach@miwon.org)

APPENDIX II: ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

---

**National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)** is a national network of 250 organizations and activists serves as a forum to share information and analysis and strengthen the capacity of immigrant and refugee communities to participate in the immigrant rights movement and global social and economic justice movements. NNIRR’s curriculum, *Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Era (BRIDGE)*, engages immigrant and refugee community members in dialogue about racism, labor, migration and global economic structures in relation to migration. NNIRR also produced an award-winning documentary, “*UPROOTED: Refugees of the Global Economy.*”

[www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org)

Catherine Tactaquin, Executive Director  
310 8th St.  
Oakland, CA 94607-6526  
(510) 465-1984

**New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice**

is dedicated to organizing workers across race and industry to build the power and participation of workers and communities. The Center organizes day laborers, guest workers, and homeless residents to build a movement dignity and rights in the post-Katrina landscape.

[www.nowcrj.org](http://www.nowcrj.org)

Saket Soni, Director  
217 North Prieur Street  
New Orleans, LA 70112-3343  
(504) 309-5165

**Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)** is a multiyear project intended to increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education, and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers. They are also the main resource in philanthropy for racial equity grantmaking. PRE has an extensive annotated bibliography on African American-Latino coalition building.

[www.racialequity.org](http://www.racialequity.org)

Lori Villarosa, Executive Director  
1720 N Street, NW  
Washington DC 20036  
p. (202) 375-7770  
f. (202) 375-7771

**Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE)**, University of Southern California

conducts research and facilitates discussions on issues of environmental justice, regional inclusion, and immigrant integration. The *Color of Change: Inter-ethnic Organizing and Leadership for the 21st Century* project is designed to catalog and understand best practices in interethnic leadership development programs: highlighting the changing demography of the country and why this calls for interethnic coalitions.

[www.college.usc.edu/pere](http://www.college.usc.edu/pere)

Manuel Pastor, Director  
3620 S. Vermont Avenue, KAP 462  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0255  
p. 213.821.1325  
f. 213.740.5680  
pere@college.usc.edu

**Public Interest Projects** operates grantmaking, technical assistance and strategic-planning programs to foster a movement for positive social change. PIP has a report, *Alliance Building in Action: Profiles from the Field.*

[www.publicinterestprojects.org](http://www.publicinterestprojects.org)

Michele Lord, Executive Director  
45 W 36th St, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
p. (212) 378-2800  
f. (212) 378-2801  
info@publicinterestprojects.org

APPENDIX II: ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CROSS-RACIAL ALLIANCE BUILDING

---

**Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture** is a national research library devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the experiences of peoples of African descent throughout the world. The Center has an extensive online resource, *In Motion: The African American Migration Experience*, which outlines the 13 defining migrations that form African America, including the African slave trade, internal migrations of African Americans, and immigration from Africa and the Caribbean.

**[www.inmotionaame.org](http://www.inmotionaame.org)**

Howard Dodson, Project Director  
188 Madison Avenue  
New York NY 10016  
212-592-7185  
[digital@nypl.org](mailto:digital@nypl.org)

**Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network**

**(REJN)** works with 60 economic justice organizations across the southern United States serving working poor mostly women and youth. They work to build relationships leadership and coalitions within the southeast and also the rest of the western hemisphere. REJN has a project called “Resisting Rivalry: African American and Latino Organizing and Educational Campaign” as well as training manuals and fact sheets on racist immigration policies and cross-cultural coalition building.

**[www.rejn.org](http://www.rejn.org)**

Leah Wise, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 240  
Durham, North Carolina 27702-0240  
p. 1(919)403-4310  
f. 1(919)403-4302  
[serejn@rejn.org](mailto:serejn@rejn.org)

**The Southern Regional Council** produces research, policy analysis, publications and advocacy on racial justice and poverty. *Building Black-Brown Coalitions in the Southeast: Four African American-Latino Collaborations* is a 2009 report.

**[www.southerncouncil.org](http://www.southerncouncil.org)**

Charles S. Johnson, III, President  
1201 W. Peachtree St. NE  
Suite 2000  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
p. 404.522.8764  
f. 404.522.8791  
[info@southerncouncil.org](mailto:info@southerncouncil.org)

**Center for Labor Research and Education, University of California, Berkeley**

conducts research and education on issues related to labor and employment. The Labor Center has reports, workshops and curricula on black workers, immigrant workers, women workers, labor and the economy. The Labor Center is currently developing a set of popular education curricula aimed at building stronger working relationships between African American and Latina/o immigrant workers on issues of employment called *Reducing Tensions Concerning Immigration and Employment*.

**[www.laborcenter.berkeley.edu](http://www.laborcenter.berkeley.edu)**

Ken Jacobs, Chair  
Center for Labor Research and Education  
2521 Channing Way # 5555  
Berkeley, CA 94720-5555  
p. (510) 642-0323  
f. (510) 642-6432

## APPENDIX III:

---

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Describe your current relationship building and alliance building efforts with African Americans or Black immigrant communities. What issues are the alliances built around? How did you choose the issues?
- Why did your organization decide to do this? Did it just happen as a natural outcome of work you were already doing, or was there a conscious or strategic decision made to engage in this type of effort? Other reasons...
- What stage of development is this effort at – early (planning, just launching), middle (have been doing for 1-2 years) or advanced (2 yrs+)
- Are you working with partners or allies outside your organization to develop or implement this effort? If so, with whom.
- Have you developed a formal training program or curriculum designed to educate or involve your members in this effort? Have you received outside training/assistance? If so from whom?
- What are some challenges or obstacles that your organization has encountered, either internally or externally, in implementing or trying to develop these relationships and alliances? How have these been addressed? Has it meant changes in the way you conduct your other work?
- What have been some positive outcomes or benefits from engaging in this effort? What have been some factors of success or best practices?
- What is the next stage of development you'd like to reach with this effort?
- What resources do you need to reach this next level? (e.g., staff, funding, training, networking etc.)
- What advice or recommendations would you give to other organizations trying to do similar things? To funders who are interested in supporting this work?







