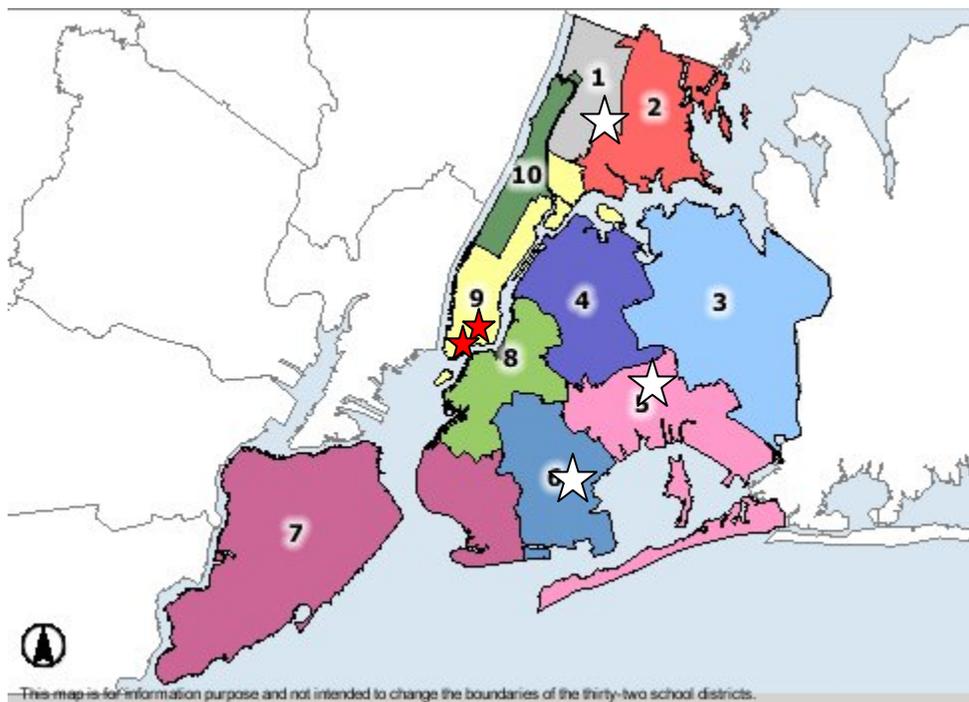


Making a Difference

Collaborative Organizing for School Improvement in New York City, 1996-2006



A Consulting Report to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund

by Ann Bastian

December 2006

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Executive Summary:

This report was commissioned by Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas, program director at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, to examine the role community organizing can play in shaping effective social policy. It looks at the case of community organizing for educational equity and school improvement in New York City, represented by a network of neighborhood and citywide collaboratives. These collaboratives are engaging non-profit organizations in low-income communities of color to become advocates, policy initiators, watchdogs and civic constituents for school change. The review was designed by consultant Ann Bastian, with the participation of RBF staff, and involved a series of panel discussions, surveys and interviews. The results can be summarized as follows:

- A coherent and collaborative grassroots network of education activists has been formed across New York City for public school reform, which crosses barriers of race, language, locale, and age.
- This process has empowered a new layer of activists and leaders, has engaged low-income communities in education issues, has strengthened community-based organizations, and has created new relationships and alliances with other education stakeholders.
- A broad and significant range of local school improvements and innovations have been achieved in the neighborhood schools where the collaboratives are active.
- In order to impact system-wide policy and the newly centralized NYC Department of Education, this network is expanding to citywide scale, requiring new funding and staffing streams to support multiple levels of organizing.

The results are only part of the story, however. This case also teaches us about the resources, relationships, and participatory processes that have produced effective organizing to begin with; and it underscores the importance of sustained funding, which has kept pace with the work as it has evolved and grown.

Cover: The new administrative regions of the NYC Department of Education, with white stars for the three neighborhood collaboratives reviewed in this report and red stars for the two citywide collaboratives focusing on central office policy at the DOE, located in the Tweed Building, Lower Manhattan.

I. Return on Investment

How do you measure return on investment in the philanthropic sector? The answers are especially complex in the areas of social justice organizing and democratic practice. Here we are assessing a political process as much as a policy product, we are looking for qualitative as well as quantitative changes, and we are weighing risks and gains in the currencies of human energy and hope.

This report applies these lenses to the case of community organizing for educational equity and school reform in New York City. Specifically, we are looking at the experience of community collaboratives, based in neighborhood and youth groups, which have evolved in conjunction with the Community Involvement Program (CIP) over the past decade.

Through CIP, various components of the collaborative organizing process have received funding from a range of foundations (See Endnotes, page 28). The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, through its Pivotal Places program, has invested \$1.7 million in the NYC School Improvement Initiative from 1997-2006.

While each foundation has its own mission, support for the NYC Collaboratives has demonstrated several shared goals, which guide us in assessing what has been achieved:

- Developing social capital through quality education for all and effective school change policies;
- Engaging local residents in school improvement as an issue of deep concern across low-income communities;
- Building common ground and collaborative problem-solving to link community stakeholders and include them in the policy development and school improvement process;
- Empowering local leaders and youth to enlarge the community infrastructure for civic engagement and participation.

The broad context of this organizing initiative is the nation's largest school system, with over 1,400 schools serving over 1.1 million students, 75% of whom are from low-income families, 72% of whom are Black and Latino, 13% of whom have limited English proficiency. It is a school system where more than half of high school students fail to graduate. It is also a school system undergoing a massive administrative overhaul: centralizing school authority in the Mayor's office, restructuring high schools into small school units, redrafting core educational standards and policies, and waging a funding equity battle with New York State.

“The Rockefeller Brothers Fund’s support of the Community Involvement Program reflects our trustees’ long-term commitment to improving public schools. We have seen the impact CIP has made in schools, especially through its ability to bring about effective collaborative relationships.”

***Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas,
RBF program director***

At the same time, New York City is undergoing one of the most significant moments of immigrant integration in its history, with three million or more residents coming from new immigrant families. It is a moment when immigrant youth are coming of age and seeking inclusion and opportunity. They are finding counterparts in African-American families whose dreams have been repeatedly deferred. This new energy is reversing a long period of civic stagnation in poor and working class neighborhoods, the product of economic polarization, government devolution, and decaying political parties.

How these converging forces will reshape the City—whether they will open the golden door of public education to the next generation, or hold it closed—will be decided in the coming decade. This study looks at how a new wave of civic engagement and education organizing contributes to the outcome.

II. Organizing Inputs: The Infrastructure Approach

“Twenty years ago, there was no organizing infrastructure for education justice in New York City. There were two professional advocacy centers, and school-based parent associations controlled by principals. Community groups had no relationship with the UFT (the United Federation of Teachers). As schools for poor students went from bad to worse, community groups began to take action, but the first direction was to create alternative schools, like the ‘New Visions’ movement. It was a step forward, to show that good schools could exist in poor communities, but it didn’t create broad enough change across the system. The majority of schools and students were left behind.

“That’s when we decided another step was needed: create an informed grassroots base, with a real knowledge of how schools work, and the ability to work with other stakeholders. If we could build these associations with enough depth—and if we could raise expectations and hope in enough places—we would create the real public will needed to change priorities.

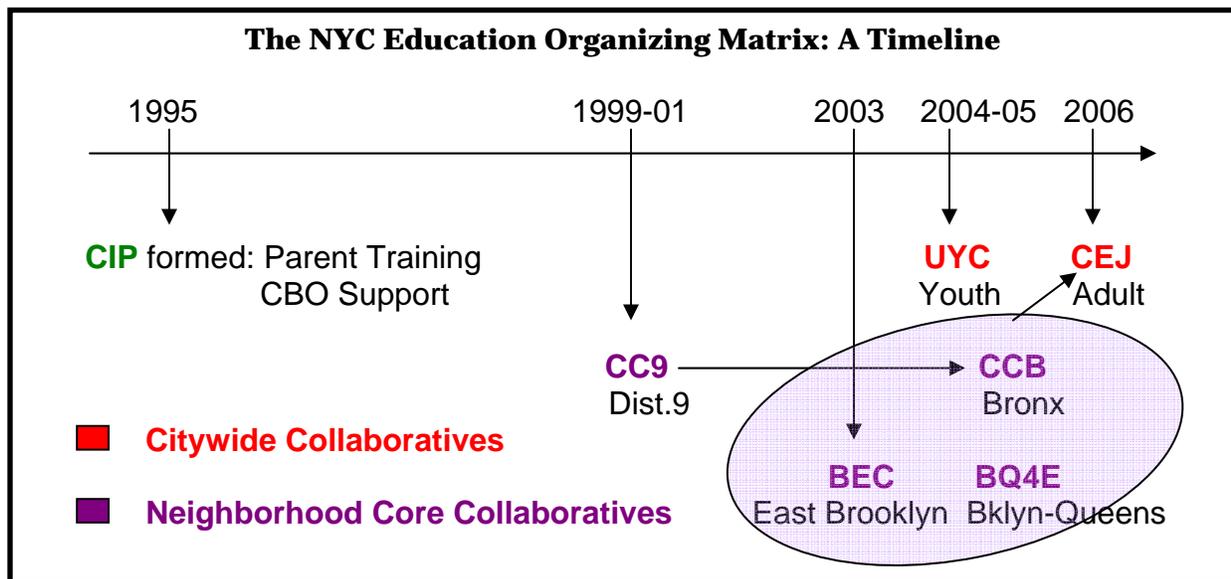
“We are now about halfway there, but already, things are significantly different. More and more organizations are developing parent action committees and taking up education issues, including housing groups, services agencies, some unions... Members of major citywide organizing groups like ACORN and IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation) are demanding good schools as part of rebuilding neighborhoods. Teachers are becoming our allies, not our enemies. Now community constituencies are working with the UFT to create programs for more effective schools.”

*Norm Fruchter, Director, Community Involvement Program,
Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University*

Twenty years ago, the world of community organizing was fairly linear: it was about reacting to injustice and building campaign mobilizations to confront power. The new world of community organizing is about creating an enduring civic infrastructure of

activists, organizations and collaborations that can initiate solutions and engage, even exercise power on an expanding scale. School change efforts in New York City are one of the places that this new world of organizing has emerged in a coherent fashion.

Leading this effort in New York is a growing network of community-based Collaboratives that form a civic infrastructure for education activism, best described as a matrix of scope and scale: the network grows horizontally to engage more and more community organizations and neighborhoods, while it grows vertically to impact school policy and practice from the local school level to the system as a whole.



The Organizing Matrix

To give a sense of how this education organizing matrix has evolved, we need to look at the component parts and how they have expanded over time. The core of the matrix is formed by three regional Collaboratives that organize public school parents and community constituencies at the neighborhood level. All are based in areas that are 80-90% people of color, where schools are most crowded and ill-equipped, where teachers have the highest turnover and least experience, where students are most apt to fall below grade level and drop-out. The first to pilot this approach was the **Community Collaborative to Improve Bronx Schools (CCB)**, formerly known as CC9, which is now extending its reach from the South Bronx to the entire borough. Next came the **Brooklyn Educational Collaborative (BEC)**, centered in East Brooklyn. A third regional collaborative is emerging in the diverse communities along the Brooklyn-Queens border, called **Brooklyn-Queens 4 Education (BQ4E)**.

Each regional Collaborative is anchored by neighborhood organizations, which function as the institutional partners for developing school improvement strategies. Partner organizations include traditional community organizing groups, social service centers

and community development non-profits, many of which sponsor their own education organizing projects, often called parent action committees. Local leaders of these projects and committees become the activist core of the regional Collaboratives. The approach is a mix of both institutional and membership organizing models, where organizational clout is combined with activist engagement. [For a complete listing of organizational partners, see Endnotes 1.]

Partner organizations in each Collaborative share resources, school assessments, program ideas, and their relationships with other stakeholders such as teachers and administrators in local schools, issue and legal advocacy groups, churches and community associations, local elected officials, etc. Together, they craft a common agenda for school change, and a strategy for implementing this agenda in local schools. For instance, CCB has pioneered a lead teacher program to address teacher retention and development needs, BEC has secured science equipment for middle schools, BQ4E is focusing on access and funding for after-school programs.

Neighborhood efforts in the boroughs are complemented by two new citywide structures. The **Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC)** was formed in 2004 as a cross-borough partnership of four low-income youth groups focused on high school equity and pathways to college. Student leaders from these groups defined a four-prong agenda for high school reform: access to counseling and academic supports; safe and non-threatening school environments; improved facilities and resources; and a student voice in school decision making. This year, UYC also created a citywide Student Union to engage a wider range of high school students and youth development organizations in its campaigns.

Another citywide collaborative emerged in 2006, when the three neighborhood-based collaboratives came together to form the **NYC Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ)**, anticipating that more local collaboratives will be created and that there will be important opportunities to affect the system-wide policies being enacted by the new NYC Department of Education. Thus far, CEJ has conducted extensive discussions around issues of fiscal equity and reducing class size, drop-out rates, and teacher recruitment and training. Its focus in 2007 will be the performance crisis in the middle grades (6th-8th grades), which has decisive and highly inequitable impacts on high school graduation rates and college readiness.

An Organic Intermediary

The design and the glue for this matrix come from a home-grown intermediary organization, the **Community Involvement Program (CIP)**. CIP was established through the NYU Institute for Education and Social Policy in 1995 to promote parent participation in school reform; it is now affiliated with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, as its New York office. In 1999, CIP helped to design the Collaborative approach and continues to play a facilitation and strategic support role. CIP provides the professional-technical capacities that most community organizing efforts seriously lack, and that traditionally reside in autonomous think tanks or technical assistance providers, at some distance from their grassroots clients.

By contrast, CIP is a partner organization in the Collaboratives. It is able to provide data analysis, applied and comparative research, policy expertise, and fundraising support to the collaboratives, in an integrated way. It has developed sophisticated curricula and tools to teach grassroots activists how to evaluate local schools and DOE policies on the ground, and matched this work with academic research studies that support policy innovation.

Complementing this expertise, CIP provides direct support to the organizing and leadership development components of the Collaboratives' work. Each Collaborative has a senior CIP staff member to guide it. Through fundraising and extensive training for the field organizing team, CIP has also added staff capacity to the frontline partners groups, recognizing that many prior coalition efforts foundered because they demanded more than they gave back and stretched their partners too thin.

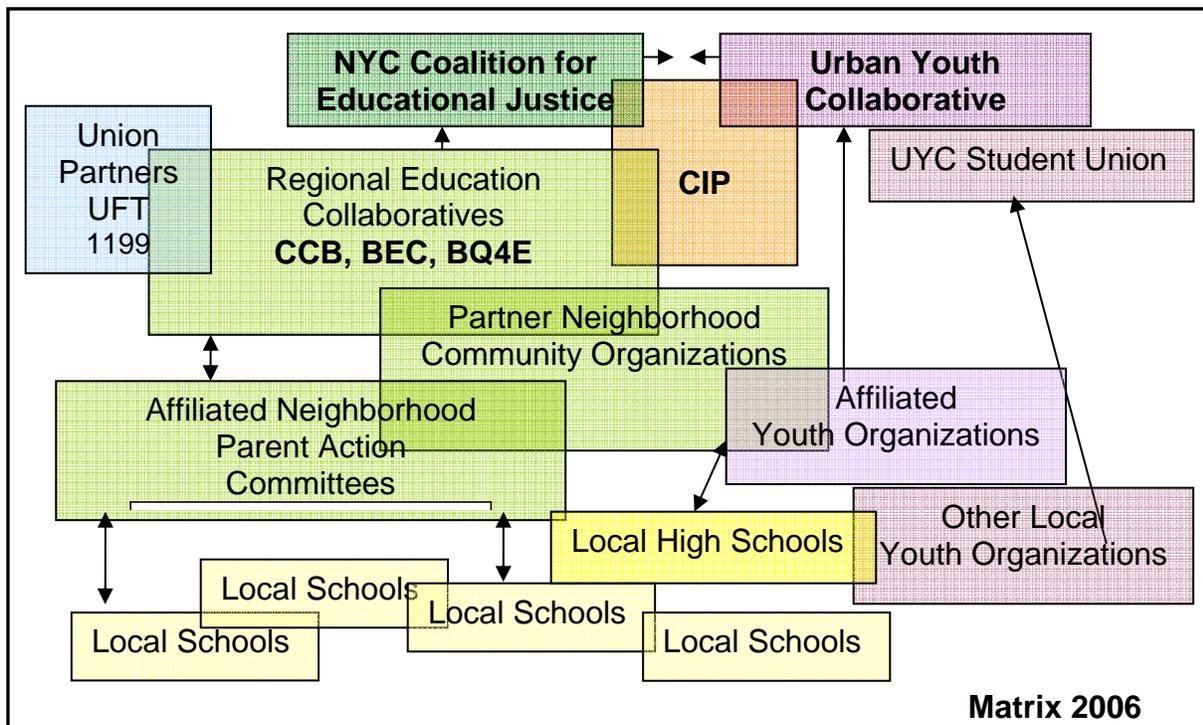
CIP provides the element of persistent focus and strategic planning across discrete localities, diverse constituencies and passing campaign moments that most community organizations find difficult to sustain. At the same time, CIP's leadership is balanced by accountability to the collective decision-making processes of the Collaboratives, as they determine priority campaigns and new partnerships.

This is not to say that everything flows easily. Mobilizing effective issue campaigns as an outside pressure group involves different kinds of energy and discipline than nurturing democratic working relationships among a diverse mix of organizations and constituencies.

“Authentic grassroots leadership requires a commitment to process and a willingness to provide the time and space this process needs. Sometimes the timeframe required for leaders to grapple with issues and reach consensus is at odds with the pace required to move a policy campaign. We are constantly balancing these conflicting pressures.”

***Kavitha Mediratta,
CIP Principal Associate***

Nonetheless, much of the foundation investment has already paid off: an integrated education organizing network has been established in New York City. It has grown in breadth and depth, it is learning from shared practices, and it is reaching citywide scale.



We attribute this success to:

- the strength of the Collaboratives' infrastructure approach, which creates space for a blend of institutional partners and activist members at multiple levels of policy and practice;
- the presence of a skilled, connected, and accountable intermediary, combining policy and organizing expertise;
- collective investment in democratic practice and internal education, supporting multi-racial and multi-cultural organizing through an evolving process;
- opportunities for innovation and new alliances, especially with teachers, that have presented themselves through the school restructuring process;
- the rising aspirations of new immigrants, low-income families and youth;
- a steady funding stream, allowing the work to experiment, mature, adapt and grow over time.

The next questions are tougher: How much does this new infrastructure generate a culture of participation, empower new leaders, and engage the broader community in school issues? And how much impact does civic inclusion and renewal have on school improvement and educational priorities?

III. Organizing Impacts: Values Added

To assess the impacts of the NYC collaboratives, we conducted a series of panel discussions and interviews with the CIP staff, partner organizations, parent and community leaders, and youth activists. We used a written survey to assess concrete accomplishments and capacity building needs among the partner organizations. We also interviewed staff at the United Federation of Teachers and, informally, several counterparts at the Department of Education, to see the work from their perspectives [see Endnotes 2]. All the sources of this review demonstrated that organizing impacts occur on multiple levels.

A. Civic Impacts

Leadership Empowerment: If not us, who?

“What was it like before we built this organization? When my son was in kindergarten, they told me he had to go to special education. I knew this was wrong, I knew he would be disadvantaged there. I was a home care worker and I thought he should get another evaluation, so I went to the hospital and tried to find out what could be done, but I couldn’t get an appointment or find the right people. I didn’t know how to fight it. So he went to special education and he hated school. Then we started this organization, and I learned about how the school worked, and I could advocate for my daughter and my next son. And they have gone on to college. And my oldest boy, I was able to help him get a regular diploma from high school, but he won’t go to college now. He says school makes him feel bad, but he tells me ‘Don’t worry, Mom, I’ll be all right.’”

*Placida Rodriguez, Education Justice Organizer,
Make the Road by Walking, Bushwick*

The stories we heard from grassroots leaders and activists in education organizing were powerful and consistent—the struggle has been hard and the experience has been transformative. We heard from many activists about the personal impacts in terms of their own sense of fulfillment, stronger relationships between parents and children, and more positive outcomes for the family as well as the community.

The stories were not only about finding one’s own voice, but about the empowerment that comes from creating a common voice out of many different racial, national, cultural, neighborhood backgrounds. It was clear that the organizing process in each Collaborative included trust building activities that defused conventional ethnic and neighborhood stereotypes, and dispelled prevalent fears of associating with people outside one’s immediate group.

Part of the empowerment we saw seems intrinsic to community organizing. The organizing process means identifying common problems and seeing others in the same boat; in other words, moving from private experience to civic perspectives. It means taking collective action, moving with others from a passive to active stance, and

standing shoulder to shoulder in a common cause. However, the depth of empowerment we sensed in Collaborative leaders and activists also appeared to spring from the depth of internal education and collective skill building that the Collaboratives have undertaken.

Using curricula developed with CIP staff, the regional Collaboratives conduct extensive workshops covering: community organizing methods, power analysis and campaign development; essential leadership skills such as public speaking, running meetings, and

policy negotiation; school performance assessment, including data collection, parent and teacher surveys, in-school observation; and education policy analysis, looking at strategies for student achievement and best practices, as well as at the policy process itself.

The UYC has parallel curricula for youth leaders. Its Youth Organizing Institute includes a two-week intensive summer training for 25 young people involved in high school improvement campaigns, which explores the history and structure of the NYC public school system, policy research and analysis, organizer training and academic skill building. Each graduate also receives a \$1,000 college scholarship.

“When I first got involved, my parents said, ‘Are you in a cult or something? You just eat and go to meetings all the time.’ Now my whole family is involved... I went through the Youth Organizing Institute and learned about history, about organizing, I got a stipend for college. Organizing is really interesting, it’s cool, but I don’t want to just be an organizer. I want to see the world.”

***Rafael Pena, UYC Organizer,
Sistas and Brothas
United/NorthWest Bronx***

“I am the mother of 8 children. I never thought I had time to be an activist. But I went to a meeting and saw what was wrong, the magnitude of the inequities. No one was listening and we had to make them listen. So now I go for all the parents who can’t be there. And its fun, we’re making change, we see the big picture. And all of us activists are like a family, we cross so many boundaries... It’s my passion.”

***Zakiyah Ansan, BEC leader,
UFT Parent Outreach
Committee, Brooklyn***

The cross-generational impacts of the work were a recurring theme among both parent and youth activists. Leaders have become role models in their families and communities. Every conversation pointed to the multiplier effects that leadership empowerment had in creating social capital: youth getting parents and siblings involved, adults engaging their neighbors, new immigrants learning English, parents getting better jobs, students moving on to college. What was palpable in all our meetings was the spirit of rising expectations, solidarity, personal growth and moral commitment that makes organizing successful and sustainable.

At the same time, respondents identified two major challenges facing the grassroots leadership component of the work, which we will return to later:

- Expanding the collaboratives into enough areas to create a critical mass of neighborhoods and schools to influence the system overall;
- Recruiting and developing enough skilled organizers to build and sustain a deep base of empowerment on a larger scale.

Stronger Organizations

It was amply evident in our conversations that the Collaboratives have brought together energetic, forceful, articulate leaders. It seemed equally clear that this organizing approach has added new dimensions to the partner organizations.

For one, the investment in training within the Collaboratives has introduced the partner organizations to new methodologies for developing issues and programs, and has also encouraged pro-active rather than reactive responses to problems. The Collaboratives’ strategy of building infrastructure and shared capacity across organizations has also had an impact on the internal culture of partner groups and on the general climate for social justice work.

“We have created learning organizations and a learning culture. We are still learning about our own resources, our intellectual capital. We’re creating our own sets of best practices and lessons of what doesn’t work.”

***T. Thaddeus Brown,
BEC leader, Brooklyn***

“We dissect the issues and we’ve learned how to prioritize: can the problem be fixed now? Is it a short or a long term goal? What relationships do we need to move this? We’ve learned that to stay the course, we can’t get caught up just reacting to the City.”

***Ocynthia Williams,
CCB leader, The Bronx***

All the organizational leaders we spoke with said their experience in the Collaboratives helped them construct broader agendas and alliances in other issue areas, such as housing, gentrification and language access. Service organizations have incorporated organizing approaches into their case work and advocacy roles, engaging their base as constituents and members rather than clients. They have used parent and youth activists to expand outreach in other program areas.

And all have more actively sought out partners in developing new programs and campaigns, instead of the “go it alone” approach of the past, where institutions and organizations often created parallel and duplicative capacities. This is no small advance in New York City, where the non-profit sector has been notoriously competitive and sectarian for many decades.

It was also true that the collaborative approach has created some new pressures on organizations and underscored some of the stresses of alliance building. Andrew Friedman, Co-Director at Make the Road by Walking, spoke about the effort required to get BQ4E off the ground, pointing out that the Collaboratives bring together very different kinds of groups, at different levels of capacity and organizational development,

and sometimes, at different levels of commitment and contribution to the common process. In addition, many of the partner organizations rely on the same set of foundations for support, a situation that, in the past and present, has exacerbated tensions around maintaining a distinct identity, gaining access to program officers, and claiming credit for accomplishments.

CIP's ability to raise the funding needed by partner organizations to add frontline education organizers, and its own contribution of expertise and leadership, has balanced some of the unevenness in capacity and mitigated the funding competition among its partner groups. However, the need to expand the scale of this work and operate at the same time on a citywide level will tax resources and resource-sharing in a new way—a challenge we will return to later in this report.

Civic Engagement

Has the empowerment of a new layer and generation of community activists, and the building of stronger local organizations, translated into broader civic engagement across the involved communities? A definitive answer would require more intensive studies of participation rates in voting and other civic activities.

Nonetheless, our conversations readily suggested that education issue work is creating a culture of participation in local communities. Local campaigns involve school or neighborhood-based surveys, door-knocking, rallies, demonstrations, town meetings, public celebrations and social events that engage the broader community. Moreover, in the Collaborative design, campaigns are not one-shot opportunities but part of a sustained and expanding agenda for school change. The design gives participants continuous opportunities for engagement, at different levels of intensity. This is especially critical in poor communities where civic activity must compete with making ends meet, keeping families intact, adapting to the dominant culture or language, and navigating a generally alien, and sometimes hostile, public sector.

Our review also indicated that a growing number of partner organizations are developing voter education and outreach components of their work, based on the constituencies they have developed through their education and other issue campaigns, and their emerging clout as players in City politics.

“We just started a voter participation program. We built a team of election district captains, not all of them are citizens or voting age, but they want to participate. The first year we knocked on 8,000 doors and doubled voting rates on our districts. The summer interns knocked on 500 doors in Hope Gardens alone. This year, we want to connect voter education more closely to our issue campaigns. We have definitely gotten the ear of our local elected officials.”

***Oona Chatterjee, Co-Director
Make the Road by Walking,
Brooklyn, BQ4E and UYC***

“We started with press in the trenches, you know, in the laundromats and word-of-mouth. It’s still important. But we also need to be doing public relations with the churches, with the local merchants’ associations, the local reporters... Next, we need to be looking at the local ethnic press, and especially, the radio.”

***Carol Boyd, CCB leader,
New Settlements, The Bronx***

This new level of political engagement has also involved a growing sophistication in using the press and alternative media. Our surveys confirmed that partner organizations want much greater access to the mainstream media citywide. Moreover, they emphatically want to establish electronic communication networks to enhance organizing and mobilizing in greater numbers. UYC, for example, recently engaged a communications consultant to help them conduct more systematic and sustained messaging across a variety of

media outlets from Black Entertainment Television to more mainstream news outlets. At the same time, UYC is developing an internet communications strategy, with assistance from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which will include a blog for high school students to discuss high school reform concerns and viral messaging on campaign issues.

Our surveys indicated that partner organizations will also require considerable technical assistance and training in order to consistently access mainstream media and upgrade internal communications, another challenge to be discussed in our conclusions.

B. School Impacts:

Local School Improvement

Do leadership empowerment, community engagement and civic participation have an impact on educational priorities and school improvement? The answer is clearly affirmative at the local school level. The Collaboratives have had significant and widening impacts on the quality of education and on learning environments in the schools within their range of organizing. BEC recently won a major campaign that secured basic science equipment for 47 schools with middle grades in East Brooklyn. The BQ4E focus on funding for after-school programs is critical in a largely immigrant region where only 1 in 5 students has access to after-school programs that can help with homework and language issues.

Probably the most significant policy reform achieved by a Collaborative has been the *Lead Teacher Program*, won by CCB two years ago in alliance with the UFT. The program creates additional pay for experienced and talented teachers to serve as supporters and mentors to other teachers in low performing schools. CCB members were active in designing the program, selecting lead teachers, and monitoring the results. Its initial success in 2004 led to the program being implemented in 10 CCB-affiliated schools across the Bronx; last year those schools showed measurable gains in teacher retention rates.

The Lead Teacher Program in CCB schools is a premier example of how a community initiative produced a creative response to a specific teaching deficit. But more fundamentally, it shows how a community initiative shifted the power paradigm for three major stakeholders: low-income parents, the UFT, and the Department of Education.

Parents and teachers ended the mutual “blame game” and worked together to come up with a supportive policy with incentives for success. Community groups moved from a reactive to a pro-active role,

seeking out teacher dialogue and input. The UFT moved beyond knee-jerk resistance to performance-based pay and promotion, recognizing the role of mentoring and accepting a parent role in evaluation. And initially, the DOE moved beyond its traditional sense of management prerogatives around staffing to accept the tri-partite process, and went even further to remove a number of principals who resisted these changes.

While these regional Collaborative campaigns have had multi-school impacts, each Collaborative also assists partner organizations in designing and implementing specific local school initiatives. This report cannot possibly recount the entire array of local school improvements achieved thus far, yet we can offer several examples of the range of activities being undertaken. Caitlin Ervin, community organizing director for CHAFE (based in Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation) describes their current work in East Brooklyn:

“CHAFE fought for many years to convince the DOE to recognize and remedy overcrowding in the neighborhood’s elementary schools, culminating in an agreement to build a \$49 million K-8 school. We have been involved in all stages of school planning, including site selection and design. Now we’re conducting research and considering our role in curriculum development and school governance...

“CHAFE is addressing middle schools through BEC and local campaigns. We’re campaigning for an auditorium to be converted into a gymnasium at one middle school, we secured an additional safety agent at another. Now the middle school committee is beginning to research how to create safe schools that do not have excessive safety agent presence... And we’re in the early stages of a campaign to get the DOE to initiate a dual language program at the one elementary school in Cypress Hills that does not have one.”

In addition, student activists at Future of Tomorrow (FOT), the youth wing of CHAFE, recently convinced the principal of Franklin K. Lane High School to make the lunchroom a more welcoming and positive environment. As part of the UYC, FOT is now negotiating the creation of a Student Success Center on the Lane campus.

“The Lead Teacher Program has made a real contribution. CCB did all the research, they tracked me down with the proposal, we started a serious dialogue with parents and teachers—the early meetings were practically riots. And now in the 10 schools where it started, test scores are up, teachers want to stay, everyone saw that a difference could be made.”

***Herb Katz
Retired UFT Rep,
District 9, The Bronx***

Across the borough in Bushwick, at Make the Road by Walking, students in Youth Power and parents in the Education Justice Project have been intensely involved in the restructuring of the old Bushwick High School and are the primary community partner in the start-up of the new Bushwick School for Social Justice. Youth organizer Jose Lopez explains:

“When we started, the principals wouldn’t even talk to us. Or they would ‘yes’ us, tell us they were doing something and do nothing. But after our campaigns they started to listen and even ask us to help push for new resources, like getting a computer lab. The old superintendent wouldn’t talk to us, but then we got a new superintendent and the first thing, she asked to meet with us. Now with the break up of Bushwick High, they (school officials) are sponsoring town meetings where 400 people come to talk about the new schools. The principals are paying attention and working with us. This is really a step forward.”

In the South Bronx, CCB has been implementing a successful two year campaign at P.S. 218, a designated K-8 dual language magnet school. As Angelica Otero, a CCB organizer, reports: “The old principal didn’t really understand the dual language concept. The curriculum was supposed to be 50-50 in English and Spanish, but parents found the core subjects were mostly in English. We formed a Dual Language Committee, and parents attended trainings put on by the DOE, which before only teachers had attended. We visited many schools around the City with dual language programs, like the ones in Cypress Hill, to understand best practices. Then we got the DOE to hire a real expert as a consultant to help improve P.S. 218. The DOE officer for dual languages was quite sympathetic, though later he got frustrated and quit.

“But we’ve kept going. The state came up with some magnet school funding. The old principal retired. So now we have implemented a new curriculum for the primary grades and teachers have received professional development. We see real improvement in grades K-2, but grades 3-5 still need strengthening. We have a proposal in to the state for \$300,000 grant to work on the next phase.”

CCB has also won recent campaigns in traffic safety, getting speed bumps installed in the busy streets in front of P.S. 218, 53 and 64. To celebrate the victory at P.S. 53, the community closed the street for a public BBQ attended by hundreds of supporters.

From speed bumps at P.S. 53 to reshaping the small high schools, there has been a steady progression in the level of local school involvement and magnitude of change effected by this organizing. One of the main explanations that organizers cite for this growing access and success is their new relationship with teachers and the UFT.

Educating the Educators

Bridging the parent-teacher, community-union divide has been an integral part of the Collaborative strategy from the outset. This understanding has grown from a deep analysis of the school change process in New York, and from comparative research across the country, which definitively shows that equity reforms instigated from the

“outside” by disadvantaged communities will not be successfully implemented on the “inside” of school operations without buy-in from teachers and administrators. On the flip side, a growing body of research also indicates that systemic equity reforms are hard to achieve without the political and cultural dimensions added by community organizing [see Endnote 3, *The Fund for Education Organizing*, citing Oakes and Rogers].

CIP and its partners also understand that the new political reality of centralization in New York City has shifted power for the union and for administrators, as well as for communities. As CIP director Norm Fruchter puts it: “Community organizations are really past the old antagonism with the UFT. Since the 1990’s, the UFT’s power as the ‘shadow government’ in education has been diminishing, and now, it too is treated as an outside player. UFT leaders have seen the need for new coalitions, and also recognized in a deeper way that better conditions for students are better conditions for teachers. Now there’s a very strong relationship—strong enough that we can disagree on specific issues and know that we will be together on the majority of core issues.” For example, though the UYC and UFT do not see eye-to-eye on school safety policies, they are finding ways to support each others’ efforts to address the guidance crisis and improve pathways to college.

While the context has shifted at the macro level, the actual forging of the alliance has happened from the bottom up, through local UFT participation in campaigns like the Lead Teacher Program and BEC’s effort to win science labs for middle schools in East Brooklyn. In our conversations with UFT staff and officers, there was no doubt that the opening came from the community side. They believe that without the Collaboratives, there would still be a wall of suspicion, blame, racial politics and special interest rivalry between teachers and parents—a wall that was cemented in place by the Ocean Hill-Brownsville confrontation in 1968, and has been slow to crumble on its own.

“We decided to start community tours for the teachers at the beginning of the school year. So we put 160 teachers on the school buses, the kids call them ‘cheese buses,’ and had parents take the teachers around the neighborhood that their students come from. The teachers were really honest about how this opened their eyes. We have seen a real shift in the school culture... And principals are feeling more accountable, they will meet with us now.”

***Angelica Otero,
Parent Organizer, CCB,
New Settlement, The Bronx***

In contrast, where the Collaboratives have been active over time, UFT staff reported a huge difference in how teachers and the union perceive and receive community involvement. At times, small steps have made a world of difference: a neighborhood tour, letting parents observe classrooms, a family-staff bingo night at the school, showing up at the same rallies. Now the UFT has hired parent coordinators in each borough, who hold monthly meetings with parents and, where possible, connect them with the organizing groups within the Collaboratives.

“The work of the Collaboratives is what’s going to really make the system change. It’s so exciting. We’re building trust and dialogue, we’re breaking down the stereotypes, so that people can be open to change and combine their good thinking about what needs to be done... It’s pretty simple: the problems are too daunting to be adversarial.”

***Michelle Bodden
UFT Vice President for
Elementary Schools***

Again, it has been the tangible impacts on local schools that have moved the alliance process forward in the regions and upward in the administrative ladder. Both CEJ and UYC activists, and UFT staff, expressed a sense that more principals and superintendents have become accessible and responsive as parents and teachers work more closely together, some of them feeling the pressure from below and some sensing the opportunity for change. UFT staffers also felt this openness had reached the highest levels of the union, even winning over the cynics and penetrating the UFT “old guard.”

Parent-teacher and community-union relationships have also been propelled by another powerful force: intensely shared frustration with central management at the Department of Education.

Engaging the System

Although the Collaboratives have successfully wrought victories from the DOE for specific policies and interventions, these victories have not succeeded in redefining the community role in education reform. One example that many cited was the DOE’s decision to eliminate parent participation in the Lead Teacher Program when it took the program citywide. From the viewpoint of Eric Zachary, CIP principal associate and former CCB coordinator: “The Administration [DOE] has shut out the community. The collaboration between parents, teachers and administrators has been left out, even though the evaluation showed it is critical to the program’s success.”

In other words, the shift in power paradigms that the Lead Teacher Program achieved for local schools in the Bronx was lost at the central level. The original Lead Teacher Program shifted the paradigm because it allowed for power-sharing by enlarging power for every stakeholder. It worked because each of the three main stakeholders got more input and the system became more effective in terms they each sought and understood: parents won better prepared teachers and a more stable environment, the union won resources for better teacher development and reward, the administration won more skilled school leadership and more accountability. Since centralization under the Mayor, however, the DOE is seen as operating in the more traditional paradigm: a zero-sum game, a contest for power where the goal is to marginalize other stakeholders rather than engage them.

Young people in UYC were most outraged about the lack of respect they experienced from high level DOE officials. In May 2006, UYC activists presented 8,000 signatures on a petition asking for youth input into the creation and evaluation of school safety policies. They rallied at “Tweed” (the DOE offices in the old Tweed Building in lower Manhattan), where DOE officials tried to discourage press coverage. Having received no

response to petitions, students held another rally in July that attracted over 300 youth from around the City, calling for the Chancellor to respond, which to date he has not.

“When we went to DOE, we felt blown off. They do not respect that we are the ones in the schools every day, that we know what is going on and have good ideas about how to improve things... What will it take for them to start listening? Probably a citywide walkout of students, like in LA.”

Rafael Pena, UYC Organizer, Sistas and Brothas United

Given the DOE’s reluctance to engage with students on school safety policies, the UYC has deliberately advanced a two-prong strategy. While still pushing for school safety reforms from the outside, they are trying to establish collaboration with DOE to create stronger pathways to college through more comprehensive and well staffed guidance counseling and academic support programs. Nonetheless, the DOE’s failure to understand the relationship between supportive college pathways and non-threatening school environments leaves UYC leaders skeptical about the possibilities for transformation in their schools.

Youthful impatience may be nothing new, but similar responses toward DOE were echoed by both leaders and staff members of each of the adult Collaboratives. There was not a single interview in this study, outside of high level DOE officials, that did not project the new centralized DOE management as controlling, unilateral, high-handed, and hostile to consultation, let alone collaboration. With few individual exceptions, DOE leaders are seen as unwilling to create partnerships beyond the local school level, and resistant to understanding the contributions that community and union involvement could and should bring to the citywide school reform and policy process.

In several informal conversations with DOE officials, who did not want to go on record, it became clear that the Administration is operating with a fundamentally different view of “the system.” The inner circle of top DOE officials believe they are bringing order and disciplined management to a massive school system that was dysfunctionally de-centralized, dominated by community patronage systems and paralyzed by overly powerful unions, all of which subverted competence and accountability. Having dispatched the community school boards, the DOE now weighs policy as a labor-management contest for power with the UFT, and also as a reflection of Mayoral authority (not to mention political clout, especially at the state level). This view tends to perceive the alliance that has been emerging between the Collaboratives and the UFT as alarming, retrograde, or marginal. It discounts the independence of the community partners from the UFT; what communities and the union experience as fruitful collaboration, the DOE sees as camouflage for union power.

At the same time, there were some insiders at DOE who felt that an important track record of collaboration was being established at the 189 new small high schools, where community partners are active in the school restructuring process. And one top DOE official felt that youth and parent voices coming from outside the system will be important in addressing major gaps in the system, like guidance programs and middle

school performance. It was pointed out, however, that community voices compete with other pressures on DOE decision-makers; at times, there are louder and stronger interest groups setting the priorities.

Overall, staff and leaders in the Collaboratives, as well as UFT counterparts, expressed varying degrees of optimism and skepticism that relationships with DOE would improve over time—particularly *after* Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein leave office. Creating new terrain for dialogue and collaboration was one common theme. There was also some hope that middle level administrators would emerge from the ten school regions and special programs with greater experience and appreciation of the community’s role, to influence the style of central office decision-making.

Above all, there was unanimous and strong resolve to magnify the outside pressure on DOE, which means moving the Collaboratives’ organizing program to new levels of scope and scale in terms of political presence. The UYC’s new Student Union aims to build a citywide movement of high school students to challenge the DOE’s reform style and priorities. CEJ was launched explicitly to fuse community power into a citywide counterweight to the centralized authority of the Chancellor and the Mayor’s ability to sell his education agenda. But to have citywide impact, both CEJ and UYC will also have to operate in Albany, where the decisive battles over state funding, school authority and education standards are waged.

“The Mayor has been very pre-emptive. What we need is more critical mass... The fault lines are really clear: graduation rates, real job preparation, the middle school sinkhole—this secret system of educational apartheid. And the next opportunities are in front of us: the renewal of Mayoral control in ’08 [by the state legislature], the fiscal equity plan, the ’09 Mayoral election.”

***Jon Kest, NYC Director,
ACORN, and CEJ Partner***

In other words, CEJ and UYC need to build enough civic infrastructure and political clout not only to engage the current DOE leadership, but to influence the state mandates which govern the DOE and to influence the way DOE will be run under the next mayor. One pivotal opportunity will come in 2008, when the state legislature will start debating the renewal of the authorization it gave Mayor Bloomberg in 2002 to end the independent Board of Education and centralize school administration into a City department. The re-authorization process will be a major forum for the Collaboratives, the

UFT and other advocates to raise the race and class disparities that have persisted under centralization, and to demand structural accountability mandates for the DOE, like a more equitable distribution of quality teaching, better staffing ratios and class size limits. Here the Collaboratives’ alliance with the UFT, along with other powerful legislative players, will have considerable impact.

Another major opportunity lies in the settlement of the fiscal equity lawsuit. In 2003, The New York City Campaign for Fiscal Equity won a landmark case in the state’s highest court directing the state to adequately fund New York City schools. The Campaign was put together by leading education activists, advocates and officials in the

City, including CIP's director Norm Fruchter, and receives considerable support from education funders. As a result of the case, the state increased capital funding to the City schools by over \$11 million this year, but balked at increasing the operating budget.

After another round of appeals, the full ruling was re-affirmed in November this year. Incoming governor Eliot Spitzer has been sympathetic to the case and as a candidate recommended between \$4-6 billion in additional operating funds to the City's schools. He and the state legislature are now mandated to come up with a spending plan to meet the court order, including accountability measures to ensure that the needs of the least served children have highest priority. Again, the battle will be around class size, teacher quality, universal pre-kindergarten, and other school improvement strategies.

The third looming opportunity will be the change in mayoral administrations in 2009, and the climate set by the election itself. By that time, the capacity of CEJ and UYC will be fully tested on multiple levels: setting an alternative agenda for the education debate, engaging under-served constituents in voicing their needs, educating voters to the needs of the system overall, commanding media coverage and credibility, and winning a permanent place at the DOE table for community partners.

IV. The Next Challenges: Scope, Scale and Sustainability

The Collaboratives are approaching rich opportunities to re-shape the system at a macro level. Their capacity to seize these moments require expanding the scope of their work across communities, operating at both the local school and system-wide levels simultaneously, and sustaining the intensity of their efforts across a number of campaigns in the City and State arenas.

For the regional Collaborative leaders, this requires several next steps: building their relationships with local elected officials, maximizing the voter presence of their constituents, expanding their outreach to the clergy and business leaders and other civic "validators," and particularly, developing in-house media and communications capacities. UYC leaders have defined an additional step for their growth: they want to expand the Student Union across high schools in the city through the creation of school-based chapters that connect to UYC campaigns.

Some of this expansion will come from the internal growth and maturation of the partner organizations within each Collaborative, but putting the pieces together citywide at greater scope and scale will also take another level of intermediary capacity from CIP and additional resources enabling the anchor organizations to work more closely together. There are a number of challenging elements to this growth scenario:

- The sheer size of the New York City school system
- The low level of grassroots media capacity and media access
- The absence of organizer training pipelines
- The need to significantly expand funding streams

It is sometimes hard to grasp the enormous scale of the New York City school system, where the student population alone is larger than all but 10 of the nation's largest cities, and where each Collaborative works in a region the size of most urban school districts. Jon Kest at ACORN suggested that citywide presence would require accelerating the development of the BQ4E collaborative into Queens and establishing new collaboratives in Upper Manhattan and Staten Island. But as he also pointed out, "This is not a linear process. We cannot fix 1,500 schools one by one. But we can be active in 200 schools, create more credibility and start changing the political culture."

Moreover, New York is a compact City, where civic density matches physical density. The Collaboratives are potentially well positioned in a web of social justice allies, including a growing number of immigrant rights groups and voter participation initiatives, as well as the UFT and service sector unions, to leverage considerable weight in the policy process.

The issue of media capacity is also complex. Staff and leaders are not just looking for access to the expertise of traditional public relations firms, though they are certainly looking for expertise. But in their experience, traditional firms don't understand how to convey community power or the push-pull messages they would like to send. Partner organizations are also interested in enlarging media capacity internally, through staffing and training, in an ongoing way that will extend their influence across multiple issues areas and affect the overall social justice climate. In the media area, as elsewhere, the need arises for intermediary resource organizations that are grounded and accountable. There is a corollary need for media funders to give grantees discretion over their technical assistance providers.

One advantage for the New York Collaboratives, on the other hand, is the City's status as a world media center, the richness of its ethnic and alternative press, and the relative number of media resource providers with community action roots or experience. In terms of developing overall media capacity, it would seem especially important to cultivate internal staff, with dedicated responsibilities for coordinating communications with the press, with media intermediaries, with members and allied groups.

While the tasks of expanding constituencies and building media expertise will be pressing, the two most fundamental challenges to reaching citywide scale appear to be staffing and funding. The staffing question is how to create a big enough pipeline of skilled and indigenous community members, young or not, who can take on organizer roles. Organizer recruitment and training are issues, and so is retention. Hours are bad, salaries are low, it's a demanding job, and there are few opportunities for upward mobility into leadership roles. New York has seen several independent organizer training institutes come and go in recent years, suggesting that this capacity may need to be embedded inside the new citywide Collaboratives.

Public colleges in the CCNY and CUNY systems may be a promising source for cultivating this new organizer stream. The Hunter College School of Social Work's community organizing program has turned out a small but steady flow of candidates,

several of whom have found positions as organizing interns within Collaborative partner organizations. This year, UYC formally created an internship opportunity through Hunter College, in order to provide prospective organizers with more advanced skills. As yet, however, there is no deeper connection between the Collaboratives and students in the CCNY and CUNY systems, which might well supply both the organizer and leadership pipelines from a vast student body demographically connected with low-income communities, public schools, and social justice issues.

The parallel challenge is funding, finding the expanding pots of money, most typically foundation grants, to hire these organizers, deploy these trainers, and sustain program expansion in a timely way. The challenge is to underwrite both breadth and depth, keeping the neighborhood organizations healthy, sustaining the collective planning and learning processes that have made the Collaboratives empowering and democratic, while adding new layers of policy development and monitoring, campaign and media expertise to operate on the full stage.

“We need the many funders who have been investing in public school improvement and reform to understand that community organizing is a critical ingredient, especially in the most under-served systems.”

***Henry Allen,
Discount Foundation and
The Fund for Education
Organizing***

Unfortunately, foundation funding does not tend to expand exponentially, like organizing and civic mobilization. This suggests the funding question may also need to be answered in a collaborative way, with local and national funders playing complementary roles and making strategically focused investments.

The view was summarized by Henry Allen, executive director of the Discount Foundation and co-founder of the Fund for Education Organizing, a new national funder collaborative that expects to spend \$1.6 million in four sites in 2007. "To date, there are a relatively small number of foundations supporting education organizing. Their grantmaking has been well targeted—in Boston, New York and Chicago—and we are seeing positive outcomes to build on... But we need this work to get to scale, within each urban system and across the nation, so that we create more holistic models for how schools can change, and don't just produce isolated cases. Such organizing builds the public will for school reform and creates greater accountability to those who have the greatest stake in the schools. Funders need to understand education organizing as both a complementary and a necessary strategy for better schools." We will close this report with a closer look at foundation responses to this challenge.

“If every New Yorker really grasped the situation, that one out of two public school kids is not making it out of high school, that only 10% of the kids in Bushwick High School passed the Regents exam, that we have middle schools without science labs, that we have schools built for 2,000 with 3,500 students crammed in...

***Lenore Brown,
BEC leader, Brooklyn***

“...And we move the debate away from the Mayor’s picture that it’s all being taken care of... Well, we’ll fill Yankee Stadium and Shea Stadium with parents and students and community members, all on the same night!”

***T. Thaddeus Brown,
BEC leader, 1199 Child Care Fund***

Ironically, throughout our review, no one has raised civic participation as a barrier. In fact, leaders across the board felt that an energetic upsurge of civic engagement is underway in low-income communities and that there is a deep wellspring of activism yet to be tapped. They also felt they would have the message and the opportunities to begin shifting the policy climate over the next period.

Nor did any of our respondents, outside the DOE, question the collaborative approach as a way to cut through their policy and power stalemates. Establishing collaboration as an organizing principle and the path to scale is certainly the greatest accomplishment of education organizing in New York City to date, and the strongest return on the RBF investment thus far.

V. Pivotal Places, Critical Moments: Reflections on Funding

Nothing else in American education organizing approaches the scale or integration of New York City’s Collaboratives. And no city in the U.S. relies more on its public sector, and its public education system, for its future growth and social health than New York City. This initiative will have critical impacts on the school change process in New York, and it will set trends nationally, succeed or fail.

That is not to say that community-driven reform processes in other major urban school systems, like Los Angeles and Chicago, are not significant and instructive. Nor should we ignore comparable efforts in the economic justice and political participation arenas, where new models of collaboration between labor, community, and interfaith partners have emerged and begun shifting economic development policy and political power.

In places where economic justice collaboratives are growing dramatically—notably, in Los Angeles, San Jose, Denver and Miami—many of the ingredients parallel the NYC education organizing experience: new immigrants coming of age, infrastructure organizing across multiple types of community organizations, the construction of an escalating reform agenda beyond single campaigns, the linkage of issue work with civic engagement and empowerment. These parallel examples have also been relatively successful in addressing the two core challenges facing the NYC Collaboratives: growing an expanding stream of new organizers, and garnering an expanding and complementary base of foundation support from both regional and national funders.

If the NYC Collaborative strategy is “halfway there,” then it would seem the funders’ investment is also at a halfway mark. The next phase will require both investing in a new scale of work and leveraging support among funding peers, especially the national foundations that are just exploring the community contribution to school reform.

We should note that where such foundation leveraging has secured new levels of investment in community organizing and civic infrastructure, it has demanded some growth and change within the foundation world itself. New funding principles have emerged, already evident among many of the Collaboratives’ funders, which stress the importance of:

- Growing the number, size and duration of grants with the growth of the organizing and new levels of collaboration, and staying invested over time;
- Recognizing the critical role of “organic” intermediaries, like CIP, which are sharing their resources and risks with partner organizations on the frontlines;
- Recognizing that organizational development and capacity building is necessary and complementary to effective policy advocacy;
- Recognizing that leadership empowerment and enlarging the culture of participation are outcomes as vital to the future health of whole communities as they are instrumental to advancing a given set of policy goals;
- Recognizing that building democracy is an expansive process and requires practice, lots of practice, not only among grassroots participants in marginalized communities, but also among the decision-makers at the center of authority.

“Civic infrastructure is not just the ‘legs’ of social policy. It can also be the brains, like figuring out that language access is a key issue for 25% of this City... Sometimes it seems foundations want community groups to stay small and incompetent, they think expertise should reside somewhere else. We think poor communities deserve to exercise real power and take real leadership in setting priorities—we live with the consequences every day. Technical skills are not so hard to learn, but knowing how to create a web of social relationships that make communities pro-active and optimistic, that takes a different order of skill, and heart, and time.”

***Andrew Friedman, Co-Director,
Make the Road by Walking, CEJ***

While these principles are becoming more widely acknowledged, particularly in international funding, it isn’t clear how deeply they are embraced here at home. It seems that funders are still struggling to expand their comfort zones when it comes to community organizing. Funders may be unfamiliar with how much expertise resides outside the think tanks and policy boxes.

Another source of funder discomfort might well be the “outside” position of most community organizing, its distance from the “inside” of established stakeholders. The case of the NYC Collaboratives indicates that outsider status has not so much been sought, as been imposed, from the top if not the bottom of the system.

Yet we found in New York, as in other cities where civic infrastructure is growing, that community organizing has matured considerably and operates from a collaborative vision of public accountability. CIP and the Collaboratives actually deploy dual outside-inside strategies, creating terrain for school change which often seems more flexible and adaptive, even entrepreneurial, than the system itself has produced.

The NYC case also suggests the ways that inside-outside dynamics might change, as relationships grow from the local school level up the administrative ladder, as initially narrow areas of cooperation multiply—and as education activists knock on some collateral doors in the political arena.

Perhaps this last part might be hardest for funders to grapple with: democracy, it turns out, is a political animal, as much the child of contention as the parent of consensus. Exclusion and inequity demand social action. Effective social policy requires mobilized public will. Scrupulously conducted 501(c)(3) inputs can sometimes produce highly political, even electoral outcomes.

This is fairly new ground for most U.S. foundations, where the concept of civil society is seldom examined in a rigorous way. Ironically, funders often find it easier to tolerate the unintended consequences of social policy interventions, than to accept the intended and very political consequences of helping the poor to share power in a democratic society.

We opened this report by citing several common objectives of foundation support for the NYC Education Collaboratives: developing social capital through better schools, engaging low-income communities, building common ground, involving community stakeholders, empowering new leaders, enlarging civil society. When we measure the return on investment by these objectives, much has been accomplished and there is the promise of even greater return to come. Yet this case also makes clear that we are measuring more than the instructive quality of the work and how well the outcomes match our goals.

The return on this investment is also measured by the social values we hold, the values of participation and inclusion, equality and justice that are at the heart of the political process. Over the next four years, we will get to test our values, while we stretch our thinking about how schools can change. New York City is a pivotal place at a critical moment in reconstructing its commitment to public education as a democratic institution.

ENDNOTES

1. The Collaboratives and their Partner Organizations:

Community Collaborative to Improve Bronx Schools (CCB)

South Bronx ACORN
Citizens Advice Bureau
Highbridge Community Life Center
Mid-Bronx Senior Citizens Council
New Settlement Apartments
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition

Brooklyn Education Collaborative (BEC)

Brooklyn ACORN
Cypress Hills Advocates for Education (CHAPE)
1199 Child Care Fund
United Federation of Teachers (UFT)

Brooklyn-Queens 4 Education (BQ4E)

NYC ACORN
Latin American Integration Center
Make the Road by Walking
New York Civic Participation Project

Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC)

Future of Tomorrow/CHAPE
Youth Power/Make the Road by Walking
Sistas and Brothas United/Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition
Youth on the Move/Mothers on the Move

The UYC Student Union also includes:

Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)
Each One Teach One (A project of the Correctional Association)
Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE)
New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN)
Prison Moratorium Project (PMP)

NYC Coalition for Education Justice (CEJ)

Community Collaborative to Improve Bronx Schools (CCB)
Brooklyn Education Collaborative (BEC)
Brooklyn-Queens 4 Education (BQ4E)

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CCB, BEC, BQ4E, UYC Partner Staff and Leaders:

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Hema Bissessar, Youth Leader, Future of Tomorrow, UYC
Carol Boyd, NSA Parent Action Committee Leader, CCB
Lenore Brown, CHAFE Leader, BEC
T. Thaddeus Brown, 1199 Child Care Fund, BEC
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Angela Reformato, UFT Chapter Leader for Guidance and HS Counselors

Also

Henry Allen, Executive Director, The Discount Foundation, and Principal Consultant to the Fund for Education Organizing at Public Interest Partners

3. National Research in Education Organizing: There is a growing body of national research looking at the impacts of community-based education organizing on the school improvement process in urban public school systems. A useful summary is provided by the mission statement of *The Fund for Education Organizing*. Seminal studies include Oakes and Rogers, Learning Power (Teachers College Press) and Fruchter, Urban Schools, Public Will (Teachers College Press).

4. Community Involvement Program Funders

Carnegie Corporation of New York

Coleman Family Fund

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Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

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Open Society Institute

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Rockefeller Brothers Fund

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