How Do We Get From Here to There?

Cross-Cultural Organizing and the District 7 Planning Council

Prepared for the District 7 Planning Council

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes a four-month examination by Research Assistant Dara Nussbaum of multicultural organizing, for use by the District 7 Planning Council in the Frogtown neighborhood. It includes suggestions from Frogtown community members for effective community building strategies in their neighborhood. In addition, it describes three inclusive organizing projects occurring in the Twin Cities and delineates lessons learned from organizing across cultures. The report also provides advice from community organizers and consultants regarding relationship building, power/empowerment, and access issues. Appendices include tools for organizers and a compendium of guidelines for multicultural organizing.

The report makes the following recommendations, given the fact that resident involvement in the District 7 Planning Council does not represent the racial demographics of Frogtown. The relationships District 7 staff build with community members of color will most strongly impact resident involvement. District 7 Planning Council’s organizational structure must support resident led initiatives, reflect its claim to be community-based, and include people of color at all levels of the organization in positions that afford them true power. Recommendations for developing relationships with community members of color include: 1) Identify indigenous leaders through front-line staff of cultural or neighborhood organizations; 2) “Go to them” – do not expect “them” to come to you. Support community building already occurring, and build personal relationships; 3) Form partnerships or working relationships from these personal contacts; 4) Make certain that groups directly affected by a project are engaged in its planning. Patience, flexibility, sincerity, leadership development opportunities, surrender of control, and redistribution of power are vital for organizing in a multicultural context.
Introduction

Transferring onto paper, in report form, all the ideas, excitement, and frustrations of a project that changed form during every conversation with community organizers or Frogtown residents, a project that practically took on a life of its own, is extremely challenging. However, I am eager to document my adventures these past four months so that the staff at the District 7 Planning Council* can build on them and move further ahead with inclusive organizing initiatives in Frogtown.# I intend for this report to be as reality-based as possible, so that it will be most useful to Elaine, Tait, Yeng, and future community organizers at District 7. And yet I do not want to make the customary mistake of ignoring philosophical and moral dilemmas in favor of the action/solution-oriented culture in which I am writing. Therefore, this report covers a lot of ground, and I hope organizers and readers will take the time to study it in its entirety.

First, I describe the research project and critique its structure and intention. Second, I relay residents and workers’ visions and strategies surrounding community building in Frogtown. Third, I describe three inclusive organizing ventures of other neighborhood organizations from which District 7 can learn. Lastly, I include a list of suggestions for cross-cultural organizing specifically pertaining to relationships, power, and access. Appendices on contact information, cultural and ethnic resources, guidelines for multicultural organizing, and tools for organizers are not exhaustive; however, they are a start. Although I hope my “Dos and Don’ts” of community organizing will prove practical to community organizers, and that my discussion on the ethical considerations of cross-cultural work will be useful to organizers, staff, and board members, I truly believe that as long as District Makes a sincere commitment to support

*From now on I use District 7 to refer to the District 7 Planning Council, unless otherwise stated.
#The Frogtown neighborhood in St. Paul is comprised of approximately 45% rental property and 55% homeowner property. It contains the highest concentration per capita of children of any neighborhood in St. Paul. Frogtown is roughly 30% European-American, 33% Southeast Asian, 28% African American, 5% Hispanic, 2% East African, 2% American Indian. Approximately 40% of the population is at or below the poverty line. (District 7 Planning Council)
its multicultural neighborhood as residents deem necessary, District 7 can not fail. Sure, mistakes may be made; however, such a commitment signifies a conscious decision on the part of District 7 to learn from its mistakes and keep at it, even in times of conflict. I hope that District 7 will make that commitment in the very near future.

The Project

I was hired as a Research Assistant to investigate the following questions: “What kinds of programs and/or events have other diverse neighborhoods found useful in bringing together people of different cultures to address common issues, concerns, or interests? How have other neighborhood organizations helped to foster the development of positive relationships between people of different ethnicities and cultures?” I could not deny that as a white, middle-class, college student living outside of Frogtown doing a three month internship at District 7, I was a gatekeeper. In other words, I had access to a lot of information, and the power to decide what to do (or not do) with that information. Initially I viewed my gatekeeping role, however, as an opportunity to bring voices to the table that were not usually heard, to listen as much as possible and then speak even less. Unfortunately, it took about a month before I realized that it was District 7’s table we were talking about, and that important piece of information had neither been previously acknowledged nor critiqued. In other words, the table was already set. Supposedly this project was intended to illuminate barriers so that they could be eliminated, with what I assumed to be the ultimate goal of empowering all residents. And yet no power analysis existed in the research project description. I ask District 7, How can we talk about empowerment without talking about who currently holds power?

The fact that District 7 assigned an undergraduate intern, an outsider of the Frogtown community, and someone without a community organizing background to write a manual on community organizing (meanwhile the organizers at District 7 were
unaware of the project) makes me question District 7’s commitment to making their organization more diverse. It also raises serious doubts about the sustainability of this project. One of my interviewees challenged, “Why are you doing this backwards?” He saw the research project as a “flogged process” in that it did not come from the people it will affect. I agree with him, and I saw this reflected in the project’s structure; beginning with a national literature review and following that with research of work done in the Twin Cities, I was not scheduled to return to/enter Frogtown until the last month and a half of the project, and then only to solicit resident input. A sharing and redistribution of power should be the bottom line (especially when the work involves marginalized communities), and input does not equal power. “Let me declare diversity and how we’ll celebrate it,” that same interviewee avowed. “I’d have you study the Anishanabe language so you could talk to me. Let me design a diversity model. I’d ask them to join me in smoking the pipe. I’d ask them to express forgiveness for all that they’ve done to the water, the earth, and the animals. I’d ask them to have respect for every living thing. To have respect for each other as they would for their own children. I’d ask them to share their excesses and demonstrate generosity…”

So…

This report is not a manual that outlines the “how to” steps necessary to replicate successful strategies/programs/events for engaging multiple cultures in the work of an organization, as originally intended. This is not what residents desire, and besides, such a formula does not exist. Rather, this report is a challenge to District 7 to ask residents from these “multiple cultures” what their visions for Frogtown are, and what they expect from their local neighborhood organization. It is a challenge to District 7 to leave the comfort of the office, go out into the streets of the community, and sell their services to the people they are supposed to represent. (And a warning to not do this until they can acknowledge where they’ve fallen short in the past and assure that new promises made will be followed through on). It is a challenge to District 7, as
community liaison between the City of Saint Paul and residents of East Midway, Frogtown, Lower Rice St., Mount Airy, and Capitol Heights, to explain to citizens, “This is how it really works” (meaning city process and the allocation of resources) and then to support residents in responding to issues they identify as top priorities.

Yes, I will include a paragraph identifying barriers to participation – that’s easy. However, it will be the relationships that District 7 staff build with community members of color that will truly incite more representative participation. When District 7 changes its organizational structure and culture to support the claim it makes in its brochure, “We were initiated by the city 30 years ago, but we have the power to set our own priorities today!” residents will recognize that their participation affords them personal power rather than simply legitimizing District 7’s own power. Similarly, people of color can sense when their involvement is truly desired in all stages of decision-making and when it is ambivalently and inconsistently requested. Staff may verbally promote diversity all they want, but relationships, results, and action expose the sincerity or insincerity of their words.

Thoughts on Community-Building From Frogtown, For Frogtown

During the course of this project, I was largely unsuccessful at contacting residents through District 7. I called people on the SWOT list, told them I had received their name from either Tait, Elaine, or Yeng, and explained briefly my project and position as an intern at District 7. I let people know that I was interested in scheduling a time to talk about their experience living in Frogtown and with the District 7 Planning Council, as general or as specific to the research questions as they wished. Some residents and staff suggested that the lack of response came from a growing discomfort of being studied as residents of Frogtown, low income people, and/or people of color – the general sentiment being, ‘Not another survey!’ Lack of time was certainly a factor, and I expect also some doubt that their input would change anything. Could this be
considered a reflection of their prior experience with District 7? I was frustrated and concerned by District 7’s inability to connect me with residents. However, trust takes a long time to build; as an outsider, I did not expect it up front. Furthermore, it is more appropriate for District 7 organizers to be having those conversations with residents than myself (although necessary for everyone!!!!), if the goal is to truly long-lasting relationships and make this work sustainable.

I did go some Saturday afternoons and talk with people around University and Dale. I also spoke with community members Eric Dawson, Laurel Bunker, Chaz Batiste, and Sandy’Ci Moua. I spent one afternoon at Frogtown Center Catholic Charities and talked with clients in the waiting room as well as with staff. I also had meetings with Reverend Wangard of Christ Lutheran Church, Darwin Strong of American Indians in Unity, Sharon Kaniess of the Frogtown Family Resource Center, and Ilean Her of the Asian Pacific Islander Community and Policy Center. From those meetings, it was clear that if District 7 truly wanted to build relationships with residents, multiple contacts were available through staff on the front lines of local community and cultural organizations. Honestly, I would have pursued those contacts more intensely were it not for my own moral misgivings about forcing District 7’s agenda before relationships and trust were established. Community organizers told me over and over in various interviews, you can not expect people to come to you unless you have first demonstrated your support for their causes, showed up on their turf, and just listened during multiple encounters before opening your mouth and soliciting any involvement for your cause. In retrospect, however, I am disappointed with myself that I did not do more to make those connections with residents.

Of the Frogtown residents and workers with whom I did speak, many proposed suggestions for building community and identified barriers to participation. Eric Dawson, manager of Willard’s Bar and a strong community leader, shed much wisdom on community building. He views community events as opportunities to bring people
together, not just as parties in the streets. He consistently mentioned food as a sure way to get people to come out, something as simple as setting up a grill on a street corner and holding a cookout. Remembering past Friday cook-outs at Speedy Market and the lack of advertising, Eric advised that if a cook-out is planned, one should also make a strong effort to publicize it so as not to let another missed opportunity for community building pass by. He suggested that staff from District 7 show up at block parties and outdoor celebrations during the summer in order to support community building already occurring and use such opportunities to build relationships with residents. Eric emphasized that although fliering is important, personal relationships are instrumental in getting people to come out to meetings or events. He recommended that Tait, Yeng, and Elaine doorknock together to model cross-cultural relationships and increase the likelihood that, based on a shared cultural/racial background, residents will feel like they can relate to the strangers at their door. Eric identified intimidation of primarily white and well-versed core groups at committee meetings as the main barrier to new participants, especially people of color. He suggested that when going for the first time, residents should take along a friend or neighbor for moral support, clout, and someone with whom to process the meeting afterwards.

Ilean Her, Executive Director of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, urged District 7 to put forth or support concrete programming ventures based on resources it can make available to the community. She emphasized the need for District 7 to clearly define its services and then engage in extensive outreach to get community buy-in. District 7 Planning Council should advertise what it can provide to Frogtown; for example, meeting spaces, forums or information on how to work with the police in situations of domestic violence or violent crimes, parenting programs, and information on how to clean up one’s house. Ilean recommended pulling together a core group of about five to ten youth and supporting youth organizing. She feels youth organizing is promising because youth are often times easier to work with than adults. Also, parents
are always passionate about their kids, and youth issues can serve to bring parents together to form relationships with each other. Ilean named Christ Lutheran Church and Hmong Church as spaces to tap into where strong community building already is occurring. Lastly, she stressed that two or three, not fifty, committed families are all it takes to get projects going.

As a new mother and as a staff member who works with youth at a local community organization, Laurel’s main concerns are the lack of safe spaces in which young children can play, and the teenagers hanging out on street corners in the summertime due to a shortage of better alternatives. She also discussed the isolation in which many residents of Frogtown and Summit University live. Laurel saw block clubs as a method for neighbors to get to know one another, beautify the things they do have, and sponsor events for entire families. Laurel explained, “It’s easy for black folks to complain about white folks, but then we don’t support our own stuff.” She emphasized the need for residents to patronize small businesses, and for people of color to buy the houses of elders when they pass on. She feels the Church needs to reclaim its place of importance in the community and expand its involvement with neighborhood residents. Summer programming through the Church would simultaneously make use of community assets and target multiple community needs. Brainstorming ways to bring people together, Laurel thought of replacing the green chair on University Ave. with park benches; planning rendezvous during the summer in which adults could meet on certain corners, introduce themselves, and just talk; Church-sponsored language exchange programs; forums or support groups in which single moms pass who have overcome serious hardship share knowledge and strategies with other single moms; parenting classes to which people can walk, and a site for posting community information.

Residents with whom I spoke at Catholic Charities named affordable housing, slum landlords, drug dealing, and the appearance of the neighborhood as the top
priorities for a neighborhood organization. They felt that building cross-cultural relationships and improving communication would be nice, but was on the bottom of their list of priorities and could only be seriously dealt with after they secured such basic needs as housing, child care, and employment. When I asked residents on the street what was important to them, and what was going on in their lives that they thought District 7 should know about, people mentioned church activities, housing, transportation, police brutality, gangs, drugs, and lack of jobs that pay a livable wage.

Community leaders and residents repeatedly listed the following barriers to participation in District 7 in our conversations. First, residents are unaware that it even exists. Of the twenty people I interviewed on Dale and University, only an Assistant Pastor had heard of District 7, and he did not know what it actually did. Many people suggested changing the name to make it sound more inviting and less like a city agency, if that was the image the organization was trying to push. Lack of time and attention to basic needs presented other barriers; single mothers working full days did not have the time or mental energy to expend on a meeting at which they felt unwelcome and did not understand what was being discussed. Many people mentioned Robert’s Rules of Order as a definite way to hinder open communication. Residents of other neighborhoods in the Twin Cities counteracted similar barriers with creative problem solving, as we will see from the following case studies.

Case Studies

Although much inclusive organizing is underway in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, the efforts of the North Minneapolis South East Asian Initiative, the Lyndale Neighborhood Association, and Hope Community’s Listening Project seemed most relevant to District 7 and Frogtown. The projects all emerge from the typical neighborhood organization phenomenon: associations that are supposed to be representative of their surrounding communities are nothing of the sort. Rather than
providing forums for all voices to be heard and all people to access city systems, funds, and power; they are controlled by a specific demographic of residents who function largely as gatekeepers and preservers of “the good old days.” Sometimes this group of largely white, middle class homeowners expresses regret that their neighborhood association, community council, or planning council is not more diverse. “We’ve asked people to come,” they say. “We’ve fliered, we’ve translated ‘Welcome’ into four different languages…we want them to participate, but we get no response. They must just not be interested.” Interestingly, the blame usually is placed on the so-called ‘Them’; rarely does the neighborhood organization examine its own structures and methods of conducting business for clues as to why it does not provide an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and affirming of all cultures.

North Minneapolis Southeast Asian Initiative

The North Minneapolis Southeast Asian Initiative (NMSEAI) grew out of a general dissatisfaction among local neighborhood organizations with the low levels of involvement of Southeast Asian residents. North Minneapolis has a rapidly growing Southeast Asian community; yet, participation of residents in the Cleveland Neighborhood Association and the Hawthorne and Jordan Area Community Councils has not reflected the changing demographics of the region. Organizers at the neighborhood associations expressed frustration that their attempts at outreach had proven unsuccessful. However, until Terry Wilson, Community Coordinator at Hawthorne Area Community Council, initiated the North Minneapolis Southeast Asian Initiative, no serious, systematic, and committed effort at outreach had occurred. In fact, Terry’s supervisor let him know at the beginning that, although valuable, his outreach to the Southeast Asian community should not be considered such a priority as to detract from other “agenda” items. (Terry, of course, did not listen). During interviews, members of the collaborative consistently cited time, dedication, and commitment as main factors responsible for the success NMSEAI currently enjoys. The
point? Unless one is willing to commit to a sincere and long-term engagement, backed by such resources as people and time, the effort most likely will not be sustainable.

The North Minneapolis Southeast Asian Initiative differed from comparable inclusive organizing ventures in that as the project evolved, the goals strayed away from simply legitimizing local neighborhood associations via a more diverse and “representative” participation (buzz words of the inclusive organizing movement). Instead, NMSEAI sought to develop the leadership capacities of Southeast Asian residents and increase the information flow between the city of Minneapolis and Southeast Asian communities by exploring new partnerships motivated by the concerns of Southeast Asian residents. How were such links created? What processes created a space for Southeast Asian residents to speak about pressing issues in their daily lives? Clearly, surveys were not it. Relationships were.

The involvement of the Southeast Asian Community Council (SEACC) as one of the core participants in the collaboration *from its inception* was key to the success of the initiative. Existing relationships between staff at the various neighborhood organizations, particularly that of Terry and Cha Lee at Hawthorne and SEACC, birthed natural partnerships. Staff dedicated a full year to building relationships and learning about culture through formal and informal exchanges. Non-Asian staff members met with Southeast Asians they knew and asked who further they should contact to be involved in the planning stages. People bounced around ideas over lunches, in homes, and in weekly meetings between the neighborhood and Southeast Asian community councils. In this way, NMSEAI was created among, by, and with Southeast Asian communities, rather than developed elsewhere and imposed from the outside. Clearly, an approach so organic to the community at which it was aimed reduced energy expenditures that would have arisen later upon the discovery that a white organizer’s perception of reality was not readily transferable to a differing cultural context. The initial involvement of SEACC and its Executive Director, Cha Lee (highly respected...
leaders in their community), afforded NMSEAI immediate credibility among many Southeast Asian residents of North Minneapolis.

The 1999 hiring of a Hmong man as Outreach Organizer further solidified the trust Southeast Asian residents were developing for the initiative. And Tom Yang’s newness to North Minneapolis was offset by the appearance of SEACC’s letterhead on Tom’s business card and his office space in their building. Tom spent his first three months doorknocking and talking with Southeast Asian residents in order to 1) build relationships with members of the Southeast Asian community, 2) find out about their concerns and problems, 3) identify what information would be most useful to them, and 4) tell people about NMSEAI. Monthly issue-specific forums emerged from these conversations, covering topics such as crime and safety, housing, school and youth, and business opportunities. Over 240 people participated in the first three forums, 80% Southeast Asian. During the first part of each forum, panelists ranging from police officers to bankers provided information requested by Southeast Asian residents in the initial interviews. Residents and community members used the second part of the forums to ask questions, voice concerns, and offer suggestions on how to improve ‘The System’ and communication between ‘The System’ and residents. A separate, but related, initiative on Hmong-police communication sprung from the Crime and Safety forum. Importantly, NMSEAI was both flexible enough and sufficiently committed to satisfying the needs of Southeast Asian residents that it was able to remain with the project as it changed forms.

The North Minneapolis Southeast Asian Initiative is successful because it has directly helped the Southeast Asian community through the transfer of information and the creation of community gathering spaces. It has not substantially increased turnout at Hawthorne, Jordan, or Cleveland’s neighborhood meetings. Although eager, staff at the neighborhood organizations realize that it may be the next generation when this occurs. Patience, trust, and time were mentioned often in interviews as lessons learned
from the process, as well as the importance of relationship building. Board members have doorknocked with Tom and reported extremely positive experiences. Terry’s frequent presence at Southeast Asian celebrations and community events has made a positive impression among residents, and he now serves on the board of SEACC. The more that staff left their own comfort zones and entered spaces of those whom they were trying to reach, the more success they reported in developing relationships. Ultimately, NMSEAI improved City-Southeast Asian communication and cross-cultural interaction, outside the walls of Cleveland, Hawthorne, or Jordan neighborhood associations. This is what the Lyndale Neighborhood Association would consider true neighborhood development, as the next case study demonstrates.

Lyndale Neighborhood Association

The mission of the Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA) is to the point: to build community. “We want to spread the capacity of our neighborhood, not our neighborhood organization,” Executive Director Laura Johansson explained in an interview. Laura names 1995 as the crucial point when Lyndale shifted to a proactive, empowerment-based model. The turnaround came about after a series of devastating crimes shattered neighborhood security and Lyndale residents decided to get together and take their neighborhood back. A fundamental shift in LNA’s organizational structure followed in order to best support such resident-led initiatives. Formerly-titled Organizers became Technical Assistants. Residents were now Project Leaders. And organizations within the Lyndale neighborhood once viewed as competitors for LNA programming became partner organizations.

Community-building with LNA generally follows two tracks: 1) Resident Led Initiatives, and 2) the Lyndale Program Fund. Regarding (so-called) Resident Led initiatives, the typical story at neighborhood organizations begins with a resident voicing a complaint and ends with staff attempting to solve the problem. However, instead of asking that resident, ‘What would you like to see happen?’ and then planning solutions
based on his or her input, staff at Lyndale ask, ‘What would you like to see happen, what will you do about it, and how can we best support you?’ A Lyndale resident outlines the purpose, goals, expected outcomes, time line, and success indicators of his/her idea in a one-page LNA Project Plan. Staff and project leader mentors are available for assistance. In accordance with the theme of the project, the resident then consults one of the following Program Committees for guidance and support: Environment, Youth and Family, Art Culture, Crime and Drug, or Housing and Economic Development. Once per month LNA’s Steering Committee reviews project plans and offers a recommendation to the General Membership based only on whether it is 1) resident led, 2) contributes to LNA’s mission of building community, and 3) if resources are available to support it. Again, the Steering Committee offers only a recommendation; the General Membership holds the final decision-making authority at its monthly meeting where supporters, beneficiaries, and committee members are encouraged to come support the project plan for the vote.

The structure of LNA and the project plan process reflect a transfer of power from a limited number of people involved in traditional governing bodies of neighborhood organizations to a large number of people who live in the neighborhoods. In contrast to the same twelve committee members continuously making decisions and allocating funds, LNA has opened its doors for hundreds of people to plan and implement projects, thereby accessing power and resources. Laura points out that if you tell people their ideas count, you have to back that up with a structure that supports them. Directing the steering committee to base its recommendation on fairly limited and objective criteria, and then granting the general membership final say removes the gate-keeping role the fifteen to eighteen traditional board members customarily retain. Such a decentralized, grass-roots approach is conducive to widespread and diverse participation.

The second track, Lyndale Program Fund, operates according to a similar philosophy. LNA recognizes that community building is already taking place through
numerous venues including churches, schools, and recreation centers. Rather than competing with and duplicating such efforts, LNA aims to enhance and build on those that already exist. By re-granting funds and partnering with community leaders, LNA can expand its support from the four programs it might have run out of its own organization to ninety programs in the Lyndale community. Again, we see a shift in focus from building a neighborhood association to building a neighborhood. At the Annual Fall Review Meeting, parents, youth, and social service providers come together to set community programming priorities for the following year. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are sent out to program providers based on their ability to meet those priorities. Parents and members of the Youth and Family Committee review RFPs and offer funding recommendations which are then reviewed by the Steering Committee and voted on by the General Membership. In early spring the funded providers and LNA come together to network and organize the Annual Doorknock and Summer Sampler Fair, joint outreach efforts where social service providers advertise their services to Lyndale residents. Accountability occurs when youth and parents choose their activities, as funding follows attendance. Clearly, the Lyndale Program Fund creates many opportunities for relationship building and networking, while simultaneously ensuring that Lyndale residents receive the social service programming they feel they need.

Community building with LNA assumes other forms as well. Latina residents created a group called Mujeres Latinas en accion that functions as a support group providing both resources and social/cultural sustenance. Projects of the group include a resource center and a Spanish language exchange program where residents engage in one-on-one conversations in order to learn each other’s languages. Cross-cultural relationships develop naturally from this process. Mujeres Latinas en accion also sponsor cultural events celebrating Latino/a culture. Their annual posada pre-winter holiday festival and gift drive has evolved from a Latino celebration to a community-wide
event. A group of Latina women wheeling their children in strollers now participates in LNA’s annual walk-a-thon and thus invested new life and meaning into an event that traditionally represented white homeowners. Every year Mujeres Latinas en accion chooses new and more events of the neighborhood in which to participate. Importantly, such involvement is not coerced, and/or simply for the sake of participation; rather, it is on their own accord that the Latinas participate - because they have something to gain from participation, because cross-cultural relationships developed naturally over time, and because they are more familiar with the process and have their own support systems strongly in place.

Lastly, LNA’s ‘Block Clubs Deluxe’ model exemplifies additional alternatives to the “death by meetings” syndrome of many local neighborhood organizational approaches to community building. Via three to seven contacts per block (blocks are self-defined based on existing relationships and each contact represents one issue-area committee), LNA created a communication infrastructure to make information as accessible as possible to residents. Indigenous leaders on each block sign a contract that they will not have to attend any meetings, and that they will commit to flier at least eight times per year. Contacts may attend cross-block club meetings based on the specific issue area they represent. Not only does the ‘Block Clubs Deluxe’ model assure that practical information is passed on to residents, it gives neighbors an excuse to talk with one another, and thus facilitates community building. Residents doorknocking with fellow residents builds relationships among community members in a way that no neighborhood organizer can do by himself or herself. Again, decentralization leads to more widespread participation and a redistribution of leadership.

Hope Community’s Listening Project

Although Hope Community’s Listening Project explores a different process of building community than NMSEAI and LNA, it shares the same values of relationship
building and appreciation of diversity. Jackie Byers, Lead Organizer of the Listening Project, explains in her report, “The idea was to create space for people to come together as a community to challenge each other around the meaning of ‘community’” (1). Furthermore, the Listening Project hoped to reach voices not usually heard in public discussions on community issues or in local neighborhood associations. Through one-on-one meetings with contacts she found through community organizations, Jackie developed a group of about fifteen leaders. Most often front-line staff in local organizations, this group of leaders demonstrated a commitment to support their community day in and day out. Jackie explains, “They are leaders because they bring people with them, by supporting new leadership and developing skills. These are not leaders who were given some prescribed authority by the city or who became experts through numerous degrees. These are leaders that move things even when it goes unnoticed” (2).

Once Jackie pulled together the initial core group members, she asked them for their thoughts on the Listening Project. Do you think this is a good idea? How should it be designed? Who should we talk to? The group validated the importance of listening in community building, specifically the importance of listening to people not usually given the opportunity to speak. They named the following groups: cultural organizations, youth, people of color, homeless people, tenants, and seniors. Importantly, leaders expressed caution against tokenizing people. In an interview, Jackie explained that although participants and relationships in the process were deliberate, they were also natural, and the Listening Project was structured in such a way as to constantly present opportunities for leadership development and personal and professional growth. At the initial gathering, each leader agreed to help organize a group of people to dialogue about the meaning of community.

By the end of the project, over three hundred people had participated in about thirty listening sessions. Because the sessions were organized around relationships
that the core leader already held, conversations most often occurred among people that had something in common (recovery community, work, job training program, residence in the same shelter, etc.). Most took place on the group’s ‘turf,’ so to speak, as Jackie and the leader who organized the group went to where the members naturally gathered. They tried to keep groups small, preferably less than ten people. If a leader did not feel comfortable facilitating, Jackie facilitated the session herself. Oftentimes co-facilitators did not come from the group they were facilitating, so as to model in process the intentions of the Listening Project as a whole, particularly regarding the necessity of relationship building/networking, stepping outside of one’s own comfort zone, and achieving a sense of personal power. For example, leaders who played subservient roles to professionals in their daily lives found themselves facilitating a listening session that contained a room packed full of professionals.

Most conversations occurred over food. Questions posed to the group included: What is community? What are the strengths of your community? What are the challenges or weaknesses of your community? How do you define leadership? Who are the leaders in your community? What would be your ideal community? How do you think other people see your community? What would make your community more powerful? As a facilitator, Jackie made no claims to neutrality; her bias leaned towards the importance of understanding and accessing power. During one session at a shelter, the dialogue veered off into participants blaming specific cultural groups for the affordable housing crisis in the Twin Cities. Jackie ended up putting on an organizing training for the group at a later date that included a power analysis specific to housing issues; ultimately, participants realized that fighting over crumbs ensured that no significant redistribution of power or resources would take place. The flexibility of the Listening Project allowed other projects to shoot off from the initial dialogues based on participants’ interests and needs. And the Listening Project soon took on a web-like or circular structure as participants from listening sessions joined the core leaders group
and formed other listening circles. Relationships built during the project also led to participants becoming involved in each others organizations or existing community development efforts including the Hope Community. Lastly, discussions generated during the listening sessions gave community organizers a great deal to think about as they moved ahead with their work in Phillips.

Briefly, themes that occurred over and over in listening session groups are as follows. First, that “community” is complex, multi-layered, and overlapping. All different kinds of communities exist, many without neat boundaries. When neighborhood organizations define community geographically, they dismiss or limit the power of cultural communities. Furthermore, neighborhood organizations in areas that contain high percentages of rental property and thus house fairly transient populations discourage tenants from taking ownership of their neighborhoods when they make it clear that community is geographic and only about where you currently reside. Many participants expressed concern that neighborhood associations and block clubs operate in a top down manner, and customarily are composed of mainly white homeowners. They articulated barriers to participation in local neighborhood associations, including intimidation from lack of familiarity and understanding, language, time, transportation, lack of child care, and racial and economic discrimination. Clearly, community building thrived in a variety of spaces; it was not limited to local neighborhood associations or block club meetings. Listening sessions often affirmed the value and power of participants’ own communities, however marginalized or disconnected they felt from the larger society. For example, during one discussion on feelings of invisibility and alienation, a member pointed out, “but we are a community together” (3). And while “we need to get the community together more” was one of the most common suggestions of the dialogues, participants also realized the necessity of coming to the table backed by the clout of one’s own constituency, so as to avoid tokenization and instead possess true bargaining power.
The above case studies are useful histories from which we can learn. Clearly, each neighborhood organization serves a unique mix of people and operates within a specific political atmosphere. Thus, we should not consider the case studies as models to be duplicated; but rather as examples from which we can strive for the same successes in our own neighborhood and avoid repeating mistakes. The following is a brief analysis of why NMSEAI, LNA, and Hope Community’s Listening Project achieved such success. Time, dedication, and commitment were evident in all three organizing ventures. Staffs’ own integrity was backed by solid organizational support. Organizers involved residents and cultural organizations at all stages of the process, so that the projects were actually relevant to the communities’ needs, and participants were able to feel a sense of ownership. Each organization learned the importance of building relationships and gaining trust - and that such messy but rewarding processes could not be forced, faked, or rushed. Organizers viewed residents as the experts, and not only told them that their voices counted, but followed through on their ideas and complaints. Flexibility was vital for the success of each venture; a constantly evolving project demonstrates that organizers are truly listening, creativity is thriving (usually), and that leadership development is occurring. In other words, gatekeeping institutions are transferring control and power roles are being rewritten. Although staff at NMSEAI originally wanted to increase turn out of Southeast Asians at neighborhood association meetings, they learned that a culturally-specific approach would serve the Southeast Asian community most effectively. Similarly, LNA’s Latinas Mujeres en accion (as well as their youth organizing) reflected a greater skepticism from people of color than white organizers of people of color that bringing everyone together is the most effective solution. People with existing relationships or people who shared something in common came together first, and then partnerships or coalition building occurred later. When the listening project brought together people who were not used to being in the same room, intentions were clearly stated and the process was deliberate. Creativity is vital for the
creation of alternative spaces in which people can come together, and an atmosphere that feels welcoming and respectful of people from all walks of life. Participants of the Listening Project affirmed that a complex structure of indigenous leadership exists within communities that are commonly marginalized from public discussions and mainstream spaces. And Lyndale’s asset-based model of community development showed that populations often labeled by outsiders as dysfunctional or depressed are actually quite rich in social capital and motivation. Debra Rogers, of VOICE of Phillips, came up with a formula that, although not particularly catchy, sums up lessons learned from NMSEAI, LNA, and Hope Community: “\(I + R + O + L = A\): Information + Relationships + Opportunity + Leadership = Action.”

### Advice From Community Organizers and Consultants For Community Organizers

**Relationships, Relationships, Relationships**

“‘White culture’ affects your sense of rhythm. You forget how to relate to people, how to live life. An organizer without rhythm is out of step with the people. There is no objective model for organizing. You need to feel out the rhythm of the people you’re working with. You do this through relationships.”

- Maria Reinat-Pumarejo

As the liaison between the City of St. Paul and residents, District 7 inherited an Anglo-European value system that traditionally focused on action, solutions, and outcome. Regarding cultural value systems, this is not the norm. Most cultures place
more weight on process and relationships.

- Take time to build relationships through formal and informal exchanges. The development of trust does not adhere to a predetermined schedule or timeline. Practice ‘Being’ instead of ‘Doing’. Come from the heart instead of from the mind.

- Organize by strategic, intentional relationships. Real change will only occur if all parties involved are motivated - acknowledge those motivations and self-interests up front. Shared experience, common interests, or a partnership based on a need and an ability to provide for that need bring people together. So does money!

- A chain is as strong as its weakest link. Start small and establish trust and commitment. No matter how many people you can turn out, the project will not be effective or sustainable if the relationships are not there to back it up.

- Step outside of your comfort zone. However, be aware of from where you are coming (your own culture, social location, and biases. Approach interactions with people as a fellow human being, not just as a representative of your organization. Attend events of other cultural or community organizations, and reflect on how various cultures view community and leadership.

- Listen before you speak. Approach people on their turf. Do not solicit involvement for your cause until you have shown support for their cause. Let working partnerships evolve from relationships.

- Network, engage in coalition building, partner with cultural, faith-based, and other community groups. Partnerships based on a cooperative spirit (i.e. a win-win attitude) where no one has to buy in or sell out are the most successful.

- Realize that you are not starting with a clean slate. People of color and low income people may be mistrustful and skeptical of your project based on negative experiences with social service agencies, city government, broken promises, surveys, or past experiences with your organization. Acknowledge mistakes of your organizations if you are challenged on them, and validate that mistrust. Use clear,
honest communication, and promise only what you can deliver.

- Actions speak louder than words. This is especially true in cross-cultural and cross-lingual interactions. Facial expressions, body language, and ultimately, Results will have the most impact on trust.

Power, Empowerment, and the Relinquishing of Power

**Accountability:** Acceptance of a role that fits within a cultural, political, and social perspective that leads to the liberation of people of color from racism, oppression, and cultural subordination. It requires a commitment to the vision of African-Americans and other oppressed peoples to assume self-determination over those areas deemed by them to directly affect their lives.

**Gatekeeping:** Controlling the pace of social change.

- The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond

As liaisons between the City and its residents, neighborhood organizations function as gatekeepers. District 7 is a gatekeeper: it has access to information, money, and power. Until it relinquishes some of that power, it will not be truly accountable to its residents.

- Remember that a power group trying to engage the powerless will never result in an equal relationship. How will the neighborhood organization give up some of its power? How can it empower low income residents, residents of color, and tenants?

- Money is power. Make funds available for people of color to gain or further experience in leadership and organizational development. Make money available for resident led initiatives.

- Knowledge is power: Aim to increase residents’ knowledge base through the transfer of information on the functioning of city systems that directly affect their daily lives. Make it not just public, but accessible. Widely advertise free or subsidized services, loans, scholarships, internship opportunities, etc.
• Involve community members in the planning stages of projects that will impact their lives. Because residents, not neighborhood organizations, are the experts on issues that directly affect them, the chance that the project will be successful increases the earlier residents are involved. Residents feel a sense of ownership and commitment if they are involved from the beginning.

• Be accountable to people of color. Whites must take leadership from people of color. Organizations working in communities of color must take leadership from residents of color. Mandate in your bylaws that the racial demographic of the board represent that of the community, or require that people of color fill at least fifty percent of board seats. Intentional quotas will extend beyond tokenism when people of color hold true power.

• Be honest about where you have fallen short in the past. District 7 Planning Council must acknowledge that, despite such intentions, it is not community-based right now. Instead of adapting people of color to fit into an organization that is not accountable to them, change your organization. Surrender some control, and support community building that comes out of other venues. View community building as legitimate no matter where it takes place - it is not your role to judge.

• Make decisions in the room, not out of the room.

• Leave the safety of your office, and take board members with you. Do not expect people to come to you - go to them.

• Aim to work yourself out of a job. Your work should lead to leadership development, not just effective programming. Encourage a culture of mentorship rather than the hoarding of information.

Logistics, Outreach, and Access

“Does 'Barriers to participation’ mean ‘Barriers to participation [in my process]’?”
What other processes are there that might be more conducive to participation? What do those alternative processes look like?"

- Sandra Richardson

- Make sure staff are racially/culturally representative of the community. Hire staff who live in the community. Trust is more quickly gained by “insiders” than “outsiders.”

- Personally deliver welcome packets to new residents. Provide in them practical information on schools, religious organizations, cultural organizations, shopping, housing, and direct service providers.

- Sell your services. Sit at a table on the sidewalk in the middle of summer with pamphlets on what you can offer your community, and stay there all day. Or set up a grill at a strategic spot and engage people in conversation as they eat a hamburger. Get to know residents, and if a working relationship grows out of the conversation, that’s great.

- Go to them - if you don’t ask, it appears that you don’t care. Take advantage of community celebrations to make your face known to residents and build relationships. Do more outreach to ethnic organizations. Go to culturally-specific events or events held by other organizations. Network with faith groups.

- Contact front-line staff at community organizations (direct service, cultural, etc.) and ask them for contacts or to facilitate a meeting with someone who they know may be interested in working with you. Whereas Executive Directors are not always well-connected to community members, front-line staff usually hold solid relationships.

- Make it personal. Use individual contacts and established relationships to disseminate information. Most cultures will respond more readily to a conversation in person or a phone call than to letters, fliers, etc. Whereas many European-
Americans view fliers and mailings as efficient, and are accustomed to communicating in such a manner, people from more relational-based cultures may view this practice as cold and impersonal and therefore will not turn out. (This is especially important with Hmong people who do not traditionally have a written language). Take advantage of advertising and outreach opportunities to build relationships.

- Make the table together. Rather than bringing people of diverse cultures together around your table, make it together, or just throw the table away entirely. This means involving representatives from all groups in planning the gathering: food, entertainment, agenda, structure.

The following are suggestions from experienced organizers. However, residents and members are the true experts - they will know what will make them come to a meeting, and what will make them come back.

- Provide and advertise FREE transportation, child care, and food at all gatherings. Make sure the child care provider is someone to whom all residents will entrust their children (this demands cultural-awareness and sensitivity). If the gathering draws many cultures together, rotate the variety of food; for example, serve E. African at one meeting, Mexican the next, etc..

- Where and When? Hold meetings in a neutral space if diverse groups of people are attending. Alternate meeting days and times to encourage more widespread participation. Hold culturally-specific meetings in a natural gathering space, such as a home, community center, church, or cultural organization (depending on the group). Choose a time that is most culturally-appropriate for that group; for example, if members attend mosque on Saturday, choose another day. Typically, weekday evenings fit into people’s schedules the best.

- Provide translation at all meetings. Use community members to translate. If
possible, meet with translators or key community members in advance to discuss concepts, as a literal translation of some terms is not possible or makes no sense (example: re-zoning). Know that not everything said will be translated because the translator may not be viewed as a neutral messenger and could get denounced after the meeting for what he or she communicated. Make sure the translator is generally respected by the community.

- Be extremely sensitive to process. Not everyone operates by Robert’s Rules of Order, (most do not)! Some people suggest that all attendees should introduce themselves and offer a bit of neutral information about themselves. Everyone who wants it should have the opportunity to speak once before one person speaks twice. The person or people planning the gathering should get input on culturally-appropriate and inclusive processes if they do not already know; assumptions are invitations for misunderstandings.

**APPENDIX A**

**Community Contacts Suggested by Residents and Workers of Frogtown (For Identifying Community Leaders, Networking, and Partnerships)**

**African American Mentoring Project**
Donna Morris
905 Selby Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
*Group of teens from community.*

**Asian Business Community**

**Centro Legal, Inc.**
2575 University Ave. W., suite #135
St. Paul, MN 55114-1024
(612) 642-1890, 1-800-245-5753
*Bilingual community law office, legal service for Latina battered women.*

**Christ Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill**
Reverend David Wangard
Frogtown Center Catholic Charities
Melvin Giles
633 University Avenue W.
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 265-5712 or (651) 222-1250
Collaborative, interdivisional program of Catholic Charities. Community Building, Community Internship Program, Eviction Prevention Program, Family Center, Frogtown Pluralism Circle, Peace Initiative, Law Center, and more.

Frogtown Family Center
849 University Ave. (basement level)
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 205-4260
“Making systems work for families.” Collaborate with other neighborhood groups to break down barriers to and fill gaps in services currently available. Culturally-specific parenting classes, Community baby showers, Youth Leadership Training and Mentoring, and more.
Chente Vu - Hmong Parenting Group: (651) 205-4262

Frogtown Family Resource Center
377 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103
(651) 290-8376
Parenting information and support, informal play and learning for children, adult education, community resource information and referrals. English Language Learning, Culturally-Specific Parenting Groups, Tri-lingual Story Sharing, and more.

Hmong American Partnership
Spruce Tree Center, 1600
(651) 642 - 9601
Self-sufficiency and youth and family programs to Hmong, and other new immigrant groups in the Twin Cities area. Employment programs, Education and training programs, After-school program, Family support project, and more.

Hmong Church

Hmong Funeral Home
625 Dale St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55103-1640
(651)293-1934
Hmong funeral services and support.
Hmong National Organization
Valeng Cha
345 University Ave. W. suite #205
St. Paul, MN 55103
(612) 290-2343
(651)228-7272
Non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Hmong culture and improving education in the Hmong community.

Indian Affairs Council
525 Park St. #303
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 284-3567

Lao Family Center
320 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55103
(651) 221-0069
Family Employment program to overcome barriers to employment, help Hmong families achieve self-sufficiency, Youth and Family programs to strengthen Hmong individuals and families, English Language program, and more.

LEAP Forward For Children
919 Lafond Ave., Building C
St. Paul, MN 55104-2108
Community Collaboration that creates, coordinates, and supports after-school and summer programs for children.

Mexica Multicultural Education Charter School
291 E. Belviere St.
St. Paul, MN 55107
(651) 222-1423 or (651) 602-9333
“An adventure in the development of academic excellence through community participation... committed to developing meaningful relationships with corporations, small businesses, all levels of government and nonprofit organizations.”

Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
Reverend James Thomas
451 W. Central Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 227-4444

Pilgrim Baptist Church
Pastor Dr. Robert L. Stephens, Sr.
Recreation Centers

South St. Paul Area Learning Center
141 6th Ave. S.
S. St. Paul, MN 55075
(651) 450-9966
Alternative high school. Educational programs tailored to meet the needs of at-risk learners and to help each student earn a high school diploma.

Southeast Asian Action Coalition

St. James A.M.E. Church
624 Central Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 227-4151

St. Peter Claver
375 Oxford St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 646-1797

Thomas Dale Block Club
Johnny Howard
1034 Lafond Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 642-5989 or (651) 642-5959
Mission to build a sense of pride in and for the Thomas-Dale community. Focus on crime and safety, youth and seniors, housing, and the perception of community.

Vietnam Center
Vy Pham
1159 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55104
612-821-4525.

Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota
Vann Saroyan Phan
Vietnam Center
1159 University Ave., suite #1
St. Paul, MN 55104
Serves the Vietnamese community in the Twin Cities metro area. Targets such areas as Elders, Employment, Youth, Family, Health, and Resettlement.
Young Life
373 St. Anthony Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103
(651) 291-8475
Non-denominational Christian youth group.

Youth Leadership for Vital Communities
Bryan Anderson, Coordinator
919 Lafond Ave., Building C.
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 659-6034
Youth leadership through experiential education, youth-adult partnerships, and service-learning opportunities. Focus on thriving with diversity while building economically viable communities.
APPENDIX B

Residents Willing to Speak with Staff at District 7 Planning Council
Regarding Issues of Community Building or Cross-Cultural Organizing

NOTE: Resident names and contact information are unpublished in this version of the document.
APPENDIX C

Potential Consultants for Organizational Assessment, Board Development, Structural Change, or Cross-Cultural Training

Change Architects
Doroth Mayer
(651)722-8869
Independent contractor supporting neighborhoods to develop strong working partnerships between neighborhood volunteers, staff, and government partners. Can help with organizational assessment, strategic planning, board development, working with diverse residents.

CHIA Consulting
Chia Youyee Vang
2616 E. 24th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 721-1778
Research, Evaluation, Facilitation, and Cross-Cultural Training.

Full Circle Communications
Sam Grant
(715) 825-2399, (612) 970-1685, or (651) 772-6135
Teaches workshops and does customized training on the “collective leadership development” model, which encourages existing leaders to continually empower new leaders. Also provides services in the areas of strategic planning, board training, organizational assessment and change, diversity training, sustainable economic development and comprehensive community development.

Madii Institute
Susan Blood
22218 Chaparral Lane
Rogers, Minnesota 55374
(763) 498-8429
http://www.madii.org
Training on asset-based community development, learning communities, system dynamics, networking technology, community leadership and community transformation. Consultant for VOICE in Phillips.

Sankofa
Sandra K. Richardson
3833 Portland Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(612) 823-2245
skrichardson@qwest.net
Organizational development, strategic planning, cross-cultural mediation. Consultant for Westside Family Center.

APPENDIX D

Local Cultural and Ethnic Resources, Compiled by the Center for Neighborhoods

African American
African Immigrant
American Indian
Asian, Pacific Islander
Latino / Chicano
Russian / Eastern European

Contact Center for Neighborhoods for more information

Center for Neighborhoods
2600 East Franklin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55406
612-339-3480
612-339-3481 (fax)
www.center4neighborhoods.org
info@center4neighborhoods.org
APPENDIX E

Inclusive Organizing Activities in the Twin Cities, Compiled by the Center for Neighborhoods (Useful for Peer Contacts and Support)

Contact Center for Neighborhoods for more information

Center for Neighborhoods
2600 East Franklin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55406
612-339-3480
612-339-3481 (fax)
www.center4neighborhoods.org
info@center4neighborhoods.org
APPENDIX F

Recommendations for Further Contact

Welcome Packet
Samples from the Hamline/Midway Coalition. Call Cathy at (651) 646-1984.

Culturally-Specific Food Do's and Don'ts
Westside Family Center has an excellent resource on planning what to serve at multicultural gatherings. Call Maria at (651) 205-4264.

“I’ll supply the paint if you can get a group together.”
From Petey Mitchell’s Brush With Kindness Project that District 7 may want to replicate. Call Petey at (651) 771-1152 x19. He could also offer advice on culturally-specific task forces and working with faith-based organizations.

Partnering of Neighborhood Organizations with Cultural Organizations
Call Elena at (612) 722-4817 for more information about whom to contact.
APPENDIX G

Compendium of Guidelines for Multicultural Organizing

“Cultural Diversity / Inclusiveness”
“Guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration “
Hand-out: “Two Views of Racism and Solutions”
“Race, Ethnicity, and Community Development - Implications for Policy and Practice”
Discussion of Organizer’s Levels of Community Involvement and Profile of a Successful Organizer
Tips for Cross-Cultural Collaboration
Discussion of American Indian view of Leadership
Hand-out/Discussion of Leadership, Leading Effective Meetings
Hand-out: “Basic Guidelines for Culturally-Respectful Discussion Groups”
“Self-Assessment: High/Low Context”
A Community Builder’s Tool Kit (see sections ‘Tackle Racism First’; ‘Draw Strength from Multicultural Identities’; ‘Bridge Language Barriers’) Note: Community Builder’s Tool Kit is not included. It can be obtained via the Democracy/Race/Culture Project, Institute for Democratic Renewal, School of Politics & Economics, Claremont Graduate University, California.
APPENDIX H

Tools for Organizers

Sample LNA Project Plan Form
Sample LNA Budget Request Form
Sample LNA Completed Project Plans
Sample LNA Guide to Summer Activities for Neighborhood Youth
Hand-Out: “Asset-Based Community Development”
Hand-Out: “Community Assets Map”
Hand-Out: “Capacity Inventory Flow Chart”
Hand-Out: “Capacity Inventories Can Work in the Phillips Neighborhood
Sample Individual Capacity Inventory
Cardstorming Exercise (Activity to Stimulate Group Discussion and Connection)
Paired Interviews (Ice-Breaker or Introductions)
“Shake your assets” (Group Game for Asset-based Community Building. Note: Use index cards, write a skill on one side, a need on the other)
Hand-Out: the Spiral Model (Approach to Organizing)
Table of Community Organizing Models

To see the full report, order a hard copy
APPENDIX I

Original Project Description

Responsibilities of Research Assistant:
The undergraduate student will help identify programs and events developed by other neighborhoods to bring people together from different cultures to address common issues and concerns. Researcher tasks will include: 1) identification of program leads from staff and organizational leaders; 2) literature review; 3) contact neighborhood organizations (at least five) with successful programs and collect written information and conduct interviews with key participants; 4) prepare preliminary report to present with staff to community task force; 5) follow-up research as indicated from feedback. Final written report will be a manual that outlines successful programs/events that have proven successful in bringing people together from different cultures to address common issues and concerns. The manual will include resource people; a bibliography, and “how to” steps necessary to replicate these efforts in Frogtown. A community and faculty mentor will support the research assistant.

Workplan:
By the end of February: Complete research including literature review and interviews with other organizations working in multicultural communities.

First half of March: Compile data, formulate focus group presentation and questions.

Second half of March: Facilitate focus groups with residents to gather input on what the research demonstrates and how it applies to District 7 communities.

By the end of April: Compile a “how-to” manual outlining strategies/programs/events for engaging multiple cultures in the work of an organization.

There will be the possibility of an extension to mid-May for final completion of the project if needed.
APPENDIX J

My Contacts During Project

Chaz Baptiste, Resident
Laurel Bunker, Community Member
Jackie Byers, Hope Community
Center for Minneapolis Neighborhoods (Gretchen and Sean)
Jay Clark, CURA
Community Members, Intersection of Dale and University, Frogtown Center
Eric Dawson, Resident
“Fostering a Racism Free Community” (Retreat and group meetings)
Melvin Giles, Frogtown Center
Teresa Glass, Frogtown Center
Sam Grant, Center for Community-Based Learning, Metro State
Amy Grielick, New Village East Village, Powderhorn Residence Group
Andrea Hanberg, Seward Towers
Ilean Her, Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
“How to Lead Meetings that Really Work” Training
Cathy Lue, Alliance for a Prejudice-Free Community, Hamline-Midway Coalition
Laura Johansson, Lyndale Neighborhood Association
Sharon Kaniess, Frogtown Family Resource Center
Doroth Mayer, Change Architects
Maria McNamara, Westside Family Center
Petey Mitchell, Better Together Project, East Side Neighborhood Development Company
Sandy'Ci Moua, Resident
People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond National Training
Char Perry, Jordan Community Council
John Poupart, American Indian Policy Center
Debra Rogers, VOICE in Phillips, Minneapolis Foundation
Barb Rose, Wilder
Darwin Strong, St. Paul American Indians in Unity
Joan Vanhala, Citizen Leadership Development Initiative, Family & Children’s Svices
Reverend David Wangard, Christ Lutheran Church
Terry Wilson, Hawthorne Community Council
Chia Youyee Vang, CHIA Consulting
Michael Yang, Urban Coalition
Tom Yang, North Minneapolis Southeast Asian Initiative
APPENDIX K

Sample Dialogue Questions

What’s important to you in your community?

What’s going on in your life that you think District 7 should know about?

What should a neighborhood organization do to support you in your daily life?

What issues of race or culture come up in your day to day life?

What are some barriers to you feeling like your neighborhood organization is for you? How can we turn those barriers into strategies for improvement?

Are you involved in your neighborhood organization? What would make you more involved? What is it you are involved in?

Have your participated in any activities in your neighborhood? Which ones?* Have you participated in any activities presented by District 7? How was it? Are you interested in working with District 7? Why or why not? How would you like to participate? What would encourage you? What would stand in your way?

What do staff at District 7 need to know about _____ culture for _____ to feel comfortable participating in neighborhood planning?* What are some ways language barriers can be overcome? What do _____ stakeholders need to know to work with their neighborhood organizations?

Where is District 7 serving the neighborhood and where is it not?

What kind of impact does becoming more culturally competent have on community?

Where do we have to start to get from here to there?

Are there spaces in Frogtown where community building/relationship building/cross-cultural interaction is going on that you think District 7 should know about?

Are there community leaders doing this work whom District 7 should contact?

*Sequence adopted from Doroth Mayer
What can neighborhood organizations do to support community building already happening in communities of color?

What are five key ways to improve cross-cultural relationships in District 7?

APPENDIX L

Works Consulted and Additional Resources


Intended for individuals and groups engaged in community-building, especially for those who have not yet seriously dealt with racism in their daily work. Explores leadership, governance, tackling racism, multicultural identities, and bridging language barriers in extremely accessible format.

Community Matters v6 n3 Summer 1999.


Discusses multicultural community organizing and cultural competence in the context of social justice. Useful examination of the importance of understanding one’s own culture and social location. Honest, reality-based.


Includes cultural-specific information, including cultural sayings and accessible charts contrasting beliefs values and practices of one group with those of other cultures.


Explores role of power and race in the planning, practice, and evaluation of comprehensive community-building initiatives. Considers “insider-outsider” tension. Based on interviews and focus groups with community residents, technical assistance providers, and staff, funders, and researchers of community-building initiatives.

Websites

Center for Community Change www.communitychange.org  
Center for Neighborhoods www.center4neighborhoods.org  
Loka Institute www.loka.org  
National Community Building Network www.ncbn.org

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.