



**funders'
collaborative
on youth
organizing**

2010 Youth Organizing Field Scan

Alexie Torres-Fleming, Pilar Valdes, Supriya Pillai

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Funder's Collaborative on Youth Organizing

20 Jay Street, Suite 210B
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(212) 725-3386

info@fcyo.org

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Funders' Collaborative Youth Organizing

The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO), founded in 2000, is the only national intermediary that is dedicated to increasing philanthropic resources for youth organizing groups and to promoting the leadership of low-income youth of color in social justice organizing. Youth organizing is an innovative youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organizing and advocacy, and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities. FCYO is dedicated to advancing youth organizing as a strategy for civic engagement and social transformation. Our mission is to cultivate resources for young people taking action to build healthy and equitable communities. We bridge funders and organizers to support youth organizing and its commitment to systemic change and social justice.

FCYO employs a multi-level capacity building model that integrates grantmaking and group learning, leveraging and funder education, and research and dissemination. FCYO builds the direct capacity of youth organizing groups through grantmaking initiatives as well as through our periodic field gatherings. We cultivate financial resources for the broader youth organizing field through our leveraging and funder education efforts to promote youth organizing as an important social justice and civic engagement approach. Finally, we build and expand the base of knowledge on youth organizing and its specific relevance as a strategy for social change through innovative research and publications.

ABOUT THE 2010 FIELD SCAN

FCYO conducts national field scans using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research to document trends, challenges and opportunities. Field scans provide an opportunity to inform FCYO's strategy and to help advocate for the field of youth organizing.

The last comprehensive survey of the number of youth organizing groups in the country was done in 2004 by the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and FCYO, which identified approximately 120 organizations, projects and intermediaries spread throughout the United States. In 2004, we found that the majority of organizations working in youth organizing have budgets of less than \$600,000 and most of the oldest groups had been in existence for 10 years or less. The highest concentration of youth organizing groups were clustered in the Northeast and California and the top three issues addressed by these groups were education, juvenile justice, and the environment.

Since then we noted, anecdotally, two trends: 1) there has been an attrition of organizations in the field and many of the organizations that we knew of in 2004 no longer exist, including a key intermediary, LISTEN, Inc.; 2) simultaneously, there has been a growth of organizations committed to intergenerational youth organizing.

While youth organizing groups had always had a predominantly low-income youth of color membership, we noted, at that time, an increase in the number of Latino youth engaged in immigrant rights organizing.

Over the past year, we consulted our database, practitioners and funders and the field and identified 160 organizations spread throughout the United States. 86% of these groups responded to an online survey gathering basic information such as budget size, issue and campaign areas, geographic representation, organizational structure and youth development supports provided to young people, etc. In addition, in-depth conversations with representatives (either in person, or via phone) of more than 80 organizations were held to further understand aspects of the online survey as well as to inform a new strategic direction that we saw emerging from the field: the need to support a leadership pipeline to bolster the progressive, social justice movement utilizing youth organizing as an effective entry point and connecting youth organizers intentionally to further opportunities for leadership development and expression as they age. This document is an analysis of the online survey and in-person conversations held nationally. We are pleased to present you with the 2010 Field Scan: the State of the Field of Youth Organizing as we celebrate 10 years of supporting the development of youth organizing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth organizing is an innovative strategy which powerfully engages young people, particularly low-income youth of color, to develop and implement community organizing skills. The vast majority of the youth organizing field, on behalf of whom FCYO advocates, works with youth between the ages of 13-19, in and out of school. The 2010 Field Scan analyzes data from the respondents of a national survey as well as in-depth conversations with the field. We identified 160 organizations for our survey and we received an 86% response rate. In addition we held focus group discussions and one-on-one conversations with more than 80 organizations nationally. (Please see the full list of organizations in the Appendix section of this document.)

Key Campaign and Community Issues

In our 2004 Field Scan we saw the growth of education organizing in the field of youth organizing. Today it is the issue that most youth organizing groups are working on (65%). Other issue areas of concern and around which most groups are organizing include racial justice (50%), environmental justice (37%), economic justice (38%), juvenile justice (36%), immigration rights (34%), and issues relating to gender and young women (30%). We were surprised to learn that many groups' campaigns focus on health (37%)—a new trend since our last scan.

The work of youth organizing and community organizing is vastly multi-issue. Furthermore, youth organizers approach the issues they are working on in their campaigns **intersectionally**. The long-time school-to-prison-pipeline campaigns illustrate this clearly—young people see the connection between the poor qualities of their local schools and the prisons being built next door. Youth organizers in the environmental justice movement are addressing such things as health disparities, climate change and food justice. As funders think about how best to support the field, it is important to understand that communities experiencing great inequities do not work on their issues in silos.

The Geography of Youth Organizing

We found that most groups are concentrated in the Northeast (44%) and on the West Coast (25%), similar to our findings from our 2004 survey. Many of the groups are about ten years old. Of the 50 groups founded since 2000, 46% were founded in the last 5 years. We see a promising trend emerging with 22% of groups less than five years of age emerging in the South and Southwest.

The Rise of Intergenerational Organizing

Our findings confirm that there are a growing number of intergenerational organizing groups—52% embrace the principle that youth and elders lead together on organizational and campaign-related work. As analyzed further in the document, intergenerational organizing can play a key component in long-term sustainability of the progressive, social justice movement.

Small Budgets, Big Impact: A Political Apex and the Need for Investments Now!

The majority of groups operate on small annual budgets. More than half of the survey respondents stated that their organizations had budgets under \$600,000 and the majority of organizations in this category actually had budgets under \$350,000. While 27% of organizations responded that their budgets were larger than \$1 million, we found that the youth organizing portion of the total budget was approximately \$500,000. Youth-led organizations, on the whole, had the smallest budgets with 50% being under \$350,000.

Relative to budget size, youth organizing groups have enormous impact. In the paper we further an analysis about the scope and scale of youth organizing today. The political moment is such that youth are leading on critical issues on a national scale, such as education and immigrant rights organizing. Low-income communities and communities of color are often the last to receive resources. We believe that funding at this critical time may be the “tipping point” factor to win big for the most affected communities behind crucial campaigns.

Going to Scale

92% of the organizations said they were involved (formally and informally) in coalitions and networks, on a local, state-wide, regional and national level. There is evidence of growth of regional and national networks. The work particularly in education organizing with the rise of networks like the Alliance for Educational Justice and in immigration with United We Dream, demonstrates how youth organizers in local communities are generating greater power to influence federal policy legislation and debates.

Trends: Integration of Youth Development Supports to Strengthen Youth Organizing

In the late 1990s and at the turn of the millennium, as youth organizing began to re-emerge, the realm of youth development and youth organizing were sometimes placed on different ends of an ideological spectrum. In our 2010 Field Scan, 100% of respondents said that they provided youth development support, informally or formally as part of their youth organizing work. This data indicates that supports provided to organizers outside of campaign and political education are intentionally integrated to strengthen youth organizing strategies.

In this report, we also document the use of media, first as a strategy to recruit young people and now utilized as a core and critical strategy to advance youth organizing campaigns.

The largely formal academic supports and largely informal mental/emotional health supports that organizations provide their youth membership and leaders elicit a balance the field is trying to strike between the need for holistic youth development and collective campaigning efforts. Simply put, strong youth organizers need to be strong youth.

Academic supports (access to college prep, tutoring, homework help) are by and large provided by youth organizing group more formally than before. This fact coupled with the growth in education organizing campaigns signals, again, that organizations are not only fighting to increase college-going rates of low-income youth of color but are actually preparing youth to succeed in post-secondary educational opportunities.

We are particularly interested, both in our conversations with the field and through our online survey, in the role mental and emotional health supports provide in strengthening youth organizing in a more holistic manner. Of all the areas of support, mental and emotional health had the largest number of respondents stating that they were providing this *informally* (56%). Groups strongly expressed the need for dialogue and work with more progressive youth services organizations. This represents a significant capacity issue area for the field and it represents an opportunity to respond to address the mental and emotional needs of youth organizers.

Models of Youth Organizing

By and large we can say youth organizing has grown more sophisticated over the past decade particularly in the articulation of models. Beyond recruiting youth to be a part of campaigns, youth organizing groups have developed intensive models focusing on the leadership development of youth organizers while also finding formal and informal ways of supporting their personal developmental needs. This growth in sophistication speaks to the commitment that groups have made to ensuring that young people not only win campaigns but also grow as leaders who are healthy in body and mind so that they may continue to move into broader participation in the progressive social justice movement post-high school.

Core aspects that we found in all of the models shared with us by youth organizing groups included:

- Leadership Development - based on the premise that youth organizing is intended to intentionally build leadership among the most affected
- Holistic Development – focused on the critical youth development needs as they intersect with youth organizing
- Campaign Development – ensuring skills building and political education so that youth organizing expands a base that wins on issues

Leadership Pipelines and the Powerful Role of Youth Organizing

Over the past couple of years, FCYO has been developing a theoretical framework based on opportunities we saw arising since our last field scan in 2004. Particularly in the run-up to President Obama's election, conversations among progressives were being held about the need to build a youth leadership pipeline to ensure that not only would we have a progressive candidate in office in 2008, but that a progressive shift would outlast the subsequent four to eight years of Obama's Presidency. As progressives thought about a leadership pipeline, so too was the field of youth organizing and the larger ecosystem of organizations concerned, broadly, with social justice. On the one hand, baby boomer executive directors and social justice leaders who are thinking of their own transitions and retirement ask, *"Where is the base of leadership to take on our positions and lead the work?"* On the other hand, youth organizers ask, *"Where are the opportunities to continue to develop and lead in the movement post-high school age?"* We saw an opportunity to better understand opportunities and challenges that exist in youth organizing today around the leadership developed and the potential for youth organizers to continue to bolster the progressive, social justice movement.

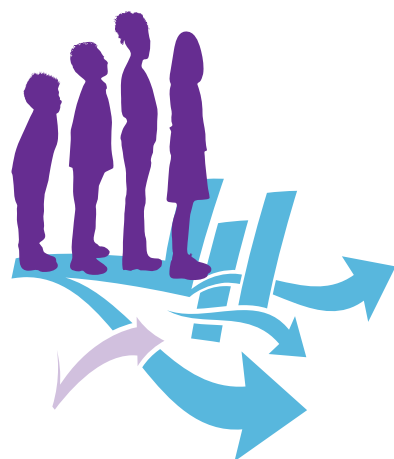
FCYO used the 2010 Field Scan online survey and in-depth conversations with representatives of 80+ groups to help us to connect the work of youth organizing groups - who create an immense base of leadership among those most affected by inequities (low-income youth and, particularly, youth of color)- to broader conversations about progressive youth leadership pipelines.

While leadership pipelines should have multiple entry points and be intentionally built to span a lifetime of leadership, we at FCYO focused our theoretical framework on three key phases that begin with youth organizing among low-income youth of color at the high school age. We believe it to be the most effective entry point for long-term sustainability of the social justice movement.

PROGRESSIVE, SOCIAL JUSTICE YOUTH LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

stage 1 ENTRY

INCREASE pool of
young people entering
youth organizing



- › Middle School Feeder Programs
- › Summer School
- › Fellowships
- › Linkages to Service Organizations

stage 2 DEVELOPMENT

INCREASE support to youth
organizing groups to enrich the
transformative opportunity
for young people to engage
in social justice work
at the high school age



- › Youth Organizing Leadership Development Models
- › Supporting Youth Organizations with School and Work (stipends, credits)
- › Increasing Scope and Scale of Youth Organizing at the High School Age

stage 3 TRANSITION

TRANSITION
youth organizers
post-high school



- › Alumni Tracking Systems
- › Access to Post-Secondary Education and Scholarships
- › Job Readiness and Employment Assistance within the Social Justice Sector

Stage 1 (Entry): How can we increase the number of young people entering progressive social justice work through youth organizing?

Stage 2 (Development): How can we increase support to youth organizing groups to enrich the transformative opportunity for young people to engage in social justice work at the high-school age?

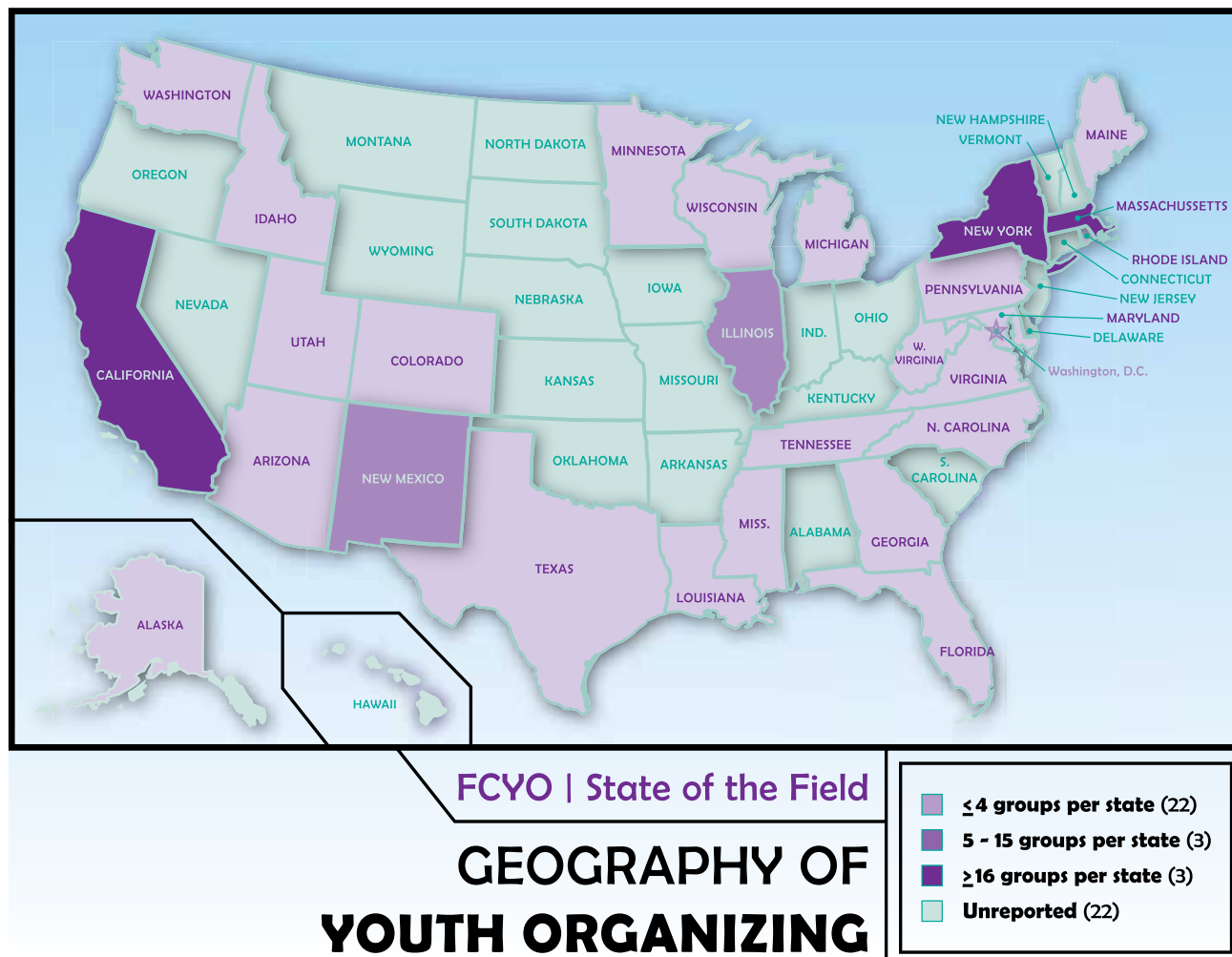
Stage 3 (Transition): How can we help organizations and individuals transition post-high school, maintaining a commitment to social change work and bolstering the progressive, social justice movement?

We spent many months with partners in the field of youth organizing exploring need for a leadership pipeline, connecting youth organizers to opportunities for continued leadership development and expression as they age. What we found most critical to the field both through our conversations and through our online survey was the need to uplift and further deepen models in the field of youth organizing. Specifically we found a greater need to illuminate how best to address the holistic development needs of youth organizers at the high school age (Stage 2). Furthermore, partners in the field were concerned with how to transition youth organizers to post-secondary educational experiences and employment opportunities as they age (Stage 3).

The information from the field scan, coupled with the analysis from field scan conversations, have informed our latest grantmaking strategy, *ReGenerations: Leadership Pipeline*.

2010 YOUTH ORGANIZING FIELD SCAN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Where are the groups?



Like the 2004 survey, we found that the highest concentration of organizations were in the Northeast (44%) and on the West Coast (25%). This is not a surprising fact—historically, the resurgence of youth organizing in the late 1990s was concentrated in California and New York. And, while the majority of organizing groups that responded are about 10 years old (40% founded in the 1990s and 39% founded since 2000)¹, most of the more mature groups are situated in the Northeast and on the West Coast.

We see a rise in new organizations forming in the South. While only 10% of all youth organizing groups that responded to the survey were situated in the South, over the last five years, 22% of new groups have emerged from the South and Southwest, in particular. We believe greater investments should be made to diversify the overall geographic spread of youth organizing and there is a promising trend in the rise of youth organizing in the South. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, we saw the emergence of youth-led groups like VAYLA-NO in New Orleans responding to critical community issues, creating immense partnerships and working with community elders. We would also like to highlight the emergence of a unique collaboration of youth organizing groups in New Orleans: FYRE Youth Squad, Juvenile Justice Project, VAYLA- NO and Kids ReThink New Orleans Schools. Outside of New Orleans there are several groups throughout the South that we could highlight. Please see the list of organizations in the Appendix section of this document. For more information, please read a

¹ Organizations that responded to the survey indicated their original founding date. Some of the youth organizing projects within adult-led organizations began after the organization's initial founding date.

detailed scan of organizing groups in the South, *Social Justice Organizing in the US South* (Institute for Southern Studies, Hill-Snowdon Foundation, New World Foundation. March 2009).²

From our conversations with the field, particularly with participants from the South we learned about the challenges faced by organizations in rural areas. Most of the organizing on the West Coast and in the Northeast is situated in urban areas. While other parts of the country also organize youth in urban areas (Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, for example), the vast rural areas of the country face challenges to organizing young people by sheer geographic disparity. While access to transportation plays a significant role in urban areas, the distance between community centers, houses, schools and institutions prove difficult in mobilizing young people, in particular.

Also of note in the South, from our conversations in the field, was the importance organizations and networks placed on relationships as a key element of organizing. The trusted relationships developed through living and working together in community, often across generations, was a point that all of the groups we met with in our Southern conversations stressed. We look forward to exploring this further.

Issues: Scope and Scale

Scope: Issues Addressed by Youth Organizers

Since the late 1990s, after a decade of supporting the field as a philanthropic intermediary, we recognize that investments in youth organizing groups and movement building are long-term. Several issues have remained core and critical to the field (racial justice and juvenile justice, for example). Youth organizing groups work to change systemic issues, addressing root causes. With education organizing on the rise, in 2004, we found that the top issues for the field were racial justice, environmental justice, juvenile justice. In 2010, a significant majority of organizations (65%) are working on education organizing—the top issue for the field. Again, environmental justice and juvenile justice remain critical issues for youth organizing. Economic justice and immigrant rights work are also a major areas.

We were surprised to learn that nearly 40% of organizations are working on health-related campaigns. When we explored this further, we learned that health-related work intersects aspects of environmental work as well as a rise in food justice and reproductive health and rights.

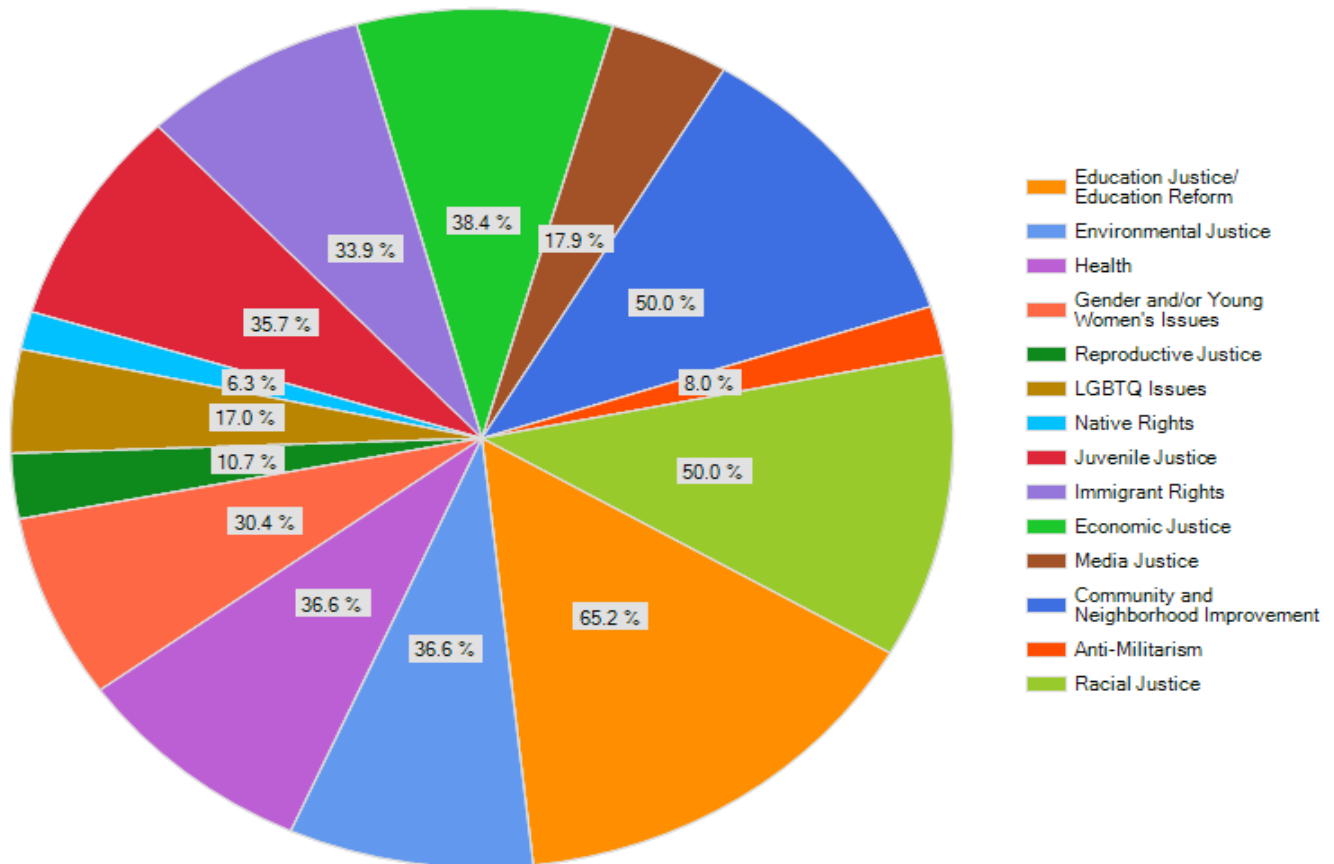
Multi-Issue Campaigns and Intersectionality

Clearly when one examines the chart below the scope of issues organizations in the field address through their organizing, the numbers do not add to 100%—in fact they far surpass it. Simply put, organizing groups are working on multiple issues. Low-income communities of color face multiple disparities and, thus, youth organizing groups do not work on their issues in silos. From our conversations with the field, young people explained how they work on the issues their communities face in an intersectional manner. Education organizing efforts are coupled with an analysis around juvenile justice as evidenced by the long-time campaigns against “School to Prison” pipelines. Youth organizers see the connection between the lack of access to quality education for low-income youth of color and the prisons being built in or near their communities.

Dual “coming out” strategies among LGBTQ youth that are undocumented take on new meaning in immigrant rights work. And, as mentioned above when exploring what “health” meant to organizations that were surveyed, environmental justice campaigns have drawn intersectional analyses in areas such as anti-incinerator struggles, clean-air campaigns as well as community redevelopment and anti-displacement campaigns. As youth organizers fight to shut down polluting facilities in their neighborhood, they also see the connection to participating in the redevelopment plans within their community.

² <http://www.southernstudies.org/iss/Southern%20Scan%20Apr09.pdf>

Youth Organizing Issue Areas



Other areas identified by groups in our survey included:

- Affordable Housing/Anti-displacement
- City Budget/Public Investment
- Civic Engagement
- Climate Change
- Cultural Preservation
- Food Justice
- Foster Care Services Improvement
- Sustainable Development
- Violence Prevention
- Worker Rights
- Water rights

The Youth Organizing Age Group

Our survey confirmed that the majority of groups (93%) are working with youth ages 13 to 18, although there with 17% of groups reporting work with youth under the age of 13 and 60% working with college-age youth. We are curious about work with younger youth below the age of 13 and older youth and will monitor that in the next Field Scan to see if confirms anecdotal evidence that this may be a trend. Of note are the number of groups working with hard-to-reach populations such as youth in foster care, the juvenile justice system and formerly incarcerated young men and women.

Scale: Networks and Coalitions

As we further highlight the scope of issue areas that organizing groups address, it is important to note scale. The 2010 Field Scan found that 92% of organizations were involved (formally and informally) in coalitions and networks on a local, state-wide, national and regional level. While organizing groups are truly grassroots, steeped in the work of local communities, coalition and network work is paramount to how organizations operate underlining a fundamental aspect of movement building. While organizations build their base in their communities, they are growing efforts in their communities, across locales (82%, the vast majority of respondents are engaged in local or city-wide campaigns). More than half are engaged in state-wide coalitions and networks; 41% are engaged in regional campaigns and 47% are engaged in national campaigns. Simply put, the work of local community organizations still remains very much tied to the local base, but the work of community organizing groups is going to scale and youth organizing is a critical component.

We have over thousands of examples where young people have been at the helm of policy and campaign wins, these span from environment to juvenile justice, to immigration to schools. A few networks to highlight that illustrate core issue areas and scale are immigrant rights work and the Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ).

Networks: Immigration Organizing

A significant portion of the target population identified by youth organizing groups in our survey are immigrant youth (48%) and more than 1/3 of organizations are working on immigration-related campaigns. Like the coalition and networks described below focusing on education, immigration policy debates have underscored how youth organizers and their allies are taking their work to scale and at the same time staying rooted in local communities, addressing frontline issues around deportation and concerns pertinent to undocumented youth and their families. One example is the work of young people for The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act), proposed federal legislation granting access to higher education for undocumented youth. Youth organizers from high school to post-secondary institutions, undocumented and documented, have been working since 2001 on this legislation which has taken stage in the US Senate. Similarly, young people have been critical in the debates and struggles around comprehensive immigration reform as evidenced by efforts as recent as this year. May 1st demonstrations over the past several years have highlighted how youth have actually been leading campaigns with and on behalf of their elders and parents. In light of recent legislation introduced in Arizona this year, further targeting and criminalizing undocumented immigrants, May 1st protests took on greater significance with powerful base-building in local communities connecting to national actions and coalitions.

The debates around immigration organizing are varied and within the field of youth organizing there are a variety of approaches. Nevertheless, youth organizing and the networks and coalitions that have formed from the local to federal level have brought immigrant rights issues to the forefront of national debates.

Networks: Education Organizing

It is no surprise that 65% of organizations are working on education as a top issue for the field and that popular media shares stories of campaign efforts and policy advocacy by grassroots groups and coalitions at the state and federal levels. In 2005, local organizing groups in Los Angeles, including the Community Coalition of South LA (CoCo) and Inner City Struggle (ICS), among others, worked with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Their

campaigns were backed by data demonstrating that the lowest college going rates were among youth from the poorest communities. For example, they highlighted that in Los Angeles 700,000 students, 74% of whom were Latino, were barely graduating high school and most were not accessing higher education. Despite the landmark victory of Brown vs. the Board of Education in 1954 ruling that separate education facilities are inherently unequal, more than half a century later, ICS, CoCo and their partners organized a campaign highlighting that low-income youth of color were systematically denied access to higher education. The local coalition conducted audits demonstrating disparities in education funding between poorer and more affluent neighborhoods. As a result of their local intergenerational coalition work, a resolution was passed which made college preparatory classes mandatory for high school graduation requirements in public schools throughout Los Angeles, regardless of where they were situated. This monumental victory has resulted in state-wide efforts to afford youth throughout the state the same benefits of the College Prep for All resolution.

Efforts of ICS and CoCo were not singular. Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE), a youth-led organizing collaborative comprised of students from 7 community organizations and 12 Chicago Public High Schools, formed in 2007 to address issues around quality education for low-income youth of color in Chicago. In November 2008, they won the support of then-Chicago Public School (CPS) CEO Arne Duncan (currently U.S. Secretary of Education) for their platform of comprehensive, youth-driven education reform aimed at reducing the dropout rate. And in 2009, VOYCE was able to secure \$130,000 from CPS to fund the first year of a youth-designed pilot aimed at increasing social emotional supports for freshmen who are at risk of dropping out. As multiple efforts around the country arose from the work of community organizations, with youth organizers at the helm, in 2008 the Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ) was formed, creating a national alliance of youth organizing and intergenerational groups working for educational justice. In a short time, AEJ has brought together organizations across the country, including ICS, CoCo, Philadelphia Student Union, and the organizations that comprise VOYCE in Chicago, among many others. The local groups are defining a national agenda and a set of policy priorities for the Obama Administration. They are involved in federal legislative debates around the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind and other federal education policy initiatives. The work of AEJ and the organizations that are in the alliance demonstrate how youth organizing has grown to scale, while still rooted in local communities, impacting policy at the local, state and federal level.

Organized Communities, Stronger Schools report³: In the recent report *Organized Communities, Stronger Schools* published by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University, the authors found that organizing contributed to the capacity of urban schools to provide a successful learning environment through new resources, policies and school improvements. In a survey of 124 youth members involved with the three youth organizing groups in the study, young people responded that organizing had increased their knowledge of education issues facing their schools and school systems, and that they intended to sustain their political and civic engagement over the long term. Moreover, more than 50% of the youth reported that they planned to stay involved with activism in the future and nearly 40% reported that they wanted to find a job in organizing in the future. The report also found that youth organizing efforts increased students' leadership and organizing skills, desire to engage in their own educational goals, and intentions to remain committed to social justice activities.

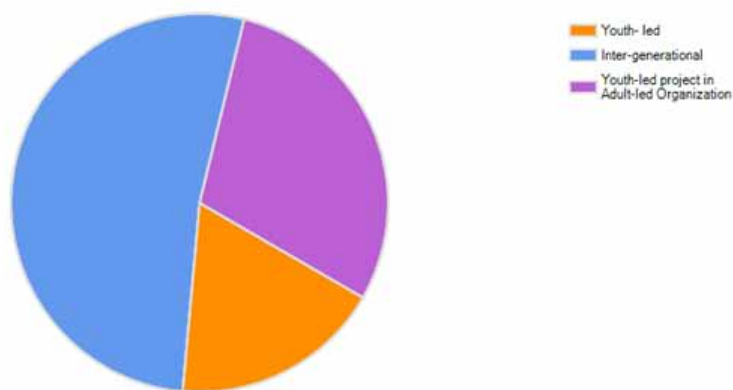
³ Mediratta, Kavitha, Seema Shah, Sara McAlister, Norm Fruchter, Christina Mokhtar and Dana Lockwood 2008. *Organized Communities, Stronger Schools*. New York Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University

Organizational Structure

FCYO defines organizational structure in three ways:

- Youth-led: young people (18 years and younger) provide leadership for the design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns as well as the management of the organization.
- Inter-generational: young people and adults share leadership in the design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns, as well as the management of the organizations.
- Youth-led projects in adult-led organizations: young people provide leadership for design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns, but may not have a leadership role in the management of the larger adult-led organization in which they are housed.

Our 2010 Field Scan confirms the anecdotal trend we documented since our last survey: there is a rise in intergenerational organizing.



52% of respondents indicated that their organization adopts an intergenerational organizing strategy. 18% of organizations stated they were youth-led. 30% of respondents were youth-led projects within adult-led organizations.

Opportunities: Intergenerational Organizing

Why is intergenerational organizing on the rise and what does it offer the work of communities on critical issues? In a 2004 report, *ReGenerations: Young People Shaping Environmental Justice*, the Movement Strategy Center explored the then relatively new intergenerational phenomenon as a means of leadership expansion for the progressive, social justice movement. FCYO's last grantmaking initiative, *ReGenerations: Leadership Expansion for Environmental Justice* focused on the role that youth leadership and organizing plays in building and sustaining strong environmental justice movements. We chose to focus on environmental justice in reflection of the innovative models of cross-generational leadership and organizing, as well as the strong role youth have played in pushing the movement forward historically and presently.

When leadership is shared by youth and their elders at all levels or various levels of the organization, as someone "ages out", organization's have the capacity to transition an effective member into an opening. What is happening in the work of community organizing, as well, is that adult organizers have increasingly seen the value in partnering with youth not only as a means of sustaining leadership but as a powerful leadership base to tackle current day issues. In addition, youth organizers who may have traditionally worked on their own, value the participation and shared knowledge of elders in their communities. The education organizing work highlighted above has brought together unique efforts of parents and students; and immigration organizing has attracted attention in part because of campaigns led by youth in concert with elders in their communities and adult allies.

Trends: Youth-Led Organizing

At the same time, organizations like Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) in East Palo Alto and FIERCE in New York City demonstrate that youth-led organizations are developing strong and sophisticated movement leaders. Both groups fall in the older, more mature category while maintaining a commitment to organizational structure and campaign work that is youth-led. While we see that youth-led organizations no longer dominate the landscape as they once did in the late 1990s, several organizations have adopted an intergenerational approach.

Growth of Formal Youth Organizing Non-Profits

When FCYO first began, one of our long-term goals was to help support the development of 501c3 non-profit status as part of the necessary infrastructure to build the field of youth organizing. The 2010 Field Scan found that most organizations (73%) are now independent 501c3 institutions with only 24% still under a fiscal sponsor. While we recognized that 501c3 organizations are not the only institutional structure needed to build the field and attain the goals of communities, this is a significant achievement for the field.

There are other structures forming either as off-shoots of the traditional non-profit 501c3 structure or parallel c4 organizations. We learned about many organizations that are helping to incubate newer organizations, acting as the fiscal sponsor to emerging groups. Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice in the Bronx has incubated emerging non-profits and was working on spinning off a community development center. Youth Together in the East Bay also incubates smaller non-profits, including some youth development organizations. Sistias and Brothas United in the Bronx and Make the Road New York both helped to develop public schools in their respective neighborhoods.

Budget, Staffing and Impact

Budget Sizes

The majority of groups (73%) surveyed had budgets under \$600,000—this has not changed since we last conducted our survey in 2004. Furthermore, of the majority with budgets under \$600,000, most actually have budgets less than \$350,000 (39%). While there are some groups that have budgets greater than \$1million, we saw this as a sign of growth. Further analysis of organizations with larger budgets (over \$1million), indicated that these were models of youth-led projects within adult-led organizations. Approximate budget sizes of youth-organizing work within adult-led organizations were \$500,000.

Field-Wide Impact and the Political “Tipping Point”: Why Investments are Needed Now

Organizations working at the grassroots with low-income youth on front-line issues, like immigration rights and access to quality education for all, are at times the least likely to access major philanthropic support. And while budget sizes haven’t shifted since 2004, we can assert that youth organizing groups (stand-alone, intergenerational or youth-led within adult organizations), are highly effective with large impact, particularly in light of small budgets. For example, the vast majority of groups operating in the Alliance for Educational Justice and United We Dream, national coalitions whose individual members are having an impact on policy at the local level and whose collective power is impacting federal legislation and policy debates, have budgets under \$500,000. Foundations ask, “*Do organizations with small budgets have the capacity to absorb larger grants?*” From our conversations with organizations, groups felt that this is a critical political moment to invest in youth organizing. While, on the whole, organizational capacity varies, without significant increases in giving to youth organizing and in the midst of a financial crisis, organizations and coalitions of youth organizing groups are acting at scale. Greater investments could not only be absorbed but very well constitute a significant “tipping point” factor for organizations to truly capture the opportunities of the critical and current political moment.

Staffing

While organizations are strapped on many levels, when it comes to staffing, investments particularly for their youth organizing work has resulted in 86% of youth organizing groups having at least 1 full-time, paid youth organizer, on staff.

In true community organizing style, groups in our survey rely heavily on their base of members and on volunteers to support their organizational work beyond campaigns. 68% have more than 10 volunteers that assist in organizational matters. Beyond the one dedicated staff person for youth organizing, expanded full-time paid staff remains small with 44% of groups having fewer than 5 staff. Greater investments in youth organizing efforts could significantly enhance much needed staff support as the work goes to scale.

Youth Organizing as Youth Employment: Opportunities and Challenges to Stipends

Analysts predict that the 2010 summer will be the worst across the nation for youth employment. As low-income communities grapple with access to jobs, compensation for youth organizing work may be even more critically important now than ever. One such form of compensation is stipends provided to youth organizers.

The 2010 Field Scan survey results found that:

43% stipend 1-5 youth organizers	20% stipend 6-10 youth organizers
7% stipend 11-15 youth organizers	14% stipend more than 15 youth organizers
16% do not provide any stipends to youth organizers	

84% of respondents stated that there was some sort of stipend for youth organizers, with most providing stipends to fewer than 10 youth organizers. Organizing can provide meaningful jobs where they are needed most. And, for youth organizers, stipends provided by organizations is a significant form of youth employment. A stipend opportunity means that a young person in a low-income community can support him or herself and/or provide support to their family. In addition to legitimizing meaningful work addressing root causes to poverty and inequity, stipends offer an alternative to other traditional low-wage positions. A youth organizer who may have to leave community work to take a job at Foot Locker or McDonald's, with a stipend may be able to stay in meaningful social change work and continue to learn, develop, and implement unique leadership skills. Because stipends can be an important draw to keep youth organizers engaged in the work of community organizing, the also can be a large contributing factor to impacting the question of reaching and achieving scale.

During focus groups discussions, groups shared the benefits and challenges of stipends. Most groups expressed that stipends were an excellent way to compensate and support young people for their work (especially given that many youth leave youth organizing because they need paid employment). Nevertheless, some expressed concern that stipends were not always sustainable and that, if youth organizing depended on paid compensation to youth, there would need to be much more financial investments to the field. Other organizations, in addition to the sustainability issue, had ideological/philosophical concerns around financial remuneration and youth organizing: to be truly dedicated to long-term community organizing, youth organizers must be compelled to stay in the work regardless of compensation.

Trends and Opportunities: How Youth Development Supports Strengthen Youth Organizing

In the late 1990s and at the turn of the millennium, as youth organizing began to re-emerge, the realm of youth development and youth organizing were sometimes placed on different ends of an ideological spectrum. The data from our 2010 Field Scan indicates that supports provided to organizers outside of campaigns and political education are more intentionally integrated into strengthening youth organizing strategies. **100% of groups that responded to our online survey are providing youth development supports as part of their youth organizing programs.** When we explored with youth organizing groups in our field conversations whether organizing youth was for the sake of youth development or for strengthening campaigns, groups were clear that youth organizing can and must move forward a progressive, social justice agenda while at the same time meeting the needs of the youth leading it.

There is a significant opportunity for greater investments in holistic youth organizing, addressing the youth development supports needed to enrich the experiences of high school-aged youth organizers.

In trying to better understand how organizations work with youth beyond campaigns and political education, we explored several areas of youth development support. The following are key highlights:

Academic Supports: In our last field scan, educational supports like college prep work and home work help were considered critical issues and were also handled informally. Since 2004, we see a formidable increase in campaign efforts in education organizing as well as groups providing more *formal* and sophisticated support around college prep, homework help and tutoring. Today, either through tutoring or college prep, the vast majority of groups provide some sort of academic support. Again, this points to how youth organizing groups use traditional youth development supports (in this case, academic support) to strengthen organizing strategies.

Mental/Emotional Health: From our focus group conversations we found that many youth leave organizing and progressive, social change work because of personal and developmental needs that need to be addressed. There is a rich opportunity to strengthen mental and emotional health supports for youth organizers. We are particularly interested, both in our conversations with the field and through our online survey, in the role mental/emotional health supports provide in strengthening youth organizing. More than half of the respondents in our survey provide mental health supports as part of their youth organizing work. Of all the areas of support, mental and emotional health had the largest number of respondents stating that they were providing this *informally* (56%), including discussion groups, building one-on-one relationships with youth, their families and staff and developing referral systems to mental health providers. Groups strongly expressed the need for dialogue and work with more progressive youth services organizations. This represents a significant capacity issue area for the field and it represents an opportunity invest in addressing the mental and emotional needs of youth organizers.

Media: Another critical area to highlight here is the use of media. Traditionally, arts and media are used as recruitment strategies for organizations to attract and engage youth organizers. With the rise of YouTube, affordable video production and dissemination, and social networking sites, organizers have really harnessed the power of media in support of campaigns. For example, Khmer Girls in Action in Long Beach, California used innovative media skills to create a Public Service Announcement for a campaign around Proposition 4⁴, which they later went on to win. Mobilizing through texting, the use of Facebook and other social networking sites have been critical elements of campaign strategies. The work of DREAM Activists relies heavily on confidential social networking, protecting the status of undocumented youth. From our work with groups in our recent grantmaking program, many organizations' websites encompass BLOG or VLOG (video blog) components run by young organizers themselves. The growth of the field of media justice and its convergence with youth organizing, including movement building spaces such as the national Allied Media Conference and the formal media track at

⁴ Parental Notification Act: Proponents were advocating that anyone under the age of 18 had to have parental consent before accessing abortion services.

the US Social Forum, further reinforces how media and the arts have moved from recruitment strategies to integral components of youth organizing work.

Models of Youth Organizing

As mentioned above, we generally categorized youth organizing groups in three-ways: youth-led, intergenerational and youth organizing projects within adult-led organizations. With the analysis that youth development supports are furthering youth organizing models in their intentional linkages, we further explored model development and implementation through our field survey and focus group discussions. By and large we can say, youth organizing has grown extremely sophisticated over the past decade particularly in the articulation of models.

Beyond recruiting youth to be a part of campaigns, youth organizing groups have developed intensive models focusing on the leadership development of youth organizers while also finding formal and informal ways of supporting their personal developmental needs. This growth in sophistication speaks to the commitment that groups have made to ensuring that young people not only win campaigns but also grow as leaders who are healthy in body and mind so that they may continue to move into broader participation in the progressive social justice movement post high school.

Core to all models we assessed, we saw commonalities in an intentional trajectory: youth move from general membership to core membership and then to campaign and/or organizational leaders. While there are several nuances among models, common elements include:

- a period of consciousness raising through political education
- core skills training in community organizing (these two are often done through intensive institutes with a core curriculum)
- movement from the larger and more peripheral general membership into smaller organizing teams and clubs
- smaller lead youth organizing teams working with staff organizers (these are often stipended positions)
- mentorship: peer and staff
- longer term internships, apprenticeships and fellowships within the organization
- organizational board and staff leadership.

Core aspects that we found in all of the models shared with us by youth organizing groups included:

- Leadership Development – based on the premise that youth organizing is intended to intentionally build leadership among the most affected
- Holistic Development – focused on the critical youth development needs as they intersect with youth organizing
- Campaign Development – ensuring skills building and political education so that youth organizing expands a base that wins on issues



CONCLUSION: THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN YOUTH ORGANIZING AND A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

In the ten years of acting as a philanthropic support and advocate for the field of youth organizing, we have witnessed tremendous growth and increased sophistication of youth organizing groups across the nation. Yet as we conducted our conversations with the field, and as confirmed by our survey, there remain further opportunities to invest in youth organizing: With limited budgets, groups continue to impact policies and debates on a local, regional, and national level. In addition, FCYO believes that youth organizing, among low-income youth of color at the high school age, is the most effective entry point for long-term

sustainability of the social justice movement.

Following our 2004 Field Scan and the proceeding launch of our *ReGenerations* framework and grant making initiative in 2006, we saw an occasion to better understand opportunities and challenges that exist in youth organizing today around the leadership developed and the potential for youth organizers to continue to bolster the progressive, social justice movement.

It is our belief that in order to ensure that youth organizers continue to take the lead in addressing community issues, especially in low-income communities and in communities of color, and remain connected to the social justice movement, it is imperative to systematically build pathways, bridges and support for youth to move from organizing as a high school-aged youth into social justice as a young adult (and beyond). Opportunities to further this theory were underscored by the attention paid among progressives who invested in youth to campaign grassroots style and elect a more progressive President in 2008. Conversations, in particular around the need to build a leadership pipeline for youth to sustain a longer-term swing to the left, percolated. However, we found that these conversations focused on youth of college age and campus-based and/or electoral organizing as the entry point to begin building leadership pipelines for youth.

As we grappled with the leadership sustainability dialogues and models burgeoning in the field of youth organizing and those who cared about social justice and the concept of progressive youth leadership pipelines, we saw an opportunity to explore a few areas:

1. How could we connect high-school aged youth organizing, which builds a transformative base of leadership among low-income youth and youth of color, to broader notions of progressive youth leadership currently focused on entry points among college-age youth and strategies of campus-based organizing?
2. Of the existing models and thoughts around leadership development and sustainability in the field of youth organizing, what else was missing? How do we systematically build the pathways necessary for youth organizers to clearly and intentionally move from one stage in their life to the next as they age?

We spent the past year exploring these questions with partners in the field of youth organizing the need for a leadership pipeline, connecting youth organizers to opportunities for continued leadership development and expression.

Why addressing holistic youth development is critical

What we found most critical to the field was the need to uplift and further deepen models in the field of youth organizing. Often youth organizers are subject to the very conditions around which they organize and thus “fall off” a leadership trajectory. Poverty, racial inequities and disparities which are further compounded by gender discrepancies are very real and consequential experiences youth organizers grapple with daily. Specifically we found a greater need to illuminate how best to address the holistic development needs of youth organizers at the high school age (Stage 2). We believe that by addressing these holistic needs we are addressing core issues which cause youth organizers and the potential transformative base to “drop out” of social change work. The findings

from the online survey confirmed, as mentioned above, that 100% of youth organizing groups are providing some sort of youth development support. Further analysis found that there is an opportunity to explore supporting and formalizing mental and emotional health supports to youth organizing groups. As we look to enrich and deepen the experience of a high school-aged youth organizer, we believe that we must further explore how to support the issues they confront personally.

Our field conversations also illuminated innovations in the field around, for example, youth leadership models connecting holistic practices to organizing. Furthermore, through our field conversations, groups spent time visioning what further resources were needed beyond what currently exists to address the mental and emotional needs of young people engaged in organizing. We believe that in creating systematic practices and an infrastructure that embraces holistic youth development as it connects to youth organizing, we can alter and shift current paradigms in adult organizing and, in effect, impact the viability of long-term participation of those most affected to lead social justice and develop a more progressive and robust democracy.

Why intentional pathways to employment and post-secondary education are critical

Furthermore, partners in the field were concerned with how to transition youth organizers to post-secondary educational experiences and employment opportunities as they age (Stage 3). *How are we preparing youth organizers for the next stage in their life post-high school-age? What are the intentional stepping stones in place for youth organizers to continue to develop and contribute to social change work?* As the 2010 Field Scan indicated that a vast majority of groups are providing college prep support to youth organizers to access post-secondary education, we were able to explore further with the field current innovations both in college prep and other aspects of a youth organizer's transition to further educational opportunities. We learned about connections groups are making to community college and traditional four-year institutions of higher education. Furthermore we explored barriers to post-secondary opportunities as well as opportunities to connect youth organizers more seamlessly to higher education.



ReGenerations: Leadership Pipeline

Across Stage 2 and Stage 3 conversations with the field, we consider the infrastructure that exists and the infrastructure that is needed to deepen the experience of a youth organizer at the high school age and ensure a successful transition to social change work post-high school-age. From what we currently have in the field, *what are the best practices that can be elevated? What are tools to be shared across the field?* Moreover, what is the world we envision and how do we begin building this intentional pipeline with bridges and pathways for youth organizers to continue to succeed, grow and lead?

The rich information from these conversations plus the data in our field scan has deeply informed our newest grantmaking initiative that will support and develop the early entry of the leadership pipeline that begins powerfully with youth organizing. We will continue to test what we learn through our strategic grantmaking initiative, *ReGenerations: Leadership Pipeline*, and we look forward to identifying best practices in youth organizing leadership development and sharing innovation in the field with the broader funder and practitioner community.

Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing: 2009 - 2010 Youth Organizing Field Scan

Please note: Organizations with an (*) participated in our in-depth regional focus group discussions, or one-on-one conversations.

ORGANIZATION NAME	LOCATION
2nd Chance Organization	Lexington, Mississippi
Action Communication and Education Reform *	Duck Hill, Mississippi
Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA)	Anchorage, Alaska
Albany Park Neighborhood Council *	Chicago, Illinois
Alliance for Educational Justice *	Oakland, California
Alternatives for Community & Environment *	Roxbury, Massachusetts
African Revolutionary Student Organization (ARSO)	San Diego, California
Asian Pacific Islander Youth for Power, Advocacy and Leadership (AYPAL)*	Oakland, CA
Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Youth (BAGLY, Inc.)	Boston, MA
Black Mesa Water Coalition *	Flagstaff, AZ
Boston-area Youth Organizing Project (BYOP) *	Boston, Massachusetts
Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development (BUILD, Inc.)	Chicago, Illinois
CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities *	New York, New York
California Fund for Youth Organizing *	Multi-city, California
Californians for Justice (CFJ) *	Long Beach, California
Center for Young Women's Development *	San Francisco, California
Chicago Freedom School (CFS) *	Chicago, Illinois
Chinese Progressive Association *	San Francisco, California
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) *	Los Angeles, California
Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth *	San Francisco, California
Colonias Development Council	Las Cruces, New Mexico
Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), Youth for Environmental Justice (Youth EJ) *	Huntington Park, California
Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CoCo) *	Los Angeles, California
Community Learning Partnership *	Washington, DC
Community Water Center *	Visalia, California
Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) *	Providence, Rhode Island
Design Studio 4 Social Intervention (DS4SI) *	Boston, Massachusetts
Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice *	Detroit, Michigan
Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation-Youth Force *	Dorchester, Massachusetts
DRUM- Desis Rising Up & Moving *	Jackson Heights, New York
El Puente	Brooklyn, New York
Energy Action Coalition	Washington, DC
Environmental Justice Climate Change Initiative	Washington, DC
Escuelas Si! Pintas No! (Schools Yes! Prisons No!)	Stockton (Central Valley), California
Every Voice in Action Foundation	Tucson, Arizona
Families United for Racial & Economic Equality (FUREE)	Brooklyn, New York
FIERCE *	New York, New York
Future of Tomorrow (Cypress Hills Development Corporation) *	Brooklyn, New York
Gandhi Brigade	Silver Spring, Maryland
Girls for Gender Equity *	Brooklyn, New York
Global Action Project *	New York, New York
Global Youth Justice	Somerville, Massachusetts
The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)	New York, New York
Grassroots Artists Movement (G.A.ME)	Bronx, New York
Highlander Research and Education Center	New Market, Tennessee
Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth (HOMEY) *	San Francisco, California
Hyde Square Task Force *	Boston, Massachusetts
Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN)	Boise, Idaho
Inclusion Center for Community and Justice	Salt Lake City, Utah
InnerCity Struggle *	Los Angeles, California
Jobs with Justice Education Fund	Washington, DC
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana *	New Orleans, Louisiana
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO) *	Chicago, Illinois
Khmer Girls in Action (KGA) *	Long Beach, California
Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools *	New Orleans, Louisiana
Korean American Resource & Cultural Center *	Chicago, Illinois
League of Young Voters Education Fund (LYVEF)	Brooklyn, New York
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization *	Chicago, Illinois
Long Island CAN (Congregations Associations and Neighborhoods)	Nassau and Suffolk Counties, New York
Maine Youth Action Network	Portland, Maine (but focus is statewide)
Make the Road by Walking New York *	Brooklyn and Queens, New York
Movement Strategy Center (MSC) *	Oakland, California
Native Youth Leadership Alliance	(Inter-tribal) South Dakota, Oklahoma, Arizona
New Mexico Acequia Association: Sembrando Semillas Youth Program	Santa Fe, New Mexico
New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC) *	New York, New York
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc. *	Lexington, Mississippi

Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing: 2009 - 2010 Youth Organizing Field Scan

Please note: Organizations with an (*) participated in our in-depth regional focus group discussions, or one-on-one conversations.

ORGANIZATION NAME	LOCATION
Oakland Community Organizations (from PICO -People Improving Communities)	Oakland, California
Oasis Center *	Nashville, Tennessee
Odyssey Youth Center	Spokane, Washington
One HOOD	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Padres & Jovenes Unidos *	Denver, Colorado
Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA) *	Oakland, California
Philadelphia Student Union (PSU) *	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
PODER People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources *	Austin, TX
PODER People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights	San Francisco, California
Power U Center for Social Change *	Miami, Florida
Project HIP-HOP (Highways Into the Past - History, Organizing and Power) *	Boston, Massachusetts
Project South	Atlanta, Georgia
Radio Rootz (affiliate of People's Production House) *	New York, New York
Real Food Challenge (RFC)	Boston, Massachusetts (national focus)
Rhode Island for Community & Justice	Providence, Rhode Island
RYSE	Richmond, California
Seattle Young People's Project	Seattle, Washington
Sistas and Brothas United *	Bronx, New York
Sistas on the Rise.Inc	Bronx, New York
Sisters in Action For Issues of Reproductive Empowerment (SAFIRE)	Oakland, California
Sociedad Latina *	Mission Hill/Roxbury, Massachusetts
School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) *	Oakland, California
Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA) *	Los Angeles, California
Southerners On New Ground (SONG) *	Atlanta, Georgia and Southern regional
Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ) *	Albuquerque, New Mexico
Southwest Organizing Project - Chicago *	Chicago, Illinois
SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP) *	Albuquerque, New Mexico
Southwest Workers Union (SWU) *	San Antonio, Texas
Spontaneous Celebrations	Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts
Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC)	Charleston, West Virginia
Student Immigrant Movement *	Boston, Massachusetts
Successfully Overcoming The Odds	Greensboro/High Point, North Carolina
SustainUS - United States Youth for Sustainable Development	Multiple Locations - Principle is Washington, DC
Target Area Development Corporation *	Chicago, Illinois
Teens Leading The Way c/o United Teen Equality Center	Lowell, Massachusetts
Tenants and Workers United	Alexandria, Virginia
The Brighton Park Neighborhood Council *	Chicago, Illinois
The Bronx Defenders	New York, New York
The Brotherhood/Sister Sol *	Harlem, New York
The Ruckus Society	Oakland, California
Tunica Teens In Action - Concerned Citizens For A Better Tunica County, Inc. *	Tunica, Mississippi
UPROSE - United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park *	Brooklyn, New York
Urban Underground *	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Urban Youth Collaborative *	New York, New York
Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO)*	New Orleans, Louisiana
Voces de la Frontera *	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) *	Chicago, Illinois
WeCount!	Homestead, Florida
Young Women's Empowerment Project *	Chicago, Illinois
Youth 4 Change Alliance (Y4C) *	Providence, Rhode Island
Youth Education Alliance	Washington, DC
Youth Force *	Boston, Massachusetts
Youth In Action *	Providence, Rhode Island
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice (YMPJ) *	Bronx, New York
Youth on Board *	Boston, Massachusetts
Youth Task Force of Santa Clara County	San Jose, California
Youth Together *	Oakland, California
Youth United for Community Action (YUCA)*	East Palo Alto, California
Youth Uprising	Oakland, California



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