

## Chapter II: On-Site Assistance Developing Organizations and Leaders

From the beginning, the Center's primary focus was on the development of community leaders and grassroots community-controlled organizations. On-site assistance was the heart of the Center's work, absorbing the lion's share of the staff-time and budget, and being central in CCC's work on economic justice, housing, community development and other issues which are highlighted in later chapters.

The Center provided all this assistance for free as a critical element in achieving its mission of helping low-income people build organizations through which they could improve their communities and fight for greater justice and opportunity. Foundations and other funding sources covered the costs of staff, consultants, travel and other expenses.

The Center's work developing organizations and leaders included both assistance in **creating new organizations** and aid in helping **existing groups** further develop their power and capacity.

**With both new and older organizations, there were two major components to the Center's support.** The largest component was extensive **on-site advice and assistance** which supported hundreds of grassroots groups over four decades. The other significant component was a series of important **leadership development initiatives**, most of which were supported by special funding and thus of limited duration.

### **On-Site Assistance for Grassroots Organizations:**

CCC's on-site assistance typically involved a multi-year commitment to providing organizations with a combination of three types of help –

- organizational development assistance, including help on community organizing;
- advice and aid on fundraising and resource development; and
- specialized technical assistance on particular issues and projects, including helping groups develop alternative policies and programs.

All this aid was directed toward building each local organization's power, knowledge, skills and capacity so it could tackle increasingly tough and important issues over time.

“The Center has developed ... a policy statement that deals with the criteria for selecting CBOs (community-based organizations) for assistance....This provides guidance for an intake system and a formalized technical assistance plan that is used by the Center upon acceptance of an organization as a client.

“The Center's CBO criteria are specific and include the following organizational characteristics or a demonstrated commitment to develop them:

- a base in the community and accountability to the community in decision-making;
- strong, indigenous low income, especially minority low income leadership, and a general consensus on that leadership;
- commitment to broadening the membership base and expanding and improving community leadership;
- commitment to increasing the power and capacity of the community's residents to improve community conditions and to convince major private and public institutions to assist in improving those conditions;
- current or potential capacity to plan, carry out and manage a program which addresses those goals and priorities;
- self-reliance, initiative, and dynamism;
- organizational integrity; and
- need for technical assistance from CCC, and willingness to establish a productive working relationship with the Center.

“As a matter of policy, the Center will only work with CBOs which share these characteristics or demonstrate a commitment to develop them.”

Center staff were on site frequently without charge to the group, with CCC's "liaison", or lead person, being responsible for coordinating help from others on staff and consultants as needed. The Center's top leaders and issue specialists all kept directly involved in providing on-site support to grassroots groups to ensure that their work was constantly grounded and directly informed by the needs, views and priorities of poor people and their organizations.

### **How CCC organized its organizational and technical assistance support:**

How did the Center organize and deliver its program of on-site technical assistance to so many groups with varying needs?

In addition to its "field staff", the Center involved virtually all other program staff-members in providing advice as well as on-site assistance to community-based organizations (CBOs). This included 40 people with widely varying specialties, including national issue specialists, fundraising and publications staff, the Executive Directors and other top management. This strategy maximized the staff's connections with and accountability to grassroots communities and organizations and its direct knowledge of their priorities and needs.

Each of these staff members acted as CCC's lead person, or "liaison", for at least one organization and coordinated the Center's support to it. Some had extensive experience in organizational development, but many others had to learn OD skills through experience and working alongside organizers and other capacity-building experts who were on staff.

The Center created relationships with community groups through both extensive outreach and "inreach" -- an unusual degree of openness and responsiveness to requests for help. We gave highest priority to groups which met CCC's criteria as genuinely community based and committed to social justice, most needed help, and were involved with issues which were priorities for the Center and on which we had the skills and experience to be helpful.

Both our outreach and inreach were greatly facilitated by two central characteristics of the Center's staff –

- The great range of contacts, networks and working relationships of CCC's very diverse and experienced staff;
- The Center's unique advantage in having staff with many different specialties, which resulted in CCC being approached for many different reasons – a financial or fundraising crisis, designing a job training strategy, tackling a more sophisticated banking issue, looking for advice on combatting gentrification, developing a leadership transition and search process, dealing with an internal conflict or staff crisis, needing help conducting a retreat or evaluation,

Typically, the Center was called for help on one issue and began helping from a distance. As the organizations got to know each other, they were able to decide whether the relationship should continue over time and if and when on-site assistance might be merited. The relationships often deepened with CCC's liaison gradually becoming more familiar with the community organization as a whole, its strengths and challenges, and whether there were other ways CCC could help the organization deepen its knowledge of an issue, strengthen its organizing or program strategy, address internal issues to increase its capacity and impact.

Each of us learned as we deepened our experience in working with different organizations. Each liaison played several roles --

- Assistance provider
- Diagnostician and problem-solver
- TA Coordinator, able to call on CCC colleagues for advice and help when they ran into a problem or challenge
- Counsel to the leadership, as CCC staff produced, gained credibility, access and influence within the CBO and were able to use that to help the organization tackle deeper issues

Senior leaders in the Center and other supervisors encouraged this level of independence and entrepreneurship throughout the field and policy work. While sometimes this led to challenges with, for example, a staff-person acting too much like a "lone ranger" or pursuing his/her own agenda, the Center's approach paid off in the dynamism, creativity, and new ideas and approaches were constantly being generated.

At any given time CCC provided especially intensive assistance to 25-40 CBOs. In those cases the staff would work on-site frequently, typically for 2-4 days each trip. The Center covered the full cost of this travel, including hotels, meals and other costs. This obviously was of great value to community groups with limited budgets and demanding roles and responsibilities,

Two other challenges arose because of the exceptionally varied nature of the types of assistance and specialized issues the Center addressed. First, this breadth complicated the challenges of conducting as much oversight and structured evaluation as would be ideal. Second, it made it very difficult for outsiders to pigeon hole the Center – were we committed to community organizing or community development approaches? Were there two or three central issues which defined the Center?

One evaluator described the Center's breadth as its fundamental strength, and defined the Center as having an "interstitial" role, being nimble and responsive as it discerned gaps in policy arenas or areas of assistance and then moving to fill those gaps through staff shifts, new initiatives and special projects, or joining in collaborations or coalitions with other organizations.

## **The central importance of organizational development assistance, including community organizing:**

Organizational development (OD) assistance, including advice on community organizing, typically was central to the relationship between CCC and a local group. The Center's OD expertise was unusually broad-ranging and deep. To provide this help, **the Center had many people on staff with impressive backgrounds in organizational development and community organizing:** at one point the Center's OD staff included ten former Executive Directors of community groups as well as over a dozen other staff members with expertise in community organizing, organizational planning, management or other aspects of organization-building. Many of these people also took on lead roles in the Center's leadership development programs, which are discussed later in this chapter.

These staff-members assisted local leaders with the following types of organizational development help:

- Assistance with the launching and start-up of new organizations
- Advice on organizational structure
- Legal advice
- Board development help
- Facilitation of Board and staff retreats
- Periodic organizational assessments
- Strategic planning help
- Coaching for Executive Directors and other staff
- Aid with staff recruitment
- Staff development help, including training for organizers
- Advice on organizing strategy, tactics, and campaigns
- Links to national organizing campaigns
- Voter registration and mobilization
- Public policy
- Communications strategy
- Leadership transitions
- Fiscal management
- Crisis management, mediation and conflict resolution
- Program and impact evaluation
- Program refinement and strengthening

Having access to such a wide variety of types of advice and assistance provides community organizations with a tremendous advantage. In effect, **CCC provided a full range of management consulting and planning help as well as expert advice on community organizing. CCC was uniquely experienced and skilled in providing such assistance and combining it with resource development help and with specialized assistance on many of the community and policy issues which concern community leaders. Furthermore, CCC's deep involvement with a series of major public policy issues greatly strengthened the local groups' involvement and impact in pushing for important policy reforms at the local, state, and federal levels.**

The Center **helped people create hundreds of new organizations over the years.** Experienced staff from CCC advised emerging community leaders and young staff as they devised plans for organizing a community, choosing their initial issues and planning strategies for winning those issues, and establishing the organization's credibility and value. They helped local people create their board and committee structure, choose initial staff, raise start-up money, and set their course. In short, they helped local groups build their power and capacity and to learn as they gained experience.

The Mott Small Grants program was a very important tool in many start-ups. For more than two decades the Center administered this substantial fund which was supported by a major grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Each year, this enabled CCC to make at least fifteen subgrants each year, each of which was for \$5,000-10,000. Most went to new organizations which showed promise but had not yet had sufficient time to establish the credibility they needed to raise their full initial budget from direct grants.

Over the years the Small Grants program was instrumental in the creation and early growth of dozens of organizations, many of which went on to become important and well-funded agents of community change. Some of this funding went to more mature organizations which faced emergencies or had difficulty raising money to launch new initiatives. (Similar Mott-funded small grant programs at the National Council of La Raza and the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs also were important catalysts in creating dozens of community groups, rural and urban, of every ethnic mix, addressing a host of community and policy issues.)

In addition, CCC staff constantly helped hundreds of more mature organizations when they reached **major crossroads**. This included help developing **strategic plans** which sorted out their responsibilities and priorities, and help making important decisions about their future directions and strategy. The Center often helped organizations as they went through significant changes in leadership, with either a **transition** in Executive Director or major shifts in Board leadership. And CCC helped organizations with **restructuring**, including cases when a community organizing group needed to rethink its structure and staffing so it could take on responsibilities in community development, service delivery, or legislative or electoral work. In these situations, groups often also need help thinking through what kinds of partnerships or coalitions would best increase their power and impact.

Another time when the Center provided crucial assistance was when an organization begins to suffer from "**mission creep**" or to **stagnate** and lose energy and impact. In these situations **organizations gain enormously from having access to experienced advisors who know the organizations well, are trusted as being committed to the community's welfare, and are available to help Board-members and staff reflect on their history, goals and fundamental values as well as the extent to which they are accomplishing what they set out to do. This can help reenergize an organization and lead to important corrections in its path, including changes which increase its legitimacy, accountability and integrity.**

Because of the central importance of community organizing in ensuring that an organization has the community base, accountability, leadership and impact, CCC always had **several highly skilled community organizers on staff**. From the early days when Charles Bannerman and Eddie Brown worked at CCC and helped local groups put together community organizing strategies and campaigns, the Center has given local leaders help with community organizing, base-building, coalition-building, and both culturally based and congregation-based organizing strategies and tactics. Typically, this specialized help was integrated with other forms of organizational development advice and assistance.

Over the years, **the Center earned a national reputation for its ecumenical approach, working with groups with very different strategies and issue priorities** in pursuing positive change and fundamental reforms.

### **Resource development help reinforcing organizational development:**

Since funding is so critical to building nonprofit capacity, the Center always concentrated on helping groups raise funds. It helped local leaders develop fundraising plans, including providing advice on private funding sources and strategies for pursuing them. It also provided advice on government funding when organizations decided that the benefits of government support outweigh any hazards there may be in accepting public funding. In addition, the Center advised groups on the development of proposals and progress reports to funding sources. Finally, CCC supported groups' requests for funding and intervenes with potential donors when it had relationships which could be helpful.

Historically, the Center aggressively pursued **two other strategies for increasing funding for low-income organizations and groups serving communities of color**. First, under the leadership of former CCC Executive Director Pablo Eisenberg, CCC became the acknowledged national leader in concerted efforts to increase funding for grassroots organizations, especially groups involved in community organizing, public policy advocacy and significant social change. In addition to playing a direct leadership role in advocacy on these issues, Pablo expanded the Center's influence by bringing many national organizations together to create the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, a coalition committed to pressing for reforms in philanthropy which would increase financial support for groups committed to reform and social change.

Second, the Center played a **powerful, carefully considered role in advocating for federal government funding for low-income organizations and their community priorities**. Such invaluable federal programs as Public Service Employment, VISTA and the community-oriented programs of HHS, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration provided invaluable funding for many years. Groups learned how to guard against the risks involved with government funding, including possible limitations on their advocacy and organizing work, the challenge of managing complex programs with integrity and fully meeting government performance standards, and the risks of political pressures.

In all its resource development work and advocacy, the Center stressed the particular importance of **flexible core support** which enables organizations to allocate the funding to meet their highest priority needs. It has also emphasized the need for long-term continuing support rather than just short-term commitments, so that nonprofits can build for the long-term. Another priority was the need for **support for organizing, advocacy, and policy reform, including tackling controversial issues of public policy or private sector accountability**.

### **Expert technical assistance on specialized issues:**

CCC was very unusual in combining extensive specialized technical assistance with **organizational development help: most support organizations or consultants provide either OD help or assistance on a particular issue or program on which they are expert**. The

Center instead provided comprehensive help, seeing it as essential to carefully coordinate both types of assistance **so that organizations can build their organizational strength at the same time they address issues with the benefit of access to extensive specialized knowledge.**

CCC's specialized assistance covered a broad range of issues over time. Through the years the Center was best known for its expertise on economic justice, jobs and income, economic development, housing, community development, neighborhood revitalization, and immigration. At some points the Center had funding which made it possible to also specialize on issues of community safety, juvenile justice, education, and health, but short-term project funding does not provide the continuity which organizations like the Center need to build their long-term impact on issues which concern them.

**Community groups allied with the Center have benefitted enormously from having access to nationally known experts who are committed not only to providing professional advice and assistance on the immediate issues people face but also to transferring knowledge and skills to them so they can increase their capacity for the future and growing impact.**

The Center's assistance on the specialized issues it addressed included advice and assistance on:

- Whether to get involved with an issue or program
- Alternative roles which an organization can play vis a vis that issue
- Program design
- Staffing needs and recruitment
- Strategy
- Partnering on planning and project development
- Neighborhood or community planning
- Specific issues or projects -- feasibility, strategy and design, partnerships, management requirements, and financing
- In-service training, peer to peer learning and transfer of expertise
- Evaluation and learning based on ongoing assessment and feedback
- Public policy analysis and advice, including advice on alternative policy reforms and strategies
- Developing capacity in research, especially in citizen monitoring and/or participatory action research
- Access to opportunities to work in coalitions or on joint campaigns

### **Targeted Leadership Development Programs:**

In addition to providing extensive on-site organizational development and specialized technical assistance to hundreds of community groups, the Center launched several ambitious leadership development programs over the years. They substantially increased the Center's reach and impact. Each was designed to increase the knowledge and leadership skills of a particular population which could not be reached adequately with on-site assistance alone.

Because of CCC's core funding constraints, these initiatives typically depended on

special project funding. While some gained support from several funders over time, most were less fortunate and therefore of limited duration.

### **The Youth Project:**

In the turmoil and rapid social change of the late Sixties, the Center launched The Youth Project to assist young people to develop the capacity to tackle issues which concerned them and their communities. The YP had a staff and advisory committee of people under 30 and funding which enabled it to make subgrants to finance the start-up of new youth-led organizations.

The Project scouted nationwide for emerging youth groups which showed promise as possible vehicles for significant community change, giving special attention to the South, the Rio Grande Valley, Appalachia, California's Central Valley and other distressed regions. Many were linked to broader social movements to which organized youth could make a substantial contribution.

With its combination of technical and financial assistance, the Youth Project was instrumental in the birth and early development of dozens of youth-led organizations, many of which were successful in leading efforts for change. The issues their leaders tackled ranged from high school reform to farmworker living conditions, from labor reform to civil rights for African Americans and Latinos. Many of these organizations went on to become long-lasting vehicles for community change.

### **SALT, or the Southern Appalachian Leadership Training Program:**

In the late Sixties, there was growing concern about conditions in Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia and Southern Appalachia. Hunger and poverty were rampant, the politics was highly corrupt and largely controlled by coal operators, and communities were unorganized and without influence over the issues which plagued the region. Concerned about these conditions and sensing the need for concerted efforts to strengthen community leadership in the region, the Center approached the Highlander Center -- which was renowned for its experience in developing leadership in the South and the "hollers" of Appalachia using techniques developed with Paolo Freire, who pioneered popular education for social change. They collaborated in developing the Southern Appalachian Leadership Training Program, or SALT, which the Ford Foundation then funded for several years.

SALT began modestly with a "travel program". This enabled CCC to hire a local staff person to reach into isolated communities and identify emerging leaders who would benefit from being able to overcome their isolation by travelling to other communities where they might learn from their organizing efforts. CCC then worked with Highlander to design a training program which offered local people the opportunity to participate in a year-long series of workshops and peer learning discussions which were designed to increase their leadership skills and their understanding of local issues. After several waves of leaders had been developed through these peer learning and training sessions, the Center turned over full responsibility for continuing this program to Highlander.

### **The Women's Technical Assistance Project, or WTAP:**

In the 1970s and 80s, concerned about the lack of strong organizing on women's issues,



the Center decided to devote staff time and other resources to creating a special project focused on building organizations which were both led by women and dedicated to tackling the issues which most concerned low-income women. Led by CCC's Eileen Paul, the Women's Technical Assistance Project provided a mix of technical assistance, resource development help, and leadership development workshops to women throughout the country, especially in the Southeast.

The issues which WTAP's local partners tackled were wide-ranging. Several focused primarily on job opportunities for women, especially in occupations which had long been dominated by men. These occupations included highway construction, coal-mining and factory jobs.

The women leading these groups were typically isolated and cut off from outside assistance. They had few contacts with peers in other towns and cities, and even less contact with support organizations with skills in community organizing, leadership development and organizational development.

WTAP filled these gaps by bringing groups of women together repeatedly to learn from each other and gain in confidence and leadership skills. WTAP emphasized work with women in rural areas where the problems of isolation and limited experience were most serious. The Project was instrumental in developing the Southeast Women's Employment Coalition which organized white and Black working-class women throughout seven states in Appalachia and the South on issues related to jobs and income. SWEC had a major impact, especially in West Virginia where the Coalition and its local affiliates succeeded in opening up several hundred coal-mining jobs for women.

### **The Community Change Agents Project:**

For several years in the 1980s, the Center received Kellogg Foundation funding for an extensive leadership development program which it called "the Community Change Agents Project". Each year CCC project director Jennifer Henderson and her staff selected 15-20 community leaders and brought them together four times for week-long training sessions on the different sets of skills most essential to bringing about substantial community change. These weeks concentrated on community organizing, planning, management and policy advocacy. They included extensive peer learning, as the participants included many people who were pioneers in analyzing and acting on community issues and broader policy questions. Also key to the program's strength was its access to the many areas of specialized knowledge offered by CCC's staff experts and consultants.

Most participants were executive directors of local and statewide community-based organizations. In addition to learning a great deal from participating in the workshops, they built new links to peer organizations in their regions and nationwide. They were able to use these new connections to continue peer learning and to fashion joint campaigns and partnerships which increased their power and capacity.

### **The Community Development Assistance Centers Project:**

In the Eighties, CCC launched a replication effort aimed at strengthening local and regional organizations which provided the types of advice and assistance the Center itself offered

nationwide. The Community Development Assistance Centers Project brought together the executive directors of such organizations to learn from each other and from CCC so they could expand their capacity to provide organizational development, resource development and specialized technical assistance for grassroots low-income organization. Participants included the Pratt Institute Center for Community Economic Development, the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, a number of university-based community design centers, Los Angeles' Community Development Technologies Center, and regional community organizing training centers.

This initiative led to extensive cross-site learning and expanded technical assistance capacity in several regions of the country. It also solidified the Center's connections with many regional and statewide organizations which shared CCC's vision and commitment.

### **The Cluster-Building Project:**

In the Nineties, with support from the Kellogg Foundation, CCC financed a series of "clusters" which brought together community leaders who wanted to deepen their knowledge and to work jointly on issues of common concern. These included a series of several cluster meetings on each of the following key issues --

- a cluster of **urban Native American** leaders and staff directors, who met repeatedly to discuss and learn more about the unique challenges they shared in representing off-reservation Indians; they shared knowledge and experience in the fields of social service delivery, community development, community organizing and policy advocacy.
- a cluster which convened several meetings of groups on the cutting edge on **banking and reinvestment** issues so they could deepen their understanding of new developments on those issues and plot joint strategy for impacting federal policy in a quickly changing federal landscape;
- a series convening Public Housing tenant leaders and housing attorneys to foster peer learning on **public housing** issues which concerned them and to plan joint strategy for impacting key issues, especially tenant participation in decision-making and issues related to modernization and displacement under HOPE VI and other programs; this led to creation of a national coalition of public housing resident organizations, legal services lawyers and other allies (ENPHRONT);
- a cluster repeatedly convening grassroots groups and their allies for peer learning and planning regarding the implementation of **welfare reform**; this led to creation of a national project of financial support and cross-site learning for groups organizing and advocating on welfare reform issues; and
- a cluster of experienced community organizers from the Northern Plains and Mountain West who were each considering taking on responsibilities in the **construction and rehabilitation of housing and in economic development**.

The Center found this strategy of convening groups around issues of common concern for peer learning and joint strategizing to be an excellent way to foster joint action on key issues.

In later years CCC continued to pursue this strategy even though the Kellogg funding lapsed after several years. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, CCC's cluster-building brought together representatives of worker centers, coalitions working on immigration issues, groups concerned about retirement security, tenant organizations tackling mobile home park issues, and organizations of previously incarcerated people who were addressing issues of the rights of returning citizens and other ex-offenders.

## **Projects developing capacity of local leaders and organizations to influence public policy:**

**Throughout its long history, the Center launched one project after another to give local and statewide organizations opportunities to work directly on issues of national importance. While most dealt with issues of federal policy, others addressed the behavior of banks, major corporations and other private sector institutions.**

To go back to the beginning, the Center's predecessor organization the "Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty" was involved in the late 1960's on several central issues. The first campaign to capture national attention was aimed at keeping the "war on poverty" committed to supporting grassroots organizing and "**maximum feasible participation of the poor**" in the Community Action Program and other initiatives of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

CCAP's Director Dick Boone and others on the Crusade's staff and board had been key leaders in OEO's creation and they were very concerned about slippage in its initial commitment to grassroots empowerment. Therefore, CCAP brought over 1500 people to Washington for meetings and a highly publicized mobilization which pressured OEO Director Sargent Shriver and others on these issues. Somewhat later this action was followed by unsuccessful efforts to defeat the "Green Amendment" which reduced community control of the early Community Action Program and mandated local government participation on the boards of local CAPs.

Other initial national issues included an attack on growing corporate control of agriculture (the "Agribusiness Accountability Project" led by Jim Hightower) and promotion of strong enforcement of the **Freedom of Information** Act so that citizens' groups could get access to information on key federal issues.

CCAP played an early national leadership role on issues of **hunger and malnutrition**. Working closely with Rep. Adam Clayton Powell and Kennedy allies, the Crusade created the National Commission on Hunger which involved US Senators and major church, labor, and minority leaders in launching a series of Congressional hearings into hunger. Held in Harlem, the Mississippi Delta and the Valleys of California and Texas, they built the case and constituency for a great expansion of federal aid to poor and working-class families. The hearings, the Commission's publication Hunger, USA, and the subsequent creation of an ongoing national watchdog organization on hunger issues had a profound impact on millions of poor families nationwide.

Finally, during this time of great militancy among American Indians, including the actions of the American Indian Movement, CCAP's Edgar Cahn worked with Native American Leaders to develop a hard-hitting critique of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, entitled ***Our Brothers' Keeper***.

**Having strongly established the Center's role on national issues, CCC proceeded to establish a series of national initiatives as issues and opportunities arose.** Some of these arose from the concerns of local community groups. Others were initiated when the Center's Board and staff spotted important openings for collective action at the national level. From the vantage point of this paper's focus on leadership and organizational development, the following initiatives were particularly important.

The Center responded to each wave of massive **federal cutbacks in domestic social programs** by launching what became the leading progressive coalitions fighting those changes. CCC was effective because of its unique combination of five qualities –

- its legitimacy because of its deep roots in local organizations representing poor people,
- its skills in coalition-building,
- its reputation for being unusually collaborative and serious about sharing leadership, funding and credit,
- its growing record of accomplishment on federal policy issues, and
- its staff's expert knowledge of the issues.

These coalitions involved dozens of national organizations in fighting against deep cuts in budgets presented by Presidents Nixon and Reagan. Today's Coalition on Human Needs -- which until recently operated as a special project of CCC -- is a continuation of the alliance formed to block Reagan's cuts as well as his plans to eliminate scores of important federal programs and replace them with **block grants**. Those broad grants to local and state governments would have virtually no targeting to benefit low-income people and greatly weakened protections on civil rights, citizen participation and other key issues. The coalition succeeded in limiting the move to block grants and has continued to serve as the main vehicle for waging annual struggles over the federal budget. Needless to say, this has often been a losing battle, though these progressive coalitions have had significant wins over the years.

Block grant issues gave the Center opportunities for launching two especially exemplary projects combining serious leadership development, organizing, and public policy campaigns. The first of these was the **General Revenue Sharing** Citizen Monitoring Project which CCC launched with a civil rights organization, a nonprofit which was building urban coalitions, and the League of Women Voters. It is described in the paper on Economic Justice, as is the **Community Development** Block Grant Monitoring Project. Both developed local leaders' understanding of federal policy and politics, their knowledge of how to launch campaigns on federal policy issues, their understanding of how to influence local government policy, and their skills in mobilizing people to work on major policy issues. They moved people from addressing only local issues to also effectively tackling statewide and national issues.

Both Monitoring Projects also developed local groups' skills in **participatory action research, community-based monitoring and popular education**. Staff and leaders of local groups were drilled in techniques for involving ordinary citizens in researching and mastering policy issues, considering alternative ways to influence them, and then marshalling cadres of knowledgeable residents to have a direct impact on them. **The Projects developed research instruments and strategies which were easily mastered and designed specifically to develop people's capacity to be leaders and organizers on issues which matter to them immensely** (e.g. income and vital services for residents, investment for their neighborhoods, banking services, access to jobs, who benefits when business gets public subsidies and tax breaks).

The Center's Othello Poulard created and led coalitions which had a similar impact on issues of jobs and public housing. CCC obtained several years of federal funding so it could equip local groups to monitor and influence the CETA job training program, especially CETA's creation of **public service jobs** for unemployed people. This project supported organizing and leadership development in dozens of cities, as did a privately funded initiative to help public housing residents coalesce with other community groups, legal services attorneys and others to

fight displacement, poor management, and other abuses in **public housing**. Both these projects were extraordinarily successful as "popular education" which dramatically increased the knowledge, sophistication and success of grassroots leaders whose personal welfare was directly affected by the results of these policy battles. Both initiatives are also described in later chapters.

The Center's pioneering work on "citizen monitoring" demonstrates the tremendous potential of using participatory action research techniques to educate people on the policy issues they care about, and to inform them about the politics and procedures which are involved in implementing those policies. This form of popular education prepares people to identify whether there are any illegalities or other failures in the implementation of particular policies while also surfacing opportunities for ordinary people to influence how public policies are implemented. Armed with this knowledge, citizens are in a far stronger position to exercise their rights and to influence policy formulation. It is no exaggeration to say that this kind of "citizen monitoring" provides an essential technique for reforming government policies so that public programs become far more accountable, effective, and beneficial to those who most need help. And CCC's experience with using both private and federal government funding for this combination of research and education demonstrates that supporting citizen monitoring is an exceptionally effective use of public as well as private funds.

**In sum, the Center was particularly effective when it launched projects which combined all three forms of assistance –**

- **organizational and organizing assistance,**
- **resource development help, and**
- **specialized assistance on issues.**

**This combined the building of power and capacity at the local level with popular education on the issues which matter most to people.** This comprehensive approach was greatly facilitated when CCC was able to raise special funding to support the staffing, travel and, in some instances **pass-through funding** for local staffing or other costs, which are involved in providing the full range of assistance which is needed.