

PROJECT
change

PROJECT
CHANGE IN
ACTION



LESSONS LEARNED II



“The people involved with Project Change have made a significant impact in their communities. They have proven that by working together the struggle for social justice can succeed.”

—ROBERT D. HAAS
Chairman and CEO
Levi Strauss & Co.

Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative,
a project of the Tides Center,
was founded by
the Levi Strauss Foundation.

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Attachment 1:
A Glossary of Terms,
“The Power of Words”

I. INTRODUCTION

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”

— NELSON MANDELA
1994 Inaugural Speech

This document presents key lessons of Project Change, a consortium of four community-based anti-racism coalitions funded by the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF). While Project Change began in 1991, *Lessons Learned II: Project Change in Action* focuses on recent activities undertaken since 1995. It is the second in a series of reports that document the efforts of Project Change communities to put anti-racist strategies into action and show the outcomes of their work. An earlier publication, titled *Lessons Learned: Planning an Anti-Racism Initiative*, highlighted insights about planning and organizing the initial phases of community anti-racism initiatives.¹ The intent of this report is to: 1) highlight challenges and opportunities diverse coalitions face when implementing programs designed to address race relations in their communities; 2) offer new insights for those getting started in this work; and 3) share with funders some meaningful ways to advance the field of anti-racism.

Since its inception, Project Change has been widely recognized for its community innovation and impacts by various leading national institutions, including President Clinton’s One America Initiative, *USA TODAY*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Diversity Factor Magazine*, and the National Hispanic Corporate Council (NHCC). Levi Strauss & Co., on behalf of its work with Project Change, has received various prestigious national and regional awards, including the inaugural Ron Brown Award for Corporate Citizenship, the League of Women Voters Diversity Award, and the J.C. Penney Golden Rule Award for civic volunteerism in the southern U.S.

The lessons in this document are drawn from an evaluation of Project Change conducted by the Center for



Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD), a national nonprofit planning and evaluation group. Findings are based on interviews with foundation staff, technical assistance providers, current and former task force members from each of the four pilot sites, and local project staff. This account should be viewed as a “work in progress” as new insights and understandings evolve. A companion report will be prepared by CAPD to provide greater detail about the effectiveness of Project Change’s program strategies to date.

Project Change represents a unique perspective and provides powerful insights for private funders, leaders of community and social justice institutions, policy makers, scholars, and the media. We want very much for others to benefit from what Project Change has taught us about how to have more of an impact in the field of anti-racism work. Accordingly, we encourage you to share it with others who will benefit from its contents.

¹ See *Lessons Learned: Planning An Anti-Racism Initiative*, The Center for Assessment and Policy Development, PA, 1995.

Background and Rationale

The nation's racial conflicts have been underscored by the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest; the spate of black church burnings across the southern U.S.; emerging efforts to dismantle affirmative action and bilingual education policies in California and elsewhere; and the brutal murder of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas. Racism is pervasive and, many believe, becoming more insidious. The following data suggest that while some racial disparities are decreasing (for instance, between income levels of black and white men with the same education), many more exist or are getting worse:

- ❖ In figures released in a recent report by the President's Initiative on Race, the annual median family income varies widely according to ethnic group: Whites, \$47,023; Blacks, \$26,522; and Latinos, \$26,179. For family home ownership, the figures also vary. They are: 71.7% whites; 46% Blacks, and 43% Latinos.²
- ❖ According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of hate groups rose 20% nationwide from 1996 to 1997, and there are more than 163 active internet sites dedicated to racial hatred.
- ❖ Today, it is estimated that more than 80% of white Americans live in neighborhoods that are less than 1 percent African American.³
- ❖ A recent survey of corporate and private foundation giving reveals that in 1997, less than 10% of the more than \$227 billion in grants awarded in the U.S. were targeted to organizations that explicitly

serve the interests of communities of color, despite the fact that communities of color now constitute more than 20% of the national population.⁴

Goals and Origins

Against this backdrop, the primary intent of Project Change is to focus public attention and action on institutional racism, the intentional or unconscious subordination of specific racial groups through organizational policies or practices. While the initiative has many facets, addressing institutional racism through innovative and inclusive intervention and public education strategies is its core objective and distinguishing feature.

Project Change began in 1991 as a pilot in three sites: Albuquerque, New Mexico; El Paso, Texas; and Valdosta, Georgia. In 1993, the project was expanded to Knoxville, Tennessee. Since the late 1980s, more than \$6 million has been committed to support Project Change efforts. LSF has also invested in a larger social justice strategy that promotes civil rights efforts by some of the country's most prominent social justice organizations, including: the National Conference on Community Justice, the National Council of La Raza, and the National Urban League. In September 1997, Project Change's day-to-day administration was transferred from LSF to the San Francisco-based Tides Center, a national nonprofit incubator supporting the development of innovative social justice programs.

² Report released by The President's Initiative on Race and prepared by the Council of Economic Advisors, September 1998.

³ Cornel West, *Race Matters*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1993, p. 4.

⁴ Highlights of the Foundation Center's, *Foundation Giving*, 1997 Edition, New York, NY

II. EVOLVING STRATEGIES



“Project Change has been inspiring because of the people willing to do the work in the community, who struggled through the initial challenges of working together, and who continue to boldly move the project forward. With race on the consciousness of the nation, Project Change has an opportunity to make an indelible footprint in history.”

— **OMOWALE SATTERWHITE**
Community Development
Institute,
Project Change Trainer

Two primary strategies inform Project Change’s continuing work today. First, support continues for the four local coalitions with an eye to establishing a meaningful and lasting legacy, one that builds on LSF’s seminal investment in each community. To this end, Project Change sites are increasingly developing innovative projects and institutional strategies designed to promote long-term progressive change in their communities. Examples of Project Change leadership along these lines include the following:

- ❖ **In Albuquerque**, a fair lending institute has been developed in partnership with the University of New Mexico Institute of Public Law to enhance bank compliance with non-discriminatory lending laws. Among other activities, a television documentary on institutional racism was produced and aired statewide in partnership with a local network station affiliate, reaching more than one million New Mexico viewers.
- ❖ **In El Paso**, a three-part race relations training program has been in development through a partnership with members of the Police Department, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and U.S. Border Patrol. In addition, El Paso Project Change has established a successful pilot conflict resolution training program targeted to students at racially-troubled local schools.
- ❖ **In Knoxville**, a social justice collaborative, in partnership with the FBI, is being developed for the Eastern Tennessee region, bringing together key social justice organizations to work collectively on priorities that the community identifies. A hate crimes task force was established to enable local law

enforcement and the community to quickly respond to violent acts directed at people of color and others.

- ❖ **In Valdosta**, a banking coalition (involving eight of ten local banks) has been established to identify and remedy discriminatory lending practices among local financial institutions. This work has led to the creation of a loan fund to help low-income residents seeking home ownership.

The second half of Project Change’s mission is to add to the national base of knowledge, tools, and resources available in the ongoing fight against racism. In doing so, Project Change identifies, develops and makes available resources and tools, including: an anti-racism glossary of commonly used terms (see Attachment 1), an anti-racism resource guide, an internet service focusing on race, and a compendium of web site addresses of social justice organizations. It is hoped that these tools will foster important linkages among social justice organizations and assist community groups to plan and implement more informed and complementary anti-racism efforts.

The last eight years provide an important backdrop to the work that lies ahead. Project Change began in each community with the formation of a multi-racial volunteer task force that identified local issues and challenges. These coalitions continue to guide the Project’s work in each community and typically consist of 12-15 individuals representing a cross-section of local business, law enforcement, religious, government, neighborhood, non-profit and community leadership. LSF has provided financial and technical assistance for these local coalitions

Key Elements of Albuquerque Project Change's Fair Lending Strategy

Since 1993, Albuquerque Project Change (APC) has worked in partnership with community groups and financial lending institutions to eliminate racial barriers to credit. Five primary factors explain APC's successful strategy: 1) strong partnerships in and outside the banking industry; 2) a cohesive, well-organized task force; 3) at least one task force volunteer with strong standing and expertise in the banking industry; 4) competent staff; and 5) effective use of outside expertise in anti-racism training. The following are a few details about APC's strong partnerships and other key elements to its success.

Albuquerque's strong community infrastructure of non-profit organizations and interest groups has proven to be a cornerstone to this work. The Community Reinvestment Task Force (CREDIT), made up of nonprofit community advocacy, service and development groups, came together to challenge the planned merger of two major Albuquerque banks. Under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), communities can challenge mergers on the grounds that banks are not reinvesting in low-income neighborhoods where they do business. CREDIT held banks accountable to the credit needs of minority and low-income communities by use of the CRA. Over time, and as a result of two merger challenges,

CREDIT achieved lending commitments of over \$5 million for Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The commitments included low-interest and flexible underwriting which benefited low-income neighborhoods of color.

With the establishment of relationships with three major banks, APC conducted a series of "Non-discriminatory Lending Education and Awareness Workshops" for bank executives and loan officers. Nationally respected corporate diversity trainers facilitated the workshops. These workshops resulted in increased lending and marketing by participating banks to some people of color.

In the Fall of 1998, community needs and industry changes led APC to launch the Project Change Fair Lending Center (FLC). FLC works in partnership with the Institute of Public Law, the public service arm of the University of New Mexico School of Law. FLC provides research information, referral, and training for community groups, financial institutions, government bodies/agencies, New Mexico's judiciary, and the media. Shortly after FLC opened its doors, CREDIT won a \$1.3 billion commitment for low-income communities of color. Moreover, FLC participated in the negotiations, spawned by yet another mega-merger. FLC continues to work with CREDIT to ensure that promised dollars reach low-income neighborhoods of color.

through one to three year planning grants culminating in supplemental grants in support of a three-year action phase. Recently, the Foundation has approved additional

funding to assist successful sites to move beyond LSF support and to advance efforts toward achieving a community-wide legacy.



“There is a need for an organization like the Fair Lending Center of Project Change to bring resources and training to the community so it can cope with this sea change in the economic environment — in which mega-financial institutions are increasingly more interested in capital markets than in community lending.”

— VICKI PLEVIN
Director, Project Change
Fair Lending Center,
Institute of Public Law,
University of NM School
of Law

III. A FIVE-STEP APPROACH



“I knew that at some point in my journey, I needed to figure out how to be influential with white people, how to help them understand that fighting against racism is in their self-interest. I thought maybe Project Change could help me move in that direction. And it has.”

— CHRISTOPHER WOODHULL
Executive Director,
Tribe One (Youth
Empowerment Organization)

The Project Change experience offers one approach to the successful implementation of an anti-racism initiative geared towards the following objectives:

- ❖ Dismantling institutional policies and practices that promote discrimination;
- ❖ Easing tensions between majority and minority groups;
- ❖ Promoting diversity in the leadership of key community institutions; and
- ❖ Stopping or preventing overt acts of racial and cultural prejudice.

Successful implementation of this approach involves a five-step process that can be replicated in other communities. Key elements of this five-step process are as follows:

1. Assemble a diverse coalition of local citizens committed to improving race relations in a community and building trust across racial and ethnic lines. In El Paso, this included a judge, a bank chairman, church leaders, and officials from public institutions like the YWCA and local colleges, as well as managers of private firms and companies in the region.

2. Assess local conditions — community history, employment statistics, education, and lending practices — to identify evidence of institutional racism. In Albuquerque, for instance, research supported by Project Change has shown that people of color are twice as likely as Anglos to be denied home loans.

Even upper income people of color are more likely to be denied a home loan than lower income Anglos.

3. Educate the public about institutional racism by engaging local residents and community leaders in ways that lead to meaningful action. In Knoxville, strategies to educate the community about reporting racially-motivated hate crimes went hand-in-hand with opportunities to train local leaders in hate crime prevention.

4. Advocate positive change in institutional policy and practice with targeted programs that encourage community mobilization, partnership, and exchange among diverse groups. In Valdosta, residents organized across racial lines to prevent a proposed Ku Klux Klan march in the community.

5. Evaluate and share lessons learned to inspire larger advancements in the global fight against racism. CAPD’s evaluation and dissemination, related to lessons gleaned from the respective sites, have inspired national interest from critical constituencies ranging from academic institutions to corporate and foundation grantmaking entities to the media.

Each of Project Change’s local, citizen task forces initially met in a two- or three-day retreat in which members shared their views and worked towards consensus on how to tackle pressing issues of race in their communities. The task forces were charged with assessing local conditions, defining race relations issues, and outlining a course of action.



The task forces initiated their work with an assessment of local conditions in a research-based "state of racism" report. In each site, this research was conducted by an independent organization, usually a local university, to ensure an informed and objective assessment of historical and current examples of how institutional racism affects area residents. Community research along these lines provided a basis for each Project Change task

force to determine appropriate projects and activities for its work. Local projects typically center on issues of greatest concern to community members, such as fair banking and lending practices, educational equity, and police-community relations. Throughout the three-year action phase, each task force identifies and works with other community partners who are willing to participate in local anti-racism efforts.



"Project Change has been able to create a community-wide conversation around equity in the area of access to credit and capital to low-income people in our city. We have built rather unlikely partnerships between banking and the community. We are working together on a grassroots level on fair-lending as it relates to reducing poverty in this community."

— **DIANA DORN-JONES**
Executive Director,
United South Broadway
Corp., Albuquerque, NM

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES



“Collaboration across lines of race and ethnicity is strategically essential to advance any social justice agenda. In this work, however, it is very, very difficult for like-minded people to come to common ground. Project Change is modeling the possibility of how this kind of work can be done with integrity and, ultimately, with impact.”

— HENRY A.J. RAMOS
Senior Management
Consultant

Based on work in all four sites, Project Change has developed a set of twelve guiding principles for diverse groups working to eradicate institutional racism in their communities. While some of these elements may appear obvious at first glance, we have learned that neglecting any one of them can cripple efforts to getting the job done.

1. Define the issue in a broad and inclusive way, so that everyone feels they have a stake in its outcomes (including whites). Make it clear that it is in everyone’s best interest to eliminate racism.
2. As a group, model the behavior and commitment needed in the community. Engage in meaningful decision making and timely follow-up action, and establish a team that adequately reflects the community it seeks to represent. Be prepared to invest personal time and effort in between group dialogues and meetings.
3. Recruit volunteer community leaders who have demonstrated commitment to changing the status quo, and who bring standing and expertise relative to the issues and institutions that are the focus of the change effort.
4. Require ongoing participation in anti-racism training (continuous learning), even for those individuals with years of experience in community work. Project Change has discovered that multiple trainings over time are the best way to optimize learning, personal transformation, and skill building in anti-racism work.
5. Invest the necessary time to build trusting relations and a safe environment to work collectively with

diverse allies. Do not be concerned if serious group dialogue leads to an initial separation along racial/ethnic lines. It takes time for individuals to overcome fears, heal old wounds, and create constructive partnerships. Often, a skilled, outside facilitator can help groups surface key issues and conflicts and move toward resolution.

6. Support anti-racism work through the targeted use of applied research. Study the challenges and opportunities that characterize a community in relation to its particular racial dynamics. Develop reports and analyses related to: historical, attitudinal and regional factors concerning community race issues; local socio-economic disparities based on race; and institutional policies that encourage or discourage progress. Disseminate this work broadly and use it to encourage needed community dialogue.
7. Treat both process and results as important. Acknowledge that time limitations create tensions between the two and allow for adequate time so that individuals can confront difficult issues meaningfully and fully.
8. Look inward at the need for rigorous inquiry, reflection, and healing at the individual level. Acknowledge that denial, oppression, and internalized oppression exist and that fighting racism, or any “ism,” begins with one’s self. This is an essential step toward modeling the behavior change agents and leaders want to see in the broader community.

9. Acknowledge that racism exists in at least four inter-related domains: the *personal* (where we hold personal attitudes, biases, prejudices and stereotypes); the *interpersonal* (the level at which we interact with others — strongly affected by the attitudes at the personal level); the *institutional* (the group context in which policies and procedures are made and administered, dictating the way decisions are made, the way people are hired and fired, etc.); and the *cultural* (that which determines what personal/group qualities and characteristics are valued and devalued, including judgments about racial identity).

10. Acknowledge the paradox that understanding, valuing and appreciating differences is essential to achieve common ground. On the one hand, encourage homogeneous groups to meet separately so they can explore their unique challenges and opportunities. On the other hand, encourage explorations of the larger



challenges and opportunities that people of diverse backgrounds face together, within a more diverse, integrated context. Both strategies are essential and can take place simultaneously.

11. Hold anti-racism work to the same high standards applied in other fields of work. Incorporate excellent planning and implementation of strategies, rigorous evaluation, and effective use of theory and evidence to document and support statements that are purported to be factual; properly allocate resources sufficient to do the work; and make use of expert technical assistance.

12. Take action that inspires commitment toward institutional reform. Be explicit about the steps institutions must take to achieve intended results (e.g., advocate for changes in policy and/or practice based on informed study and partner with leading experts on the issues).

It is hoped that the above list of guiding principles will serve as a useful reference for group discussion and reflection early on in community change processes across the nation.



“The fact is doing this work requires a lot of us and often we are not aware of how much until we begin a process that leads to greater awareness and deeper understanding. I urge each of us who take on the mantle of social change to search our hearts and decide to do our own work. I believe we can’t do one without doing the other.”

— SHIRLEY STRONG
Project Change,
Executive Director

V. COMMON BARRIERS



“If we are to dismantle institutionalized racism in the South, committed people of European descent and people of color must be willing to trust each other and to devise strategies for guiding each other through the minefields that continue to threaten and sabotage our noblest efforts.”

— LINDA BENNETT ELDER
Valdosta State University,
Associate Professor of
Religion Studies in the
Department of Philosophy

During these past eight years, Project Change has found that when people come together to address institutional racism, they generally encounter barriers to progress that make it difficult to achieve long-lasting, substantive change. The following is a list of common barriers in the hope that those who engage in this type of work will anticipate such obstacles and be prepared to address them. Key barriers and challenges that typically impede understanding and progress in this work include the following:



1. The misleading notion that efforts to eradicate racism benefit only people of color.
2. The absence of a theoretical framework for understanding the root causes and effects of racism.
3. The difficulty of establishing community trust and openness that enables groups to move from dialogue to action.
4. The absence of shared values that support a common vision, mission, and plan of action. Many groups lack agreement on the fundamental elements of any community change process (e.g., clear, concise answers to the questions: Who? What? How? Where? When? and Why?).
5. The absence of a shared understanding related to key issues and language essential to comprehending meaningful anti-racism work.⁵
6. An unmet need for continuous learning, both individually and organizationally, to deepen knowledge about race relations and enhance relevant skills.
7. The dearth of skilled technical assistance providers, with expertise in fields like strategic planning, anti-racism training, and conflict resolution, that can support the change process.
8. Conflicting opinions about best strategies for changing the behavior of institutions.

5. See the attached, “Glossary of Terms, “The Power of Words””

VI. SUCCESSES AND LESSONS



Despite encountering many of the common obstacles referenced earlier, Project Change has achieved important program successes in the four goal areas. All four community coalitions have developed strategies to respond to local issues that they determined were most important. While strategies may differ from one community to another, the issues identified as highest priority concerns are quite similar.

To varying degrees of impact, each coalition has selected the following priorities: 1) equitable access to credit and capital, 2) improved educational equity in public schools, and 3) hate crimes prevention. What have been the exemplary results and lessons of this work?

Access to Credit and Capital

The longest running programs in Albuquerque and Valdosta have achieved the most significant inroads in the banking industry. These sites have developed

strategies and programs designed to expand minority access to home mortgage loans. Both groups have benefited from the support of key bank executives in their respective communities. Albuquerque, in particular, has also demonstrated highly effective use of strategic advances with leading regional organizing and advocacy networks concerned about minority banking.⁶ Efforts in both places have resulted in important new community institutional vehicles designed to address equity concerns in the field: In Albuquerque, a new fair lending center at the University of New Mexico Law School; and in Valdosta, a new low-income loan fund supported by area banks. These efforts suggest the critical importance of targeted strategies and strategic alliances with both leading institutional and grassroots partners.

Educational Equity in Public Schools

Educational equity goals have been difficult to attain. Schools have not welcomed “outside interference,” and most do not accept that insitutional racism affects how children fare in school. Nor has there been consensus within Project Change about where and how to engage (by working on resources allocation to schools, parent organizing, negotiation with school boards, teacher training, curriculum development, tracking and promotion standards, etc.). Hence, there is a lot of trial and error.

Some strategies are working. In El Paso, patient and tenacious efforts over the past several years have led to the development of a successful pilot conflict resolution training program. El PasoProject Change (EPPC) partnered with a local university’s Upward Bound Program and Hispanic Leadership Institute to conduct this pilot



“Fighting institutional racism starts with young people. El Paso Project Change developed a racial conflict resolution model that provides students with the tools and training to be the responsible agents for the educational institution. Through conflict resolution councils, the students are empowered to resolve the issues that arise.”

— FRANCISCO DOMINGUEZ
Attorney, Texas Rural Legal Aid
El Paso Project Change

⁶ See previous box titled, “Key Elements of Albuquerque Project Change’s Fair Lending Strategy.”



“The Project Change task force has helped break down racial barriers in the community and has been identified as the vehicle for community relations with law enforcement. El Paso Project Change is creating a safe place where law enforcement and the community can come together to dialogue. In the old days, we wouldn't have been allies.”

— REV. CAROLYNE REDIC
Victory Chapel
El Paso Project Change

for students of a local public school where racial tensions have been a growing problem. Working with and through student groups and their families from four local high schools, EPPC has gained confidence from school authorities. Students from one participating high school have applied what they learned from the training by successfully mediating incidents at their school and hosting a conflict resolution session for their classmates. Plans are underway for EPPC, along with volunteer teachers and youth participants, to offer an annual conflict resolution kick-off event and to help other schools in the district implement their own mediation youth groups.

In this instance, key lessons include the critical importance of staying power (i.e., remaining persistent against the backdrop of bureaucratic resistance) as well as soliciting support from key stakeholder groups (here, students and their families) positioned to help persuade institutional authorities to act.

Hate Crimes Prevention

Knoxville Project Change (KPC) has experienced some success, to date, in addressing community challenges related to hate crimes reporting and prosecution. Three years ago, a predominantly black church was burned in Knoxville, one of many church arsons nationwide suspected by the Federal Department of Justice as being racially motivated. KPC's response was to convene a leadership conference designed to establish a regional hate crimes strategy to guide hate crimes response by area law enforcement agencies and other leadership community institutions. Through a

resulting partnership with regional FBI executives, KPC has helped to establish a hate crimes task force consisting of all of Knoxville's leading law enforcement officials, representing local, state, and federal agencies. The task force is developing a comprehensive protocol that will inform regional policy and practice in this area, including new delineation of roles and responsibilities, surveillance and prosecution, best practices, and community education and engagement activities.

The core lesson of Knoxville's experience is the critical importance of building on time-sensitive opportunities: the rash of recent hate crimes helped Project Change to establish a timely partnership with area law enforcement. Project Change principals seized the moment and successfully transformed the problem into an opportunity for positive community and institutional response.

In El Paso, EPPC has developed another meaningful local hate crimes strategy. Through initial attempts to enhance public awareness about local hate crimes in the community, EPPC successfully cultivated relationships with local law enforcement agencies, human rights groups (especially on behalf of border residents), and victims' rights groups. Due in large part to these efforts, a member of EPPC was competitively selected by U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to participate in a "Hate Crime Train the Trainer" program. The primary intent of this national training initiative is to educate local law enforcement officials and selected community residents on how to prevent hate and bias crimes. To do so, a model hate crimes training curriculum is made available to selected local communities,

disseminating best policies, procedures, practices, techniques, and materials. EPPC is now an active member of a local training team, along with local law enforcement officials, serving nine counties in Texas, New Mexico and East Arizona. Under this federal and local partnership, plans are underway to train nearly 200 police recruits and community volunteers in the first round of hate crimes training in El Paso.

In addition to creating a cadre of trained law enforcement and community leaders, EPPC is considering ways to incorporate a hate crimes training curriculum in local university criminal justice degree-granting programs, and to advocate for strengthening existing hate crime laws in Texas. The primary lesson of El Paso's work is that by having established a strong rapport with local victims rights groups and law enforcement agencies, EPPC positioned itself to leverage much needed technical training and resources (e.g., training curriculum and a manual) made available by a collaboration of national law enforcement agencies.

In general, the ability to influence local institutional policies and practices varies greatly among the local sites. The extent to which the four coalitions succeed in carrying out their organizational change strategies depends, in large measure, on the degree to which each site is characterized by the following five elements: a conducive environment in the community for social justice work; strong partnerships with other local organizations and groups; a competent, cohesive task force (or board of directors); competent staff; and a productive relationship with the funder.

El Paso Project Change Youth & Education Committee

The El Paso Project Change Youth & Education Committee is made up of a partnership among area high schools, university professionals, and community leaders who know that one necessary approach to combatting institutional racism in El Paso is training and empowering youth to identify and mediate racial conflict in their schools. The Committee believes that it can achieve this goal through the following measures:

- Educating El Paso youth and raising their awareness about the local manifestations of racism
- Empowering El Paso youth to understand and confront their own racism
- Empowering El Paso youth to understand and confront racism that has affected their lives
- Educating and empowering El Paso youth with the ability to mediate racial conflict
- Institutionalizing protocols and a methodology for resolving racial conflict in their schools.



“I didn't realize that it was so difficult to get hate crimes statistics out of police departments — it's public information, for gods sakes! In Albuquerque, we document hate crimes so we know there's a problem and so we can determine if we need to do more training of police officers or if we need to get information to the community about what's going on.”

— **MARY MOLINA MESCALL**
Deputy Director,
Albuquerque Police
Department

VII. WAYS TO INVEST IN ANTI-RACISM WORK



“Before Project Change, there wasn't an appreciation or recognition that the African American community had any impact on the Valdosta-Lowndes County community. One of the tangible pieces of evidence of our work is the dedication of the largest Civil War monument built to unknown slaves and African American soldiers.”

— DR. JERRY HARDEE
VP, Academic Affairs,
Albany State University
Valdosta Project Change

The anti-racism field presents continuing opportunities for private funders to invest in community building and community enhancing activities. Typically the most important and lasting gains for funders and communities alike result when funding is allocated to support significant long-term investment activity. The following is a list of recommendations for funder consideration based on Project Change's experience since the early 1990s. Virtually all of the approaches described below help to increase civic participation, community leadership capacity, and public awareness in general, while also addressing the issues most particular to the anti-racism agenda of Project Change.

Dialogue

❖ Promote community dialogue on racism with careful attention to both design and results. Encourage efforts that expand the dialogue from a black-white paradigm to one that is inclusive of other important groups, including Asian-Pacific Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. Also support efforts that move beyond one-time events to on-going engagement.

Community Action

❖ Support diverse, local community coalitions that seek planning and implementation grants toward the development of well-focused and inclusive anti-racism initiatives.

❖ Seek ways to integrate anti-racism work into existing community initiatives designed to improve health,



promote leadership development, and enhance educational and economic opportunities in the larger civic context.

Technical Assistance

❖ Seek ways to expand the level and kind of technical assistance available to local community organizations working to address institutional racism. The types of technical assistance that are especially needed include skilled facilitation in group process and anti-racism training, strategic planning, and conflict resolution.

❖ Support “learning communities” among diverse groups of technical assistance providers to deepen their knowledge of racism and its effects, share best practices, build lasting and supportive collegial partnerships, prevent burnout, and enhance their overall capacity to support each other.

❖ Study and address barriers in the field that continue to limit the number of technical assistance providers who are people of color.

Research and Dissemination

❖ Help build an inventory of best practices and models for addressing institutional racism at the local community level.

❖ Support the establishment of an informational exchange network of leading writers, practitioners, trainers, technical assistance providers, and policy advocates who work to improve race relations.

❖ Support the production and distribution of printed, video, and on-line (internet) information designed to expand public awareness about the root causes and effects of racism and to identify ways to address them effectively.

❖ Support the development of standard benchmarks for success in any anti-racism, community-change process, focusing especially on criteria to verify that change efforts, both short and long-term, are producing desired results.

Youth

❖ Support programs in schools and community organizations that help children and youth learn the value of living in a diverse society.

❖ Encourage youth engagement in leadership development programs and service projects that expand their capacities to address constructively racial tensions and challenges in the community.

Organizational Development

❖ Encourage diversity in the composition of community institutions and coalitions at the level of staff, board of directors, members and clients so that these bodies optimally reflect the diversity of the communities they aim to represent and serve.

❖ Ensure that programs and projects serving people of color have relevant evaluation procedures and criteria reflecting the uniqueness of these communities (e.g., utilize a culturally relevant lens for evaluation).

❖ Help build a civic and organizational culture that truly respects and values diverse backgrounds, talents and skills.



“Project Change is about the transformation of people — people who are passionate about respect, dignity, and integrity. Funders who want to invest in social capital will learn many lessons about what it takes to build such communities.”

— MIYOKO OSHIMA,
Former Director of Program
The Tides Center

VIII. CONCLUSION

“If it were nothing but farmworkers in the union now, just Mexican farmworkers, we'd only have about 30 percent of all the ideas that we have. There would be no cross-fertilization, no growing. It's beautiful to work with other groups, other ideas, and other customs. It's like the wood is laminated.”

— Cesar Chavez

Racism is the number one challenge of our times, requiring a level of awareness, will, and commitment that is much larger than most people anticipate. As in other complex areas, this work is often frustrating and elusive, raising as many questions as providing answers. Some of the key lingering questions related to anti-racism work are the following:

- ❖ What does it take to collaborate in ways that bring meaningful results?
- ❖ How can we most effectively deepen awareness to address root causes rather than symptoms?
- ❖ How can we ensure that our expanding public dialogue on race leads to meaningful changes in behavior, attitudes and beliefs?
- ❖ How do we expand the dialogue to include more diverse voices?
- ❖ How do we deal with race in relation to the other “isms”?

In an effort to respond to the ways in which institutional racism is perpetuated in America and to provide more concrete answers to lingering

questions in the field, Project Change has developed timely and fruitful local strategies that constructively advance the struggle for social justice. We hope this report, and others that draw from Project Change's experience, will help to inform and support complementary efforts designed to eradicate the disgraceful and painful effects of racism on our society.



Valdosta, GA, 1991... the journey continues...

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PHOTOS

Inside front cover: Dupont Photographers; page 2: Alex Haley statue, Patricia Moore Harbour, photographer;
page 7: modern homes, Kathy Sloane, photographer; page 10: petition signing, Gary Heatherly, photographer; page 11: students,
Lilliana Nieto Del Rio, photographer; page 14: slave memorial, Paul Leavy, photographer, *The Valdosta Times*; page 16: children and teacher, Kathy Sloane, photographer.
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