



EQUITY CONVERSATION GUIDES FOR YOUNG LEADERS AND PARTNERS

## Sharing Power: History and Contributions of Organizing in the Continuum of Youth Engagement



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.

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# Using the Equity Conversation Guides for Young Leaders and Partners

The Annie E. Casey Foundation believes that to achieve the result it seeks — that all children in the United States have bright futures — it must integrate racial and ethnic equity and inclusion as a core component of all its work.

With that in mind, the Foundation's Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative prioritizes equity and inclusion in its efforts to ensure that young people — ages 14 to 26 in the United States who have spent at least one day in foster care after their 14th birthday — have the relationships, resources and opportunities to achieve well-being and success.

Authentic youth engagement has been a philosophical cornerstone since the Jim Casey Initiative's inception and has become a signature practice that empowers young people across the nation. This practice of youth-adult partnership has demonstrated that including young people who have experienced foster care in the development, implementation and evaluation of policy and practices leads to significantly better and more equitable solutions.

With this foundational imperative in mind, the Jim Casey Initiative developed the Equity Conversation Guides for Young Leaders and Partners — a collection of four documents — to help young leaders and adult facilitators engage in conversations aimed at the following objectives:

- developing systems analysis and critical thinking skills;
- creating space to learn together;
- sparking interest to learn more; and
- building knowledge of equity and inclusion, with a positive youth development and adolescent brain development lens.

The Equity Conversation Guides for Young Leaders and Partners are designed to be an integral component of partnering with young people in this important work. Building youth-adult partnerships requires drawing from the lessons of adolescent brain science to provide the most relevant leadership and professional development experiences, prepare and support young leaders and ensure consistent opportunities for young people to advocate for systems change. Moreover, developing equity and inclusion solutions requires a commitment to enabling open conversations between adults and young people to build understanding on key concepts and ideas that can help advance equity and systems change.

Each of the four guides covers a critical component to understanding how authentic youth engagement and youth-adult partnerships fit within an equity and inclusion framework.

- 1. Core Concepts and Terms:** To be effective advocates, young leaders need to be equipped with foundational knowledge about the relevant concepts for advancing equity and inclusion. Learning these key concepts in peer groups lends itself to deeper discussion, introspection and critical

thinking. It also allows leaders to apply their understanding of equity from personal experience in their work toward systemic change.

- 2. Identity and Culture:** Identity development for young people who have experienced foster care is complex. Experiences with birth families, foster families and other living arrangements influence one's sense of self, family, community and culture. Some young people who have been in foster care might identify with several cultures and communities, whereas some might not know where they come from. Establishing one's place and role in equity and inclusion work must include a journey to understand oneself. This guide is designed to enable adult facilitators to explore these complex themes in a strengths-based environment with young leaders and advocates who have experienced foster care.
- 3. Youth Organizing:** Understanding the historical context of youth leadership and advocacy allows young people to fully appreciate the impact of their voice and the political dynamics involved in advocacy. This conversation provides them with an opportunity to learn about the central role that young people have played in systems change with an equity and inclusion lens.
- 4. A Historical Perspective of Child Welfare Systems:** Learning about the history and construct of child welfare systems — including the roles that race and ethnicity have played in those systems — is critical to understanding their evolution and to developing equitable solutions. To engage in leadership and advocacy in meaningful ways, young people must understand the context of child welfare systems and how various policies and practices can affect children and families differently. This guide provides historical information specific to child welfare systems through an equity and inclusion lens, while building skills in critical thinking, asking effective questions and applying root-cause analysis.

The guides are intended to spark interest in further research and analysis for the participants and organizations taking up this work. References have been provided to guide some of the next steps for learning.

#### **Tips for Facilitators:**

- Starting with the *Core Concepts and Terms* guide will provide the language and ideas needed to move through the rest of the conversations. However, facilitators should use their judgment to determine how and in what order to move through the guides.
- Remember that the guides are meant to set the stage for starting a conversation. It is OK if you do not know each topic comprehensively. You can learn with the group!
- You might find the group needs to have an extended conversation that requires adjusting the timeframes in the agenda. That is OK! Have the conversation that needs to be had.
- Use your judgment in reading the room. Conversations that require intensive new learning and reflection often benefit from breaks that include mindfulness practice or body work — for example, a walk around the room or a two-minute breathing exercise.
- Make it about a result! Remember that this work is in the context of developing solutions to advance racial and ethnic equity. Balance the need for understanding ourselves with building relationships and connections to our work.

## Why Is Youth Organizing a Prioritized Topic?

There are multiple examples of youth engagement strategies. Most describe a process that moves away from treating young people as decoration or tokens to partnering with young people in decision making. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative has worked within a youth-adult partnership model since its inception. The Jim Casey Initiative consistently partners with young people in the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies, ensuring that young people have self-advocacy skills they can use in their case planning and policy-advocacy skills they can use in systems change work.

Understanding the historical context of youth leadership and advocacy allows young people to fully appreciate the impact of their voices and the political dynamics involved in advocacy. Understanding the historical context and model of youth organizing allows young people to see the central role young people, including and especially young people of color, have played in systems change with a racial and ethnic equity and inclusion lens.

Built on the foundation of collective action, youth organizing is an opportunity for transformative leadership and authentic youth-adult partnerships. It is a particularly compelling youth engagement strategy for racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice for young people in foster care because it engages those most affected in analyzing challenges and developing solutions.

Youth organizing places current and former youth in foster care front and center in improving their communities and the lives of their peers in foster care. Through political education and power analysis, young people reflect on the policies and root causes of systemic inequity — including white supremacy and systemic discrimination — that shape their experience and inform their work as change agents.

Youth organizing is distinct from other forms of youth engagement in its potential to help the leadership of the most marginalized youth engage at the community level in direct action that addresses their concrete concerns and reflects the priorities of a broad base of young people. Through shared power and collaborative leadership, youth organizers work together to listen to their community, raise up critical issues from the grassroots and radically change the systems affecting their lives in ways that facilitate both personal and community transformation.<sup>1</sup>

Membership structures within youth organizing models also provide opportunities for young people to develop meaningful leadership roles at different levels, while continuously raising up the next generation of leaders from their membership base or the community. This approach challenges traditional leadership models rooted in hierarchy that often concentrate power with a handful of young people while creating barriers to participation for others.

Coalition building brings people, community partners and outside organizations together around a common issue. For example, student organizers working to decriminalize schools and remove police presence on campus might reach out to teachers and the teachers union to stand together with them. Allies can also play an important role in coalition building and education and advocacy efforts in child welfare. While they may not have lived experience with the issue, they can follow the leadership of those who do to organize for systems change.

Similar to the youth-adult partnership model, youth organizing builds leadership skills that can also be a foundation for future educational and professional opportunities as young people move through varying roles in an organization.

Intergenerational relationships and youth-adult partnerships play an important role in organizing movements. While youth organizing focuses on the leadership of young people, adult organizers can help build collective power and foster intergenerational relationships that create opportunities for natural support, mentorship and social capital.

Youth organizing practices complement youth-adult partnership practices. While youth organizing practices frequently happen outside institutions, youth-adult partnerships are often opportunities for young people to contribute within systems. Both are critical components to structural, cross-system advocacy and promote leadership, confidence and a sense of belonging as young people transition into adulthood.

Drawing deeply on 20 years of lessons, learnings and writings by and about youth organizers in the field of organizing, this guide lifts up key concepts, activities and opportunities for reflection on youth organizing in the child welfare system and its influence on racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice.

Throughout history, young people of color have been leading organized movements for racial justice and liberation. Gwen Sanders Gamble was only 16 years old when she organized and trained other young people to march in the Birmingham Children's Crusade to protest segregation.<sup>2</sup> While still in high school, Moctesuma Esparza, along with other Chicano students, organized the East L.A. walkouts, which demanded educational equity for Chicano students.<sup>3</sup> Marsha P. Johnson was only 25 when she and Sylvia Rivera, two transgender women of color, created STAR, a radical support and resistance organization for and by trans people.<sup>4</sup>

Today, youth of color continue to build power and mobilize across the country to radically change and challenge the systems that oppress them and their communities. Some of these powerful examples include Black Lives Matter, United We Dream and the Oceti Sakowin youth at Standing Rock, as well as local organizing initiatives to create community-based alternatives to juvenile justice, dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and end violence against LGBTQ youth of color.

### RESULTS FOR THIS CONVERSATION

- Learn about the history and influence of organizing led by people of color.
- Deepen understanding of fundamental youth organizing principles and practices and how organizing advances racial and ethnic equity and inclusion.
- Reflect on ways to apply organizing principles, practices and coalition-building strategies to systems change and racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice.

### KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Youth organizing is one strategy or approach to youth engagement and systems change that combines positive youth development, leadership and community organizing to address root causes and conditions of systemic inequity and discrimination.
- Youth organizing differs from individual youth advocacy in its emphasis on the collective power of the group.
- Participants may have varying levels of knowledge and understanding about the content being covered.

- Facilitators enter the session with their own mental models, assumptions and implicit biases but are aware of those mental models and can skillfully manage them in constructive ways to promote learning.



#### KEY ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS

- Small posters: Gallery of youth organizing (stories + photos)
- Flip chart: Youth organizing definition
- Small posters: Youth organizing principles
- Handout: Ginwright and Cammarota quote
- Handout: Youth organizing roles
- Flip chart: Base building
- Flip chart: Leadership development
- “Word scramble” cutouts
- Flip chart: Intergenerational organizing
- Flip chart: Cultural organizing definition
- Handout: Cultural organizing examples
- Handout: Putting it into practice example
- Handout: Key terms glossary

#### NOTES ON AUDIENCE

This conversation guide is designed for, but is not limited to, young people currently and formerly in foster care and their adult allies or supporters.

#### GROUP SIZE

Approximate range is five to 25 participants. Number of participants may vary, but it is recommended that the group remains small enough to allow for meaningful participation by all.

#### IDENTIFYING FACILITATOR(S)

This guide is intended for cofacilitation. Below are some suggestions:

- At least one facilitator should come from the same community as the participants.
- At least one facilitator should have expertise in youth organizing.
- At least one facilitator should already have a relationship with participants and expertise in child welfare and/or older youth.
- Consider cofacilitation by a young leader in your network.

# Required Pework for Facilitators

Pework is an opportunity for facilitators to ground themselves in key youth organizing concepts and identify any areas of learning needed to facilitate a meaningful conversation with participants.

## GET FAMILIAR WITH KEY YOUTH ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

There are different models of youth organizing. The suggested readings provide an introductory set of materials for you to learn from and determine if they are useful to your work.

### READ

- Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing. (2000). *An emerging model for working with youth: Community organizing + youth development = youth organizing* (Occasional papers series). New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from [https://fcyo.org/uploads/resources/8141\\_Papers\\_no1\\_v4.qxd.pdf](https://fcyo.org/uploads/resources/8141_Papers_no1_v4.qxd.pdf)

*An Emerging Model for Working with Youth* provides a foundation for understanding key youth organizing principles and practices grounded in the history of transformative organizing led by people of color and the growing field of positive youth development.

### LOOK FOR

- While reading, look for the theories that support youth organizing, the influence of organizing led by people of color on current youth organizing models and the ways that youth organizing fits into a continuum of youth engagement strategies.

### READ

- Lee, N. (2014). *Healing-centered youth organizing: A framework for youth leadership in the 21st century*. Oakland, CA: Urban Peace Movement. Retrieved from <https://urbanpeacemovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ConceptPaperFINALPDF.pdf>

*Healing-Centered Youth Organizing* explores youth organizing as a model for supporting leadership among youth of color, as well as the role of healing and trauma-informed organizing in creating opportunities for individual and community transformation.

### LOOK FOR

- While reading, look for the principles of healing-centered organizing, the healing practices offered and the role of healing practices in advancing racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice.

## REFLECT

Critical questions for facilitators:

- What assumptions, mental models and/or biases do you have that influence your understanding of youth organizing and might shape your facilitation of the conversations?

- What are some key areas of growth and learning for you? What additional information might be needed to deepen your understanding of youth organizing with young people who have been affected by the foster care system?
- What are the similarities and differences between youth-adult partnership and youth organizing?
- How are the principles and practices of youth organizing relevant to your current work toward racial and ethnic equity and inclusion in the child welfare system?

#### READ THIS GUIDE

- Review thoroughly and immerse yourself in key concepts.
- Reflect on the timing of activities and any local modifications for your group.
- Identify any gaps in knowledge and connect with resources to support learning.
- Determine key talking points for setting the context of why you are hosting this conversation in this moment and what next steps will occur.

#### CONNECT AND PREPARE WITH YOUR COFACILITATOR

- Connect with your cofacilitator before holding this conversation. Discuss prework and determine who will take the lead on each section of the conversation. Discuss your facilitation styles.
- Prepare materials, including agenda, flip charts, handouts and conversation prompts.
- Share any pre-conversation activities with participants, if needed.

#### SET UP THE SPACE

Setting up the physical space for your discussion is an important part of preparing for your conversation and creating a sense of community.

- Set chairs in a circle, creating a circle of support. Let the group know that the circle is to support one another and learn together about youth organizing concepts for advancing racial and ethnic equity and inclusion principles.
- You might set up an altar, focal space or place of reverence by covering a table with a cloth and objects to suggest contemplation and community, such as flowers, water, photos or images symbolizing ancestors, sacredness, unity and reverence.
- Identify gender-neutral bathrooms.
- Ensure the space is physically accessible for all abilities and bodies, including chair location, room for mobility and entry points.
- Prepare materials needed (e.g., agenda, flip charts, handouts, markers, tape, etc.).
- Include relevant local or national data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to put in the room.

Note that black text placed in “conversation” boxes is the suggested script for facilitators.

## 1. INTRODUCE TOPIC, KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND RESULTS FOR THE SESSION (5–7 MINUTES)

Facilitators should begin the training as follows:

- Introduce how the topic relates to youth engagement, youth-adult partnership and racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice.



We were interested in learning more about different types of leadership and advocacy strategies. Not only does youth organizing have a strong history of successful campaigns, it is also a strategy that is led by young people. The skills that are developed through organizing can help in youth-adult partnerships as well.

One step in developing racial and ethnic equity and inclusion strategies is to build relationships, listen and act on ideas from people who are directly affected by the issue you are trying to address. Youth organizing does this — it's youth led from the beginning and intentionally shifts power dynamics to communities.

- Explain why you are hosting this conversation in context of your local work.



Many of you work in youth-adult partnerships and have also been connected to external organizations who are also working to improve the child welfare system. We thought it would be helpful for our group to understand different ways young people can lead and how multiple strategies for youth engagement can support one another in advocating for systems change.

- Describe key assumptions that set the foundation for this work.



Assumptions are ideas that the group has accepted as true. Being clear on our assumptions allows us to enter the conversation on the same page and clarify what we mean with key terms. Let's review the assumptions that this guide makes about youth organizing.

- Youth organizing is one strategy or approach to youth engagement and systems change that combines positive youth development, leadership and community organizing to address root causes and conditions of systemic inequity and discrimination.
  - Youth organizing differs from individual youth advocacy in its emphasis on the collective power of the group.
  - Participants may have varying levels of knowledge and understanding about the content being covered.
  - Facilitators enter the session with their own mental models, assumptions and implicit biases but are aware of those mental models and can skillfully manage them in constructive ways to promote learning.
- Review results for participants.



This conversation is going to be interactive! But similar to other meetings, we want to make sure we are meeting our results to learn new ideas and skills. Let's review the results of the conversation to see if we meet those goals by the end.

#### RESULTS FOR THIS CONVERSATION



1. Learn about the history and impact of organizing led by people of color.
2. Deepen understanding of fundamental youth organizing principles and practices and how organizing advances racial and ethnic equity and inclusion.
3. Reflect on ways to apply organizing principles, practices and coalition-building strategies to systems change and racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice.

This is a critical time to ground participants in the purpose and importance of the topic. If participants have participated in other racial and ethnic equity and inclusion conversations, it might be useful to add some time to reflect and make connections with previous work.

This is also a time when facilitators introduce themselves and provide a brief background of their connection to this work. Facilitators will participate in introductory questions with participants further on, but it is important to set the stage for who facilitators are and why they are here.



#### KEY ACTIONS

- Introduce facilitator(s).
- Introduce the conversation.
- Review key assumptions.
- Review results.
- Walk through the agenda.
- Review connection with other REEI conversations (if applicable).



#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Agenda (flip chart)
- Small posters: Youth organizing principles



**TIP:** Facilitators can use the small posters of the key youth organizing principles as part of the introduction to help frame the discussion, placing them around the room and reading them out loud with participants. (Note: These signs will be used again for another activity.)

## 2. INTRODUCE GROUP (15 MINUTES)

Group introductions allow participants to build connections from the start.

Introductions can be facilitated by asking participants to answer the following:

- What is your name?
- What are your personal gender pronouns?
- An engaging personal question, such as What is one thing you have been able to do as group that you might not have been able to accomplish alone? What is a cultural and/or personal tradition or activity that keeps you grounded in your work as a leader? or If you could have dinner with one person (dead or alive), who would it be and what would you eat?



#### KEY ACTIONS

- Introduce participants individually and identify their personal gender pronouns.
- Invite participants to respond to a personal prompt question.
- Provide an opportunity for all voices to be heard.



**TIP:** It can help to ask for a volunteer to start and pick a direction to move introductions around the circle. Facilitators can also engage participants by asking if they would like to lead with an icebreaker or community question.

*Facilitators should emphasize respect for all genders and pronouns shared and encourage participants not to assume gender. If anyone is uncertain of someone's personal pronouns, the facilitator may wish to suggest that the group use genderless language such as they, them, person, people and/or folks.*

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### 3. CREATE THE SPACE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARTICIPANTS (15 MINUTES)

As facilitators and participants move through this powerful conversation together, it is critical to begin to collectively create a physical and emotional space where participants' whole selves are recognized, lifted up and held with affirmation — while simultaneously creating a community of accountability and trust. This open, welcoming and co-learning space is vital as your group works together to build connections, share personal experiences and break down important issues related to youth organizing and racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice.

Facilitators should invite participants to create a courageous space where they can “show up and show out” by being present, actively engaged and willing to learn, teach and share new things. They can highlight that showing up can also mean staying engaged while actively stepping back to create space for others, as well as showing up for ourselves.

Facilitators should also strongly encourage participants to speak in the first person and only share from their own experience — always bringing participants back to their own learning.<sup>5</sup>



#### KEY ACTIONS

- Lift up the importance of having collective community agreements to maintain trust and care, and collectively develop and write down these agreements on flip-chart paper in front of the room. Keep the agreements during the entire conversation and refer to them if issues come up or agreements are broken.
- (Optional) Identify a unity chant, call and response or cultural tradition that connects and grounds the group throughout the conversation.



#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Blank flip-chart paper
- Markers
- Tape



**TIP:** *Community agreements often include strategies such as “step up, step back” to help ensure that all voices are heard in the space. Some groups also use the terms “ouch” and “oops” for participants to acknowledge a hurt or recognize a mistake they might have made. Participants should be given the option to talk more about such topics or decline to discuss them further.*



**TIP:** Another very important role of facilitators in creating and maintaining community accountability is to equalize power inequity that is often intentionally or unintentionally present in group work. Facilitator and participant identities can be consciously or subconsciously influenced by the same systems of power and privilege that we are working to change, and they can shape communication, interaction and leadership styles. Some examples of privilege that can show up include:

- one group, such as adults or white participants, dominating the conversation;
- white people questioning and/or challenging the experience of people of color; and
- white people putting the burden of the conversation on people of color to “teach” them about their experience rather than being in the work themselves.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4. FROM PAST TO PRESENT: GALLERY OF YOUTH ORGANIZING (15 MINUTES)

Organizing is part of a long and inspiring history of fighting for racial and social justice in the United States. Before diving deeper into youth organizing definitions and concepts, this section helps to ground participants in the history of these movements, the role of youth-adult partnership in organizing and the influence of youth organizing on racial and ethnic equity and inclusion from past to present.



##### KEY ACTIONS

- Introduce section.
- Activity: Gallery of youth organizing



##### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Small posters: Gallery of youth organizing (stories + photos)
- Tape

##### ► Activity: Gallery of youth organizing (15 minutes)

Post the stories and photos of youth organizing exhibits around the room before the activity begins.

This is a quiet, reflective activity. Facilitators should encourage a quiet space and use a calm tone to signal the transitions in the activity.



Youth organizing is part of a long and extraordinary legacy of communities working together to fight for racial justice and systems change. As we begin our discussion today, it is important to start by grounding ourselves in this inspiring history and the difference made by these movements. To help us reflect, we are going to take a walk through the “gallery of organizing.” In just a moment, we will get up quietly and walk around the room to each “exhibit” to read and personally

reflect on the story. When you are finished with one exhibit, you can move on to the next. This is a reflective activity, so we are going to ask that folks move quietly around the room. Afterwards, there will be an opportunity for additional reflection in small groups.

After the quiet reflection period, ask participants to gather in small groups and stand next to one of the youth organizing exhibits. Make sure participants are evenly spread out among the stories in groups of three to five people.

Have participants consider the following questions in their respective small groups:

- Did anything surprise or inspire you about these examples?
- How do these examples relate to racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice?
- Where do you see examples of young people and adults working together, and how does this relate to your own youth-adult partnerships?



**TIP:** Write these questions on flip-chart paper.

Call participants back together. Go around the room and ask participants to share a little about their reflection and some key insights discussed in their group.



Thank you all for sharing. As we continue in our own advocacy and organizing work, we can look to these examples for inspiration and insight. Next, we are going to talk more about what youth organizing is, what it looks like and what difference it can make in our communities and our lives.

## 5. YOUTH ORGANIZING 101: THE WHAT AND THE WHY OF YOUTH ORGANIZING (30 MINUTES)

Youth organizing is a powerful strategy that puts young people in foster care at the center of movements for racial and social justice to improve their lives and the lives of their peers in care. In this section, facilitators will introduce key youth organizing definitions, review youth organizing practices and reflect on the transformative impact of organizing on young people's everyday lives.

### ***Principles of Youth Organizing***

- Youth organizing is rooted in racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice through political education and collective power.
- Youth organizing builds the collective power of young people by engaging a broad, diverse base of youth at the grassroots in meaningful opportunities to identify critical issues and create change, while growing a leadership pipeline throughout an organization that continuously engages new members and builds their skills and confidence as leaders.

- Youth organizing creates youth-led campaigns on priority issues identified by young people, rooted in social justice and aimed at an issue (or a decision maker) that shifts the relations of power.
- Youth organizing transforms lives, systems and communities. As Ginwright and Cammarota write, “We become closer to our humanity and agents of our own development when we reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing our existence.”<sup>7</sup>



#### KEY ACTIONS

- Activity: The what of youth organizing — Key definitions and principles
- Activity: The why of youth organizing



#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Blank flip-chart paper
- Markers
- Flip chart: Youth organizing definition
- Small posters: Key youth organizing principles
- Handout: Ginwright and Cammarota quote

### ▶ **Activity: The what of youth organizing — Key definitions and principles (20–25 minutes)**

Have flip charts and markers ready to pass out before the activity begins.



Now that we have seen what youth organizing can look like and the impact it has had over the past century, let’s take some time to talk about what we think youth organizing is and what it can look like in practice.

To get started, we are going to get into small groups and create our own definitions of youth organizing based on our reflections from the gallery of youth organizing. Groups can use any combination of words, graphic art and/or spoken word, performance or skits. When you are finished your group will present or perform your definition to the larger group. Remember — there is no right or wrong definition.

Divide participants into small groups depending on size and provide flip-chart paper and markers for each group. Facilitators can use different techniques for dividing into groups throughout the day such as counting off or pairing up people who don’t know one another very well. Let participants know they only have 7–10 minutes.



**TIP:** *Playing music can be a great way to engage participants, create a fun atmosphere and monitor time.*

Ask for volunteers to begin small group presentations and encourage celebration and shout-outs for each group as they present. If space is available, participants can tape their definitions up around the room.



Awesome! Thank you all for sharing your definition of youth organizing.

There is no one definition of youth organizing, but there are some important distinctions that separate youth organizing from other forms of advocacy and civic engagement. Here's one definition from the School of Unity and Liberation to help us reflect on some of those key differences.

Ask for a volunteer to read the definition on the wall.

“Organizing is the process of building organizations of people with similar interests who use their collective power to win immediate improvements in people’s lives and alter the relations of power.”<sup>8</sup>



What stands out to you about this definition? How does this definition relate to the stories in the gallery of organizing and the definitions you came up with?



**TIP:** *It is key to emphasize how youth organizing is not about a single advocate or champion, but about people coming together and using their collective power to get decision makers to change systems or policies that make a real difference in people’s lives.*



Now that we have thought critically about the definition of youth organizing, let’s take a deeper look at what youth organizing looks like. During this next activity, we are going to reflect on some of the youth organizing principles and practices that guide this work.

But first, we are going to get into small groups again.

Divide participants into four new groups, pass out the key principle posters to each group and ask them to wait for the instructions. Each group should only have one key principle. After each group has gotten a key principle, ask each group to:

1. read the principle out loud to the group;
2. clarify any questions or comments about what the principle means to group members, emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers;
3. reflect on how they currently use, or could use, this principle in their advocacy and youth-adult partnership work; and
4. choose one person who will present their principle and important reflections from their group.

Groups will have 5–7 minutes for this activity.

Bring everyone back and ask each group's designee to read their principle out loud and share important reflections. After each group has presented, close with a large group reflection.



Before we wrap up, what are some things that came up while you were listening to groups present? Does anyone have any lingering questions or need for more information? Why are these principles important?

Now that we know a little bit about what youth organizing is, let's talk about why it's important and the impact it can have.

### ► **Activity: The why of youth organizing (5–7 minutes)**



In the past 20 years, there have been great efforts to raise up the need for trauma-informed care in the child welfare system. We now know that the trauma individuals experience can have serious, long-term effects on their health and well-being. We are learning that youth organizing has the unique power to help young people heal from their own trauma while working toward healing a community's collective trauma from historic and current discrimination based on race and ethnicity.

During this activity, we are going to reflect on the potential of youth organizing and its effect on individuals and communities by reflecting on a quote by Professors Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota.

Pass out copies of the Ginwright and Cammarota quote to each participant and provide some background on Shawn Ginwright.



Shawn Ginwright is a leading national expert on African-American youth, youth activism and youth development. He is an associate professor of education in the Africana studies department and senior research associate for the César E. Chávez Institute at San Francisco State University.

Ask a participant to read Ginwright and Cammarota's quote out loud:

"We become closer to our humanity and agents of our own development when we reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing our existence."

Ask participants to turn to their neighbor on their right and reflect on the following questions:

- What do you think Ginwright and Cammarota mean by the quote?
- Why do you think it is important to reflect on the conditions in society when we are working toward racial and ethnic equity and inclusion?

- How has learning about the system and participating in advocacy affected you and/or your community?

After 2–3 minutes, ask the group to come back together, invite a few volunteers to share what came up for them and thank everyone for sharing.



Thank you so much for sharing. Having a common understanding and language for talking about youth organizing is essential! When we know the what and why of youth organizing, we can begin to see how it fits within our own groups and organizing work. Now let's talk about how youth organizing builds power and develops leadership throughout organizations.

## 6. GETTING ORGANIZED: BASE BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (30 MINUTES)

Base building is intentionally building the power of your network by bringing new people into your work on systems change, training and equipping young people at every level and raising awareness of your issue. Base building and leadership development give young people the opportunity to contribute and effect change at all levels, while allowing organizations to raise up the next generation of leaders.

In this section, facilitators will define base building and leadership development within the field of youth organizing and reflect on the ways collective power and shared leadership contribute to systems change and racially equitable solutions.



### KEY ACTIONS

- Activity: Defining base building
- Activity: Defining leadership development



### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handout: Youth organizing roles
- Flip chart: Base-building definition
- Flip chart: Leadership development definition

### ► **Activity: Defining base building (15 minutes)**

To start this activity, reflect as a large group on the following prompts. Take 2–3 responses per question before moving on.



Youth organizing is about building our people power! When we talk about people power, what do you think we mean? Why do you think people power is important to creating systems change?

Pass out “Youth Organizing Roles” handout to each participant.



Before we talk about how we build people power, let’s talk about some of the ways our groups are organized to support recruitment, engagement and leadership. The handout you just received lists important youth organizing roles. These roles are often displayed in concentric circles to show how we build power from the grassroots to the center.

Ask for a volunteer to read the definitions of constituency, base, members and organizers.



Based on these roles, what do you think we mean by base building?

Ask one or two volunteers to share their reflections. Next, post the definition of base building and ask for a volunteer to read it out loud:

“Base building is about growing organizational power by recruiting new members from our constituency, training and supporting leadership and critically analyzing and raising awareness of our organization and our issues.”



What are some things that stand out about this definition? What are similarities and differences between youth organizing and youth-adult partnerships?

Ask participants to find someone directly across from them to reflect on the following prompts:

- What are some ways that your group recruits, trains and supports members?
- Are there any challenges to participation in the way your group is currently organized?
- How do you think the youth organizing roles support greater inclusion of all members?

Bring the group back for a final reflection. Close by asking 2–3 volunteers to reflect.



Another important piece of building our power is developing leadership!

► **Activity: Defining leadership development (15 minutes)**



In youth organizing, leadership development is about raising up the next generation of leaders and growing the collective power of the group.

Post the leadership development definition on the wall and ask a volunteer to read it out loud:

“Leadership development is the process of raising up leaders, new and experienced, throughout your organization through skill building, critical analysis and ongoing support.”



Leadership development is not only about individuals but also about the collective power of your group to create and make change.

In the large group, reflect on the following prompts:

- What do you think is important about this definition?
- What do you think we mean by critical analysis skills? How are these skills important to racial and ethnic equity and inclusion, youth voice and systems change?
- What do you think are important skills for building leadership in your groups?



**TIP:** *It might help to offer examples of skills related to critical analysis, including political education around systemic oppression and root causes.*

## 7. WORKING TOGETHER: INTERGENERATIONAL ORGANIZING (20 MINUTES)

Intergenerational organizing and youth-adult partnerships are an important part of youth-led movements and a strategy for building power and creating the change you want to see. Throughout history, organizing movements were often intergenerational, as well as community and family efforts. In this section, participants will reflect on what it means to work together across ages and how organizing can be used in their local youth-adult partnerships.



### KEY ACTIONS

- Activity: Defining intergenerational organizing
- Activity: Word scramble and reflection



### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flip chart: Intergenerational organizing definition
- Five sets of word scramble cutouts in envelopes
- Tape

### ▶ **Activity: Defining intergenerational organizing (5 minutes)**



Building our power through intergenerational organizing and youth-adult partnerships can be an important part of a change movement. While young people are in the driver's seat, alumni and adult supporters can help build power and create opportunities for developing relationships already within the young person's life and building mentorships and community connections.

Ask for 2–3 volunteers to answer the following prompt:



What are some examples of intergenerational organizing or youth-adult partnerships in your region?

Thank you. These are great examples! Now we are going to work together to create our own definition of what intergenerational organizing and youth-adult partnerships mean in our work for social justice and systems change.

### ► **Activity: Word scramble and reflection (15 minutes)**

Divide participants into five groups. Have one facilitator pass out the envelopes and long strips of tape while the other gives the directions below.



Envelopes are being passed out filled with words on pieces of paper. In your small groups, spend the next five minutes using the words inside the envelopes to create sentences and phrases that explain what intergenerational organizing means to your group. When your group likes an explanation, please post it to the wall near you.

Have tape ready as groups finish and keep an eye on the time. Give the group a two-minute warning and ask them to pick one person who will share their definition.

After five minutes, go around the room and have each group present its definition.



Great! Thank you all for sharing. As we discovered when creating our definition of youth organizing earlier today, there is no one definition for or way to practice intergenerational organizing, but having a working definition can help provide a framework for our understanding. We'd like to offer this definition of intergenerational organizing.

Tape the definition of intergenerational organizing on the wall, and ask for a volunteer to read it:

"Intergenerational organizing happens when young people and older people work together on the same issue with equal power and leadership."

As a large group, reflect on the following prompts:

- How is this the same as or different from your definitions?
- What are some ways your group practices intergenerational work?
- How is intergenerational work important for creating equity and inclusion?

## **8. CULTURAL ORGANIZING (15 MINUTES)**

Cultural organizing is the intersection of organizing, art and culture. As youth organizers lead campaigns and build their organizational power, they often use art and culture as a way to bring awareness to their issue and build community among members.

During this section, facilitators will share the definition of cultural organizing and reflect with participants on ways to put cultural organizing into practice in their communities.



#### KEY ACTIONS

- Activity: Defining cultural organizing
- Activity: Cultural organizing examples



#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flip chart: Cultural organizing definition
- Handout: Cultural organizing examples

#### ▶ **Activity: Defining cultural organizing (5 minutes)**

Post the definition of cultural organizing on the wall and ask a volunteer to read it out loud:

“Cultural organizing is working for justice at the intersection of art, activism, education and culture.”

In a large group, ask 2–3 participants for some examples of cultural organizing based on the definition provided.



**TIP:** *Some examples may include murals, posters, hip-hop and other music, spoken word, videos and cultural ceremonies.*

#### ▶ **Activity: Cultural organizing examples (7–10 minutes)**

Divide participants into five groups. After participants are in their groups, pass out one of the five cultural organizing examples to each group.

Next, ask participants to select someone to read the description above the image to their group and then discuss the following questions:

- What stands out to them about the example?
- How does your example support organizing and activism?

After 3–4 minutes in small groups, ask participants to choose one person from each group to share their group’s example and key reflections.

After each group has shared, as a large group reflect on the following prompts:



How can you use cultural organizing in your own efforts to create change in the foster care system? How can cultural organizing support racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice in the foster care system?

Thank you for sharing! Now that we have taken time to learn more about what youth organizing is, the ways groups are organized and support members and the role of intergenerational partnerships and cultural organizing, we are ready to put it into practice!

## 9. PUTTING IT ALL INTO PRACTICE: YOUTH ORGANIZING IN FOSTER CARE (30 MINUTES)

During this final section, participants will reflect in small groups on the role of organizing in their communities and how they can put organizing into practice.



### KEY ACTIONS

- Activity: Creating a movement



### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Blank flip-chart paper
- Handout: Putting it into practice example
- Blank paper
- Plenty of markers

### ► **Activity: Creating a movement (30 minutes)**

Introduce the activity.



During our final activity, we will be working together to put what we've learned today into practice. We will work together as a team of core organizers who are part of a local youth organizing group working on important issues in the foster care system.

Before reading the instructions, divide participants into small groups of no more than five and give them each blank flip-chart paper, markers and blank paper. After participants are settled in their groups, read the instructions below out loud:



As a crew, you will have 15 minutes to decide:

- the name of your group;
- the issue your group is organizing around (remember, it has to be an issue that needs to be addressed within your community or within a system, such as child welfare);



- the kind of information you need to understand the root causes of your issue;
- ways to bring new members into your work and meaningfully engage them;
- how to use cultural organizing in your movement (flip charts and markers can be used to create something visual); and
- who will present your information back to the large group.

The paper is provided for you to document your answers, create signs or use in any creative way you want.



**TIP:** *Provide an example! Give groups the “Putting It Into Practice Example” handout or put the example on a flip chart. As part of the instructions, use the example to help spark ideas and clarify questions.*

After 15 minutes, bring the group back and ask for volunteers to present about their movement. Encourage clapping and positive feedback. At this time, don’t open the floor for questions, but remind groups they will have an opportunity at the end of the activity to reflect together.

After each group has presented, reflect as a large group on the following:

- What are some general thoughts or reflections?
- How does this relate to your current work?
- Are there things you would add or do differently in your advocacy efforts after this activity?
- How did your group work together to identify the issue?

Thank everyone for sharing and bring the group back to the center for closing.

## 10. CLOSING OPTIONS (15 MINUTES)

Taking intentional time at the end of the discussion to reflect and reconnect as a group is an important part of the conversation. Facilitators should ask everyone to participate in the closing reflection to make sure the session ends with everyone being heard.

One way to facilitate feedback is using the “head, heart, feet” method. Ask participants to choose one of the following to share with the group: head — something you learned; heart — something that inspired you; feet — something you will take away from the conversation.



**TIP:** *Ask for a volunteer to start a round of “head, heart or feet” feedback. Encourage participants to try and pick only one (depending on the size of the group), and make sure all voices are heard.*

After each person has shared, you can use a culturally relevant tradition, an organizing chant and/or other collective action (e.g., breathing together) to close the space.

One example of a closing action is the unity clap. The history of the unity clap began with the United Farm Workers as a way to communicate across the different languages spoken by Latino and Filipino farm workers. The clap starts off slowly, then gets faster and faster, which is said to be like a heartbeat.

Don't forget to thank everyone for their participation!



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## Key Terms Glossary

Below is a list of core concepts and terms that are often used in efforts to advance racial and ethnic equity and inclusion.

**Ally:** Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize his or her privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice.<sup>1</sup>

**Colonization:** Some form of invasion or dispossession of a people. The colonizer-colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.<sup>2</sup>

**Community-based responsive alternatives:** In the context of child welfare and youth justice, interventions or programs serving young people in their communities, primarily to divert, prevent or reduce interaction with public systems and promote youth development.

**Cultural appropriation:** Theft of cultural elements — including symbols, art, language and customs — for one's own use, commodification or profit, often without understanding, acknowledging or respecting its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption that a dominant culture has the right to take others' cultural elements.<sup>3</sup>

**Culture:** A learned set of values, beliefs, customs, norms and perceptions shared by a group of people that provide a general design for living and a pattern for interpreting life. "Culture [is] those deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, which they communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged." <sup>4</sup>

**Decolonization:** The process of a colonized group becoming self-governing or independent.<sup>5</sup>

**Disparity:** A difference in experience, treatment or outcome. Racial disparities are differences in outcomes based on race (i.e., one racial group is worse off than another racial group).

**Disproportionality:** The state of being out of proportion. Either an over- or under-representation of a given population, often defined by racial and ethnic backgrounds, at any given point in a child-serving system.

**Diversity:** All the ways in which people differ, encompassing all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another.<sup>6</sup>

**Equality:** Sameness in status, rights and treatment. Everyone receives or has the same things.

**Equitable community engagement:** Ensures that the affected community is directly involved in the design, operationalization and monitoring of any and all solutions to problems that are affecting said community. An equitable community engagement process or strategy is participatory, recognizes and values the experiences and expertise of community members and involves sharing power and resources as equal partners.

**Equitable public-private partnerships:** Represents a fair and formal agreement between a public agency (local, state or federal) and a private-sector entity — inclusive of affected-community leadership — to partner together by sharing their skills and assets in providing services to the general public and/or a targeted population.

**Equity:** Fairness. Everyone receives or has what is needed to thrive and reach one's full potential.

**Ethnicity:** A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interest, history and ancestral geographical base. (Examples: Cape Verdean, Haitian, Polish, etc.)

**Gender:** A social construct used to classify a person as man, woman or some other identity. Gender is fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth.<sup>7</sup>

**Historical trauma:** The cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of an individual or a generation caused by a traumatic experience or event.

**Identity:** Who a person is, the way they think about themselves, the way they are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define them.

**Impacted communities:** Refers to groups of people with some thread of commonality who are disproportionately exposed to environmental or social factors that negatively affect their well-being directly and/or indirectly.

**Inclusion:** The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. Going beyond diversity and numerical representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.<sup>8</sup>

**Internalized racism:** The private racial beliefs held by and within individuals. For example, the ways we absorb social messages about race and adopt them as personal beliefs, biases and prejudices are within the realm of internalized racism. For people of color, **internalized oppression** can involve believing in negative messages about oneself or one's racial group. For white people, **internalized privilege** can involve feeling a sense of superiority and entitlement or holding negative beliefs about people of color.<sup>9</sup>

**Interpersonal racism:** How our private beliefs about race become public when we interact with others. When we act upon our prejudices or unconscious biases — whether or not it is intentional,

visible or verbal — we engage in interpersonal racism. This type of racism can take the form of bigotry, hate speech or racial violence.<sup>10</sup>

**Intersectionality:** An approach largely advanced by women of color, which argues that classifications (identities) including gender, race, class and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society and in social systems and are mutually constitutive.<sup>11</sup>

**Institutional racism:** Racial inequity within institutions and systems of power, such as places of employment, government agencies and social services. It can take the form of unfair policies and practices, discriminatory treatment and inequitable opportunities and outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

**Justice:** People are treated with fairness, their human rights are honored and they receive what they need.

**Liberation:** The act or state of gaining full rights and full social and economic opportunities.

**Oppression:** Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others already have access to it.<sup>13</sup>

**Power:** The authority and ability to decide who has access to resources; the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others, oneself and/or the course of events.

**Prejudice:** A prejudgment or unjustifiable attitude, usually negative, of one type of individual or group toward another group and its members.<sup>14</sup>

**Privilege (unearned privilege):** Systematic advantage that is granted based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or other dimensions of diversity, regardless of individuals' personal characteristics or efforts.<sup>15</sup>

**Race:** A socially constructed system of categorizing humans primarily based on observable physical features such as skin color and/or on ancestry. There is no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories.<sup>16</sup>

**Racial equity:** The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity was no longer a predictor of one's outcomes (i.e., if every person was given what is needed to enjoy a full and healthy life).

**Racialization:** Distinct from racism, which is often understood as a conscious belief, racialization can describe a process that does not require intentionality and connotes a process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race. According to John A. Powell, "structural racialization is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors."<sup>17</sup>

**Structural racism:** Racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.<sup>18</sup>

**Tribal sovereignty:** The authority to self-govern. Treaties, executive orders and laws have created a contract between tribes and the United States affirming that tribal nations retain their inherent powers of self-government.<sup>19</sup>

**Unity:** Cohesion, harmony, interconnectedness and integration.

**White supremacy:** A belief that white people are superior to those of all other races and should therefore dominate society. This is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and people of color by white people and nations of the European continent — for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.<sup>20</sup>

Additional resource: Racial Equity Tools Glossary found here: [www.racialequitytools.org/images/uploads/RET\\_Glossary913L.pdf](http://www.racialequitytools.org/images/uploads/RET_Glossary913L.pdf)

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## ENDNOTES

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## Ginwright and Cammarota Quote

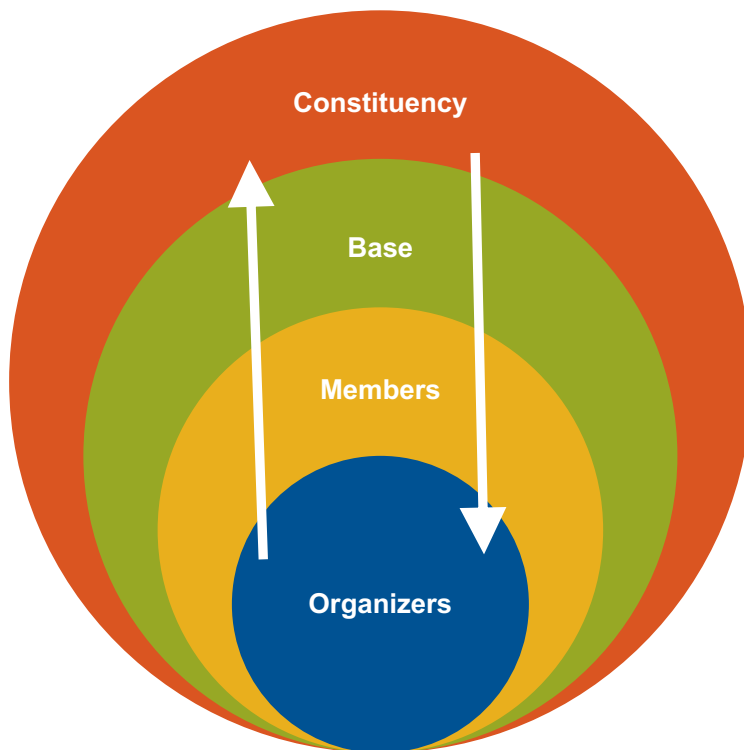
*“We become closer to our humanity and agents of our own development when we reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing our existence.”*

— Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota



# Youth Organizing Roles

Youth organizing is about building people power! We are always working to recruit new members from our constituency and build leadership throughout our organization.



**Constituency:** Young people most affected by the issue

**Base:** Young people affected by the issue who are connected to our organization in some way

**Members:** Active members of our organization who participate in meetings and events

**Organizers:** Leaders who support member development, build organizational power and help move group goals forward



# Cultural Organizing Examples

“**Julio Salgado** is the co-founder of DreamersAdrift.com (<http://dreamersadrift.com>) and project manager for CultureStrike (<http://juliosalgadoart.com/about>). His status as an undocumented, queer activist has fueled the contents of his visual art, which depict key individuals and moments of the DREAM Act and migrant rights movement.”



Retrieved from <http://juliosalgadoart.com/about>

“**MaestraPeace Mural** was painted in 1994 by a ‘Who’s Who’ of Bay Area muralists: Juana Alicia, Miranda Bergman, Edythe Boone, Susan Kelk Cervantes, Meera Desai, Yvonne Littleton and Irene Perez.

One of San Francisco’s largest and best known murals, MaestraPeace serves as a visual testament to the courageous contributions of women through time and around the world.”



Retrieved from <https://womensbuilding.org/the-mural/>

“In her talk ‘My Art is Active: Exploring Social Activism through the Spoken Word,’ **TanishaNicole** explores social activism using her chosen artistic form — spoken word poetry. Nicole invites you to view activism from a poetic lens, and understand how your lived experiences can translate to and be part of the social activism around us through your own art.”



Retrieved from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bstudbt7E60](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bstudbt7E60)

**Tatyana Fazlalizadeh**, a native of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, currently lives and works in Brooklyn, N.Y. She is a 2015 Forbes 30 Under 30 recipient. Tatyana is the creator of Stop Telling Women to Smile, an international street art series that tackles gender-based street harassment. The public art series can be found on walls across the globe, amassing international attention for tackling violence against women in public spaces.”



Retrieved from [www.tlynnfaz.com/Bio-CV](http://www.tlynnfaz.com/Bio-CV)

## Traditional and Cultural Healing Services (Mexican and Urban Native)

“La Plazita Institute’s Wookihi Cultural Program reintroduces Native American urban families and Incarcerated Native American populations to their cultural traditions and practices. Some of the weekly services we provide are Lakshota and Nahuatl language services, Inipi ceremonies, talking circles, rites of passage and immersion in our traditional Lifeways program. We also offer training on traditional farming of the Southwest, and culturally relevant ‘Pathways’ navigation services. Traditional Lifeways services include job readiness, training and entrepreneurship through silkscreen printing and traditional crafts including ceramics, beading, quilling and silversmithing.”



Retrieved from <http://laplazitainstitute.org/programs/>



# Youth organizing...

is rooted in racial and ethnic equity, inclusion and justice through political education and collective power.

Youth organizing promotes equity and justice through political education that gets down to the root cause of systemic oppression. Youth organizing is also about shared power, community leadership and youth-led action!



# Youth organizing...

## builds collective power of young people.

Through a process called base building, youth organizing engages a broader, more diverse base of young people at the grassroots in meaningful opportunities to identify critical issues and create change — while always bringing more and more young people into the organization and raising up the next generation of leaders.



# Youth organizing...

creates youth-led campaigns that challenge systems and alter power.

Campaigns are determined and led by young people who connect with and listen to a broad range of young people — not only those in their organization — to assess needs and pressing problems facing their community, which not only informs their campaign but also brings in new members that help the organization build its power.



# Youth organizing...

transforms lives, systems and communities.

Youth organizing not only changes policies and practices, but also creates a community of love and opportunities for personal transformation.



## Word Scramble Cutouts

YOUTH

CHANGE

TEAM

AND

ARE

BELIEVE

I

UNIQUE

TALENT

TO

A

THE

ADULTS

SYSTEM



## Word Scramble Cutouts

FOSTER

TO

EQUALITY

IN

PARTNERS

AND

BARRIERS

SOLUTIONS

ABILITY

PROMOTE

POWER

DIFFERENCE

CHOOSE

COMMUNITY

THE



# Putting It Into Practice Example

**NAME OF GROUP:** Power Up!

## **WHAT IS YOUR GROUP ORGANIZING FOR?**

Black and brown youth coming out of care are at great risk of homelessness, even more than white youth. We are pushing for more permanent housing for youth leaving care in our community.

## **WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DO YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND YOUR ISSUE AT THE ROOT?**

We need to find out how many black and brown youth aging out of foster care are homeless and the challenges they face in trying to find affordable housing in our community.

## **HOW YOU WILL BRING NEW MEMBERS INTO THE WORK AND ENGAGE THEM IN MEANINGFUL WAYS?**

Hold monthly youth-oriented forums on the housing crisis and provide food to encourage youth to attend and sign up to join.

## **HOW MIGHT YOU USE CULTURAL ORGANIZING IN YOUR MOVEMENT?**

We are going to take and enlarge photos to exhibit at a local coffee shop that show the challenges kids face in finding housing after care.



# Gallery of Organizing

## CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

In May 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, nearly 1,000 elementary, middle and high school students joined the fight to end segregation and began marching in the streets for civil rights. These young leaders collectively shouted slogans, held signs and stood in protest. The Children's Crusade was part of a larger strategy for racial equity organized by civil rights activists in Alabama including Martin Luther King Jr. and James Bevel. Civil rights organizers knew that young people could play a pivotal role in the success of their campaign. As other activists were experiencing police violence and being held in jail, young people played a key role by putting themselves on the line to stand in solidarity and demonstrate continued power in this monumental campaign for civil rights in the United States. Martin Luther King Jr. was quoted as saying that young people who marched in the Children's Crusade developed "a sense of their own stake in freedom" and that they "brought a new impact to the crusade, and the impetus that we needed to win the struggle." (Stanford University, retrieved 2018)



Retrieved from [www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3944](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3944)

## EAST LOS ANGELES WALKOUTS

In 1968, Chicano students were experiencing extreme racial and ethnic discrimination and prejudice in East Los Angeles public schools and around the country. Students were pushed out of school and discouraged from continuing their education in college, and the curriculum, culture and administrative policies were centered on white, English-speaking students that further marginalized Chicano students. In March of that year, Chicano youth leaders organized nearly 15,000 students in what was known as the East L.A. Walkouts (or Blowouts) to demand more teachers and administrators of color, ethnic studies and curricula that reflected their culture, and greater educational equity. The East LA Walkouts were also part of the larger Chicano Movement for civil rights in the 1960s. (Swarthmore College, 2011)



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## STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries)

An often-untold story within the history of the LGBTQ movement is the power and leadership of queer, genderqueer, nonbinary and trans women of color in the fight for liberation and justice. Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, two trans women of color, were at the forefront of the historical Stonewall Riots in 1969 — a rebellion against antigay police raids and violence and a major spark in the movement for LGBTQ justice. Shortly after, Johnson and Rivera founded STAR, a radical organization of support and organized resistance for homeless and runaway trans women. Even with no funding, STAR provided a space for trans women to find shelter, build community and collectively organize for “free gender expression, an end to prison injustice and homelessness and the creation of an inclusive community that rejected binding definitions of gender and sexual identity.” (Ryan, 2017)



Retrieved from <https://equalityarchive.com/history/transgender-women-of-color-at-stonewall/>

## STANDING ROCK

The collective power of indigenous youth at Standing Rock was an undeniable force in the movement to end the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that runs a half mile from the land of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota. The pipeline threatened their water, their land and the religious and cultural sites of the Dakota and Lakota people. In an act of collective resistance, Oceti Sakowin (or Sioux Nation) youth organized one of the first direct actions to peacefully stop the construction of the pipeline. These same young people then led a 2,000-mile relay run from North Dakota across the country to Washington, D.C., to bring their demands to federal decision makers. In June 2017, a federal judge ruled and the construction of the pipeline was halted. (KQED, 2017)



Retrieved from [www.gazettenet.com/Northampton-activists-to-hold-anti-pipeline-rally-against-Dakota-Access-4440696](http://www.gazettenet.com/Northampton-activists-to-hold-anti-pipeline-rally-against-Dakota-Access-4440696)

## UNITED WE DREAM

United We Dream is the largest immigrant youth–led organization in the country, with more than 400,000 members organizing around four key areas: (1) protections for immigrants, (2) defending deportation, (3) educational access and (4) justice for immigrant youth who identify as LGBTQ. United We Dream has won monumental campaigns that have protected over 800,000 young people from deportation, maintained in-state college tuition for students in Texas and defeated racist laws that target immigrant children, youth and families. United We Dream activists are now continuing to organize for a Clean Dream Act that would provide young people with a pathway to citizenship, keep them from being ripped from their families, schools and communities, and prevent additional racist immigration-enforcement policies.



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## BLACK LIVES MATTER

In 2013, Trayvon Martin was murdered and his killer, George Zimmerman, was acquitted at trial. In response, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi created Black Lives Matter as an affirmation of black lives and a tool for organizing around anti-black racism and the continued state-sanctioned violence against black people. That first year, Black Lives Matter was a movement-building strategy and a platform. In 2014, when Michael Brown was murdered by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson, Patrisse Cullors and Darnell Moore organized the Black Lives Matter Ride that brought over 600 people from all over the country to Ferguson to fight for justice for Brown and his family. As people came together, they began to organize and talk about the need to continue this work in their own cities — from here, 18 Black Lives Matter chapters were started. Today, the Black Lives Matter Global Network is a decentralized, member-led network with over 40 chapters that “organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” (Black Lives Matter Herstory, retrieved 2018)



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# Cultural Organizing

**Cultural organizing** is working for justice at the intersection of art, activism, education and culture.



## Youth Organizing

**Youth organizing** is the process of building organizations of people with similar interests who use their collective power to win immediate improvements in people's lives and alter the relations of power.



# Leadership Development

## Leadership development

is the process of raising up leaders, new and experienced, throughout your organization through skill building, critical analysis and ongoing support.



# Intergenerational Organizing

**Intergenerational organizing** happens when young people and older people work together on the same issue with equal power and leadership.



## Base Building

**Base building** is about growing organizational power by recruiting new members from our constituency, training and supporting leadership in critical analysis and raising awareness of our organization and our issues.

