PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

SETTLEMENTS HOUSES AND THE STRENGTHENING OF COMMUNITY

Report prepared for United Neighborhood Houses of New York

The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago

As states struggle with how to balance and use the new so-called administrative and programmatic freedoms granted by the Federal Personal Responsibility Act, there is no question of the importance of building community in this era of devolution to the community level of governmental responsibility and support for individuals and families. Both funders and policy makers are focussing on how to use a community-building strategy in implementing sustainable change, not just in the welfare system, but also in economic development and education.

This report, and two prior reports by Chapin Hall/UNH, describe through several case studies how settlement houses' in-depth knowledge of their neighborhoods facilitates building community in many different forms: creating little league sports teams; organizing local taxi cab drivers; cleaning up a park in collaboration with other neighborhood groups; and organizing residents around neighborhood and citywide issues. As different as these various efforts are, the settlements share some common "lessons learned:"

1. Community building allows settlements to attract neighborhood residents who were formerly unknown to or unaware of the settlement as volunteers, as board members, as program participants, or as referral agents.
2. Community building supports service integration by encouraging and enabling or requiring staff to work together across program areas to achieve common goals.
3. Hiring people who already have a "community- building lens" facilitates this difficult work and enables it to take off in new directions.
4. Creative use of existing funding can support community-building activities. One does not have to wait for earmarked monies in order to launch a community-building effort. On the other hand, small amounts of money for community activities really help spark these efforts.
5. Community building is evolutionary and incremental. A modest, winnable effort can lead to a willingness to tackle larger issues.
6. Leadership is critical. In every one of the case studies, the initiative came about because of one person's vision, energy, and commitment. However, with small "wins" and/or visible changes as a result of the actions of the leader, we also see others taking on the responsibility for furthering the initiative or trying other activities.

From its first report on UNH's Community-Building Initiative, Chapin Hall has become a partner, supporter, and important resource - as well as documentor- of settlement house activities. On behalf of the many settlement staff and participants who have benefitted from their insights, I want to express enormous appreciation to Prudence Brown and Janice Hirota for their invaluable contributions to our community-building work. UNH and its member agencies also continue to be extremely grateful for the generous funding from the Ford Foundation that enables us to work with Chapin Hall. We hope that these three case studies will inspire others in the settlement house community in New York City and throughout the country to assume an activist community- building role. For those settlements and other partners in human services delivery already engaged in building community, we hope these lessons add to the knowledge already assembled and strengthen our mutual efforts.

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Pathways to Change

Settlement Houses and the Strengthening of Community

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Settlement houses have always played a pivotal role in the life of urban neighborhoods. They have been part of the daily rhythms of people's lives, offering services and activities to individuals and families alike, from early childhood to old age, across all social groupings. They have provided neutral social arenas within which residents and other community stake-holders could come together to pursue interests, learn skills, fulfill needs, and make social contact. In contemporary New York City, where population shifts and the influx of immigrant groups have created increasingly diverse and sometimes divided neighborhoods, such non-partisan welcome continues to be critical. But, settlements also strive to generate among residents an awareness of shared aims and common ground, and to foster a willingness to invest in, promote, and enrich the quality of neighborhood life.

This report builds on and extends Chapin Hall's examination of the contemporary community-building work of the thirty-seven settlement house members of the United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) in New York City. The first publication in the series explored the meaning of community building within the settlement house context, highlighting the "embeddedness" of settlements in their communities.[1] The second report examined, through four case studies, a variety of approaches undertaken by settlement houses as they translate community-building ideas into actual practice.[2]

This report also uses case studies to consider the meaning of community building within the settlement house context. Each of the three cases presented here provides a detailed look at a particular community-building effort; as such, each case can stand alone. But the case studies taken together also provide a window on the slow, demanding, and often complex work of community organizing, in which-according to the philosophy of these settlements--the development of skills, reflection, experience, and political alertness must be integral to any attempts to promote civic activism, foster advocacy, and develop a sense of common good. These case studies are not evaluations; in fact, the final outcomes of these efforts are yet to unfold. Rather, through concrete examples, the report aims to explore the meanings, processes, and goals of building community.

The report consists of three major sections. Section I briefly discusses the meaning of community building. Section II provides the three case studies. The first of these, Forest Hills Community House, explores the development and early implementation of the community mediation program as part of the settlement's community-organizing work. The second, United Community Centers, demonstrates how the settlement intertwines health, education and community organizing in its work with local groups. The third, Citizens Advice Bureau, describes the work of the agency in helping tenants in a city-owned building move toward a viable tenants' organization and self-management. Section III develops some overarching themes that emerge across these distinct but philosophically related undertakings.

1. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Four intersecting themes are central to the notion of community building.[3] First, community building fosters the development

[1] See Prudence Brown, Settlement Houses Today: Their Community-Building Role. The Chaplin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 1995.

[2] See Janice M. Hirota, Prudence Brown and Nancy Martin, Building Community: The tradition and Promise of the Settlement Houses. The Chaplin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 1996.

[3] This discussion of community building is informed by the work of Prudence Brown and Janice M. Hirota on the report *Voices from the Field. Learning from Comprehensive Community Initiatives of* the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families (forthcoming). Anne C. Kubisch directed the project; other authors include Robert Chaskin, Mark Joseph, Michelle Roberts, and Harold Richman.

of the physical, economic, social, and cultural aspects of a neighborhood. Thus, creating affordable housing and improving parks and playgrounds, establishing new employment opportunities and financial resources, strengthening and extending individual capabilities and experiences, and fostering social networks all fall within the purview of community building.

Second, community building provides a philosophical framework for action, with an overarching impetus, rationale, and guiding standard for planning, decision making, and implementation. In this sense, the substantive interest in all aspects of a neighborhood is matched by the integrative perspective such a framework provides. Within a settlement, this holistic approach to change can help highlight and enhance the links among programs, staff, and participants as well as the connection between the settlement and the larger community. A settlement with an internalized community-building philosophy seeks opportunities to:

- promote resident participation and advance local leadership;
- develop common ground across different neighborhood constituencies and build social net-works;
- foster a sense of identity with, commitment to, and advocacy for the neighborhood;
- strengthen the neighborhood's institutional infrastructure; and
- make connections between neighborhood interests and major social trends, external resources, and decision makers.

Third, community building emphasizes the intrinsic connection between individual well-being and the common good. A settlement with a community-building perspective supports the development of individual capacity while working to impart a sense of civic reciprocity; at the same time, it aims to foster broader community interests in ways that nourish individual growth. Thus, the settlement strives to serve individuals and communities simultaneously, defining its mission in terms of the entire neighborhood, while continuing to maintain a focus on individuals, families, and programs.

Fourth, community building is a demanding process that requires a long-term perspective and commitment. For a settlement, such a perspective means a self-conscious consideration of program needs, community-building values, and ways to bring the two together. Such efforts not only join a wide range of actors--settlement house administrators and staff, program participants, neighborhood residents and institutions, and at times other organizations, foundations, or municipal agencies--but often entail shifts in individual perspectives and transformations in roles and relationships. This change is meant to occur not only among community members--as, for example, when residents become engaged in civic activism--but also among settlement administrators and staff, and in the relationship between the settlement and its neighborhood. Thus, while administrators and staff may play pivotal roles in articulating and guiding community-building efforts, such work also means facilitating the informed participation of all relevant groups and nurturing local leadership among both individuals and other community organizations.

Community building is not unique to settlement houses. Yet, the integration of settlements into the daily life and social fabric of their neighborhoods makes them well positioned to take on community-building efforts. A number of overlapping traits develop and reinforce settlements' "embeddedness."[4] These include:

- A settlement builds on local resources and seeks to develop and meet shared interests and needs across the community, providing everyday, inclusive activities that draw in participants from a wide range of neighborhood groups.
- A settlement's many programs offer neighborhood residents multiple entry points into the settlement and into community-building efforts.[5]

[4] For an extended discussion of the "Community Embeddedness" of settlements houses, see Brown, Settlement Houses Today

[5] In this paper, the word "program" is used as an inclusive term encompassing "services" and "activities." "Services," such as counseling, day care, and meals for seniors, aim to meet some need; "activities," such as little league sports, arts programs, or classes for youth and adults, build on particular interests. These admittedly broad

- A settlement is typically a crossroads for the various groups in a neighborhood, often serving, according to one executive director, as the "living room" of the neighborhood. In a corollary way, a settlement fosters its role as "neutral turf" for all members of the community, working to create an environment where all residents feel welcome.
- A settlement is generally a well-established organization in the neighborhood, with a long history of commitment to and service for residents, a sense of stability and continuity, and connections with other institutions and net-works, both locally and beyond, including non-profit organizations, public and private agencies, elected officials, and religious groups.

In addition, UNH provides institutional support for the community-building efforts of its members by, for example, creating organization-wide forums for discussing issues of broad concern, supporting various documentation projects, sponsoring and staffing a community-building committee, and helping to introduce and promote community building projects. In part, this report intends to highlight settlements' ongoing engagement with community-building values and perspectives, and to reinforce the place of such work within the settlement tradition. These three case studies represent a small sampling of such community-building efforts; yet, taken together, they allow an examination of the often-complex task of translating the notion of community building into action. The detailed case discussions aim to encourage sharing and learning about the work and meaning of building community, to stimulate creative thinking about the approach, and to promote further community-building endeavors within settlement houses and in other agencies and organizations.

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definitions are meant only to clarify the use of these terms in this paper. In fact, services and activities are not mutually exclusive. There is a great deal of convergence, where a service, such as regularly scheduled health discussions, also engages the interest of participants, or an activity, such as an exercise class for seniors, also meets participant needs. Such convergence can also be seen in the deliberate linking of, for example, counseling service participants with other settlement activities, such as gardening. In part, it is this intertwining of needs, interests, and capabilities, through a great range of programs. that makes for the richness and depth of settlement house offerings.

The case studies are based on data gathered through on-site interviews and observations that took place over the 8-month period beginning in July 1996. In general, interviews were conducted during a series of site visits, and included meetings with settlement administrators, staff, program participants, and community stakeholders. In some of the sites, data were also collected at project meetings and events.

II. CASE STUDIES

FOREST HILLS COMMUNITY HOUSE

Community Mediation Program

The Forest Hills Community House has its roots in an uproar of community protest in 1971 about New York City plans to build public housing at 62nd Drive and 108th Street in Forest Hills, Queens. The resolution of this intense political battle, in which Mayor Lindsay enlisted the negotiating skills of then Queens Lawyer Mario Cuomo, rested on the eventual mediation of community and city interests. In the end, the housing development was built--as the country's first low-income public housing cooperative, with priority for neighborhood residents and a percentage of apartments earmarked for seniors. The size of the venture was reduced from three 24-story buildings to three 12-story buildings, and, in response to a proposal from fifty civic organizations, a separate 2-story building was added for a community center to help provide social services in Forest Hills and Rego Park.

Forest Hills Community House opened its doors in 1975. From the first, it aimed nor only to help meet particular service needs, but also to provide a social space where residents and stakeholders from across neighborhood groups could gather and work together for the common good. A center brochure states:

From the beginning, we've tried to design our programs in direct response to the specific problems of the Forest Hills/Rego Park area.... Yet, just as often, we simply create a forum through which neighbors can work together to help each other.

This approach draws on the great energy and commitment to the neighborhood that surfaced during the 1971 protest; it responds to the common goal of residents and other stakeholders to "improve the neighborhoods we all share." For the settlement, the core of such improvement is rooted in the understanding that community-building perspectives must be carried out through the actions and decisions of individuals in the course of their everyday lives. The relatively new community mediation program, the subject of this case study, reflects and extends this focus, aiming to develop individual perspectives, experiences, and capabilities, while strengthening the social fabric and daily life of the community.

BACKGROUND

An influx of immigrants arriving from Eastern European, Latin American, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries have recently settled in the Borough of Queens. Forest Hills and Rego Park, the two adjacent areas within Community Board 6 that constitute the core catchment area of the settlement, mirror this borough-wide trend. According to the New York City Department of City Planning, as reported in the January 12, 1997 edition of *Newsday,* between 1990 and 1994, Forest Hills-Kew Gardens and Rego Park became home to more than 14,500 new immigrants, with over a third coming from the former Soviet Union. Others have arrived from China, India, Iran, Poland, the Philippines, and Israel, with smaller numbers coming from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Pakistan, and Romania. These newcomers have joined a predominately Eastern European and Jewish neighborhood, to which many residents moved in the late 1940s and 1950s. This explains in part why the area has one of the largest concentrations of senior citizens in the city.

The settlement has grown from an initial staff of three to over 200, and now offers several programs that span the Borough of Queens, beyond Forest Hills and Rego Park. These include the Homeless Families Project, which works with families to find permanent housing and provides follow-up services, and the Queens Child Care Network, which trains and maintains a network of in-home child care providers. The settlement's housing division, which aims to support and increase neighborhood and housing stability through community education, eviction prevention services, and technical assistance to property owners, tenant groups, and block associations, serves, in addition to Forest Hills and Rego Park, the communities of Corona, Elmhurst, Jamaica, Jackson Heights, and Kew Gardens. All these neighborhoods reflect the growing diversity of Queens--not just in numbers of countries represented, but in occupational histories, religious affiliations, educational backgrounds, and cultural practices, assumptions, and expectations.

As the settlement has moved to work with increasingly diverse populations, addressing changing needs and expanding into new neighborhoods, it has also worked to link its many programs, staffs, communities, and participants within a unifying philosophical perspective. Its approach to community building and organizing, with simultaneous emphases on developing and linking individuals and communities plays an integrating role across the settlement. At an October 1996 retreat, for example, board and staff members together envisioned ways to serve, strengthen, and interconnect individuals and communities. Settlement administrators recently reaffirmed this focus by transforming the Department of Housing and Family Programs into the Department of Organizing/ Community Services. Within the department, the cities of program directors also changed to feature a joint emphasis on community organizing as well as particular substantive areas: Director of Organizing/Homeless Families Programs; Director of Organizing/ Housing Programs; and Director of Organizing/Community Programs. In describing the changes, a memo to staff explained:

... We want to focus on activities which encourage participants to see themselves as vital members of a community, be that community their family, or their building or residence, or their neighborhood. We will

place greater focus on skill building, leadership development, consumer and civic education, and developing partnerships among program participants and between program participants and other community residents and institutions.

COMMUNITY MEDIATION

The community mediation program, in the division of Organizing/Community Programs, draws notice not only for its nontraditional programmatic focus, but because it has been seen from the start as an effort that explicitly embodies the settlement's approach to community building. The heart of the program is straightforward. A flyer describes mediation as "a process where disputing parties attempt to resolve their differences through discussion and compromise, with the help of a neutral third party." Within the settlement context, this means that the parties bringing and responding to a complaint meet voluntarily with a team of two trained mediators. The mediators are present as neutral facilitators, not as judges or intermediaries responsible for finding or imposing a resolution. Throughout, the work of raising, discussing, and resolving the conflict belongs to the disputants themselves, reinforcing the perspective that they have the ability and responsibility to try to discover together and carry out a way to settle their dispute.

Community mediation places interpersonal dynamics within a broader framework, asserting that "an unresolved dispute between neighbors is a community concern and a community responsibility." The settlement sees mediation as a preventive measure that brings individuals together to try to resolve personal disputes before they become overt public issues, spilling tensions among others or involving the justice system.

Although it is too early to know how the program will actually play out, this seemingly simple proposal- to support face-to-face encounters to resolve disputes- actually contains complex assumptions with potentially radical impact, especially in a diverse and fragmented society such as ours, in which neighbors frequently perceive little common ground.

Getting Started

The community mediation program had an unusual start at the settlement, and represents the convergence of one individual's strong belief in the practice and the desire of Forest Hills administrators to offer programs with an explicit community-building agenda at the individual and community levels. In summer 1995, the current Director of Organizing/Community Programs, who was a graduate student at the time, proposed an internship with the settlement to start a community mediation program. The idea intrigued the settlement associate director, who herself has experience in conflict resolution. She felt such a program would be compatible with the settlement's approach to community building as well as with the desire to extend and reframe the meaning of service provision within the settlement context. At the same time, she wondered whether there was enough community need to warrant such an effort. Forest Hills programs typically are responses to perceived needs. Still, the idea appealed to settlement administrators, and the intern began work on implementing his proposal.

Outreach and Needs Assessment

Early on, the mediation program director combined outreach and a needs assessment, simultaneously explaining the concept of community mediation and testing the level of need and support in the neighborhood. He met one-on-one with key individuals, attended gatherings of local groups, and made numerous presentations; his contacts included local civic groups, churches, synagogues, and municipal agencies such as the police. Throughout this process, he laid the groundwork for recruiting volunteers to become mediators and for developing sources of dispute referrals.

As the outreach and assessment effort continued, an interesting and unexpected result began emerging. Community house administrators point out that the outreach was "massive." In order to explain the mediation

effort, the program director reinforced existing relationships, but also went to meetings and talked with organizations that the settlement had nor contacted before and that, in some instances, had no knowledge of the existence of the settlement. The outreach, then, not only disseminated information about the mediation program, but raised the visibility of the settlement within the neighborhood. At times, it also engaged individuals and local institutions in the work of the house. For instance, one resident who had never before heard of the settlement became a volunteer mediator. A minister, whose church is in a section of the settlement's catchment area where few residents participate in its programs, recognized the possibilities of community mediation, prompting a first-time visit to the settlement and a meeting with the executive director. The minister's growing interest in the settlement's work eventually led to his current involvement as a member of its board of directors.

At the same time, the outreach highlighted for settlement administrators the issue of the center's invisibility among some segments of the neighborhood. The administrators see several reasons for this invisibility. The center's programs are always filled to capacity; slots in the after-school program, for example, fill up within hours of opening registration, and such senior programs as Meals on Wheels are also oversubscribed. There is no need to undertake outreach efforts to fill slots; in fact, settlement administrators see a danger in raising expectations that the programs cannot meet.

In addition, settlement administrators and program directors see the center's invisibility as being related to the perceived role of the settlement as a provider of services. Those segments of the population who do not see themselves as needing services may ignore the settlement altogether. By moving beyond the conventional parameters of social services--beyond categorical programs, target audiences, and specialized needs--nontraditional programs such as the mediation center may increase the settlement's visibility and engage new segments of the population. Furthermore, the use of volunteers as mediators offers an important role to residents looking for interesting ways to contribute to their community.

Volunteer Mediators

Staff initially envisioned a neighborhood-based mediation center, with volunteer mediators and disputants living In Forest Hills and Rego Park. Neighbors, then, would be helping neighbors settle their disputes. Volunteers enthusiastically responded to the call-made through announcements to settlement participants and an ad in a local newspaper--to train and work as mediators, with more than seventy individuals signing up for a handful of starting spots. Many of these volunteers were young seniors, recent retirees, often with professional backgrounds, who wanted to do something challenging, engaging, and useful.

After a series of interviews, the program director selected seven volunteers to train and work as mediators. In addition to pledging to participate in thirty hours of training and to be available for mediation two nights a month, the director looked for listening skills, a non-judgmental approach, and responsiveness to others. He also wanted the mediators to reflect the demographic diversity of the two neighborhoods, aiming for a mix along age, occupational, gender, and ethnic and racial lines. The final group of mediators includes a Russian immigrant, a 30-year resident of the area, a Latina who serves on the settlement's board of directors and lives in the Forest Hills Cooperative, and a participant in the settlement's senior center; two of the seven had previous experience as mediators. After the volunteers took part in four day-long training sessions conducted at the settlement by the Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution and served an apprenticeship period observing and assisting in mediation sessions, the settlement's mediation center was, in June 1996, ready for business.

Generating Referrals

The program director and mediators quickly learned, however, that attracting disputes to the center was more difficult than expected.

Building on the initial effort to introduce the idea of community mediation, the program director began another wave of outreach, visiting and revisiting local institutions where residents might go with problems, as well as talking with other program staff at the settlement. Although many organizations apparently appreciated the concept and its potential, others did not see the rationale for a distinct mediation program, feeling that the courts, places of worship, community boards, and other institutions already filled any need. Still others see mediation as appropriate for high-tension situations that verge on violence, where there are gang conflicts or incidents of overt racial strife, but not for a neighborhood like Forest Hills-Rego Park.

Realizing that many people have difficulty imagining the role of mediation in resolving interpersonal friction, the program director set about defusing and broadening the concept. Outreach presentations began including homey examples and role plays of how mediation could be a low-key preventive process, and program literature included examples of tensions between neighbors over noise and other problems, between landlord and tenant, business owner and customer, or among family members. Even so, the referrals were slow to come; as a result, the program director began accepting referrals from beyond Forest Hills-Rego Park, altering somewhat the original neighborhood base of the program. It is a program that, the settlement associate director says, will probably continue to grow a case at a time, through word of mouth, with most referrals coming initially from other programs within the settlement; as of early spring 1997, five settlement programs had made referrals to mediation.

It is too soon to know whether or how quickly the rate of referrals and sessions will grow.[6] It is even more uncertain whether the program will foster the expected intersection of individual and community development. Still, at least one disputant, after her session, joined the long waiting list of volunteers who want to become mediators. The strong effort at external outreach seems to be slowly reaping results as well: since the start of mediations, eight outside organizations have made referrals to the program. These have included municipal bodies, such as the local police precinct, community board, and a councilperson's office, as well as various civic and religious organizations. At least half of these groups had little or no previous involvement with the settlement.

The Process of Mediation

Several themes infuse the structure and dynamics of the community mediation process. First, the disputants share central control of and responsibility for the process. Community mediation is a voluntary process, dependent on the willingness of both the complainant and respondent to agree to mediation and then to participate fully. In its mediation forms and procedures, the settlement stresses disputants' authority. For example, the "Request to Appear" form emphasizes that although an "impartial, trained mediator" will help both parties "reach a fair and mutually-agreeable resolution .... No decisions will be made for you, only *by you. "If* the disputants come to any agreement, it is written up on a "Mediation Agreement" form which all participants sign. Currently working at the individual level, the program seeks ultimately to change community perceptions, norms, and behavior regarding conflict and its resolution. The program aims to foster the view that conflict is a normal part of daily life; individuals can deal with conflict constructively, reducing the reliance on litigation and court-imposed resolutions, and deterring potential recourse to acts of reprisal and violence.

Second, it is difficult in our society to raise points of conflict; there are few common cultural practices or institutional forums that facilitate the voluntary airing and mutual resolution of personal grievances. In many ways, the community mediation process works toward providing a social arena for this

[6] During the first to months of the program, the director interviewed forty complainants, and referred twenty-six to mediation. Of these, ten complaints have actually gone through the mediation process, with four others pending; six disputes were resolved before mediation. The ocher complainants either chose not to use mediation or the cases were not appropriate-one, for example, entailed a long legal battle, another involved domestic violence.

difficult interaction. The program uses the Request to Appear form mentioned above to arrange a particular time and place for the meeting; at the session, the actors sit in set places, with the disputants facing the mediators. Before the discussion can begin, disputants must formally agree to such behavioral ground rules as speaking in turn, remaining seated during the meeting, and being respectful; all actors agree to maintain confidentiality. Perhaps as a means to mute this structural formality, the program initially strove for a kind of interactional informality, with staff wincing when some disputants insisted on infusing a formal respect into the interaction or using court language, for example, addressing the mediators as "your honor."

However, staff have now come to recognize the value of such formality--the structured rules, clear procedures, and defined roles--which seems to create a social space in which anxiety-producing confrontation can occur. It has become clear, over the course of these sessions, that even while they agree to participate, many disputants find the prospect daunting. One disputant, for example, shared her sense of anxiety with the settlement associate director before the session, concerned that the mediators would not be neutral and fair, and worried about the possible outcome. The program director says chat disputants invariably arrive early for their sessions, sometimes as much as 45 minutes, reflecting the out-of- the-ordinary quality of the meeting and perhaps unease as well. The rules and formality provide a way of getting started, help participants know how to act and what to expect, and afford, it seems, some sense of safety, predictability, and control in the situation.

Third, the issue is never to try to assign blame. In fact, the program sees this as a fundamental distinction between community mediation and resolutions imposed through the courts. Rather, the session has a very practical orientation, aiming to elicit points of agreement between disputants on concrete next steps. The goal is always to identify practical solutions to immediate problems, such as excessive noise. In the process, mediators also try to get at possible underlying causes of disputes, for example, cultural differences that often produce misunderstandings.

Fourth, the settlement continues to support the mediation effort beyond the session. Disputants can call the program director at any time about the session or its aftermath. In addition, the program sends out follow-up questionnaires to track whether agreements are being observed or if disputants feel that further action, such as a second session, would be helpful.

The program also asks disputants to fill out a "Feedback Form" about the mediation process. Some of these comments reveal positive change and an easing of tensions. One mentions, for example, that now "my neighbors have starred to be less demanding;" another says that the complainant "says hello to me ... which he did not do before the mediation." Of course, not all disputes are easily resolved, including those that go to mediation. The program director mentions that some disputants want to "win," and are not satisfied with attempts at mutual resolution; and at least one participant sees the session as "a waste of crime" and plans to pursue matters in court.

Future Steps

Although all the mediation sessions so far have involved disputes between individuals, there are plans to broaden the reach of mediation, linking it to other settlement programs and dealing with classes of people in addition to individuals. Staff in housing services regularly receive calls from residents who are having problems with landlords, perhaps over repair or other service issues. In the past, housing staff have tried to counsel callers about possible remedies, urging tenants to begin by talking with their landlords; at times, staff themselves have gotten involved in dealing with landlords or inspecting repairs. Now, staff can refer callers to the mediation program. In addition, and perhaps more important, program directors for housing and mediation services are developing workshops to bring together groups of people.

The first, planned for lace spring 1997, is for shareholders and tenants in cooperative buildings; future workshops may convene landlords and tenants. These workshops will aim at articulating common ground--such as the stake each has in developing and supporting viable buildings and neighborhoods--that might provide starting points for conversation between these intrinsically linked but often contentious groups. Such a step will take mediation beyond sessions of individuals to working with groups of community stakeholders. Settlement staff also see a possible role for the mediation program in helping to ease tensions rooted in the widely varied and rapidly growing ethnic, cultural, religious, and experiential differences in the neighborhood.

THE MEDIATION PROGRAM WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY

Overall, the program director sees the settlement as an ideal location for this effort. As a deliberately neutral actor in the community, settlements traditionally aim to bring together the various groups in their neighborhoods, welcoming residents from across ethnic, religious, racial, class, age, and experiential lines. In Forest Hills-Rego Park, this neutrality seems to be increasingly important as the number and variety of immigrant groups quickly grows. Yet, administrators want the settlement to be not only neutral ground, but a place where participants are developing and promoting common ground, where beyond welcoming all members of the neighborhood, settlement programs further shared concerns, develop common experiences, and foster among residents a sense of investment in their community. Settlements act as conduits for individuals and groups to undertake new roles as engaged members of their communities. In working toward such community building, the settlement emphasizes two intertwined themes: developing individual capacity, and linking individuals and groups to each other within a broader community perspective. The emphasis on individual development marks a critical difference, the associate director argues, between mobilizing and organizing. Mobilizing may get participants out to a rally or even involved in a particular cause, but organizing involves deep, lasting change at the individual and community levels. Too often, she continues, a so-called "organizing" effort loses steam when the organizer leaves a community because residents have not gained the skills, experience, confidence, political savvy, and community perspective to continue on their own. For settlement administrators, fostering capability at the individual level means not only skill development but also supporting individuals' ability and willingness to recognize and advocate for available options, make informed choices, and take responsibility for the consequences, within a community framework. Community mediation is one of a few programs at Forest Hills Community House that was developed from the start with a clear, self-conscious community-building sensibility.

Yet, the twin themes of options and decision-making within a community framework run through many older settlement programs as well. Teen programs, for example, teach peer counseling skills to help teen leaders use their skills and influence within their peer groups in positive, responsible ways. Work with homeless families involves developing participatory skills and introducing individuals into the institutional life of the community, in such ways as participating in parent and tenant associations; through these means, individuals can begin to form links with others, define common concerns, and together have a voice in critical areas of their daily lives.

In a sense, settlement programs very concretely connect individuals one to another, developing loose links and sometimes closer ties by utilizing the constructive potential of direct social contact. For example, the settlement's intergenerational focus brings together youth, adults, and seniors in such programs as a work-study program and the Neighborhood Intergenerational Chore and Escort Program. The mediation director is also developing the settlement's family room, equipped with multi-media computers, and envisions a mix of residents, working side-by-

side, but each free to pursue his or her own interests. A recurrent theme throughout these programs involves the regular association, in face-to-face contact, of members of social groups who may not normally come together in the course of their everyday routines. These interactions help put a face on such abstract categories as senior citizen, teenager, and immigrant; create personal links; and strengthen the social fabric of the neighborhood. Across all programs, broadening individual perspectives, experiences, and capabilities through interactions builds community at both the individual and community levels.

DISTINGUISHING FACTORS AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING THEMES

Forest Hills Community House administrators and program directors emphasize developing individual and collective capacity, fostering connections among residents and local groups, and promoting a sense of the common good as the fundamental components of community organizing. The settlement is striving to make community organizing part of its work in the community, a process that has entailed expanding and transforming the meaning of service provision. The community mediation program reflects and implements this effort. In considering the settlement's community building, some overall themes emerge, including the following:

Nontraditional programs offer new perspectives on the role of the settlement. The mediation program is part of a broad settlement effort to build on and expand its traditional service provision role, explicitly joining service provision and community organizing. The program has attracted individuals and groups previously unconnected to the settlement to act as volunteers, sources of referral, and program participants. Many of these newcomers do not see themselves as needing traditional services; however, nontraditional programs, such as the mediation center, can provide entry points into the settlement. In addition, such programs can stimulate administrators and staff to build on existing resources, developing new efforts, such as the collaboration between housing programs and mediation.

Community building means changing roles for individuals. In a fundamental way, the concept of community mediation places a great deal of faith in the power of individuals to change taken-for-granted aspects of their every-day lives. The program emphasizes the ability of people to raise, confront, and resolve disputes, the ability of such groups as tenants and landlords to come together around common interests, and ultimately the ability of residents collectively to challenge and change community norms. The program director and mediators strive to impart this sense of possibility to others in the community. Moreover, according to the program director, in placing disputants themselves at the center of a voluntary resolution process, mediation implicitly argues for "a fundamental change" in how one sees conflict and its resolution, one's own civic role and responsibility, especially when in conflict with others, and the role of the Justice system, especially such intermediaries as the courts.

Neutral, structured social arenas facilitate difficult social interaction. The central focus of the community mediation program is to bring together disputants to air and resolve their differences. In order to accomplish its aim, the program works to provide a neutral social arena---complete with the neutral team of mediators--- within which complainants and respondents feel, as one mediator puts it, that they are in a "personal and safe environment," where they can raise potentially difficult issues. The presence of the mediators helps to create this environment, but they are only a part of a larger structural framework that includes a clear agenda, a set of simple, directly stated rules, and guidelines that define the roles of all participants. This procedural framework creates a social arena that allows participants to come together and resolve grievances, interactions that are frequently fraught with tension and anxiety, and marked with potential pitfalls-but, within the mediation context, allowed to occur constructively and safely.

Community building entails creating common ground. In a diverse and frequently fragmented society in which there often are no connections between neighbors, a vital component of community building is the articulation of common ground. This often demands a willingness and ability to take a long-term, encompassing perspective, beyond immediate points of friction or more focused points of view. In the community mediation program, as in other community-building efforts, staff frequently meld these differing perspectives, helping residents recognize ways to deal with immediate issues. In the process, they help broaden personal frameworks and sometimes change daily behavior in radical ways.

UNITED COMMUNITY CENTERS

NIV-Prevention Work with the New Lots Taxi Association

United Community Centers (UCC) was founded in 1954 by residents of two public housing projects in the East New York section of Brooklyn, a working class and low-income community whose current residents constitute an ethnically diverse population of African Americans and Latinos. The settlement, a relatively new member of the United Neighborhood Houses, joined in 1996. UCC characterizes itself as a "problem-oriented" organization; its service programs aim to "connect people to ongoing efforts to understand our society and to struggle socially and democratically to meet the needs of our community." This philosophy infuses all of the settlement's activities, from its services, community education programs, and social and cultural activities to its social action campaigns, and from its day care program and youth groups to its community newspaper and annual street fair. UCC is a membership organization made up largely of community residents; its board is elected by the membership, which numbers about 100 families who pay $5 in dues per year.

UCC's largest program is the Morris L. Eisenstein Learning Center, which opened in 1972. The Learning Center staff of thirty-two full-and part-time employees provide day care for eighty-five pre-schoolers and sixty- five school-age children. UCC also offers a Teen Video and Dramatic Club, an art program, a bimonthly community newspaper, *The Link,* which is distributed to 12,000 households in East New York, the health and HIV-prevention program described in this case, and a variety of social, cultural, and advocacy activities in the community, such as the East New York Street Fair, the Mothers' March to Stop AIDS and Save Lives, and the East New York Community Committee to Stop the Incinerator. In addition to Learning Center employees, UCC staff also include the executive and assistant directors, four community organizers/health workers, and two support staff.

The central role that community organizing plays in UCC's approach is evident in its community-based HIV- prevention strategy. The strategy includes three elements: promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS among community residents; organizing subgroups within the community in ongoing activities that promote discussion of HIV/AIDS- related issues; and involving residents in the planning and execution of community actions and events. Although UCC provides services for all of East New York, the particular area in which staff focus their HIV-prevention work is the 10 square blocks immediately surrounding the settlement. Approximately 25,000 people live in this area.

This case study focuses on the way UCC has implemented its HIV-prevention strategy with a particular sector of the community, a group of largely Dominican taxi drivers. Unlike a more traditional approach of recruiting clients into educational and skill-building classes in order to change knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding HIV/AIDS, UCC uses community organizing to change community norms in support of behaviors that reduce the risk of HIV infection and transmission.

BACKGROUND

UCC's relationship with a group of Dominican taxi drivers began in 1990, when the drivers worked for a taxi dispatcher located across

the street from UCC. Unhappy about their working conditions, about thirty-five drivers Went to strike in 1991; they were joined by other Latino drivers from different taxi bases in the community who wanted to form their own taxi association. UCC's proximity to the taxi dispatcher, and the fact that UCC's staff and participants had been customers of the drivers, fostered familiarity between the settlement and the drivers. Within the context of this relationship, UCC's executive director offered assistance that the drivers accepted; settlement staff helped the drivers set their priorities and strategies, and facilitated interaction between the drivers and the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission. UCC also provided a letter of support when the drivers, seeking to establish their own taxi association, encountered resistance from the Community Board. Eventually, the drivers founded the New Lots Taxi Association (NLTA), which is now headquartered less than a block away from UCC.

NLTA has about 175 drivers, almost 50 of whom are officially members. The members own NLTA cooperatively, and are entitled to a reduced weekly fee to have calls distributed to them. They also receive such benefits as hospital expenses for a driver or a close relative and contributions to the funeral costs of drivers' family members. In addition, if a driver's car needs repairs, a collection is organized for voluntary contributions from other members. NLTA is largely Dominican: all of the administrators are Dominican as are most of the drivers, although Haitians and other Latino groups make up about 20 percent of the total.

The NLTA storefront is an active social center where drivers often fraternize while waiting to be dispatched for a job. UCC staff took advantage of the drivers' presence on the block to develop informal relations with their neighbors. These relations deepened as the drivers became involved in some of UCC's activities and came to understand that UCC is not an agency of the city government and that they share many similar concerns, such as community safety and the rights of immigrants. UCC's assistant director, a Latino woman, formed an especially good relationship with some of the drivers and was able to interject many of her concerns related co HIV prevention into their informal conversations.

At the same time, UCC developed a proposal and received funding from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for a comprehensive community-based HIV-prevention program. East New York has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in New York City, along with high rates of drug-related crime, prostitution, unemployment, poor housing, and other poverty-related conditions. UCC's overall approach focuses on changing community norms in support of behaviors chat reduce the risk of HIV infection and transmission. By targeting various groups that are deeply rooted in the community, UCC hopes both to reduce the risk of infection and to influence the norms and sex behaviors of high-risk populations with whom these target groups are tied by familial and social bonds. The target groups that UCC selected for its community-based work ranged from parent-teacher associations and parents of children in local child care centers to members of teen groups and church congregations. UCC selected the NLTA membership as one of the initial target groups, a choice that represented a natural evolution of UCC's relationship with the drivers.

HIV-PREVENTION DISCUSSIONS

Before moving to its current location, NLTA did not have the space to accommodate its monthly membership meetings, and asked to use UCC's community room. The settlement was happy to comply. Although NLTA's agenda was primarily business, UCC's assistant director had talked about UCC's social and health goals and activities in previous interactions with the drivers. When NLTA first started meeting at UCC, she placed brochures about HIV prevention at their meetings.

This evolved into a 15-minute AIDS discussion before or after the meetings, and then a special meeting with interested drivers specifically devoted to HIV and AIDS. Recognizing that the drivers regularly lunched

together at a local Latino restaurant, UCC determined that providing lunch would facilitate their engagement in regularly scheduled discussions. Eventually, this arrangement developed into monthly meetings, which now take place in an open room on the lower level of the new NLTA quarters.

Eight to twenty drivers from a core group of twenty-five NLTA members attend these monthly meetings. The UCC assistant director facilitates the discussions, which focus on a wide range of topics, such as how the drivers can be at risk for HIV infection; the kinds of relationships the men want with their spouses, partners, and children; sexual behavior and the treatment of women; homophobia; and the difficulties of living in a culture whose values and norms differ somewhat from those in the Dominican Republic.

An observer of these meetings sees a group of men actively engaged in the discussions, listening to each other and sharing their differing opinions in a lively atmosphere. The drivers discuss personal issues openly and frankly, and ask questions that cover many aspects of sexuality, family relationships, and identity. The UCC assistant director listens carefully and responds not only to what they say but also to what they do not say. She invites them to put difficult issues on the table and challenges their assumptions about sexual norms, such as the perception that "only decent women" do not make their partners wear condoms. In one meeting on the topic of domestic violence, she videotaped the discussion so the drivers could listen to themselves, reflect on their attitudes, and assess, some months later, whether their subsequent behavior was consistent with these expressed attitudes.

One of the most complex and personal issues that is integrated at many points into these discussions is that of gender dynamics and the role of machismo. As UCC noted in its proposal to the CDC, a general acceptance of the subordinate role of women can be interpreted by men as justification for either violent coercion or more subtle pressures to engage in unprotected sex. In her role as facilitator, the assistant director is neither judgmental nor accusatory, but demonstrates how certain behaviors can lead to a spread of HIV infection. Further, she works to get the drivers to identify ways in which sexual relationships can be mutually negotiated while still protecting the "macho" identity of the man. It is clear that the drivers who go to the meetings have a great deal of respect for the facilitator and can talk freely with her about their most personal issues. From time to time, female partners attend the meetings as well. As the president of NLTA commented, most of the drivers know someone personally who has died of AIDS and, as a consequence, recognize the importance of the discussions and the validity of UCC's message.

It is difficult to quantify the impact of the HIV-prevention discussions on participants' behaviors, let alone their impact on those in drivers' families and social networks. An NLTA member has noticed that many drivers "measure the risk" more with regard to sex and AIDS. He believes that this is the case because UCC has created a forum in which the drivers have a "safe space" to discuss such issues as how Latino men perceive Latino women, and how society reacts differently here as compared to the Dominican Republic with regard to the roles of men and women. He feels that the wives of the drivers who participate in the discussions are the biggest beneficiaries of the program due to their husbands' increased awareness and respect. The discussions, he emphasizes, are not just about condoms.

Condoms are, however, a primary component of the drivers' AIDS-prevention work. Seven drivers dispense condoms regularly, and many more identify UCC as their condom distributor, stopping by periodically to request a supply, both for their own use and to distribute to others in NLTA. Drivers also carry out special initiatives, such as passing out Valentine's Day packages that include condoms, cards, Hershey Kisses, and literature about AIDS. An evaluation of the program by the Hunter College Center for AIDS, Drugs and Community Health supports the view that NLTA drivers distinguish themselves from drivers in other taxi associations by being more

informed and aware of HIV/AIDS issues and more supportive of the regular use of condoms. UCC asserts that the drivers' visible promotion of condoms sends a powerful prevention message to the community and promotes alternative definitions of masculinity, especially among Latino youth.

THE BROADER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UCC AND NLTA

UCC aims to establish strong relations with multiple local groups and to involve them in community events as a way of building community, of creating vested interests among diverse constituencies in the development of their community. The HIV-prevention discussions described above grew out of an evolving relationship between UCC and NLTA. Historically and philosophically, UCC has been supportive of the struggles of working people; therefore, using its political voice and leverage to help the drivers establish their own taxi association was consistent with the settlement's mission and goals. The subsequent challenge for UCC was to identify how the agendas of the two organizations overlapped.

An early example of UCC's reaching out to involve the drivers in community events occurred when NLTA was first established. UCC staff helped tie the drivers into a larger network of taxi associations by linking them with a Brooklyn-wide baseball league and then donating $100 to their team. The East New York Street Fair was the first major event on which UCC and NLTA collaborated. The Street Fair has entertainment, music, food, and vendors, all representatives of the diverse cultures that make up the community. Approximately forty community organizations co-sponsor the event, ensuring a broad and diverse base of support and participation. After NLTA started using UCC's community room for its monthly meeting, the UCC assistant director suggested that the drivers, experts in "getting the word out" for their taxi business, could distribute flyers for the Street Fair to their passengers and attach $1 NLTA coupons as a promotion for themselves.

Another mutually beneficial outcome of the drivers' participation in the Street Fair is the Dominoes Tournament, an activity the drivers had conducted independently for a few years. UCC invited NLTA to schedule the last day of their tournament on the day of the Street Fair, which they did---presenting the winners' trophies on stage in front of all those attending the fair. Over time NLTA's participation in the Street Fair has developed in a variety of directions. Drivers now help UCC with fair set-up and clean-up, provide entertainers with transportation, use their cars to block streets, and distribute condoms. In keeping with their business perspective, the drivers decorate their cars, hand out business cards, and wear the red NLTA jackets as a means of advertising. Moreover, they are at the fair as community residents, with social and familial ties to many of the others in attendance.

UCC has developed a variety of strategies for integrating its HIV-prevention message into social and cultural events like the Street Fair and for engaging NLTA in mutually beneficial ways. For example, the taxi drivers have been involved in UCC's 5K Run/Walk for Hope and the Mothers' March to Stop AIDS, posting signs to publicize the events, passing out water to participants, and using their cars to block off the streets. Promotion of safety is a primary area of concern for both NLTA and UCC, as it is for the community as a whole. In the past 5 years, four NLTA drivers have been killed. UCC helped organize a meeting with the police and drivers to discuss safety issues. More broadly, the drivers have worked with UCC and the local police precinct to obtain more police patrols in the area, an effort that has resulted in reduced drug trafficking and greater safety on the street where UCC and NLTA are located. UCC participants and staff feel safe using NLTA taxis, and the proximity of the two institutions enables members to look out for one another.

The NLA has gained respect and credibility from its association with UCC, which has helped the group work with institutions like the police. For example, when the drivers felt that the police were discriminating against them as Latinos, UCC organized a meeting with the police inspector to initiate an open

discussion of the issue. UCC has also facilitated discussions with the police precinct about tickets given to drivers that the drivers felt were unfair because they were sitting in their cars at the time, waiting to be dispatched. The Hunter College evaluation report provides a further example, citing an occasion when members of a competing taxi association contacted NLTA about a local dispute with the precinct; they wanted NLTA to secure the assistance of UCC. The NLTA provided that linkage to UCC and the organizational support of elected and other officials in East New York that UCC is perceived to be able to mobilize.

WORKING WITH IMMIGRANTS

Settlements have traditionally played an important role in helping newcomer communities get established in this country. Like many other urban areas, East New York has experienced an influx of Immigrants in the past decades, the majority of whom come from different parts of the Caribbean and Central and South America. UCC's relationship with the NLTA drivers is one vehicle for learning about and developing ways of responding to the needs of different immigrant communities. UCC deeply believes that people must be able to vote if they are to have a strong voice and investment in their community. As a result, the settlement has sponsored several citizenship drives with a special focus on the drivers, who publicize the efforts through flyers at the taxi base and in their cars, and through word-of-mouth to their families, friends, and acquaintances. At the citizenship drives, UCC staff help people with their applications for citizenship, including taking official photographs and fingerprints for them. Staff also discuss new laws and procedures, provide applications for green cards, and distribute copies of the citizenship examination.

Newcomer populations often face social and psychological challenges, as well as legal and economic ones. UCC defines its HIV-prevention work with the Dominican taxi drivers as one forum in which this immigrant group can test out new norms, ideas, and values within a context that is both respectful of past practices and committed to the community's health and well-being as it evolves in East New York. The transition to a new culture can often lead to conflict, not only with the dominant culture but also within oneself. At one of the HIV-prevention discussions, there was a video and subsequent discussion on child abuse. The drivers commented that there is a fine line between abuse and discipline, especially when judged by what often seem to them to be contradictory community standards. In the United States, some of the drivers maintained, parents are reprimanded for "disciplining" their children if some outside institution (such as the school) perceives them as being too forceful. However, if a child gets into trouble with the police, the parents are blamed and held accountable for nor disciplining their child enough. The drivers' engagement in this particular discussion, and the intensity of their feelings and views, reveal the stress they experience as recent immigrants. Another aspect of this stress can be seen in their response to the fact that the boy in the video answered his father in English when spoken to in Spanish. The drivers reported a mixture of hurt and pride, wanting their children to be successful in their new world of East New York, yet somehow feeling devalued and rejected themselves. UCC provides a social forum where the drivers can express these feelings and find support for reconciling the past and future in ways that help them and their families move forward. By working within the context of a strong occupational and social group, the settlement builds support both for changes in individual attitudes and behavior, and for the possibility that these changes will affect many others.

DISTINGUISHING FACTORS AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING THEMES

Embedded in UCC’s HIV-prevention work with the New Lots Taxi Association are a number of elements that reflect larger community-building themes, such as the following:

Staff roles are culturally appropriate and consistent with the settlement's community-building philosophy

The initial linkage between UCC and the NLTA drivers and the development of their informal relationship into a monthly HIV-prevention discussion group depended a great deal on the role of UCC's assistant director, a Latina. First, she did not have to deal with language and cultural barriers that might have existed had she not been a Latina.[7] Second, all staff roles at UCC are defined as organizer roles; this means that she leads the HIV-prevention discussions with the drivers as an organizer with AIDS expertise, rather than as an AIDS specialist. Although this organizational philosophy often conflicts with the funding support for a "health worker" staff slot filled by an individual whose training and professional identity is as a health worker, the assistant director is able to embrace and reinforce the notion that all UCC employees need to embody the settlement's community-building mission. As the case study has demonstrated, this approach enabled UCC and NLTA to expand their relationship beyond a narrow or traditional HIV-prevention exchange.

The HIV-prevention work with the taxi drivers is embedded in a multi-pronged health education program. The taxi drivers are just one of a number of target groups for UCC's HIV-prevention programs. UCC does workshops with other groups such as PTA$_S$, day care center parents and staff, block associations, tenant associations, churches, and schools. The settlement engages a number of social groups in HIV-prevention activities such as local teens in a Teen Video and Dramatic Club, and it organizes community-wide events such as the Mothers March to Stop AIDS. Further, its bimonthly newspaper *The Link,* which is distributed to 12,000 households in East New York, covers HIV-related issues. This multi-pronged approach aims to knit together social networks, promoting collaborative linkages among community groups and organizations as a way of diffusing and reinforcing healthy attitudes and norms related to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

UCC takes a long-term organic approach to building relationships. UCC's approach is to establish a range of relationships with different constituencies in the community, including residents, merchant associations, churches, day care centers, and so forth. Through these relationships, UCC recruits individuals for specific programs, such as child care or ESL classes, mobilizes participation on various community campaigns, and identifies new needs or issues. Even with very modest resources and a small staff of six (excluding the MLE Learning Center, which shares space with UCC), a community-building tens can help maximize the degree to which UCC is embedded in the community. An important aspect of UCC's strategy, and its related ability to get things done, is that everyone knows that the settlement is in for the long haul. Just as it took some time before the drivers became strongly connected to UCC, so are many other relationships developed and nurtured over time. In this way, when a specific initiative such as the HIV-prevention program arises, UCC is in a position to seize the opportunity, building on and mobilizing relationships toward that end. It would have been impossible to start an HIV-prevention program with the NLTA without a preexisting relationship.

*Community-building relationships need to be reciproc*al. UCC makes an important point of identifying ways to build reciprocal relationships in the community, ways in which the settlement can help others with their own interests, as well as the other way around. This is not necessarily a manipulative strategy, but simply one that recognizes and tries to address the common concerns and goals of all interested parties. Thus, in its work with the taxi drivers, UCC explicitly respects NLTA's business pursuits, finding ways in which these interests overlap with UCC's agenda.

UCC uses its leadership to bring about broad community change. UCC is perceived as an organization that reaches people "how to struggle" for positive changes in the community. This means helping people develop an analysis of a community problem and voice an opinion, such as through letter-

[7] About 20 percent of the NLTA drivers, though none of its administrators are Haitian. UCC has not been a successful engaging this group despite recently a Haitian staff person

writing campaigns, protests, and marches. In order to be an effective community problem solver or facilitator (as it was in the discussions between the drivers and the local police), UCC must have good communication with a range of organizations and constituencies.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Walk-in Centers and the Melrose Court Tenants' Association

A community organizer founded the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in 1971 to provide various types of walk-in assistance to residents in the West Bronx. The agency was initially patterned on the British "Citizens Advice Bureaux" movement, a neighborhood-based social support system begun during the Second World War for returning soldiers and their families. Following the British model, CAB's approach is both neighborhood-based and comprehensive, operating under the general axiom, "Whatever your problem, we are here to help."

Over the past 26 years, CAB has grown tremendously. Initially housed in a storefront office, the agency---now with more than 270 staff and twenty offices located throughout the Bronx (and one in Washington Heights, Manhattan) ---has become a major social service organization with a primary focus on the needs of low-income individuals and families. In 1992, CAB became an associate member of the United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), with the goal of providing full settlement house programs in underserved south-west Bronx neighborhoods. Toward this end, in 1993, UNH initiated and facilitated merger discussions between CAB and the Girls Club of New York. Those discussions culminated in CAB's full membership in UNH in 1993 and completion of the merger in 1995. The agency's core information, referral, and advocacy services, which are provided on a walk-in basis, cover a range of substantive areas, including immigration, employment and training, consumer rights and credits, social service advocacy, community resources, and the agency's specialty of housing and entitlements. CAB advocates for and mediates between community residents and these various institutional arenas, helping residents understand the operation and impact of these systems, as well as how to navigate them effectively. CAB staff also work to help residents speak for themselves. The organization's long-term goal is for residents to become their own advocates, working on behalf of their families and their communities. In addition, the settlement now offers a range of social services, from after-school programs to support groups, seeking in particular to provide programs for senior citizens, youth, homeless and relocated families, immigrants, and people with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, as neighborhood conditions have changed over the years. CAB has broadened its approach to include a number of community-organizing and community-driven efforts. This case study focuses on one of these efforts---the agency's work over the past 2 years helping residents of Melrose Court, a large city---owned building, develop a strong, viable tenants' association. The community-organizing work at Melrose Court represents a new area for CAB, but one that reflects its tradition of neighborhood-based services and its broad mission of advocacy and fostering the development of individual capacity. At Melrose Court, the settlement is helping residents become active, effective participants in their community, working together to have a voice in decisions affecting their lives.

BACKGROUND

Melrose Court is a large five-story residence occupying two full city lots, with 103 ample units, ranging in size from three and a half to seven and a half rooms, and seven separate entrances. The building was constructed around the turn of the century, primarily for well-to-do families, and to this day some of its former elegance is apparent. Like other buildings in the South Bronx, however, Melrose Court had deteriorated over the past several decades to the point chat conditions are substandard and residents feet unsafe. According to tenants and CAB staff, the building's population of approximately 450 residents largely reflects the racial and ethnic make-up of the surrounding community---75

percent are Hispanic (25 percent of whom are black Hispanics) and 25 percent are non-Hispanic African Americans. The majority of families are low-income, and close to 70 percent accept some form of public assistance. Currently, single mothers between 25 and 35 years old with young children comprise the building's largest demographic group; however, Melrose Court also holds long family histories, and in some cases two to three generations of the same family have lived there.

The residence is one of a select group of New York City-owned buildings in the Tenant Interim Lease program (TIL), a NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) effort aimed at developing cooperative ownership by tenants. A rate cap under the TIL program keeps the cost per month at roughly $80 per room, and tenants especially appreciate these large and affordable apartments. Under the program, tenants are responsible for building management as long as at least 65 percent of the tenants are participating, 90 percent are paying rent, and functioning management committees are in place. If successful, tenants in a TIL building can collectively purchase their building from the city at well under market rates. The tenants thus acquire equity in their building, and the city is relieved of the administrative burden of managing the building.

In 1995, after more than a decade in the TIL program, Melrose Court was in trouble. The tenants' association had become weak, and the number of residents paying rent or involved in building management was low. HPD wanted to help turn Melrose Court around. The agency sees the residence as an especially important member of the program because it is one of the original TIL buildings, it is the largest in the program, and because the surrounding neighborhood is part of a city regional development area. HPD therefore approached CAB as a potential intermediary that could help strengthen the tenants' association and activate resident management of the building. CAB seemed particularly appropriate because of its history in the neighborhood, its extensive services, and the proximity of Melrose Court to other CAB offices and programs. In addition, the organization was increasingly moving toward community organizing and other strategies for promoting broad community involvement. As collaborating partners, HPD and CAB then approached the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation for funding for the intermediary role.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AT MELROSE COURT

Getting Started

The CAB office at Melrose Court opened in July 1995, in a small one-bedroom apartment on the first floor. Even before moving in, CAB staff knew that many tenants, as well as HPD, saw the building as a place where residents did not work together. Therefore, in addition to providing information and referral services, CAB started working to build community among the tenants. Agency staff started facilitating the tenants' association meetings, but soon realized that this would not be sufficient to mobilize residents. Before tenants could take greater ownership of their building, CAB had to strengthen their resolve to work together. An early goal for CAB then was to get tenants to talk with each other. In order to do this, staff had to encourage tenants to come down to the office and become comfortable with CAB.

After false starts due to poor staffing choices, a seasoned staff member began in January 1996 to help build trust and stability at Melrose Court. When this person arrived, she found little communication between the tenants and the office, and decided to create incentives to get residents involved. Since she was familiar with CAB and its service approach, she was able to draw upon many of the programs and practices that were effective at the agency's other sites.

CAB established regular office hours, and staff reached out to those residents already involved as the first step in getting others to come in and talk. Only a handful of people were attending tenants' association meetings when CAB arrived, but there was a small,

active core group, mostly women. CAB decided to sponsor activities that would bring tenants together, and held weekly luncheons for 5 months. The luncheons were an informal means for staff to talk with residents about the tenants' association, as well as a way to get to know residents and understand their needs. Some residents were uncomfortable working with the long-time tenant leaders, and the agency benefitted from being perceived as a neutral entity. Once enough tenants were familiar with CAB, staff were able to engage volunteers to knock on doors, circulate flyers, and make phone calls to others in the building. Two tenants, women from the core group of active residents, volunteered to work in the office to help maintain coverage, answer questions, take calls, and do general paperwork.

CAB sought to involve residents further by offering services and activities that responded to their specific needs. For example, staff started a mother-child program at Melrose Court to serve the large number of single mothers with children who stayed at home during the day. During the first hour of the program, mothers and children engage together in such activities as reading or arts and crafts. In the second hour, the children stay with the activity specialist; the mothers move to another room for a discussion group in which staff talk with them about the tenants' association, invite them to discuss problems and concerns, and encourage them to use the group however they wish. As particular individual needs identified through these discussions, staff work with the families, providing direct counseling or connecting them with appropriate assistance. For example, the CAB office has helped several women who were victims of domestic violence obtain orders of protection against their partners. Based on the discussions, staff also recognized a place for the Home Instruction Program for Pre-school Youngsters (HIPPY), which trains and supports parents in home instruction of their pre-school children. Now co-run by Melrose Court staff and a tenant volunteer, HIPPY serves the dual purpose of meeting needs and engaging parents.

CAB also expanded resident involvement by sponsoring a number of special activities and services that deliberately link residents to resources in the surrounding community, including CAB's own facilities and programs. For example, because there are ninety-six children under the age of 12 living in the building, staff frequently organized trips so the children could participate in programs at CAB's nearby Girls Club site.[8] Resident interest in youth services and programs was so great that CAB started an after-school program at Melrose Court itself, in which ten to fifteen children regularly participate. CAB's work force development specialist visits Melrose Court once a week, meeting with tenants to learn about their job skills, and training and employment needs.

In addition, CAB worked to engage and win the support of residents by responding to some of the chronic problems in the building, sponsoring projects that unite tenants around the building. For example, CAB solicited donated paint and involved resident children in a beautification project, giving them responsibility for painting a wall of the building and keeping it free of graffiti. More fundamental, residents reported that for many years vandalism and delinquency were major problems at Melrose Court, and that any building improvements were ruined soon after completion. Because it provided unrestricted access to the different apartment blocks, the roof was a particular problem spot. Tenants regularly travelled across the roof, and at times drug dealers used the roof to elude the police. CAB was instrumental in organizing tenants to help address these problems. As a result, residents pressed the maintenance crew to install new intercoms, doors, and locks.

Organizing Residents for Building Management

Involving residents in projects and programs in the first year at Melrose Court laid an important foundation for organizing tenants. However, it

[8] This facility became part of CAB through its merger with the Girls Club of New York, and has been developed as the settlement's principal full-service site, housing the largest number of services and activities of any CAB site.

was not until later that residents actually mobilized. In September 1996, HPD notified the tenants' association that if residents did not take effective management of Melrose Court, the department would have to remove the building from the cooperative program. The building would then fall under the city's central management. Tenants who had been working with CAB rallied to inform other residents about the notice. Volunteers circulated flyers, calling their neighbors to a general meeting to discuss the impending HPD decision and the building's status. More than half of the building's tenants attended the meeting. The residents were strongly opposed to seeing the building revert to city control---many remembered the poor conditions when the building was previously centrally managed. Essentially, tenants would not be able to depend on efficient maintenance, regular oil delivery, and other important building services---all of which they now control. CAB staff repeated their challenge to tenants to become involved, informing them that the office would do its part to help get the management up and running.

Tenants decided to hold weekly meetings, drawing over thirty tenants on average. At the meetings, tenants and CAB staff discussed strategies for getting an extension from HPD and for effectively organizing the other residents. Tenant volunteers circulated a petition and a survey to all building residents. The petition, signed by everyone in the building, asked HPD for an extra month for tenants to put their management structure in place. The survey posed a number of questions, including whether residents wanted Melrose Court to remain in the TIL program. Residents responded in support of TIL. The survey also invited tenants to join one of three management committees: the repair committee (monitor repairs and maintenance staff); the screening committee (fill vacancies); and the rent committee (monitor rent arrears and payments). Tenants also formed two other loosely structured committees, the security committee and the youth services committee, providing still other means to participate in the life of the building.

Mobilization of Melrose Court tenants has resulted in several outcomes. Tenant participation is up: general association meetings are held once a month and the three committees meet twice a month. Moreover, a broad range of tenants now take part, and a strong core group of tenant leaders keeps the energy level high. In an effort to move toward an effective system of building management, the committees have adopted bylaws that lay out rules for participation and decision making. In response to the tenant petition, HPD granted the tenants' association additional time to address its shortcomings. As of January 1997, the department had made no decision about the building's ultimate disposition.

There have been a number of positive changes in the life of the building as a result of increased tenant involvement. For instance, early on the new committees aimed to get maintenance staff working in a timely fashion on building repairs. Although there were four city-contracted maintenance workers on site, tenants frequently complained about repairs being left undone or poorly done. CAB staff pointed out that the building residents are in fact the employers of the maintenance staff because their rent goes directly to repairs and general improvements. In an effort to increase the accountability of the maintenance staff, the repair committee took responsibility for keeping repair records and collecting written complaints about building maintenance. Then, committee members and CAB staff approached the maintenance workers' union with this documentation; as a result, three of the four maintenance workers were suspended. Ever since this incident, maintenance staff assigned to Melrose Court routinely finish repairs in good and timely order. Now committee members take ongoing responsibility for checking the repairs that have been done.

Tenant committees, with the help of CAB, also made progress negotiating agreements on rent payments. A large number of Melrose Court tenants had fallen behind on their rent, some with as much as 3 years in arrears. A significant portion of those behind on their rent are on some form of public assistance or housing subsidy, which makes paying back rent difficult. In addition, many tenants cited discrepancies, often arising from years of poor bookkeeping both at the building and

HPD. From early on, the CAB office began working with tenants and HPD to clear up and settle these accounts--- an area where CAB's experience with different public Systems has been a great benefit. The day after the September tenants' association meeting, approximately fifteen tenants went to the CAB office to deal with their rent. Now, 6 months later, most of those in arrears have agreed to begin paying off the debt, usually including a portion of the back rent with each rent payment. Even some of the squatters living in the building came to the office to discuss their status and, as a result, are working to legalize their residence. The rent committee has taken responsibility for these agreements, and the screening response committee is currently working to fill the nearly twenty vacancies in the building.

With CAB's help, Melrose Court residents have successfully organized their tenants' association. Rent collection is at 80 percent---a full 30 percent above what it was when CAB first arrived-and a core group of tenant leaders is in place. Furthermore, residents appreciate CAB's work, and report that they have largely put aside their differences with each other. The building is now a place, they say, where neighbors cooperate and work together. While recognizing that CAB and the tenants have made real progress at Melrose Court, staff have maintained from the start that it was unlikely that the building would remain in the TIL program much longer, given the trend toward privatizing city buildings.

When HPD finally decided what to do with Melrose Court, staff and tenants were pleased that this forecast was not entirely accurate. In March 1997, HPD notified the Melrose Court tenants' association that it would become co-manager of the building, serving in an advisory capacity to a sub-management group. Essentially, the work of CAB staff with the tenants' association had made it possible for a management company co come in, creating a greatly improved situation for residents and their building. CAB staff cite the tenant petition and phone calls to HPD as two important factors that influenced the decision to keep Melrose Court in the TIL program, but point to their own lobbying efforts as well.

Although the entrance of a sub-management group has made tenants somewhat apprehensive---5 years ago a similar group largely exploited tenants and had to be removed by the city---tenants realize that they can retain a certain level of autonomy and control. CAB's presence and clear commitment to the tenants has helped ease their fears; the agency plans to help tenants work with the incoming group and to continue supporting their association. Although Melrose Court residents are still not in a position to purchase the building and move into cooperative ownership, they continue, with the help of CAB, to develop and sustain a vigorous and organized voice in decisions affecting life in this small community.

WALK-IN CENTER WITHIN CAB AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY

Perceived as a neutral entity interested in the well-being of residents, CAB has been able to develop a strong and open relationship with the tenants of Melrose Court and provide them with a unique service. At Melrose Court and other CAB offices, staff are vital members of the communities they serve, responsive to local needs and concerns. The agency has demonstrated its commitment to local communities and developed a strong reputation for advocating on their behalf. Staff feel that these characteristics have positioned the organization to cake on broader organizing efforts that strengthen individuals, families, and their neighborhoods.

Despite challenges presented by categorical funding streams and problem-oriented services, CAB has made a conscious attempt in both its special programs and walk-in offices to retain its comprehensive approach, adding and integrating services that respond to community needs. In Its special programs for particular populations, such as senior residents or formerly homeless families, CAB tries to be comprehensive by infusing its general assistance with multiple services. For example, the organization has developed Services for seniors program that includes minor repairs, crime prevention, and various seniors groups, as well as general information and referral assistance for the elderly. CAB

homeless services offices work closely with formerly homeless families who are leaving shelters, trying to help them remain in permanent housing by connecting them to services and other important resources in their new communities.

In its walk-in offices, CAB has combined a multi-service approach with its existing information and referral assistance. Because of the nature of CAB's general assistance services, walk-in offices may only see a client once; however, over the years, CAB has expanded to provide comprehensive, integrated programs at many of these sites, from after-school programs to support groups. In some walk-in offices, CAB has worked to develop offices that act as a "home base" for community residents. These sites, such as the Avenue St. John office, function in a more holistic manner, providing a range of services that respond to identified community needs. Located in the Hunts Point/Longwood section of the South Bronx, the Avenue St. John office opened in 1989 to extend CAB services to formerly homeless families being relocated into city-owned buildings in the area. The office has developed and grown with this community, providing general information and referral assistance, as well as such resident-identified services as family support and after-school programs. The office also supports community-building efforts, organizing block parties and recently branching out to tenant organizing.

CAB has also developed strength in advocacy--- both at the individual case level and at the systemic policy level. CAB convenes and disseminates information among local social service providers and other groups and organizations. The agency started the City-wide Welfare Advocacy Network (CWAN) and runs the local borough chapter in the Bronx (BWAN). CAB collaborates with other agencies, encouraging them to learn about changes in welfare legislation, to give their reactions to legislators, to share information about policy changes with local communities, and to assess next steps. CAB staff have traditionally taken the lead in this kind of advocacy, but the agency has expressed an interest in moving this work out into the community where residents would be the leaders. Among other advocacy activities, CAB also sponsors public forums on policy issues, and has been produc*ing Network Notes,* a bimonthly publication for information providers in New York. The publication details, in plain language, changes in and information about health and social service entitlements, as well as new services, publications, hotlines, training sessions, and special events. CAB's links with social services systems and other organizations are important resources in its work with individuals and communities.

CAB traditionally uses local help and involves community residents in a variety of ways throughout the agency. Volunteers are a major resource for CAB, and work in its daily activities and services. Staff seek volunteers from the community at large as well as from various seniors groups and from the city's Work Experience and Title V programs. In addition, a large proportion of CAB staff either live in communities with CAB facilities or come from similar low-income backgrounds as those they serve. Across its various sites, CAB staff is diverse and reflects the communities served; over 90 percent are people of color and more than 50 percent are bilingual (Spanish, Garifuna [Honduras], Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Hindi, Urdu, and several West African languages). The agency is committed both to hiring the best-qualified candidates and to giving job opportunities to local residents; the agency in fact has a written policy to encourage former program participants, public assistance recipients, and community residents to apply for CAB jobs.

CAB's deep belief in drawing upon the assets of local residents is evident in the many staff members who are former program participants. For example, CAB recently hired a Melrose Court tenant, a woman who was very active in the building, as a full-time staff member to provide information and referrals services from the Girls Club office. Another staff member, working at Melrose Court, first came to the agency as a program participant. In the course of receiving services from CAB, she grew to appreciate the organization's work and began volunteering at its main walk-

in office on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, helping people fill out applications and problem solving for walk-in clients. In typical CAB fashion, she was given the opportunity to develop her interests and take on more responsibilities. Five months after she initially came to CAB, staff hired her, first on a part-time basis, and then, just a few months later, as full-time staff. Several staff believe that it is individuals like this who ground CAB in the community and help keep its practice connected with its philosophy.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING THEMES

CAB staff stress that the agency is increasingly moving toward community building in order to strengthen low- income individuals, families, and communities. In doing so, staff have undertaken a number of new efforts that promote greater community involvement and organizing, and that deliberately build upon CAB's experiences, capabilities, and resources as a social service organization. As a result, CAB has begun to develop an approach that emphasizes individual capacity building coupled with various strategies to engage residents in collective efforts. Several themes emerge from CABs community-building experience:

Community context and needs shape immediate and long-term interventions. Serving Bronx communities over the past 26 years, CAB has developed its programs in response to new or developing needs-whether general assistance for communities in transition or family support for young developing communities. CAB's position as a neighborhood-based information specialist is important here, because staff are quickly aware of changes in service systems and of service gaps in the community. Across the organization, there is an articulated custom of respect: staff treat residents not as clients, but as community members indispensable to their neighborhoods' well-being. As CAB moves toward interventions involving broader community participation, staff have drawn upon these practices and approaches to residents and other stakeholders. The work of the agency is driven by identified needs, proceeds incrementally, and ultimately aims to accomplish broad long-term goals. CABs day-to-day undertakings at Melrose Court are framed by the agency's long-term commitment to tenants, supporting, developing, and strengthening their participation in decisions affecting their lives and their community.

*Walk-in centers are embedded in a broader advo*cacy *agenda for the South Bronx.* CAB has been very active in policy work and coalition building. Staff take an activist approach in their work, and are involved in voter registration drives, circulating form letters to legislators, and rallies. Although initially staff undertook such activism informally, the practice is becoming a more formal part of their work. In addition, CAB hopes to engage community members in this civic activism. Within this context, CAB viewed its decision to get involved with the Melrose Court tenants' association as an opportunity to expand its community-building work and to support and promote an important housing program. At Melrose Court, as in much of its advocacy in such other areas as welfare, CAB's involvement on the front lines enables staff to learn first-hand about the everyday consequences of public policy decisions. The agency then takes the additional step, using its deep knowledge to advocate for better policies and practices; the agency has already begun to involve residents in this advocacy work, including efforts around school reform and the city's rent laws.

Individual advocacy is port of a larger goal to strengthen links among residents and to community resources. A major CAB focus is to link people to resources and to empower them to leverage those resources. This focus largely grows out of the agency's first-hand experience with residents of low-income communities who have a difficult time navigating school, medical, welfare, and social service systems. CAB helps residents become familiar with service systems and how to use them effectively, and provides ongoing information about any system changes. CAB's approach aims to strengthen the capacities of residents and to break the cycle of dependency. Staff try to strike a balance

between providing assistance and nor doing everything for residents as part of a broader strategy of encouraging individuals to speak for themselves. CAB performs this work with the understanding that strengthening individuals to support themselves and their families is the first step toward residents having a stronger voice in their communities. Only when community members are well informed and have the right cools, can they begin to make their own connections to service systems and organizations, thereby strengthening the social fabric of their community.

A multifaceted approach supports individuals and strengthens communities. CABs community-building strategy stems from and builds on its philosophy and practice as a social service organization. The agency has taken a multifaceted approach to community organizing, involving residents in specific activities, encouraging them to interact and work with one another, and providing general or specific assistance where needed. The organization combines community-building activities with many of its services, thereby increasing the potency and substantive depth of its mobilizing efforts, and provides basic information, referral, and other social services both to meet the needs of residents and to support them as they work to find their own and communal solutions to daily problems.

III. CONCLUSION

These three case studies describe community-building and organizing endeavors that translate into action the philosophical approaches of three distinct settlement houses. Each settlement comes from particular historical roots, carrying out diverse initial aims and traditions; each works in a different neighborhood, with particular strengths, resources, and needs. The Forest Hills Community House in Queens has its roots in community turmoil around the proposed construction of public housing in the neighborhood. As part of negotiations, fifty local organizations called for the creation of the settlement as a provider of traditional services for local residents. Residents of two East New York public housing projects founded United Community Centers (UCC) to provide children's programs and to act as an institutional base for organizing residents to address and democratically resolve community problems. And the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), based on a British model of neighborhood-based social support, was established in the West Bronx as a storefront walk-in information and referral center for neighborhood residents.

Yet, these diverse backgrounds and organizational frameworks have given rise among the three settlements to a shared emphasis on community organizing. Two of the settlements, UCC and Forest Hills, highlight their commitment to the approach by incorporating the term “community organizer" into job titles of program staff. As the case studies demonstrate, all three settlements have made organizing an integral part of their substantive work. Several common themes emerge out of the cases that help delineate the work of community-building and organizing, including the following:

Settlement houses support efforts for community change. The work of staff in each of these cases reflects and carries into action a conviction that individuals have the ability to make their neighborhoods better places to live. This means, for example, finding new ways to mediate conflict, organizing to negotiate with municipal bodies such as the police or housing agency, identifying and working together to resolve shared problems, and grasping and enacting the view that individual well-being and community well-being are intrinsically and dynamically linked. This belief that people can change their communities exists alongside a recognition that larger political, economic, and social forces outside the community can promote or impede local change efforts.

Community organizing buildings on developing individual capacity once fostering social networks. In each of the cases, the settlement emphasizes the expansion of individual capacity. Here, capacity includes acquiring particular knowledge and gaining

specific skills; thus, a resident might better grasp housing regulations or the consequences of health practices, or learn how to mediate conflict or navigate institutional systems. In addition, the development of individual capacity encompasses the ability to make informed choices, to reflect on one's experience, to perceive institutional and political realities, and to advocate for oneself, one's family, and one's community.

At the same time, community organizing aims to link individuals to each other in concrete ways, reinforcing and developing common experiences, joint endeavors, and a sense of mutuality and shared concerns. A pivotal aspect In promoting and supporting social networks, especially In a diverse, often fragmented society such as ours, is facilitating face-to-face interaction among community members. At times, staff aim to develop a social foundation for action through informal interaction, such as the lunches and parent discussions that bring Melrose Court tenants together. In other instances, the interaction itself carries programmatic overtones, such as the health discussions among the New Lots Taxi drivers or the Forest Hills mediation sessions.

Community organizing promotes changing relationships. Part of the community-building work described above has been the development of neutral, yet structured arenas where potentially difficult interaction can take place. In addition, then, to providing important meeting grounds where people can come together voluntarily, these social spaces seem to allow interactions that would not normally occur in the course of daily life. In part, these social arenas provide a sense of safety that allows participants to reach beyond their customary routines and, for example, confront and resolve conflict, or examine sexual and social mores. In providing such social arenas, settlements support individuals and groups in thinking through and transforming their interactions with one another.

Developing individual capacity occurs within a broad community framework. Within the context of community building and organizing, the development of individual capacity means a broader community frame-work, as the case studies show, the meaning of "community" may vary. In the CAB study, the residents of Melrose Court form a community working to become a viable tenants' association. In the UCC example, "community" operates at different levels, with the New Lots taxi drivers forming an occupational community, which intersects with the community of families and friends, as well as with the broader neighborhood. Forest Hills administrators explicitly acknowledge the shifting reference of the term "community," which might mean participants' "family, or their building or residence, or their neighborhood." Whatever the meaning, a critical point for all three settlements is, as Forest Hills continues, to "encourage participants to see themselves as vital members of a community."

Community organizing promotes civic activism. The work of settlements to develop individual capacity is linked intrinsically to efforts aimed at heightening civic sensibilities, broadening residents engagement in their communities, developing an alertness to political and institutional realities, and reinforcing a sense of shared endeavor. The case studies provide instances of such efforts, and point to ways participants carry changed attitudes and behavior into their everyday lives. This happens, for example, when New Lots taxi drivers integrate condom distribution into their work, Melrose Court residents understand and negotiate institutional systems, and Forest Hills residents reframe approaches to conflict resolution. In many ways, the engagement of participants in new civic roles reflects the explicit political consciousness of settlements. Overall, such efforts emphasize the understanding that individuals have the right, responsibility, and ability, especially when working together, to influence the circumstances of their daily lives.

Community organizing entails changing community norms. The case studies provide examples of how the settlements aim to effect change in broader communities through changes in behavior and attitudes among individuals and groups. UCC works with targeted groups of influential residents-- including the taxi drivers-- to highlight existing

links among the groups, raise health consciousness across the community, and promote civic activism. CAB started with a particular building and is working to help develop an association of informed and active residents who are effective advocates for themselves and their community. At the moment, the Forest Hills mediation work focuses on individuals, but plans to bring together classes of people, starting with landlords and tenants, to use mediation as a means to articulate and forge understandings of the overlapping interests that link neighborhood groups. In all of these instances, individual development underpins and allows changes in community norms; and changing community norms facilitate and strengthen individual engagement.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND SETTLEMENT WORK

The community-organizing work of these settlements aims for individual, family, and community level change that is substantive, concrete, and profound. Such work demands a long-term developmental perspective and long-term commitment to residents and the neighborhood they share. The case studies highlight a wide range of tasks undertaken by settlements in their organizing work, including:

- creating and providing nontraditional services, such as the mediation program, or providing new interpretations for traditional services, such as health education;
- conceptualizing, promoting, and regulating safe, neutral social space so participants can carry out demanding interactions, such as confronting problematic situations, exploring traditional mores, and developing the skills, willingness, and responsibility to speak out for one- self and one's community;
- providing information and access to skills in ways that encourage individual action and responsibility, and further collaborative endeavor;
- recognizing and reaching out to new segments of the neighborhood, while maintaining and reinforcing established ties;
- promoting and supporting vital local social networks; and
- taking political action to promote community well-being.

Throughout, a critical theme is heightening civic sensibilities, political alertness, and supporting and facilitating ways for community stakeholders--including settlement staff, program participants, neighborhood residents--to carry out roles as "vicar" community members.

The case studies argue that community organizing must be rooted in the dynamic interaction of individuals, groups, and the broader community. Their long participation in and commitment to their neighborhoods, coupled with their inclusive holistic approach, make settlements well positioned to do community organizing. At the same time, the embeddedness of settlements in their communities is neither passive nor taken for granted. Rather, the community-building work of fostering and supporting such interaction both reflects and enacts a rootedness in the community. It is through such work that settlements continually reaffirm and reinforce their place in the daily life and social fabric of the community.