
Building the Capacities of Inner City Organizations and Neighborhoods⁷

Much of what works in the inner city and for the truly disadvantaged is run by indigenous, nonprofit community-based organizations.

In spite of successes, nonprofit organizations can do much more for their neighborhoods. Some are sophisticated in management. Most are not. They need technical assistance in Board development, fundraising, financial management, organizational management, personnel management and staff development. Almost all need to acquire media and communications skills — so they can become better known to the community and funders. Such media savvy is not only a major venue for advocacy, but can help a nonprofit group become financially self-sufficient by persuading more funders to contribute. When neighborhood-based organizations enhance their capacities in this way, they position themselves as models for future replication.

The Foundation provides ongoing technical assistance in all of these areas of institutional and neighborhood capacity building. Evaluations have demonstrated that such technical assistance can improve the skills, knowledge and action of grassroots nonprofit organizations. In turn, such evaluations have shown that there can be measurable, positive outcomes as a result of the improvements by the nonprofit group.

Institutional capacity building addresses the central question of our time when it comes to the truly disadvantaged: How can we replicate to scale what we know already works?

