

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW'S
ROLE AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES IN
TWO COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES,
BROWNSVILLE-EAST NEW YORK AND BUSHWICK

by

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Volume I

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of the Philosophy of Social Welfare, The City University of New York.

2012

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW'S ROLE AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES IN TWO COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, BROWNSVILLE-EAST NEW YORK AND BUSHWICK

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Recent studies of community-based organizations suggest the need for more qualitative/descriptive accounts of organizations such as Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT). ACT is intended to function as an effective social, political, and economic capital building agent, on multiple levels, for low-income children and families throughout New York City.

This qualitative study, utilizing phenomenological methodology, seeks to describe and conceptualize ACT's role and primary responsibilities in the change goals (at the individual, family, neighborhood, and systems levels) and outcomes, central principles (i.e., comprehensiveness and community building), and operational strategies (i.e., governance, funding, staffing, technical assistance, evaluation, and program development) of two Brooklyn-based comprehensive community efforts: Brownville-East New York and Bushwick. In addition to observing meetings and reviewing agency documents, interviews were conducted with partners from Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick as well as partners from the government, foundation, and policy advocacy arenas. Interviews were also conducted with current and previous ACT staff.

Grounded theory methodology was utilized in this cross-case content analysis of the interviews. Meanings of ACT's role and primary responsibilities in the aforementioned areas of the comprehensive community efforts emerged from this analysis.

Cross-community analysis of meanings revealed similarities and differences between each group of stakeholders in their understanding of ACT and their activities in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's comprehensive community-building initiatives.

Implications of this study for future social work research, including the development of an evaluation model, were discussed.

Acknowledgements

The focus of this dissertation is on an area of macro social work commonly referred to as comprehensive community efforts; specifically, it studies their goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies. I have been honored to know people who taught me about the urgency of large-scale change. All residents of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick—both situated in Brooklyn, NY—were my greatest teachers. They taught me about great fortitude in the face of insurmountable adversities and the unyielding power we all possess to effect change, and that while change must begin with the personal, it must never stop there.

I am fiercely gracious to all ACT partners from Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick and the New York City government, foundation, and policy advocacy arenas as well as the ACT staff who not only participated in this research study but also brought incredible substance to it. They stand beside the residents of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick who push for change at the individual, family, neighborhood, and system levels. They are competent and passionate, and their stories will always live with me. I trust that this document reflects their stories to the best of its ability.

The faculty at the doctoral program, most especially Dr. Irwin Epstein, Dr. Andrea Savage, Dr. Mimi Abramovitz, and Dr. Stephen Burghardt, consistently encouraged and supported my interest in comprehensive community efforts. Dr. Epstein coached me every step of the way, beginning with developing the focus of this work and ending with its defense. I most appreciated his encouragement and support when I myself was going through individual and family changes.

ACT staff (Eric Brettschneider, Anthea McLaughlin, Loren Miller, Latrella Penny, Deborah Rubien, Raul Rubio, and Sandy March) and my mentors (Vivian Relta and Denise Rosario) were the greatest believers in my capabilities, and my loudest cheerleaders. The Children's Defense Fund California and New York offices as well as New Leaf Services, The Atlantic Philanthropies, and the Public Interest Projects were incredibly supportive of the completion of my dissertation.

I am grateful to Dr. Darrell Wheeler and Hossannah Asuncion for their assistance with the technical aspects of recording all interviews. I am grateful to Sharon Lee Harkey and her team at Purple Shark Transcriptions for their assistance with the transcription of all interviews. I am also grateful to Corey Abramson, who trained me in Atlas, a qualitative analytical software program used to examine all transcribed interviews in this study. Thank you to Dr. Tim Ramsey, who assisted with the initial coding of interviews and the editing of the findings chapters. Thank you to Sharon Harkey at Purple Shark Transcriptions and Kim, Neil, and Wendy at Scribendi for executing all proofreading and editing under very tight time constraints. Thank you to Vena at Fed Ex Kinko's for printing at the speed of light.

I could not have accomplished this work without the active and varied support of my chosen family, including those who are no longer with me: Beatriz Vieira, Alison Gerig, Jesse Frechette, Melissa Levy, Jenny Mendez, Jennefer Russo, Miguel Soares, Leslie Marshall, Wanda Acosta, Carla Roland Guzman, Tanisha Douglas, Tory Cason, Seema Patel, Raysa Segura Rodriguez, Jessy Mathew, The Joseph Family, Alpha Balde, Tiffany Herard Willoughby, Barbara O'Neill, Rebecca Rugg, Paulo Pina, Sri Rao, Delia Yarrow, Lisha McKoy, Jessy Wolvek, Keren Ludwig, Veronica Ortiz, Lisa George, Laini George, Richard Nizzardini, Sara Lesser, Eve Gordon, Laureen Phillips, Jose Aleman, Marjana Sekosan, Judith Goodman, Yvonne Asencio, and Pankti Sevak.

I am profoundly grateful to the most amazing healers I have ever encountered: Monique Lang, Bruce Wood, Calvin Chin, Donna Diamond, Charles Seaman, and Ralph Fishkin.

The Philadelphia tribe was critical in getting me to the finish line: a special heartfelt thank you to Christina Fanizzi, Shauna Swartz, Lily Rizack, Carol Murray, Casey Cook, Susan Schewel, Elizabeth Schmidt, Sara Lomax-Reese, Pamela Freeman, and Lana Jaclyn.

My great-aunt, Carmela Rossomando; aunts, Marianne Robbins and Louise Neely; and step-father, Mahmoud Sharaky were always interested in talking about my PhD endeavor, from start to finish.

And to my mother, Adelaide Sharaky, whose natural inclination toward intellectualism and choice to become an educator inspired me to pursue my PhD. Thank you for always putting my education first and instilling in me the inner voice responsible for my desire to strive for the absolute best in all circumstances.

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List of Acronyms

ACS: the Administration for Children’s Services

ACT: Agenda for Children Tomorrow

ASFA: Adoption and Safe Families Act

BCCN: the Bushwick Child Care Network

B CPI: the Bushwick Community Partnership Initiative, also commonly referred to as Bushwick Making Children Important

BEEC: the Bushwick Early Education Coalition

B-ENY: Brownsville-East New York

B-ENY CWNN: the Brownsville-East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network

BMCI: Bushwick Making Children Important, also commonly referred to as the Bushwick Community Partnership Initiative; formerly the Bushwick Managed Care Initiative

BRC: the Bushwick Resource Coalition

CAAs: Community Action Agencies

CAP: The Community Action Program of Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

CBOs: community-based organizations

CCE/CCEs: Comprehensive Community Effort/Comprehensive Community Efforts; interchangeable with Comprehensive Community Initiative/Comprehensive Community Initiatives

CCENY: the Community Coalition of East New York, also commonly referred to as East New York’s Community Partnership Initiative

CCI/CCI: Comprehensive Community Initiative/Comprehensive Community Initiatives; interchangeable with Comprehensive Community Effort/Comprehensive Community Efforts

CDCs: Community Development Corporations

CPI: the Community Partnership Initiative, a project of the Administration for Children’s Services; commonly known as the Community Coalition of East New York in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick Making Children Important in Bushwick

CPP: the Administration for Children’s Services’ Community Partnership Project; also known as The Administration for Children’s Services’ Community Partnership Initiative

CWNN: the Child Welfare Neighborhood Network, a former project of the Administration for Children's Services

CWOP: the Child Welfare Organizing Project

EZ/EC: the federal government's Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

GIS: geographic information system technology

HRA: the Human Resources Administration

HUD: the Department of Housing and Urban Development

LDT: Local Design Team

NASW: the National Association of Social Workers

NBA: the Neighborhood Based Alliance

NBI: the Neighborhood Based Initiative

NCBN: the National Community Building Network

NSP: Neighborhood Strategies Project

OEO: the federal government's Office of Economic Opportunity

PAPs: the Parent Access Points

PSP: the Parent Services Project

QDA: qualitative data analysis

SIP: the Special Impact Project

SPA/SPAs: Service Planning Area/Service Planning Areas

UWNYC: the United Way of New York City

Chapter 1: Introduction

History

The tenuous relationship between top-down, piecemeal, categorical approaches and those that are bottom-up, comprehensive, and integrated to human services and economic development is not unknown to the social work profession. This was the case in 1989, when the need for child and family services for the poor in New York City was increasing exponentially. Child abuse reports stood at almost 58,000, and infant mortality rates in some neighborhoods were two to three times the national rate. The city's foster care population was at an all-time high, with more than 47,000 children in care. Foster children were routinely placed in care far from their home communities, disrupting their schooling and friendships and making parental visits and family reunification difficult. In this same year, the Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT) Project Task Force brought together more than 100 leaders from New York City's philanthropic and social service communities to assess the possibility of implementing several public recommendations to improve the delivery of health and social services to children.

The Task Force focused on the frequent and familiar recommendations made by advisory groups (under public, private, and independent auspices) to integrate services to disadvantaged children, families, and neighborhoods. Finding that the fragmentation of services was a continuing problem, the Task Force proposed a solution that recognized the need for an innovative program to guide changes in the service delivery system. The Task Force proposed a neighborhood-based planning process to coordinate human services and economic development efforts. ACT's proposal had five key elements:

- 1 mayoral support for the effort's programs and policies;
- 2 public/private sector cooperation;
- 3 specific action-oriented proposals with measurable outcomes;
- 4 active outreach and constituency building; and
- 5 persistent follow-up advocacy and monitoring.

ACT members analyzed indicators of risk to children at the community board district level, and then created detailed data profiles of ten of the city's most troubled neighborhoods. Five of these communities—Bedford-Stuyvesant, South Jamaica, Mott Haven, Bushwick, and Washington Heights/Inwood—were selected for the development of what is commonly referred to in the literature as comprehensive community efforts (CCEs) (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002; Walsh, 1997). Within each CCE, ACT convened residents, community-based groups, service providers, church leaders, school leaders, and several other leaders. They brought together individuals and organizations from the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to bridge the worlds of social services and economic development. Membership ranged from 175 in the Mott Haven Collaborative to 500 in the Washington Heights/Inwood Collaborative.

Through the CCEs, ACT helped each neighborhood plan for itself. The steps for each CCBE were to:

- 1 convene key stakeholders and define the CCE's roles and goals;
- 2 identify potential fiscal agents and office locations;
- 3 validate data on community conditions and existing resources;
- 4 develop CCE participation, membership agreements, and by-laws; and
- 5 recruit, hire, and train a local planner (by consensus).

The CCEs worked to create neighborhood-specific strategies to revitalize the neighborhood and improve the quality of services to connect families and children to the right services at the right time. Some exemplars of CCE accomplishments included:

- 1 cleaning up vacant lots to develop Green Thumb projects;
- 2 identifying ten potential sites for midnight basketball courts in collaboration with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation;
- 3 organizing early childhood service coalitions;
- 4 organizing job shadowing programs for junior high school students in conjunction with local development corporations;
- 5 distributing *City Family*, a publication to inform New York's Spanish-speaking communities about ways to improve their quality of life; and
- 6 incorporating *Youthline* into CCEs' information systems.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine ACT's involvement in two CCEs, Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. Specifically, it researched ACT's role and primary responsibilities in the change goals (i.e., change goals at the individual, family, neighborhood, and systems levels) and outcomes, central principles (i.e., comprehensiveness and community building), and operational strategies (i.e., governance, funding, staffing, technical assistance, evaluation, and program development) of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick CCEs (American Writing Corporation, 1992; Barchecheat, 2003; Barss and Associates, 1969; Brettschneider, 2001; Chaskin et al., 2001; Connell et al., 1995; Fishman, 1993; Milligan et al., 1996; Stone, 1996; Himmelman, 1992; Kubisch et al., 1997; Mattessich et al., 1992; Rosewater, 1992; Stone 1996; Blank et al., no date; Kingsley, 1996; Hayes, 1995; Kubisch et al., 1997; Gardner, no date; Brown et al., 1993; Chaskin et al, 2001; Connell et al., 1995; Fetterman et al., 1996; Fraser et al., 2002; Mueller, 1996; Sullivan, 1996; Walsh, 1997).

Since ACT's inception 22 years ago, no research study has focused *solely* on ACT's role as a change agent in the development and success of comprehensive community efforts throughout New York City. The purpose of this study was to do precisely that. The methodology chosen was exploratory; it employed qualitative methods in the phenomenological tradition of case study research (Patton, 2002).

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The link between CCEs and poverty reduction has been documented in previous studies (Rich & Giles, 2001; Chaskin, 2001; Wood, 2002). ACT, which integrates CCEs in poverty reduction, draws directly upon this linkage. Poverty reduction requires more of social workers than do top-down, piecemeal, categorical approaches; there are many contributing factors to poverty, and the reduction of it requires addressing all of these factors (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). The

former National Community Building Network (NCBN) represented more than 250 entities throughout the United States and offered the following CCE principles:

- to build capacity in neighborhood institutions, strengthen ties among residents, and assist residents in working individually and collectively toward neighborhood change; and
- to encompass a number of dimensions, including: community participation, capacity building, neighborhood governance, collaboration, social capital development, an asset orientation, strengthening civic practices, and addressing deep-rooted issues of race and racism (www.commbuild.org).

The current National Association of Social Work's (NASW's) code of ethics (NASW, 2011) complements these principles. Similar to the former NCBN's above-mentioned focus, social work emphasizes helping people in need and addressing social problems, challenging social injustice, respecting the dignity and inherent worth of persons, and recognizing the central importance of human relationships. Finally, this study is guided by key terms defined in the CCE literature.

Importance of the Study

According to Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr, and Connell (1995), comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs):

- embody many of the most current, promising ideas to promote the well-being of disadvantaged individuals and communities in the United States today. A number of audiences—from national policymakers to individual community residents—have a stake in knowing whether and how CCIs work.
- are testing a range of important hypotheses about individual development, family processes, and community dynamics. If CCIs are well evaluated, the findings will have implications for our understanding of human behavior and will suggest important directions for further research and broad policy directions.
- offer an opportunity to expand and redefine the current boundaries of the field of evaluation, perhaps to address similar challenges posed by other complex, interactive,

multi-systemic interventions. Evaluators are continually challenged to meet the demand for information—whether for accountability or for learning purposes—more effectively and efficiently. The evaluation of CCIs raises, in new and more complex ways, fundamental questions about how to ascertain the ways in which an investment of resources has “paid off” (page 6).

Nonetheless, knowledge about the integration and evaluation of CCEs as a poverty-reduction approach within the social work practice is at an early stage of development. Attempts to address the needs of poor children, families, and neighborhoods have been hampered by deficits in meaningful CCE process-product and evaluation approaches.

This study addresses these deficits by describing the understandings of ACT’s involvement in CCEs in two neighborhoods: Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. The resulting conceptualization of ACT’s involvement in these two CCEs contributes to the social work profession’s efforts to integrate CCEs in poverty reduction.

The findings of this study have the potential to (i.) inform new comprehensive programs and major social policies; (ii.) determine, with a degree of certainty, the successes of CCBEs, thus warranting funders’ continued investment; (iii.) generate useful information on how the efforts are working and how to modify them to improve their impact; and (iv.) provide feedback to community residents that their time, energy, and hard work is translating into something tangible.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on two CCEs, Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick, for identifying the core meanings of their change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategy experiences. The selection of more than one CCE facilitates diverse and comparative understandings of these experiences. Participation by an array of stakeholders including (1.) local partners; (2.) government, foundation, and policy partners; and (3.) ACT staff in each

community further broadens the understanding of experiences obtained. The use of semi-structured interviews yields rich, detailed descriptions of change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies. Interview questions inquire about participants' unique and shared understandings of ACT and their involvement in these above-mentioned areas. Lastly, interviews with all participants explore their perceptions of ACT's obstacles to effective implementation and ACT's attempts to overcome them. Finally, interviews attend to respondents' future concerns for and about ACT.

This study continues in Chapter 2 by reviewing the literature; specifically, it provides an introduction and overview as well as a historical context on the following areas: social capital; civic engagement; economic and political capital; community organizing models; comprehensive community-based initiatives and their evaluations; and ACT and its accomplishments, operational strategies, and evaluations.

Chapter 3 focuses on the study's methodology; specifically, it discusses the phenomenological method, data collection (site selection, target population, and sampling procedures), data-gathering instruments (interviews, observation, and archival records), issues of reliability and validity, political and ethical issues, data analysis (data management and cross-case content analysis), organization of the findings, and overview of the findings.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 summarize findings from four groups: partners in Brownsville-East New York; partners in Bushwick; partners in the government, foundation, and policy advocacy arenas; and ACT staff. Specifically, it discusses findings related to understandings of ACT; goals for change; principles guiding ACT; strategies employed by ACT; changes at the individual, family, neighborhood, and systems levels; obstacles; overcoming obstacles; and future concerns.

Chapter 8 concludes with a conceptualization of ACT's relationship to Brownsville-East New York compared to Bushwick, ACT's role and primary responsibilities in Brownsville-East New York compared to Bushwick's change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies, and Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's obstacles, overcoming obstacles, and future concerns. The chapter ends with implications for the social work profession, including

the role of social work in CCEs, the role of social work in the study of CCEs, and implications for future research.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of “comprehensive community initiatives/efforts,” “change at the individual and family levels,” “change at the neighborhood level,” “change at the systems level,” “comprehensiveness,” “community building,” “governance,” “funding,” “staffing,” “technical assistance,” and “evaluation” are drawn from the CCI literature and are used as points of reference throughout the study.

Comprehensive Community Initiatives/Efforts: “...are neighborhood-based and seek to improve the lives of individuals and families, as well as the conditions of neighborhoods in which they reside, by working comprehensively across social, economic, and physical sectors” (pages 12–13, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, The Aspen Institute, 1997).

Change at the Individual and Family Levels: “...to build capacity and improve the quality of life of individual neighborhood residents and their families. [CCIs] aim to increase both the quality and quantity of activities designed to improve educational outcomes, employment, and the health and well-being of neighborhood residents.”

Change at the Neighborhood Level: “...to improve or increase the housing stock, neighborhood infrastructure, the business/commercial sector, education and training institutions, the social and civic support network, cultural vitality, and other quality-of-life activities.”

Change at the Systems Level: “...to improve the quantity and quality of services and other investments provided by outside systems (including social services, schools, the judicial system, commercial activity, and private sector investment) and to increase access for neighborhood residents to the structure of opportunity that exists at the

municipal or regional level” (pages 14–15, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, The Aspen Institute, 1997).

Comprehensiveness: “...addresses the full range of circumstances, opportunities, and needs of individuals and families living in CCI neighborhoods and the relationships among them.”

Community building: “...has to do with strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change” (pages 15–16, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, The Aspen Institute, 1997).

Governance: “...concerns the creation of mechanisms to guide planning, decision making, and implementation, as well as to locate accountability and responsibility for action undertaken.”

Funding: “CCIs are generally foundation-sponsored initiatives. Grant funds are meant to be flexible and responsive to priorities established by the local governance structure.”

Staffing: “[CCIs] rely to a large extent on a core staff person who, as project director or coordinator, facilitates the planning process and takes responsibility for moving from planning to action.”

Technical assistance: “...may be provided centrally by a funder or it may be sought by the CCI governance entity and other participants. It may be furnished by one or multiple providers. It may focus on process issues (such as governance, board development, strategic planning) or programmatic issues (such as service provision, land use, financial instruments).”

Evaluation: “...can be formative, providing feedback to various initiative stakeholders, such as funders, staff, or residents....might be more summative, seeking to provide evidence of ultimate or periodic progress after a given period of time....might serve a “social learning” function, attempting to draw out generalizable lessons for policy and for future research and experimentation....can promote the community capacity building and empowerment agenda of an initiative, especially if evaluation tools such as theory specification, data collection, and information analysis are in the hands of residents or

community institutions” (pages 17–19, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, The Aspen Institute, 1997).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This chapter will examine the historical context that preceded ACT. Specifically, it will discuss social capital, including its definition, first traces, benefits, distinct levels, and “dark side.” It will summarize social capital and civic engagement trends, including the erosion of both. Next, this review will examine the decline of economic and political capital between 1900 and 2000 and will outline recommendations to address this decline. Then, it will summarize community organizing models and situate ACT within these models. Subsequent sections will focus on the evolution of comprehensive community-based initiatives and their evaluations as well as the beginning of ACT and its history of accomplishments, operational strategies, and evaluations. This will provide a historical context for this study and deepen the rationale for it. Lastly, this chapter will provide an in-depth framework for the various aspects of this study.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Definitions of Social Capital

Putnam (2000) defines social capital as connections among individuals, including social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value (Putnam, 2000). Specifically, social contacts/ties affect the productivity of individuals and groups. He distinguishes social capital

from physical and human capital. Physical capital refers to physical objects; human capital refers to properties of individuals.

Warren, Thompson, and Saegert (2001) offer a slightly different definition; they equate social capital with the set of resources that are inherent in relationships of trust and cooperation among people. They write that these kinds of social assets do not alleviate poverty directly; rather, they leverage investments in human capital and household financial resources.

The First Trace of Social Capital

According to Putnam (2000), the first known use of the concept of “social capital” was by a practical reformer of the Progressive Era (1890s–1920s), L.J. Hanifan, state supervisor of rural schools in West Virginia. He invoked the idea of “social capital” to urge the importance of community involvement for successful schools:

“...[social capital] is those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit...The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself...If he comes into contact with his neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors” (page 19).

Benefits of Social Capital

Social capital investments, as Krugman puts it, are important for the sustainability of rules of conduct. Specifically, Krugman writes that social capital investments are important for the sustainability of networks and the associated norms of reciprocity, including generalized reciprocity and specific reciprocity, all key issues implicit to the ACT model. According to Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001), social capital investments are not an alternative to providing greater financial resources and public services to poor communities, but rather are an essential means to increase financial resources and public services and to make more effective use of them.

According to Putnam (2000), social capital has both an individual and collective aspect—a private and a public face. Putnam writes that social capital investments may benefit the immediate interest(s) of the person making the investments, while some social capital investments may benefit the interests of bystanders.

Three Levels of Social Capital

According to Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001), there are three distinct levels at which social capital operates: within communities, across communities, and through ties with financial and public institutions.

Within Communities: Bonding Social Capital

According to Putnam (2000), bonding or exclusive social capital is inward-looking and tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups; this form of social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) write that strong social bonds and effective organizations within communities provide the foundation on which poor communities can develop the capacity to address the problems of poverty, to rebuild their communities, and to achieve a measure of control over their lives.

Putnam states that bonding social capital, by creating strong in-group loyalty, may also create strong out-group antagonism; therefore, negative external effects may be more common with this form of social capital. Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) offer a slightly different perspective: “Strongly bonded communities can be closed-minded, hostile to others, and possibly even corrupt” (page 11).

Across Communities: Bridging Social Capital

Putnam (2000) writes that bridging or inclusive social capital are outward-looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages; this type of social capital is better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion. Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) write that bridging ties can help bring greater resources and opportunities into poor communities. Furthermore, they argue that building trust and cooperation across communities can help provide the basis for strengthening the social fabric of the whole society and creating a national consensus for combating poverty. Putnam’s description of social capital and Saegert, Thompson, and Warren’s outline of the potential outcomes of social capital capture the essence of the ACT model.

de Souza Briggs writes that bonding social capital is good for “getting by,” but bridging social capital is crucial for “getting ahead.” Bonding social capital bolsters narrow selves while bridging social capital generates broader identities and reciprocity. Putnam (2000) compares the dimensions of bonding social capital to “superglue” and bridging social capital to “WD-40.”

According to Putnam, bonding and bridging social capital may both have powerful positive social effects, and many groups simultaneously bond along some social capital dimensions and bridge across others. Neither are not either-or categories into which social networks may be neatly divided but rather more-or-less dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital.

Financial and Public Institutions: Creating Synergy

Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) write that the social assets of poor communities may be ineffective if they are isolated from or undermined by mainstream economic and public institutions. Instead, they propose the notion of “synergy” between community-based activities, economic organizations, and public institutions. Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) offer the following definition of synergy: “Scholars studying the role of social capital in developing countries have used the term ‘synergy’ to characterize...local organizations, economic actors, and state institutions work together for positive developmental outcomes” (Evans, 1997; Woolcock, 1998, page 15).

Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) argue that public institutions do not always work to build social capital when it comes to poor communities. In fact, sometimes they have gone further, working to crush autonomy and the collective action of poor communities when they perceive them as too threatening. Alternatively, even when dominant public institutions do not directly oppose the residents of poor communities, they may fail to serve them well because their staff is so disconnected from residents of the local community. Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) write about a number of synergy creation initiatives that have worked to overcome these obstacles. ACT is a prime example.

Lastly, Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) argue that designing strategies that seek to build and use social capital to combat poverty need to consider all three levels of social capital. They also argue that doing this holds real potential for transformation in three arenas: recognizing the leadership of women, confronting the racial order, and challenging the cultural consensus on poverty.

The Dark Side of Social Capital

Putnam acknowledges that social capital—the bonding type—may reinforce social stratification and, therefore, inequality. He argues that there is evidence that social capital and equality are complementary, not warring values: History shows that when social connectedness was high, so was equality (1960s); when social capital was low, so was inequality (1975–2000).

Putnam further argues that bridging and bonding social capital are good for different things and depend on the scope of the problems that are faced. Bigger, more collective problems tend to

require bridging social capital; smaller, more community/family/individual problems tend to require bonding social capital.

Trends in Social Capital and Civic Engagement

Putnam (2000) examines patterns of social connectedness in a variety of areas, including political participation, civic participation, religion, the workplace, informal social connections, altruism, volunteering, philanthropy, reciprocity, honesty, trust, small groups, social movements, and the Internet between 1900 and 2000 and argues that generally, social capital has declined in these areas. Subsequent sections explore the root causes of this decline, including trends in economic and political capital.

Political Participation

According to Putnam (2000), in 2000, Americans scored about as well on a civics test as their parents and grandparents did; however, they had on average four more years of formal schooling than they had. In addition, at election time, Americans were no less likely than their parents and grandparents to talk politics or express interest in the campaign. On the other hand, between the mid-1960s and 2000, despite the rapid rise in levels of education, Americans became 10–15% less likely to attend public meetings, both partisan and nonpartisan, and roughly 40% less engaged in party politics and, indeed, in political and civic organizations of all sorts. Putnam writes that Americans remained reasonably well-informed spectators of public affairs, but far fewer Americans take part in the game.

Putnam further argues that these trends reflect the fact that more Americans than ever before are “turned-off” and “tuned-out” from politics. In the mid-1960s, Americans were strikingly confident in the benevolence and responsiveness of their political institutions. In the 1990s, roughly three out of four Americans did not trust the government to do what was right most of the time.

Putnam states that as a result of “...the dysfunctional ugliness of contemporary politics and the absence of large, compelling collective projects...” (page 47), Americans have redirected their energies away from conventional politics into less formal and more voluntary and effective channels.

Civic Participation

According to Putnam, during the first two-thirds of the 1900s, Americans’ involvement in civic associations of all sorts rose steadily, except for during the Great Depression. In the last third of the 1900s, only mailing-list membership continued to expand, with the creation of a new species of “tertiary” association whose membership never met. Active involvement in face-to-face community organizations plummeted. During the last third of the 1900s, formal membership in organizations edged downward by 10–20%, and active involvement in clubs and other voluntary associations collapsed at an astonishing rate.

Religion

Putnam writes that as of 2000, religion remained a central fount of American life and health; faith-based organizations serve civic life both directly, by providing social support to their

members and social services to the wider community; and indirectly, by nurturing civic skills, inculcating moral values, encouraging altruism, and fostering civic recruitment among church people.

According to Putnam, the broad oscillations in religious participation during the 20th century mirror trends in secular civic life—flowering during the first six decades of the 1900s, especially in the two decades after World War II, but then fading over the past three to four decades. This disengagement appears tied to generational succession: For the most part, younger generations are less involved in both religious and secular social activities than were their predecessors at the same age.

During this period, American religious life is marked by the surge of more dynamic and demanding forms of faith and the decline of more mundane forms. The community-building efforts of these new denominations have been directed inward rather than outward, thus limiting their otherwise salutary effects on America's stock of social capital. At the turn of the century, Americans were going to church less than they did between the 1960s and 2000, and their churches were less engaged with the larger community.

The Workplace

According to Putnam, in 2000, most Americans were employed, and most of the time, Americans work with other people. This is a natural site for connecting with others; however, at the beginning of the 21st century, Americans were demonstrably less likely than their parents to join with co-workers in formal associations. In addition, for the one in three American adults

who is not employed, workplace ties are nonexistent. Putnam argues that the workplace is not the salvation for America's fraying civic society.

Informal Social Connections

Putnam states that most Americans connect with their fellows in myriad informal ways; however, across a very wide range of activities, the past several decades of the 20th century have witnessed a striking diminution of regular contacts with friends and neighbors. Americans spent less time in conversation over meals, exchanged visits less often, engaged less often in leisure activities that encouraged social interaction, and spent more time watching and less time doing. Americans knew their neighbors less and saw old friends less often.

Altruism, Volunteering, and Philanthropy

Putnam writes that Americans, especially people over 60—the generation most resistant to civic disengagement—volunteered in greater numbers in the 1990s than in the 1970s. He states that this rise in volunteering is sometimes interpreted as a natural counterweight to the decline in other forms of civic participation; disenchanted with government, members of the younger generation are rolling up their sleeves to get the job done themselves. However, Putnam argues that the profile of new volunteerism directly contradicts this optimistic thesis. The rise in volunteering is concentrated among the boomers' aging, civic parents, whereas the civic dropouts are drawn disproportionately from the boomers. Lastly, volunteering is part of the syndrome of good citizenship and political involvement, not an alternative to it. Volunteers are more interested in politics and less cynical about political leaders than are non-volunteers. Political cynics, even young cynics, are less likely than other people to volunteer. According to

Putnam, political alienation rose over the past several decades of the 20th century, as did volunteering, but volunteering rose despite the greater alienation, not because of it.

Reciprocity, Honesty, and Trust

Putnam states that one of the most revealing indicators of the fraying of our social fabric is Americans' expanded reliance on "...getting it in writing..." (page 147), the amount of money spent on getting lawyers to anticipate and manage our disputes, and the increasing forced reliance on formal institutions and the law to accomplish what we used to accomplish through informal networks reinforced by generalized reciprocity forms of social capital (see above). ACT attempts to reverse this trend by building networks in which reciprocity, honesty, and trust are among its guiding principles.

Small Groups, Social Movements, and the Net

Putnam writes that there are three countertrends that fostered greater social connectedness: small-group movements, social movements, and telecommunications. Small groups in the form of encounter groups, reading groups, support groups, self-help groups, and the like became important anchors in the emotional and social lives of millions of Americans. In addition, the succession of great social movements swept across the land in the last third of the 20th century, beginning with the black civil rights movement, followed by the student movement, the peace movement, the women's movement, the gay and lesbian movement, the abortion and right-to-life movements, the religious conservative movement, the environmental movement, the animal rights movement, and innumerable others. Putnam states that telecommunications and the Internet also fostered greater connectedness, and by all odds was the most important.

The Erosion of Social Capital

Putnam argues there were many factors that contributed to the decline in civic engagement and social capital. First, the pressures of time and money, especially the special pressures on two-career families, contributed measurably to the diminution of our social and community involvement between 1965 and 2000. Second, suburbanization, commuting, and sprawl also played a supporting role. Third, the effect of electronic entertainment—above all, television, in privatizing our leisure time—has contributed substantially to this decline. Fourth and most important, generational change—the slow, steady, and ineluctable replacement of the long civic generation by their less involved children and grandchildren—has been a powerful factor in civic engagement and social capital decline.

Wilson (1987) focuses on both liberals and conservatives for an explanation of “the ghetto underclass and inner-city social dislocations” (page 13). He writes that the traditional liberal views on social issues have failed to address straightforwardly the rise of social pathologies in the ghetto. Specifically, he believes that the erosion of social capital among the ghetto underclass is not only the result of the impact of racism and racial discrimination but also of shifts in the American economy, which have produced extraordinary rates of joblessness among the black population that have compounded other social problems in the inner city, the historic flow of migrants, changes in the urban minority age structure, population changes in the central city, and the class transformation of the inner city.

Wilson also argues that in addition to liberals' complete avoidance of any discussion of these problems, some eschew terms such as "underclass," and others embrace selective evidence that denies the very existence of an underclass and behavior associated with the underclass or rely on the convenient term "racism" to account for the sharp rise in the rates of social dislocation—i.e., the erosion of social capital—in the inner city. Wilson argues that the combined effect of these tendencies rendered liberal arguments ineffective and enhanced faulty conservative arguments on the underclass. These realities prompted Eric Brettschneider to convene a group of equally concerned leaders in New York City, and they decided to begin ACT as a mechanism to respond to these realities. ACT's approach captured, in a clear and succinct manner, the social pathologies as well as the formulation and implementation of its solutions (see "Neighborhood Planning Process" below).

According to Wilson, the erosion of social capital in the inner city is also attributable to the prominent conservative perspectives of the 1960s—i.e. the interconnection between cultural traditions, family history, and individual character—as an explanation of the ghetto underclass and the erosion of social capital in the inner-city's being expanded upon during the 1980s by the conservative belief that the growth of liberal social policies exacerbated the ghetto underclass's cultural tendencies and erosion of social capital.

Lastly, Wilson (1987) and Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) argue that government policies have also led to an erosion of social capital in the inner city. Wilson offers an example of this: affirmative action.

Making the Case for the Importance of Social Capital

According to Putnam, social capital benefits individuals and communities; it has many features that help people translate aspirations into reality. Social capital allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily and widen their awareness of the many ways in which our fates are linked. It allows communities to advance smoothly.

Putnam argues that the decline of social capital and civic engagement matters because more of it would improve many disparate domains important to Americans. For example, it would improve education and children's welfare, make neighborhoods safe and productive, lead to economic prosperity, improve health and happiness, and strengthen the performance of our democratic institutions.

Returning to and Going Beyond Social Capital

Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001) acknowledge the criticalness of strengthening and organizing internal and external social capital in combating poverty. They write that strengthening and organizing social capital builds partnerships between poor communities and community development programs while building political power, allows for poor communities to command greater resources, and makes investment strategies work. However, they argue that strengthening and organizing social capital is insufficient for problem-solving in poor communities; greater financial resources and better public services are needed, too.

Lopez and Stack (2001) argue for a “cultural citizenship strategy” (page 53) with an objective that alters the terms on which communities participate in civic life. As Putnam argues, participation in civic life is crucial to building the trust that fuels prosperity, and the decline in civic participation produces a range of social problems. However, Lopez and Stack argue that participation in and of itself does not build trust. It can be positive or profoundly negative. When communities are submerged in contexts of institutionalized racism and prejudice, participation breeds hostility and distrust. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between modes of participation and to identify their political and cultural bases.

Wilson argues that the amelioration of the conditions of the truly disadvantaged minority members such as the ghetto underclass requires policies that are not race-specific. Wilson implies that the types of policies that are needed are ones that ameliorate the problems of minority poverty in relation to the amelioration of the broader problems of economic organization.

As demonstrated below, these examples of social capital, including strengthening and organizing social capital internally and externally, increasing financial resources and improving public services, increasing civic participation, and augmenting non-race-specific policies, are all outcomes that ACT brings about in their respective communities.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL

Krugman (2009) outlines political and economic trends between the 1870s and 2000s and argues that there have been shifts in both. Specifically, he writes that political capital has shifted from a movement that centered on the New Deal to one of conservatism. Furthermore, he discusses the shifts in wealth from the middle class to the rich. Lastly, subsequent sections offer confirming yet slightly varying perspectives by Wilson (1987), Bookchin (1987), and de Souza Briggs (2002).

Trends in Political and Economic Capital

1870s–1930s: The Long Gilded Age

According to Krugman (2009), the period between 1870 and 1930 was defined by great wealth generation, income disparities, a democratic system in which poorly paid workers vastly outnumbered the minimally taxed elite, and an absence of effective demands that the government do more to “...soak the rich and help the less well off...” (page 20). Krugman writes that conservative dominance in the presidency, U.S. Senate, and House of Representatives, one major wing of the Democratic Party (the Bourbon Democrats), the effective disenfranchisement of many workers, the disparity in campaign financing, and pervasive election fraud contributed to these trends. Krugman argues that above all, the period between 1870 and 1930 was marked by persistently high levels of economic inequality.

Krugman writes that during the period between 1870 and 1930, Populism failed and plutocracy ruled because of a political system tilted in favor of those with money and organization, but it

also lacked the kind of leadership that could bridge the divisions among the various groups whose interests would have been served by change. The divisions included the divide between city and country, the cultural and social gap between immigrants and native-born, and the divide between poor whites and blacks.

Krugman summarizes that during the Long Gilded Age, cultural and racial divisions among those with shared common economic interests prevented the emergence of an effective political challenge to extreme economic inequality. Furthermore, the intellectual dominance of conservative, antigovernment ideology also prevented this challenge from being met.

According to Krugman, the Great Depression as well as state-level, modest moves toward a more equal society (i.e., the passage of workers' compensation and old-age pension laws) made the New Deal possible.

The 1920s–1950s: The Great Compression

Krugman writes about the narrowing of income gaps in the United States between the 1920s and 1950s—the sharp reduction in the gap between the rich and the working class and the reduction in wage differentials among workers—and its reference as the “Great Compression.” This echoes the “Great Depression” in that this too was a period marked by the narrowing of income gaps that transformed the nature of our society and politics. However, while the Great Depression lives on in most people's memories, the Great Compression has been forgotten.

According to Krugman, during the 1930s, the common conservative defense against demands to do something about inequality was the claim that nothing can be done, that no policies can appreciably raise the share of national income going to working families or at least that can do so without wrecking the economy. However, Roosevelt and Truman managed to preside over a dramatic downward redistribution of wealth that made Americans far more equal than before. The economy was not wrecked by this redistribution, but the Great Compression set the stage for a great generation-long economic boom.

The 1950s, as Krugman puts it, was marked by an America that was a middle-class society; the rich were a lot less rich than they had been a generation earlier. He argues that economic equalization was more the result of sudden change, brought on in large part by a change in the political balance of power rather than a gradual response to imperfect market forces. He further argues that an example of this is the incomes of the wealthy: The rich became less rich because the New Deal taxed away much, perhaps most, of their income.

While the rich were the biggest victims of the Great Compression, blue-collar workers were the biggest beneficiaries. They earned high wages because U.S. manufacturing companies faced little foreign competition and a scarcity of labor created by the severe immigration restrictions imposed by the Immigration Act of 1924. Furthermore, blue-collar workers did so well because of the rise in union membership and power under the New Deal. The rise in union membership resulted from the New Deal's shift of the federal government from protector of employers to workers' right to organize. Other accounts attribute the rise in union membership and power to

the internal dynamics of the union movement, i.e., workers' responses to the Great Depression and specifically their responses to wage reductions.

In addition to unionization, World War II also contributed to the Great Compression. The war created huge inflationary pressures, leading to government price controls on many key commodities. In addition, labor shortages created by the war's demands led to huge wage increases, so wages in many key national industries were also placed under federal control; specifically, under the control of FDR's National War Labor Board. Because of FDR's values, the wages of low-paid workers were raised more than those of highly paid employees.

The Welfare State

Krugman writes that between 1948 and 1970, both the Democrats and Republicans came to accept the changes that were brought about during the Great Compression. To a large extent, the New Deal created the political conditions that sustained this acceptance. A highly progressive tax system limited wealth at the top, and the rich were too weak politically to protest. Social Security and unemployment insurance were untouchable programs, and Medicare eventually achieved the same status. Strong unions were also an accepted part of the national scene.

The Sixties: A Troubled Prosperity

According to Krugman, the 1960s were marked by chaos and upheaval against the backdrop of the best economy America ever had. Crime was soaring, cities were devastated by riots, and demonstrators were denouncing the Vietnam War. Yet, employment was abundant, wages were higher than ever and rising every year, and economic security was unprecedented.

Krugman writes that voters expressed their dismay during the 1966 elections by giving Republicans major gains in Congress. He argues that the seeds of “movement conservatism” (page 81) were sown between 1964, the year of Johnson’s landslide victory over Goldwater, and 1972, the year of Nixon’s even bigger landslide over McGovern.

Krugman further argues that the 1960s were marked by Republicans learning how to exploit emerging cultural resentments and fears to win elections. Republicans learned how to exploit White backlash against the civil rights movement and its consequences, thus paving the way for movement conservatism to win the White House and Congress.

1970s: Movement Conservatism

According to Krugman, the position of the movement that eventually became the New Deal in the late 1920s is what movement conservatism became in the mid-1970s. The ideas, organization, and intellectual cadres were in place. There were even foreign and domestic crises that propelled the movement to have power. Vietnam fell, and there was a perceived wave of communist victories across Southeast Asia and Africa as well as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Islamic revolution in Iran and the humiliation of the hostage crisis. On the domestic side, the combination of an economic crisis resulting from bad monetary policy and the energy crisis created the nightmare of stagflation—i.e., high unemployment combined with double-digit inflation.

Krugman argues that the dire mood of the 1970s made it possible for movement conservatives to claim that liberal policies had been discredited, resulting in a remarkable reversal of New Deal achievements.

The Great Divergence

Krugman acknowledges that since 1973, the last year of the great boom, average income—i.e., the total income of the nation divided by the number of people—has increased substantially. However, he argues that this is attributable to a few people getting much, much richer.

Median income, depending on which definition one uses, has either risen modestly or actually declined. Furthermore, Krugman writes that the “median inflation-adjusted earnings” (page 121) (i.e., earnings a generation ago is converted into today’s dollars by adjusting for changes in the consumer price index) of men working full-time in 2005 were slightly lower than they had been in 1973.

Krugman argues that neither average nor median income is an indicator of how most people are doing. He notes that while people’s standard of living has risen, official numbers do not capture the ways in which life has gotten harder for working families; e.g., there is more intense competition to live in a good school district, traffic congestion is worse, etc.

Krugman writes that rising economic inequality resulted from a rising demand for skilled labor driven in large part by technological change and the top 10% of the population reaping the gains

from rising productivity. He notes that changes in institutions, changing norms, and the decline of unions all contributed to the rise in economic inequality.

Krugman's bottom line is that the typical American family has not made progress in the past approximate thirty years, and that this is not normal.

The Politics of Inequality

According to Krugman, the period between the 1940s and 1970s was one marked by "muted partisanship" (page 155); however, beginning in the 1970s, bitter partisanship reemerged with Republicans opposing taxes on the rich, trying to shrink government benefits, and undermining the welfare state. The Democratic party supported raising taxes on the rich while trying to expand government benefits and strengthen the welfare state.

Krugman further argues that the Republican party has been radicalized by movement conservatives who want to undo the 20th century's progress. He writes that they have managed to maintain control of the Republican party via an interlocking set of institutions ultimately answering to a small group of people that collectively reward loyalists and punish dissenters. Krugman further writes that these institutions guarantee favorable news coverage to politicians who toe the party line, while harassing and undermining opponents; and these very institutions support a large standing army of party intellectuals (e.g., The Cato Institute and The Heritage Foundation) and activists. The last crucial ingredients, according to Krugman, which allows movement conservatives to maintain control of the Republican party, is the ability to turn hard-right positions into winning strategies and large-scale funding.

“Weapons of Mass Distraction” (page 173)

Krugman questions how movement conservatives—i.e., advocates of a smaller welfare state and regressive tax policies—have been able to win elections, even as the decline of economic capital like income equality should have made the welfare state more popular. Krugman attributes this to “weapons of mass distraction” —i.e., the role of racial discord in determining beliefs about the poor, Republicans popularizing the faulty notion that Democrats are weak on national security, the backing of the conservative military institution, the mobilization of evangelical voters (albeit in a minority), immigrants who are unable to vote despite being an integral though low wage-earning part of the economy, and vote suppression, which occurred during the 2006 election.

This eventual decline in political and economic capital prompted the emergence of ACT as a social capital bridging mechanism in New York City’s poorest communities. The goal was to strengthen their political and economic capital; however, in the absence of this, the creation of a social capital mechanism would be a constant, always working toward stronger political and economic capital.

Additional Perspectives on the Erosion of Political and Economic Capital

Wilson (1987) provides a different perspective on economic capital—one that looks more closely at the impact of job flight on “the truly disadvantaged,” an enlarged underclass. He argues that job flight has destroyed businesses, social institutions, and youth socialization processes, leading to the erosion of economic capital and ultimately, the decline in social capital.

Bookchin (1987) writes that the “real urban crisis of our time”—i.e., the decline in political, economic, and social capital—have resulted from “unchecked urbanization,” not “cities that have gone out of control.” He defines urbanization as the industrial, commercial, and urban sprawl commonly referred to as urban belts. He argues that unchecked urbanization has led to the destruction of the social fabric—i.e., social capital—and landscape of cities and has set society and nature at odds.

Stiglitz (2002) argues that globalization has not realized its potential to eradicate poverty and promote economic growth. Furthermore, he argues that “market fundamentalism” endorses the false view that a “free” market solves all problems flawlessly.

de Souza Briggs (2002) summarizes macro, sweeping, and evolving economic trends as:

1. “The continued suburbanization of jobs, wealth, and political power in America, not so much abandoning our core cities but fearing them and striking a less-than-square deal with them...”
2. “The evolution of our services-dominated, decentralized, skill-intensive, and networked global economy.”
3. “The devolution or decentralization of governance, not only in the US but in many other parts of the world.”
4. The marketization and non-profitization of social policy.”
5. “The graying and browning of America” (pages 3–4).

de Souza Briggs writes that these trends produced subsequent opportunities and/or threats affecting American cities and regions; therefore, affecting social problems faced by America's population, including cultural and political life.

Returning to and Going Beyond Political and Economic Capital

Bookchin (1987) argues for enfranchised citizens coordinating at economic and political levels both within and between communities to transcend the growing power of the state and a centralized corporate economy. He writes that there are historical examples of this, including America's New England colonies. Bookchin warns of the cost of disenfranchised citizens, including urban dwellers being reduced to "passive taxpayers," rural people functioning as "a laboring class for industrial agriculture," and a taxed landscape afflicted by "overbuilt, densely populated, and over-extended structures."

Stiglitz calls for public institutions to reform and become more transparent and responsive to their constituents. As mentioned before, ACT became the social capital mechanism, as Bookchin suggests, coordinating at political and economic levels and, as Stiglitz suggests, holding public institutions accountable.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Smock (2004) argues that the way to address the social, political, and economic declines/inequalities, as suggested in the review of social, political, and economic capital above,

is through mechanisms through which citizens, especially disenfranchised citizens, may impact the conditions affecting their lives. She believes that such a mechanism is community organizing, and she offers five models that share common features, including:

- Building individual capacity- developing local leaders;
- Building community capacity- networks and social, political, and economic capital;
- Building a community governance structure;
- Diagnosing and framing the community's problems;
- Taking collective action for community change; and
- Widening the scope- organizing for broader social structural change (pages 6–7).

Models of Community Organizing

According to Smock, all effective community-organizing initiatives using a wide range of methods and techniques for putting common features into practice may be categorized into five distinct models: the power-based model, the community-building model, the civic model, the woman-centered model, and the transformative model. Smock explores the differences among these models and their implications for participatory democracy and urban change.

Power-based Model

Smock writes that according to the power-based model, urban neighborhood problems stem from the community's lack of power within the political decision-making process, and the solution is to build the community's clout so that its interests are better represented within pluralistic public sphere. The power-based model organizes the community by building large, formal, highly

disciplined “people’s” organizations to fight for the community’s interests in the public sphere; it impacts the public sphere via conflict and confrontation to demonstrate residents’ power to pressure political and economic power holders to concede to the community’s demands.

Community-building Model

The community-building model views urban neighborhood problems as stemming from the deterioration of the community’s social and economic infrastructure; the solution is to rebuild the community from within by mobilizing its assets and connecting it to the mainstream economy. This model organizes the community by building broad collaborative partnerships of diverse neighborhood “stakeholder” groups, including nonprofits, businesses, residents’ associations, and government; its goal is to be recognized as a legitimate representative of the community as a whole and to impact the public sphere by striving to influence public decision-making through consensual partnerships with government.

Civic Model

The civic model understands urban neighborhood problems as stemming from social disorder and instability within the community; the solution is to restore and maintain the neighborhood’s stability by activating both formal and informal mechanisms of social control. This model organizes the community by creating informal, unstructured forums for neighbors to meet one another, exchange information, and problem-solve; it impacts the public sphere by using official, bureaucratic channels for citizen interaction with local government to get the city services system to respond to neighborhood problems. It is common to interact with city services personnel on an individual-to-individual basis.

Woman-centered Model

In the woman-centered model, urban neighborhood problems stem from the fact that the institutions at the core of community life are not responsive to the needs of women and families. In this model, the solution is to re-conceptualize private household problems as public issues with collective solutions, and to build women's leadership roles within the community. Those utilizing this model organize the community by creating small teams modeled in a support-group structure that provide safe, nurturing spaces where residents can gather, provide mutual support, and build shared leadership. Within this model, impacting the public sphere translates to seeking to build face-to-face relationships with the staff and administrators of public institutions in order to make programs and services more responsive to the needs of families.

Transformative Model

Within the transformative model, urban neighborhood problems are the symptoms of unjust economic and political institutions, and the solution is to challenge the existing institutional arrangements in order to create a more equitable society. This model advocates organizing the community by developing the ideological foundations within neighborhoods for the emergence of a broad-based movement for social change. It views the public sphere as dominated by institutions that systematically disempower low-income residents and seeks to alter the dominant ideological frameworks and to change the terms of the public debate.

ACT may be considered a hybrid community-organizing model; it is most captured by Smock's community-building and transformative models.

THE EVOLUTION OF COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES AND THEIR EVALUATIONS

The Late 19th Century: The Emergence of Comprehensive Community Development via Settlement Houses in the United States and Subsequent Evaluation

The notion of comprehensive community development grew out of the late-1800s settlement house movement (Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr, & Connell, 1995), in part resulting from a shift in ideology that viewed individual character as the root cause of social problems to one that viewed environmental factors as responsible for deplorable conditions (Garvin & Cox, 2001).

The specifics of comprehensive community development are discussed in the literature as the combination of service delivery, community building, and social change in an array of areas—all with the intention of promoting both individual and collective benefits—and within the context of small groups or clubs to coalitions (Fabricant & Fischer, 2002; Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2007) and were guided by participation and democracy (Garvin & Cox, 2001).

The 1950s – 1980s: Public and Philanthropic Sectors’ Investments in Social Change and Subsequent Evaluation as a “Social Learning” Mechanism

As previously discussed, comprehensive community-based initiatives were often linked to local reform movements and worked through nongovernmental organizations. Beginning in the 1950s, comprehensive community-based initiatives shifted to those efforts focused on reforming urban

governing structures viewed as too narrow and fragmented to address those changes brought about by metropolitanization—i.e., the shift of the middle class to the outskirts of urban centers while the poor remain disproportionately in central areas—and demanded the response of the bureaucracy to the needs of the inner-city poor (O’Conner, 1995; Hoffmann-Martinot & Sellers, 2005). This led to local government reform that was eventually taken up by the federal government.

Mid-1950s–1961: The Ford Foundation’s Series of Experiments in Urban Areas and Its Subsequent 1961 Gray Areas Program

In response to deindustrialization, white middle-class suburbanization, and the massive immigration of poor minorities, the Ford Foundation launched a series of experiments in urban areas intended to “promote metropolitan governance and planning structures, create new community-based mechanisms for dealing with juvenile delinquency, increase the capacity of schools to educate ‘culturally deprived’ newcomer populations, and improve employment and human services to the inner-city poor” (O’Connor, 1995, page 33). These series of experiments were also intended to combine research, local planning, and community action in the reformation of local government agencies; specifically, they increased coordination of and made services more responsive to the needs of the inner-city poor.

According to O’Connor (1995), these series of experiments led to the Gray Areas Program, geographically situated in urban “gray areas,”ⁱ with the purpose of testing problem analyses and exploring new interventions. The Gray Areas Program facilitated a long period of social learning in which program evaluation played a critical role (O’Conner, 1995).

Over time, the Program's focus shifted to "people problems" (O'Connor, 1995, page 34)—i.e., newcomer populations with low skills, low educational achievement, and overall cultural deprivation. This prompted social services agencies to be more comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive to newcomers' needs. However, evaluation remained vaguely defined, and individual programs were required to establish "self-evaluations" mechanisms with little uniformity or validation across programs (O'Connor, 1995). This resulted in intangible social learning as well as a wealth of narrative reports, correspondence, internal memos, and Maris and Martin's classic study, *Dilemmas of Social Reform*. According to O'Connor (1995), these documents defined the underlying problem as the "emergence of poverty" and the "vicious cycle of cultural and material deprivation" and articulated the theory of institutional reform and crucial insights into the process of community-based social action.

"The Ford Foundation's social learning process did not systematically address the question of what the programs were actually accomplishing and did little to assess the connections between programs and their stated objectives" (O'Connor, 1995, page 36). Furthermore, the Foundation's reluctance to outsource evaluation had its costs.

Mid-1950s–Mid-1960s: The fight against juvenile delinquency

In the 1950s and 1960s, delinquency was a national obsession, and the Children's Bureau, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Ford Foundation, and the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency funded community-based demonstration projects led by youth organizations, universities, social welfare programs, and law-enforcement agencies that were

more grounded in theory than the Gray Areas Program and related urban experiments; thus, the evaluation plans were meant to reflect on one or more of the prominent theories of the times: individual psychology, female-headed families, adolescent transitions, lower-class culture, and the absence of opportunity (O'Connor, 1995).

These evaluation findings did play a significant role in the social scientific debates about the nature of delinquency and poverty; however, pragmatism and ideology played a major role in the popularity of opportunity theory and its incorporation into the Juvenile Delinquency Control Act of 1961, which was supported by Cloward and Ohlin in *Delinquency and Opportunity* and incorporated into the Mobilization for Youth Program on New York City's Lower East Side (O'Connor, 1995). According to O'Connor (1995), this led to interventions in the form of education, job training, and other opportunity-enhancing programs.

While the Gray Areas and juvenile delinquency evaluation strategies did not advance the effectiveness of their programs, they produced critical information important for advocates promoting community change.

Mid-1960s–Late 1960s: The Federal Government's Planning-Programming-Budgeting System and Subsequent Evaluation as an "Impact Assessment" Mechanism

The Community Action Program (CAP) of Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964

The Johnson Administration established CAP, administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) as a way to provide funds for urban and rural Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to mobilize local resources on behalf of the poor, specifically, program coordination at the local level and participation by the poor (O'Connor, 1995; Fisher, 2001, OEO, 1965).

As a result of the unprecedented and ambitious 1967 New Jersey Income Maintenance Experiment, the evaluation of CAP became tied to the political need to produce measurable results and raised the question of whether impact should be assessed in terms of the comprehensive, integrating functions unique to local CAAs or individual programs administered under their auspices, according to O'Connor (1995). For political and academic reasons, OEO chose the latter evaluation mechanism, and in 1967, political pressures intensified when Congress reined in the War on Poverty by calling for more stringent evaluation mechanisms, thus prioritizing political accountability over evaluation for the sake of learning, developing methodology, and improving programs (O'Connor, 1995).

During the late 1960s, The University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Corporation (NORC) and Barss Reitzel Associates, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, conducted the national impact study of 100 CAAs on CAP's effectiveness in stimulating local institutional change, as measured by indicators such as the changes in size and demographic makeup of the population served by local agencies, changes in the demographic composition of various community boards, and the number of agency referrals generated by CAAs (O'Connor, 1995). Their findings included that CAAs did indeed bring about local institutional change—that those dedicated to community mobilization and empowerment had a greater impact on local institutions than did

CAAs serving primarily as local service coordinators, but that CAAs had little actual impact on jobs, income, and political power; thus, under the Nixon administration, OEO phased out CAP, according to O'Connor (1995).

“That the War on Poverty yielded neither a thoroughgoing assessment of the impact of CAP nor any significant methodological inroads into evaluating comprehensive community interventions represents a significant lost opportunity, a loss due to political pressures, to a lack of academic engagement in the issues, and to the fact that there was insufficient organized political interest in establishing whether and how a sustained investment in CAP could contribute to anti-poverty goals. Even the evaluations that were conducted—partial or flawed though they may have been—had considerable value in clarifying the difficult methodological issues that would have to be addressed: how to operationalize the many and conflicting goals of CAP; how to measure the existence and extent of such complex, long-range processes as institutional change; identifying appropriate interim indicators for measuring progress against poverty; and developing the appropriate framework for comparing findings across sites” (O'Connor, 1995, pages 46–47).

Mid-1960s: Model Cities and Subsequent Evaluation as a “Policy Learning” Mechanism

1965: The Model Cities Program

In 1965, the Lyndon B. Johnson administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development initiated the Model Cities Program, grants available to sixty-six demonstration sites for planning and implementation of comprehensive redevelopment plans in poor

neighborhoods and technical assistance from a federal coordinator working as a liaison with local agencies (O'Connor, 1995).

The Program was wrought with ambivalence and vagueness of purpose; this was reflected in its evaluation mechanism, which was not funded and was left up to devices of HUD administrators that did not have well-versed evaluation staff to lead this charge (O'Connor, 1995). Under the Nixon administration, evaluation was focused on troubleshooting and internal management issues; thus, the national, broader impact plan was not implemented, according to O'Connor (1995).

Some of the lessons from this period included the difficulties associated with agency coordination, varying priorities at the local versus national levels, who has responsibility for evaluation, and shrinking funding (O'Connor, 1995).

Late 1960s–90s: Community Development Corporations and Subsequent Evaluation as a Window into “Context”

This period was marked by a shift from government to states and local government as “change agents” for addressing poor communities’ needs (O’Conner, 1995).

Mid-1960s–Mid-1980s: Community Development Corporations

In 1966, Senators Javits and Kennedy held extended hearings on inner-city conditions, which led to the Special Impact Project (SIP) amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964, federal

funding for economic development in neighborhoods and communities where “dependency, chronic unemployment, and community deterioration” (O’Connor, 1995, page 51) existed. The SIP strategy was different from the CAP and Model Cities strategies in that it focused on building local economies through community economic development and creating its own infrastructure of community-based services via community development corporations (CDCs) (O’Connor, 1995, Cnaan and Rothman, 2001).

According to O’Connor (1995), inadequate funding levels, cumbersome administrative setup, lack of time, and lack of a contextual analysis were barriers to conducting rigorous evaluation of CDCs; nonetheless, evaluation of CDC performance and effectiveness as a poverty-reducing approach relied on case studies, two of which were conducted in the early 1970s and one in the mid-1980s. However, by the time the results of this third study were released, the political climate for CDCs had changed considerably, with funding rapidly decreasing.

The Late 1980s: The Emergence of CCIs

CCIs, a new generation of community-based anti-poverty ventures, began in the late 1980s and incorporated lessons learned from thirty years of public-sector and philanthropic investment in social change (Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, The Aspen Institute, 2002). They were begun primarily by national or community foundations, and all had the goal of “promoting positive change in individual, family, and community circumstances in disadvantaged neighborhoods by improving physical, economic, and social conditions” (Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr, & Connell, 1995, page 1).

CCIs were a response to a convergence of four trends (Connell, Kubisch, Schorr, & Weiss, 1995). First, human service programs were failing as a result of fragmentation and categorization of social services. Second, prevention strategies were being sought as an alternative to the costly and uncertain success of remediation in several domains. Third, bricks and mortar/physical revitalization projects were not achieving sustained improvements in low-income neighborhoods. And lastly, there was a move toward public-private partnerships and local action approaches either in addition to or as an alternative to government-focused solutions to social problems.

The 1990s: The Federal Government's Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities Program (EZ/EC)

In 1993, Congress established the EZ/EC program, a community development effort intended to create jobs and business opportunities in the most economically distressed inner-city and rural areas in the United States; its hallmark was community collaboration and decision making and building relations among various levels of government and between government and communities (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2007). According to Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, and Vidal (2007), the program's first round of funding occurred in 1994, with 105 communities receiving federal funding via the Social Service Block Grant (Title XX) over a ten-year period; its second round was in 1998 with twenty new empowerment zones; however, as of 2007, funding had not yet been fully allocated for these sites.

1990s: New Approaches to Evaluating CCIs, Part I

In 1995, Connell, Kubisch, Schorr, and Weiss at the Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families at The Aspen Institute published *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts*. The publication is made up of six papers. The first paper situates the problems of evaluating CCIs into a historical context (see above, starting with “The Late 19th Century...”). The second and third papers address evaluation problems as a result of the complex design of CCIs; specifically, the second paper discusses the promise of CCI evaluations that are based on their own theories of change and how such an approach would serve the multiple purposes of evaluation. This paper by Weiss (1995) also argues that CCIs are so difficult to evaluate because the “theories of change” that underlie the structures, strategies, and goals are poorly articulated; she challenged CCI designers to be specific about their theories of change. Specifically, the third paper focuses on a conceptual framework that could inform the program-based theories. The fourth and fifth papers address the methodological challenges, including the absence of control groups and comparison communities as well as measurement dilemmas. The last paper recommends that evaluators take new roles with respect to CCIs—i.e., roles that engage the evaluator in the initiative more than has traditionally been the case.

CCIs are challenging to evaluate due to the following characteristics: horizontal complexity, vertical complexity, contextual issues, flexible and evolving intervention, broad range of outcomes, and absence of a comparison community or control group (Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr & Connell, 1995).

Horizontal complexity refers to CCIs working across systems and sectors via a complex range of interventions. Synergy is generated as a result of these interventions interacting with the others, thus making the tracking and measuring of synergy a challenge.

Vertical complexity refers to CCIs changing individuals, families, communities, and systems as well as the impact of change at each of these levels on the others. What influences community-level circumstances and which of these influences are amenable to interventions coupled with which community variable affect individual variables and vice versa make evaluation a challenge.

Contextual issues refer to the broader set of circumstances and events that have a direct influence on the success of CCIs, which CCIs have little control over changing, e.g., the macroeconomic climate as well as the racial and cultural barriers that minority populations face.

Flexible and evolving intervention refers to those interventions that adapt to the ways in which communities' needs and dynamics change over time, thus making these fluid interventions difficult to track.

Broad range of outcomes refers to the array of intended outcomes that CCIs aspire to achieve; e.g., community participation; leadership development; empowerment; community building; a shift of authority and responsibility from higher-level sponsors to the community; the ways in which institutions operate in the community; and the ways in which government agencies

operate at the municipal, state, and federal levels. Many of these areas are difficult to operationalize, thus measuring them is difficult.

Absence of a control group refers to the evaluators' inability to randomly assign community individuals in treatment and control groups as CCIs seek to effect change for all community individuals. Absence of a community comparison refers to the lack of an equivalent community not benefiting from a CCI and whose outcomes can be compared to the target community's outcomes. The effectiveness of the CCI is difficult to decipher whether individual, family, community, and systems change resulted from the CCI or from some other intervention or contextual circumstance.

According to Connell, Kubisch, Schorr, and Weiss (1995), it is worth addressing the challenge of evaluating CCIs because:

- “CCIs embody many of the most promising ideas to promote the well-being of disadvantaged individuals and communities in the United States today. A number of audiences—from national policymakers to individual community residents—have a stake in knowing whether and how CCIs work.
- CCIs are testing a range of important hypotheses about individual development, family processes, and community dynamics. If the CCIs are well evaluated, the findings will have implications for our understanding of human behavior and will suggest important directions for further research as well as for broad policy directions.

- CCIs offer an opportunity to expand and redefine the current boundaries of the field of evaluation, perhaps to address similar challenges posed by other complex, interactive, multi-systems interventions. Evaluators are continually challenged to meet the demand for information—whether for accountability or for learning purposes—more effectively and efficiently. The evaluation of CCIs raises, in new and more complex ways, fundamental questions about how to ascertain the ways in which an investment of resources has ‘paid off’” (page 6).

CCIs: Goals, Principles, Operational Strategies, Dynamic Tensions, and Early Findings

Goals and Principles

CCIs seek to promote change at the individual and family, neighborhood, and systems levels (Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, The Aspen Institute, 1997). According to the Roundtable (1997), CCIs are guided by the principles of comprehensiveness and community building; specifically, comprehensiveness attempts to attain and create synergy among the following goals:

- expansion and improvement of social services;
- education and training;
- economic development;
- physical revitalization; and
- quality-of-life activities.

Operational Strategies

Comprehensiveness and community building are translated into action via the CCIs structures and operations, including governance, funding, staffing, technical assistance, evaluation, and program development (Roundtable, 1997).

Dynamic Tensions

CCIs two central tensions are the “process” versus “product” tension—i.e., the difficulty of producing outcomes in a timely way while simultaneously building capacity and respecting the community building process—and the “inside” versus “outside tension—i.e., the difficulty of negotiating roles and power dynamics for efforts that brought external resources into neighborhoods, especially when the goal was to empower residents and respect local conditions. The Roundtable (1997) believes that there are lessons to be learned from the manifestation of these tensions. They believe that these tensions permeate intent, interaction, and interpretation and are present in stakeholders’ relationships, the process of strategic planning and project implementation, and the monitoring of progress toward particular objectives.

Early Findings

The Roundtable (1997) reported that strategies to improve individual and family level change are the most straightforward while strategies to improve neighborhood and system level change are more challenging. The principle of comprehensiveness has not proven a useful guide for action

because it is too broad and thus too difficult to operationalize. The principle of community building has been defined as capacity building in the neighborhood, strengthening social networks, and leadership development.

Lessons for operations include developing governance and establishing an institutional base, attaining flexible funding, attaining long-term funding, securing a funder with an enhanced role, understanding the criticalness of staffing and technical assistance, and understanding the challenges associated with evaluating CCIs and the criticalness of implementing a theory of change evaluation by a nontraditional evaluator.

1998: New Approaches to Evaluating CCIs, Part II

In 1998, Fulbright-Anderson, Kubisch, and Connell at the Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families at The Aspen Institute published *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Theory, Measurement, and Analysis*. In this publication, Connell and Kubisch (1998) attempt to apply the theory of change evaluation approach articulated by Weiss (1995) to a CCI, including steps stakeholders can follow to carry one out. The publication also includes five additional papers that explore how to apply a theory of change evaluation approach, what it actually looks like, its benefits, and its challenges as well as issues related to measurement of change and the availability of data. Lastly, it examines the use of existing data to measure change at the neighborhood level, the issue of attributing causality, and the changing role of the evaluator in the context of CCIs.

Connell and Kubisch (1998) argue that a theory of change evaluation approach can sharpen the planning and implementation of an initiative, facilitate the measurement and data collection elements of the evaluation process, and reduce problems associated with causal attribution of impact. They also state that a good theory of change is plausible, doable, and testable and describe three stages in carrying out the theory of change evaluation approach: surfacing and articulating a theory of change, measuring a CCI's activities and intended outcomes, and analyzing and interpreting the results of an evaluation.

Philliber (1998) states that the way to increase specificity in a theory of change evaluation approach is by charting a concrete theory of change, promoting good management with a theory of change, and promoting buy-in by staff.

Brown (1998) discusses the following learned lessons regarding the role of the evaluator in an initiative with an emerging theory of change, in an initiative with diverse constituencies, in an initiative with competing political agendas, and in an initiative with a weak theory of change:

- “Establishing a theory of change framework in the planning period involves multiple tasks and can be very time consuming” (page 106).
- “An evaluator using a theory of change approach needs to draw upon a wide variety of skills during the planning period” (page 107).
- “As an active participant during the planning period, an evaluator can improve the quality of the process and its product” (page 108).

According to Brown (1998), there are two conditions that are conducive to a productive theory of change evaluation approach: a theory of change that is strong and responsive to input from participating sites and a support structure that reinforces the theory of change evaluation approach.

Gambone (1998) offers a measurement model for CCI evaluations, including measuring historical conditions and ongoing dynamics, activities and interim outcomes, and long-term outcomes. She argues that measurement of historical conditions and ongoing dynamics includes history, geography, economics, politics, pollution, and relationships. Measurement of activities and interim outcomes includes involvement of individuals and groups, decision-making, roles, facilitators, obstacles, mobilizing people or organizations, new or restructured activities, new or restructured resources, meeting predetermined thresholds for participation, civic activities, and events. Lastly, measurement of long-term outcomes includes change at the level of individuals, families, organizations, communities, and institutions. Gambone (1998) makes the following recommendations:

- develop new measures;
- increase the availability of existing measures;
- support the specification of underlying theories;
- undertake basic research on community change; and
- encourage the development of small area data in existing data collection efforts.

Coulton and Hollister (1998) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of available data for small areas. Advantages include the ability to create a retrospective baseline with data that have

already been collected; the ability to compare communities as data sources typically cover the entire countries, cities, or districts where CCIs are situated; the ability to manipulate data and build up to the desired units of geography via geographic information system (GIS) technology; and the ability to subject the data to traditional time-trend, comparative, spatial, and ecological analyses.

Coulton and Hollister (1998) delineate administrative data sources for small area measures (see appendix for more information). They discuss challenges associated with using administrative data, including confidentiality, data accuracy, data extraction and management, and matched and longitudinal files.

Granger (1998) states that results of a theory of change evaluation approach should provide evidence of four characteristics:

- responsiveness;
- objectivity;
- trustworthiness; and
- generalizability.

In 2002, Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, Chaskin, Fullbright-Anderson, and Hamilton at the Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families at The Aspen Institute published *Voices From the Field II: Reflections on Comprehensive Community Change*, an acknowledgement that after one decade of experience, CCIs did not transform poor neighborhoods and the lives of their residents in the ways in which they had hoped. The

publication outlines what is needed to make this shift. Specifically, its six chapters discuss the importance of accounting for the “entire ecology of change” (page 6):

- change among community residents;
- change within and among community-level institutions;
- change among those who provide technical, financial, practical, and other supports;
and
- changes in broad policies and structures that have enormous influence on community residents and institutions.

O’Conner (1995) writes that despite these trends over the decades, all comprehensive community-based initiatives share the following set of assumptions and operating principles:

- “An analysis of social problems that emphasizes their environmental origins, their complexity, and their interrelatedness...”
- “A recognition of the importance of the geographically bounded area, whether rural small town or urban neighborhood, as the basis of communal social bonds, as a manageable landscape for achieving social reform, as a laboratory for social experimentation, and as a legitimate unit for social scientific analysis...”
- “An emphasis on institutions as key leverage points for stimulating change, both in individuals and society at large...”
- “A faith in knowledge as the basis of planning, public education, and learning for the sake of social betterment...”
- “A belief that the isolation of the poor is a key factor in causing and perpetuating poverty and social inequality...” (pages 25–27).

THE HISTORY OF AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW

1989: The Birth of Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT)

ACT's Beginning and History

ACT began in 1988 with a request from the United Way of New York City and the New York Community Trust to Eric Brettschneider, the then–senior consultant, and Stan Litow, the then-director, both at Interface, a nonprofit, policy study organization, to prepare a list of recommendations for improved services to children (Brettschneider, 2011). This request was part of the “Decade of the Child,” an effort of Governor Cuomo and the United Way of New York State. The “Decade of the Child” effort was a campaign to foster interest in comprehensive, neighborhood-based services that are easy to use and responsive to the needs of children and families in a number of urban areas (Blum, 2001).

Mr. Brettschneider and Mr. Litow denied the request on the basis that several past reports had already met this request; however, they suggested an analysis of these prior reports to determine which recommendations were implemented, which were not, and how implementation or lack thereof transpired.

This report focused on the importance of sustained mayoral support, the need for capacity building, and the critical role that local leadership plays in creating relevant programs. It was

reviewed by more than one hundred government, community, and nonprofit representatives, and they determined that fragmentation of services in New York City and a centralized approach that ignored geography and differences in neighborhood needs contributed to, as previously discussed, the erosion of social, political, and economic capital: too many children staying too long in foster care; children being placed in foster care settings distant from their home communities, which made reunification more difficult and the experience of separation more stressful for children and their families; ineffective intervention in child abuse cases; high rates of infant mortality and low birth-weight babies; and poor performance by a large segment of New York City's school-age children (Agenda for Children Tomorrow, 1990). They also agreed that it had been no one's job to address the problems of fragmented and ineffective services.

Using these learned lessons, they agreed to strengthen social, political, and economic capital by promoting an "agenda" of systems change as well as creating and implementing a plan to create a community board district-based, integrated social services system for children and families. This was envisioned as the way to get services that would be easier to find, easier to use, and responsive to the needs of children, families, and neighborhoods. Thus, Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT) was born. ACT was charged with shifting the allocation of service resources among neighborhoods to a basis of objectively determined needs, redefining the service areas of public and private organizations so that these organizations would be located in and provide services to the residents of specific neighborhoods; adopting service practices that would encourage neighborhood residents with needs to become partners with professionals in working toward better lives for themselves and their children; and connecting child and family services to

economic development efforts, both by neighborhood and citywide. As discussed above, this is most reflective of Smock's community-building and transformative models.

This initial advisory group also believed that a balance in leadership power—both governmental and nongovernmental—was necessary, and as a result, suggested a neutral auspice with a voluntary chair and government advisory co-chair. This was viewed as a demonstration of a consensus model of governance. This advisory group became ACT's "Oversight Committee," made up of more than 300 members of New York City's social service, government, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors involved in improving conditions for children and families, and continued to provide input through the years.

The original neutral auspice was the New York Community Trust and as ACT grew, was later assumed by the Tides Foundation. One of ACT's key funders, the Ford Foundation viewed the Fund for the City of New York as an organization they created to encourage the unique governance structure of organizations like ACT and requested that they assume the role of neutral auspice. To this day, the Fund for the City of New York continues to assume this role, and ACT continues to remain unincorporated.

At the onset, the collaborative required that the government co-chair be a deputy mayor to facilitate a reach that would exceed social services. The initial governmental co-chair was Deputy Mayor Steisel (under Mayor Dinkins's administration) and then later, Deputy Mayors Cesar Perales and Ninfa Segarra (under Mayors Dinkins's and Giuliani's administrations); the initial nongovernmental co-chair was Barbara Blum, the then-executive director of the National

Center for Children in Poverty at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. (Prior to this position, Ms. Blum was the president of the Foundation for Children Development, and prior to that, she was the commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services.) The initial vice chairs were Donna Lawrence, then–human services assistant to Mayor Dinkins, and Moises Perez, executive director of Alianza Dominicana.

Ten community districts were identified as areas where revitalization could be particularly important, largely on the basis of a single indicator of risk to children—the trend and rate of low birth weights in the community. Specifically, ACT recognized that children’s development is spiritually, emotionally, physically, and economically linked to the health of a neighborhood and helped each neighborhood rediscover its hidden strengths and potential assets and find its own solutions to meet its own unique needs.

During ACT’s initial years, collaboratives were developed in five of these ten community board districts—Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Jamaica, Mott Haven, and Washington Heights. The total population of these communities was between 400,000 and 500,000, which gave ACT the potential for a considerably larger-scale improvement than is undertaken in most comprehensive community initiatives (see below). The other five targeted neighborhoods were East New York, East Harlem, Staten Island, East Tremont, and Central Harlem. Local planners staffed the organization and resident participants in each collaborative; specifically, they brought together service providers, community and business leaders, local government officials, and residents to enhance the quality of life for each neighborhood’s children and families. Local planners were voluntarily housed in community-based agencies but supervised and supported by ACT central

staff. During ACT's first twelve years of existence and with the local planners' assistance, community priorities were identified and interventions were initiated.

ACT's Vision

ACT envisions a New York City neighborhood with clean streets and parks, toddlers playing at home or at cheerful day care centers, children and teenagers rushing to school doors, grandparents sitting on house stoops exchanging stories, health-care centers open twenty-four hours a day, and local banks, merchants, and service providers working together to ensure the health, safety, and economic stability of families living in the neighborhood.

ACT's Mission

The following reflects, at the time of this study, ACT's mission:

“To create and evaluate ten community board district-based collaborative groups of health and social service providers, consumers, and concerned others in order to create services for children and families that are comprehensive, non-duplicative, accessible, supportive of families' needs, and easy to use; and to connect economic development, housing, and employment decision-making and resources to this network.”

(www.actnyc.org)

Again, this is most reflective of Smock's community-building and transformative models.

Gains and Accomplishments, 1990–1994, 1995–2005, 2007–2008, 2009–2010

The following highlights some of ACT's gains and accomplishments, 1995–2005, 2007–2008; see appendix for more details and examples:

Programs/Projects

- The Early Childhood Coalition Transition Project of Washington Heights/Inwood was started to help children make the transition from childcare and Head Start to kindergarten. The goal was to facilitate the psychological, educational, and logistical transition for children and their families to improve their children's education and receipt of much needed community services.
- ACT was one of several agencies that provided assistance to city agencies by disseminating summer program information to the five ACT coalitions located in Bushwick, Mott Haven, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Jamaica, and Washington Heights/Inwood.
- One of the earliest dialogues and collaboration on the issue of case conferencing began. At an ACT oversight committee meeting, the then–Human Resource Administration (HRA) commissioner, Lillian Barrios-Paoli, with the guidance of Rea Stein and Susan Sabor, said that HRA was working with ACT to design a conferencing mechanism to assure coordinated case planning for welfare-to-work and other cases. Also at the meeting, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative announced that it had established a case-conferencing model to better serve the children of at-risk families by strengthening communication among agencies and families, school officials, clinics, workers, drug counselors, and preventive workers from one of Bushwick's preventive programs. Their model, with the help of a

facilitator, developed a strategic plan and advocated for the family as well as arranged follow-up meetingsⁱⁱ.

- Through the urging of New York Community Trust, ACT was invited to apply for the Family Unification program as part of ACT's neighborhood-based initiatives. The Family Unification program is a federally funded program aimed at preventing family separation by providing subsidized housing to families in the child welfare system.
- New York Community Trust announced that its collaborative effort in securing funding for the federal government welfare-to-work demonstration grant was achieved. ACT played a significant role in the Neighborhood Strategies Project (NSP). The NSP, an economic development project, had goals of workforce development, business and job creation, and community building. ACT was instrumental in researching and identifying communities that served as demonstration sites for the initiatives.
- Jamaica ACT reported advanced work in its collaborative. With the coordination of the Jamaica Local Planner, the Parks Council received a \$150,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation to support new open-space projects in Jamaica and Staten Island. Another important milestone was in the area of technology. The New York State Advanced Telecommunication Project (NYSATP) encouraged the Queens Technology Consortium's application for advanced telecommunication infrastructure in disadvantaged areas of Jamaica, Corona/East Elmhurst and Far Rockaway. Jamaica ACT was the principal writer for the proposal team. The Collaborative also played an important role in the

formation of the Queens Technology Consortium, which brought more than 70 businesses, hospitals, and CBOs to enhance the telecommunication capacity of underserved communities in Queens.

- ACT signed a linkage agreement with Youth Force, Inc. as a response to the fiscal year 1988 Beacon School Program initiative Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Department of Youth and Community Development. The Beacon Advisory Council, an offshoot of this proposal, received support from ACT. Using ACT as a model, the Beacon developed the Beacon Advisory Council to which ACT provided training and technical assistance to Beacon staff on how to assess needs and strengths, make appropriate referrals for services, assist the Beacon in establishing case conferencing, and explore ways to expand preventive services for the community.
- In 2001, the United Way of New York City (UWNYC) convened The Early Learning Council, a study group formed by child advocates and agencies from around New York City, to explore strategies to promote and increase access to early childhood education opportunities. Agenda for Children Tomorrow, Citizen's Committee for Children, and Child Care, Inc. were some of the partners that collaborated during this initial stage to develop integrated early care systems and collaborative service delivery models. After extensive research and planning, in 2002, ACT was commissioned by UWNYC to create Parent Access Points in two NYC neighborhoods, Bushwick and Washington Heights. In Bushwick, ACT partnered with a well-known early education coalition, the Bushwick Child Care Network (BCCN), and created a Local Design Team (LDT) to inform the

conceptualization and implementation of the Parent Access Point. The storefront Bushwick IMPACT Center was opened as a community-based Resource Center in November 2005.

- In 2002, the newly elected Mayor Bloomberg charged several city commissioners and deputy-level staff to strategize about how to minimize interagency bureaucratic barriers for New Yorkers who rely on the city's human services system. Known at first as the One City Strategy, this effort became One City/One Community in 2004. Specifically, One City/One Community was intended to support interagency collaboration, reduce conflicts across agencies, and identify "Catch-22's"—policy conflicts that often leave the city's most at-risk families without recourse or solution to what should be resolvable problems. One City evolved considerably during its three-year existence. In its first year, its primary activities were planning, design, and outreach. In the second year, the attention of the project's staff and advisors turned to case conferencing, service integration, and policy identification. These activities continued in the third year and added creating a client consent form and protocol, an effort led by the City's Law Department, technology-based interagency information-sharing strategies, the design, testing, and implementation of a holistic interagency case management training curriculum with a focus on navigating city agencies, and project evaluation. ACT managed this project.

Strategic

- ACT contributed to a report entitled “**Consideration for Implementing Managed Care in the New York City Child Welfare System.**” The working draft report sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Welfare agencies, Inc. and the Children’s Defense Fund of New York was commissioned by the New York City Task Force on Managed Care in Child Welfare. It presented guiding principles to inform the implementation of managed care methods in the child welfare systems in a way that is consistent with sound child welfare practice.
- ACT’s executive director Eric Brettschneider attended the Lutheran Social Service of Metropolitan New York’s Foster and Adoptive Parents luncheon. The event honored foster and adoptive parents engaged with the Lutheran Social Services, Inc.
- Eric Brettschneider was interviewed for an assessment report of the New York Community Trust’s Bushwick Geographic Targeting Task Force project. The effort was intended to provide comprehensive grant-making resources to the Bushwick community.
- Eric Brettschneider was invited to attend Best Beginnings’ Open House. The event was also attended by 130 persons including elected officials, members of New York City administration, community leaders and residents. Best Beginnings, a New York–based human services organization, provides families of newborns and young children with the support they need to become healthy, self-sufficient, and productive citizens.

- Heartcease Home, Inc., an independent-living skills-training program for adolescent women, invited Eric Brettschneider to assist in providing guidance on Heartcease's program reform.
- ACT sponsored a discussion workshop led by Lora Myers, co-author of *Really Reading*. The discussion was on ten simple and effective methods to develop a child's love for reading. The workshop explored engaging and creative activities that can be done with children to show them how much fun reading can be. The event was hosted by St. Francis Xavier Action Youth.
- ACT hosted top leadership from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In an appreciation letter, the visitors thanked ACT and said the trip was "informative and rewarding." The visit provided the Illinois staff an opportunity to think differently about child development issues and share both cities' experiences and approaches. ACT was invited to reciprocate the visit.
- Eric Brettschneider was invited by the City University of New York's (CUNY's) Center for Urban Research to speak to the leadership of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). DYCD's primary focus was to contract with community-based organizations that provided services as a means of promoting individual and neighborhood development. ACT was invited to provide some guidance and program development strategies.
- ACT's Executive Director moderated a forum entitled "The Adoption and Safe Families Act: How New York's legislative approach will impact families and children." The forum was held at Fordham University and was aimed at providing an opportunity for policy makers and service providers to come together to

discuss current legislative approaches to New York's implementation of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The forum was attended by more than 180 professionals representing voluntary child care agencies, legal service offices, schools of law and social work, major children's lawyers groups, court appointed advocates, parent advocates, BAR associations, members of the legislature, a wide range of elected city officials, and community groups. The panel presentation included the Honorable John Johnson—commissioner, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Roger Green—chair, New York State Assembly, Micheal Gage—administrative judge for the New York City Family Courts, Michael Arsham—executive director of the Child Welfare Organizing Project, and a few other prominent city officials.

Planning

- The Comptroller of the City of New York, Alan Havesi, invited Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director, to participate on an advisory committee on foster care. The comptroller commended ACT for its leading role in the child welfare field. He remarked that ACT, since its inception, has dedicated itself to the welfare of children in less-fortunate neighborhoods of New York City. ACT aided the comptroller's advisory committee in developing meaningful services to New Yorkers in a cost-effective manner.
- The New York Community Trust released its concept paper on the Neighborhood Strategies Project-Organizing Committee. In the spring and summer of 1994, ACT was selected as one of the lead organizations to research and identify a

number of communities to consider as partners for the Neighborhood Strategies Project. The mission of the Neighborhood Strategies Project was to invest in communities to create opportunities for economically disadvantaged residents so that they can make full contributions as productive citizens in society.

Resource

- Bushwick ACT contributed to the Bushwick Resource Coalition Children and Family Committee. ACT's role was recognized in developing a needs assessment of the available Bushwick mental health services for children. The assessment was presented to the deputy commissioner of mental health and the director of Children and Family Services for the State Office of Mental Health Services.

Donations

- IBM's Corporate Community Relations program donated one PC with CD-ROMs, six laser printers, seven sound cards, two think-pads, and various softwares. The market value for these products was \$22,222.70.

Awards/Nominations

- Eric Brettschneider was nominated by Nicholas Scoppetta, the then–Commissioner for the Administration for Children's Services, for the 1998 Brooke Russell Astor Award. The award was established at the New York Public Library in 1987 by David Rockefeller to honor an outstanding individual whose work has not yet been accorded significant public recognition but whose

dedication and perseverance have made an important contribution toward improving the quality of life in New York City. The reception was held in the Trustees Room of the New York Public Library.

System-Wide Change

- Washington Heights ACT joined as a member of the organizing committee for **Credit Where Credit is Due**. The committee was responsible for creating the Community Development Credit Union (CDCU) with the aim of establishing a credit union in the Washington Heights/Inwood community to provide credit and banking facilities, primarily savings and checking accounts, to underserved clients.

Conferences/Events

- Eric Brettschneider, ACT's executive director, facilitated a workshop entitled "Transitions to Independent Living: Making Positive Community Connections." The workshop was part of the ninth annual Independent Living Skills Conference held at the McGinley Center at Fordham University.
- Jamaica ACT organized a forum, "Community Development, Demographic Change, and City Planning: Mapping Technology in Community Development and Creating Partnerships." The event invited guest speakers from New York City Department of City Planning, University of Chicago and the Bureau of Census, and United States Department of Commerce.

- ACT's executive director attended the Jobs Plus/NJI Conference in Baltimore. The event focused on building and sustaining multi-agency contribution. The event was organized by MDRC.
- ACT's executive director was invited to speak to the board of the Charles Hayden Foundation. The discussion was about demographic trends and their implications for youth service groups, in particular New York City's school-based youth population. The Charles Hayden Foundation's mission is to promote the mental, moral, and physical development of school-aged youth in the New York City and Boston communities. The foundation also disburses \$13 million per year to youth development and school reform efforts.
- ACT's executive director was invited to speak with participants at the CORO Foundation's leadership New York Program. The event was a one-day exploration of New York City's child welfare system.
- ACT's executive director was invited by Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields to participate as a panelist in the borough's first annual parent convention. More than 1,000 people attended the event. The convention proceedings were compiled into a resource guide.

Tangible Outcomes in Communities

- Mott Haven: An employer recruitment and job readiness program increased summer employment opportunities for young people.

- Bushwick and Washington Heights: An early childhood transition project improved transition from day care and Head Start to elementary school for children and their parents.
- Buswick: ongoing community-coordinated case conferencing for families with children who are at risk of entering the child welfare system.
- Bedford Stuyvesant: Created a model budget for local child welfare agencies in response to new challenges by ACS and ASFA legislation.

Remnants of Smock's community organizing models (power-based, community-building, civic, women-centered, and transformative), bonding and bridging social capital, and strengthening political and economic capital are evident in most of these programs/projects, strategic, planning, resource, donations, awards, systems-wide change, and conferences/events accomplishments.

Governance

The ACT Approach

The ACT approach has been commonly described as encouraging of community involvement, awareness, and trust; helping cut government "red tape"; deploying resources where they are needed; helping neighborhoods coordinate federal, state, city, and private-sector efforts; and promoting interagency communication and minimizing duplication of efforts.

The Neighborhood Planning Process

As previously mentioned, ACT convened community-based groups, service providers, churches, schools, and residents and builds on existing coalitions to form neighborhood collaborative. The collaboratives worked together to create neighborhood-specific strategies to revitalize the neighborhood and improve the quality of services to connect children and families to the right services at the right time. This has been commonly referred to as “bottom-up planning in a top-down world” (Brettschneider, 2001). Through the collaboratives, ACT helped neighborhoods plan for themselves. The steps for each community were to convene key stakeholders to define the collaboratives’ roles and goals; identify potential fiscal agents and office locations; validate data on community conditions and existing resources; develop collaborative participation agreement and bylaws; recruit, hire, and train local planners; and identify a decision-making process by consensus. Furthermore, ACT carried out this mission by promoting and providing technical support for changes in how government structured, financed, and delivered services.

Consensus-building

ACT builds consensus around key issues for children in New York City. Working collaboratively and through coalitions takes time; however, it keeps projects accountable, ensures relevance, and maintains buy-in. The ACT Central Office works jointly with communities to select local planners and network liaisons who are committed, creative, and who, ideally, live in communities they serve. ACT initiatives emphasize listening, sharing, and affirmation at all levels. ACT has been referred to the conductor of energy—between parents, children, and trained professionals—changing communities.

Connecting with Government

Each collaborative, along with ACT central staff, chose a local planner to be the link between the neighborhood and city government. Through the local planner, government learned both the strengths and weaknesses of each neighborhood, and the neighborhood learned to navigate and access government resources. The local planner worked as a liaison between the neighborhood and government and encouraged government and local human services decision-making to be more inclusive of the neighborhood.

Funding

Local planners were paid with foundation and government lines from the Administration for Children's Services and the Human Resources Administration. However, in an effort to retain autonomy and be less controlled by government, ACT's executive director and deputy director have always been funded privately.

Shortly thereafter, when New York City's child welfare system shifted from the Bureau of Child Welfare to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and Nicolas Scoppetta was appointed its commissioner, ACT's locus was shifted to ACS to reinforce the Mayor Giuliani administration's commitment to decentralize children's services and emphasize neighborhood involvement.

When ACS shifted to mobilizing communities to improve family life via neighborhood networks, ACT collaboratives served as models for power, shared decision making, and leadership.

ACT identified a cadre of impressive local leaders who served as fantastic resources for identifying problems early on, proposing appropriate solutions to these problems, and highlighting unexpected consequences of well-intended bureaucratic programs.

ACT was a pioneer in the age of geomapping, neighborhood asset surveys, focus groups, and diplomacy in resolving conflict. Through ACT's work, two prominent themes emerged: Collaboratives were docking stations of numerous other initiatives and diplomacy as a concept for local conflict resolution. ACT has often been referred to as "...serving as electricians, making connections within neighborhoods, and connecting neighborhoods to sources of power..." (Brettschneider, 2002).

Ultimately, the essence of ACT is sharing power with the people and moving toward providing resources to neighborhood initiatives.

As previously discussed, ACT's governance and funding structures, while tenuous, were meant to reflect an interest in sustaining a public/private partnership as well as be flexible and responsive to diverse interests. Over time, as these diverse interests evolved, so did ACT. Much of ACT's governance is the result of its being a government, community, and non-governmental collaboration as well as a project intended to "reinvent government" (from "History of ACT and Evolution").

Staffing

As previously mentioned, local planners staffed the organization and resident participants in each collaborative; specifically, they brought together service providers, community and business leaders, local government officials, and residents to enhance the quality of life for each neighborhood's children and families. Local planners were voluntarily housed in community-based agencies but were supervised and supported by ACT central staff. During ACT's first twelve years of existence and with the local planners' assistance, community priorities were identified and interventions were initiated.

Internal and External Evaluations, 1992–2008

Internal Evaluation: The Early 1990s

In the early 1990s (Schroeder, 1992), interviews were conducted with nine stakeholders regarding ACT's mission and specific proposals ACT should consider. The following reflects interviewees' ideas on both mission and proposals:

Mission

- should incorporate a definition of “community-based” that involves more than geographic location;
- should incorporate the “coordinator” role at each city agency that is responsible for managing cooperative efforts with other agencies and organizations;
- should focus on the family, not just the individual/child;
- should ensure a systems-approach; and
- should account for cultural differences.

Proposals for ACT's Consideration

- Develop a manageable scope of projects.
- Focus on a common problem that requires a coordinated focus.
- Use existing structures—not create new ones—to coordinate services.
- Ensure that coordination is valued by the Mayor, his commissioners, etc.
- Include schools.
- Consider streamlining administrative procedures to promote service coordination.
- Work toward a systems-based collaboration between the then Board of Education, Child Welfare Agency, the Department of Youth Services, and Department of Juvenile Justice.
- Coordinate funding streams to decrease regulatory restrictions and massive amounts of paperwork.
- Coordinate health services.
- Develop a command structure within service bureaucracies.
- Coordinate information within and between service systems.
- Safeguard confidentiality.
- Remove barriers that prevent clients from coordinating their own services.
- Ensure youth services.
- Be sensitive to the multicultural needs throughout all of this work, including the need for bilingual/multilingual staff.

External Evaluation: Doing the Invisible: A Case Study of ACT

In 1998, the Ford Foundation granted funding to conduct a case study of ACT; specifically, to document how ACT does what it does, to find the value for others in its methods, and to formulate lessons—all from its first ten years of operation.

This was an important study because few CCI observers and participants have described the process by which strategic behavior on the part of a small number of CCI staff sustained over many years can serve a policy advocacy and systems change agenda. In addition, it highlighted the difference between the CCI literature—i.e., writings about the practice of community-building and capacity-building—and the practice of collaborative community development—i.e., that practitioners usually do not write for publication. The study was intended to bridge the observer/writer-practitioner gap by relying extensively on the words of practitioners (Sherwood, 1999).

The study examined the following areas with respect to ACT's context:

- increasing social capital as the objective of community- and capacity-building;
- community organizing: confrontational versus consensus approaches;
- the politics of resource allocation;
- duality versus balance in the work of CCIs; and
- the effect of New York City politics on the delivery of human services.

It also discussed interviewees' views of ACT's mission, theories of change, and strategies; the image of ACT as the conductor; diplomacy as a principle for guiding action and interaction;

ACT's principles of "low-hanging fruit" and data-driven planning and action; ACT's invisibility; and lessons for other CCIs.

Some of the study's major conclusions included ACT's work as invisible because it consists mainly of process without fees attached to its value, their principles consciously minimize their contributions, and the world in which ACT operates is raucously self-promotional and competitive. In addition, the study found that relationships are the center of ACT's world. Lastly, the study raised the question of whether or not ACT would survive the 2000 mayoral election.

External Evaluation: Bushwick IMPACT

In 2006, seeking to evaluate the Bushwick IMPACT initiative, ACT contracted with Metis Associates, Inc., an independent research and evaluation company. The goal of the first phase of the evaluation was to gain a better understanding of the project model, project implementation, and expected outcomes (refer to *Gains and Accomplishments, Programs/Projects* above for more information), as well as the needs of the community that IMPACT is working to address. To do so, Metis reviewed project documentation, analyzed data from the project's database, and conducted in-depth interviews with selected stakeholders, including nineteen parents who had recently used IMPACT services, eleven representatives of IMPACT partner agencies that had participated in Local Design Team meetings, and seven project staff.

In-depth interviews with key stakeholders revealed that IMPACT has been very successful in the following areas:

- increasing families' access to early care and education resources;

- promoting early childhood development and smoother transitions to child care and school;
- empowering parents; and
- increasing practitioners' capacity to network and to serve families.

External Evaluation: Kay Sherwood- June 2007

In June of 2007, during the period of Eric Brettschneider and Anthea McLaughlin's transition out of ACT, another external evaluation (Sherwood, 2007) was conducted. The following includes prominent findings:

- ACT's mission was consistent with its work; however, it could be more concise and clear.
- "Broker" and "intermediary" were often used to describe ACT's mission.
- Longtime partners pointed out that ACT's work has narrowed as its partnership with ACS has become its predominant city government connection.
- Interviewees' view of ACT's services and contributions were based on their own organizational agendas and interests.
- ACT has been valuable in reaching into the communities and helping resources find each other;
- Interviewees were generally in favor of a broader scope for ACT, but cognizant of difficulties.
- Interviewees were split on the question of whether ACT should (or should not) continue to pursue the collaborative as a community capacity-building strategy.

- Interviewees were unanimous that ACT needs to claim its achievements, be more visible, and have a higher profile, while at the same time appreciating the difficulties involved in sharing credit with community and government partners for ACT's work.
- Many interviewees were unaware of the details of ACT's structure, and while most agreed that Eric/Anthea's transition was a good time to review the advantages and disadvantages of the current structure, only a few were inclined to recommend that ACT take steps toward independence by becoming an incorporated 501(c)3.
- Almost all interviewees commented on how closely identified ACT is with Eric and Anthea and believed new leadership should have their leadership qualities: broad connections in the city, diplomacy skills, ability to work with multiple constituencies and move comfortably across sectors, and commitment to community participation in government decisions.
- Many interviewees saw opportunities for ACT to take on new tasks in such areas as children's mental health issues, juvenile justice, and prisoner re-entry.
- ACT was seen as essential to implementing ACS's Community Partnership Initiative (CPI), and many believed it should continue its involvement in this initiative.
- Many interviewees also believed ACT should continue its involvement in the poverty reduction initiative that emerged as a result of the Commission in Economic Opportunity.

External Evaluation: Brandeis University, August 2007

As One City/One Community (see *Gains and Accomplishments, Programs/Projects* above for more information) ended its demonstration phase, decisions needed to be made about:

- whether One City should continue, in what form, and with what kinds of design, governance, or practice modifications;
- how One City might be supported, and whether it was sustainable with government funds; and
- whether and how the approach or aspects of the approach could or should be utilized in other areas of the city.

To help the city answer these questions, the city and ACT engaged the Center for Youth and Communities (part of Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management) to conduct a short-term study on One City's accomplishments to date, the strength of its structure, and its longer-term projects.

Overall, interviewees cited the following One City/One Community contributions:

- One City/One Community staff knowledge of different agency systems and ability to cut through red tape to expedite solutions to problems;
- bringing different agency administrators together for case conferencing;
- line staff access to power;
- commissioner involvement and imprimatur;
- exposing Commissioners to client and street-level issues;
- concept of Commissioner meetings combined with case conferencing; and

- showing how well this work can be done—modeling effective case conferencing.

Overall, interviewees made the following recommendations:

- Expand One City/One Community with more robust funding/staffing.
- Do a new common visioning process with all involved agencies.
- Improve communication with and training of line staff to improve their understanding of the policy issues behind client problems.

Internal Evaluation: Anthea McLaughlin, 2008

Prior to May 22, 2008, ACT's interim co-executive directors invited the former associate director to meet with staff, on a one-to-one basis, to gather staff perspectives on the current state of the organization, their professional experiences at the organization since Eric Brettschneider and Anthea McLaughlin's transitions, and recommendations on how to proactively move ACT forward.

Staff made the following recommendations:

- The transition team should interface with staff to reinforce their commitment to ACT.
- The transition team should offer accountability and/or create accountability mechanisms or systems for interim co-executive directors to access and use.
- The transition team should help differentiate and clarify the type of management and leadership ACT needs.

- Interim co-executive directors, staff, transition team, and other stakeholders should engage in planning activities that can link current activities to the larger vision of ACT.
- Staff professional development opportunities should be built into the everyday work of ACT.
- ACT should expand its agenda.
- A negotiation table for staff compensation should be created.
- The transition team should work expediently to make a decision about ACT's executive director.

ACT, 2006—June, 2011

The summer of 2007 was marked by Eric Brettschneider and Anthea McLaughlin's resignations followed by the creation of a transition team under the leadership of Megan McLaughlin. During this period, the following was acknowledged:

"It is generally agreed that executive transitions provide both opportunities and challenges and that success or failure, to a great extent, depends on the services during the transition process. Successful transitions can launch the new executive director and the organization; an unsuccessful transition has serious consequences such as repeated executive turnover, loss of other staff and board members, and compromised delivery of programs and services (Megan McLaughlin, "Transition Update, August 18, 2008," page 1).

Between Eric and Anthea's departures and September 2008, when the new executive director, Linda Selvin, began, the transition team focused on the following areas:

- addressing internal/organizational issues;
- facilitating internal and external notice of the new executive director;
- preparing the incoming executive director; and
- developing a more formal governance structure.

Under Ms. Selvin's leadership, the following gains and accomplishments were attained:

- Provided technical assistance to ACS' Community Partnership Project (CPP).
- Developed an ACT governance guide.
- Via Bushwick IMPACT, developed leadership, fostered family literacy, supported families, and provided child development supports.
- Bushwick IMPACT launched *Seguir Adelante*.
- Facilitated the Bridge Builder's transition.
- Supported the East New York CPP.
- Participated in the Pipeline Crisis/Winning Strategies Initiative.
- Hosted a series of stakeholders events focusing on postsecondary education;
- Planned ACT's 20th Anniversary Celebration.
- Provided professional development to student interns.
- Received the OMEGA Institute Service Grant.

In November 2010, as a result of dwindling funds, Ms. Selvin departed ACT, and during this same month, Timothy Ross with Action Research Partners submitted a proposal to ACT's

Advisory Board (formerly the Transition Team) on potential options for ACT's future. Mr. Ross delineated a three-part inquiry over three months that would answer the following questions:

- What is ACT's status today in terms of its finances, programs, political relationships, mission, and vision?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the major options that ACT might pursue?
- Once the Advisory Board selects an option for ACT's future, what will need to happen to execute that option?

Unfortunately, because of lack of funding, this inquiry has not been fulfilled.

ACT's Relationship to Community Development, Community Building, Community Organizing, and Comprehensive Community Initiatives

In the realm of community development, community building, and comprehensive community initiatives, ACT is distinguished by its roots in child welfare reform efforts. While many consider it a CCI, ACT differs from many other community-building initiatives in its combination of citywide and neighborhood-based strategies, untraditional organizational infrastructure, lack of predetermined set of objectives or problems to community groups for neighborhood-level initiatives, an approach of maximum diplomacy and minimum credit, and lack of unincorporated status. Recent literature about the effectiveness of CCIs highlights the difficulty of improving neighborhood conditions solely with a neighborhood strategy, given the importance of municipal, state, and federal government policies and the wide-reaching effects of

global economic forces (Smock, _____ & Stone, 1996). These distinctions situate ACT within two of Smock's community-organizing models (2004): the community-building and transformative models.

BROWNSVILLE

Brownsville is a residential neighborhood located in eastern Brooklyn, New York City.

The total land area is 1 square mile, and the zip code for the neighborhood is 11212. Brownsville is bordered by East New York Avenue to the north (on the Bedford-Stuyvesant border), East 98th Street to the west (East Flatbush), and the freight rail Bay Ridge Branch of the Long Island Rail Road to the south (adjacent to the neighborhood of Canarsie), and to the east (East New York).ⁱⁱⁱ

The area is patrolled by the 73rd Precinct^{iv}, located at 1470 East New York Avenue. New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) property in the area is patrolled by Public Service Area 2. It is part of Brooklyn Community Board 16.

In 2008, Brownsville's population was 116,579 and the demographics were 77.1% Black or African American, 18.8% Hispanic or Latino, 5.4% Caucasian, 1.9% Asian/Pacific Islander; 8.2% described themselves as "other." High school graduates comprised 31.7% of the population, and 9.2% had a Bachelor's degree or higher. As of 2008, the median household income was \$17,967. There were a total of 28,298 housing units in Brownsville.^v

Brownsville is dominated by public housing developments of various types. There is also a significant concentration of semi-detached multi-unit row houses similar to those found in East New York and Soundview surrounding the public housing developments. Many, however, have been torn down and replaced by vacant lots or newly constructed subsidized attached multi-unit row houses. There is also a small number of tenements in the area. The neighborhood contains the highest concentration of NYCHA developments in New York City. There are 18 NYCHA developments located in Brownsville.^{vi}

History

Brownsville was Jewish and politically radical from the 1880s to the 1950s; throughout the 1920s and 1930s, it elected Socialist and American Labor Party candidates to the state assembly.^{vii}

As early as the 1910s, the area had acquired a reputation as a vicious slum and breeding ground for crime. It has been known throughout the years for its criminal gangs and in the '30s and '40s achieved notoriety as the birthplace of Murder, Inc. It was a predominantly Jewish neighborhood until the 1960s, when its population had become largely black and Brownsville's unemployment rate was 17%. Half of all families in the district lived on less than \$5,000 a year.

Journalist Jimmy Breslin wrote in 1968 that Brownsville reminded him of Berlin after World War II; block after block of burned-out shells of houses, streets littered with decaying

automobile hulks: “The stores on the avenues were empty and the streets lined with deserted apartment houses or buildings with empty apartments on every floor.”

In September 1967, a riot occurred following the death of an 11-year-old black male who was killed by a detective at the corner of St. Johns Place and Ralph Avenue two days before. The child had just exited a candy store with a brown paper bag full of candy. As this 11-year-old black male ran down Ralph Avenue in the middle of the day past children playing, Brooklynites shopping and/or waiting for the bus, he was shot dead by a detective who assumed that the child was running because he had robbed a 73-year-old Jewish man. The community fumed over the loss of a black boy at the hands of law enforcement. The community quickly became incensed at the realization that a black child running (a) could automatically be considered suspicious of having committed a crime and (b) could not run down the street, as children often do, without being murdered by law enforcement. The riot was additionally fueled by Brooklyn militant Sonny Carson, who spread false rumors that a white policeman killed the youth for no reason and was quelled only after Brooklyn North Borough Commander Lloyd Sealy deployed a squad of 150 black police officers to the riot to prevent further looting. The officer responsible was later cleared after a grand jury refused to indict him.^{viii}

In 1968 Brownsville was the setting of a protracted and highly contentious teachers’ strike.^{ix} The Board of Education had experimented with giving the people of the neighborhood control over the school. The new administration laid off several teachers in violation of union contract rules. The teachers were all white and mostly Jewish, and the resulting strike served to badly divide the

whole city. The resulting strike dragged on for half a year, becoming known as one of John Lindsay's "Ten Plagues."^x

Social Problems

Many social problems associated with poverty, from crime to drug addiction, have plagued the area for decades. Despite the decline of crime compared to their peaks during the crack and heroin epidemics, violent crime continues to be a serious problem in the community.^{xi}

Brownsville has significantly higher dropout rates and incidents of violence in its schools.^{xii}

Students must pass through metal detectors and swipe identification cards to enter the buildings; however, most New York City public high schools have adopted this approach regardless of their location. Other problems in local schools include low test scores and high truancy rates.

Due to the lucrative drug trade in the area, many addicts reside in the community. Peer pressure among children who come from broken homes contributes to the high rate of usage. Many households in the area are headed by single mothers, also contributing to truancy and the high poverty rate. Many of these single mothers had their first child at a very young age and cannot adequately provide for their children. The incarceration rate in the area is also very high. Many if not most men in the community have been arrested at some point in their lives.^{xiii} This has a direct correlation to aggressive policing tactics including "sweeps" due to the area's high crime rate. Brownsville is home to a significant number of inmates currently held in New York state prison and jail facilities.

In 2003, the United States Army Medical Corps established a training program in an emergency room that has received 600 cases per year of gunshot and stabbing victims.^{xiv} The program, called the Academy of Advanced Combat Medicine, started at Kings County's Eighth Medical Brigade, based at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island, trained its reservists in a busy civilian emergency room.

Urban Renewal

After a wave of arson throughout the 1970s ravaged the low-income communities of New York City, many if not most of the residential structures in Brownsville were left seriously damaged or destroyed. The city began to rehabilitate many formerly abandoned tenement-style apartment buildings and designate them low-income housing beginning in the late 1970s. Also, many subsidized multi-unit townhouses and newly constructed apartment buildings have been or are being built on vacant lots across the neighborhood.

Until recently, Brownsville was the only Brooklyn school district without a high school. There are now three; two are housed in the same building at 226 Bristol Street. Teachers Preparatory opened in September 2001, and FDA VII opened in September 2004. Teachers Preparatory School serves 6th through 12th graders, and received a grade of A on both its middle school and high school report cards for the year 2008.^{xv} There is also Brownsville Academy, a Diploma Plus transfer school. It received a Well Developed score for its 2008–2009 quality review^{xvi}. It also received a grade of B on its 2007–2008 report card^{xvii}.

Transportation

Brownsville's main thoroughfare is Pitkin Avenue^{xviii}. It is also accessible on the New York City subway system via the 3 and L trains.

EAST NEW YORK

East New York is a residential neighborhood located in the eastern section of the borough of Brooklyn in New York City. The neighborhood is part of Brooklyn Community Board 5^{xix}. Its boundaries, starting from the north and moving clockwise, are: Cypress Hills Cemetery to the north, the Borough of Queens to the east—specifically, the neighborhoods of Woodhaven, Ozone Park, and Lindenwood—Jamaica Bay to the south, and the railway tracks next to Van Sinderen Avenue to the west. Linden Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue are the primary thoroughfares through East New York. Zip codes include 11207, 11208, and 11239. The area is patrolled by the 75th Precinct located at 1000 Sutter Avenue, Brooklyn North Task Force, and Transit District 33. New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) property in the area is patrolled by Public Service Area 2. During the 20th century, East New York came to be a commuter town predominantly inhabited by African Americans and Hispanics.

East New York has a population of around 90,000. More than half of the population lives below the poverty line and receives public assistance, including but not limited to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Home Relief, Supplemental Security Income, and Medicaid. East New York is predominantly African American, with a significant Puerto Rican and Dominican population as well^{xx}.

East New York consists of mixed properties but primarily semi-detached homes, two-to-four-family houses, and multi-unit apartment buildings including condominiums and co-ops. The area is also home to the East Brooklyn Industrial Park. Public housing developments of various types—NYCHA developed a total of twelve—and a smaller number of tenements populate the area. The total land area is one square mile.

Industrial Park

In 1980, the forty-four block East Brooklyn Industrial Park was established by the New York City Public Development Corporation in the northwest quadrant of East New York, Brooklyn, bounded by Atlantic Avenue, Sheffield Avenue, Sutter Avenue, and Powell Street.

Education

All areas of New York City are within the New York City Department of Education school district. East New York high schools suffer from high dropout rates. As with many NYC schools, gang violence is a common problem found in the local schools.

One of the neighborhood's local public high schools, Thomas Jefferson High School, shut down in June 2007 due to extremely low academic performance: a graduation rate of 29%, with only 2% entering the school at grade level in math and 10% entering at grade level in reading. The school was known for its Reserve Officers' Training Corps program. Four new high schools were organized in the old building^{xxi}.

History

A chain of hills, geologically a terminal moraine, separates northwestern Long Island from Jamaica and the Hempstead Plains, the main part of Long Island's fertile outwash plain. Through one low spot in the chain passed a few 18th-century roads, including the ferry road or *Jamaica Turnpike* from Brooklyn to Jamaica, hence it was called "Jamaica Pass." During the American Revolutionary War, invading British and Hessian soldiers ended an all-night march at this pass in August 1776 to surprise and flank General George Washington and the Continental Army, to win the Battle of Long Island.

In the middle of the 19th century, the road between Brooklyn and Jamaica became the Brooklyn and Jamaica Plank Road. The New York and Manhattan Beach Railway (1877) and the Long Island Rail Road (1878) were also built through the pass. The point where they met was called Broadway Junction. As often happened at 19th century railroad junctions, a railway town arose. Sprawling development into the recently rustic northern part of the Town of New Lots followed the reach of elevated transit lines into the area: the Jamaica Avenue Line in 1885 and the Fulton Street Line in 1889. The road to Brooklyn was renamed Fulton Street, the one to Jamaica, Jamaica Avenue, and the one to Williamsburg, Broadway.

East New York was annexed as the 26th Ward of the rapidly growing City of Brooklyn; in 1897, it was brought into New York City as a whole with the consolidation of Brooklyn and other boroughs into a single city. In the 20th century, its name came to be applied to much of the former township.

In 1939, the Works Progress Administration *Guide to New York City* wrote:

“The development of East New York began in 1835 through the enterprise of John R. Pitkin, a wealthy Connecticut merchant who visualized it as a great city rivaling New York. The Panic of 1837 smashed his hopes. After 1853, a modest development began. By the 1930s, the residents were chiefly Italians, Jewish, German, and Russians who moved in from Brownsville, Bushwick, and other near-by crowded localities. Many of the Slavic families continue to burn candles before icons, and observe religious fetes according to the old calendar.”

After World War II, thousands of manufacturing jobs left New York City, thereby increasing the importance of the remaining jobs to those with limited education and job skills. During this same period, large numbers of Puerto Ricans and African Americans emigrated to New York City looking for employment. East New York, no longer replete with the jobs the new residents had come for, was faced with a host of new socioeconomic problems, including widespread unemployment and crime.

Walter Thabit, a city planner for East New York, chronicled in his book, *How East New York Became a Ghetto*, the change in population from mostly working class Italians and Jewish residents to Puerto Rican and African Americans residents. Thabit argues that landlords and real estate agents played a significant role in the downturn of the area. Puerto Ricans were moving in masses to New York City in the late 1950s, at a time when unemployment rates in Puerto Rico soared to 25%, leaving Puerto Rico on the brink of poverty.

Thabit also describes how the construction of public housing projects in East New York further contributed to its decline, noting that many of the developments were built by corrupt managers and contractors. He argues that city government largely ignored the community when it could have helped turn it around.

Writing in the *New York Press*, Michael Manville accused Thabit of poor research, sweeping generalizations, and a failure to distinguish the actions of racist individuals from the effects of a racist capitalist system, and contended that much of the urban renewal and public housing efforts of the period were in fact well-intentioned, if ill-considered and hubristic^{xxii}.

Renewal

New developments are rising in the area, including the Gateway Center^{xxiii}, located on what was once part of a landfill near Jamaica Bay. The Gateway shopping mall in Starrett City near East New York is suburban-style, and is home to retailers that include Bed Bath & Beyond, Staples, Marshalls, Olive Garden, Red Lobster, Boulder Creek Steakhouse, Target, The Home Depot, and BJ's Wholesale Club. The development was welcomed by many in the neighborhood for the jobs it would provide and is frequented by people from all over Southern Queens and Southern Brooklyn, bringing business into the neighborhood. Unfortunately, that promise has been elusive, as the low-wage, high-turnover positions that comprise the majority of jobs there do little to generate higher wealth in the community.

Urban Renewal

After a wave of arson ravaged the low-income communities of New York City throughout the 1970s, many of the residential structures in East New York were left seriously damaged or destroyed. The dilapidated homes and streetscapes served as the fictional setting for the film *Death Wish 3*. The city, through its Department of Housing Preservation and Renewal, initiated several rehabilitation programs designed to redevelop many formerly abandoned apartment buildings and designate them low-income housing beginning in the late 1970s. Also, many subsidized multi-unit townhouses and newly constructed apartment buildings have been or are being built on vacant lots across the neighborhood. It is important to note that because of the restrictions placed by the rent-stabilization code on many of the redeveloped multi-family buildings, a significant number of these properties have fallen into disrepair and are at risk of landlord abandonment.

BUSHWICK

Bushwick is a neighborhood in the northern part of the New York City borough of Brooklyn. The neighborhood, formerly Brooklyn's 18th Ward, is now part of Brooklyn Community Board 4. It is served by the NYPD's 83rd Precinct and is represented in the New York City Council as part of Districts 34 and 37.^{xxiv}

Bushwick is bound by Williamsburg to the west, East New York to the east, Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville to the south, and Ridgewood, Queens to the north.^{xxv} It is served by zip codes

11207, 11221, and 11237.^{xxvi} Bushwick was once an independent town and has undergone various territorial changes throughout its history.

Housing

Bushwick's diverse housing stock includes six-family apartment buildings and two- and three-family townhouses. The median age of the housing stock is 76 years. More than 91% of housing units are within 440 yards of a park, and more than 97% of housing units are within 880 yards of a subway.

Median rent in 2007 was \$795, the 40th highest median rent in the city. About one out of six rental units is subsidized, and greater than one out of three units is rent-regulated. Four percent of renters live in severely overcrowded conditions. Vacant land fills 4.1% of Bushwick, rating it the 21st most vacant neighborhood in the city.

In 2007, the neighborhood had a 18.7% home ownership rate, though roughly one out of twenty owners of a one-to-four-unit building received a notice of foreclosure.^{xxvii}

Demographics

Bushwick's population in 2007 was 129,980; 38.9% of that population was foreign-born.^{xxviii}

Though an ethnic neighborhood, Bushwick's population is, for a New York City neighborhood, relatively homogeneous, scoring a 0.5 on the Furman Center's racial diversity index, making it the city's 35th most diverse neighborhood in 2007. Most residents are Latinos from the

Caribbean island of Puerto Rico and from the Dominican Republic, but more recent years have seen an increase in native-born Americans as well as other Latino groups. In 2008, the neighborhood's median household income was \$28,802. Thirty-two percent of the population falls under the poverty line, making Bushwick the 7th most impoverished neighborhood in New York City.

More than 75% of children in the neighborhood are born in poverty^{xxix}. Only 40.3% of students in Bushwick read at grade level, making it the 49th most literate neighborhood in the city in 2007. Students who do math at grade level in Bushwick is 58.2%, 41st in the city. In 2007, Bushwick averaged twenty-five felonies per 1,000 persons, the 25th most felonious community district out of fifty-five in the city^{xxx}.

Bushwick is the largest hub of Brooklyn's Hispanic-American community. Like other neighborhoods in New York City, Bushwick's Hispanic population is mainly Puerto Rican and Dominican, with a sizable South American population as well. As nearly 80% of Bushwick's population is Hispanic, residents have created many businesses to support their various national and distinct traditions in food and other items. The neighborhood's major commercial streets are Knickerbocker Avenue, Myrtle Avenue, Wyckoff Avenue, and Broadway.

Bushwick Township

Four villages

In 1638, the Dutch West India Company secured a deed from the local Lenape people for the Bushwick area, and Peter Stuyvesant chartered the area in 1661, naming it “Boswijck,” meaning “little town in the woods” or “heavy woods” in 17th century Dutch^{xxxix}. Its area included the modern-day communities of Bushwick, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint. Bushwick was the last of the original six Dutch towns of Brooklyn to be established within New Netherland. The community was settled, though unchartered, on February 16, 1660, on a plot of land between the Bushwick and Newtown Creeks^{xxxix} by fourteen French and Huguenot settlers, a Dutch translator named Peter Jan De Witt^{xxxix}, and one of the original eleven slaves brought to New Netherland, Franciscus the Negro, who had worked his way to freedom^{xxxix}. The group centered its settlement around a church located near today’s Bushwick and Metropolitan Avenues. The major thoroughfare was Woodpoint Road, which allowed farmers to bring their goods to the town dock^{xxxix}. This original settlement came to be known as *Het Dorp* by the Dutch, and, later, Bushwick Green by the British. The English would take over the six towns three years later and unite the towns under Kings County in 1683.

At the turn of the 19th century, Bushwick consisted of four villages: Green Point; Bushwick Shore^{xxxix}, later to be known as Williamsburg; Bushwick Green; and Bushwick Crossroads, at the spot today’s Bushwick Avenue turns southeast at Flushing Avenue^{xxxix}.

Land annexation

Bushwick's first major expansion occurred after it annexed The New Lots of Bushwick, a hilly upland originally claimed by the Native Americans in the first treaties they signed with European colonists providing the settlers rights to the lowland on the water. After the second war between the natives and the settlers broke out, the natives fled, leaving the area to be divided among the six towns in Kings County. Bushwick had the prime location to absorb its new tract of land in a contiguous fashion. New Bushwick Lane (Evergreen Ave), a former Native American trail, was a key thoroughfare to access this new tract suitable mostly for potato and cabbage agriculture^{xxxviii}. This area is bounded roughly by Flushing Avenue to the north, and Evergreen Cemetery to the south.

In the 1850s, the New Lots of Bushwick area began to develop. References to the town of Bowronville, a new neighborhood contained within the area south of Lafayette Avenue and Stanhope Street begin to appear dating to the 1850s^{xxxix}.

Bushwick Shore and Williamsburgh

The area known as Bushwick Shore was so called for about 140 years. Bushwick residents called Bushwick Shore "the Strand," another term for "beach"^{xl}. Bushwick Creek, in the north, and Cripplebush, a region of thick, boggy shrubland extending from Wallabout Creek to Newtown Creek, in the south and east, cut off Bushwick Shore from the other villages in Bushwick. Farmers and gardeners from the other Bushwick villages sent their goods to Bushwick Shore to be ferried to New York City for sale via a market at present-day Grand St. Bushwick Shore's

favorable location close to New York City led to the creation of several farming developments. Originally a 13-acre (53,000 m²) development within Bushwick Shore, Williamsburgh rapidly expanded during the first half of the 19th century and eventually seceded from Bushwick to form its own independent city^{xli}.

Early Industry

When Bushwick was founded, it was primarily an area for farming food and tobacco. As Brooklyn and New York City grew, factories that manufactured sugar, oil, and chemicals were built. Inventor Peter Cooper built a glue-manufacturing plant, his first factory, in Bushwick. Immigrants from western Europe joined the original Dutch settlers. The Bushwick Chemical Works, at Metropolitan Avenue and Grand Street on the English Kills channel, was another early industry among the lime, plaster, and brick works, coal yards, and other factories that developed along English Kills, which was dredged and made an important commercial waterway^{xlii}. In October 1867, the American Institute awarded The Bushwick Chemical Works the first premium for commercial acids of greatest purity and strength^{xliii}. The Bushwick Glass Company, later to be known as Brookfield Glass Company, established itself in 1869, when a local brewer sold it to James Brookfield^{xliv}. The Bushwick Glass Company made a variety of both bottles and jars. Around the same time, in 1868, the Long Island Rail Road built the Bushwick Branch from its hub in Jamaica via Maspeth to Bushwick Terminal at the intersection of Montrose and Bushwick Avenues^{xlv}, allowing easy movement of passengers, raw materials, and finished goods.

In the 1840s and 1850s, a majority of the immigrants were German, which became the dominant population. Bushwick established a considerable brewery industry, including “Brewer’s Row”:

14 breweries operating in a 14-block area by 1890^{xlvi}. Thus, Bushwick was dubbed the “beer capital of the Northeast.” The last Bushwick brewery closed its doors in 1976^{xlvi}.

As late as 1883, Bushwick maintained open farming land east of Flushing Avenue^{xlvi}. A synergy developed between the brewers and the farmers during this period, as the dairy farmers collected spent grain and hops for cow feed. The dairy farmers sold milk and other dairy products to consumers in Brooklyn. Both industries supported blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and feed stores along Flushing Avenue^{xlix}.

The first elevated railway in Brooklyn, known as the Lexington Avenue Elevated, opened in 1885. Its eastern terminus was at the edge of Bushwick, at Gates Avenue and Broadway^l. This line was extended southeastward into East New York shortly thereafter. By the end of 1889, the Broadway Elevated and the Myrtle Avenue Elevated were completed, enabling easier access to Downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan and the rapid residential development of Bushwick from farmland.

With the success of the brewing industry and the presence of the elevated trains, another wave of European immigrants settled in the neighborhood. Also, parts of Bushwick became affluent. Brewery owners and doctors commissioned mansions along Bushwick and Irving Avenues at the turn of the 20th century. New York mayor John Francis Hylan kept a townhouse on Bushwick Avenue during this period^{li}. Bushwick homes were designed in the Italianate, Neo Greco, Romanesque Revival, and Queen Anne styles by well-known architects. Bushwick was a center of culture with several Vaudeville-era playhouses, including the Amphion Theatre, the nation’s

first theater with electric lighting^{lii}. The wealth of the neighborhood peaked between World War I and World War II, even when events such as Prohibition and the Great Depression were taking place.

After WWI, the German enclave was steadily replaced by a significant proportion of Italian Americans. By 1950, Bushwick was one of New York City's largest Italian American neighborhoods, although some German Americans remained^{liii}.

Interestingly, the Italian community was composed nearly entirely of Sicilians, most all of whom came from the Palermo, Trapani, and Agrigento provinces in Sicily. In particular, the Sicilian townsfolk of Menfi, Santa Margherita di Belice, Trapani, Castelvetro, and many other *paesi* had their own clubs, or “clubbu,” in the area. Il Circolo di Santa Margherita di Belice remains the oldest operating Sicilian organization in the United States but began here. These clubs often started as mutual benevolence associations or funeral societies but transformed as the needs of their communities did from the late 1800s until the 1960s, when many began to fade away. St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church Roman Catholic Parish was the hub of this Sicilian community, and held five feasts during the year, complete with processions of saints or Our Lady of Trapani. St. Joseph opened in 1923 because the Italian community had been rapidly growing in Bushwick since 1900. This Sicilian community first was centered in Our Lady of Pompeii parish on Siegel St. in Williamsburgh; however, as industry expanded along Flushing Avenue, the Sicilian population expanded with the growing need for labor by factory operators.

St. Leonard's parish was the large German Catholic parish in the area; however, members of the Italian community were not welcome there and thus were compelled to open their own parish. St. Leonard's closed in 1973. St. Joseph's is now a large and vibrant Latino parish run by the Scalabrini Order of priests, an Italian missionary order that caters to migrants.

1950s, 1960s, and 1970s: white-flight and loss of the brewing industry

The demographic transition of Bushwick mirrored many Brooklyn neighborhoods after WWII. Initially, working class African American and Caribbean American families took over homes in the southeastern edge of the neighborhood, closest to Eastern Parkway. Beginning in the mid-1950s and particularly in the 1960s, an influx of less-affluent African American and Puerto Rican migrants began to move into central Bushwick. "While poorer than the previous residents, Black Bushwickites were working class and strongly oriented to home ownership and forming block associations. These blocks were in a better position to withstand the devastations of the 1970s" (John A. Dereszewski). This change in demographics coincided with changes in the local economy. At the same time, locally rising energy costs, advances in transportation, and the invention of the steel can encouraged beer companies to move out of New York City. As the breweries closed, the neighborhood deteriorated along with much of Brooklyn and New York City. Discussions of urban renewal took place in the 1960s, but never materialized. The U.S. Census records that it went from almost 90% white in 1960 to less than 40% in 1970. A contributor to this drastic change was the John Lindsay administration's policy of raising rent for welfare recipients, which encouraged Bushwick landlords to fill vacant units with such tenants, as they now brought higher rents than ordinary tenants would pay on the open market. By the mid-'70s, half of Bushwick's residents were on public assistance^{liv}. According to *The New York*

Times, “In a five-year period in the late 1960s and early 70s, the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn was transformed from a neatly maintained community of wood houses into what often approached a no man’s land of abandoned buildings, empty lots, drugs and arson.”

Blackout: riots and looting

On the night of July 13, 1977, a major blackout occurred in New York City. Arson, looting, and vandalism followed in low-income neighborhoods across the city. Bushwick, however, saw some of the most devastating damages and losses. While local owners in the predominantly Puerto Rican Knickerbocker Avenue and Graham Avenue shopping districts were able to defend their stores with force, suburban owners with stores in the Broadway shopping district saw their shops looted and burned. Twenty-seven stores, some of which were of mixed use, along Broadway had burned (Goodman 104). Looters (and residents who bought from looters) saw the blackout as an opportunity to get what they otherwise could not afford. Fires spread to many residential buildings as well. After the riots were over and the fires were put out, residents saw “some streets that looked like Brooklyn Heights, and others that looked like Dresden in 1945” (Goodman 181): unsafe dwellings and empty lots among surviving buildings. Broadway business space had a 43% vacancy rate in the wake of the riots^{lv}.

Late 20th century: blight and poverty

Bushwick was left with a lack of both retail stores and housing. After the blackout, residents who could afford to leave abandoned the area. But new immigrants were coming into the area during the late 1960s, early 1970s, and 1980s, many of whom were from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and more recently, Central America. However, apartment renovation and new

construction did not keep pace with the demolition of unsafe buildings, forcing overcrowded conditions at first. As buildings came down, the vacant lots made parts of the neighborhood look and feel desolate, and more residents left. The neighborhood was a hotbed of poverty and crime through the 1980s. During this period, the Knickerbocker Avenue shopping district was nicknamed “The Well” for its seemingly unending supply of drugs^{lvi}. In the 1990s, it remained a poor and relatively dangerous area, with seventy-seven murders, eighty rapes, and 2,242 robberies in 1990^{lvii}.

2000s: State and local government funded revitalization

Starting in the middle of the 2000s, the City and State of New York began pouring resources into the Bushwick neighborhood, primarily through a program called the Bushwick Initiative. The Bushwick Initiative was a two-year pilot program spearheaded by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council (Ridgewood Bushwick), and the Office of Assemblyman Vito Lopez. The Bushwick Initiative aims to address deteriorated housing conditions, increase economic development opportunities, reduce drug-dealing activities, and enhance the quality of life in the 23 square blocks surrounding Maria Hernandez Park^{lviii}.

Crime reduction

One of the most critical pieces of the Bushwick Initiative is the strengthened relationship between HPD’s Narcotics Control Unit (NCU) and the New York City Police Department’s 83rd Precinct and Narcotics Division, who have joined together to reduce the extensive drug-dealing operations within the target area^{lix}.

Housing improvement

In an effort to reduce lead hazards in buildings, HPD and DOHMH created a grant program focusing on residential buildings in the Bushwick Initiative target area. As a result of this outreach, sixty-four buildings received lead abatement work worth approximately \$750,000. One-hundred fifty buildings were referred to HPD's Housing Litigation Division (HLD) for action. HLD brought cases to compel the owners of those buildings to correct outstanding violations; to obtain civil penalties for the owners' failure to comply with the Housing Maintenance Code and the Multiple Dwelling Law where appropriate; and to compel those owners who had failed to register with HPD to do so. In addition, in situations where the owners had failed to correct emergency conditions, including lead paint hazards, and had denied HPD's inspectors and contractors access to scope and complete the necessary work to remediate the conditions, the Housing Litigation Division obtained access warrants ordering the owners to allow HPD's inspectors and contractors into the buildings to complete necessary emergency repairs^{lx}.

Commercial revitalization

Many of the Bushwick Initiative's efforts toward economic development are focused on revitalizing Knickerbocker Avenue, the primary commercial strip in the area. Ridgewood Bushwick spoke to business owners in the area about reviving the now-defunct Knickerbocker Avenue Merchants' Association. Through this organization, Ridgewood Bushwick hopes to utilize SBS's resources to increase economic opportunities for local business owners in the area^{lxi}.

Sanitation improvement

In addition to DOHMH’s lead prevention work, the Bushwick Initiative has benefited from a series of public health programs addressing pest control, infant health, and fitness. DOHMH spent \$25,000 purchasing 1,000 rodent-resistant trash cans, which were distributed to buildings with a high number of rodent complaints^{lxii}. Educational information in both English and Spanish concerning rodent control was distributed at the same time, and cans were plastered with the flyers reading “CAN IT – Keep Rats Out of Your Community”^{lxiii}.

Comparatively low rents

The last half of the 20th century transformed Bushwick into a home for low-income renters in a primarily Hispanic, immigrant community. Ethnic groups common in the neighborhood are Puerto Ricans, Hondurans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Ecuadorians, African Americans, Haitians, Jamaicans, and Afro-Caribbeans. There is also smaller numbers of Chinese, Koreans, Indo-Caribbeans (Guyana and Trinidad), Filipinos, and Arabs in the area. Since 2000, the rise of real estate prices in nearby Manhattan has made the neighborhood more attractive to younger professionals^{lxiv}. In the wake of reduced crime rates citywide and a shortage of cheap housing in nearby neighborhoods such as Park Slope and Williamsburg, an influx of young professionals and artists moved into converted warehouse lofts, brownstones, limestone-brick townhouses, and other renovated buildings.

CONCLUSION

This review examines the erosion of economic, political, and social capital, a variety of intervention models, and the evaluation of such models between 1875 and 2010. It highlights the negative impacts of this erosion and the subsequent need for a comprehensive model like ACT. Specifically, it makes the case for the imperativeness of an intervention model that accounts for bonding social capital within communities, bridging social capital between communities, and creating synergy between communities and public institutions. Furthermore, the historical interplay between politics and evaluation as well as the absence of a comprehensive evaluation of the ACT model paves the way for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction and Overview

The foregoing literature review demonstrates the need for a descriptive study that leads to a conceptualization of ACT, and its role and primary responsibilities in promoting change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies in two communities—Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. The literature also identifies characteristics of this subject that warrant a qualitative inquiry as the preferred approach.

Qualitative inquiry is naturalistic, not controlled, and takes a holistic approach to the study of a subject that is affected by context. This approach also facilitates the adaptability of the study design as understanding deepens. Finally, inductive analysis of or immersion in the details of the subject produces categories or dimensions that are the desired product of the project (Patton, 2002). It is clear that a qualitative approach would best accomplish the goal of this study: to gain an in-depth understanding of ACT in two communities, from the perspectives of the people involved.

A presentation follows of this study's research design, including a rationale for the selection of the phenomenological method, a description of the data collection techniques, and an explanation of the procedures used in the analysis of the data and organization of the findings.

Phenomenological Method

A qualitative research design was utilized to gather descriptive information and explore ACT's role and primary responsibilities in the change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick CCEs. According to the literature, there are several dimensions of change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies associated with CCEs. Contextual dimensions include the essence and functions of these aspects, coupled with persons' stakes in these endeavors. The primary dimension and focus of this study is the process of change goals and outcomes, central

principles, and operational strategies. The phenomenological method was employed to explore this process, identifying the core meanings of these change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies experiences.

Data Collection

Site Selection and Target Population

The two participating CCEs are located in Brooklyn, New York: one in Brownsville-East New York and one in Bushwick. Criterion-based sampling was used to select CCEs for this study (Patton, 2002). Criteria for inclusion were as follows: first, the CCEs had a history of ACT participation.^{lxv} Second, at the time of this study, the CCEs had current ACT participation. Third, the CCEs did not have a history of a thorough evaluation. Fourth, the CCEs were willing to have an external observer look at their change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies experiences.

The respondents for this study were all former and/or current adult participants of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick CCEs, including former and/or current staff of ACT, as well as partners within government, foundations, and policy advocacy organizations. Since the beginning of ACT, an average of 350 participants participated in each CCE, totaling 700 leaders. The majority of these participants were from Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick and, at the time of this study, either continued to participate in their respective CCEs, or moved on to higher levels of leadership but maintained contact with current participants in their respective CCEs. For these reasons, the majority of participants were reachable.

The researcher contacted potential respondents individually through a recruitment letter sent to their work or home address, whichever was on record as their mailing address. This letter was also sent to their e-mail addresses, if available. Potential respondents' addresses were available via Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick CCE databases stored on a computer at ACT's offices. The letter (see Appendices) presented the purpose of the study, and requested potential respondents' participation in an individual interview that was conducted in a mutually agreed-upon location that excluded ACT offices. The letter requested that potential respondents contact the researcher by telephone or e-mail to state whether or not they wanted to participate. This

ensured that every potential respondent received the invitation. The researcher anticipated that a maximum of 80 respondents would complete participation in the study, 40 from each CCBE. However, a total of 50 participated: 11 Brownsville-East New York CCE participants, 14 Bushwick participants, 13 government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners, and 13 ACT staff.

Potential respondents who stated that they did not want to participate were thanked in a return telephone call, note, or e-mail message (see Appendices). Potential respondents who agreed to discuss participation in the study received a return telephone call to discuss the consent process, the purpose of the study, the types of questions the researcher would ask, the option of tape recording the interview, and how the researcher intended to use the results of the study. The researcher also answered any questions at that point. If the potential respondent agreed to proceed, the researcher and the potential respondent decided on a mutually convenient time and place to meet for a two-hour, face-to-face interview. The researcher told the potential respondent that she would confirm on the morning of the interview to make certain the time and place were still convenient, and to remind the potential respondent that they could withdraw from the study at that point if they wished (see Appendices).

Sampling Procedures

This is a qualitative study in the phenomenological tradition of case study research (Patton, 2002). This method aims for a rich description of the lived experience of potential respondents, and allows for themes of the greatest salience to the respondents to emerge through discourse; this occurred for participants of both CCEs, and the findings of each group were compared. As stated above, the researcher sent all potential respondents a recruitment letter that described the purpose of the study, what participation would entail, and the voluntary nature of their participation. The letter stated the researcher's request that potential respondents contact her by telephone or e-mail, whether or not they wished to participate. Once the potential respondents responded and agreed to proceed, the researcher contacted them with more information about the study and, if they agreed to continue, established a time and place for an interview (see Appendices). Potential respondents who did not agree to continue were thanked in a return telephone call or e-mail message. The researcher conducted all interviews. Interviews took place

in person, at a designated time, at the mutual convenience of the potential respondent and the interviewer, and did not include ACT offices. Before the interview began, each potential respondent was given a copy of an informed consent form to read and sign. If they agreed to be audio-taped, they were also given an audio consent form (see Appendices). If they did not agree to be audio-taped, the interviewer asked for their permission to take notes. The researcher gave each respondent a copy of their signed consent form for their records, as well as a list of resources on CCEs engaged in similar and varying types of change goals, central principles, and operational strategies (see Appendices).

All interviews used a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendices) with a variety of questions, all with probes to explore responses in-depth. The questions moved from broad questions about respondents' general experiences with ACT to more specific questions about their experiences with ACT's involvement in the change goals of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick CCEs. Additional questions explored subjects' perceptions of ACT's involvement in the central principles and operational strategies of both CCEs, including how ACT's involvement supported these aspects and learned lessons.

Although the researcher employed an interview guide, she also followed the respondents' leads into areas they determined were most relevant to their experiences/perceptions. Interviews were tape recorded when consent was granted. The researcher transcribed tapes and typed notes. These were de-identified and tapes and notes were immediately destroyed, as there was no need to tie each respondent's reports to the specifics of their personal situations. Transcriptions were assigned numerical codes.

The researcher entered all transcribed data into a non-hierarchical qualitative data analysis program that was used in the coding and analysis.

The qualitative data analysis (QDA) programs used in this study allowed the researcher to structure the massive amounts of qualitative data in meaningful and systematic ways, code the data with an extensive concept and variable scheme, and retrieve the data in ways that allowed her to evaluate patterns in the data. The point of the computer-assisted QDA was not to turn data

into quantifiable data for the subject of statistical analysis, but rather to reference and cross-reference occurrences in ways that make the analysis of patterns more systematic and less anecdotal, while retaining the depth of information that made the data unique (Dohan & Sanchez-Jankowshi, 1998). The point of the QDA software was not to thwart the “thick description” (Geertz, 2000) of meaningful experiences, but to assist in managing, systematizing, and explaining voluminous and rich data by helping the researcher see the larger picture.

In this study, the researcher used an extensive coding scheme that contained codes generated both deductively (prior to fieldwork) and inductively (during fieldwork). The codes were instrumental in helping the researcher recognize and chart patterns of change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies experiences. By applying codes that easily allowed the researcher to retrieve particular types of occurrences in the data, she was better able to determine if the experiences were isolated or part of larger patterns. Furthermore, coding allowed the researcher to see which types of experiences co-occurred with which sets of change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies experiences.

On the deductive side, the researcher’s codebook utilized concepts and variables drawn from preexisting empirical literature and social theory, before she entered the field. Codes were placed into larger substantively meaningful code families that provided a higher level of abstraction. Some codes had sub-codes that provided more descriptive depth and a lower level of abstraction. “Free codes” that were not assigned to a specific family were used, allowing for open associations when a code did not exactly fit into a pre-existing family.

On the inductive side, the researcher developed codes and families that were applied to emerging patterns, even if they were not adequately represented in the initial coding schema. Inductive concepts were placed into pre-existing code families when applicable; otherwise, new code families were formed. As new patterns emerged and were given codes, earlier data was recoded to maintain consistency throughout the data set. The application of codes to pieces of data was not mutually exclusive, meaning that even the smallest bit of experiential data could be tagged with all of the relevant codes.

The researcher developed graphics to organize and represent findings. These included typologies, trajectories, and charts, some of which accompany this research report.

Data Gathering Instruments

The following data sources and data collection methods were also used in this study:

- Documented activities: Specific, documented activities carried out by respondents were collected. Documented activities included minutes, reports, and memos; all were tracked in a database.
- Interviews: Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with respondents. Interview questions were developed and tested for validity and reliability. The interviewer conducted all interviews, and recorded, transcribed, and coded all answers.
- Observation.
- Social and economic indicators: Agenda for Children Tomorrow maintains social and economic indicators drawn from administrative agencies and the U.S. Census in their Assets Inventory Library. These data was valuable in contextualizing many of the change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies experiences. For some experiences, it was necessary to draw upon additional data sources.
- Oral history/archiving: A group of selected respondents provided an oral history of CCEs in Brownsville-East York and Bushwick.

Interviews

Earlier studies have utilized the interview method with respondents to identify and describe the change goals and outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies experiences in the study of CCEs (Milligan, Coulton, York, & Register, 1998). However, none of these studies include ACT.

The researcher utilized the interview method to avoid constrictions imposed by other data gathering instruments and facilitate further exploration of respondents' answers. Individual interviews were designed to access respondents' perspectives that were knowledgeable, meaningful, and able to be made explicit. Questions were designed in a way that presupposed the

respondents have something meaningful to say, using their terminology, perceptions, and experiences. This is critical in a phenomenological study, because people's language provides a powerful means to understand the phenomenon under investigation. In order to capture the world of individual/neighborhood/system change and the operational strategies of the CCEs under investigation in this study, the interviews were recorded and field notes were taken. These notes were detailed and concrete, describing the physical setting; what people said, including direct quotes; the researcher's own reactions and feelings; and the researcher's insights and interpretations.

Interviews with CCE Participants and Government, Foundation, and Advocacy Partners

As previously mentioned, interviews occurred at mutually agreed-upon locations, outside of ACT offices. Each respondent signed a consent form and, if they agreed to be recorded, an audio consent form (see Appendices).

In designing the interview questions to explore the phenomenon of CCEs, the researcher employed meanings as conceptual units of analysis (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). The questions elicited meanings that respondents gave to the structure, process, and outcomes of change goals, central principles, and operational strategies.

The researcher referred to instruments developed by The Aspen Institute (1997). In questioning the respondents, the researcher found it helpful to include probes using language from The Aspen Institute (1997) (see Appendices).

The demographic characteristics of the respondents interviewed are found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Demographic Characteristics of Partners and Staff Interviewed

	B-ENY Partners	Bushwick Partners	Government, Foundation, and Policy Partners	ACT Staff
TOTAL	11	14	13	13
Gender				
Female	10	12	5	9
Male	1	2	8	4
Race				
Asian	0	0	0	0
Black	11	7	5	4
Hispanic	0	4	1	2
Other	0	0	0	0
White	0	3	7	7

Interviews with ACT Staff

Previous studies raise many questions regarding how CCEs facilitate their change goals, central principles, and operational strategies. ACT staff was interviewed to explore these dimensions further, and the values and assumptions associated with them.

Observation

As this was a descriptive, exploratory study to generate hypotheses, non-systemic observation was employed when possible (Tripodi & Epstein, 1980). Through direct, personal observation of the CCEs, the researcher used her own experience to understand and interpret change goals, central principles, and operational strategies. In all observations, she captured the language used

and described the physical and social environments. She took notes during all observations. The researcher did not conduct any covert observations.

The researcher observed one monthly meeting of the CCENY and one Bushwick IMPACT event. Both provided opportunities to understand and describe the culture of each in relationship to change goals, central principles, and operational strategies. The researcher was a non-participant observer in both contexts.

Archival Records

Documents were reviewed based upon their relevancy to change goals, central principles, and operational strategies. Past and present agency publications were included in the data collection process.

Reliability and Validity Issues

Since the purpose of this study was to describe the conceptual elements of the CCE process, it was critical that each concept be measured separately, linking its nominal and operational definitions. Principles for constructing valid and reliable data collection instruments were followed in designing and using the interview guide with respondents. Each person was presented with a standard set of questions. Each question contained no more than one concept, and what kind of information was being sought—experiential, information, opinions, values, feelings, knowledge, or demographics—was made clear. To maximize the quality of the interview findings, the questions were worded in a neutral fashion. The basic principles of interviewing were employed. Prefatory and transition statements between topics, as well as recognition and feedback, were provided as each interview proceeded. Follow-up questions clarified or further explored interviewees' responses. Probes further explored certain areas in an effort to exhaust the possible responses. These interviewing principles provided guidance for, and kept the respondent invested in, the interview. They also helped the researcher maintain control of the interviews.

The triangulation of methods for gathering different kinds of data from different perspectives served to maximize the data's reliability and to construct validity. Key informants emerged in

each CCE. Although their input was valuable, the researcher used them carefully, knowing that their perspectives were limited. The researcher's involvement in the CCEs and the lives of the respondents was simultaneously the study's greatest strength and greatest weakness. The researcher's biggest challenge was maintaining an analytical perspective while experiencing the CCEs.

Political and Ethical Issues

ACT

Regular communication via electronic mail and telephone was scrupulously maintained with ACT to keep them informed of and invested in the study. The value of openly apprising all respondents of the study's purpose also communicated ACT's commitment to the study.

The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized among all respondents. All respondents signed consent forms and audio consent forms, and all observed groups gave verbal consent prior to being observed.

Interviews with and Observations of CCE Participants and Government, Foundation, and Advocacy Partners

These interviews were personal, taking the researcher into areas of the respondents' private thoughts with respect to ACT. Therefore, the researcher exercised maximum professional discretion and caution in her attempts to meet with participants and partners. She accepted staff recommendations about interviewing participants and partners. She also always respected participants' and partners' desires and needs regarding time and confidentiality.

Interviews with ACT Staff

The recruitment letter to ACT staff emphasized the "expert" role of the respondents in educating the researcher. Some respondents shared that this approach encouraged them to invest in a conversation about a topic that is seldom explored in depth: "Interviews are interventions" (Patton, 2002, p. 339). The interview questions asked staff to share their thoughts on the ways in which ACT impacted them in a professional sense, as well as on ACT's future priorities. Given

the possibility that these interviews could raise questions about ACT, the staff will receive feedback in the form of a written report at the conclusion of this study.

Data Management and Analysis

Data Management

All interviews were transcribed and stored on a computer. The transcriptions included the researcher's feelings, impressions, and interpretations. The researcher began to analyze the data following the transcription of all interviews. As the analysis proceeded, she developed and maintained an organizational system. Evolution of the organizational system was guided by the use of the previously mentioned analytical unit. Concentrating on this analytical unit facilitated identification of the contextual dimensions of CCEs most applicable for this study.

Cross-Case Content Analysis

A cross-case analysis of the data was employed, using each group of interviews and observations, totaling four, as a case. Logical analysis of the data within each group identified emergent patterns or themes generated by either the respondents or the researcher. The inductive and deductive, grounded theoretical approach to gathering, coding, and categorizing interview and observational data were utilized. Analysis of the themes and relationships emerging from the categories provided the respondents produced interpretations and possible hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The first analytical task was description. As previously mentioned, the researcher used QDA to review the full data set for common patterns and emerging themes, and developed a classification system around these themes. The data was coded to fit the categories and subcategories in the classification system. The categories and subcategories were then tested for independence, logic, and completeness. The classification system was revised until the categories and subcategories attained maximum possible meaningfulness and accuracy, and all of the data was exhausted.

The second step in analysis was interpretation. The researcher reviewed and drew interpretations from each theme in the classification system, making minor modifications in the order of the system.

Organization of the Findings

The findings could have been organized, according to the dimensions of CCEs, from the analysis of meanings or by each stakeholder groups' perspectives on these dimensions. The researcher chose the latter option for a couple of reasons. First, this option emphasizes each group's conceptualizations of change goals, central principles, and operational strategies, an important goal of this study. Second, this option clarifies the contributing attributes of each group, a secondary focus of this study.

The findings are presented from the perspectives of participants, partners, and ACT staff in relationship to both communities, using their own words. There is extensive use of excerpts, including quotes from the interviews, to communicate the richness and depth of the meanings.

Overview of the Findings

The findings are organized into four chapters. Each chapter contains descriptive information in the form of respondent quotations and interpretations of the data.

Chapters 4 through 7 described and analyze several contextual dimensions of change goals, central principles, and operational strategies by stakeholder group. Chapter 4 focuses on Brownsville-East New York stakeholders' perspectives. Chapter 5 dedicates itself to Bushwick stakeholders' experiences. Chapter 6 homes in on government, foundation, and advocacy stakeholders' meanings. Chapter 7 includes ACT staff's experiences. Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes this study's findings and discusses its implications for future social work research.

Chapter 4: Brownsville East New York Partners

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the purpose of this phenomenological study: to explore, describe, and conceptualize understandings of the CCE of ACT, their goals for change, their guiding principles, their operational strategies, and their individual/family, neighborhood, and systems level changes. There are several contextual dimensions associated with these areas, including groups of stakeholders involved with ACT.

An exploration of Brownsville-East New York stakeholders' perspectives on these previously mentioned areas is the first step in this study.

Although an exhaustive and comprehensive analysis of Brownsville-East New York stakeholders' perspectives is not the purpose of this study, an examination of selected aspects of these previously mentioned areas will contribute to the grounding of CCEs in human experience, particularly in its variations across different stakeholders. Data describing these areas were gathered through interviews with Brownsville-East New York stakeholders involved with ACT. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings for this group.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF ACT

The previously mentioned literature states that there is no precise definition of comprehensive community efforts (CCEs) (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002, Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with respondents' diverse understandings of Agenda for Children Tomorrow.

The literature also attempts to define CCEs by stating that “comprehensive” encompasses the range of measures and actions used to tackle social problems, and it includes the way these measures and actions are related, the person who undertakes them, and the ways people undertake them. “Community” refers to the political or administrative community, the community as a social group of belonging, or the community of individual interests within a specific geographical area. “Efforts” refer to private initiatives, isolated projects, integrated programs supported by government, or all three at once (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002, Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with most understandings below.

One understanding described ACT as an organization that utilizes the measures of technical assistance and support on operational strategies. ACT was equated with the Brownsville-East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network (B-ENY CWNN)^{lxvi}, the parent organization of the CCENY (Community Coalition of East New York)^{lxvii}; specifically, ACT was viewed as a member organization of the B-ENY CWNN. It was also perceived as knowledgeable about the measures of community building and partnership development.

“To me, Agenda for Children is like the other social agencies that are around and programs that are around. They’re there, and they’re present to help children be better persons, okay. I would imagine that the goals will probably be very much similar. My thinking is that with every agency that has to deal with social welfare and specifically child welfare, they’ll have a different slant.”₆

and

“To assist with community partnerships, to assist with community building, to also give us technical support in developing the Coalition, SPAs, because they were a part of the Brownsville-East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network that we had seven years ago. And it was to provide the technical support and assistance to make sure that we were headed in the right direction and we had what we needed to do that.”₁

and

“Oh, well, the short version is ACT is an organization that provides technical support...to community based organizations in the various communities on a variety of levels.”⁵

One understanding equated ACT with encompassing and practicing measures of organizing principles:

“The focus is on children, and from what I see of his participation and organizational impact in the network, I get the sense that there is not only a focus for children, but how they thrive and work in correlation to their growth. With families, yes, that’s a done deal, but also, how we can impact on their lives as they develop in appropriate fashion and in a beneficial fashion to the society as a whole. To me, Agenda for Children is like the other social agencies that are around and programs that are around. They’re there, and they’re present to help children be better persons, OK.”⁶

Another respondent discussed ACT’s measures and actions in relationship to the community. She equated ACT to a “consultant firm” that advises and provides technical assistance to community-based organizing groups whose goals are related to improving the lives of children. This respondent understood ACT as more oriented toward a policy-driven agenda rather than a direct service agenda:

“Sure. I guess I see ACT as a, how do you call it, consultant firm in a sense where they are advisors, technical assistance to me just for any community organizing group that involves children. That’s kind of how I see them more as a policy-driven type organization. That’s kind of what I know pretty much. Not really direct service agenda, as an agency, just more as a policy-driven type assistance group.”²

Another understanding equated ACT with a person, ACT's former executive director^{lxviii}. This understanding also equated ACT with another person, ACT's former associate director. This understanding also equated ACT with the measures of creating several reports concerning children's safety, abuse prevention, and related topics intended to inform and improve the work of the Administration of Children's Services^{lxix}. It described ACT in relationship to government: it was as an "ally to" and "arm of" the Administration for Children's Services.

"Well, my understanding is that it was an organization that was created by [ACT's former executive director], who was later joined by [ACT's former associate executive director]. And that they wrote proposals concerning the safety of children, the prevention of child abuse, and things of that nature, offered them to ACS and became, I want to say ally, but it was like an arm of ACS [ACT's former executive director], having been a commissioner at one time. I don't think they were commissioners at that time. That wasn't his title. But he was working with them to improve their functioning and for the safety and the prevention of abuse to children."³

Another understanding conveyed ACT as Osman. She described their mission as ensuring that children become productive citizens in the world by focusing on their healthy development, leaning toward a prevention-versus-intervention approach and viewing children within the context of families and communities:

"Probably my orientation, I should say first, is from the work that I see [the community coordinator of the CCENY] do, OK. The focus is on children, and from what I see of his participation and organizational impact in the network, I get the sense that there is not only a focus for children, but how they thrive and work in correlation to their growth. With families, yes, that's a done deal, but also, how we can impact on their lives as they develop in appropriate fashion and in a beneficial fashion to the society as a whole."

"I've always felt that preventive is going to be the wave of the future for child welfare. We're going to have to try to come from intervening, which is primarily the essence of

foster care, to the place of trying to put services in place with families so they can begin to not see on a regular routine basis, foster care as a way to work out their problems. So, Agenda for Children I imagine would also be looking at that as its focus, trying to work with children in the context of their families. I do believe that children—and this is something I’m very adamant about is that children do not drop out of the sky. They live in the context of family. However that family looks or how it’s constructed, it is still the connection, the basic unit in terms of society. So, children can’t do things or function things. You’re just wired that way. They’re made that way. Children can’t do things by themselves. They have to do within the context of parents, siblings, relatives; however it’s done. So, that’s my understanding or that’s how I see ACT, as well as I see the various other types of programs that have to focus on children.”⁶

She and additional respondents discussed their associations of ACT with specific persons undertaking specific measures and actions. This respondent also said ACT provided assistance with the hiring of Osman Boakye and accessing data pertinent to the issues they were working on. Specifically, she discussed ACT’s community planning director’s assistance with setting up a parent advocate–driven referral system between head starts/child care and prevention agencies, both of which receive funding from the Administration for Children’s Services. She made the distinction between ACT’s providing the information versus doing the actual work of setting up the referral system. She described ACT as a “trainer” and “advisor”:

“I know for the Brownsville-East New York Network, when there was a spot, definitely they provided us with a coordinator, [the community coordinator of the CCENY]. And he came in to provide the assistance to the network as far as organizing events and working with the organizations that fit in the SPA network as far as recording minutes and providing different information that we send the coalition [inaudible 2:00], they have provided for us. But also, for example, [ACT’s director of community planning], she is now trying to work out with our current CPI to get involved getting parent advocates to help us with our referrals between the head start/child care and preventive agencies. So, I think that how—I guess the first question is how can we as a coalition utilize parent

advocates? Is it feasible? That's the first question. And, two, the financial implications for those for that role.”₂

In keeping with the literature's definition of community, this respondent said ACT worked in high-need neighborhoods; specifically, in neighborhoods where child neglect, abuse, and poverty indicators are high. She also reported that CCENY's work with ACT has occurred primarily through the coordinator of the CCENY, aka the East New York Community Partnership Initiative, in the capacity of mentor. She stated that ACT assisted CCENY in the selection process that led to the hiring of the coordinator:

“As far as what they do is they work in neighborhoods where there is a lot of poverty, a lot of child abuse, a lot of need. Washington Heights I think is one of their projects. Bushwick is one of their projects. Brownsville-East New York was an ACS project. That's my understanding of ACT.”₃

Associations of ACT with ACS

There were several understandings that were consistent with the literature's definition of efforts. One respondent said ACT was a part of the Administration for Children's Services and a member of the CCENY. It equated Osman as an employee of the Administration for Children's Services because he coordinates CCENY meetings, which receive funding from the Administration for Children's Services. It perceived Osman to be connected to ACT, which was a program of ACS but one that was separate from the CCENY:

“I always thought he was part of ACS. I actually do not work for ACS either. I'm an employee of the Jewish Ward of Family Children's Services, and when I started attending the network meetings in 2002 when we started here in this field office, [the community coordinator of the CCENY] was the person who would organize the meetings, pull them together, send out all the emails, was based in an ACS office, was in the global network as an ACS person. So, I just made the assumption that he worked for ACS and didn't

recognize—when he would speak about Agenda for Children Tomorrow I saw it as a program he was connected with within ACS and not as a separate entity.”⁸

Other respondents elaborated on how ACT carried out their measures/actions in relationship to ACS: ACT guides ACS on CPIs. They viewed ACS as the day-to-day, logistical, technical assistance providers while ACT was viewed as the overarching, strategic planning and technical assistance providers:

“You know what? You just brought something to mind, and that’s where [ACT’s director of community planning] comes in, and we’re at the point now, let’s say, halfway, if you really want to know the area what we are doing, she’s great like that. They will come in, listen to what you have to say. Like I said, that logical, analytical, critical thinking, and they put it all together and say, “Yeah. That’s how I see ACT.” Because they’re great. They’re really good at that. They’ll come. They’ll listen.”^{10 & 11}

This is consistent with, according to Saegert, Thompson, and Warren as well as Putnam, the third level of social capital: creating synergy between communities and public institutions. Furthermore, it is consistent with Smock’s community-organizing model of community building.

Lack of Clarity on ACT

There were also several reports on the lack of clarity on ACT and its role. For example, one understanding reflected ACT’s intent as similar to CCENY’s intent: to share resources for the benefit of children and families of B-ENY and the rest of Brooklyn. This understanding acknowledged the relationship between ACT and the CCENY; however, it was unfamiliar with its exact nature:

“Well, we’ve done a number of things here at Brooklyn Children Center with the coalition. First is that as part of our community outreach services we host an annual what we call a substance abuse conference where we bring service providers together to talk about issues on substance abuse, how it affects the family, how it affects areas of mental

health. And this is a conference that normally has an audience of anywhere between 300 to 350 people. And we've been doing this for seven years now. It'll be seven years coming up this November. One of the [inaudible 2:26] is that as an organization is part of the, as you say, the ACT now, we had service providers in the Brownsville-East New York area are able to kind of come together and share resources for the community at large, actually, not only just for the residents here in Brownsville-East New York, but throughout the borough of Brooklyn.”⁹

Another understanding associated ACT with paying Osman's salary until the Administration for Children's Services awarded CPI funding to B-ENY CWNN, at which time ACS began paying Osman's salary:

“So, as far as I know, [the community coordinator of the CCENY] works with ACT, right, but [the community coordinator of the CCENY] is the liaison. As far as I know, before we got the grant money, before CPI, ACT was paying [the community coordinator of the CCENY]. He used to get his salary from ACT. So, basically, that was the tie, at least for me, with regards with being involved with East New York group. ACT was just [the community coordinator of the CCENY's] employer.”¹⁰

Another understanding conveyed that Osman was not paid with CCENY funding but rather with ACT funding:

“...and also, I think [the community coordinator of the CCENY] is still paid by ACT. I don't think he's paid out of the CPI funds...”¹¹

Both of these respondents did not equate ACT and Osman as working together with the goal of improving the lives of children and families. They merely perceived ACT as an entity that paid Osman's salary—and as one that is synonymous with ACS.

Another understanding described ACT as a service provider to community-based organizations in B-ENY:

“Oh, well, the short version is ACT is an organization that provides...services to community-based organizations in the various communities on a variety of levels.”⁵

Another respondent was unable to articulate ACT’s mission but said it was related to improving children, families, and communities:

“I only can go from my experience. I don’t know that much about them. In terms—I know it’s an agency working with children, of course, but in terms of what we do, in terms of [the community coordinator of the CCENY], he’s a liaison with our community network agency. He pretty much oversees the various groups that are involved with that, and I know he has to report back to his main office, which is ACT, as they call it. So, to me, it’s more like a liaison, which means various agents that work with children or are involved in making life better for children and families.”⁴

“Well, as far as to my knowledge, I know that the Agenda for Children Tomorrow, that they, under the leadership of [ACT’s former executive director], developed a task force. I believe it’s in Bushwick or Bed-Stuy. I can’t remember. And he had been involved a lot in community. I think that was one of his passions, because he’s always talking about community wherever I met him in meetings or in conferences. He was always talking about the commitment to their community. Their mission exactly I don’t really know. But based on being involved with the community, I would believe it has to do something also with community, their mission statement or whatever it is.”⁷

Another respondent was unable to articulate her understanding of ACT:

“I really don’t know much at all about Agenda for Children Tomorrow. I know the name, and I learned today that [the community coordinator of the CCENY] works for them. I didn’t realize that he was separate from ACS. I thought he was part of ACS. So, that was

news to me. And I know they're a member of the organization that I attend meetings at to participate.”⁸

ACT via Osman brought together service providers and created a space where community residents could voice their concerns and be a part of addressing them:

“I think bringing people together. I think bringing service providers together, particularly in the Brownsville-East New York Network. I think that's the main thing. Any sort of way that we can bring services together to help families ultimately reflects on the entire system, whether it's the local government, state government, even federal government, because it's a matter of strengthening families. And I think that's what we're trying to do.”⁹

“As a—oh, God, I don't even know how to say this other than to just say it. Well, working with [the community coordinator of the CCENY], he has accepted me just for who I am. I don't have to put on no airs. I can be just as blunt and direct as I naturally am. I don't have to color code anything, look for any big vocabulary to get my point across. And I can say exactly what's on my heart and what other people in the community want to say and don't say. And you're not condemned for it. People is like, oh, no, she didn't say that. Yeah, I said it. You guys want to say it, but you scared. But I'm not on anybody's payroll, so it's OK. And that's just how I just conduct my everyday life.”⁵

These understandings are most reflective of the first level of social capital: exclusive social capital (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren; Putnam). Specifically, these understandings equate ACT with an organization that addresses social inequalities, and therefore political and economic inequalities, by bonding social capital within Brownsville-East New York with the goal of addressing poverty, rebuilding the community, and achieving a sense of control over its life.

In addition, these understandings are most consistent with Smock's belief that the way to address social, political, and economic inequalities is by working with disenfranchised citizens so they

may be able to affect their conditions. She refers to this as “community organizing.” One of the above understandings explicitly equated ACT with “organizing principles.” Lastly, most of the above understandings are synonymous with Smock’s common features shared between community organizing models: building individual capacity—developing local leaders and building community capacity—networks and social, political, and economic capital.

Lastly, associations of ACT with ACS and lack of clarity are consequences of ACT’s origin and history in Brownsville-East New York (see endnote lxviii). The Administration for Children’s Services, via its various community partnership initiatives, came into existence prior to ACT in Brownsville-East New York. The Administration for Children’s Services, prior to 2003, requested ACT’s assistance in its partnership work. Specifically, ACT supervised staff in Brownsville-East New York and led the partnership work from setup to implementation, etc.

GOALS FOR CHANGE

The literature states that CCEs pursue three objectives: substantial change in distressed communities and a sustainable development and improvement process in order to improve conditions and opportunities for individuals and families residing in these communities; change in the nature of relationships between communities and external service providers; and local change by drawing upon both local and external resources and knowledge. Simply put, CCEs seek change on the individual and family level, community level, and systemic level (American Writing Corporation, 1992; Barchechat, 2003; Barss and Associates, 1969; Brettschneider, 2001; Chaskin et al., 2001; Connell et al., 1995; Fishman, 1993; Milligan et al., 1996; and Stone, 1996). Remnants of these goals are evident in respondents’ reports below.

Shared Goals during the B-ENY CWNN

The history of shared goals between B-ENY Child Welfare Neighborhood Network and ACT were discussed. Community change goals included moderating several events, mostly fulfilled by Eric Brettschneider; recruiting, interviewing, and selecting a liaison for the B-ENY CWNN; and discussing issues, challenges, etc. as well as potential responses. Additional change goals, including systems-level change goals, included sharing city-level information via the ACT Oversight Meeting, sharing information on what other ACT communities were doing, conducting strategic planning in the absence of resources for the B-ENY Child Welfare Neighborhood Network, increasing job readiness with parents, lifting up the community's voice to citywide decision makers, and the hiring of a dedicated and hardworking liaison, Osman:

“Well, I’m trying to think back to when we first worked with them. It was when we were looking for a liaison person. And they offered us their help in finding a liaison, collected the résumés, offered them to us. We interviewed. And [ACT’s former executive director] sat in on the interviews.”

“I’m seeing [ACT’s former executive director] as our moderator for our first breakfast, but that was prior to us getting a liaison person.”

“Well, because [the community coordinator of the CCENY] worked for ACT, when we did his evaluation, we went to ACT and talked about his performance. When I say we, one of our chairs and myself. It wasn’t [the co-chair of the CCENY]; she wasn’t able to make it. It was someone who worked for ACS, Trisha Johnson. She’s no longer with us. She works in Manhattan. And she decided that she had to give up the co-chair. So, we would do that. And then, of course, we became involved with ACT when they would invite us to their oversight meetings. And we became involved like that. That was good because it added to our knowledge. And [ACT’s director of community planning] was the supervisor for [the community coordinator of the CCENY]. So, I had interaction with her. OK. This is very important.”

“[ACT’s former associate executive director], we asked [ACT’s former associate executive director] and [the ACT’s director of integrative services, Family Engagement,

and Training] to come over and help us to organize or to decide what it was that we needed to do and how to do it.”

“Coffee time. And they introduced us to that idea and to workshops for the network. [Coffee time] was meetings of parents trying to—the way we did it is we had workshops, various workshops: one on getting a job, one on parenting, finances, and things of that nature. And we adopted two schools. And this was all at the suggestion of ACT. They gave us guidance in this matter. And we adopted two schools and had the workshops at the schools. The workshops were about] job readiness; we did about ten workshops on. Maybe six workshops on being ready to work, how to write a résumé, cover letter, how to—job fairs, how to get the information from the Internet. And some of the parents had never used the computer before. And we were able to help them write their résumé. Of course, it wasn’t myself or [the community coordinator of the CCENY] or [the co-chair of the CCENY] or anyone like that. We asked various members of the community to come in and help those who were interested or those who knew how to do those things, we asked them. One of the persons was Janice Teague who had run a job program, an employment program for the New York Urban League. And she was able to do that. She helped us—talked about attire, interviewing skills, and things of that nature.”³

“Well, in several conferences, he was a facilitator or a moderator, whatever you want to call it. I really can’t tell you what exactly he would speak about, but I know that it was always about community, that we must tap into it. We must work with the people and so forth. But I really can’t tell you verbatim what exactly he said. It’s been such a long time. But I know it was community, mostly community that he used to be—because most of the places I think it was community planning and development under Anna [inaudible 8:23]. And that’s where he used to come—we used to be attending those conferences where he would be. And he also came to our work meetings when Anna was there to talk about how we must tap into the community or we must be creative or we must know the leader of the community and so forth. But basically, that’s basically what I can remember. I knew then from that time, the way he spoke that he had this passion. That’s my perception.”⁷

“And I know he always said it shouldn’t be up/down, but it should be down/up.”⁷

“Well, with the network, which is also known as SPA, which is Service Planning Area, [the community coordinator of the CCENY] being the community coordinator was very instrumental. I don’t know. He came in and he just learned that community. And he’s knowledgeable. He knows where to tap in. He has been excellent. And I think [inaudible 10:49] also in the coalition, it’s good. It’s excellent, because working with a liaison who has prior knowledge, but not as much as [the community coordinator of the CCENY], is able to tap into areas and centers and places for our meetings and places also to involve other people to come into the other network. But to the coalition, because now we have the coalition, so they have—I believe that it was through [the community coordinator of the CCENY] but he’s a worker. But I think that—I don’t see that they’ve ever been there and they’ve needed to be there. I think they are always being a presence of the people from ACT.”⁷

Shared Goals for Change During CCENY

Furthermore, another dimension that shaped respondents’ accounts included how they perceived ACT’s relationship to the CCENY. Community level change such as improving the lives of children and their families by addressing daycare, mental health, child abuse prevention, family visitation, and foster parent recruitment needs as well as supporting children and families without the involvement of the Administration for Children’s Services were identified as goals by a respondent who viewed ACT as a member of CCENY:

“My understanding of the goals of the Community Coalition as it is today is that its network and collaboration with ACS evolves into something that can be sustained in the community without ACS. Well, taken on more of the role of providing services for families and interventions without the support and initiatives of Administration for Children Services, just outreaching—being able to have people refer to community-based

organization for services that will sustain a family without having to have ACS monitoring.”₅

Community level change like creating a space where service providers could learn about the others’ services for the benefit of children and families and hosting an annual substance abuse conference were identified as goals by a respondent who viewed ACT as a partner to CCENY:

“I think it was SPA 2 because a SPA 2, it encompassed Brownsville-East New York. So, each SPA was able to development their own goals. And Brownsville-East New York SPA, we had after-school education was one. And another one was substance abuse. The other was child abuse prevention. And the fourth goal was I think community influence where that involved getting community residents involved with that. So, each SPA has developed their own goals. And we as a SPA developed—we had our own breakfast. And we had child abuse prevention contests, with kids creating posters about child abuse prevention. And we had a calendar with that and poster contests. So, I think [ACT’s former executive director] of ACT was getting involved with us as far as with just helping develop the SPA, being supportive. He spoke at our annual breakfast. But I think he really helped get us connected across the city, I believe, as far as just—I didn’t meet him personally, but just heard him mentioned a lot during that time when we were a SPA. And we did a connection with a different organization, he was there to help us with that. So, again, ACT was involved with getting us the connections with certain groups or helping us find money for the actual SPA [inaudible 5:33] money. So, that was the first [inaudible] SPA with ACT in that instance.”₂

Respondents discussed the historical goal shifts between the Administration for Children’s Services and ACT, which affected CCENY’s relationship to ACT. They said the neighborhood-based services movement (known as B-ENY Child Welfare Neighborhood Network) was the child welfare system’s attempt to get communities more involved in the formulation and attainment of child welfare service delivery goals while the community partnership initiatives movement (known as CCENY) was the child welfare system’s attempt to increase their own involvement in the formulation and attainment of child welfare service delivery goals:

“Well, it was probably Commissioner Bell of ACS or Commissioner Scoppetta, it was Commissioner Bell in 2001, began neighborhood-based services in ACS. So, neighborhood-based services was ACS’s attempt to get the community involved with child welfare. He developed SPAs, service planning areas, across the city. And Brownsville-East New York was a particular SPA, SPA 2, or SPA 3, which was CDs 5 and 16. And we set up about three goals. One goal was after school...”²

Another respondent said Ms. Deborah Rubien assisted one of the CCENY work groups with the goal of strategic planning.

“Well, yes. [ACT’s director of community planning] has an interest in that committee because she found that it wasn’t—the implementation wasn’t as we expected it to be. The implementation went through, but we are not getting the children to the preventive agency as fast or vice versa with preventive to the head start, head start to preventive. So, she came with some strategic and strategies. And she talked about IMPACT, which is a group in Bed-Stuy or Bushwick, and how they’ve been working with the parent advocate or Advocates for Children. And she came with that to us. And we are looking into it right now to see how we can get parent advocate or community advocates so we can get the implementation of the work to go through us more than they are doing, because apparently their subgroup has met the goal and probably surpassed it. And they are involved in the schools. And I think with the faith-based organizations and the preventive agencies and the Head Start/Child Care.”⁷

There was also a discussion of CCENY’s goals; however, they were not discussed as shared goals with ACT. For example, community change goals included for service providers to network with each other in an effort to maximize the community’s resources when children and families were in need; to demystify mental health disorders; to troubleshoot challenging cases; to support families; to keep abreast of the latest issues and approaches in the area of substance abuse; and to recognize accomplishments by families and agencies:

“Yeah. That’s how I got connected. So, part of my job is to attend those meetings often enough to develop these relationships, and I’ve been active—fairly active in the coalition for the last few years. I’ve always gone to meetings, just kind of showed up, picked up paper, took names. Then lately, I’ve been co-chair of the mental health committee of the coalition.”

“When I came to this field office in 2002, the coalition or whatever it was called at the time, the service provision area network or whatever—what I was told was that this was the strongest one in the city. Every CD had one. They were there for community organizations to use to network with each other. This one actually really does meet regularly, talk to each other, have relationships with each other throughout the course of the month so that there’s an ongoing collaborative process, and I think part of the reason why the network is so strong out here is because there are so few resources for the clients in the area, and it means that we’ve all had to be creative in terms of working with each other around what can you do. And the fact that there are so many providers of services that are not traditional—thought of as traditional service providers for ACS clients. Let’s put it that way. I think that’s a plus. I think it’s nice that we can say I know the library on whichever street that has this particular program at this particular time that would be good for you and your family. Yeah.”

Additional community and system level change goals identified included to recruit and retain foster parents; to create linkages between head start/child care and preventive service agencies; to host visits between birth parents and children in foster care; to have community residents attend family team conferences; to increase awareness about mental health needs in children and families; to educate the public about community-based, human services via their semi-annual service provider fairs; to ensure that children strive to the best of their ability and to strengthen their families so that is possible; and to provide an array of services and activities to facilitate this goal, including an annual substance abuse conference that examines the effects of substance abuse on the mental health of children and their families:

“Yeah, so the SPA applied for the RFP and we got the actual grant of \$150,000. So, all the CPIs have the four same goals. So, the CPI of East New York started in fall of 2008. 2009 was the first year. So, it was February 2008 is when the CPI—is when the SPA became the CPI, which is now called the CCENY. And all eleven CPIs have the same four goals: recruiting and retaining foster parents, creating linkages between head start/child care preventive services, also to host visits between birth parents and children in foster care, and then, what’s another one, oh, to have community residents attend family team conferences. But we had our fiscal and that fiscal that the CPI of East New York added was to promote awareness of mental health issues in children and families.”²

“We had a fair in the neighborhood, we had it this past February, and many—it was like 50, 70 providers came to Thomas Jefferson High School when they had tables and they were giving out information about their different programs and activities, and community residents would come and just partake. We had lunch for them. It was a great way to introduce what we do to the community. There are a lot of resources out there that we are part of for being in the CPI and not everybody knows about them. We’re hoping to do another one of those maybe in the fall.”¹¹

“Right. My understanding is the whole purpose of ACT or the Brownsville-East New York Coalition is to work on strengthening families, strengthening families and to provide an array of services to, I guess, not only keep families together, but those families, to make sure that kids in those families strive to the best of their ability. That’s my understanding.”⁸

There were concerns that the CCENY’s goals were not meeting the comprehensive needs of children and families:

“The thing is, it goes back to what is the base of where it’s coming from. It’s dealing with children. So, I guess in a way—for me, if you’re just talking about needs, let’s say, for people in Brownsville-East New York, for you to become anything, that education and the job piece has to be there. That for me is—the education and the job piece has to be in

place, because how else are you going to help your young children? By providing them with daycare, yes. If you provide me with daycare so I can either go to school or work, yes. I mean, if I'm a foster—there are many children out there who need needs, or if I do foster care, then I'm feeling helpful. So, in a way I can agree with what he's saying, but I don't know if there's a certain piece that shouldn't be there. It's like you provide, 'We should concentrate on Head Start Childcare.' Fine. But OK, so my kid goes to the daycare, but what are you doing for me?"¹⁰

Respondents' associations of ACT's goals as shared goals for change with both the B-ENY CPI and B-ENY CWNN, initiatives of the Administration for Children's Services, is consistent with ACT's origin and history in Brownsville-East New York (see endnote lxviii). This was the result of ACT and the Administration for Children's Services, prior to 2003, joining to execute B-ENY's community partnership work.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING ACT

There are two principles that guide comprehensive community efforts: comprehensiveness and community building (Himmelman, 1992; Kubisch et al., 1997; Mattessich et al., 1992; Rosewater, 1992; and Stone, 1996). All respondents agreed with this notion, and most agreed with their definitions:

Comprehensiveness: the full range of circumstances, opportunities, and needs of individuals and families living in CCE communities and the relationships among them.

Community building: Strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive community change.

The literature states that CCEs give attention to comprehensiveness and community-building activities, in principle and/or action, and strive to achieve synergy among them. This too is reflected in respondents' observations below.

Comprehensiveness

One respondent offered another definition of comprehensiveness: involving community residents in the work.

“I guess comprehensiveness is gathering all the information and being able to use it in various places on the job, in your life, your work with the families, your work in the community.”³

This is consistent with Smock's civic model because it strives to improve neighborhoods by creating forums for residents to meet one another, exchange information, and solve problems.

One respondent said the CCENY promotes comprehensiveness by maintaining members who provide an array of services:

“I see the CPI as being comprehensive because we have so many services available, and we are trying to get the word out that they are here, that people can take advantage of them. Because, like Shirley was saying, there are so many facets to someone's needs, it might not just be a job. It's the schooling. It's the whole gamut, and we—I think with CPI we're sort of fine-tuning and trying to meet explicit needs, things that have been articulated from ACS; this is what we need in East New York. We're working on those.”¹¹

Another respondent said the CCENY promotes comprehensiveness by having the additional work group on mental health:

“We added the mental health committee because we thought that was a need that was not being met or people were underserved, so the CPI is comprehensiveness in that respect.”¹¹

One respondent said the CCENY believes comprehensiveness is about addressing children’s and families’ needs and building on their strengths:

“Well, comprehensiveness is a part of—is definitely important with our work, because our coalition is very diverse in the members we have. Our coalition is a system meant to help organizations, after-school programs, housing organizations. We also have community centers, literacy programs. So, we can’t just have foster care involved with our coalition, because children need everything. It’s supposed to go in foster care; we need twice as much because they lack the family that most children have. If you don’t have the family, the family’s your support, so if you have a family, then the bigger community is even more of a support because you didn’t have your mom and dad around to really help guide you. So, we don’t just help foster care kids, but we help all kids in alternative families. So, the members who we have in coalition do definitely—talk about [inaudible] from this because you definitely want to add the police department. You definitely want to invite the fire department. Every month at our coalition, we have presenters. We’ve had the fire department presenting one time. We had all kinds of people come, fatherhood programs, because families need everything. Families need recreation. Then, they need counseling. Families need housing. They need also a place to just relax with their children. So, again, part of our work is getting everybody on board, whether it be [inaudible 51:36], Grandma, former convicts, those who want to give back and help out their community. That’s what we’re about. So, we need everybody.”²

This is consistent with the first level of social capital building: bonding social capital within communities (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren; Putnam).

Another respondent said the CCENY’s comprehensive approach led to richer perspectives on and solutions to resident’s problems:

“I’m just thinking also, your question about examples, earlier this year there was a woman. She may have been a substance abuser, I’m not sure, but she was a young woman under 30 with like four or five kids, and she needed help. So, we were able to put the kids in daycare, which costs money, which CPI funded, and we were able to get help for the mother to help her deal with her issues. Then our meetings, examples of the help we’re giving out come up, and I wish we would like [another Brownsville-East New interviewee] said, I wish we were recording these because, if I think of another example—yeah. That one comes to mind because that happened this year, and that was significant because it took a load off her because she wasn’t able to manage the kids at that time. Sometimes when we have family visits there are parents who are not able to control their children, so we need a different type of visit. Instead of visit host, we would need a visit coach, which unfortunately, we don’t have, and they had asked me if I would go for the training, but it’s not really related to my primary work responsibilities, so I had told them no. But it would help because there are different types of families that we’re dealing with, and some families have different issues. The visit hosts go out with the families, they get to know them, and they just oversee what they’re doing.”¹¹

Another respondent went on to say that the CCENY’s dedication to comprehensiveness was evident because it exceeded the Administration for Children’s Services’ mandates:

“I will speak about the coalition as a whole. The preventive agencies that are in East New York, they are very much into the need of the community families. They are at least when I go to my debriefing, I hear about that. They’re looking at the community in a sense that people need them and they want to make a difference in their life. And whatever is presented before them, they know that they cannot solve every problem. But we are working as a coalition under the mandated board of our commissioner. So, therefore, we are looking not only to make the number [**inaudible** 20:59], but we also want to find out the process after these families have come in contact with a preventive agency in the sense of after they leave and they know what they have to do, if anybody will follow up with them to know if what they did was sustainable. Let’s put it that way. So, our liaison

and the workers of the different preventive agencies are looking to tap into the family after they leave and after they have that family team conference to see how the family has successfully met the mandated goal or whatever they hold or whatever they have set before them, whether it's preventive skills, drug and abuse, whatever. So, then, it went a little further. My coalition is looking into tapping into those areas, not only leave the family. And I think it's something also that the worker does in their respective agencies.”⁷

“I can say, and it was not with family-teen conferencing, but I think what the coalition tried to do to be comprehensive was to add that fifth goal, which was mental health. OK, because, for the most part, most of the other social programs vying for the RFP have not put in a fifth goal. They have put in according to what was required, which one of them was family-teen conferencing. The other was childcare. The other was the foster care support, and I think the third was the preventive—I'm going back to childcare—no, preventive services and school. So, the fifth made us unique, and that's the thing about comprehension is that it does speak to uniqueness or the uniqueness of the singular thing that zeroes in on the community, and for East New York/Brownsville, mental health is a singular piece that we may need to necessarily focus on.”⁶

This is consistent with Smock's transformative model because it seeks to alter dominant ideological frameworks and the terms of public debate by developing alternative ideological frameworks within B-ENY.

Another respondent said this strengthened the local, child welfare service network:

“Well, if everything goes right in terms of the coalition helping our caseworkers in terms of decreasing their responsibility, because if you have the host, that will mean so they don't have to be with their families. So, for the caseworkers, that would give them more time to dedicate to something else. So, they help reduce their pressure or time, give them more time so the host would take their place for the visits. Also, probably financial to the CPI because they will pay for the recreation and the transportation to the families that we

will have to give to them in that sense. I guess just giving service, helping us out reducing all of our workload. That's the biggest part so far.”⁴

Other respondents discussed community residents' participation in the B-ENY CWNN:

“As I said before, it's a work in progress. It's still a work in progress. Again, it's the right know, the agencies getting together and seeing what's going on and trying to get, again, Joe on the street involved by knowing what's going on. So, it's again letting them know about us and how to go about doing that.”⁴

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by sharing information with CCENY leaders via their quarterly oversight meetings:

“Before we were talking about the oversight. And that's part of it. That's gathering the knowledge so that you can spread it to your agency, to your families. I guess comprehensiveness is gathering all the information and being able to use it in various places on the job, in your life, your work with the families, your work in the community.”³

According to one respondent, when the B-ENY CWNN evolved into the CCENY, comprehensiveness became less systematic:

“In the CPI, we don't have that. We had that network because we had a community outreach group that would go into the community and meet people and offer information and bring them back to our monthly meetings. And in the beginning, when we were organizing, it was one of those things where we would come up with an idea to have the faith to have the community outreach group. And we would just pass whoever was at the meeting, just pass the paper around and have them sign up for it. To us, it was as simple as that. And people who would sign up would attend the meetings would do the work. For instance, the substance abuse group that we had, people signed up for it. They came

to the meetings. They planned the conference and found a place to have it and it just sort of happened.”₃

“Also, with the child abuse prevention group, people wanted to—that was one of the groups that we had at the network. And people signed up for it. They had an event every year, yearly event. People volunteered to work on it. And one day we came together and said, well, we need money. How are we going to do that? And I suggested—I don’t think it was the group that did calendars. And I suggested we do a calendar. And the child abuse took it up. And they had posters that went around to the various schools involved with kids. And they would draw posters of what it means to feel safe. And then, ACS printed it up for us. And we sold them. And it was like a grassroot[s] things, like a growing thing. People felt really a part of it. I’m not sure that they feel that way about the CPI.”₃

“Well, now, one of the groups that’s trying to bring back the community is the foster care. Right, the subgroup I think they called them. I think they are reaching out to the community, to the churches and things of that nature. We don’t have as many churches involved in our CPI as we would like to. We had some churches involved with the network. But they sort of dropped out. I don’t know. I think they obviously felt that there was no place for them. Well, in the head start/child care we do have one church daycare that is involved. But it’s a private daycare. And that’s not an ACS daycare. And there is a difference. But I’m glad for their participation, because they bring another dimension to that whole group, not religious or anything, but just daycare from the aspect of being a private concern, having to, what’s the word I’m looking for, having to market their daycare.”₃

Another respondent said the CCENY—not ACT—promoted comprehensiveness via relationship building; however, she acknowledged that ACT’s future assistance with this should be explored:

“And I’m not saying it’s because of ACT. I think it’s because of the individuals in this particular network are strong, strong-willed, strong-minded, committed to the

community, that we may not have needed them as much. But, then, also on our behalf, we haven't explored what else could they do? You understand what I'm saying? So, I think it's both. You understand what I'm saying? That we haven't pushed to see what else we could use them for. And them saying OK. Both parties not pushing enough or exploring or being partnered enough. You understand what I'm saying?"¹

ACT promoted comprehensiveness by providing as much information as possible on the issues that the CCENY was addressing:

"Before we were talking about the oversight. And that's part of it. That's gathering the knowledge so that you can spread it to your agency, to your families. I guess comprehensiveness is gathering all the information and being able to use it in various places on the job, in your life, your work with the families, your work in the community."³

Community Building

Another definition of community building included strengthening families as well as each family member's relationship to the other, especially their children:

"...that's what we want to do, strengthen the families in terms of people's relationship with their families and their children, educating them and making them whole, going towards wholeness I should say."⁴

One respondent said ACT promoted community building by growing them [i.e., the respondent] into a leader:

"And I think that ACT certainly strengthened me. I thought that the knowledge and just the fact that they had faith in me or would even talk to me about the organization, I think that that certainly was community building."³

Another respondent mentioned that B-ENY residents and faith leaders were integral to promoting community building:

“No, I guess when you say community also, you’re talking about residents who may not necessarily belong to a particular organization, but also have input into community building. And that’s something that we try to do through the coalition, invite individual members who may have had some services, but are not necessarily linked—they’re not employed by a particular agency. They just want to come and volunteer their time and their services. And we’ve had that as well. And these have been members of the community. So, I think that’s very important when you talk about community building, that we’re not just talking about service providers, but residents of those particular communities. They’ve posted flyers. I know at one time there were at least several pastors of a church that would attend and they would—and with church organizations that’s a true way of doing some outreach to community members, particularly...”⁹

The CCENY promoted community building by having residents involved and asking them, “What do you need?” and by addressing needs in a systematic way:

“Thinking out of the box means you can’t do everything the way you used to. You have to try new things. You have to also bring on new partners. And you have to have community residents in order to build a community, not just the businesses, not just the service providers, but you need residents, because you can’t say what the community needs unless you ask the people in the community.”¹

Another resident said CCENY promoted community building via activities that encouraged residents to see that solutions to their problems exist in B-ENY:

“Well, I think the presence of the coalition in terms of the activities they have done have worked to help the community be strong and functioning and seeing that it is its own resource through the various vehicles or goals, such as family-teen conferencing. We had

a resource there not too long ago in which the entire coalition worked with, where we had a number of different social programs, social agency programs within the community, as well as outside the community come and be there for the community residents. And we did that in a relatively short period of time—there’s supposedly another one coming up in August which I have to get together on—at the school that was in the community. So, we drew the help of the educational system, which is—which serves both to strengthen the educational system’s presence in East New York, as well as the people who participate in that system. So, yes. I think by the coalition working its five goals, OK, and through the activities they developed, they have served to help in community building. They built the community that way, and the community now sees itself, it can come from here instead of coming from outside. That’s what we’re trying to work towards. I often say I’d like for East New York to be a lot more in terms of being able to get its services that it needs to help itself become the best. So, it’s not a statistic as much as a resource. And maybe it could be a statistic to say, ‘OK, let’s take a look at what’s going on in East New York.’ Being built that way. I find when people can turn to themselves when they are in—let’s say in trouble or in difficulties, they’re much more able and much more likely to go out and go out in a much stronger presence. So, they’re much more generous in terms of being of service to society because they’re not having to feel like they have to depend on outside to help the inside.”⁶

These are all examples of the first level of social capital: bonding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren; Putnam).

The CCENY put community building into practice with respect to the social problem of substance abuse/dependency. Their approach is one of non-judgment and sensitivity. Their hope is that those in need of treatment will seek it, whether in or out of B-ENY. Members have relationships with substance abuse/dependency agencies beyond B-ENY as well. The ultimate hope is that residents will get clean and sober and give back to the community by sharing their personal stories and/or getting involved with CCENY in some capacity.

“So, this is why the community building is great because we have people from Queens, from Manhattan, from the different—we even have some old station in Staten Island, so it’s great that we have all these choices. So, I may not run to do the program in East New York, but hey, I can send you to. You want to go to Staten Island? Some of these organizations will even give you the metro card because we’re really interested in where you’re going and helping yourself so you can become—what I found interesting in some of these organizations, the people are now working where people used to do drugs and are now trying to—they’ve turned their lives around. So, they are very effective, let’s say, if we go to a—in the schools if we go to a program on gang affair or whatever. Because these guys, they actually have experienced it, and that will get the kids more than me with my little, quote/unquote, ‘educational aspect’ of it. These guys are living proof. That’s what also happens at the substance abuse conference. Some of the ones that are very popular are actually these folks that had undergone this whole drug treatment and therefore can tell you exactly, ‘This is not’—what term should I use? You know what I’m trying to say. It’s not all pie in the sky. This is actually concrete. This is what I did. This is how I’ve overcome it, so don’t tell me that you cannot overcome it because I’m living proof of that.”^{10 & 11}

“Also, we had—I think it was not this past substance abuse conference but the one before, we had the district attorney’s office come and give a speech, and it was a young man. It was talking about child abuse, and he was an EMT driver, and he was strung out on crack, and he had a 1- or 2-year-old son that he just kept punching till the kid got bloody, and they took him to the hospital, and the child died. But they had him on the tape talking about what led up to this death. And then we found that one of our committees, Dr. White—what was her committee? Consumer, she was working with that family and trying to get help for the family. So, after this incident happened she said, ‘We know this guy. We’re working with his family.’ So, it’s like there are larger issues, things that are happening in the family, and we’re able to try to be of service because, you could tell on one hand he’s bad and he should just go to jail, but this is a human being. This is a person with a drug disease, and he needs help. And if his wife needs help, we’re there to

support. It's interesting how many ways the things we do pop up. They kind of percolate.”^{10 & 11}

“We have a lot of the people sitting around the table in our meetings exactly that, and therefore, you know what, you really grabbed my attention because I'm looking at the **[inaudible]**. So, you see, it can be done. It can be done. Here's living proof. And those are the people you really want to invite to your meetings because they're living proof. There's hope.”^{10 & 11}

“Some people in the past ACS cases and they turned their lives around, now they're doing progressive work in the community, they're very active and come to the meetings articulate, well spoken. And they really change for the better. So, we're able to fertilize and we bear fruit, and this fruit is able to give back to the community.”^{10 & 11}

Another respondent discussed the community-building principle as a reciprocal relationship between CCENY and ACT:

“I think the best way I could answer that is to say that they still exist today. They're still in operation. OK. Moving from SPA to network to coalition and they still live. That's the only way I—just by that little bit of weeding and feeding that they did, ACT—and having them being available to contact for other information and support and services and what have you, they still live. [Surviving over time and changing as needed], according to the money, to the politics, to the need of the community.”⁵

This is consistent with ACT's attempt to reverse the historical erosion of social capital; specifically, reciprocity, honesty, and trust via network-building (Putnam, 2000).

Another leader said ACT promoted community building by treating community leaders like experts and asking them for their opinion/feedback:

“And I think that ACT certainly strengthened me. I thought that the knowledge and just the fact that they had faith in me or would even talk to me about the organization, I think that that certainly was community building. And ACT certainly had a place in that when we asked them to come in the beginning to set up goals for our—that we talked about before, the coffee time. That was what they did in Washington Heights. And we thought we would be able to carry it on, but we wanted to change the name. And as a matter of fact, we wrote—I don’t know, we may have a copy of it. We did write a summary or outline or report on coffee time and the strategic plan for the network.”³

This is another example of the first level of social capital: bonding social capital within communities.

Other respondents said that CCENY fared well on building community because of the increase in residents’ informing other residents by “word-of-mouth” of community resources:

“I think we get an A for that [i.e., promoting community building].”¹⁰

“I think so, too.”¹¹

“I really think we get an A for that because, like I said, we’ve been going now for several years, and you have organizations that never miss a meeting. They’re really into what we have to do. They bring on new people all the time, and in a lot of these organizations the staff changes a lot or the agency is still there. So, they would still send someone to represent them. When you think about it, some of the organizations that are sending people, if you think in terms of ‘What’s in it for me’ based on what we’re doing, there’s not really in it for them, per se, because the people that you get I don’t work with them. They are not in my, say, catchment area or for the organization. But they’re trying to build that community of workers. I am here to help you, even though I may not be stationed in East New York, you can still use my services because some people maybe don’t want to use the services. For example, if I’m suffering some mental health

[condition], maybe I don't want my neighbors, et cetera, so I'm not going to go next door.”¹⁰

“...to me, how I look at it, even in the library, if an organization changes only one person's life that's a plus because at least you get one person. Hopefully, that one person will get another person and it goes on. You're not going to get a whole group; it's unusual. If you do, great, but it starts with one...and from then it keeps on mushrooming. Because I remember the first time we had a community fair it was mostly providers, but as we do it each time, you get more of the community coming in. They are really shocked at what these organizations have to offer, and it's right in their backyards.”¹⁰

Inherent to community building is the notion that the CCE will sustain itself over time; this held true with a few respondents:

“Well, I think as far as comprehensiveness, just on the basic fact that we're still together as an organization. We meet monthly. Various community members, various service providers present their services at these meetings to keep us informed as to what's available so that we can keep abreast of the various services that families may need, whether it's help with their rent, summer jobs programs, or even health care, what sort of programs that are providing affordable health services for these families that are in the community. So, there's sort of the general fact that we meet monthly to get that sort of information that we can come back and share with our organization to help with the families that we serve, because each service provider has a population that they serve. They will have an array of services that they can at least offer to families or let them know that they're available within the community.”⁹

“I believe so [i.e., the B-ENY Community Partnership Initiative will survive after the Administration for Children's Services is no longer a part of it]. The workers are very good and the chair people are very good. But there are usually changes. There are new initiatives to implement.”⁷

Reports of B-ENY's principles guiding ACT's work are consistent with those principles reflected in ACT's mission: "To create and evaluate ten community board district-based collaborative groups of health and social service providers, consumers, and concerned others in order to create services for children and families that are comprehensive, non-duplicative, accessible, supportive of families' needs, and easy to use; and to connect economic development, housing, and employment decision-making and resources to this network." Furthermore, reports state that as a result of comprehensiveness and community building, B-ENY had a diverse collaborative of local leaders, including an array of service providers and residents, and leadership/capacity building were integral parts of the work. This is consistent with addressing social inequalities—and therefore, political and economic inequalities—via bonding social capital within communities.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ACT

Governance

According to the literature, governance concerns the creation of mechanisms to guide planning, decision making, and implementation, as well as to locate accountability and responsibility for actions undertaken (Blank et al., no date; Kingsley, 1996). This is reflected in most respondents' accounts.

Several respondents discussed CCENY's governance as consisting of two co-chairs, an executive board, five work groups, and a general membership:

"There's a board of directors, each chair of a committee meet I think first Friday of the month, and that's when they report on what they're doing and when they make decisions. So, they have a board."⁴

“I think that from what I see, the person that people go to in terms of who might be the head of the CPIs, [the co-chair of the CCENY], because she basically I feel very much it’s her baby. She leads the meetings when she’s there, and she leads the executive committee meetings, and she makes a lot of the decisions in regards to how the money will be spent. So, the governance—and we do have executive board meetings, so we meet and share our views, and those are taken into account and many times implemented, but I think [the co-chair of the CCENY] and, to a lesser extent, [the other co-chair of the CCENY], who’s also a co-chair, have a lot of the leadership.”¹¹

“Especially we see with the CPI, after all, we do have our goals that we have to make. We all have these heads of these committees. This time, I must say, each is pulling his own. What happened, when we started out to do the five goals, the chairperson, the work was left automatically to the co-chairs who basically were named chairs because nobody else was rushing to volunteer. So, that’s how come [the co-chair of the CCENY] was the chair of this, [the other co-chair of the CCENY] the chair of that, I became the chair, you know. Then you have the group that was always there. So, as things get going, then we—like I decided not be a chair and bring in other people. But in essence, in any organization you always have this chord that’s willing to work, and the others will only jump on once they see it’s going and will be a success. So, there’s no difference in this, but basically, there is an executive board, and there are the five chairs, which also involve the co-chairs, which [the Co-chair of the CCENY] is a chair, [the other co-chair of the CCENY] is a chair. So, you have that—”¹⁰

“I’m just thinking about this because I’ve never remembered an election taking place. The leadership of the CPI have been pretty much stable. It’s changed when somebody has had to leave, is no longer involved in the neighborhood, but mostly it works on people volunteering their time because all of us do this kind of as a slice of an already full plate. In terms of the various committees, when people attend meetings, they are encouraged to also attend the committee meetings, which the SPA meeting happens on one particular day, and they’re given a calendar at that meeting, and any participant is encouraged to attend any of the specialty groups, you know. The leadership of those groups comes,

again, by volunteer people. Say, I have time to be at the meetings, but I don't have time to do all the thinking and leading stuff. Other people will say, 'I can think, but I can't be present. I'll email you my concerns, thoughts, whatever.' And we basically work by, let's say, the—most of the work that's done is done by consensus. In developing the response to the request for a proposal, for instance, there were maybe about twenty of us all together that shared our input and a handful of people working with a fundraiser pulled together all our thoughts and ideas and figured out which committees and refined the wording of the goals, because we were all pretty clear what we wanted to do, but we just needed something to pull it all together, and that happened? [Who is the lead?] Mostly [the two co-chairs of the CCENY]. With some input from [the community coordinator of the CCENY], we did have some—[the liaison of the CCENY] is a person that was hired for kind of the administrative organization role for the CPI contract, and that can change a person. There was a person before who had that role. The other thing, though, that I wanted to say is that there are community members who come to the various meetings, and I know there are community members who have sat on some committees, which gives a richness of perspective on this is what I need today. I don't care about all that yucky, mucky stuff. You need to know this is what me and my neighbors need today. It's really helpful in terms of addressing those concerns.”⁸

Respondents said that one distinguishing characteristic of CCENY's governance is inclusivity as evidenced by consensus-driven decision making and ongoing efforts to increase community resident involvement:

“I think it's by consensus. I really think so because, like I said, we're a very flexible committee. At any given point you'll have different people at a meeting, so I think it's by consensus, but I respect Tambe as the chair, so—”¹¹

Another respondent discussed an additional distinguishing characteristic of CCENY's governance: proactive leadership.

“[The two co-chairs of the CCENY] were the original co-chairs, and they have been working together for a long time and they continue to do this. So, sometimes it may seem that it’s like [the co-chair of the CCENY] is the driving force behind all of the decisions, but I don’t really think so. I think it’s both of them together, but [the co-chair of the CCENY] is seen as more like the aggressive type, as opposed to [the other co-chair of the CCENY]—”¹⁰

“I think it’s both of them [i.e., the two co-chairs of the CCENY] working together. The other aspect is if you really need to move things, these people just take it and move it. They’re an executive committee. So, we would all discuss things, but to get it moving, you have to have one or the other. So, they’re like the driving force, and especially [the co-chair of the CCENY] because she wants to see the network succeed and that we also accomplish what we’re doing. So, if somebody falls along the wayside and are not doing their work, then basically [the co-chair of the CCENY] takes it up and do it, even though it’s not her parcel. That’s why the impression maybe like it’s [the co-chair of the CCENY] moving, but she’s just taking on that role of making sure that it’s successful.”¹⁰

This respondent also said that integral to the CCENY’s governance is consistent work group recruitment, coordination, and strategic planning as well as work execution as evidenced by Eva and Osman’s efforts:

“...and then [the community coordinator of the CCENY] and [the CCENY liaison’s] role is that as all these groups are doing all these activities for people, they have to be there. First of all, [the liaison of the CCENY] has to get it all coordinated: who meets when, where, what time. I have to be there to give the minutes, to take the minutes. So, you have to make sure—you can’t just say, ‘OK, I’m meeting Tuesday at ten o’clock.’ No, because I can’t be there. If you want to do that, fine, but somebody else will have to take the minutes. [The CCENY community coordinator’s] role is to make sure he trains [the CCENY liaison] into what she really needs to look out for, because remember, [the CCENY community coordinator] is also no longer in too much of the note taking, but not everybody can take notes and make it what you really need to know. So, [the CCENY

community coordinator] wants to train [the CCENY liaison] to also know how to coordinate, how to organize so that he can have a lesser role in those other mundane kind of things. So, that's—because then these chairs can't be there, [the CCENY community coordinator] is there.”¹⁰

Funding

According to the literature, CCEs are funded by private foundations that are meant to be flexible and responsive to the priorities established by the local governance structure (Hayes, 1995). This was not reflected in one respondent's report. She discussed the CCENY's funding in the context of Osman Boakye's salary. At the time of this study, she said it paid Osman's salary. Prior to the B-ENY CWNN receiving CPI funding, the understanding was that ACT paid for Osman's salary; however, this respondent was unclear as to whether it was private funding:

“What do I understand of the role of ACT? Not much. We did have a meeting once where it was—they were trying to explain to us. So, as far as I know, [the CCENY community coordinator] works with ACT, right, but [the CCENY community coordinator] is the liaison. As far as I know, before we got the grant money, before CPI, ACT was paying [the CCENY community coordinator]. He used to get his salary from ACT. So, basically, that was the tie, at least for me, with regards with being involved with East New York group. ACT was just [the CCENY community coordinator's] employer.”¹⁰

Technical Assistance

ACT provided technical assistance; e.g., on how to develop a parent-led referral system between head starts/daycare centers and preventive agencies:

“Just out of your definition [of technical assistance] alone, they've provided more than half of those services [i.e., process, outcomes, strategic planning, and/or programmatic,

like service provision] to the East New York and Brownsville community over time in one way or another at one point or another.”⁵

“I just think with all the technical support that they provide and just endorsement or information and exchange of information and help to give you that baseline to work from, you can just—they give you a baseline to work from and you can tweak it and just run with it and develop it into exactly what you need it to be. And just by them being there 100 percent for that is a great thing.”⁵

“Tech assistance, most beneficial, it’d probably be providing [the CCENY community coordinator], yeah. Definitely that. He’s always going back to the mission. And sometimes when we’re in meetings and we’re all getting kind of not well together, some of us are kind of off track, he’s like, let’s kind of get it back on track. But I think with [ACT’s former executive director], I think it’s the same. I think ACT’s greatest thing is just bringing back the mission of children and families, I guess, reminding us that we’re about the family and children of this community of Brownsville-East New York. I think that’s important. So, that’s important. Reminding you, reinforcing the mission of children and families through services.”²

“...[ACT’s director of community planning], she is now trying to work out with our current CPI to get involved getting parent advocates to help us with our referrals between the head start/child care and preventive agencies. So, I think that how—I guess the first question is how can we as a coalition utilize parent advocates? Is it feasible? That’s the first question. And, two, the financial implications for those for that role. So, I think ACT can help us develop that role. At the same time, the coalition has to really, really do it themselves. So, ACT can only provide the information, but not as far as actual work and stuff. I’m thinking training definitely, but not really as far as a direct service that we really utilize. I know ACT, I don’t see ACT as a financial, as a financier, more of just an actual consultant advisory role.”²

When ACT was unable to provide technical assistance, it connected CCENY to other technical assistance providers who assisted with goal attainment:

“It helps us to stay on task. It helps us to listen to what we’re doing, to what we hear as far as the feedback that comes from, not only family, but also from the reporting constituencies. In the presence of [the CCENY community coordinator], I think that ACT has helped the coalition to achieve its goals. When we were doing the RFP, [the CCENY community coordinator] really helped us to stay on target and to discuss each of the goals with equity, OK. I think, to that extent, ACT has been able to help us come to the place where we are now. He has been more of a representative of ACT. I guess I’m having a hard time—I try to bring it in him, but I don’t believe that any person is all things to anybody, but I think he has, in his person, been able to help us to continue to run smoothly as a coalition because he brings different people, even the discordant pittance of persons, and there are even in the coalition, for them to at least listen to what needs to be listened to. So, yes, I do think he has helped and been a very helpful presence to the coalition, yes. Yeah. I believe that—see, the thing is that [the CCENY community coordinator] does not—that’s the thing about a nervous system. You really don’t know it’s working. You do know it’s working because of the fact that you’re moving your hand or you’re thinking of—you’re interpreting something. But you really don’t know the millions of different things that go on in order to achieve even a simple thing of holding out your hand. That’s [the CCENY community coordinator], and that in itself is the nervous system. The coalition may be the mouth, but what goes on as far as words and interpretation are the members, which includes [the CCENY community coordinator] in that, that speaks the sentence or the message. [The CCENY community coordinator] is not outspoken, as you know, but his presence is such that people respond to him in such a way that, yes, whatever we do, he’s very much a part of that. I think ACT has worked or its presence has improved very well and greatly improved the dynamic or the system relationship between East New York and ACS. I think it has worked or greatly improved it between that and, let’s say, the National Office of Children’s Services, which I think that’s where [staff member] I believe is also part of, which is a national or statewide thing. ACT has helped to greatly improve that and to better help the outside or the state,

as well as the city, to see and view and relate to the coalition. As a matter of fact, she was just here to monitor, and she is almost like our big brother, big sister type person. She helps to—she was there at our in-treat that we had, and she helps us to see, OK, we’re doing well, ‘You’re on your right track,’ to keep us—we did get our positional grant from them this time.”⁶

“The resource fair is probably a very good example. We had the police department there because the presence of—because ACT was an active participant and helped us in terms of getting—sending our brochures, sending out invites to the various other people that impact the community, that’s one way. Let’s see. Starting up a dialogue as far as with the attorneys—not the attorney, the DA’s office, getting some information as far as getting speakers to come and speak at our—we have also—every year in November we have what is called a conference, which usually—it will be now for the first time mental health and substance abuse. So, usually we have persons who talk on what they can bring to the table to our residents. That’s what I’m thinking of as far as how ACT has helped, and by the coordination that has taken place through [the CCENY community coordinator], ACT has done the same thing in terms of bringing to the table other sources of technical assistance that will benefit the community of East New York.”⁶

Staffing

Respondents did not provide reports on staffing.

Evaluation

While unable to report on specific conclusions, one respondent mentioned that evaluations of the CCENY have been conducted both internally and externally—i.e., by the CCENY and by an outside evaluator hired by the Administration for Children’s Services:

“Evaluations? Well, I think one of our evaluations is an end-of-year report before our CPI meet. We did that—actually, we do it on a quarterly basis actually. We have to send it to ACS quarterly reports, a numerical and a narrative. So, that’s as far as evaluating ourselves as far as that. We do also do debriefings. So, we do quantitative and qualitative evaluation as far as the debriefings, as far as the family team conferencing. Now, that’s just one segment that we debrief about, not about the other groups. But I think evaluation to me always seems ongoing as far as internal evaluation. We could improve here. We could improve there. We need more people there or [inaudible 1:09:39]. Evaluation could be through the form of narrative where you say we need so-and-so here. We need this here. We need this here. But as far as the CPI evaluation... There was an evaluation I think of OCP that ACS has. I read a report about that, about the CPIs in the first year, yes. There has been an external evaluation of the CPIs. ACS has on their website, it was calendar year 2007/2008, but we’re actually Phase 3, East New York. We started in 2008/2009.”₂

This respondent believed that ACT’s lack of involvement in the CPI’s evaluation was an obstacle; they felt that since ACT was involved in the conceptualization of the CPIs, ACT should have also been involved in the conceptualization of CPI evaluations:

“And evaluation. I think ACT could do well in evaluation. I think ACT could be part of evaluating the CPIs. I think that should be their role. If we handed all the actual reports, the quarterly reports and the year reports, then they could collect all that data and say ACS, boom, this is where each CPI could improve based upon all their reports they’ve had for the year. Boom, boom, boom, boom. This is where we think they could improve as far as advertising or getting a volunteer, getting interns or whatever they want to suggest.”₂

B-ENY’s reports on governance employed by ACT are consistent with ACT’s original vision for governance: a diverse governing body, inclusivity, and consensus-driven decision making. Reports on funding are not surprising when contextualized in terms of B-ENY’s reports on understandings of ACT as well as the origin and history of ACT (see endnote lxviii) in B-ENY.

Specifically, reports equated ACT with ACS and therefore, funding employed by ACT was equated with funding employed by ACS.

B-ENY's reports on evaluation employed by ACT are inconsistent with the history of evaluation employed by ACT. Specifically, reports account for evaluations conducted by ACS; however, there were no reports of evaluations conducted by ACT (see Chapter 2). Reports associate evaluation as a strength of ACT and indicate its lack of involvement in evaluations conducted by ACS as an obstacle. This indicated need for the evaluation of social capital building entities is consistent with the literature.

CHANGES AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY LEVELS

According to the literature, CCEs attempt to foster fundamental transformation of poor communities and to catalyze a process of sustained improvement in the circumstances and opportunities of individuals and families in those communities (Halpern, 1994; Mueller et al., 1996; Rossi et al., 1994). In short, CCEs set out to promote change at three levels: the individual and family level, the neighborhood level, and the system level.

CCEs build capacity and improve the quality of life of individual neighborhood residents and their families. Specifically, they work to increase both the quality and quantity of activities designed to improve educational outcomes, employment, and the health and well-being of neighborhood residents. They also place priority on strengthening the personal, political, or process knowledge and skills that enable people to motivate and lead their peers. This is apparent in respondents' reports on individual changes with residents formerly involved with service systems like the Administration for Children's Services. These reports are consistent with Saegert, Thompson, and Warren; and Putnam's first level of social capital: bonding social capital within communities.

Other respondents described individual changes with leaders involved with the CCENY. For example, respondents describe Osman Boakye as “reliable,” “dependable,” and “awesome.” They state he is the “go to” and “head” worker:

“...and also, I think [the CCENY Community Coordinator] is still paid by ACT. I don’t think he’s paid out of the CPI funds, and I know there was a danger not too long ago that he might be halftime with us, so hopefully he can stay full time because he’s an indispensable part of CPI. If you need anything, you just go to him. He’s reliable. He’s dependable. He comes to meetings early. He sets up. He gets the chairs down. He cleans up after meetings. He does a lot of headwork. He is just awesome.”¹¹

“Well, with the network, which is also known as SPA, which is Service Planning Area, [the CCENY Community Coordinator] being the community coordinator was very instrumental. I don’t know. He came in and he just learned that community. And he’s knowledgeable. He knows where to tap in. He has been excellent. And I think [inaudible 10:49] also in the coalition, it’s good. It’s excellent, because working with a liaison who has prior knowledge, but not as much as [the CCENY community coordinator], is able to tap into areas and centers and places for our meetings and places also to involve other people to come into the other network. But to the coalition, because now we have the coalition, so they have—I believe that it was through [the CCENY community coordinator] but he’s a worker. But I think that—I don’t see that they’ve ever been there and they’ve needed to be there. I think they are always being a presence of the people from ACT.”⁷

“The main thing was providing [the CCENY community coordinator]. That’s the major thing that they’ve done. And I’m quite sure they work through [the CCENY community coordinator] to get data that they need or to give us different ideas. And, [ACT’s director of community planning], she comes out a lot to say—to give us brainstorming ideas, i.e., whether we thought about doing it this way, we thought about doing it that way. But it’s not where they’re pushing, thank goodness. So, they’re a partner. They’ve offered other technical assistance, which we haven’t taken them up on. So, I think one of the things

next year was to build that partnership even more and looking at it will take some of the pressure off of the executive board, because we have an executive board that meets once a month. It's a lot. It's a lot."¹

"[The CCENY community coordinator] is very, very much dedicated to that community. His contribution there is that he spends his time, his effort in doing things, making sure that everything is under control, because he supervise us. At that time, I think—well, he supervised by ACT, the main players there with [the two co-chairs of the CCENY], which still are. And he's just excellent. He goes beyond. He helps a lot. He doesn't delay. He goes on the mission right away to take care of it. His contribution has been meeting the needs and the goals of the SPA. And now, with the coalition, even though we have a liaison, he also goes with her. They do presentations in the foster care agencies. If she's not available, he is. And he's really, really working to meet the goals of East New York. And I think he has a love for East New York since he started out as a community coordinator in East New York."⁷

"I think it's providing [the CCENY community coordinator], I guess, because when I came in, I came in November 2008 as a liaison. And they hadn't had a liaison for five months, because this didn't happen before and the other liaison had to be let go. Well, [the CCENY community coordinator] was—see, what happened was the RFP for the CPI, [the CCENY community coordinator] was there for the SPA, not for the CPI. So, I think the goal was how do we keep [the CCENY community coordinator] and then bring on the CPI liaison? So, ACS found funding to keep [the CCENY community coordinator] on with the coalition and had him stay for the CPI. And he supervised the actual CPI liaison. So, his role is pretty much as supervising myself. And he and I work together and coordinate, help plan different activities for the CPI. So, he stayed on. And then, the liaison before me—so, [the CCENY community coordinator's] position is separate, but yet kind of connecting this past with the present in a sense. So, [the CCENY community coordinator's] role is kind of supervisory in a sense to my role. Technically, it is. And so, the liaison before me I think came on I think in January/February. Her name was—I hear her name all the time. I can't think of her name. Right. And I was the one to replace her.

Yeah. So, when I came on I was—our CPI still has a ways to go as far as structure wise, because as a SPA, you're pretty much ad hoc and wasn't a goals-, members-driven program as a CPI is. CPI is goals, numbers. SPA was more or less whatever you want to do is fine. We're not funding you, so you just do whatever. The CPI is giving you money, giving you goals, numbers to meet. Not numbers, but every [inaudible] has had to submit an actual plan, actual strategic plan to ACS when they were actually going for the RFP. And in that plan, you stated what members you wanted to achieve, what goals you wanted to achieve for each different aspect of the CPI. So, we weren't hitting our numbers. We're starting to do better now. So with [the CCENY community coordinator], he and I have been a tag team more or less. And we've had to back into the rug and really support each other. But I think besides providing us with the community coordinator, [the CCENY community coordinator], I keep hearing [ACT's former executive director] a lot. And [ACT's former executive director], who was ACT's first director I believe when they first started, I remember he was one of our keynote speakers at a breakfast. And I just remember his—he had a certain aura about him that I just liked. That I did like. And just a sense of coming with the children and communities, so I think with ACT and his vision I think that's what their contribution was. And I think their work with the community is good.”₂

“I would say [the CCENY community coordinator]. Left to right he's been a good contribution and the best. His organizational skills. He is—consistency. Now, if you ask me specifically for those two, I cannot tell you. I just know that they're there. They're present. And his resource, OK. His resource—being a resource. Those are the three things that I know of him. The other, let's say four and five, his quietness and consistency I want to say stick-to-it-ness, but it's the same thing as consistency. It's [the CCENY community coordinator]. It's [the CCENY community coordinator]. I think he brings the cognitive piece to what we do, along with [the co-chair of the CCENY]—[the co-chair of the CCENY] does that.”₃

Another respondent mentioned Osman's knowledge of education:

“What [the CCENY Community Coordinator] has brought to the table in terms of what’s going on from an educational point of view, and I think that’s where I’ve gotten some sense of what ACT will bring, because that’s the—I guess the committee that he works with I think is the educational and preventive piece to it.”⁶

Another respondent said both the coordinator and the liaison of the CCENY do well on the planning and executing of the CCENY’s logistics and maintaining the cohesion of the work groups:

“[The CCENY community coordinator is] involved in another group as well. He attends our subgroups—meetings. Another liaison for that too, I mean, a coordinator. This is all new since last year they have CPI and everybody has different titles. I was asking we have [the CCENY liaison] as the—no, she’s a liaison; he’s a coordinator, but again, in terms of the getting all these groups together, a subcommittee, that’s what their role is, to pretty much make sure everybody’s cohesive and making sure the meetings are taking place. They send the emails out and things like that; keep you well informed of what’s going on.”⁴

Others discussed the co-chairs of the CCENY. Specifically, they discussed their added value, especially in the context of their dual roles. They said it was an opportunity to leader the work both holistically and in its parts:

“But I think it’s both of them working together. The other aspect is if you really need to move things, these people just take it and move it. They’re an executive committee. So, we would all discuss things, but to get it moving, you have to have one or the other. So, they’re like the driving force, and especially [the CCENY co-chair] because she wants to see the network succeed and that we also accomplish what we’re doing. So, if somebody falls along the wayside and are not doing their work, then basically [the CCENY Co-chair] takes it up and do it, even though it’s not her parcel. That’s why the impression maybe like it’s [the CCENY co-chair] moving, but she’s just taking on that role of making sure that it’s successful.”¹⁰

“It’s [i.e., dual roles are] just an extra step, actually. It’s just an extra step. Because when I was the chair for mental health, it’s that extra step of having to get the people onboard, make sure the meetings are planning. To me it’s just an extra step because as a co-chair basically that’s what I would have to do anyway. But what it is, that extra step. As a co-chair, you have to basically do the same thing, but now you have this added piece because now you’re working, not only with the large committee, but you’re also working with a smaller committee. So, you have to get both of them going. So, I would say it is an added role. It is an extra step.”¹⁰

“I think it’s a benefit to have the co-chairs involved in the committees because then they can give their input, and [the CCENY co-chair- #2] comes from a social services background anyway. She was with [a children and families organization] in Brownsville, so she’s head of—I think it’s the Head Start Childcare Committee, so she’s able to give her expertise in that area. Like [another B-ENY respondent] was saying, [the CCENY co-chair] just keeps things moving, and I appreciate that because there may be times when we’re not able to be there or we’re not able to help, and you know you have that satisfaction of knowing things are going to take place, things are going to happen, things are going to proceed. We’re going to move forward. There’s such a momentum that I think CPI created in the network that first, initially, we were like on our own, and now we have to change our whole focus, and it’s coming down from ACS and this and that.

But we kind of fit into it, and we started moving along, and the committees kind of took off by themselves. It really is like a living organism. You have the co-chairs. You have the subgroups, and you have the general membership. Like [another B-ENY respondent] said, it always shifts. People come from different organizations, and people want a piece of the pie, and even though the coalition is not officially with Brownsville, we did give them some money so they could be doing projects in that neighborhood. Originally we were Community Board 5 and 16, which is Brownsville-East New York Network, but then when we became CPI we were just CCENY, but now we’ve been asked because ACS has less money to—I guess because of the economic downturn to help support

Brownsville, so we gave them money to help them with their endeavors. So, I think it's helpful that we have people involved in multi-layers and the work does get spread out.

We've come up with some really—like **Kruse** just kind of took off. Shirley kind of—”¹¹

Reports on changes at the individual and family levels include changes with residents formerly involved with the Administration for Children's Services as well as leaders of B-ENY. This is another example of exclusive social capital—i.e., bonding social capital within communities to reduce social, political, and economic inequalities.

CHANGES AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL

The literature states that CCEs are concerned with the accessibility and quality of social support, economic opportunity, and physical infrastructure within the target community. This encompasses efforts to improve or increase the housing stock, neighborhood infrastructure, the business/commercial sector, education and training institutions, the social and civic support network, cultural vitality, and other quality-of-life activities. CCEs pursue strategies that focus on building the capacity of existing local institutions responsible for these aspects of community life or supporting the creation of new organizations to do so. CCEs are also concerned with the qualities of collective life provided through community attributes such as strong personal networks, “social capital,” and a “sense of community,” as well as the community's capacity to handle conflict, solve problems, and/or express its voice and represent its interests in the larger economic and political arena. This is consistent with Saegert, Thompson, Warren, and Putnam's three levels of social capital: bonding social capital within communities, bridging social capital across communities, and creating synergy with financial and public institutions. As demonstrated below, ACT facilitated these three levels of social capital building.

Changes at the Neighborhood Level as a Result of CCENY

One respondent discussed this notion in the context of the community providing technical assistance to itself- not just external entities providing it to them:

“OK. I would like to add that sometimes technical assistance can come from the ever-growing members that come into a place, and they don’t necessarily have to be social programs or not-for-profit agencies. It could be a printing shop. A resident. It could be the fire department. It could be any of those that lend technical assistance. We’ve had different speakers come from the fire department to talk about we can provide services for people that have been put out of their homes due to a fire. So, technical assistance can be a number of different persons. I’d like to get technical assistance from banks, from supermarkets, from grocery stores, who are in the community. So, that’s what we’re working towards now.”⁶

“Well, I know some coalition members, I guess through support of their organization, I know when we talk about technical assistance particularly as it relates to us putting on a conference here at [a children’s psychiatric center in B-ENY], they will have their other staff members that come out and assist with—when I think of technical assistance, I also think of setting up registration, doing the logistical support of directing folks to certain conference rooms in the areas and putting together labels for the brochures and bags, and so on and so forth. So, we have some members in the coalition that, I guess through their own administrative—through the permission of their own administrative board, rather, or positions, has allowed other members who may not attend the meeting to come and help out at the conference. So, that’s the way I look at technical assistance. And that’s been helpful. It’s been extremely helpful. Sure, absolutely, because every piece is important. If I come here and I’m to attend a conference, but I can’t get in my workshop and my materials are disorganized and I don’t know where to go to lunch, with no name tags and no one is directing me to a room, then I may feel disgruntled, feel that this is a waste of time. So, technical assistance is very important in that respect. Right. Absolutely. Yeah, I think it [i.e., the B-ENY Community Partnership Initiative’s annual Substance Abuse Conference] increases awareness first and foremost. I think it increases in, one, awareness. Two is I know of a place to go in the event that I have a problem. And one

other thing that we do is that we have a resource tape so that service providers, they come in, provide resources, share their resources at the table so that they can take back with them, but also just residents of the community will also have knowledge of these resources. As residents—through our base, we also enable them to invite residents of the community.”⁹

Other respondents discussed the impact of a CCENY’s seminar on the community’s collective life: They reported that community residents shared their personal stories about mental health to normalized mental health issues. Another example of this included the mental health work group.

“I learned a lot too because as far as I’m concerned, we tend to just look at someone experiencing mental—oh, that person is just crazy. But there are so many aspects, and at one of the seminars here we actually had teenagers and some people who were experiencing some of those things. So, it was interesting to note how they were quite open in saying what medications they were taking because the person who was conducting the seminar was a psychologist. He was an established person. It was good.”¹⁰

“There’s also been the mental health committee on mental health issues and where you can go for help just kind of demystifying it, hopefully de-stigmatizing it, and we have enough copies around it and various agencies that are a part of the network.

It helps, I think, if people know what a mental illness could be and they know that there’s help available before it gets to the point that a serious situation has arisen in terms of either behavior or health or even to the point of hospitalization or de-compensation. If you can treat those things early, then you can end up with a healthier community overall, and that’s a very important thing. So, that’s been one accomplishment.”⁸

Additional activities dedicated to improving the community’s collective life included the CCENY’s neighborhood fair, annual substance abuse forum, and annual community breakfast:

“Actually, I should say the network has been active in doing things like having a substance abuse forum on Election Day usually is every year. There’s a community breakfast every year that recognizes some of the accomplishments of families and agencies in the community so that people do have a chance to see—publicly recognize the fruits of their labors.”⁸

Another respondent discussed the conflicting perception of ACT as promoting community building and yet, at one point in time, attempting to “take over” the B-ENY CWNN:

“I think because the CPI has a different focus, perhaps to not as involved. CPI, just about the time that the CPI was formed, I was no longer at [a children and families’ organization in B-ENY]. And if you’re not in the heart of the work, you really don’t know why. [The CCENY community coordinator] remained in the building. And then, of course, when the [children and families’ organization in B-ENY] closed, that particular program, all their programs, he had to find another place to be. I don’t have that interaction with him. Well, he sat next door and he said, well, you know what, I’m writing a proposal or I’m doing a report, if you want to look at it and so on and so forth. So I was right in the heart of it. And now I’m not.”³

Changes at the Neighborhood Level as a Result of ACT’s Involvement

Neighborhood changes or improvement in neighborhood infrastructure as a direct result of ACT’s involvement were also discussed. Respondents discussed ACT’s assistance with hiring a staff person, Osman, and its role as mentor when troubleshooting issues, challenges, etc. One respondent said hiring Osman was significant because he was able to improve B-ENY’s relationship to ACS, which resulted in their receptivity to B-ENY leaders’ input:

“It’s been about eight or nine years that we began to work with them. And [ACT’s former executive director] was a great friend and mentor and just worked with us very well. [ACT’s former associate executive director], we asked [ACT’s former associate

executive director] and [the ACT's director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training] to come over and help us to organize or to decide what it was that we needed to do and how to do it.”₃

“We’ve had some work with them. And the reason that we have been working with them very closely or as close as we have been is because of [the CCENY community coordinator]. While he was their employee, ACT helped us to find him, a liaison person, helped us with the interview sessions, and then sort of mentored Brownsville-East New York. I would say that.”₃

“I know for the Brownsville-East New York Network, when there was a spot, definitely they provided us with a coordinator, [the CCENY community coordinator]. And he came in to provide the assistance to the network as far as organizing events and working with the organizations that fit in the SPA network as far as recording minutes and providing different information that we send the coalition, [inaudible 2:00] they have provided for us. I think ACT has worked or its presence has improved very well and greatly improved the dynamic or the system relationship between East New York and ACS. I think it has worked or greatly improved it between that and, let’s say, the National Office of Children’s Services, which I think that’s where Terry I believe is also part of, which is a national or statewide thing. ACT has helped to greatly improve that and to better help the outside or the state, as well as the city, to see and view and relate to the coalition.”₆

“Yeah, well, I would say that with the coalition I think ACS has been more, what should I say, more receptive of the community itself.

So, ACS has been—I don’t know if I should say friendlier than I think of what has been maybe [inaudible]. They have seen what we are doing. They’ve seen all the preventive agencies that are available for them. And I tell at our general meeting when we invite different people, they get to learn.”₇

One example of ACT's attempt to improve B-ENY's social support network was utilizing ACT's oversight meetings as training opportunities for local leaders:

“And then, of course, we became involved with ACT when they would invite us to their oversight meetings. And we became involved like that. That was good because it added to our knowledge.”³

“Well, attending their oversight meetings kept me abreast of what was going on in New York City with housing, with education, and things of that nature. And in a preventive service, I think that all the persons involved, the case planners, the supervisors, the program director should know all the things that are going on in New York City to be able—as far as housing and education and not only child abuse. That's not the only subject that a preventive service should know. They should have a wide range of knowledge to be able to help the clients. Yes, because I was—some of them were about education. Some of them were about housing. Those were the two things that I remember at this particular thing. But they were able to bring the information around issues that affected the families in New York City. They were able to get the big names, the people who had the knowledge to come to their meetings. And they were able to hear them and speak to them. It was just having the information at your fingertips or having it so that that affects the work that you do with the families. If we know that shelters are being outmoded or shelters are being changed, well, the way to assess them or the way to move into housing authority and what housing authority is doing as far as families are concerned. We have a lot of families who lived in the projects, so what's going on with them? Why are there warehousing apartments when people move out and things of that nature? You have to have the knowledge in order to help the families. And it isn't just about them abusing their children, about them hitting them or things of that nature. All those things affect us, everything affects us. Or at least, that's how I feel.”³

CHANGES AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

The literature states that holistic and sustainable individual and community change are created by broader context or system change. The literature defines system change as improving the quantity and quality of services and other investments provided by outside systems, including social services, schools, the judicial system, commercial activity, and private-sector investment. It also defines system change as increasing community residents' access to the structures that exist at the municipal and regional levels. This often involves a political empowerment agenda for the community that includes community organizing, better representation of neighborhood interests in city-level decision-making forums, or gaining commitments for improved corporate responsibility toward the community. Examples of this are evident in respondents' reports below. This is consistent with Saegert, Thompson, Warren, and Putnam's third level of social capital: building synergy with financial and public institutions. Furthermore, it is consistent with Smock's community-organizing models; specifically, the community-building, civic, women-centered, and transformative models. As demonstrated below, ACT facilitated all of these aspects.

Changes at the System Level as a Result of CCENY

One respondent said ACT has not helped to improve the CCENY's relationship with ACS. She said that prior to ACT discovering B-ENY, the CCENY had a pre-existing relationship with ACS:

“No. And I guess part of that is because we have a relationship with ACS with me being a service provider. Because we have relationships with ACS already. We had a relationship when we started matching needs and services. So, I said with me and [the CCENY co-chair- #2] being the other co-chair, we're the contracted agencies from ACS. So, it was we developed a relationship with the ACS partners who were there for neighborhood-based services, as well as who are now Office of Community Partnerships. So, we have relationships that we've developed with them. So, ACT wasn't a part of that really. ACT could be more beneficial in bringing other systems to the table, i.e., Department of Education, police department, criminal justice. I could see ACT moving in

that area to bring them to the table and making sure that they are integral partners. In the last seven years, we've had—depending on who the commanding officer was for [inaudible 13:54], you have somebody come. They come for six months. They get transferred. Nobody else comes. So, it's helping us maintain those kind of relationships. Also, I think it would help if ACT could get foundations involved, as well as corporate, in other words, if it's [inaudible]. We had a subcommittee for substance abuse. A lot of our clients are substance abusers. Bring them to the table. Even if it's where they did training for staff, how do you interpret drug results? How do you—you understand what I'm saying? Things of that nature. And even now, we have a substance abuse conference. Let them give us a donation to help cover the cost, because right now, thank goodness, the CPI has the \$150,000, but who knows if that's going to last? We did this for seven years, begging, borrowing, hitting our own budgets, but where are these other partners? I think ACT would be more beneficial, because it would be educational as well as financial, educating them, educating us.”¹

Other respondents said it was difficult to know if ACT helped B-ENY improve its relationship with government service systems like ACS. They said it was hard to know if ACT led to policy changes at ACS or if ACS led themselves to policy changes. They attributed much of this to not knowing what occurs behind the scenes as well as their associations of ACT with ACS. They repeated that beyond paying Osman's salary, they were unaware of ACT's role with respect to the CCENY:

“It's funny. I kind of look at ACT as the umbrella, the educational umbrella because it just seems to be—ACS seems to be more concrete. You have a child or you're working with children. You either put them back with their parents or you take them away from their parents, while with ACT I see it as more—it's hard to explain. Like just telling me what the essence of a child should be. It's like this perfect whole psychology of what a child should experience, what a child should—you know, the sets of development. I don't know. For some reason, I see them more in that world of hands-on role. I see them more maybe the teaching agent, let's say, of ACS. I mean, I don't know. I could go on, but that's just the idea I'm thinking of ACT. To be honest with you, we did go to a meeting

with [inaudible], but like I said, that meeting really sticks because I could see it was more—you know.”¹⁰

“More theoretical and the idea of—I feel they’re there to support ACS, and I’m very glad they gave us [the CCENY community coordinator] because, like I said, he’s the Jack-of-all-trades. He’s able to do everything. There was a point where I think he was carrying the coalition. He was—you know, we had committees, and at one point I think we didn’t have chairs of some of the committees. Every meeting he would be reporting, “The committee’s doing this. The committee’s doing Y. The committee’s doing D.” He’d go to every meeting, and he’s kind of the glue that holds CPI and the 516 Neighborhood Network together. That’s how I see him. And ACT is this kind of theoretical thing that tries to help and support ACS.”¹¹

“Actually, now that I’m recalling, I remember being very impressed with ACT. We went to a meeting—and that’s what I’m talking about, for lack of another word, I’ll use the word education. We went to a meeting, and there were very—I was very impressed with their analytical and logical thinking because, to me, I also thought about critical thinking because of the way we’re all sitting there and the way how they really put—I forget what it was all about, but I can distinctly remember how they pull it all together, just how you’re throwing all this information and you’re going to have to put it together. It was the same where, where at the end, they’re logical and critical, analytical thinking really came out. That’s why I said I looked at them as more that kind of educational kind of piece than ACS.”¹⁰

“Basically, you asked a good question, and there’s where the answer is we don’t really know the difference between what ACT does and what ACS does because who is changing the policy. Is it ACS that has changed its policy, or is it ACT that causes ACS to change its policy? We really don’t know because I’ve heard of changes in the foster care system. Who is doing that? Is that ACT or is it ACS?”¹⁰

“We don’t really know how the two turn. That’s the same place, too. They’re the same physical location, right? That’s why they are one and the same thing.”¹⁰

“So, basically I’ll be very honest with you. ACT’s role and what it does is very nebulous to me. I really can’t tell you for a fact, because even with CPI or even with the network, I always think in terms of when we need help or when we’re talking with the substance abuse conferences, it was all ACS. Getting it printed, getting the information to ACS, not ACT. We have a lot of help from ACS, even with our little printing of our booklets now with CPI it’s ACS. ACT for me pays Osman.”¹⁰

“And I don’t know what ACT does beyond paying [the CCENY community coordinator]. I don’t know if they give money to CPI or money to ACS, if any of that \$150,000 that we get from ACS is partly fueled by ACT. I have no idea.”¹¹

Another respondent said she did not believe that ACT assisted with improving relationships with government service systems like ACS. She attributed much of this to not understanding ACT and its role:

“Well, not much really. I don’t see how. It’s funny. I keep having to ask [the CCENY community coordinator] what is ACT’s role, because I know they’re there, but I see them as a whole separate, like over there. I don’t see them as here, because it’s—I know ACS does governance. So, I know what their role is. I know what their mission is. But ACT, I’m still saying is their role still really defined? I’m not sure if it’s really clearly defined as yet. I don’t see another medium between us and ACS. I don’t see those yet. [the CCENY community coordinator] is still—for example, there’s a think tank in [inaudible 43:08], but I still see them as a separate whole private entity away from the CPI and ACS.”²

Changes at the Systems Level as a Result of ACT’s Involvement

One respondent said system changes brought about by ACT included assistance with the coordination of government-funded services at a neighborhood level, which led to the overall improvement of relationships with government service systems:

“Almost definitely. Any sort of way that we can bring services together to help families ultimately reflects on the entire system, whether it’s the local government, state government, even federal government, because it’s a matter of strengthening families. And I think that’s what we’re trying to do.”⁹

Another respondent said it was evident that B-ENY’s relationship with the child welfare system improved because both began to trust the other more:

“Yeah, well, I would say that with the coalition I think ACS has been more, what should I say, more receptive of the community itself. Right. And I’m saying that because before, even though we had this **[inaudible]**, we were meeting with agencies that were contracted with ACS; now we are still having those agencies, but then we’re having the community involvement. At that time, we were looking at the need of the community, but now we are looking at how we can keep families safe permanently and also the well-being of children. And through the coalition, we are bonded a little more with the community and even bring in community representatives that they’re neutral and meet our family team conferences. In the visitation portion, when the children are the goal of **[zero-one]** looking to go back home, we have the family and the foster parent meet at one neutral place. The foster care will leave the child with a biological parent and we would have a community person that would attend or go with them to wherever they desire to go, whether it’s a movie, went to **[inaudible 16:30]**, but within the community. And if they don’t want to meet in the community, like for instance, Little Flower is our fiscal conduit, so around here we have the Barnes & Noble, we have the movie theater. Right. So, if they don’t want to go back into East New York, we will have them do it here. So, ACS has been—I don’t know if I should say friendlier—than I think of what has been maybe **[inaudible]**. They have seen what we are doing. They’ve seen all the preventive agencies that are available for them. And I tell at our general meeting when we invite

different people, they get to learn. Then it got distributed and sent out and all that sort of stuff.”⁷

In addition to an improved relationship with the child welfare, government service system, the other prominent area of system change included increased funding. One respondent attributed this to the CCENY and ACT’s contributions; another said this was the direct result of ACT:

“I think another accomplishment is just the fact that, as an organization, we were able to get one of the CPI contracts to be able to enhance what we were doing anyway and just have more resources to bring to that, like this [mental health] booklet wouldn’t have happened without having the money to fund getting it printed. Which came through the CPI money, so that’s one of the ways that this has happened. And I think over the years that I’m hoping this money will continue, which will give the organization as a whole the opportunity to use it in ways that can maybe sponsor children for summer programs, for some of the programs right here in the community for the children. I know that they’ve also helped the foster care initiative in terms of providing some support and training for foster parents and encouragement for people right here in the community to become foster parents so the children don’t have to go all over the city and families have a better chance of reuniting more quickly. They’ve been able to fund through this money having community advocates present at child safety conferences here in the agency, in the ACS agency so that the families have available to them, if they would like, someone who knows the system well enough to be able to advocate for them and speak for them and kind of translate for them in terms of what really happens when you have a case with ACS and what’s available to you, what’s not available to you. Obviously they don’t have any role in making decisions, but they do have an ability to say, ‘This is what I’m observing. This is what I’m seeing. This is what you might need to do in order to be able to change this situation for the better.’ So, I think having people to train in that role is a plus for the community, and it also has a seedling effect that these are people that live in the community, so their interactions with their neighbors, their friends, their church members, whatever, they end up being a voice of, ‘This is how we do it better. This is how we raise children better.’”⁸

“ACT’s been real [inaudible] to me. The main point is providing us with a community coordinator. That was the second [inaudible], I think, because [the CCENY community coordinator] came after the SPA was connected. The SPA started in about 2001. And [the CCENY community coordinator] came on in about 2003, 2004, I’m thinking. So [the CCENY community coordinator] came after the SPA. So, I think ACT’s first role was just being a support to the SPA as far as linking us with potential funders and linking us with organizations and linking us with certain people who knew how to work with children. And that was the first. And then, the second point was regarding people as far as helping us coordinate the SPA’s events and coordinating the SPA in general, because the SPA was made up all of the agencies who served Brownsville-East New York. So, you all wanted turns to work with the SPA. And then, they provided us with [the CCENY community coordinator] as far as the community coordinator to provide—he was the only one paid to work within the actual SPA, to coordinate all the events for the SPA. So, I think ACT’s involvement with the SPA was pretty much advising, which it is still I think to this day with the CPI. I don’t think their role has changed any within the [inaudible 7:22] SPA to whatever to now the CPI. I think its role has pretty much been consistent, whether it be [ACT’s former executive director] or [ACT’s director of community planning]. Being the advisory role I think has been that consistent role.”²

Another respondent said ACT assisted CCENY with a strategic plan for how they would access CPI funding:

“Well, ACT was—they participated in helping us develop our, what was it called, strategic plan to get the funding for the CPI, in helping us to focus before—we had consultants actually write it. But they did provide some assistance in developing the strategic plan.”¹

Another respondent said ACT assisted with system change by their quick responsiveness when the CCENY requested assistance and their behind-the-scenes conversations with the

Administration for Children's Services' commissioner on being more responsive to B-ENY's needs:

"I think they're supportive when we ask for their help. I don't know that we asked for their help every time we had a problem or every time something happened."

"I really don't know. But I would assume behind the doors, so to speak, when Eric would be speaking to the Commissioners Bell—yeah, we started at..."³

Reports of changes at the neighborhood and system levels are equated with the Administration for Children's Services and ACT. Again, these reports are not surprising when contextualized in terms of B-ENY's reports on understandings of ACT as well as the origin and history of ACT (see endnote lxviii) in B-ENY.

OBSTACLES

Obstacles to fulfilling this CCE's fundamental goals, guiding principles, and operational strategies were discussed. One obstacle to its fundamental goals included the need for food, education, employment, and mental health care, most especially for adolescents:

"Basic needs, yeah. Sometimes, too, just giving monies—because, again, in terms of children not being with their family, yes, there's [inaudible]. Yeah. In terms of relationship building and talking over a meal, whether it's down for a French fries or a hamburger, that can be important. So, giving the families money to do some of those things or going out—again, we don't want to encourage people to watch TV during their time. Again, sit and talk, eating sometime about a meal. That encourage that discussion with kids if they're asked to speak, of kids who haven't seen their families and don't know what to talk about. Sometimes a simple thing like that, having a meal with somebody for the family they haven't seen for a while can kind of break the ice and be more conducive of good conversation."⁴

“We’re very good about diapering babies and those basic developmental pieces. However, you have a population that still is very much I think still underserved, and that is the adolescent, and for the preventive, that is a pressing problem is the adolescent. We need to start looking at—it’s not start. We just have to put a little bit more emphasis on the teenager. Our Board of Education or—excuse me, the Department of Education is—I call it chaos. And I have a sister who’s a teacher, and I have a very good friend who is a teacher, long-standing, but I’m sorry. If I had children—I don’t—I would be hard-pressed to be placing them in a public education system right now. There’s too much craziness, too much chaos running. And I think the teenagers—I think there are more teenagers dropping out than there have been ever because there is nothing there for them to stay with...”⁶

Another obstacle to this CCE’s fundamental goals included the need for service coordination and advocacy:

“Right. And I think the pipeline study is a good start in that direction. And those are big, thick studies, so I have to go back and look at the pipeline crisis study that they did. [ACT’s director of community planning] just sent me an email about the free centers in East New York that they have that are funding and that we should bring them to our group, our head start group. So, I think that’s a good step to get that with those three groups who have been focused on with the pipeline crisis study. We’re getting the funding. So, I think that’s the first part to look at the centers who are benefiting from the pipeline funding and how we as a coalition can help those centers. And not just help them, but I guess my bigger vision if in ACT could [inaudible 1:02:30]. I mean, ACT has not done what they could do as far as community building. Connect all the centers in Brownsville-East New York area and unite with one voice, because I think community building is I think about the phrase in service, in many, there is one. And you don’t have that one voice yet in East New York-Brownsville, because that’s the community building. Because there already is an entity, the East New York Family Child Care Network run by Almarie McCoy. It’s a network of 117 family group providers. So, they run daycare out of their homes. So, some of them have three kids. Some have twelve kids in a big

basement. But I think that's one part. But East New York is a big area. Brownsville is small; East New York is humongous. And she has those two areas. East New York has about hundred-and-some-odd thousand people living it. Brownsville is about half of that. That's about a hundred-and-some thousand people living in that one area. In East New York alone, about a quarter of them are children under the age of 6. So, it'd be profitable to have all those providers, whether it be head start center or Mom or Grandma having three kids in her home to unite saying we want to really help our families and children. And the goal would be, one, training better, training other providers better, quality services, like books for the kids. And ACT can help find funding for that network. I'm just thinking the big picture is coordinating all these people who need each other, assisting each other with licensing, and getting more providers, have more trainings, have fairs, because we had a thought as our subgroup head start/child care to have our own fair and start child care preventive fair where we connect head start/child care with preventive services. And have them all connect together and saying I need that, I need you. Let's come together, connect. But the first part is connect all child care/head start together with saying we're here. We need help. We need more slots to be funding. We need to support each other. So we can help more families and children in Brownsville-East New York. And that I think is the big picture. I can imagine ACT doing that. Yeah, because the CPI, we could do advocacy, too. The letter to the—we wanted to do a letter to the commissioner about opposing the kindergarten slots being cut, which we're doing that. I'm going to have to finalize that today and get it out to the commissioner. But I believe firmly in advocacy, because that's what I think is missing in this area, Brownsville-East New York, is advocacy. Because people know what their problems are. I don't have to tell a person these—they know.”²

One obstacle to this CCE's fundamental goals formulation included ACT's report on B-ENY's early childhood education needs; it lacked comprehensiveness on the cumulative needs of children and families:

“Well, see, my thing about ACT is that I still—[ACT's director of community planning] has mentioned about the pipeline crisis, that ACT is working with as far as I forgot the

pipeline goal. So, how do we connect their ideas to prevent prison entry is to help out with early childhood education. So, they want to fund three daycares in East New York, which is fine. But that's at connecting the funder with the community. I believe they had to kind of get help from the coalition as to who to go to for interview daycare centers to get their data. So, I think of ACT as being as a policy place versus—I read the actual report or parts of it that after their data collection from the eastern centers this past summer. And the data was OK. I thought it affected the numbers and all of that. But I guess their main role right now is pretty much providing this kind of data, those kind of studies and providing ideas to help our work, like the parent advocate role for head start/child care preventive referrals. So, I think ACT—we're really not using it right now. I think it was just ACT saying to us this is what we found about East New York and how do you feel about it? And we were just thinking, well, we agree with your data. We don't think it's wrong. It's cool. We haven't really created actual data, because we realize that because our role—our main focus right now with head start/child care is how do we connect families with these services. Are the families getting these services? Do families that, for example, Urban Strategies Day Care and help fund daycare, how can they get services for their children, such as literacy, such as therapy or even preventive services like Seamen's Society? That's our connection. And the data didn't cover that realm of our goal, which was to connect families with these services. So, I think if the data were to—I think if they really want to impact our work as a coalition, then they could say, OK, well, we see your referrals are low, let's try parent advocates. Well, let's see, if you can survey the daycare centers to see what the families' needs are. If you want to really help us, interview the staff at the daycare centers East New York-Brownsville to find out what services these families need. Do the kids need more reading help at home? Should we try to find literacy programs for early, for kids are ages 2 through 5? The coalition works on developing connections with literacy programs and head start/child care. That's what I want to see more of: surveying the families in the communities that we serve and find out what their needs are, particularly head start/child care centers. That's kind of where I think the data needs to be, is that data needs to be important.”²

Another obstacle to its fundamental goals included the differences between the Administration for Children's Services' perception of the community's goals and their own perception of their goals:

“What we do is we have subgroups and we work with trying to get in line foster care. I'm in the family business subgroup, and we work with—we get to visit homes, and we give them an orientation, and they go with families that are about to be reunited. These are families that are with their foster parents, and they come to the—a location, and we have bought puppets and different board games and things for them to do, coloring books. And this way, the family can have a more natural setting than in an ACS office, which is a little sterile. They can try to—we want to build them up so when they're ready to go back to the family being with the natural parents that they'd be ready. Because with CPI we don't really—I'm very involved, but not as a chair. But with the old group, then that one I was involved as a chair. This one I'm still involved with the mental health subgroup because part of that mission is to help to decrease the stigma associated with mental health. So, we have done a few activities, and one of them was write a little booklet that we have distributed quite widely talking about increasing—Even in the foster care, mental health, all these different aspects that the commissioner states that he wants the CPI, I thought we're doing a really good job with all these people. Remember, this is outside of our work. It's all volunteer. So, we have to find the time to put into this outside of our work, so I really think it's commendable that you still have so many people involved in it.”^{10 & 11}

The last identified obstacle to this community's fundamental goals included the Administration for Children's Services' institutionalized racism diminishing community resident participation and service provider decision making within the B-ENY Community Partnership Initiative:

“I think sometimes there's a reaction to status differentials that, if you're a community resident and you may not have the same education as people that are sitting on some of the committees or sitting in that room, you might feel a little bit intimidated, and sometimes I think they do. I think sometimes they may come for a little while and then

not come again because of feeling kind of like a fish out of water. Other people were born with what I call an ‘advocate gene,’ and they’re going to be there no matter what and—which also enriches all of our perspectives. But I think it is really hard to level the playing field, and I wonder sometimes about some of us—and I’ll include myself in that—when I’m always reminded, ‘Keep it simple, [Joe Smith]. Don’t use those big words. Nobody understands those big words.’ And that can be intimidating to people. I think the other thing I haven’t mentioned that I feel like I have a responsibility to mention because I’m very sensitive to it, and that is issues of race and how they play out in this community. It’s a community that is full of people of color. Many of them immigrants. Many of them don’t speak English as a first language. They speak English as a second language, if they speak it at all. There are documentation issues. I think they are underrepresented when community needs are being identified, for fear of, ‘If I really say I have fifteen people living in my little apartment, I’m going to get in trouble. My landlord’s going to evict me. Half of us are illegal, so we really can’t say anything about that.’ Yet, the overcrowding and the lack of knowledge of New York systems, the frustration with the complication of just getting any kind of services or benefits here in this town is really rough. And as a service provision area, providers don’t establish mental health clinics in this area, drug programs in this area. It’s like seeing people downtown. Nobody wants to travel this far. We can’t find anybody who’s going to want to work out in this community. It’s too dangerous, whatever. And the reality is that institutional racism creates a lot of the problems that exist in this community. And I think until we factor into our assessments what the impact of racism is on the community itself and what the individuals living in this community are struggling with, then we’re doing them a disservice. Americans have this pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, but some of us have no bootstraps. Some of us have no shoes. I don’t think we’ve done enough. People talk about it and recognize it, but I think there’s a helplessness that comes with—I mean, you’ve been to some of the meetings. Most of those people in those meetings are also people of color, so although we may have some status, the question is how much power do we really have. That’s really the issue with racism is how much power do you have. So, where can we affect change? If the community board membership is at the table, sometimes they’re able to say something. Sometimes they’re not able to say

something. Where does that go in terms of greater city government? I don't know. Does it fall on deaf ears, or does the person even have the feeling that I can say something about what's happening and what's going on? Often, institutionalized—internalized racial oppression stops you from even having a voice in that.”⁸

One obstacle to this CCE's promotion of comprehensiveness included the economy:

“And I think the money was cut with visit coaches, so they're not going to be doing that anymore. So, at the last minute I said, ‘Don't we have anybody that is a coach for our CPI,’ and they said to me, ‘We asked you if you'd go to the training, and you said no.’ That's not what I was expecting. I was expecting someone else that is in social work or something...”¹¹

“But I know for one, WPA [Women's Prison Association], they are very good in following up with their people. Well, it's the most pressing need. And as I said, whether short-term or long-term, I think it's based on what the case may be. You understand? And then, from there, then the preventive agencies are looking to how they will follow up with that family or they will meet that family at their level. But what I must say is that the family team conference is a mandated goal that the commissioner, but that is not really saying that the family and community area cannot come in because they are free. So, our school can refer somebody to our preventive agencies free. It's not some mandated person that have me have a case or anything from ACS. The community as a whole has these free services that are not known to them and they do not know where to go and get these services....preventive to help the family, as an intervening process, not to how the family is rebuffed or the child taken away. There is preventive agency. And I think that is one of the goal of our commissioner is that he wants the family to remain together, which has always been ACS's goal that we do want the family to reunify, but we don't want to disrupt them. But if there's cases that indicate that a child has been abused in some way or the other or neglected, the case is going to come in. The goal is to make it happen, the family that needs that. And as I said, we bring in a community representative, that person from the community. Who's neutral. Right. Neutral. That person gets to come in to

support and to give resources in case the worker does not know, because a lot of the workers that sit in these preventive agencies do not know about the resources within the community. So, they come in as a support to also help the family understand if they don't understand what the facilitator is saying to them and then bring it clearer to them and let them understand. Do you understand the ACT is duh-duh-duh? And if they know of the meeting that is happening in the conference, they know about a support group or a resource as we say, they will just indicate, well, there is a baby and me that she can leave the child while she goes and look for a job. There is a parental skills over here. And then, that's where the family team come in to refer the child to child care/head start, which we are having a lot of problem because of the economy and everything that is slashing these different....But funding is really necessary. Funding is definitely necessary. Not everything is, but funding is necessary because how are we going to function if we don't have the money? And we pay our community representative. We don't pay them, but we give them a stipend and also the visit [inaudible].”⁷

One obstacle to this CCE's promotion of community building included the lack of coordination between all early childhood education entities, including family daycare providers. There is an immense need for training, funding, service coordination, creating one voice on the community's needs with respect to early childhood education, and advocacy for more resources:

“Well, Brownsville-East New York, I mean, I think that the pipeline crisis that that is a good step in the right direction, because East New York-Brownsville, the pipeline crisis study I think that will help sculpt as far as—well, the connection—because I think the thing that, the big [inaudible] of the head start/child care group has been the cutting kindergarten slots from the daycares and moving to the actual public schools. And that's been a little bit of our issue of late because a lot of centers have been losing slots. So, that's been our—but, then, we want to—so, we do need to keep those slots in these centers so we can prevent more kids from—well, give children an early start in education so that they can stay in school longer and really finish high school and go on to bigger and better things.”²

One of the obstacles to this CCE's operational strategies included lack of consistent participation in its work groups:

“That’s an interesting question because the chair of the subgroup that I’m on is Tambe John, and she’s also in the library. She’s in the Brownsville area cluster, Brownsville-East New York cluster. Sometimes we’re not always at the same meetings, but I was originally a chair, so if she’s not there, they would rely on me for any decisions or ideas, and we have on the committee people in social work, Janet Greaves, and we have people from CPI. We have **Lencia**, who’s our liaison from ACS, and we have [the CCENY community coordinator] and [the CCENY liaison], and we don’t have that much beyond that in terms of the committee right now. So, we need to work more on building up the committee.”^{10 & 11}

“I guess we may always share the work, and [the CCENY liaison] and [the CCENY community coordinator] send out the notices at the meetings and try to encourage people to come and people show up. This last meeting I had last week it was myself and the rest of the people from ACS and CPI. So—Right [i.e., Tambe and I co-led it]. I had stopped. I was just going to be a member, but she has a lot of obligations because she’s like Cheryl. She’s a cluster leader. So, she has a lot of obligations, so she’s not always there. [Tambe and I co-lead, depending on] who’s there.”^{10 & 11}

Lack of participation in work groups affected this CCE's decision-making process. This is the result of CCE members' work not being compensated and competing demands—all symptoms of the economy:

“Well, I think it may depend on what issue it is. It’s generally—I think that given everybody’s time and level of commitment that service providers have to their own agencies, I would think it’s handled at a level through the committees, through the subcommittees. And then, they report to [the CCENY co-chair]. But I think [the CCENY co-chair] pretty much gives the subcommittee a lot of decision making. It’s not rule with a sort of like an iron fist sort of thing, because people—we also have to keep in mind too

that the coalition in itself, a lot of the members, a lot of people are doing this have other jobs. So, [the CCENY liaison] and I think [the CCENY community coordinator] are the only ones that are really—that's their primary job is to pull people together. Right [the CCENY community coordinator and liaison get paid]. And the other people are just choosing to be a part of it to help families, but it also—that it helps their role in the community, but these are not paid staffers. I think it poses—yes, I think it poses a challenge time-wise. Because some of us may want to do more, but given where we are with our own jobs, it's kind of difficult. Now, I've been with the coalition for many years. So, I'm in the fortunate position that my administrative staff is very supportive of ACT and their goals. But I'm sure as you get around to some of your interviews, I've known for people who have been under a lot of pressure within their own jobs with its caseloads or whatever that they choose to attend meetings and all of a sudden they can't attend anymore. Given these times of budget cuts, some people may have a job this month and next month they're looking as well. So, you have some of those factors that are going on with regard to some of these other agencies that I've laid out for you.”⁹

Another obstacle to operational strategies included the family team conferences model's lack of sensitivity to families:

“Actually, I've done family-teen conferencing. That's where I sit. I like that because it brings different people into the system, including the community rep, but also, if possible and if families are open—which you have to educate them that they have the opportunity to be open. Right now, there's still a sensitivity or hyper-vigilance against any other outside communication or outside interference into their business because that's a tradition, and you let everybody else know your business for other things. When it comes down to ACS or if ACS is even a hint in there, it's all of a sudden you're in my business and telling me how to raise my child. But you know what? Perhaps maybe it might be a good hg right now if we are to survive, if we are to thrive and if our children are going to thrive, we're going to have to have the arena of many more hands to the situation.”⁶

Another obstacle to this CCE's operational strategies included its lack of direct services and a geographic location:

“Tell me—at the time and probably now, again, the obstacle we have is not being an entity, not building, because we can't really come together to find the people. You got to go and see or by word of mouth. So, again, if any person just speak of a person, ‘Have you heard of the CPI?’ No. They say no. So, that's absolutely happen, and they don't know about us or what we do or are trying to do. The folks who are working with now on a regular basis, they may know, but unless they do the word of—again, there's nobody for them to go to. When I say go to this person, you can't. Everything's by referral. They call the mental health person and say, ‘OK, I can refer you here. Come to my agency.’ So, everything is too scattered. And we come together in that meeting, and we have the directory in terms of putting everybody together, all the agencies. I guess that's what you can call comprehensive then in terms of seeing what's there, what agency are in each and put them in one book so everybody knows what's there. At least if you're going to have a mental health program, a drug program, they can go in this book and find that's closest to you. So, that body, that piece—that booklet would be helpful, but again, getting distributors to the agencies, yes. But that local person at the municipal library working the public, visit more often libraries or reader parlor or the Laundromat, things like that, putting those flyers there, then that's how they may know that. When they had that community theater last June to have [inaudible] ourselves again is that put flowers all over the place and the people come to you, and they get information then. Again, it's not about the CPI. It's about other agencies that involve the CPI. They have to encourage to come to the meetings so they know what we're about. Again, they send businesses out, mental health places or drug programs or just libraries. There are churches who give service or want to be involved, we invite them to come, and some of them do come. But as an agency they know, and they know about each other, but if it's just the man on the street in East New York wouldn't know.”⁴

Ways to overcome these obstacles were also discussed.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Viewing the needs of children and their families as the needs of B-ENY was one suggestion made for overcoming previously mentioned obstacles:

“For you to help someone, you have to think in a comprehensiveness mode because if you have, let’s say, take one person, you have a client, and that client needs a job, when you get the client that job, she has a family. What happens to the family? Who is going to take care of the family? Is the job such that what are the hours of the job? So, I think you have to look into the whole concept, which is what I see as comprehensive, and then even the types of job you’re asking this person to. How are you going to get that person a job when that person really needs a GED and not a job because when you go they need a GED. Someone sees young people—especially someone sees young people they talk about, ‘Oh, I want to be a lawyer,’ but they don’t even want to go to school and stay in school till you get a high school diploma. So, that’s how I see comprehensiveness in that you have to look at the entire individual’s needs from A to B. For me to get from A to B, if I need a job, I first have to find out do you have the qualifications in order to get a job. So, what is your schooling, and then I move from there. What exactly do you like, so maybe I do some nice sort of tests, especially these people that don’t know what they like. Then you move from there. Then you take the family into consideration because even when you get the job, how can you help the first couple of weeks before the paycheck kicks in? Actually, I see comprehensiveness if you’re trying to sell someone, especially in this community anyway.”¹⁰

Shifting mindsets from “This is children and families’ problems” to “This is B-ENY’s problems” and helping residents comprehensively to ensure their long-term success were additional suggestions made:

“And I think the teenagers—I think there are more teenagers dropping out than there have been ever because there is nothing there for them to stay with, and we’re going to have to address that, and that means I need to see more educators and teachers getting involved in

community networking rather than seeing if they've got something preventive needs to do or childcare needs to do or another social agency, 'This is not my job; I've got other things to do.' OK. We're all in this together.”₆

Fostering relationships with community residents and ACT was another suggestion:

“I think it's [i.e., the guiding principle of comprehensiveness] more than that, because in order to get jobs you have to build the relationship. We can meet her daycare needs, her transportation needs. Well, we have to develop that partnership with the job-providing employer. And then, also be clear on the expectations of the client. If Mom only has daycare from 9:00 to 5:00, to have an employer, well, I need her from 2:00 to 10:00 is not—you're setting her up for failure. It's not going to work. So, I think there has to be clear expectations between all the partners involved and what are the limitations. So, went—someone says I want to employ these people and I can only do 2:00 to 10:00. That's making your expectation very clear right from the beginning. So, you have to have clear communication, clear expectation. And we communicate to find a possible solution. It's not just this isn't working. OK. Let's do checkpoints. Let's check in every so often. What's working? What's not working? How can we make it better?”₁

Developing and implementing activities that increase community resident involvement was another suggestion:

“One of the things that we had in the network was—I have to say this while I'm thinking about it. One of the things that we had in the network was families or members of families, members of the community who came to our meetings. We don't have that anymore.”₃

ACT assisting with engaging education and juvenile justice/criminal justice partners was another suggestion:

“Yes. I could use ACT more in developing relationships with other service partners. Even now, I’m looking at the coalition, now that we moved to community partnership, it caused the rules of the network to change. And excuse me. So we had to shift focus somewhat, blend goals. So, like now, whereas before our goal was substance abuse, it’s now mental health and substance abuse. So, we can phase out substance abuse, but they’re still interconnected. And then, with the community reps making sure that they are trained, because I do a lot of the training for the family team conference community reps, if you understand what I’m saying.”¹

ACT remaining a separate entity and providing support, as needed, were additional suggestions:

“But at one time I felt that ACT really wanted to take over the network. And I think they did. And they wanted it to be like IMPACT or the Washington Heights group. I think that they would’ve liked to have been involved with that. But we never really saw ourselves as being part of ACT or being that involved with ACT except that they were there for planning, for help with direction, for help with our growth as far as development of the chair people and development of the network when we requested it. So, we never really saw ACT as being—us as being part of ACT, except for [the CCENY community coordinator]. We knew that he worked for them.”³

ACT assisting with increasing the availability of direct services was another suggestion:

“I think least is just—I’m big on direct services. [Inaudible 33:53] would think services are the least. I think every organization that works with family and children should have some kind of direct service component to its core organization. And I think that’s what’s missing in ACT is that direct service component to the actual organization. Yeah, or just in general, because they only have a direct service component in Bushwick. What about citywide? And I think that’s what—because all the CPIs could use help. I think all the liaisons are, all CPI liaisons are overworked, underpaid. So, if ACT could maybe shift—or not shift, redevelop or whatever the case may be or even extend or what’s the word?”²

Improvement on assessing community residents' needs as well as how their needs are changing over time coupled with the B-ENY Community Partnership Initiative making this a systematic part of their process will increase consistent participation of community residents:

“Some have stayed. Some have left. As far as—that’s a struggle, keeping community residents. Providers are there. Getting community residents to become involved is difficult. We struggle with it. Most of the time they’ll come when they need something, but they won’t stay to be a part of the Coalition. But at least we can see. When we had the consumers of—what were they asking for? Do you understand what I’m saying? So, use that as a way of putting their voice in even though they’re not participating. If I have ten people saying we need cheaper summer camp, I’m using summer camp because that’s the biggest thing we’re looking for right now, how can we make a change? OK. Not just putting out the bulletins for all the summer camps in the area, but comparing them. What are the prices? What are the hours? What are these things going on? To [inaudible 24:51] residents of the community know this is what’s here. But if it’s not meeting your needs, because you can’t say it’s not meeting their needs if they don’t know it’s here. So you have to take a systematic approach.”¹

Better planning on how to spend CCENY funding was another suggestion:

“I’m not sure because with some things you discuss—the board, they discuss the whole in terms of what is the chairperson, and a lot of times I’m seeing is maybe they recommend one person who decides on that. As long as you put your invoice, then you have a good estimate on what you need the money for. Our money is discreet, but where Little Flower’s one code on the back, and if you request the money, if your i’s aren’t dotted properly and your t’s aren’t—they’re going to say no. You have to really ask for it because a lot of time they may overspend or the money’s not really put in the right direction. Yes, it’s there, but maybe too much in one area, and they may need more money, so perfecting how to balance, ‘This is what I hold, but there are more areas I may need help with.’ That’s my part to pay money on something else, want to put it somewhere else because I’m always looking at children first before some of the people

they may have your money to. Yeah [we could do better on what we spend our money on]. I think for us personally, from my perspective, point and all, but again, it's a personal thing. Yeah.”⁸

“Funding, I complain all the time about not knowing how much money the coalition as a whole has to apply to anything, OK, and how decisions are made around how the funding happens. They tease me on my committee because I say, ‘And how much money do we have to make this happen?’ So, we need to sharpen our communication around money, and I think often in relationships that's kind of the last thing that really gets talked about, and usually, it doesn't happen until the end when the pot starts being closer to empty and everybody's asking for something, and then we realize we don't have enough. And it's because nobody took the time in the beginning to develop a clear budget and kind of an idea of how we want to spend the money. So, I think that's a big issue and my pet peeve. So, it's the funding and resources.”⁸

Accessing more funding from the Administration for Children's Services, foundations, and corporations was another suggestion:

“Well, I would say that [i.e., community building] is one of the things that we will have to work on at present. I cannot say that. I believe what the commissioner wanted to do is to create this coalition and then after they're built up and they can sustain themselves, maybe that's when we will pull out. It's just I think like any other organization that puts something together. They don't want to remain there forever. So, at some point, they probably will be out, because the coalition can't sustain itself. So, I really can't respond exactly know how—East New York will probably sustain itself because we are working hard and effort [**inaudible** 27:45]. ”⁷

“And then, funding, I think funding, one hundred fifty grand is not a bad amount, but there's so much that we want to do as a coalition, that I want to do. I have my own vision for the CPI. But I just think those two things, evaluation and—because evaluation affects the funding. Because at the end of the year, you want to show that you've actually

achieved your goals and met your numbers. Get us a connection with funders: United Way, funds from the City of New York or any of those big—McArthur Foundation. McArthur or any of those big-time that—or even Robin Hood Foundation as well, which I know funds a lot of different groups across the City of New York where they actually try to affect poverty. And being that Brownsville-East New York is poverty-stricken, where almost half the residents are on welfare, that's high poverty where if half your residents are seeking government help. You need help fighting poverty. One of my ideas for the CPI is to connect—have a literacy program for early childhood education. And I think we could definitely use funding for that. We'll use the libraries and groundwork and to help work with [inaudible 1:14:19] and to help work with Urban Strategies. That's kind of what I'm envisioning, funding for that. And with education cuts, working with the Robin Hood Foundation and any other foundation to help us to improve literacy for kids who are in early childhood education programs.”₂

“Also, I think it would help if ACT could get foundations involved, as well as corporate, i.e., if it's [inaudible].”₁

In addition to more funding, augmenting service coordination and advocacy were suggested:

“Yeah, but the question is they need that one voice. And I think child [inaudible 1:06:32] of East New York was OK and Eric Devine and Darlene [Melee] in those areas of—and Tracy [Bond] and other people over there. But at the same time, the community residents have to come together. And those who work to serve, they have to come together. And I think the CPI can work with that, but also ACT can help with that as far as coordinating to get them all together, because it'd be [inaudible].”₂

Dedicating more CCENY funding to technical assistance and staffing was another suggestion:

“Technical assistance comes under that heading I think because, if you know you have resources to get external technical assistance, you can do that. If you know you have to work with volunteers within the organization, you don't always know what people's

technical expertise is until they identify themselves, and you may have the time to provide that and will maybe be able to get started and then leave.”⁸

ACT providing assistance with evaluating the CCENY was another suggestion:

“And also, evaluation, as I learned it, which I think is a great thing is evaluation goes back to the mission. So, you always want to go back to the mission and goals of your program. And evaluation can tell you did your goals meet your mission. And where are you weak in your mission as a CPI? And I think that’s how ACT can advise and provide disciplined evaluation.”²

FUTURE CONCERNS

Lack of funding was the most prominent concern regarding overcoming obstacles:

“I think it’s in a sense of, yeah, the idea of having parent advocates is great, but with [CCENY Liaison] already having to supervise community reps for the conferences, to host for the visits, [CCENY Liaison] already has two types of community volunteers. And those jobs are already a handful. So, now, [CCENY Liaison] has to advise parent advocates, because I know for me, for example, who’s going to actually supervise the parent advocates if we do get that position to help us link head start/child care with preventive services? Because it’s great to have people help you, but you also need to have actual advisement as well. So, if ACT were to help, it would have to be helping supervise the parent advocates. Well, we already have funding as a CPI. But we’re saying can we afford it, because we know the role. We actually discussed parent advocates at our head start/child care meeting we had in June, about three weeks ago. And the questions were how many hours do they work, because Bushwick CPI already has, through Bushwick IMPACT, which is a project through ACT, they have parent advocates. Now, Bushwick IMPACT works with the Bushwick CPI. So, Bushwick IMPACT is helping Bushwick

CPI with theirs. So, they're set. But we don't have the East New York IMPACT, right? We don't have an East New York where they do all that for them. So, the CPI will have to have a tool. One, training, developing our parent advocates, our CPI. And then, how do we maintain the parent advocates? Their work schedule. Where would they sit? Right now, [the CCENY community coordinator] and [the CCENY liaison] share an office. And as you can see, it's a box. And so, we have nowhere to put anybody else right now. Have someone sit in their corner. Right now, community reps, they sit at home and they wait for a phone call. [**Inaudible** 23:18] as well, they go into the community and they're set. But parent advocates, where would they sit? Where would they—how really to function well? I think ACT makes sense of the need in the community and has great ideas, but as always, the big question is who, when, what, where, why, and how. All those things have to come in. And I have no problem with ideas, but it's a matter of who will do them. [CCENY Liaison is] being paid to work with the coalition. And as a caseworker volunteering [the CCENY Liaison's] time with the SPA, that was fine. But now that [CCENY Liaison is] the—as people are saying to [the CCENY Liaison], I'm not paid. And [the CCENY Liaison is] paid to do it, to work within the coalition. But [the CCENY Liaison] only has two hands.”²

CONCLUSIONS

Most Brownsville-East New York stakeholders understood ACT to be an outside entity that provided resources to B-ENY CWNN and CCENY. Most viewed ACT as a member of B-ENY CWNN and CCENY that shared similar goals for change. They believed that the B-ENY CWNN and CCENY promoted guiding principles with support from ACT. They considered their strengths in the areas of governance and funding while ACT was a major player in technical assistance. Lastly, they attributed most individual/family and neighborhood changes to the work of B-ENY CWNN and CCENY with some support from ACT. They reported fewer system changes; however, some stakeholders attributed some of these changes to ACT.

Chapter 5: Bushwick Partners

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored Brownsville-East New York stakeholders' perspectives on their understanding of ACT, their goals for change, their guiding principles, their operational strategies, and their individual/family, neighborhood, and system level changes. An exploration of the perspectives of Bushwick stakeholders on these foregoing areas is the second step in this study.

Although an exhaustive and comprehensive analysis of Bushwick stakeholder perspectives is not the purpose of this study, an examination of selected aspects of these foregoing areas will contribute to the grounding of CCEs in human experience, particularly in its variations across different stakeholders. Data describing these areas were gathered through interviews with Bushwick stakeholders involved with ACT. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings for this group.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF ACT

The foregoing literature states that there is no precise definition of comprehensive community efforts (CCEs) (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002, Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with respondent arrays of their understanding regarding Agenda for Children Tomorrow.

The literature also attempts to define CCEs by stating that comprehensive encompasses the range of measures and actions used to tackle social problems. It additionally includes the way these measures and actions are related, the individuals who undertake them, and the ways people

undertake them. Community refers to the political or administrative community, the community as a social group of belonging, or the community of individual interests within a specific geographical area. Efforts refer to private initiatives, isolated projects, integrated programs supported by government, or all three simultaneously (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002, Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with the majority of the understandings below.

General Understandings of ACT

One understanding of ACT is that of an organization with the know-how measures on bridging the gap between city resources and local needs:

When I think of Agenda for Children Tomorrow, I go back to when they first came to Bushwick. And honestly, the initial presentation, as well as the understanding, was that they were a citywide and were going to be working with us more or less as a liaison with—They would be working with us more as a liaison between the local community and the city. So, we kind of looked on ACT as an advocacy program. And that was fantastic because the sort of thing, of what we had mentioned before, of monies not coming into the community, services not being available, issues with ACS as far as even child abuse issues and things like that, ACT was going to be able to facilitate a lot of other services for us.¹

From my understanding, ACT is—it's a community partnership. It helps to partner a sensor with the community at large and begin to work with the needs of the community and the resources within the community, and then what's not in the community, see what we can do to bring it in and how we can come together to make that happen.²

Another understanding agreed with the former and also discussed ACT as an organization that utilized the measure of connecting community programs to serve children and families more efficiently.

Mission statement, like you said, I won't be able to recite it except for the low-hanging fruit. That's all I keep hearing from everybody is think under the ACT's low-hanging fruit method. From what I interpret ACT to be is a connector of other community programs and just figuring out how other community programs can intertwine with each other and become partners more effectively to help families or children in the communities that they work in. And so, I see them like glue, the glue to let's say IMPACT and ACS, so that we can work more collaborative together and we all get the information that's needed together to fix whatever's needed to be fixed in the community or to enhance whatever is needed in the community.³

ACT was also described as a community organizing entity that connected Bushwick with pertinent information:

Okay. Fine. Well, I think it's a community organization, which is very, very important especially here in Bushwick where the need is so very great. And it is to organize not only the educational programs and the health programs and the foster care programs and the Coalition programs, in addition to creating a new Coalition called ACT and other programs. But it's also excellent in terms of bringing the news of the city and of all these programs to each other so that we can deal with issues. We can deal with problems. We can listen to each other, which is very important too.⁴

Right. But based on—they're savvy enough to know to do the research first to see where the community lacks, because sometimes the community doesn't even know that they lack in a particular area, or they may assume that there's no resources in that area, and there are. So, they just have to learn how to use the resources, how to find the resources, how to—maybe the resources are there but it's not—doesn't take shape in the way the community wants to use them, so sometimes there could be a change in that. Maybe there's a daycare center that maybe 90 percent of the daycares are in the morning, and we financed out that 80 percent of the community works in the evening. So, it helps for

legislative change, possibly, or just change in developing what the community really, really needs.⁵

Another measure/action used to tackle social problems was ACT's approach of bringing positive changes to Bushwick by including parents in the change process:

Well, I've been with Agenda for Children Tomorrow, I mean, from the initiation of it in our area, and for me, it was one of the greatest programs that was out there at the time when it started. And at the time, [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] was there, and she was one of the very best that has been—as a coordinator she was great. And what my understanding was, was that it was a program that was designed really to bring about changes and help supply the needs for what we're missing and lacking in some communities. At the time they were working with Bushwick and then I think in the Bronx there was one and one other one in Manhattan.⁶

Collaboratives, right. And it was something from my perspective that got parents involved, and it was something that was really geared to getting the type of programs into our communities that would benefit parents. I've always been sort of prejudiced where ACT was concerned because I found it to be one of the best programs that I had ever been involved in, and I'm going to just digress a little bit because Richard Gonzalez, who was our director at St. Barbara's where I worked, he was the one who was involved in it first, and he knew the interest I had in that type of thing.⁶

Another measure/action used to tackle social problems included ACT planning for children's futures by coming together, identifying issues, finding solutions, and implementing these solutions:

I think ACT is, ACT could be, ACT should be planning for children's futures. Those are children from 0 to 21. I think the understanding that many of us have gotten is that we come together to identify problems and find solutions that will impact children from ages 0 to 21.⁷

Another measure/action included ACT as a community-focused organization that sought to help communities identify their current needs and find a legitimate voice to address those needs:

To be honest, I don't remember. I don't even remember if I was ever familiar or read somewhere what its mission was. That's not to say they haven't made an effort, but it's been a long—in my mind, it's been a while since I've been involved with them directly, since those meetings that we used to have. I think in essence, what it was and what I remember from my impressions of the work they were doing, they were a community-focused organization that sought to help communities identify their current needs and how to find a voice in some sort of legitimate way where those needs could be addressed politically or otherwise.⁸

And lastly, another measure/action included ACT as a leadership developer:

Training? Before we became parent advocates, I really didn't see any of the stuff that went on before then. It wasn't until we took all our training and we were hired as parent advocates did we get the full view of what went on before that, how the ACT staff and other collaboratives were going out into the community, interview people in the community on what types of services were really lacking in the community and what types of services parents were really needing in the community and stuff like that. When we started our training, it was more readiness training, a lot of computer readiness training, software training, a lot of training on child development, resource gathering, things like that, stuff that was going to help us in our role as parent advocates for gathering resources in the community and then in turn giving them out to parents in the community.

So, I think that the peer-to-peer support stuff didn't really come until we started doing PSP. That's when we got really into the meat of how we should be acting with other parents. And I think that was for us our moment that we were, like, ah-ha. We were, like, yeah, they get it. They understand that this is how parents feel when they go into

organizations and they're not treated right. And that this is how we should be working with parents. So, I think a lot of us took—the original parent advocates, we took a lot of everything that was given to us and we use it in our daily lives now. I know it's changed me, because I'm not as crude and nasty as I was before.³

I think, as parents also, because I changed a lot of the way I was from before. The way I thought of myself as being a parent before changed a lot in a lot of trainings and the mentoring that I got for being parent advocate. I have always acknowledged two people in this whole course of me being a parent advocate and leader and things like that. I've always acknowledged [another Bushwick respondent] first, because she is the one who saw in me the potential. She's the one who always came to me to say you need to do this because you're perfect at this. You would be great at this. This is an opportunity for you. And then, [Bushwick IMPACT's first staffer—the Coordinator of Bushwick IMPACT], because at first when we started we would butt heads all the time. She would pull me out of meetings and say you can't talk to people like that. You're never going to get anywhere like that. Until me and her just had one huge blowup and a nice conversation and, ever since then, she's been my mentor for years. She's been the person I've always looked to, the person I've always talked to when I needed help and even to this day.³

Another respondent described ACT as a community collaboration that maximizes resources for children and families; however, he was unaware of the depth and scope of ACT:

I look at it as a community kind of collaboration. We work with the library, so we do a lot of things in helping families and kids in the community. So, we work in that we can improve our collaboration and our working relationship together. But in terms of the depth and scope behind it, I don't really get into too much of what this is about.⁹

In keeping with the literature's definition of community, ACT was described as an entity that enters into communities to meet with leaders on community needs and work with them on addressing these needs:

My understanding of Agenda for Children Tomorrow is that they come into different communities. They meet with community leaders of nonprofit programs, community-based organizations to see what the needs are in the community, and then they come in and they support your initiative or whatever you feel the need is for your community.

It could be with helping you financially or setting up different organizations or different leaders in the community to see if they can do that collaborative effort to meet the needs of the citizens in the community.¹⁰

Another described ACT as a community collaboration:

I look at it as a community kind of collaboration. We work with the library, so we can improve our collaboration and our working relationship together. But in terms of the depth and scope behind it, I don't really get into too much of what this is about.⁹

Another included ACT as a community partnership that met with the community at large to identify their needs and available resources:

From my understanding, ACT is—it's a community partnership. It helps to partner a sensor with the community at large and begin to work with the needs of the community and the resources within the community, and then what's not in the community, see what we can do to bring it in and how we can come together to make that happen.²

In keeping with the literature's definition of efforts, ACT was described as a public/private venture that assists communities in living to their fullest potential by identifying what they believe they need:

I understand that it's an organization that's funded both privately and through the government to assist communities in living up to their full potential based on what they think their needs are. It's like a change agency.⁵

Some respondents conveyed their understandings of ACT in three phases: ACT's early years in Bushwick, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, and Bushwick IMPACT.

Understandings of ACT's Early Years in Bushwick

Respondents described ACT's early years in Bushwick as an effort that built upon the Neighborhood Based Alliance, a statewide initiative,^{lxx} and the Bushwick Resource Coalition^{lxxi} under the former local planner of Bushwick ACT's leadership^{lxxii} from 1990–1993/94.

As far as I recall, Bushwick ACT started in 1990, first sort of branching upon or building upon what was already here, which at that time was the Bushwick Resource Committee, and I don't know if my histories are all getting merged now, but I think they were—honestly, I can't remember if it was Bushwick ACT or one of the state initiatives that I can't remember the name of. Oh, Neighborhood Based Alliance where there was, again, an effort to pull together all these folks and create lots of subcommittees, and there was this very complex infrastructure that was developed that never really happened. But I do remember Bushwick ACT being here in 1990, pulling together providers. I remember elected officials being somewhat involved in that they also held like a Saturday event or something, a community day in which providers and elected officials were present.¹¹

Okay. The early dates I'm probably not going to get totally right, because I don't totally remember it, but I would say that Bushwick ACT was something active probably from 1990 to maybe '93, maybe '94. Honestly, it's interesting. I can't remember any events or specific events or activities, except they must have been involved in some of this Neighborhood Based Alliance work.

I know that [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] was the first planner for Bushwick ACT and that **Vivian Osoto** was the administrative support to the program and that it was housed at 1420, and I believe that Norman Cosentino, who ran Bushwick Community

Service Society may have been like one of the first co-chairs or was somehow involved. If nothing else, I think he may have been hosting the site.

And then, with the divisions that often occur in this community, it sort of split off and died out, including, if I recall, some issues with Sister Betty, and it kind of brought—oh, and also I think [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] might have left. It kind of brought things to a lull and then got reinvented around 1998, specifically around case conferencing and trying to bring back a model that actually had been done here in Bushwick, probably in the late 1980s, tried to bring case conferencing back to life and tried to do something that helped providers to see if we're all serving the same family, that we ought to be planning together, including the family, and use resources more effectively.¹¹

Another respondent described ACT as a collaborative project, under Dale Joseph's leadership, which addressed community needs and involved parents:

Well, I've been with Agenda for Children Tomorrow, I mean, from the initiation of it in our area, and for me, it was one of the greatest programs that was out there at the time when it started. And at the time, [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] was there, and she was one of the very best that has been—as a coordinator she was great. And what my understanding was, was that it was a program that was designed really to bring about changes and help supply the needs for what we're missing and lacking in some communities. At the time they were working with Bushwick and then I think in the Bronx there was one and one other one in Manhattan.⁶

Collaboratives, right. And it was something from my perspective that got parents involved, and it was something that was really geared to getting the type of programs into our communities that would benefit parents. I've always been sort of prejudiced where ACT was concerned because I found it to be one of the best programs that I had ever been involved in, and I'm going to just digress a little bit because Richard Gonzalez, who

was our director at St. Barbara's where I worked, he was the one who was involved in it first, and he knew the interest I had in that type of thing.⁶

Mm-hmm. He delegated that I should take his place and attend the meetings when they first set up at TOPs for you, and that's where it used to be held. I started—the first time I went I was hooked because I liked what it was designed to do, and I felt great with what the program design was and how the people that were involved were serious, and I think the main person who worked in the building that I'm in, Eshenaria was one of the—I'm sorry to mess up her name.⁶

Right. She's an author now. She's probably [inaudible] and everything. But they were fantastic and very devoted to the program, and they was great. At that time, [ACT's former Executive Director] and the other folks from the main office in Manhattan, got to meet them, and I found that they were serious about the program and what they intended the ACT, Agenda for Children Tomorrow, to be, and it was in every aspect of looking at what could work to have children get to where they needed to get to and communities as well, and we also worked with the—got the district office at the time, which was District 32 in this community, was involved with as well, the Board of Ed. It was a collaboration, seriously, that ACT, Agenda for Children Tomorrow was with the District 32 office, and you know, all the programs were all involved. That's something that was needed then, and it's needed now.⁶

Understandings of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative

One respondent described this period as ACT's revival with the measure/action of community case conferencing^{lxxiii} associated with its former Coordinator (1998–2001).^{lxxiv} This was followed by ACT transitioning into the Bushwick ACT Collaborative,^{lxxv} under the Executive Director of the Coalition of Hispanic Family Services and the Director of the Bushwick ACT Community Development Unit in 2000:

All right. So, let's see. Case conferencing probably continued for maybe two years in 1998 to about 2000 or so. And I would say it was probably an off-and-on again process. I do recall that we had a capstone team come in and do some work with providers to see how they perceived case conferencing and to really try and document what the model was about, although I don't think the model was bought into by everyone. I think that it was certainly a spinoff for other types of case conferencing that we've seen in the community, including the Casa Project that was done with the coalition and, of course, family teen conferencing that is done by ACS now.

I guess, as family teen—I'm sorry, as case conferencing, sort of—I don't want to say faded, but wasn't in the forefront I guess in 2000 or so, there was some brainstorming done around revisiting the idea of there being a Collaborative in Bushwick and bringing together those interested parties in Bushwick to determine whether ACT should continue to be in this community, and if so, how we wanted to move it forward. And I think that was done quite successfully. We had a good response from people. We went through several months of just planning and brainstorming and thinking about what were the important issues in this community and what role a Collaborative like ACT might serve, and I think we did some prioritization of what the issues were that were of greatest concern for the community.

One of the—the two primary issues that stand out for me, one of them being homelessness and the other being health issues, and we were able to organize a process around addressing each of those issues that I believe first started off with breaking down how the community perceived those problems and what was the information and the knowledge they felt they needed to be able to address it. We also were able to bring in experts who had the data information around each of these issues, health and homelessness, and then would hold monthly meetings that were very well attended and would have key speakers that would address some of these issues, concerns, knowledge that needed to be given to the community.

For the issue of homelessness, that resulted in a position paper that was developed in collaboration with the ACT planner, a subcommittee and [the Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair], and also were able to plan what I recall in the last 20-some odd years being the first legislative breakfast here in Bushwick, particularly around an issue of concern. The breakfast was attended by over 250 individuals. It was a source of much excitement, as well as angst, but it also allowed us to move the agenda forward around homelessness in this community and ultimately was part of what led us to being able to obtain a—I believe it was a \$2 million grant for homelessness prevention for here in the community.

Knowing that that process worked well, we used a similar process around health issues, and for that, some of the primary issues, if I recall, were asthma, obesity, I think I'm forgetting a couple of other things.¹¹

I thought it was child—I don't remember diabetes being a primary. Maybe it was under the.... Obesity, yeah. But we used the similar process: position paper, resulting, again, in a legislative breakfast, not quite as well attended, but still had maybe close to 150 to 200 people, if I recall. After that process, or somewhere around that time, the structure seemed to have changed around the Collaborative, and it moved from monthly meetings that brought various providers together with a small steering committee that sometimes did a lot of the legwork to make these things happen to an attempt to formalize subcommittees around topic areas. And when that occurred, I... was less involved and less interested, and I think it seemed to have lost steam. There was a lot of effort to keep it going. I'm confusing whether the paper that was—the health paper was done with some of the staff at ACT. I think we had someone assisting us.¹¹

Right. So, it was all around that time, right, that everything started breaking up. So, I think the take was after the health issues were raised, and there were like three or four of them, was to form subcommittees around those three or four issues to try and create some further collaboration. My perception was it became time intensive with not enough

leadership in each of those subcommittees to keep it going, and so, it's—the whole process just started to fade out, and at that point, I became less involved with ACT.

Currently, I—in terms of the Collaborative, I don't think it actually exists in Bushwick anymore. There are similar types of things going on. Of course, there is the Bushwick IMPACT, which is an ACT project, so there are similar kinds of things going on, but not the Collaborative in its original form, with its original vision and purpose.¹¹

This respondent also said that in 2000, ACT restarted as the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and embarked on the measure/action of assessing the important issues, which were of the greatest concern:

I guess in 2000 or so, there was some brainstorming done around revisiting the idea of there being a Collaborative in Bushwick and bringing together those interested parties in Bushwick to determine whether ACT should continue to be in this community, and if so, how we wanted to move it forward. And I think that was done quite successfully. We had a good response from people. We went through several months of just planning and brainstorming and thinking about what were the important issues in this community and what role a Collaborative like ACT might serve, and I think we did some prioritization of what the issues were that were of greatest concern for the community.¹¹

Another respondent said this period was also marked by the birth of a private initiative called the Parent Services Project,^{lxxvi} which later became a private/public initiative called Bushwick IMPACT.^{lxxvii}

Well, you see, it became weaker and weaker because there wasn't a head. [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] had left. Now, I've always admired [ACT's former Associate Executive Director]. She's really a terrific person. And she has a lot of energy and good will and all of that. But she couldn't be here in Bushwick all the time, although I know Bushwick is close to her heart and [ACT's former Executive Director] too. But what had happened was until—and then, of course, what happened was [ACT's former Associate

Executive Director] came here and said she wants to open up a program called, I think it was Parent Services.

Right. PSP, right. I said fine. I said, in fact, I'll give you room here so that you can really have an established place here. So, Parent Services Project, which then became IMPACT, was started here in this building. And [ACT's Director of Community Planning] first was involved in working get through. And we had a lot of people from the community, parents from the community. See, that was the problem. We never really involved enough parents to really get further than we should have gotten further. And with [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] and [ACT's Director of Community Planning], in starting something like the PSP, they brought families here to learn about their community.⁴

Another respondent described this period as the strongest and most consistent phase of all. She said ACT existed in the form of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative between 2002 and 2007 and as a group that focused on children ages 0–5 from 2007 to 2009. She also said that during this first period, Bushwick ACT focused on the social problem of homelessness, and during the second period, they focused on the social problem of health.

It's a long one. My understanding of the history is not clear, but it seems to me that ACT comes and goes within Bushwick. Within the last—oh, I'm going to give it seven years, maybe even longer, they've had a stronger connectedness to our community, but they've been here before that period of time.⁷

I can't recall. I don't know why. I don't know why I'm blacking out there because whenever we speak of ACT—and when I say “we,” people from the community boards, those that I know, and again, community members are always in other areas of the community outside of the board—“ACT's been here before.” ACT started out, I was told—and I don't know if this is true—from the Geographic Targeting Task Force, and I don't know that that holds a lot of weight, though. It's kind of blended in my head. A lot of different organizations that come and go, but ACT was one of them for me.⁷

Within the last seven years I see them as a body, an organization that's really been connected strongly to our community. They did a very good job over the last seven years of pulling together stakeholders. I thought they did a very good job at identifying gaps in services, and then coming up with some type of programming for such. So, I saw it coming together in a different kind of way over the last seven years, more serious structure. Something I liked better—I liked it better.⁷

I don't see it as consistent as it [i.e., structure] once was, say within the first five of those seven years. I think those were the most, from my perspective, I see those as the most cohesive years, only because I think ACT kind of changed its look over the last two years. I have to make reference to IMPACT. They kind of took over that setting that we once met around, so it seems like their focus has switched from instead of 0 to 21, to the early elementary childhood level.⁷

The Collaborative, not community development, but Collaborative. I don't know if they're [i.e., the Bushwick ACT Community development Unit and the Bushwick ACT Collaborative] one in the same. I don't really know that.⁷

I don't know. I think one of the things that I did was attend the meetings, put my input in, talk to what some of the issues were, made sure that others came to those meetings. I can't say we, as a community board—the board itself was involved through my attending the meetings. I made sure my board was kept abreast of what was going on by reporting back to them. So, we bought into ACT. I don't know that we were—as a community board, I don't think the board was one of the key players. I honestly don't think so, but we were quite involved. We weren't key....⁷

Early on, my recollection is around—I have to use events. I have to find out what was the event. When we held a major event at Wyckoff Medical Center, I believe the issue that was brought out was homelessness, and from there, Homebase was born, and that was a Collaborative where two major community-based organizations came together to provide preventive homelessness services for residents within the 11237 zip code area. I do

believe that expanded beyond that core area, which covered a lot of people who lived in our community. Of course, we were concerned with Bushwick.

That, I think, was a major milestone for us as a community, because we had two community-based organizations that were really concerned with the same catchment area, if you will. However, they came together with their expertise in terms of housing services and case management services, so I think that was a major, major milestone that we met. Before that happened, there was a whole lot of planning meetings. There were a whole lot of sessions—maybe two years worth if I’m not mistaken—where we all sat around to identify what our issues were, to identify the problems, to see where the gaps were. We brought in other community-based organizations. We brought in the legal. We brought in housing. We brought in commissioners to identify what we saw as the problems.

I also recall we brought in—I don’t remember someone’s name, but I do believe she works with the Housing Authority, Section 8 particularly, and we identified a person or department that would flag the cases that were coming in from our community. I think that was a major, major impact for people who were seeking services from our community, but it was a greater impact for those organizations that worked in our community that identified what this was and found solutions for it.⁷

More than two applied, but—there were more than two that applied, but the two organizations that got it, deservedly so, because they both had expertise in the various fields. It was the housing services and the case management piece.⁷

I have to start from there because my involvement wasn’t as strong, to be honest with you, after the first legislative breakfast. I can’t tell you what happened, but obviously something happened. Your question is from the legislative breakfast what were the next steps with IMPACT or the Collaborative?⁷

One of the major accomplishments, I have to harp on that, was the fact that these two groups talked to each other. They began communicating. I think that was major, number

one. After that, I think that as a Collaborative, the Collaborative started looking at other issues that were facing our communities, and I always wanted to deal with older children. I thought—I guess because I had a younger teenage son at the time, I always thought there were problems with health care for older children. I always brought up issues such as suicide in older children. I don't know if those issues were just too vast for the group or what. In some kind of way, we started dealing with immunization. We started talking about daycare spots in young children, which is as important, but I think because I was more interested in older children, I lost interest. Of course, if I'm not there, then there's not really that community board piece connection. The preschool, kindergarteners, that kind of won over, and to be honest with you, Nina, I lost interest in it, honestly.⁷

Another respondent said ACT was the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, which was the organizing forum and used measures/actions to convene leaders, share information, and discuss and address community issues:

Well, it started with I think [Bushwick ACT's first local planner]. They wanted a community planner. And they pulled together some important issues that they wanted people to know about and to learn about. And what they began to do, they saw there was a very good resource community group, which there was. It was Bushwick Resource Coalition. But it was fading. And so, what they wanted was to bring these people together again and have them as a standing group so that they could always listen to each other and cooperate with each other and citywide kinds of issues as well.⁴

Another understanding was that ACT was the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, which used the measure/action of promoting networking among Bushwick service providers who worked with children:

It seemed to me that Agenda for Children Tomorrow focused on networking with organizations in Bushwick that were working directly with residents, specifically with children. And that the goal was to strengthen relationships among the providers, find new providers and bring them in to strengthen each other's work by referrals, by providing

information, by having sessions where people could discuss their issues that the organizations were facing and basically strengthen the provider community. That's my view of it the period of time that I was in on it.¹²

Another said ACT was a project that brought about positive changes with respect to Bushwick's needs via the Bushwick ACT Collaborative. That same respondent conveyed the Bushwick ACT Collaborative as ACT's vehicle to bring about positive change in Bushwick:

Well, I've been with Agenda for Children Tomorrow, I mean, from the initiation of it in our area, and for me, it was one of the greatest programs that was out there at the time when it started. And at the time, [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] was there, and she was one of the very best that has been—as a coordinator she was great. And what my understanding was, was that it was a program that was designed really to bring about changes and help supply the needs for what we're missing and lacking in some communities.

At the time they were working with Bushwick and then I think in the Bronx there was one and one other one in Manhattan.⁶

Collaboratives, right. And it was something from my perspective that got parents involved, and it was something that was really geared to getting the type of programs into our communities that would benefit parents. I've always been sort of prejudiced where ACT was concerned because I found it to be one of the best programs that I had ever been involved in.⁶

Negative and vague understandings were also conveyed. For example, one respondent said that when the Bushwick ACT Collaborative developed a focus on the health of children ages 0–5, interest decreased:

I don't know. I think one of the things that I did was attend the meetings, put my input in, talk to what some of the issues were, made sure that others came to those meetings. I

can't say we, as a community board—the board itself was involved through my attending the meetings. I made sure my board was kept abreast of what was going on by reporting back to them. So, we bought into ACT. I don't know that we were—as a community board, I don't think the board was one of the key players. I honestly don't think so, but we were quite involved. We weren't key....⁷

Early on, my recollection is around—I have to use events. I have to find out what was the event. When we held a major event at Wyckoff Medical Center, I believe the issue that was brought out was homelessness, and from there, Homebase was born, and that was a Collaborative where two major community-based organizations came together to provide preventive homelessness services for residents within the 11237 zip code area. I do believe that expanded beyond that core area, which covered a lot of people who lived in our community. Of course, we were concerned with Bushwick.

That, I think, was a major milestone for us as a community, because we had two community-based organizations that were really concerned with the same catchment area, if you will. However, they came together with their expertise in terms of housing services and case management services, so I think that was a major, major milestone that we met. Before that happened, there was a whole lot of planning meetings. There were a whole lot of sessions—maybe two years worth, if I'm not mistaken—where we all sat around to identify what our issues were, to identify the problems, to see where the gaps were. We brought in other community-based organizations. We brought in the legal. We brought in housing. We brought in commissioners to identify what we saw as the problems.

I also recall we brought in—I don't remember someone's name, but I do believe she works with the Housing Authority, Section 8 particularly, and we identified a person or department that would flag the cases that were coming in from our community. I think that was a major, major impact for people who were seeking services from our community, but it was a greater impact for those organizations that worked in our community that identified what this was and found solutions for it.⁷

More than two applied, but—there were more than two that applied, but the two organizations that got it, deservingly so, because they both had expertise in the various fields. It was the housing services and the case management piece.⁷

I have to start from there because my involvement wasn't as strong, to be honest with you, after the first legislative breakfast. I can't tell you what happened, but obviously something happened. Your question is from the legislative breakfast, what were the next steps with IMPACT or the Collaborative?⁷

One of the major accomplishments, I have to harp on that, was the fact that these two groups talked to each other. They began communicating. I think that was major, number one. After that, I think that, as a Collaborative, the Collaborative started looking at other issues that were facing our communities, and I always wanted to deal with older children. I thought—I guess because I had a younger teenage son at the time, I always thought there were problems with health care for older children. I always brought up issues such as suicide in older children. I don't know if those issues were just too vast for the group or what. In some kind of way, we started dealing with immunization. We started talking about daycare spots in young children, which is as important, but I think because I was more interested in older children, I lost interest. Of course, if I'm not there, then there's not really that community board piece connection. The preschool, kindergarteners, that kind of won over, and to be honest with you, Nina, I lost interest in it, honestly.⁷

Another respondent said this period was marked by a decrease in community participation as a result of the 2004/2005 departures of the co-chair (Denise Rosario) and the local planner (Nina Moreno):

I don't remember titles, but [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair] was involved. I think she played the Number 1 leadership role, and then there was you and then [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison]. So, it had a strong leader with equally strong, supportive members of that leadership team, who were bright, articulate, committed, were able to synthesize—that's the word I've been

struggling with—synthesize the larger—many issues that people were identifying and bringing up, bringing to the table and then it being synthesized into something concrete that could be much easier addressed by government because it's focused and straight to the point.

I guess my immediate response to that would be you guys were there, the leadership team was there, and both community providers and community residents were involved, and questions or issues were posed, and people's opinions were asked for, some sort of general consensus was attempted to be reached, and that's how we made decisions. It wasn't the leaders themselves making decisions, but a clear engagement of the community participants.

When I arrived, 2003, I think we had some fairly large number of participants, and then maybe about a year later or two years later, membership or participation started to wane and some people couldn't participate and the leadership team couldn't—I think—participate in a longer and attendance sort of petered out. So, I'm not sure beyond that what happened.⁸

I think it left us with an absence of leadership with regards to ACT's involvement in the community because, soon after, I think the meetings stopped, and then it just didn't continue besides their further involvement in other areas. So, there was an absence felt, for me at least, with regards to that kind of leadership. While one liaison left to move onto another and offer his leadership within that context, it's a different context from which he's being a leader. So, it doesn't really answer to general community's needs and need to voice its issues or concerns in a format like the one that ACT had back then.⁸

When they hired you as the local planner, the technical—or anybody, yourself as well as [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison], the technical assistance your position provided was more of a linkage between ACT itself and the different players in the community. You made yourself know, so you—you know.

They didn't have the same warm reception for [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] in the beginning. It was a change, and people around here get close to people, and they had a hard time letting go. It was a whole different kind of individual, and this is for the record, of the record, doesn't matter because I love him dearly. I just recently warmed up to [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison].⁷

It's a style thing. He was different. I didn't—he did his job. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that, but the connection; I just warmed up to [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] this year, maybe last year. [The former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison is] an excellent man, from the community, homegrown, but it was just one of those things. That's [the interviewee] talking.... Lovely man.⁷

Another respondent discussed residents' lack of clarity as it pertained to the Bushwick ACT Collaborative:

From my perception, it was very well accepted and was—it was sadness when it stopped getting—being organized. The meetings stopped. But I guess things just got—whatever happened. I don't know exactly what happened. [**Inaudible** 44:48] and more. I just say perhaps what happened—it was accepted. Anyway. Or it changed into something else. There was different money available, a different funding stream that started to get focused about a year or so later or two years later on foster families. And we run into these guys when we're up in Bushwick. They're seen. They're certainly out there. So, I don't know about residents. The residents knowing about the ACT Collaborative, I don't know how they sort of even know about it. They're much more likely, of course, to know about IMPACT, because it's a place and concrete. And they can go and get help there. So, I'm sure people would be much more aware of that than they would have ever been aware of some series of meetings that went on.¹²

Another understanding was that ACT was the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, which ceased to exist in approximately 2006 and whose original vision and purpose are not being currently carried out by similar projects like Bushwick IMPACT:

Currently, I—in terms of the Collaborative, I don't think it actually exists in Bushwick anymore. There are similar types of things going on. Of course, there is the Bushwick IMPACT, which is an ACT project, so there are similar kinds of things going on, but not the Collaborative in its original form with its original vision and purpose.¹¹

Understandings of Bushwick IMPACT

One respondent reported that Bushwick IMPACT spun off of ACT's earlier work, which was a private initiative of transitioning children from daycare/Head Start to K–12. This was also known as the previously mentioned Parent Service Project.

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I don't know if I have an understanding of IMPACT. No. So, what I understand is that this was a United Way project, partially spun off from early, early work that was done here with ACT around daycares and the transition of children from daycare to either Head Start or to elementary school and trying to create a seamless transition where information would follow the child into the school, and these were the kids where the kindergarten header would know something about how the child was functioning in the classroom setting. So, there was sort of this heightened interest around the preschool-age children. Bushwick IMPACT, which I think grew out of a United Way project, was here to address the—to assist the community in understanding what resources were available to them with regards to childcare, create linkages with the daycare programs, heighten the

awareness, again, in the community around the zero to five—let’s say three to five population, and then I don’t know if this was original purpose or kind of grew into purpose, but there was also work being done around family literacy. What I never quite understood was how ACT ended up operating a program that I consider to be sort of a direct service in some way, and which also then duplicated the similar format of meetings as were true in the Collaboratives in terms of pulling together various networks, various providers and interested parties and holding a monthly meeting and trying to focus on bringing various speakers, et cetera.¹¹

Another respondent described this period as encompassing ACT’s private/public initiative of Bushwick IMPACT and then later, the public initiative of the Bushwick Community Partnership Initiative (CPI).^{lxxviii}

That was such a long time ago, unfortunately. What I recollect, I think ACT was already in existence in Bushwick before I came on the scene, so I’m just going to assume that Bushwick—⁵

[Audio pause]

I’m going to assume that ACT probably identified Bushwick because of the properties of the population; maybe because it was Latino, maybe because it was high in poverty rates, maybe it was low in academic achievement. I don’t know how they came to pick Bushwick, but once they got involved in Bushwick, the communities seemed very receptive. They enjoyed the fact that there was a monthly meeting that the service providers could come together and identify what some of the causes were. I know one time they did asthma. One time they did housing, and it assisted them in weaving cohesiveness that allowed them to push the community’s agenda.⁵

The Bushwick ACT Collaborative that’s what I’m talking about. That’s my first experience coming on the scene with ACT.⁵

To get information, to voice their [i.e., service providers'] concerns, to collectively strategize about how they're going to move forward or change the outcomes that plague the community, and ACT was a vehicle for them they felt they would be heard, because the data, the whatever was collected, anecdote notes, research, whatever was collected that they knew it was going to be formulated in a position paper, and it was going to be read. So, it put Bushwick on the map as far as somebody giving them an ear.⁵

The Collaborative is not still operated under, let's say, ACT per se. There was a lot of transformation. I think it went from the ACT Collaborative to still a Collaborative but maybe not with ACT. At one time, ACT has a liaison that stepped in. I know after you were—you were the main person that held ACT together, you and [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair]. Then the transition was [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison], but he didn't have the same position as you. Then when—I think when funding ceased—because you know funding always has to do with stuff—when funding ceased and ACS had the Neighborhood Network, Child Welfare Network, then we kind of collapse or move people to be involved. Because one thing you realized, you can't have two and three and four meetings, so....⁵

Right. ACT was more broad about the needs of the community, and Child Welfare Group mostly concentrated on the outcomes of children and families as it related to abuse and neglect or foster care and adoption.⁵

This leader was involved with the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and discussed its goals as a place where service providers could come together, build relationships, get information, voice their concerns, discuss community issues, strategize on how to address these issues, and advocate for their resolution. She said that this group was serious and formal with respect to communicating the community's needs and recommendations in the form of position papers. As a result, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative had the ears of important citywide decision makers.

ACT does have a presence. One thing they transformed into concentrating was early childhood education. So, you have IMPACT, which I believe definitely has a funding

stream from ACT, which ACT started, and IMPACT is a storefront. I think it's on 69 Central Avenue, and the goal of IMPACT was to inform and just be the cradle of the community as far as it related to early childhood or parenting young children, as far as their academics and development stage. They're still there, and they're growing. They're becoming a little stable. Especially in a community like Bushwick, people have language barriers or immigration issues, and people just don't know how to navigate, how to secure childcare.

Right now, Bushwick, basically all the childcare—I'm not going to say "all" because there's always this myth of why there are openings in childcare when there always seems to be such a need in childcare. So, what IMPACT also does is help think about the barriers of why, if you have a family that needs childcare, why they're not getting childcare when you have childcare centers that say they have openings. So, what is it that makes the match not work, what's the paperwork or whatever that's the problem.⁵

Another described ACT as the organization that laid the groundwork for ACS's Bushwick CPI:

All together, we worked together. We cooperated together. We organized together. And [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] was really—she was low key. And she knew that she was the outsider. It's hard because ACT is an outsider. They didn't have the sight that they have now. Now, they're an insider. But at that point, she was an outsider. So, she was working very gingerly with these different groups. So, she had education, early education meeting together. And she had other groups meeting together. Now, what has happened as a result of all of these meetings from years ago, now what we've developed, [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] developed is this Community Partnership Initiative. So, we're all together again. And there's some money that [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] got from the city. And we can help each other.⁴

Another understanding was that this period was marked by ACT embarking on the measure/action of direct service delivery (via Bushwick IMPACT). She also said that Bushwick IMPACT held similar types of meetings to those once held by the Bushwick ACT Collaborative:

So, what I understand is that this was a United Way project, partially spun off from early, early work that was done here with ACT around daycares and the transition of children from daycare to either Head Start or to elementary school and trying to create a seamless transition where information would follow the child into the school, and these were the kids where the kindergarten teacher would know something about how the child was functioning in the classroom setting. So, there was sort of this heightened interest around the preschool-age children. Bushwick IMPACT, which I think grew out of a United Way project, was here to address the—to assist the community in understanding what resources were available to them with regards to childcare, create linkages with the daycare programs, heighten the awareness, again, in the community around the zero to five—let's say three to five population, and then I don't know if this was original purpose or kind of grew into purpose, but there was also work being done around family literacy. What I never quite understood was how ACT ended up operating a program that I consider to be sort of a direct service in some way, and which also then duplicated the similar format of meetings as were true in the Collaboratives in terms of pulling together various networks, various providers and interested parties and holding a monthly meeting and trying to focus on bringing various speakers, et cetera.¹¹

Another respondent reported that Bushwick IMPACT is, as a geographic area, where community residents can go and get assistance with their needs:

From my perception, it was very well accepted and was—it was sadness when it stopped getting—being organized. The meetings stopped. But I guess things just got—whatever happened. I don't know exactly what happened. [**Inaudible** 44:48] and more. I just say perhaps what happened—it was accepted. Anyway. Or it changed into something else. There was different money available, a different funding stream that started to get focused about a year or so later or two years later on foster families. And we run into

these guys when we're up in Bushwick. They're seen. They're certainly out there. So, I don't know about residents. The residents knowing about the ACT Collaborative, I don't know how they sort of even know about it. They're much more likely, of course, to know about IMPACT, because it's a place and concrete. And they can go and get help there. So, I'm sure people would be much more aware of that than they would have ever been aware of some series of meetings that went on.¹²

Another respondent described Bushwick IMPACT as a resource center—an information hub—for all children and families:

And I think when ACT was thinking about the IMPACT theory and how it was going to work that's how they believed when they got it collaboratively through the community. When they talked to the daycare centers and found out daycares what was needed, when they talked to the housing organizations and told them we need an expert in housing that can work with families, or when they talked with the local food markets and parents need to know more about WIC or they need to know more about food stamps or things like that, I believe that that's what ACT was believing they were going to be implementing in the community, a hub for information, for parents to come in and get the information they needed across the board so that they could then go out and take care of their families and be able to feel like they were making a difference.

And I think, when they brung [sic] parents like me into a project like this, they were thinking about, okay, how do we identify the parents who can be leaders in the community? How do we build them up so that they can be leaders in the community? And how do we keep them being leaders in the community? And I think that's the opportunity they gave us parents in the community when they thought of IMPACT being here. So, I think both definitions that you have describes ACT's thinking in direct correlation with IMPACT and the fact that IMPACT is now going to stay in the community, hopefully, and keep doing what they're doing.³

Another said Bushwick IMPACT employs the measure/action of improving relationships between service providers and connecting parents to needed resources:

I was participating since the beginning of the program and became a Parent Advocate in Bushwick as volunteer and then as consultant. We worked on improving relationships with CBOs in this community [i.e., Bushwick] and helping parents to reach the services they needed.¹³

Another respondent said Bushwick IMPACT employs the measure/action of assisting parents with navigating daycare, eligibility requirements:

Now, presently, ACT is in Bushwick, and they're working with Bushwick IMPACT, and they're dealing with a lot of issues with parents are finding the daycare. Issues they're going through now with eligibility. They have changed the system.¹⁰

Another described Bushwick IMPACT's measure of parent leadership development:

Again, IMPACT is something that's there that we can see what Agenda for Children Tomorrow has done. That's one thing I know is there, and most of those parents that are there are—the six parents that open the center came from our site, and they were all trained right here in this room part of the time from the people that Agenda for Children Tomorrow got to come over here, [ACT's Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training] and all those people. They were very on point. It was a great thing to see how—please, I have so many pictures of the graduations and the groups here when we'd meet in here of the parents. And those parents have never stopped. It changed them in ways that can never be duplicated, I don't think, and I really hope it will continue to be around and in that you do make sure that it stays and keep the same focus that we had as far as people who were not—who were sort of displaced and don't know where to go and not that much there for them to choose from. People need to know that somebody really got their back, in a sense.

Most of the time, the people—there was a lot of talk about immigrants, and what people—they talk about it, but there’s not a lot of aid, real assistance there for people. And I think, from my perspective, that Agenda for Children Tomorrow that was one thing they did, and not so much give them money and things like that, but there’s other things that can help you get to where you need to get, as far as money is concerned, if you have the right involvement and education-wise, whatever way it comes. If you’re educating people, you’re going to help them change their lives. People who know better, they usually do better, and that was one. There’s not a lot of programs that take the interest that...⁶

One respondent believed that between ACT’s early years in Bushwick and Bushwick IMPACT, the ways in which ACT undertook their measures/actions went from outsider to insider:

All together, we worked together. We cooperated together. We organized together. And [Bushwick ACT’s first local planner] was really—she was low key. And she knew that she was the outsider. It’s hard because ACT is an outsider. They didn’t have the sight that they have now. Now, they’re an insider.⁴

Negative and vague understandings were also articulated. One respondent said that between the periods of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and Bushwick IMPACT, the goal of improving the neighborhood became diluted because of the competing interests of service providers:

That was my earliest, right. And I don’t know exactly how long it had been because, as I said, Richard was the director of builders, of all the sites, and I don’t know how long he was involved in—I know he was involved before I was involved, but the point is that he knew my interests. I think out of all the staff that he had, he delegated, I should take over his spot in [inaudible] and that’s how I became involved in it, and I was very satisfied. That had to be in probably around 1990.⁶

She was—[Bushwick ACT’s first local planner] was—she was phenomenal, but I think a lot of it had to do with her personality as well, just being involved and wanting to be

involved. I got to see her not too long ago for something we had at IMPACT, and IMPACT is a part of Agenda for Children Tomorrow.⁶

It [i.e., ACT] has changed over time, but a lot of good things came out of it still, even though one time they were saying that when—I'm just going to say this. You asked me to be honest, and I have to be honest. One of the things is that, you know when we were meeting at 333 Central Avenue and [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] was involved, it got to a point at that point I saw—it seemed like it began to change, because I felt like we were somehow sort of losing what the Agenda for Children Tomorrow was really about, and because I find in Bushwick, to be honest with you, there are so many programs, and everyone wants to be in charge. I saw it had gotten to a point where if I wasn't the one involved, then it wasn't important. That was the attitude a lot of people had.

Then, forgetting the fact Agenda for Children Tomorrow was good the way it was. I'm not saying you didn't need people involved in it, but then you got [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair's] program and other programs when they were working with them and—when it got to that point, it sort of lost the whole thing of what I felt it was designed for as far as what Agenda for Children Tomorrow was designed for, because it became different. It's too fragmented in a sense, in that sense. It worked in ways because when we got the—even like IMPACT—I'll go with that right now—that came out of ACT because of the fact that we were connected with you and the part you played to get a center set up where we could have something that would be specifically for the parents, because I know they had set up the ACT Collaborative in the Bronx—I can never think of....⁶

In Mott Haven, right. At some point, from what I was getting, it wasn't—the participation they needed there wasn't there, and it caused problems. It's really difficult right now for me to explain what I'm feeling because I felt that, even though ACT was still there, it wasn't as present. It wasn't being allowed to perform in the way they started out doing, but they still got some good out of it, and the IMPACT center was one of the main things

because we did have like the—it got us the resources that was needed to help parents get the information and, in some cases, the education they really needed and that was not being provided for them in any other way. And I don't think they would have gotten it anyplace else if it had not been for ACT.⁶

The reason I felt it [i.e., ACT under the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair and the second local planner's leadership] got off track again because I find this happens almost all the time. In places where there should be complete solidarity, people get this is the need or this is that. That's what I find, especially with [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair]. I found that she—it was almost she seemed sometimes, my impression was she would almost be insulted if it was not all about her program and what she was doing. Same thing, I saw that. But it's not about any individual. It's about the results that you can get for the clientele that you have, the people you're trying to get to where they need to get to. It's not about us, who are the workers. It's about the people we're trying to serve and get them the services or resources they need, and I think they sort of got away from it because it was almost like people had attitudes that they—one time I was told it's no longer ACT, it's something else.

I'm saying, it's always going to be ACT for me because it worked. Agenda for Children Tomorrow worked from the beginning, and we still see results of it. I think the executive people like [ACT's former Executive Director] and they, the people were phenomenal. I hardly met a person that was the way he was, and I didn't know him probably the way you know him, but what I've seen of him the first day that I met him, he's phenomenal. He was always seemed to be about what was the best for the communities and what he was involved in. I sort of missed that, but I think some of the other ladies that have come around and you included have done great jobs and are still doing good things. I'm very partial to Agenda for Children Tomorrow and I'll always be.⁶

I don't really know what happened, but I think, again, it was a fight for territory. I think that's what it was, from my perspective that people felt if they weren't the one who initiated it and involved in it, that it wasn't that valuable. And I know that that wasn't

true, and to be honest with you, some of the meetings, I just stopped going to some of them myself because it was so far away from what it had been, and I don't think the—they were getting the results as far as Agenda for Children Tomorrow is concerned. They should have got them because of the people wanted to feel I'm director and I'm in charge, I'm in charge—the other program that came into, that collaborated with Agenda for Children Tomorrow. It was—I don't mean the individual people; I'm saying, different programs. Like what [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] was in charge of, and she wanted—always wanted to be like, I guess, looked at as a person who was totally in charge of whatever it was that she was doing. That's what I got from her.

But it was about us and about the community and about the families and about the people. That's how I saw it, and that's how I see it, and I think they were more interested in the titles they were holding than getting results for the families in the community and it didn't work for me. It still has not taken anything away from my opinion of what—because I know what Agenda for Children Tomorrow was, and I know what it was designed for. Getting sidetracked a little bit can work for a while; but, you know, I don't see any of those people involved in any of the meetings of anything I go to, none of it except for who's working with IMPACT now, but I don't see any of the other players that were there in any of the meetings I attend.⁶

Again, IMPACT is something that's there that we can see what Agenda for Children Tomorrow has done. That's one thing I know is there, and most of those parents that are there are—the six parents that open the center came from our site, and they were all trained right here in this room part of the time from the people that Agenda for Children Tomorrow got to come over here, [ACT's Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training] and all those people. They were very on point. It was a great thing to see how—please, I have so many pictures of the graduations and the groups here, when we'd meet in here, of the parents. And those parents have never stopped. It changed them in ways that can never be duplicated I don't think, and I really hope it will continue to be around and in that you do make sure that it stays and keep the same focus that we had as far as people who were not—who were sort of displaced and don't know where to

go and not that much there for them to choose from. People need to know that somebody really got their back, in a sense.

Most of the time, the people—there was a lot of talk about immigrants, and what people—they talk about it, but there's not a lot of aid, real assistance there for people. And I think from my perspective that Agenda for Children Tomorrow that was one thing they did, and not so much give them money and things like that, but there's other things that can help you get to where you need to get, as far as money is concerned, if you have the right involvement and education-wise, whatever way it comes. If you're educating people, you're going to help them change their lives. People who know better, they usually do better, and that was one. There's not a lot of programs that take the interest that—⁶

[Waiting for train]

That have the—that seem to have the same interest that ACT had, Agenda for Children Tomorrow, especially if I'm in the agency meetings with our agency or whatever. People act as if they never heard of it, and I'm saying you're dealing with children. You're dealing with families, and I know it's not in every community, but it's out there. Most of the defense fund and other child advocate programs and stuff, they're aware of Agenda for Children Tomorrow, and these people involved in these programs, why do you not know, and why are you not involved in participating as well on some level, even if it's just attending a meeting they're having.⁶

Another respondent described this period as ACT becoming less effective at providing technical assistance because its leadership had an approach of, “we know best, do it this way.”

I don't know if I would add to the definition, but as you were saying what jumped out at me from experience was—I guess two things. One is that I believe good technical assistance is not necessarily someone telling you how to do something; but rather, joining you, helping you to see the answers that you already know and then, perhaps, building

upon those. Actually, as I said that, is I think also the perspective around community building, right, because you're building. You're not coming in and telling somebody, "This is what you need to do in this community." It's helping people see you have the answers yourself, and if you add this to what you already know, you might be able—where is it you want to go, this is what you know already, this is what we can add to it, now where do you want to go with it?

And one of the dynamics in the later years that I found—and maybe it really depends upon who you worked with in ACT. The other dynamic, we had talked much about it. I'm not sure exactly that it's part of ACT's mission or vision, but it was the issues of culture and race and competence and when the technical assistance or community building has this flair of "I'm the expert" or "I know what to do," and when that person that it's coming from happens to be White, I don't think it plays out very well.

So, I think there at least has to be a certain level of awareness of what that—how that dynamic could either help or hinder a technical assistance process. You could use or not use this, but one of my issues with IMPACT is that she carries herself with that kind of tone, of "I know what I'm doing, and I know better." It makes it very difficult to work with her, and it was one of the dynamics that also came to play in working with Elizabeth [the former ACT policy associate].¹¹

And I think in many ways [ACT helped with technical assistance]. One is—if you start from the fact that [the former ACT Executive Director] made himself available—I mean, I don't know that he would turn anyone away that said, "Could I talk to you? I need to bounce something off of you." I don't think he would turn anyone away. He was just very good that way. So, there was, on that level, I think as you said earlier, the Collaborative meetings were a source of technical assistance and an opportunity for learning and for learning from each other.¹¹

Another respondent equated this Bushwick IMPACT phase with a marked decrease in ACT's contributions:

Today, if we could go down to where we're at, today we have IMPACT. And IMPACT, again, is out there. Probably we have emails and meetings scheduled and things like that on a weekly basis that we're hearing something of something that's going on. The thing being, again, it seems to me that, at this point, Bushwick IMPACT is almost in the same category as we are of not having the money to pay next month's rent or being really impacted by the economy. So, I find that upsetting, because—I don't find it upsetting for me. I find it upsetting for them, because I feel that ACT—I don't know if I want to use the word let them go, kind of left them out there on their own. That I'm saying to myself, my gosh, if I can't get anything from the city, and I understand my situation, but if ACT can't get anything from the city to make things work, then the situation has to be bad.¹

Yes. So, that bothers me because you kind of looked at ACT, the word Santa Claus comes into my head right now. But you kind of looked at ACT as they have the answer or they have the mayor's ear. They know which door to knock on. And it bothers me right now because I feel as though I think they might be in the same situation that we are, that we don't know which door to knock on. Or they're caught up in Bushwick being set aside as opposed to Harlem or something like that.¹

Another respondent said he was aware of some type of association between ACT and Bushwick IMPACT; however, he was not sure of its exact nature:

IMPACT has played, I think a tremendous role in this community.... [The Bushwick IMPACT Director] is an excellent leader in the community, I think, and really is community-minded and has been dedicated to this community. She's very attentive to the needs of community residents and has taken leadership roles, at times, in a number of areas, specifically, again, in the community partnership area and ensuring that families in the community are connected or, rather, are aware of where there are openings for daycares or Head Start programs, which is part of their major role.

In addition to that, they've also been very creative in other smaller components to their program to bring the families in. So, again, she's played a major role. Presently they've been involved with getting community providers to be involved with regards to early education of the children and parents. One metric—one meeting that I had attended was to begin the dialogue about how we're all playing roles, hopefully, to that respect of helping parents appreciate the importance of early educating the children with readings and so forth and beginning to identify some of the gaps. Since then, I'm not attending that. I thought Carmen Rosa, the program coordinator for First Steps, the mother-infant program, played a greater role in that because I don't think it would make sense for....⁸

I think, but I'm not really aware. I think I've heard of, but I'm not sure of that [i.e., a relationship between ACT and Bushwick IMPACT].⁸

General understandings of ACT are most consistent with the first and third levels of social capital: bonding social capital within communities and creating synergy between communities and public institutions to address social, political, and economic inequalities (Saegert, Thompson, Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, these associations are most in alignment with Smock's community building model, which is characterized by building the community from within via collaborative partnerships, with the goal of impacting the government's decision-making process.

Understandings of ACT's early years in Bushwick, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, and Bushwick IMPACT are most consistent with bonding social capital. Several understandings of Bushwick IMPACT reinforce Putnam's reference to "the dark side of bonding social capital," whereby it reinforces social stratification. Lastly, these understandings are most reflective of Smock's community building model, with some remnants of her civic and woman-centered models, as an approach to addressing inequalities.

GOALS FOR CHANGE

The literature states that CCEs pursue three objectives: substantial change in distressed communities and a sustainable development and improvement process in order to improve conditions and opportunities for individuals and families residing in these communities; change in the nature of relationships between communities and external service providers; and local change by drawing upon both local and external resources and knowledge. Simply put, CCEs seek change on the individual and family level, community level, and systemic level (American Writing Corporation, 1992; Barchecheat, 2003; Barss and Associates, 1969; Brettschneider, 2001; Chaskin et al., 2001; Connell et al., 1995; Fishman, 1993; Milligan et al., 1996; and Stone, 1996). Remnants of these goals are evident in the respondent reports below. All are consistent with Saegert, Thompson, Warren, and Putnam's three levels of social capital: bonding social capital within communities, bridging social capital between communities, and creating synergy with financial and public institutions.

Respondents described ACT's goals generally or in three phases: ACT's early years in Bushwick, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, and Bushwick IMPACT.

General Goals for Change

One of ACT's general community change goals included bringing people, who were invested in the well-being of children and families, together at a community level, and to then create sufficient energy to address the issues that impacted them:

Okay. I believe that ACT's purpose is to bring people together who are invested in the well being of children, and to take it a little further, bring people together on a community level, and those people including community residents, providers of service, government officials, private funders, elected officials, anyone with an interest and investment in children in the particular community. I think the belief is that by bringing that group of people together, there is enough energy developed to really create change within the community and to address whatever are the issues or concerns that impact on children and families.¹¹

Because of the increase in service providers' competing interests, over time, ACT's goal of improving the lives of children and families became diluted:

The reason I felt it got off track again because I find this happens almost all the time. In places where there should be complete solidarity, people get this is the need or this is that. That's what I find, especially with [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair]. I found that she—it was almost, she seemed sometimes, my impression was she would almost be insulted if it was not all about her program and what she was doing. Same thing, I saw that. But it's not about any individual. It's about the results that you can get for the clientele that you have, the people you're trying to get to where they need to get to. It's not about us, who are the workers. It's about the people we're trying to serve and get them the services or resources they need, and I think they sort of got away from it because it was almost like people had attitudes that they—one time I was told it's no longer ACT, it's something else.

I'm saying it's always going to be ACT for me because it worked. Agenda for Children Tomorrow worked from the beginning, and we still see results of it. I think the executive people like [the former ACT Executive Director] and they, the people were phenomenal. I hardly met a person that was the way he was, and I didn't know him probably the way you know him, but what I've seen of him the first day that I met him, he's phenomenal. He always seemed to be about what was the best for the communities and what he was involved in. I sort of missed that, but I think some of the other ladies that have come around, and you included, have done great jobs, and are still doing good things. I'm very partial to Agenda for Children Tomorrow and I'll always be.⁶

I don't really know what happened, but I think, again, it was a fight for territory. I think that's what it was, from my perspective that people felt if they weren't the one who initiated it and involved in it, that it wasn't that valuable. And I know that that wasn't true, and to be honest with you, some of the meetings, I just stopped going to some of them myself because it was so far away from what it had been, and I don't think the—

they were getting the results as far as Agenda for Children Tomorrow is concerned. They should have got them because of the people wanted to feel I'm director and I'm in charge, I'm in charge—the other program that came into, that collaborated with Agenda for Children Tomorrow. It was—I don't mean the individual people; I'm saying different programs. Like what [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair] was in charge of, and she wanted—always wanted to be like, I guess, looked at as a person who was totally in charge of whatever it was that she was doing. That's what I got from her.

But it was about us and about the community and about the families and about the people. That's how I saw it, and that's how I see it, and I think they were more interested in the titles they were holding than getting results for the families in the community and it didn't work for me. It still has not taken anything away from my opinion of what—because I know what Agenda for Children Tomorrow was, and I know what it was designed for. Getting sidetracked a little bit can work for a while, but, you know, I don't see any of those people involved in any of the meetings of anything I go to, none of it except for who's working with IMPACT now, but I don't see any of the other players that were there in any of the meetings I attend.⁶

Additional general community and system change goals included identifying community needs and connecting them to available resources via relationship building:

From my understanding, ACT is—it's a community partnership. It helps to partner a sensor with the community at large and begin to work with the needs of the community and the resources within the community, and then what's not in the community, see what we can do to bring it in and how we can come together to make that happen.²

I think is about building a strong relationship with all CBOs and work together towards meeting the needs of this community.¹³

ACT's general community goals also included training residents on how to be advocates:

Right. PSP [i.e., Parent Services Project], right. I said fine. I said, in fact, I'll give you room here so that you can really have an established place here. So, Parent Services Project, which then became IMPACT, was started here in this building. And [ACT's Director of Community Planning] first was involved in working get through. And we had a lot of people from the community, parents from the community. See, that was the problem. We never really involved enough parents to really get further than we should have gotten further. And with [the former ACT Associate Executive Director] and [ACT's Director of Community Planning], in starting something like the PSP, they brought families here to learn about their community.

And then, after that, if you remember, we had this wonderful dinner with all of these people on—this was on [**Riddle**] Avenue. There was a skating rink place. And certain people were given awards for helping to pull this project together. And so, IMPACT was born. And then, IMPACT found a place at 69 Central Avenue. And they began to develop themselves in the early childhood, which was great, because we always needed a resource very much like service coordination for families so that they understood where to go, how to get their children to daycare and also an interim place for their children to have fun at IMPACT. So, everything worked out in a very nice way.⁴

Another respondent described the system change goals of the ACT Oversight meetings as sharing information that would drive the work of local Collaboratives and giving community leaders' access to high-level government officials:

Then, I think that group tied into the ACT Oversight—is that what it was called—yep—the ACT Oversight Committee.¹¹

Well, I believe the ACT Oversight was more of a citywide Collaborative effort that represented, at that time, I guess the five ACT Collaboratives, representatives from each of those communities, as well as higher level government officials, and I believe it was co-chairs by typically the commissioner for ACS and, again, modeled the same idea of bringing in information from wider systems that would help drive the work on the

community level, but also gave those groups of participants in the Oversight Committee, access to people they may not typically get to talk to like the chancellor for the Department of Education or the commissioner for ACS or any of the other commissioners.¹¹

The following reports of general goals for change are consistent with ACT's stated mission: bringing people together to address issues; accessing government officials; and connecting community needs to available resources.

Goals for Change: ACT's Early Years in Bushwick

During ACT's early years in Bushwick,^{lxxix} their community change goals were described accessing the community's perspectives on their needs and how to address them as well as helping community leaders address their needs:

I remember ACT, maybe from the—from 1999, perhaps, or could even be longer than that. And it started out we were invited to a meeting. The community meetings were held at the Bushwick Geographic Targeting Task Force, and at that time, the director was Miss **Romani**. I can't really think of her first name right now, but as we go on, it may come back to me.

Again, the community board was a part of the meeting—Community Board 4. I remember the Hope Gardens, and there the director there at that time was the late Anna Gonzalez, and there were others. We would sit around, and we would have different strategy meetings, again, on what the needs were for our Bushwick community.

I remember ACT helping out with different initiatives for people that may have been victims of domestic violence. They worked together with different issues with the schooling. They felt there wasn't adequate, I guess curriculum or different things like that, for our community. Most of what I did with ACT was at the Bushwick Geographic

Targeting Task Force. They had different services that they provided to the community at the Task Force, and ACT was just always there at any of the meetings that they had, gentleman with the needs of the community, ACT, was always there.

For example, they had an adult learning program. They had a program for young people to teach them leadership roles, how to conduct themselves when they were going out on interviews, so on and so forth. Then they had an after school program. They would also go around the neighborhood and look at the neighborhood and do a needs assessment. Now, this is the young people. Then they would actually come back and they would implement whatever they felt needed to be done in the neighborhood.

I remember them drawing a mural on one of the schools. They were involved in peer mediation, and all of this was due to funding they had or help they had in some way from ACT. I really can't tell you how much funding they received with them because I wasn't privy to that, but I do know that ACT was a key person that was part of this collaboration.¹⁰

Accessing violence. Whatever was really affecting the community, and basically, ACT tried to get an idea, again, from the community what their needs were. They didn't just come in and say, "This is what we want you to do." They would try to find out—they'd do a needs assessment, and that's basically what they did.¹⁰

Goals for Change: the Bushwick ACT Collaborative

During the Bushwick ACT Collaborative years, ACT's community change goals were described as creating a space to network, discuss service gaps and community issues, discuss ways to advocate for these issues, and take on leadership opportunities:

When I attended those meetings with ACT, the community ones, I certainly felt, for a number of reasons, that I needed to be there: (1) certainly to support [the former

Bushwick ACT Collaborative Co-chair] and present myself as a member of the agency, (2) as the program director for [a community program] to hear and speak for the benefits of men, whatever issue is going on, that could affect them and give them some sort of voice and—I think I’m up to (3) offer some kind of leadership where I thought it made sense for me to be involved in and then, (4), just to be aware of what’s going on within the community with regards to concerns, issues and potential advocacy issues on the community’s behalf. Then lastly, of course, networking, it’s also a great opportunity to network.⁸

Additional community change goals included strengthening relationships between service providers and locating new service providers and inviting them in to discuss community issues and ways to address them:

It seemed to me that Agenda for Children Tomorrow focused on networking with organizations in Bushwick that were working directly with residents, specifically with children. And that the goal was to strengthen relationships among the providers, find new providers and bring them in to strengthen each other’s work by referrals, by providing information, by having sessions where people could discuss their issues that the organizations were facing and basically strengthen the provider community. That’s my view of it, the period of time that I was in on it.¹²

Another described the ACT Collaborative’s individual/family change goal as building leaders:

Since I came into the ACT Collaborative after it had already been functioning, well, I don’t really know for how long, but for a while, for a few years I guess, the strategic planning must have gone on prior to that. The plan about what ACT was ultimately going to—moving toward other than that very large mission statement that you mentioned, broad mission statement that you mentioned in the beginning. So, I’d have to say that, concretely, it was more the TA that was provided was more focused on I would say strengthening the staff of the organizations that participated in the Collaborative and really strengthening them, the people that came. And in terms of—I think I would say

that a few people that were there—I'd say that they did get some leadership assistance and development, because I think some folks there have actually gotten ahead. Now, maybe they would've anyway.¹²

Well, by people being able to stand up and speak, giving feedback. I guess I remember some people getting assignments, like doing your assignments. I don't know if the coordinators ever took somebody under their wing or something and kind of developed in more one-on-one coaching and mentoring, but it was a way—I think that the meeting gave a voice, gave a way for people to be able to practice speaking in public and getting assignments and then reporting back and stuff like that. So, again, in terms of strategic planning or that, I wasn't involved in that.¹²

Another said ACT's community and system change goals were to focus on homelessness and health and to develop a process for addressing them, which included the community's perspectives as well as outside expert's knowledge:

One of the—the two primary issues that stand out for me, one of them being homelessness and the other being health issues, and we were able to organize a process around addressing each of those issues that I believe first started off with breaking down how the community perceived those problems and what was the information and the knowledge they felt they needed to be able to address it. We also were able to bring in experts who had the data information around each of these issues, health and homelessness, and then would hold monthly meetings that were very well attended and would have key speakers that would address some of these issues, concerns, knowledge that needed to be given to the community.¹¹

I don't know. I think one of the things that I did was attend the meetings, put my input in, talk to what some of the issues were, made sure that others came to those meetings.

Early on, my recollection is around—I have to use events. I have to find out what was the event. When we held a major event at Wyckoff Medical Center, I believe the issue that

was brought out was homelessness, and from there, Homebase was born, and that was a Collaborative where two major community-based organizations came together to provide preventive homelessness services for residents within the 11237 zip code area. I do believe that expanded beyond that core area, which covered a lot of people who lived in our community. Of course, we were concerned with Bushwick.⁷

The first time I heard about ACT was at one of the Collaborative meetings when I was first in the Head Start, because I went to a meeting with [another Bushwick respondent] on homelessness. And that was the first time I ever heard ACT Collaborative. I didn't know what ACT meant. I just heard ACT Collaborative. And so, when I went to that meeting, I just saw a lot of people in a room that were talking about the homeless situation in Bushwick and how to help families, how to get shelters, how to get housing and things like that. I didn't know anything about ACT until I started doing the training to be a parent advocate. And then, that's when I heard about Agenda for Children Tomorrow. And that's when I put it together: ACT.³

Yeah. And like I said in the beginning, when I went to the first Collaborative meeting, it was about homelessness. But then, I got involved more. And I sat on the legislative breakfast about health for families in Bushwick. So, that's how I intimately got involved with the Collaborative.³

Goals for Change: Bushwick IMPACT

ACT's individual/family and community change goals via Bushwick IMPACT included teaching parents about the educational system and how to navigate it; creating a space where parents come together and discuss issues they are facing and how to address them; decreasing isolation experienced by parents; and creating a space where parents feel empowered to create positive changes in their children's lives:

From my perspective, from my understanding, IMPACT was born to empower parents with respect to the process of enrolling children, teaching them what the system is, how the system works and giving them an outlet where they can meet collectively and discuss issues that they're facing, and it's given them—it's empowered the parents. I've seen what has happened with some of these parents, and I think it's the best thing that could happen to them. It's given them a place where they meet. It's given them ownership of their community. It's given them a feeling of—a partnership and they're not alone, and they're addressing issues that young people are facing—not young people, but that parents of young children are facing.⁷

Bushwick IMPACT, which I think grew out of a United Way project, was here to address the—to assist the community in understanding what resources were available to them with regards to childcare, create linkages with the daycare programs, heighten the awareness, again, in the community around the zero to five—let's say three to five population, and then I don't know if this was original purpose or kind of grew into purpose, but there was also work being done around family literacy.¹¹

Other community change goals via Bushwick IMPACT included teaching about early childhood development, early childhood education resources, how to navigate systems, and how to be an effective parent advocate:

We help families in the community that need early education services. So, any type of early education services from early intervention from the child—the children are small up until they progress into the third grade. We're helping them with early intervention, with Head Start information, daycare, committee on preschool education. Anything within that realm, we're experts in. With also serving the community by holding programs onsite for families that have children under the age of—well, most of our programs run under the age of 5, really active ones, the children are under the age of 5.

So, we help parents navigate. We navigate by explaining to them the systems, documentation, the way systems work. We inform them about how systems work. We

help them move through the system by encouraging them and coaching them on what they need to do or what we feel like they are telling us they need to be able to do.³

Another individual/family change goal included facilitating literacy on community resources, education, and technology:

They definitely do. I go to school community board meetings or open night and they are there. Presentation, talking to people there about what they're doing and what they're trying to do. So, when you see that happening and that, you're, like, oh, you know, this is someone you want to work with because they really are trying to improve what they're doing and the people who are coming to them, they're trying to make it easier for them to get resources and look at housing. They're always trying to—what do you have that's going on. Is there anything with housing or computers? Or programs for kids? They're always trying to do something to help the people in the community. As an outsider looking in, wow, how can we as a library help that? This is some of the resources to make their job a little easier. And we may have some resources they don't know about, instead of going, let's all pull resources together to make it a little easier for the community to let's work together. And I think that's always something that, oh, this is something I want to keep doing.⁹

In addition, ACT's community change goals via Bushwick IMPACT included sharing information about openings for daycare and Head Start programs and engaging families on early education; specifically, on how it relates to their children as well as issues they are facing:

IMPACT has played I think a tremendous role in this community.... [The Bushwick IMPACT Director] is an excellent leader in the community, I think, and really is community-minded and has been dedicated to this community. She's very attentive to the needs of community residents and has taken leadership roles at times in a number of areas, specifically, again, in the community partnership area and ensuring that families in the community are connected or, rather, are aware of where there are openings for daycares or Head Start programs, which is part of their major role.

In addition to that, they've also been very creative in other smaller components to their program to bring the families in. So, again, she's played a major role. Presently, they've been involved with getting community providers to be involved with regards to early education of the children and parents.⁸

Additional community change goals included to share information with parents, community leaders, etc., about early childhood development and education and to match children who need daycare to daycare centers that have openings:

ACT does have a presence. One thing they transformed into concentrating was early childhood education. So, you have IMPACT, which I believe definitely has a funding stream from ACT, which ACT started, and IMPACT is a storefront. I think it's on 69 Central Avenue, and the goal of IMPACT was to inform and just be the cradle of the community as far as it related to early childhood or parenting young children, as far as their academics and development stage. They're still there, and they're growing. They're becoming a little stable. Especially in a community like Bushwick, people have language barriers or immigration issues, and people just don't know how to navigate, how to secure childcare.

Right now, Bushwick basically all the childcare—I'm not going to say "all" because there's always this myth of why there are openings in childcare when there always seems to be such a need in childcare. So, what IMPACT also does is help think about the barriers of why, if you have a family that needs childcare, why they're not getting childcare when you have childcare centers that say they have openings. So, what is it that makes the match not work, what's the paperwork or whatever that's the problem.⁵

Another said the goal is to assist parents with accessing daycare:

Now, presently, ACT is in Bushwick, and they're working with Bushwick IMPACT, and they're dealing with a lot of issues with parents are finding the daycare. Issues they're

going through now with eligibility. They have changed the system. Their parents used to have a caseworker that would come into the community. As a matter of fact, daycare—Audrey Johnson Day Care Center was one of the daycares in Bushwick that housed the caseworkers. So, the caseworker would come here, and the parents would then bring the information to them.¹⁰

Another respondent said Bushwick IMPACT's system change goals include advocating to citywide leaders by communicating the community's early childhood needs via the Bushwick Early Education Council:

It's to make sure that education, early education in the community is a priority. And so that whatever Coalition members sit with us, in their forefront of their mind early education needs to come first before anything else. Parents need to know how important early education is. CBOs need to know how important early education. And then, the government needs to know. ACS and the mayor's office, they all need to know how important early education is, because we feel that if children are not learning at an early place, then maybe down the line, the government is just going to pay for more services for these families because they didn't get an early start.³

There is a distinct shift in goals between the early years of ACT, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, and Bushwick IMPACT. During the early years, goals are most consistent with the first order of social capital: bonding social capital. During the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, goals are more consistent with the third order of social capital: creating synergy between communities and public institutions. During Bushwick IMPACT, goals are most consistent with both of these orders of social capital. When examining each phase individually, reports of goals during these three phases capture parts of ACT's mission (see chapter 2); however, goals during the Bushwick IMPACT phase come closest to capturing ACT's mission in its entirety.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING ACT

There are two principles that guide comprehensive community efforts: comprehensiveness and community building. (Himmelman, 1992; Kubisch et al., 1997; Mattessich et al., 1992; Rosewater, 1992; and Stone, 1996). All respondents agreed with this notion, and most agreed with their definitions:

Comprehensiveness: The full range of circumstances, opportunities, and needs of individuals and families living in CCE communities and the relationships among them.

Community building: Strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive community change.

The literature states that CCEs give attention to comprehensiveness and community building activities, in principle and/or action, and strive to achieve synergy among them.

Most respondents believed that ACT embodied and promoted most aspects of comprehensiveness and community building; they also believed that this propelled ACT to accomplish their goals:

Well, I certainly feel like they [i.e., ACT] have embodied most of the subsets of those principles.¹¹

One exception was a respondent who said it was difficult to comment on ACT's role on promoting community building/positive community change because she was unclear on the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's goals and how well they did at attaining these goals:

Well, honestly, I really don't know how to measure what the community change was. Really don't know. I kind of know from our point of view what we gain from it. I can observe years later people seem to still talk about it and seem to still know people from that. But in terms of fundamental change, I don't know.¹²

Another respondent believed ACT did not promote comprehensiveness and community building in the best way possible:

BRC. The BRC was a very, very important network in our community, and it was a network in our community that was important for a lot of reasons. It had depth and breadth. It went across the lines. The founder—I don't know if she was founder. The organizer, the person that was the fabric and the thread was Sister Betty. You know that. And she did a phenomenal job in pulling together all facets of the community across lines, and when I saw across lines, I'm talking about lines of protection because she had the police department there. The lines of the community board, she made sure I was there. The lines of elected officials, whenever we needed them, they were there. We had daycare providers and a lot of other people because they believed that the BRC was the organization that brought forth the providers that no one else knew how to connect with.

When we worked through an ACT Collaborative, tried to bring that organization that already had the breadth and the depth in our community, when we tried to bring them to the table, it looked like there was a struggle, and the struggle was on a couple of fronts. I think the struggle was on (1) you're going to take away something I built already; (2) we tried this, it didn't work before, why are we going to do it again; (3) I don't like some of those players, those are not my people. Resulting in a severe split in the way in which the goal should have been met, and maybe I'm not saying that right. Resulting in less power; resulting in confusion a little bit because you had a lot of people who represented various levels of government torn. They didn't know which way they wanted to be a part of this. However, had everybody come together and said, "Look, forget what I feel. We're going to make it work," I think we would have had a stronger voice, a greater voice.

The ACT Collaborative?

They kept saying it [i.e., community building] was over and over again, that was always announced at the meetings, but I don't think everybody bought into it. I don't know. That's a good question. I think personally that a lot of people felt they had to be there, but

I don't think they brought into the "we" concept. I really don't think so. No. I don't think they brought into it [i.e., the "we" concept]. I don't think they brought into the collaboration of it all. They went through the motions, but I don't know. I don't believe it. And I don't know why. I think I have some clues, but—I think people tie it up. Other people, "This never happened before. When we tried it before, we failed at it, so we're not going to make an attempt now." I don't know. I think people are—Meeting'ed out completely.⁷

Comprehensiveness

One respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by creating a space for people to enter into and create positive changes for themselves, children, families, and communities:

I think the definition—one of the things is the need is—I think there would be no—we would not have any facilities out here at all or have to change or make anything different if there weren't a need. The need to provide the opportunity, to have people change their circumstances, whatever they are. That's what I find that happens, when you have programs such as the Agenda for Children Tomorrow and others that are about doing the right thing, it's about—as I spoke before, about changing communities, just that definition, you're saying comprehensiveness, it has to be around connection of things. It cannot just be one thing that will change a community. If the need is there, you have to address the need in order to make things happen that will bring the community to where it needs to be in.

That would be like what it was like for people that are, for instance, poor. Somebody said that Bushwick is one of the unhealthiest communities that—they always say Harlem is or whatever, but one of the things when I'm in need like with Wyckoff Heights Hospital, one of the things I say is in order to bring the needs to change the health in the community, we have to deal with the merchants. We have to deal with every organization, including the hospitals that are in that community. Because if Wyckoff

Heights Hospital is not capable of meeting the needs whether it's gunshots or whatever, whatever that happens in the community, it's not going to happen. This community is going to be better if you're in an ambulance and die before you get there.

Same thing with the grocery stores. If they're talking about childhood obesity and diabetes and all those type of things and you bring the garbage in here, shove them in the supermarkets, you're not going to have a difference in how children's health is or grown-ups' health, for that matter, is. The same thing with the alcoholism. They're saying this leads to the alcoholism, so you got beer and cheap wine sold at every bodega around here, and if you are a community where that is a problem, why then does everyone have a liquor license to sell a beer instead of having more pharmaceuticals or drugstores around? That to me means that in order to be comprehensiveness, to use that again, you've got to address all of those things and keep it moving. It can't just be one area. It has to be everything. And therefore, I'm saying again, if the need is there, it provides an opportunity for programs such as this program and other programs to get involved to help bring about changes in people's lives or circumstances or whatever.

I think, again, with the input from programs such as this and being on point, they need assistance because one program can't do it all, but you can raise awareness to it. I think for me that's what happened a lot of times in the program here because we have talked about it, and it helped when we were having meetings at 333 about bringing—making sure the merchants that sell food over here, sell good, low percentage milk and all those type of healthy things. And sometimes it rumple—you know, people get upset when you do that, but we have to all be on point, and if we're serious about bringing about changes and having that continuity and making sure things happen the way you want it to happen, and I feel like even bringing it—the awareness up is a great [inaudible], because some people are not going to do it. Some don't want to get people upset or whatever, but I think that in as far back as I've been involved in this; it has been one of the things that has happened as well. They have talked about it and have had people come in from different other organizations to bring information, show slides, and do all this about helping people to change and to get to where they need to get to.

It [i.e., an unmet nutritional need] plays out to life, from birth to—

But I think that is a change in a sense, when you make people aware of something. You may be the one who gives me the idea, but you don't have to make the idea happen. It's up to me then, and I think that's what happened. Because even Wyckoff Heights Hospital, they have put it through so many different programs that they have met with and again training the IMPACT ladies and any parent that wants to go there. So, I was like three weeks ago at a meeting where they were saying they had families coming with their small babies with the little toddlers or whatever, and the doctors came to speak to them like we're sitting here talking today about what is the appropriate thing to do on every aspect.

See, when you bring things up like that, because there's a great focus on childhood obesity now and diabetes is the Stage I diabetes, and this is what they were talking about because most of the families there were Latino families, and they were saying that the diet you've been doing all this stuff that's been okay, is not okay now. And that children are more sedentary. They're not getting outside and playing in the park. He told us when the babies were sitting on the floor and their mothers and fathers—and some fathers—that you have to change those type of things. And I know that it came from being involved in our programs at 333 Central because none of it was happening before.

Yeah. But see, they [i.e., the Collaborative] were involved in it [i.e., the health paper]. You were there, so you know they got the information, and I'm saying the same thing I said about ACS and the people out in the field with people, they get the information from communities like this, and they go back and act as if they decide, it was their discovery they did. The same thing is happening with the hospitals. I see a difference in Wyckoff Heights, and Woodhall, I'm in a meeting down there every other month where the same thing happens. They send their people in, because we include them. They invite everybody to come, and they get stuff to go back, and people act on it. They act as if they discovered it and it was something—but as long as it's happening, I don't care if

somebody take it as long as they're doing the right thing. I'm pleased with some of the things that I'm seeing as far as ACS and hospitals or whatever is coming into our meetings and getting stuff and going back and acting on them.

...we would not have any facilities out here at all or have to change or make anything different if there weren't a need. The need to provide the opportunity, to have people change their circumstances, whatever they are. That's what I find that happens, when you have programs such as the Agenda for Children Tomorrow and others that are about doing the right thing.⁶

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by assisting the participants with family needs as well as teaching them how to meet their own needs:

No. That was well said, and I liked the way you put it, and I do think, in some way, with all that has been said earlier that some of that was answered because, as I indicated, to give the parents the opportunity to understand, first and foremost, in order for them to go out in the workforce and be productive citizens, they first need to make sure their child is well taken care of so they can go out and they can be relaxed, not just taken care of with a babysitter, but also in an educational institution where they won't meet the needs of the whole child. And we talked about the four needs of the whole child earlier.

So, then, as you said, then you have to make sure they have somewhere to live. We talked about the shelter. We talked about childcare, the necessities, making sure the parents have the food that they needed, maybe getting food stamps and knowing to—and not even that, the parents that are working. Maybe knowing their supports and having fresh vegetables for the children opposed to going to the fast food. All of that is done. All of that is done at ACT in some aspect. So, I think that's one of the ways when you're looking at the whole family, you're just not looking at childcare, but you're looking at all of the needs of that family.¹⁰

Right. I can [i.e., send parents with food and housing needs to ACT because they define childcare very broadly]. But I'm not saying ACT is going to meet all the parents' needs, but they are going to give them tools or they are going to give them the avenues of where to go. They're like a vessel. So, ACT will just point them and let them go down whatever path they need to go to get that help. They don't really provide people with food stamps. They don't provide them with benefits, but they know where to steer them in the direction to do that, as I can do here for my parents also.

But when I feel that I can't meet their needs, then my job too is to be a vessel and to steer them in the right direction. And that—we steer them sometimes to IMPACT and we steer them to other places too. I can't really answer the question in the way in which you're looking for me to answer it or the way maybe someone else would answer it. I can only answer it from my experience. I don't know because you gave me the definition, if ACT is actually doing all that the definition says. I can't honestly answer that because I'm not really there. If you come there and ask me with early childhood, does Audrey Johnson do that, I could answer you honestly and say yes. But for Bushwick IMPACT I cannot.¹⁰

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by always examining the interplay of one's needs; she equated this with a complex way of thinking:

I think the way they looked at it [i.e., comprehensiveness] was perfect because you cannot look at the fact that this community or these people on this side are not working. What can we do to help them work? But now you're not looking at the fact they need childcare, what hours would work for them, and how much education they have. Are you looking a minimal job to say we put them to work, never minding the fact they're stressed out how they're going to make it to work? I think they kept that very clear and making sure the whole family, every part of the family is taken care of. Yes, they're able to pay their rent, but is it enough to pay their light and gas, and if not, how can we make that happen?

So, they began to look at, not just minimal, but enough and how to make that enough, in terms of how to make their money stretch and budgeting money and management, how to make that work when they go to a supermarket and they want to shop. What are the best things and healthiest things to buy within their budget? So, budget management and how do we make that work?

So, I think for them, they kind of looked at the whole family and then the groundwork underneath them to make it somewhat solid for them to stand on and still feel like, “I can do this. I can work because I know this and this and this and this and this is going to be taken care of,” and giving them the encouragement to say, “Don’t stop there. Grab for a resource. There’s something in the community not too far that’s there to help you.” I think it’s wonderful how they took the whole thing and made it into one ball, and it bounces well.²

Another respondent said that ACT promoted comprehensiveness by lifting up the community’s voice to citywide decision makers on community issues and recommended ways of addressing them:

I think in answering your question, I think I kind of answered that earlier when I made reference to it helped the community find a voice and articulate those issues in such a way, we’re then followed by writing those papers and then sending them to the right parties for a response to them. I think that was—I don’t remember to be honest. I don’t remember. I mean, again, in my mind it’s been a while. That served as an example of it’s not the community sitting down together and saying, “Put this down, put this down, write this down.” It’s you guys. It’s the committee members. Hearing, having these hearings, if you will, and people expressing what the issues are, concerns are and then it being put down on paper. I’ve been using that to advocate for the community. So, in its simplest form, I think that was how I see that.⁸

This respondent went on to say that, the discontinuation of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative meetings had a detrimental impact on the promotion of comprehensiveness:

I agree with that [i.e., the literature's definition of community building]. Do I see anything being taken away? Again, through the meetings that ACT had initially that it helped the community. Unfortunately, it ended, and I think it left the community floundering a little bit, and except for present organization like CPI, I'm not aware of any others in which, outside of community providers, residents are actively involved. They may be, but I'm not aware of them, outside of maybe the community board, the precinct meetings.⁸

Another said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by providing direct services through Bushwick IMPACT:

I would say that the first time that I saw any signs from ACT of that had to do with when IMPACT was born, because to me that's very much where IMPACT comes from. You're taking the women from the street, the welfare recipient or whose kids are grownup, she's a grandma now, whatever. She's a grandma taking care of the grandchildren because Mom's in jail. They're taking the real people of the real Bushwick and they are building those people, not just to service themselves, but also to service the community. And to me, that's basically the first that I've seen of ACT actually doing. So, that's what it came down to the changeover to direct services.¹

In terms of ACT, basically, what you made me realize, if it wasn't for ACT, IMPACT [i.e., Bushwick IMPACT] wouldn't be in existence. So, therefore, to me, when you have a community—I don't know how IMPACT is following up in the community or what statistics that they have in terms of what's being accomplished, but ACT did put them in the community. So, they're the—basically, that's IMPACT's catalyst, ACT is. So, I would say ACT is a good situation.¹⁴

Another respondent, more familiar with Bushwick IMPACT, said it promoted comprehensiveness by thinking about all that community residents needed to succeed; however, he expressed concern about comprehensiveness diminishing because of agency competition:

I'm kind of putting together what their role is and what they do in terms of how you completed the definition. I agree what the aspect of it. How do they promote that?

Achieving. Yeah, I feel like they know exactly, okay, if Nina comes into the office, she has a need. Based on what they can do for this person, I think they go about the steps they take, I think they're really trying to thinking of a—she's looking for a job. But she needs help for someone to take care of the little baby. Could she afford to pay childcare? So, what I think will happen, they're probably, like, okay, we have to find somewhere where this—there's childcare for this person. And I see that happening.

We are, like, okay, this is here and see them talking through it. This childcare is here and not too far. What hours do they have? What hours this person can work? Trying to find a way for this person to go to work, but at the same time, they're trying to connect childcare for this person, either at a reduced cost. But the problem comes in is, if there's another child involved who's a little older who does not fit in terms of, okay, zero through five. And there's an eight-year old and this person want to go to work. This is where they find childcare for this person when there's no one there to look after this kid. So, they are [inaudible 33:35] back we're trying to do this. We have the same care, but this place isn't...⁹

Right. And the apartment is X amounts of money. We have this taken care of. She finds a place. She's going to move in. But she still has to do this. And that's where they come in where they are trying to find resources to offer this job. We can come to Bushwick IMPACT after school and have them there for until 5:00, but maybe that may be another option according to how their play area. The kid could come. So, she wants to pick that kid up now. Who's going to pick the kid up from school to get here?

So, this is when people do come in and they are trying to solve stuff, it's not as simple as just the person just finding a job and having a three-year old and an eight-year old. We need to find other resources. I find that they are pretty creative or they are pretty, let's see

what we can do. And they're picking up the phone, this person has childcare. Could they pay less? That's what I find they are good at or they work at to resolve some of these pending issues. And it happens a lot in all the low-income communities. That is something where people struggle a bit and need to find resources. And this is a place where they can probably come to someone or they may—someone probably referred them to them. And actually, they've done their groundwork.

The people who are doing this, I'm sure they've been through all the steps to find childcare for kids. And then, they may find IMPACT has maybe less resources. They'd know the first one. These community agencies are always, oh, I can't do anything. Let me—and someone probably referred them there. And that's where they may be able to find a resource if it works out. If it doesn't work out—if it works out for them, it's great. Or IMPACT will probably try and find some other resource that would probably help them with their childcare issues.

Yeah, I find too that a lot of different places for these resources to get here. By finding so many of them, and they're in competition I think, and so in—but instead of being this is—everyone [inaudible 36:33], this is—and so, now you have—instead of having one—all these resources together, you find that there is competition among these different agencies sometimes. Well, who's doing better? And it's never collaborate this thing sometimes where I think it's better if somebody that I find is too many—I call it over there, why don't you all have—they're all there. Too much competition I find sometimes with these different agencies.

Funding [inhibits collaboration]. If my agency is reaching out to 200 people and I could get more federal or state funding and IMPACT is reaching out to 150, I don't want to send these people over there to increase their amount, because now I may reduce my funding. So, instead of being collaborative, it's more we have to make sure we go report who we've given help to write a grant. If you've got a grant proposal, you have to make sure we are seeing this, we are doing this, this and this. If IMPACT is in the grant pool, instead of doing this and this. So, if they are doing the same thing, it reduces the chance

of getting that grant. If I'm doing this and you're doing the same thing, why should I give this other person the grant? So, that's where I think the funding comes in where you find that's where that's an **[inaudible]**. It may not be a competitive thing but it's there.⁹

I find that when I interview someone on behalf of IMPACT about the grant, you see where it's going. Okay. Or, if I'm here doing a grant for them in the library, we have to come back and tell IMPACT we are doing this program. We're going it to IMPACT. But we need you guys to support our grant for this library program. And based on how these grants are structured, I figure it's where the competition is. I just pick up on certain things as it goes on. That's what's happening.⁹

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by improving the lives of children via early childhood development activities:

Well, it improved the lives of moms with children living in isolation and now are a big group involved in activities to improve the development of their children and possibilities for them; also they now doing community work inviting others moms/families to participate and get benefits from the available community resources.¹³

Other respondents said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by creating Bushwick IMPACT:

I would say that the first time that I saw any signs from ACT of that had to do with when IMPACT was born, because to me that's very much where IMPACT comes from. You're taking the women from the street, the welfare recipient or whose kids are grownup, she's a grandma now, whatever. She's a grandma taking care of the grandchildren because Mom's in jail. They're taking the real people of the real Bushwick and they are building those people, not just to service themselves, but also to service the community. And to me, that's basically the first that I've seen of ACT actually doing. So, that's what it came down to—the changeover to direct services.¹

I think it's right on the money to what ACT was thinking about when they created IMPACT. I believe that that was our whole source of being.³

For the first one, I believe when we first were told about what IMPACT was going to be, which was a resource center for families. Parent advocates were under the impression that we were going to be giving resources for a whole host of things that were going on in the community, as far as there were housing issues. We were going to help families with housing issues. If there was childcare issues, we were going to help families with childcare issues. We weren't really under this thing that it was going to be defined—IMPACT was going to be defined by the ages of children. We were just under the assumption that IMPACT was going to be a resource center for all families so that they can come in and we can help them with a range of issues that they were going on so that they could be sustainable in the community.

And I think when ACT was thinking about the IMPACT theory and how it was going to work that's how they believed when they got it collaboratively through the community. When they talked to the daycare centers and found out daycares what was needed, when they talked to the housing organizations and told them we need an expert in housing that can work with families, or when they talked with the local food markets and parents need to know more about WIC, or they need to know more about food stamps, or things like that; I believe that that's what ACT was believing they were going to be implementing in the community, a hub for information, for parents to come in and get the information they needed across the board so that they could then go out and take care of their families and be able to feel like they were making a difference.

And I think when they brung [sic] parents like me into a project like this, they were thinking about, okay, how do we identify the parents who can be leaders in the community? How do we build them up so that they can be leaders in the community? And how do we keep them being leaders in the community? And I think that's the opportunity they gave us parents in the community when they thought of IMPACT being here. So, I think both definitions that you have describes ACT's thinking in direct

correlation with IMPACT and the fact that IMPACT is now going to stay in the community, hopefully, and keep doing what they're doing.³

In terms of ACT, basically, what you made me realize, if it wasn't for ACT, IMPACT wouldn't be in existence. Am I correct? So, therefore, to me, when you have a community—I don't know how IMPACT is following up in the community or what statistics that they have in terms of what's being accomplished, but ACT did put them in the community. So they're the—basically, that's IMPACT's catalyst, ACT is.¹⁴

However, the latter respondent said that in some ways, ACT did not promote comprehensiveness because they did not follow up on the extent of the impact of their trainings on the community:

So, I would say ACT is a good situation, but in terms of that workshop and maybe IMPACT was supposed to be the one, I don't know, supposed to follow up to make sure that me, I, this particular setting, how are you coming along in terms of following up with parents? I'm kind of going off on a tangent. Okay. But that's what I see. I see IMPACT, ACT is basically the reason why IMPACT is in existence and I don't know to what extent they're.... Yes. Exactly. See, I don't know-like, okay, to me, they try, by even putting that workshop together. ACT did try. Maybe there was no particular follow-up for that workshop, but maybe they've done other stuff that I don't know about. That was one workshop. They've been in existence for a while.¹⁴

Another respondent said Bushwick IMPACT promoted comprehensiveness by assisting parents' with their needs and teaching them how to assist themselves with their needs:

But I'm not saying ACT is going to meet all the parents' needs, but they are going to give them tools or they are going to give them the avenues of where to go. They're like a vessel. So, ACT will just point them and let them go down whatever path they need to go to get that help. They don't really provide people with food stamps. They don't provide them with benefits, but they know where to steer them in the direction to do that....¹⁰

Another said Bushwick IMPACT promoted comprehensiveness by going beyond individual families and improving the lives of children and families via early childhood development activities. She said this process leads to children and families promoting community building by engaging other children and families into such activities:

Well, it improved the lives of moms with children living in isolation and now are a big group involved in activities to improve the development of their children and possibilities for them; also they now doing community work inviting others moms/families to participate and get benefits from the available community resources.¹³

Another respondent said she believed part of promoting comprehensiveness is the ability to sustain a project, like Bushwick IMPACT, over time, which ACT has managed to do:

For the first one, I believe when we first were told about what IMPACT was going to be, which was a resource center for families. Parent advocates were under the impression that we were going to be giving resources for a whole host of things that were going on in the community, as far as there were housing issues. We were going to help families with housing issues. If there was childcare issues, we were going to help families with childcare issues. We weren't really under this thing that it was going to be defined—IMPACT was going to be defined by the ages of children. We were just under the assumption that IMPACT was going to be a resource center for all families so that they can come in and we can help them with a range of issues that they were going on, so that they could be sustainable in the community.

And I think when ACT was thinking about the IMPACT theory and how it was going to work, that's how they believed when they got it collaboratively through the community. When they talked to the daycare centers and found out daycares what was needed, when they talked to the housing organizations and told them we need an expert in housing that can work with families, or when they talked with the local food markets and parents need to know more about WIC or they need to know more about food stamps or things like that, I believe that that's what ACT was believing they were going to be implementing in

the community, a hub for information, for parents to come in and get the information they needed across the board so that they could then go out and take care of their families and be able to feel like they were making a difference.

And I think when they brung [sic] parents like me into a project like this, they were thinking about, okay, how do we identify the parents who can be leaders in the community? How do we build them up so that they can be leaders in the community? And how do we keep them being leaders in the community? And I think that's the opportunity they gave us parents in the community when they thought of IMPACT being here. So, I think both definitions that you have describes ACT's thinking in direct correlation with IMPACT and the fact that IMPACT is now going to stay in the community, hopefully, and keep doing what they're doing.³

Another respondent said that ACT did not promote comprehensiveness because of the competition it created with the Bushwick Resource Coalition (BRC).^{lxxx}

I don't know why this keeps coming to mind for me, and I think it fits into this discussion, but if it doesn't, I just need to talk about it. Okay. I can't think of anything. I don't know if you recall the meetings that we used to have with Sister Betty. I forget what they're called—BRC—the BRC was a very, very important network in our community, and it was a network in our community that was important for a lot of reasons. It had depth and breadth. It went across the lines. The founder—I don't know if she was founder. The organizer, the person that was the fabric and the thread was Sister Betty. You know that. And she did a phenomenal job in pulling together all facets of the community across lines, and when I saw across lines, I'm talking about lines of protection because she had the police department there. The lines of the community board, she made sure I was there. The lines of elected officials, whenever we needed them, they were there. We had daycare providers and a lot of other people because they believed that the BRC was the organization that brought forth the providers that no one else knew how to connect with.

When we worked through an ACT Collaborative, tried to bring that organization that already had the breadth and the depth in our community, when we tried to bring them to the table, it looked like there was a struggle, and the struggle was on a couple of fronts. I think the struggle was on (1) you're going to take away something I built already; (2) we tried this, it didn't work before, why are we going to do it again; (3) I don't like some of those players, those are not my people. Resulting in a severe split in the way in which the goal should have been met, and maybe I'm not saying that right. Resulting in less power; resulting in confusion, a little bit because you had a lot of people who represented various levels of government torn. They didn't know which way they wanted to be a part of this. However, had everybody come together and said, "Look, forget what I feel. We're going to make it work," I think we would have had a stronger voice, a greater voice.⁷

It [i.e., ACT and the BRC's relationship] conflicted [with promoting comprehensiveness]. I don't think it was meant to, because I think the goal was to bring to the Collaborative, the ACT Collaborative all of those players from BRC, and they were wary. Some came, some didn't. Others came to see what was going on to go back, and it never really happened the way we envisioned it. I think that takes away from, like you said, comprehensiveness, as well as it doesn't feel good for community people to be divided. That's not a good feeling.⁸

Community Building

There was a belief that ACT delivered on community building via training and reinforcing the idea that communities like Bushwick were able to help themselves:

I'm trying not to merge all these different initiatives that are taking place. I believe—honestly, I can't remember if this was ACT or another group, but I know there was, at one point, a one or two-day training around case conferencing and sort of case management and those kinds of ideas. I don't remember whether or not that was ACT or something else. As I said earlier, I think ACT was instrumental in pulling together those

daycare providers and getting them to look at this issue of transitioning kids to public school and really getting that group to work as a group and really identify some issues and get some funding, draw down some funding. So, I think they were able to draw down some foundation money, if I recall.¹¹

Yeah. I mean, if you think of that as technical assistance, capacity building. Yeah. I think that certainly is the case. But I guess—I mean, I think the other thing, from a community building perspective, is that through the ACT process, I think it reinforced the idea that we are able to help ourselves. But I think that I'm sitting here struggling with the fact that it's really too bad it's not around anymore, but it's also—it's very time intensive to keep it going. I don't think it—it's not a process that happens naturally, and that might be because so many of the providers and the participants are not in decision-making capacity, and so they can only come if somebody says they can come. They can only do something if somebody says they can do something. But I think it's a very unique process and opportunity, that it's too bad that it's not around.¹¹

Another respondent discussed community building in the context of educating people:

Well, from my experience or my experience with them, I've probably seen that, because I'm an outsider looking in meaning I'm not one of these agencies. I'm from a different scope. I'm a library. Everyone else is the schools. And coming in and looking from the inside, I'm like—what makes—why do I want to work with them? What are they doing that I see that attracted me to, oh, really content to do work with them? And that's, okay, we're going to school to make sure the kids get into. The problem with the schooling, I think you need to make sure they go down and are advocates for the parents' and kids' language barriers.

If they said there are problems with daycare and they're trying to build—I think they're just trying [inaudible 43:09] individual. I think they're trying to improve what's happening within their area and the community and not just for individuals. I think as a group. And I think people are already passionate about what they're doing in this larger

scope, not just five or six people. And just by making sure, they wanting the community to be better readers. You want them to be—and not just one or two kids. They're fostering that to make sure that kids all have free books or have library cards. Their parents can take computer classes.

So, they're not just building one, they're trying to make sure the complete whole is probably getting better [inaudible]. They're not hitting it right away, but you're dividing resources to the people to, okay, if really into them through the resources and we're making sure you have them, now we're going to bring you back again in a couple of weeks. We're not, like, okay, you have to [inaudible] on. Okay. Let's come back again next week. And let's come back two weeks after that. I think they are trying to foster—they want to make sure their peer have housing. They want to have resources in terms of education resources. And they want to make sure the community I think is better for it. It's a lot of obstacles involved in those things. But I see that they are, all right, let's do this, there. They're trying their best to foster that.

Maybe I know there are different obstacles. But I know, I would work. I would continue to try and do whatever it takes to make sure they have some of the resources that they can get. You don't have free books? I want to make sure I get free books to you for the community. And that's not a big deal. Don't worry about that aspect. I'm going to find a way to get it though. I'm going to find a way to get this. You're lacking this. I'm going to make sure you have this. So, I think they are trying to definitely—I see the people that they reach—I may reach Nina. Nina may tell somebody else. And that's how the chain grows.

And now, you are trying to just inform people what's happening within the area. And [inaudible] probably creates [inaudible] be even harder for them because less resources. The people who are—for the faces that are leaving. And hopefully, the people who are coming are just as passionate as [another Bushwick respondent] was.⁹

Another said ACT promoted community building by providing the blueprint for how to create positive change:

I think it gave, pretty much laid the foundation. It gave people like a blueprint in a sense to as to what to follow and how you go about getting that to happen. For me it was, and I've been around a long time, when I started working with ACT, I been around a long time, but it was so invigorating and enlightening that so many things came through that I was not familiar with on the level that they came through with. Again, that's what's needed because everybody has some type of information but sometimes you don't know where to put it or what to do with it.

I think for this, what they did was they came into this community, particularly this community—I can't say Mott Haven or whatever, though I'm sure it happened as well—and they made people see that there is a possibility for things to change, and—Pagine. That was her name.⁶

Another belief included ACT promoted community building by training parents on advocacy and navigating resource systems:

Basically, I have to go back again to what's going on today with IMPACT, because as I said, they're taking the people from the community, training them, A, to be empowered, to even think that they can impact the community. A person, a woman, who maybe a year ago was sitting home in her house watching the novellas, all of a sudden today, she's out and with pride is saying I represent ACT and I'm [inaudible 26:54], they use the expression of IMPACT. But who they represent and what they're doing and what they have to bring to the community. And they're very clear about I have something to offer.

If I think about the presentation made by a particular woman when she called here offering her services to come out one day a week to be present here for our people, to help them to access, whether it be getting funding, food stamps, et cetera, she didn't call saying they are sending me. She called saying I could offer you some services. And I love

that. So, that is beautiful empowerment and recognition of, A, the needs of the community, as well as the capabilities of community residents to do that.¹

A common belief was that ACT promoted community building via Bushwick IMPACT; this was more challenging with the Bushwick ACT Collaborative because of lack of resources:

That is what I see the definition—that, in theory, seems to be, in my humble opinion, the essence of IMPACT because it looks at those different levels. I'm thinking about the parents. I'm thinking about what and how they bring forth issues from their preschool to schools, enrollment issues, inoculation issues, whatever it is. They get a clear understanding of what that is, where there are problems. They collaborate with one another. So, that's, again, community building, and they have access, I believe, to city agencies to communicate and exchange ideas and promote where they think they lack in the services. I think that's something ACT did promote, and I think it happened.⁷

Well, I certainly feel like they have embodied most of the subsets of those principles. I guess one where I don't think we ever did quite as well as we could have, but maybe that's where Bushwick IMPACT comes in, has been the ability to really pull in community residents, but I think that requires more resources and the ability to really do—sort of hit the ground running and be out there in the community and do little bits of work. For example, if there were a worker doing that level of organizing, that they're out there at a daycare center on a regular basis and at a school on a regular basis and start with small numbers of parents that eventually could grow into a larger number of parents. But I don't think there were the resources to do that, and I think the limitation that most providers experienced is that whatever funding we get, we get to do particular things, and anything outside of that is not supported by program funding.

So, if you got prevention funding, for example, you had to see X number of parents X number of times, and there were very specific lines, and there was very little room to do that kind of groundwork. So, but I think, other than that, I think that ACT embodied what you described.¹¹

Another respondent believed community building was not a part of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's culture. She said they communicated openness to parents; however, they were not inviting of their input at their actual meetings:

Or they were trying to connect. They were trying to really get the input of community parents and make a place where parents could come out and feel non-judged and feel listened to and feel respected and things like that. But then, when it came down to certain people moderating these conversations, I like to say that the people were too high and mighty for their positions and wouldn't really leave the parents of the community to talk.

I think that's why they had me sit on that legislative breakfast, because when I finally spoke up and I told them you guys keep blaming parents for things that are going on in the community or for the way their children are being raised or for the health of the children, but you're not seeing the reality of what's going on in their community. I told them, because I'm a parent and my children are severely sick and I do everything I need to be doing for my children medication-wise and vitamin-wise, but they live in this community and this community is what is affecting them. The pollution, the ground, the garbage, everything is affecting them, so why would you blame the parent for something that's not in our control?³

There was an acknowledgement that while ACT promoted both comprehensiveness and community building, they struggled more with engaging residents. However, Bushwick IMPACT did well on this:

Well, I certainly feel like they have embodied most of the subsets of those principles. I guess one where I don't think we ever did quite as well as we could have, but maybe that's where Bushwick IMPACT comes in, has been the ability to really pull in community residents, but I think that requires more resources and the ability to really do—sort of hit the ground running and be out there in the community and do little bits of work. For example, if there were a worker doing that level of organizing, that they're out

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One respondent said Bushwick IMPACT promoted community building by believing that children and parents can create positive change for themselves and creating a space where this unfolds:

I think it guides the work at IMPACT a lot. I think it does, because we believe in building up parents so that parents can believe in themselves and believe that they can make a difference for themselves. And that they don't really have to go to one of these agencies and have the agencies run their life, as opposed to parents being parents the way that it was intended to be. And I think ACT does that also just because they're able to make the organizations that are in community, that are serving communities look at the community, at their service.

So, they're not just telling organizations that come in here from outside the community, okay, sure, here's a storefront. You work out of there. Give the services you have to the community. They're telling the organizations this is the community that you're serving. This is what they need to be served. And if you're going to come into this community, this is how you should be working within the community, within all organizations in the community to better serve the families that are in the community.³

Specifically, respondents discussed how Bushwick IMPACT's promotion of community building unfolds. They said it trained community residents and created opportunities for them to make positive changes at family, community, and citywide levels:

That is what I see the definition—that, in theory, seems to be, in my humble opinion, the essence of IMPACT because it looks at those different levels. I'm thinking about the parents. I'm thinking about what and how they bring forth issues from their preschool to schools, enrollment issues, inoculation issues, whatever it is. They get a clear understanding of what that is, where there are problems. They collaborate with one another. So, that's, again, community building, and they have access, I believe, to city agencies to communicate and exchange ideas and promote where they think they lack in the services. I think that's something ACT did promote, and I think it happened.⁷

Supportive: To support moms in need. Help children get early education or early intervention. A very welcoming place in the community where families can share while getting help or learning something and/or becoming a leader.¹³

One respondent believed that ACT promoted community building because the work they accomplished thus far will continue to exist after ACT is no longer in Bushwick:

Well, I know they—I actually think that kind of covers what they've pretty much done and sustaining, I think what they've placed here is sustainable. It's been growing up out of and it's not dissolved, and that's the best part. That's one of the best parts, the fact it's not dissolved because they've cut everything, but what's here and what was built by ACT can stand. It can stand. It has groundwork, and that's what is most—it's not on sinking sand. It's not on solid ground, so it's just building up. It took a long time to get here, so they're not expecting it to build quickly. The fact it's still going up and not down is a plus.²

The majority of these responses reflect principles that guided ACT's work (via the early years of ACT, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, and Bushwick IMPACT) towards the attainment of its

mission and goals. Specifically, these responses are synonymous with the first and third levels of social capital: addressing inequalities by bonding social capital within communities and creating synergy between communities and public institutions. Some reports also reflect the challenges that arise with this level of social capital: competition propelling stratification (see chapter 2).

Reports on principles guiding ACT's work are most consistent with Smock's community building and civic approaches/models. They reflect rebuilding Bushwick from within by mobilizing its assets and connecting it to the mainstream economy as well as restoring and maintaining the neighborhood's stability by activating both formal and informal mechanisms of control.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ACT

Governance

According to the literature, governance concerns the creation of mechanisms to guide planning, decision making, and implementation, as well as to locate accountability and responsibility for actions undertaken (Blank et al., no date; Kingsley, 1996). This is reflected in most respondents' accounts.

Respondents described the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's governance structure as consisting of two co-chairs, a steering committee, and a local planner:

For the Collaborative? Well, there was supposed to be co-chairs, a steering committee and then a planner who really kind of staffed those two—the co-chairs and the steering committees and their wishes. Then I think that group tied into the ACT Oversight—is that what it was called—yep—the ACT Oversight Committee. Well, I believe the ACT Oversight was more of a citywide Collaborative effort that represented, at that time, I guess the five ACT Collaboratives, representatives from each of those communities, as well as higher level government officials, and I believe it was co-chairs by typically the

commissioner for ACS and, again, modeled the same idea of bringing in information from wider systems that would help drive the work on the community level, but also gave those groups of participants in the Oversight Committee, access to people they may not typically get to talk to like the chancellor for the Department of Education or the commissioner for ACS or any of the other commissioners. It was supposed to be by consensus. Decisions were made by consensus.

The larger Bushwick meetings?

Well, again, the steering committee could have, should have been doing the legwork, but I think we struggled with having consistent participation on the steering committee, if I recall. So, the steering committee was probably a group of two or three maybe that actually made a lot of the stuff happen. I think that ACT certainly encouraged community participation, and I don't know if it was just for ACT that one of the strategies that we attempted—we the Collaborative have attempted to use, we've been with other groups doing this kind of work, has been asking each provider to identify five clients and bring your five clients to the meeting. So, we're not asking for the whole world.¹¹

Respondents reported that residents were engaged in the decision-making process at the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's monthly, general membership meetings; and decisions were made by consensus:

I think it was more discussion and a consensus. I think that's how the whole thing seems to—that's my memory of it. I remember consensus.¹²

Consensus building, I remember that.⁷

I don't remember titles, but [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] was involved. I think she played the Number 1 leadership role, and then there was you and then [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network Liaison]. So, it had a strong leader with equally strong, supportive members of that leadership team, who were

bright, articulate, committed, were able to synthesize—that's the word I've been struggling with—synthesize the larger—many issues that people were identifying and bringing up, bringing to the table and then it being synthesized into something concrete that could be much easier addressed by government because it's focused and straight to the point.⁸

I guess my immediate response to that would be you guys were there, the leadership team was there, and both community providers and community residents were involved, and questions or issues were posed, and people's opinions were asked for, some sort of general consensus was attempted to be reached, and that's how we made decisions. It wasn't the leaders themselves making decisions, but a clear engagement of the community participants.⁸

One respondent reported that more service providers than residents participated in the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's monthly, general membership meetings:

Residents? Yeah, no. Yeah, I don't recall that now. I recall—more, I would recall people who were working in the community in some fashion lived there. And when people spoke, they spoke, would often identify themselves. I'm a Bushwick resident and X, Y and Z. And sometimes they spoke as a resident. Sometimes they spoke as they shared as an employee of their organization. But I can't recall that many. Maybe a few independent residents or customers, clients whatever you want, of the groups that came to the meeting. I can't remember that being something that struck me. And I would say that for the most part that has been my experience in the last six or seven years with Collaborative, with groups, collaboratives, or coalitions. It's almost always service providers. For me, I got to talk to residents and got to know residents at the community board meetings, because people would show up. Regular residents that had nothing else to—they weren't representing anybody. They would be at Community Board meetings. Yeah, I think that's [i.e., community participation] a big challenge.¹²

The Bushwick ACT Collaborative was described as an open structure:

From what I recall of the Collaborative, it was a very open structure. Talking about [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] – [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] didn't want to be the co-chair. Who was the other co-chair? I don't know her. I don't know [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair—#2]. I don't remember her. I recall early on we were supposed to have two co-chairs, governance, running meetings, taking over, directing the Collaborative, and they couldn't find a co-chair to save their lives. So, [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] technically became the chairperson and the leader, if you will. But she did an excellent job at it. She also consistently asked if anybody was interested because she couldn't do it forever. She had to turn it over eventually, which was part of the “we” thing. She went to the meetings. I never went to one of those general meetings. She brought back the information.

The oversight meetings, yeah. We had the interim committee, who developed the agenda structure for the upcoming meeting, did a lot of the work. I was on that committee. It was rough because there were a lot of players that kept coming in and leaving. So, the governance structure, theoretically it was written out, but it was hard to fulfill.⁷

It was described as an inclusive process:

One thing I can think of is the fact that we had parents who had never spoken to—had never even been included in anything that was important. Just the fact that they were put on different committees where they had to go to the ACT office in Manhattan and sit with the executive people there; it'd be hard to measure the difference that it made in the lives of the folks, because, again, there are different classes of people. Sometimes people feel as if they're not qualified, in a sense, for want of a better word, to be involved in those types of things and they haven't gotten that training, it sets them up to be able to go and do things they would have never done before because they've never been included in anything that had any real substance to it.

Of course. That [i.e., the culture of inclusivity] makes people feel they're valued and just as important. It's hard to explain it, but it's so important that people get it. Maybe other programs will start doing the same thing to include people, not make people feel as if they're less because they don't have the same degrees and whatever. Take them where they are. And you see something and you uncover gems that you would not believe was there by just including people.

And I feel so good, Nina. I feel so good when I see it because I think about what if they had not been involved in these programs. What would happen to them? Where would they be in their lives? Like [another Bushwick respondent] that was downstairs before, she's a great example.⁶

The literature states that governance is both structure and process (Kubisch et al., 1997). This is reflected in one respondent's description of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's governance: it promoted collaboration by holding respectful forums where people raised issues and resolutions that were developed and implemented.

But I would say that people that attended those meetings felt that they could bring up and suggest and make a point that would be heard, that was heard by other people. And that would be respected and an attempt would be made to meet a need. Or either bring someone in to talk about it or you assist that organization or that person.¹²

This is also reflected in another respondent's account: ACT, via relentless, in-action consensus building and teamwork, addressed issues:

I learned, through ACT, the importance of—not even through ACT. Let me stop lying. I saw through ACT the importance of consensus. I saw it displayed a different kind of way. I saw through ACT how when you keep pushing for something in your community and you bring in others who have the same issues—they may not say it the same way you do—but on your team, you can get it done. I saw that through ACT. But I didn't learn it

[i.e., consensus building and teamwork] through ACT. I saw it. In motion, so it just kind of underscored something I already knew.⁷

Another respondent described ACT as a well-designed process and those who are involved in it as serious:

Well, I've been with Agenda for Children Tomorrow, I mean, from the initiation of it in our area, and for me, it was one of the greatest programs that was out there at the time when it started. And at the time, [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] was there, and she was one of the very best that has been—as a coordinator she was great. And what my understanding was, was that it was a program that was designed really to bring about changes and help supply the needs for what we're missing and lacking in some communities. At the time, they were working with Bushwick and then I think in the Bronx there was one and one other one in Manhattan.

Collaboratives, right. And it was something from my perspective that got parents involved, and it was something that was really geared to getting the type of programs into our communities that would benefit parents. I've always been sort of prejudiced where ACT was concerned because I found it to be one of the best programs that I had ever been involved in, and I'm going to just digress a little bit because Richard Gonzalez, who was our director at St. Barbara's where I worked, he was the one who was involved in it first, and he knew the interest I had in that type of thing.

Mm-hmm. He delegated that I should take his place and attend the meetings when they first set up at TOPs for you, and that's where it used to be held. I started—the first time I went, I was hooked because I liked what it was designed to do, and I felt great with what the program design was and how the people that were involved were serious, and I think the main person who worked in the building that I'm in, **Eshenaria** was one of the—I'm sorry to mess up her name.

Right. She's an author now. She's probably [inaudible] and everything. But they were fantastic and very devoted to the program, and they were great. At that time, [ACT's former Executive Director] and the other folks from the main office in Manhattan, got to meet them, and I found that they were serious about the program and what they intended the ACT, Agenda for Children Tomorrow, to be, and it was in every aspect of looking at what could work to have children get to where they needed to get to and communities as well, and we also worked with the—got the district office at the time, which was District 32 in this community, was involved with as well, the Board of Ed. It was a collaboration, seriously, that ACT, Agenda for Children Tomorrow was with the District 32 office, and you know, all the programs were all involved. That's something that was needed then, and it's needed now.⁶

One respondent said that the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's governance structure was also described as tying into the ACT Oversight Committee:

For the Collaborative? Well, there was supposed to be co-chairs, a steering committee and then a planner who really kind of staffed those two—the co-chairs and the steering committees and their wishes. Then I think that group tied into the ACT Oversight—is that what it was called—yep—the ACT Oversight Committee. Well, I believe the ACT Oversight was more of a citywide Collaborative effort that represented, at that time, I guess the five ACT Collaboratives, representatives from each of those communities, as well as higher level government officials, and I believe it was co-chairs by typically the commissioner for ACS and, again, modeled the same idea of bringing in information from wider systems that would help drive the work on the community level, but also gave those groups of participants in the Oversight Committee, access to people they may not typically get to talk to, like the chancellor for the Department of Education or the commissioner for ACS or any of the other commissioners. It [i.e., the decision-making structure of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative] was supposed to be by consensus. Decisions were made by consensus.

The larger Bushwick meetings?

Well, again, the steering committee could have, should have been doing the legwork, but I think we struggled with having consistent participation on the steering committee, if I recall. So, the steering committee was probably a group of two or three maybe that actually made a lot of the stuff happen.¹¹

Another respondent discussed her confusion about the governance structure of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative:

I don't recall. And I can't say that probably even at the time I could exactly figure it out. I don't think I spent that much—I guess I figured you guys were—the thing was a program of the Coalition. And that much of the marching orders of the time that you were spent specifically meeting with the Collaborative was being driven by the Coalition. I really—I can't—maybe I knew at the time, but I can't think back and remember it.¹²

Funding

According to the literature, CCEs are funded by private foundations, which are meant to be flexible and responsive to the priorities established by the local governance structure (Hayes, 1995). This was not reflected by respondent accounts. Respondents discussed their unfamiliarity with Bushwick ACT and Bushwick IMPACT's funding structure:

We had funding structure? We had money? Well, let's see. We had—that's an interesting one too. I guess if there was something else that ACT had given, they could have given more money for everything we did for ACT. I can't think of any funding structure. Maybe it was the lack of a funding structure for the Collaborative. Each Collaborative was assigned a local planner. A community agency served as a host agency. In this case, we were host agency I guess from 1998 to 2005. Sound about right?

Or '04. And as such, [the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services] provided space, resources, support, not a computer—you brought your own computer—to the ACT planner, provided supervision and leadership, provided money for snacks and then got repaid whenever—I don't know—a month or two later. What else? When other local agencies hosted the meetings, although that was a city agency, so that's okay. That's what comes to mind.¹¹

I surely don't [know the funding structure of ACT]. Not so much. I would assume the monies [for Bushwick IMPACT] came out of ACS based on the numbers of incident from our district, but I don't know that for sure.⁷

None that I can recall.⁸

Technical Assistance

According to the literature, technical assistance may be provided by a funder or it may be sought by the CCE governance entity and other participants (Brown et al., 1993; Chaskin et al., 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997). Respondents had a slightly different perspective on this. One respondent said ACT provided technical assistance via the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's monthly, general membership meetings:

Since I came into the ACT Collaborative after it had already been functioning, well, I don't really know for how long, but for a while, for a few years I guess, the strategic planning must have gone on prior to that. The plan about what ACT was ultimately going to—moving toward other than that very large mission statement that you mentioned, broad mission statement that you mentioned in the beginning. So, I'd have to say that concretely it was more the TA that was provided was more focused on I would say strengthening the staff of the organizations that participated in the Collaborative and really strengthening them, the people that came. And in terms of—I think I would say that a few people that were there—I'd say that they did get some leadership assistance

and development, because I think some folks there have actually gotten ahead. Now, maybe they would've anyway.

Well, by people being able to stand up and speak, giving feedback. I guess I remember some people getting assignments, like doing your assignments. I don't know if the coordinators ever took somebody under their wing or something and kind of developed in more one-on-one coaching and mentoring, but it was a way—I think that the meeting gave a voice, gave a way for people to be able to practice speaking in public and getting assignments and then reporting back and stuff like that. So, again, in terms of strategic planning, or that, I wasn't involved in that.¹²

Another respondent said ACT provided technical assistance via Bushwick IMPACT's programming:

No, it makes sense. And, for example, right now, with the early child education program, that's what ACT is doing through IMPACT. I believe that is the work that they're doing at this point, if that makes any sense.¹

Other respondents said ACT's leaders, Eric and Anthea, were the technical assistance providers; they always made themselves available, including but not limited to co-lead meetings:

And I think in many ways. One is—if you start from the fact that [ACT's former Executive Director] made himself available—I mean, I don't know that he would turn anyone away that said, “Could I talk to you? I need to bounce something off of you.” I don't think he would turn anyone away. He was just very good that way. So, there was on that level....¹¹

The only thing I can recall is ACT providing technical assistance to ACT, to be honest with you. I remember [ACT's former Executive Director and Associate Executive Director] coming to the meetings. [ACT's former Executive Director] would kind of co-chair along with [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] sometimes. He

kind of—I found him the linkage, if you [i.e., Nina Moreno] will, from the Collaborative to wherever else issues went on different levels, so he was good, he and [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director]. However, when they hired you as the local planner, the technical—or anybody, yourself as well as [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network’s Liaison], the technical assistance your position provided was more of a linkage between ACT itself and the different players in the community. You made yourself know, so you—you know.

They didn’t have the same warm reception for [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network’s Liaison] in the beginning. It was a change, and people around here get close to people, and they had a hard time letting go. It was a whole different kind of individual, and this is for the record, of the record, doesn’t matter because I love him dearly. I just recently warmed up to [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network’s Liaison].⁷

One respondent discussed his unfamiliarity of ACT’s technical assistance:

I don’t have any recollections of them directly offering technical assistance, as I mentioned, other than through my observations and what I was able to gain from the modeling and so forth. I was unaware they were doing that. I’m glad to hear they’re thinking of doing that technical assistance. From a community perspective—and I don’t know who you go to—but that it would help us to say, “Let’s identify what are the current, existing networks. Let’s look at how these networks are running. Let’s look at and understand what their missions are, and is it being effective?” And identifying those networks that are really just networks by name and it’s just repetitious of others, those that have a fair response and actual impact on a community that could either be, even expanded or supported in some way, it could even be more effective or uniting one network with another where some have stronger things and others can make them even stronger. And then offering assistance to those networks to continue their missions effectively I think would be a great beginning. I think CPI could benefit from some sort

of technical assistance, whether it's leadership and how to build that effectively and effectively addressing its outcomes.⁸

Staffing

One respondent reported that Bushwick ACT's leadership was smart, articulate, committed, and good at synthesizing, and focusing the issues, which made them easy to address by government:

I don't remember titles, but [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] was involved. I think she played the Number 1 leadership role, and then there was you and then [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison]. So, it had a strong leader with equally strong, supportive members of that leadership team, who were bright, articulate, committed, were able to synthesize—that's the word I've been struggling with—synthesize the larger—many issues that people were identifying and bringing up, bringing to the table and then it being synthesized into something concrete that could be much easier addressed by government because it's focused and straight to the point.⁸

Other respondents said ACT's local planners' departures had a detrimental effect on momentum and the work:

Well, you see, BCCN always met because there was always issues—I mean, the Board of Education with Department of Day Care, there are always issues that we had to talk about and deal with and help each other with. So, always, we met all through the time when Dale was no longer here and was more with Bedford-Stuy. And we didn't have a program so to speak.

Well, you see, it [i.e., the Bushwick ACT Collaborative] became weaker and weaker because there wasn't a head. [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] had left. Now, I've always admired [ACT's former Associate Executive Director]. She's really a terrific

person. And she has a lot of energy and good will and all of that. But she couldn't be here in Bushwick all the time, although I know Bushwick is close to her heart and [ACT's former Executive Director] too. But what had happened was until—and then, of course, what happened was [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] came here and said she wants to open up a program called, I think it was Parent Services.⁴

I think it [i.e., the local planner's departure] left us with an absence of leadership with regards to ACT's involvement in the community because, soon after, I think the meetings stopped, and then it just didn't continue besides their further involvement in other areas. So, there was an absence felt, for me at least, with regards to that kind of leadership. While one liaison left to move onto another and offer his leadership within that context, it's a different context from which he's being a leader. So, it doesn't really answer to general community's needs and need to voice its issues or concerns in a format like the one that ACT had back then.⁸

This respondent also believed that the discontinuation of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative meetings had a detrimental effect on the promotion of comprehensiveness and community building:

I agree with that [i.e., the literature's definition of “community building”]. Do I see anything being taken away? Again, through the meetings that ACT had initially that it helped the community. Unfortunately, it ended, and I think it left the community floundering a little bit, and except for present organization like CPI, I'm not aware of any others in which, outside of community providers, residents are actively involved. They may be, but I'm not aware of them, outside of maybe the community board, the precinct meetings.⁸

Evaluation

Respondents discussed their lack of information regarding ACT's evaluation:

No [I do not recall the evaluation process]. Well, maybe next time before they end it, they could actually ask the people, the people who participated, what was the—I don't recall that being done. Maybe it was done at some meeting I wasn't at, but to really actually ask what was valuable, what wasn't valuable. I guess, again, because I came in later in the picture, whether or not you did—did ACT achieve what it wanted to achieve? I don't know that in Bushwick during the years that it functioned. If connecting community groups to one another and strengthening that network, I'd say it did that, but I don't know what else it set out to do. Because, again, we came in, we sort of wanted to get to know people and figure out who's who. But I don't know if there was a report written about ACT. I don't really know. I don't think I got a copy of anything like that. I think I might have read it. I think I would've been interested in it.

I believe there were at least a couple of evaluations. Regretfully, I can't say I paid a lot of attention to them, probably because I didn't have the time, and probably because I was not so much into evaluation now. I guess now, if I were looking at evaluation, I would want to figure out what is some of the data that we need to be collecting to better understand this process? What would tell us this process is working? But I honestly didn't pay a lot of attention to the evaluation.¹²

No [I am not aware of any evaluations that have been done of the ACT process/outcomes]. I think for any organization that's important in theory, and I think if ACT genuinely is interested in assessing how effective they are, it certainly is worthwhile to do that, to continue doing that or to create it if it isn't. It's also the community again giving you feedback on how well you're doing or not.⁸

No [I do not know anything about Bushwick IMPACT's evaluation process]. I think for knowing that the—when I talked before about a measurable difference. It doesn't matter where it is. I think when any type of evaluation's being done, it should be based on that: where did you start and where are you now? Do you have any results? Do you have any numbers, any of those things? They have great results in the impact, and that's why I

think when it comes down to evaluating, that's what it should be based on. What have you done? What is it you're the weakest at to see the difference that was made in your parents and the people that come in your lives? That's what they're doing. This is what they are basically do. They are more successful at what they're doing than most of the bigger programs around here.⁶

Bushwick's respondent accounts of strategies employed by ACT are consistent with ACT's original vision of strategies in neighborhoods. However, there are both some similarities and some differences between the Brownsville-East New York respondent reports and those of the Bushwick respondents.

Two of the biggest similarities in both communities include the lack of clarity regarding funding and evaluation. It is unclear exactly what contributed to this lack of clarity; however, this had real implications for communicating the effectiveness of this work to funders and therefore, accessing more funding.

The Brownsville-East New York respondents reported that their governance was better at including residents than what the Bushwick respondent reports indicated. One possibility for this difference includes Brownsville-East New York's smaller service network—both informal and formal—than Bushwick; therefore, Brownsville-East New York relies much more on their informal or resident network when it comes to identifying and addressing individual, family, and community needs. Another possibility includes Brownsville-East New York's greater number of residents in positions of leadership within their partnership than Bushwick's partnership. Since these resident leaders are more connected with an array of resident networks, this contributes to a greater number of residents being involved.

CHANGES AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY LEVELS

According to the literature, CCEs attempt to foster fundamental transformation of poor communities and catalyze a process of sustained improvement in the circumstances and

opportunities of individuals and families in those communities (Halpern, 1994; Mueller et al., 1996; Rossi et al., 1994). In short, CCEs set out to promote change at three levels: the individual and family level, the neighborhood level, and the system level.

CCEs build capacity and improve the quality of life of individual neighborhood residents and their families. Specifically, they work to increase both the quality and quantity of activities designed to improve educational outcomes, employment, and the health and well-being of neighborhood residents. They also place priority on strengthening the personal, political, or process knowledge and skills that enable people to motivate and lead their peers.

General Changes at the Individual and Family Levels

There are two schools of thought reflected in the respondent reports: one group believed that ACT was an agent of change while the other group believed that the real agents of sustained change were community residents and parents:

Well, it improved the lives of moms with children living in isolation and now are a big group involved in activities to improve the development of their children and possibilities for them; also they are now doing community work inviting others, moms/families to participate and get benefits from the available community resources.¹³

Well, from my experience or my experience with them, I've probably seen that, because I'm an outsider looking in, meaning I'm not one of these agencies. I'm from a different scope. I'm a library. Everyone else is the schools. And coming in and looking from the inside, I'm like—what makes—why do I want to work with them? What are they doing that I see that attracted me to, oh, really content to do work with them? And that's, okay, we're going to school to make sure the kids get into. The problem with the schooling, I think you need to make sure they go down and are advocates for the parents' and kids' language barriers.

If they said there are problems with daycare and they're trying to build—I think they're just trying [inaudible 43:09] individual. I think they're trying to improve what's happening within their area and the community and not just for individuals. I think, as a group. And I think people are already passionate about what they're doing in this larger scope, not just five or six people. And just by making sure, they wanting the community to be better readers. You want them to be—and not just one or two kids. They're fostering that to make sure that kids all have free books or have library cards. Their parents can take computer classes.

So, they're not just building one, they're trying to make sure the complete whole is probably getting better [inaudible]. They're not hitting it right away, but you're dividing resources to the people to, okay, if really into them through the resources and we're making sure you have them, now we're going to bring you back again in a couple of weeks. We're not, like, okay, you have to [inaudible] on. Okay. Let's come back again next week. And let's come back two weeks after that. I think they are trying to foster—they want to make sure their peers have housing. They want to have resources in terms of education resources. And they want to make sure the community I think is better for it. It's a lot of obstacles involved in those things. But I see that they are, all right, let's do this, there. They're trying their best to foster that.

Maybe I know there are different obstacles. But I know I would work. I would continue to try and do whatever it takes to make sure they have some of the resources that they can get. You don't have free books? I want to make sure I get free books to you for the community. And that's not a big deal. Don't worry about that aspect. I'm going to find a way to get it though. I'm going to find a way to get this. You're lacking this. I'm going to make sure you have this. So, I think they are trying to definitely—I see the people that they reach—I may reach Nina. Nina may tell somebody else. And that's how the chain grows.

And now, you are trying to just inform people what's happening within the area. And [inaudible] probably creates [inaudible] be even harder for them because less resources.

The people who are—for the faces that are leaving. And hopefully, the people who are coming are just as passionate as [another Bushwick respondent] was.⁹

With the BRC, there was not much of community participation. With Bushwick Resource Coalition, this really was a coalition of service providers. You know what I mean? So, its focus and its mission was not necessarily one that included community residents other than those community residents who were the outreach workers, et cetera, at the different agencies. Generally speaking, if you went into a meeting, you'd find that most of the people at the meeting were community residents, but they were also employees of the agencies that they were representing. They were there as part of their, quote, job.

So, it was representative of the community, but it was not necessarily with a purpose of bringing in community residents. That was not the mission of that particular coalition. ACT definitely had the opposite mission to bring the community residents in, which plays out today to IMPACT, which is doing just such a fantastic job. You know what I mean? So, it's kind of just two different missions and both good in their own way.¹

Becoming a Parent Advocate were my first steps as community leader. I did my first experience as a community worker. IMPACT gave the opportunity to start being a mom to do something more than care for my family and start to care about others as I do for my family. Also motivated me as a leader and I took classes of leadership in my church and became a minister.¹³

One of ACT's most significant individual/family level changes was engaging and supporting parents:

Just by consistency, for people to come together. ACT was the agency, the organization if you were a person in the community where you wanted to get invited to. It was the place, if you just moved to the community, you wanted to go there to meet people and to see what was going on. It was welcoming. It looked like the community, the participants, which is very important, and it gave people individual encouragement to strive and

develop themselves and their own individual careers, which is very important in oppressed communities for individuals to feel empowered and rise as leaders. It gave you the sense of, “I could do my job, and I can do it better because I have these people like Verizon standing behind me.” You know, that’s what’s important because you can’t do it in a vacuum by yourself, and the sense that you could go up and out at the same time, that’s what ACT allowed. The information brought you up, but because the consensus brought you out, where you were able to network with more people.⁵

Okay, my greatest learned lesson through my work with ACT was communication with my parents.

Being sensitive to them. Being able to communicate, speak to them. Now, I do have a disadvantage here, because the majority of my parents are Hispanic. There is a language barrier. But they appreciate the fact that I try. And when I have somebody communicate—my concern is, it’s the children. When I see things, I try to at least communicate and talk to them. Reach out to see if everything is okay. If I see a change in the behavior, I go, take it a step further, and not ignore it.

So that in terms of IMPACT–ACT, I mean, in terms of ACT, that’s what I got out of it. Reaching out to your parents, communicating with them so that they will feel comfortable with you. And it works, because if you need something, all the time it’s not a 1, 2, 3 situation, you may need a parent for something. Just like I was in a workshop during this particular school year, from September? And by the majority of my parents, basically, they cooperated with me. So to me, it’s communication.¹⁴

Again, I’m going to have to go right back to what I said, because once you start with education—and it doesn’t matter that we’re sitting in a former classroom, but ACT has helped to bring people into a different place from where they were as far as education and knowing how to take care of the families, and even with disciplining the children. There are people who are here in this community who believed, the same as my people believed back in the day, that you supposed to whip children and do whatever you do because

that's how they were raised, but in the parenting classes that they had, they were told that you are not—when you hit children, you confuse them. It does not solve the problem they have. Speaking to your child will get better results. We have people who are doing it now. You see people who were—just think the only way they could get through to their child was to give them a beating. They know now, by being in the programs and taking classes that were provided, especially in the training, and even now, IMPACT they have every week classes with the parents to tell them on discipline, on every aspect of....⁶

Supportive: To support moms in need. Help children get early education or early intervention. A very welcoming place in the community where families can share while getting help or learning something and/or becoming a leader.¹⁴

ACT created individual/family change by building leadership in the residents:

Training? Before we became parent advocates, I really didn't see any of the stuff that went on before then. It wasn't until we took all our training and we were hired as parent advocates did we get the full view of what went on before that, how the ACT staff and other collaboratives were going out into the community, interview people in the community on what types of services were really lacking in the community and what types of services parents were really needing in the community and stuff like that. When we started our training, it was more readiness training, a lot of computer readiness training, software training, a lot of training on child development, resource gathering, things like that, stuff that was going to help us in our role as parent advocates for gathering resources in the community and then in turn giving them out to parents in the community.

So, I think that the peer-to-peer support stuff didn't really come until we started doing PSP. That's when we got really into the meat of how we should be acting with other parents. And I think that was for us our moment that we were, like, ah-ha. We were, like, yeah, they get it. They understand that this is how parents feel when they go into organizations and they're not treated right. And that this is how we should be working

with parents. So, I think a lot of us took—the original parent advocates, we took a lot of everything that was given to us and we use it in our daily lives now. I know it's changed me, because I'm not as crude and nasty as I was before.

I think, as parents also, because I changed a lot of the way I was from before. The way I thought of myself as being a parent before changed a lot in a lot of trainings and the mentoring that I got for being parent advocate. I have always acknowledged two people in this whole course of me being a parent advocate and leader and things like that. I've always acknowledged [another Bushwick respondent] first, because she is the one who saw in me the potential. She's the one who always came to me to say you need to do this because you're perfect at this. You would be great at this. This is an opportunity for you. And then [Bushwick IMPACT's first lead coordinator], because at first when we started we would butt heads all the time. She would pull me out of meetings and say you can't talk to people like that. You're never going to get anywhere like that. Until me and her just had one huge blowup and a nice conversation and, ever since then, she's been my mentor for years. She's been the person I've always looked to, the person I've always talked to when I needed help and even to this day. [Bushwick IMPACT's lead coordinator] was our coordinator. She was our parent coordinator. Out of ACT, yes.³

Yes [I consider myself a leader in Bushwick]. Becoming a Parent Advocate were my first steps as community leader. I did my first experience as a community worker. IMPACT gave the opportunity to start being a mom to do something more than care for my family and start to care about others as I do for my family. Also motivated me as a leader and I took classes of leadership in my church and became a minister.¹³

Yes [I consider myself a leader in Bushwick]. Yes, it [i.e., ACT] taught me a lot. I learned through ACT the importance of—not even through ACT. Let me stop lying. I saw through ACT the importance of consensus. I saw it displayed a different kind of way. I saw through ACT how when you keep pushing for something in your community and you bring in others who have the same issues—they may not say it the same way you do—but on your team, you can get it done. I saw that through ACT. But I didn't learn it

[consensus building and teamwork] through ACT. I saw it. In attempted, so it just kind of underscored something I already knew.⁷

Often, this leadership development resulted in residents' broadened perspectives and motivation to respond to the needs of Bushwick:

I agree, in the sense that I think that what we have to impart to people is that when they said no man is an island, it's true. No matter who you are and what you are, you need some backup. You need some support, and you need somebody who's going to be thinking pretty much along the same lines as you do as a support system. There's no one organization that can do it all by themselves. That's why it's necessary to have—and no one individual can do it. So, you need to include and be open enough to not be myopic about it and just want to have stuff just for you. That's how the change comes again, and that's how it gets—you do get stronger with numbers.

And then, anything you go after, let's say one person can't do it. Well, one person can start, but usually numbers makes a difference, and it doesn't matter what it is that you're doing, if you want to bring about a change, you need to include other folks, call meetings, have people come who are interested and let them know what their thoughts are and inform groups that are really supportive for each other and connected about the same things and go from there, because you can make a difference, and it will happen the way you want it to happen. Maybe not as fast as you want, but eventually it will take place.

I think it [i.e., the guiding principle of community building] gave, pretty much, laid the foundation. It gave people, like a blueprint, in a sense to as to what to follow and how you go about getting that to happen. For me, it was, and I've been around a long time, when I started working with ACT, I been around a long time, but it was so invigorating and enlightening that so many things came through that I was not familiar with on the level that they came through with. Again, that's what's needed because everybody has some type of information but sometimes you don't know where to put it or what to do with it.

I think, for this, what they did was they came into this community, particularly this community—I can't say Mott Haven or whatever, though I'm sure it happened as well—and they made people see that there is a possibility for things to change, and—**Pagine**. That was her name.

They were so passionate with what ACT was about and, at first, it was like could it really be. Then after I got involved in it, I saw exactly what it was, and I saw that it works. I would love to see it always continue. I'd love to see it gain more of the old strength that it had back again, but as long as it's around, it's going to be doing good things. I think, again, I can only speak for myself, but I'm speaking because I've seen the results. That's why I still feel with Bushwick right now, we have to continue doing. Because I've seen the results; we've come too far with it to just let it go and not be there.

That's what it did. That's exactly what I did because some person has been given the title of a leader doesn't mean they know everything. Sometimes they're flustered and they don't know what to do, where to go, whatever. And just having somebody sort of shine a light in the direction you need to go, you can go in there and do anything, open up whatever. But you had that little pointer or direction to go. That happened many times. People get stagnant. They're supposed to be community leaders and directors, but they're human. Some of them like to give the impression that they know anything and they're waiting for something to come through.

And I think this is the beacon that came through to help everybody sort of get to it. And I'm saying different organizations. Remember Hilda Sanchez, all these people that were here, have been here forever, they have not done what's being done in Brooklyn right now. They have not done it. She used to sometimes get upset. We had a good relationship, but she used to get upset because she'd always say, "Oh, I've been working this for 25 years." I said, "Look at all the problems that are still here. Can you see a measurable difference in what you've done in 25 years?" I said, "I'd be ashamed to say I've been here 25 years and things are still the same the way they are because I'd be in

the [inaudible], I'd be in the credit institutions, everywhere." You get what you need for the community you're in, and you can't keep a smiley face and let everybody like you. You have to go out there.

And that's what she did. She had the title, and like Anna Gonzalez that just passed away, they had the title, but they didn't—they were comfortable in their spot. I can't ever get comfortable enough to see what I feel, and I try not to do it in a mean way, a bad way, but you must know when you inform people and let people know what your thoughts are, sometimes they may disagree with you right now, but they get off there and they start thinking about maybe there's something there that I maybe need to look at.

And you cannot be afraid or shy about saying things, and again, not in a bad way, but it just needs to be said. Food for thought, and you have to do it, especially if you're carrying the title of a leader or somebody that people look up to in the community. You have to do it and be calm doing it and let people know I'm not angry or mad, but this is what I see. Think about it or you leave it alone. Whatever. But it's important that we have that.⁶

Changes at the Individual and Family Levels as a Result of Bushwick IMPACT

Individual and family level changes brought about by Bushwick IMPACT were also discussed. One respondent said the Bushwick IMPACT process is remarkable because it gets community residents to believe in and use their capabilities. Furthermore, it teaches them that they are able to create positive changes in their lives despite the adversities they have faced:

Basically, I have to go back again to what's going on today with IMPACT, because as I said, they're taking the people from the community, training them, A, to be empowered, to even think that they can impact the community. A person, a woman, who maybe a year ago was sitting home in her house watching the novellas, all of a sudden today, she's out and with pride is saying, I represent ACT and I'm [inaudible 26:54], they use the

expression of IMPACT. But who they represent and what they're doing and what they have to bring to the community. And they're very clear about I have something to offer.

If I think about the presentation made by a particular woman when she called here offering her services to come out one day a week to be present here for our people, to help them to access, whether it be getting funding, food stamps, et cetera, she didn't call saying they are sending me. She called saying, I could offer you some services. And I love that. So, that is beautiful empowerment and recognition of, A, the needs of the community, as well as the capabilities of community residents to do that.¹

Another respondent reported Bushwick IMPACT has especially created individual/family change for undocumented and monolingual-Spanish-speaking parents:

ACT does have a presence. One thing they transformed into concentrating was early childhood education. So, you have IMPACT, which I believe definitely has a funding stream from ACT, which ACT started, and IMPACT is a storefront. I think it's on 69 Central Avenue, and the goal of IMPACT was to inform and just be the cradle of the community as far as it related to early childhood or parenting young children, as far as their academics and development stage. They're still there, and they're growing. They're becoming a little stable. Especially in a community like Bushwick, people have language barriers or immigration issues, and people just don't know how to navigate, how to secure childcare.⁵

The residents' belief in their own capabilities led to neighborhood change via their participation in the Bushwick Collaborative:

When they first started, they had a small group of parent leaders or advocates, I don't remember what they called them, who were always at the ACT meetings and were always actively involved in participating in the dialogues and raising questions and bringing a voice of parents that we might not have typically had. So, I think, that's a positive.¹¹

CHANGES AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL

The literature states that CCEs are concerned with the accessibility and quality of social support, economic opportunity, and physical infrastructure within the target community. This encompasses efforts to improve or increase the housing stock, neighborhood infrastructure, the business/commercial sector, education and training institutions, the social and civic support network, cultural vitality, and other-quality-of-life activities. CCEs pursue strategies that focus on building the capacity of existing local institutions responsible for these aspects of community life or supporting the creation of new organizations to do so. CCEs are also concerned with the qualities of collective life provided through community attributes such as strong personal networks, “social capital,” and a “sense of community,” as well as the community’s capacity to handle conflict, solve problems, and/or express its voice and represent its interests in the larger economic and political arena.

General Changes at the Neighborhood Level

One respondent said that one of ACT’s most significant changes, which led to substantial neighborhood change, included instilling a belief in people that Bushwick was worth investing in:

I think their greatest contribution is to believe in Bushwick, to believe there’s something in Bushwick that needs nurturing, and to me, that’s their greatest contribution. There’s missions of communities they could have gone, but there was something about Bushwick they felt they had something to give and something to nurture. So, to me, their greatest contribution was to think about the Bushwick community.

And, I think, after that would be the encouragement they have given Bushwick. Bushwick was going down. They felt—you come here and you could feel the weight, but

I could feel Bushwick now pushing out saying there are not geographical boundaries for us. We can go and we can reach for what we need, whereas before it was almost like we can't go across this line. We have to get it here or we can't have it. If it's not within our lines, then it's not accessible to us.²

ACT accomplished this by instilling hope in community leaders:

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Significant neighborhood changes included building relationships and bringing programming to Bushwick:

Well, two things come to mind. One is that those Collaborative meetings certainly established relationships that—helped establish relationships that are maintained today. And since you mentioned parent, that they're involved with the parent access, IMPACT, we work with them.¹²

For example, one respondent discussed how ACT increased parents' access to Wyckoff Heights Medical Center's staff:

Wyckoff Hospital, in the beginning, was very shut off and parents didn't have input. But now, parents are allowed to go to council meetings, president meetings, things like that. And I think that's because of ACT being able to bring them out in the community, the higher ups, and have people talk to them and that they were able to see that stuff needs to change. It's not perfect, because I don't think Wyckoff would ever get perfect. But I think they're more willing to listen now.

There was a project that came out of Wyckoff that parent advocates here got involved with, which was called the **[Docs]** Program. And that program was specifically for first, second and third-year residents to meet with us, parents in the community, to see what really affects the health of children in this community. So that doctors could get a better idea that it's not always the parents don't want to give the medication. It's not always that the parents don't follow up on medications. Most times, it's the environment that the children are living in and the community that they're living that affects their health.

And I think through that program, Wyckoff's doctors have become a lot more open to what parents are going through in the community as opposed to pointing fingers at parents and telling them, well, you're not doing your job right. Your children are obese because of this. They're listening to the parents. And if a parent says my child keeps gaining weight, they're able to tell the parent, okay, so what are you feeding your child first? But then, is your child on other medications that might be making them overweight? And they've come into that mindset. And I think that directly has come out of ACT being able to connect with a city agency that has been able to change how they thought about working with parents and now are listening to parents.³

One respondent said ACT increased the community's awareness about New York City's municipal service systems, how they are connected, and how they are not connected:

I think that that did happen. I don't know, but I think it happened—it was so much embedded in the process that I can't say ACT held a one-day meeting on understanding systems and everybody went and they understood it. Rather, when we had the monthly

meetings and we had panel representatives from HPD, the way we'd either—if you recall, we had specific questions they had to ask. So, what we would ask them, how they answered and how we led the dialogue really I think embraced this idea that you've got to understand more than what the issue is on the table, but rather how all these systems impact. I think that knowledge, that, quote, technical assistance, happened through the process. But I also think it happened because of who was on the steering committee, who the local planner was and—not to toot my own horn—but who the chair was.

Because if I look at other Collaboratives that have taken place over the years in this community, that does not happen naturally. That kind of understanding the systems and how things are interconnected or how they work against each other is what gives a Collaborative process depth and is what I think allows the Collaborative process to create change, because if we look at the neighborhood networks, if we look at CPI, I don't see it happening.¹¹

Another neighborhood change included government leaders meeting with parents in Bushwick to discuss their needs and recommendations on how government should address their needs:

I'd say, because ACT would also hold meetings in Bushwick, and we would call in some of the powers that be, the decision makers to come in and actually meet with the directors and, of course, ACT was there too and some of the parents. Then we had the forum to really convey some of our concerns.¹⁰

These responses are most reflective of the second level of social capital, bridging social capital across communities, and Smock's community building, civic, and transformative models.

Changes at the Neighborhood Level as a Result of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative

Another said ACT brought about neighborhood change by initiating the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, which organized local and citywide leaders by creating into a space where information was shared and issues were discussed and addressed:

Okay, from my understanding, ACT is an organization that reaches out into the community and basically what happened for me, ACT put together a workshop that's ongoing for weeks and met and it was very informative. It gave us a lot of tips, knowledge, and information on what we could do to help my preschool here, gave us pointers, you know. And the workshop was just a great workshop.¹⁴

I think those government members that did participate, you know, had an opportunity to get to know us, as well as we as a community get to know them. I thought that, given what we identified to them, that it brought, at least in one case with the issues of homelessness, a positive result. How I thought it educated the community about the government and so forth was, again, those community members—and I'm putting aside service providers—that those community residents that did attend that one can have involvement with government, that there are people you could reach out to, that there can be some results when you unite as a community and find a clear voice to what the issues are.

So, in that respect, I thought IMPACT played—I thought ACT played a role. Again, I wish they would continue to play a stronger role, maybe differently, but nonetheless, more so. I thought those three areas I thought they played a good role.⁸

Within the last seven years I see them as a body, an organization that's really been connected strongly to our community. They did a very good job over the last seven years of pulling together stakeholders. I thought they did a very good job at identifying gaps in services, and then coming up with some type of programming for such.⁷

The Bushwick ACT Collaborative addressed homelessness and other issues by developing position papers and presenting them at legislative breakfasts to, on average, 200 local, city, and political leaders:

For the issue of homelessness, that resulted in a position paper that was developed in collaboration with the ACT planner, a subcommittee and myself as co-chair, and also were able to plan what I recall in the last 20-some odd years being the first legislative breakfast here in Bushwick, particularly around an issue of concern. The breakfast was attended by over 250 individuals. It was a source of much excitement, as well as angst, but it also allowed us to move the agenda forward around homelessness in this community and ultimately was part of what led us to being able to obtain a—I believe it was a \$2 million grant for homelessness prevention for here in the community.¹¹

There were a whole lot of sessions—maybe two years worth, if I’m not mistaken—where we all sat around to identify what our issues were, to identify the problems, to see where the gaps were. We brought in other community-based organizations. We brought in the legal. We brought in housing. We brought in commissioners to identify what we saw as the problems.

I also recall we brought in—I don’t remember someone’s name, but I do believe she works with the Housing Authority, Section 8 particularly, and we identified a person or department that would flag the cases that were coming in from our community. I think that was a major, major impact for people who were seeking services from our community, but it was a greater impact for those organizations that worked in our community that identified what this was and found solutions for it.⁷

I think that’s why they had me sit on that legislative breakfast, because when I finally spoke up and I told them you guys keep blaming parents for things that are going on in the community or for the way their children are being raised or for the health of the children, but you’re not seeing the reality of what’s going on in their community. I told them because I’m a parent and my children are severely sick and I do everything I need to be doing for my children medication-wise and vitamin-wise, but they live in this community and this community is what is affecting them. The pollution, the ground, the garbage, everything is affecting them, so why would you blame the parent for something that’s not in our control?³

That's a good one because I remember sitting at 315 Wyckoff when we had meetings around what's in the community, what's needed in the community and how has it really helped the community. And I remember we were dealing with—I think at that time, it might be have been the obesity piece. I'm not sure if we started out with that, but it might have been the obesity of children, and it kind of has enlightened a lot of the centers on nutrition, menu planning more so with the families and helping to encourage them to get more exercise, and we started talking a little bit about the parts and how the community doesn't have a lot of resources and parts within the Bushwick area and how we could maybe utilize the parts that were available to us. And I noticed that in the centers they become more—Wyckoff has gotten involved in coming and speak to the parents about nutrition, talk to the teachers about health and make sure exercise is implemented. I think SPARKS had come into play at that point.²

Another discussed the beginning of a nutrition and physical activity training for school-aged children called the Sparks Curriculum,^{lxxxix} she said this was the direct result of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative creating a space where community leaders convened, discussed health issues, and how to address them:

That's a good one because I remember sitting at 315 Wyckoff when we had meetings around what's in the community, what's needed in the community and how has it really helped the community. And I remember we were dealing with—I think at that time, it might be have been the obesity piece. I'm not sure if we started out with that, but it might have been the obesity of children, and it kind of has enlightened a lot of the centers on nutrition, menu planning more so with the families and helping to encourage them to get more exercise, and we started talking a little bit about the parts and how the community doesn't have a lot of resources and parts within the Bushwick area and how we could maybe utilize the parts that were available to us. And I noticed that in the centers they become more—Wyckoff has gotten involved in coming and speak to the parents about nutrition, talk to the teachers about health and make sure exercise is implemented. I think SPARKS had come into play at that point.

I don't know the whole logistics around SPARKS, but I know that it's teaching the teachers how to—and train them to become more effective in teaching children how to become active with the exercise and the playtime, which kids will see it as playtime, but it's actually exercise. So, it doesn't seem like you're putting a lot on them and making them run down the block or something like that. So, I'm not quite familiar with it, but I know the teachers have been working with one of the women who come in to do the training and that a few of them have been trained to be trainers. So, it's pretty good.²

Another said the Bushwick ACT Collaborative strengthened service provider relationships by providing information and having sessions where people could discuss their organizations' issues:

It seemed to me that Agenda for Children Tomorrow focused on networking with organizations in Bushwick that were working directly with residents, specifically with children. And that the goal was to strengthen relationships among the providers, find new providers and bring them in to strengthen each other's work by referrals, by providing information, by having sessions where people could discuss their issues that the organizations were facing and basically strengthen the provider community.¹²

Changes at the Neighborhood Level as a Result of Bushwick IMPACT

Another example of a program that ACT brought to Bushwick was the Parent Services Project, which consisted of “parent access points,” where parents could access information and get assistance with accessing needed resources:

[We met with ACT to discuss] What's needed, how could they make a difference in the community, is it needed in the community and in which ways could they be a help in the community. No. We started with the early childhood. That's how I became a part of it because I worked with all the centers in Bushwick and I worked with Head Start, which

is early childcare. So, I was brought in because of my role in working with all the families with children, young children and undocumented children. [At the time, I was employed] As a family coordinator in Bushwick with all of the centers—No. I wasn't working for them [i.e., the Bushwick Child Care Network], but I was a community partner in it, and my work was working with the Head Starts to implement family—a grounded family partnership and at the same time trying to meet the needs of the parent within the center. So, I was working with all of the Bushwick Head Starts and all the New Life Head Starts as well as Integration Head Starts and St. Barbara's. So, it was all of them in one trying to make sure the needs were met in each individual center. I was with the—wasn't that ACT with Seiderman?^{lxxxii}₂

It went full circle. It [i.e., ACT] brought it [i.e., the Parent Services Project model] in to encourage parents to come together and do something in the setting that the—the space they had to encourage them to go out and do somewhere else. Yeah [, the Parent Services Project is now Bushwick IMPACT].₂

Well, as I said, the referral system was very important. And their listing of all these different centers and help, which is very important for all of us to know who, what and where the different centers are. And then, especially referral of parents, that's been very good.₄

One said the Parent Services Project became Bushwick IMPACT and served/serves parents by teaching them about resources, teaching them how to navigate these resources, and conducting fun, literacy-based activities for their children:

Right. PSP, right. I said fine. I said, in fact, I'll give you room here so that you can really have an established place here. So, Parent Services Project, which then became IMPACT, was started here in this building. And [ACT's Director of Community Planning] first was involved in working get through. And we had a lot of people from the community, parents from the community. See, that was the problem. We never really involved enough parents to really get further than we should have gotten further. And with [ACT's former

Associate Executive Director] and Deborah [ACT's Director of Community Planning], in starting something like the PSP, they brought families here to learn about their community.

And then, after that, if you remember, we had this wonderful dinner with all of these people on—this was on [**Riddle**] Avenue. There was a skating rink place. And certain people were given awards for helping to pull this project together. And so, IMPACT was born. And then, IMPACT found a place at 69 Central Avenue. And they began to develop themselves in the early childhood, which was great, because we always needed a resource very much like service coordination for families so that they understood where to go, how to get their children to daycare and also an interim place for their children to have fun at IMPACT. So, everything worked out in a very nice way.

And now, IMPACT, I think, has drawn very good people. And they do have exceptional meetings where—their meetings, they have at least 30 people or more. And they're from all over. And now, with charter schools becoming very important, even the charter school directors are coming to their meetings. The charter schools are not involved with preschools yet, so they wouldn't be coming to BCCN. But they do come to the IMPACT meetings, which is a perfect venue for them, because where would they go?⁴

Others discussed ACT's initiation of Bushwick IMPACT:

Initially, it was a matter of just setting up high expectations that we realized that, okay, we have a friend at City Hall, that type thing, you know that they could advocate for us. Today, if we could go down to where we're at, today we have IMPACT. And IMPACT, again, is out there.¹

That they're involved with the parent access, IMPACT, we work with them. That's where our breastfeeding class is. I'm just saying [**Flo**] goes to Parent IMPACT to do the breastfeeding support group.¹²

Today, if we could go down to where we're at, today we have IMPACT. And IMPACT, again, is out there.¹

I think the two greatest contributions from ACT that have supported our community has been IMPACT—not IMPACT. I don't think IMPACT was the greatest. I think IMPACT is number two.⁷

And after that [i.e., Homebase], I feel like IMPACT has been the greatest legacy for that, something that's left in the community that is still sustainable and still working without too much of their guidance, something that's parent friendly and that's still working under the unique idea of what ACT was trying to put in the community. Because I feel like we are now ACT's [inaudible 28:57], ACT's connector, like the little connector in the Bushwick community, because we make sure that parents, one, are connected to the community and also that the CBOs in the community are responsive to what the parents need in the community.³

Another respondent believed that the cornerstone of Bushwick IMPACT was its training, workshops and social forums, which transformed parent's leadership and advocacy:

It may not be exact, but I'd say my most involvement, I'd say, is the fact of getting parents to benefit of what ACT offers. And that is in the training that they've had, the workshops they've been able to go to, and even I remember like a couple functions like gatherings they had. They have never stopped talking about it, and for me, to have the parents get that from ACT is a part of what I feel is in the infrastructure, getting the parents to be privy to that type of experience or the experiences that they had, and that has been for me one of the greatest things because I know they would not have gotten it. They hadn't gotten it anyplace else, and they would not have gotten it without the benefit of people, yourself and all the others they're involved in to make sure Agenda for Children Tomorrow was in this community.

Well, IMPACT had the biggest outgrowth of—I mean, I think having all the Africans involved that was a great thing. That was really great, but IMPACT the impact that it has had on this community is one of ACT's finest moments as far as I'm concerned. In this community, I can't speak for the other ones, but in this community it's phenomenal. Seriously. Like every other place, there are little tweaks and things that may not be going exactly right, but 99.9 percent of them it works well.

Yes, yes, yes. That's something that Jennifer told, they should be proud of the services or proud of it. I'm sure they have other things as well. But it works. There's so many—and not just in Bushwick, but in Bed-Stuy people are coming in from all over to get information. The parents basically are the ones who impart in that stuff to them and they will train right here, as I said, in this building through Agenda for Children Tomorrow and the part of ACT that it played. It's one of the greatest things, and I'm not trying to play it up. It's for real. People can come and check it out for themselves, and it's a good thing. I'm very proud of it.⁶

Another respondent said Bushwick IMPACT's model works well because they train community leaders—the work is bigger than the project itself:

[Bushwick IMPACT's Director] and the staff that's here now, it's not that they're having a big impact on the Bushwick community, but in the work that they're doing it appears that they're doing not just fantastic work, but they're doing work that's impacting the community, because as they're working with the residents and developing the residents, they in turn, then, are feeding out. And that's what I always look on as something of great value. So, I like what I see as a person who is always looking to see our community be a better place.¹

Another respondent discussed the creation of Bushwick IMPACT's formal, communication system on open daycare slots to all interested community leaders:

I'm sorry. Another thing they do that's very important too, they contact all the daycares, and they find out, "Do you have a waiting list," or there could be another center that's under-enrolled, so they can refer children to you so we can keep our enrollment up. Because one of the issues that we were faced with in daycare, they were saying that some of the daycares were under-enrolled, so they were trying to take money from the budget. Those of us that are enrolled to all four composites like I am, we thought, "Why do they want to take money away from daycare?"

So, the commissioner looked at everything on a whole, Commissioner Mattingly, and he said the problem is there are a lot of daycares that are actually under-enrolled. So, then ACT said, "Okay, let's start this networking. We can help each other. You have children on your waiting list. I need children." So, then they did like a referral. So, that helped the centers that were under-enrolled.¹⁰

Another respondent said she believed this system led to an increase in the number of children in Bushwick-based childcare centers and Head Starts:

Most supportive is helping to get children into daycare and Head Starts and that kind of thing. That's very, very supportive.⁴

At the time of this study, one respondent believed that the residents' awareness of Bushwick IMPACT was/is greater than their awareness of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative:

From my perception, it [i.e., the Bushwick ACT Collaborative] was very well accepted and was—it was sadness when it stopped getting—being organized. The meetings stopped. But I guess things just got—whatever happened. I don't know exactly what happened. [Inaudible 44:48] and more. I just say perhaps what happened—it was accepted. Anyway. Or, it changed into something else. There was different money available, a different funding stream that started to get focused about a year or so later or two years later on foster families. And we run into these guys when we're up in Bushwick. They're seen. They're certainly out there. So, I don't know about residents.

The residents knowing about the ACT Collaborative, I don't know how they sort of even know about it. They're much more likely, of course, to know about IMPACT, because it's a place and concrete. And they can go and get help there. So, I'm sure people would be much more aware of that than they would have ever been aware of some series of meetings that went on.¹²

Another believed that Bushwick IMPACT did not reach its fullest potential because there were insufficient parents involved:

So, Parent Services Project, which then became IMPACT, was started here in this building. And [ACT's Director of Community Planning] first was involved in working get through. And we had a lot of people from the community, parents from the community. See, that was the problem. We never really involved enough parents to really get further than we should have gotten further.⁴

One respondent believed ACT missed two very important opportunities with the Parent Services Project/Bushwick IMPACT's parent advocates: (1) they did not train these advocates across disciplines and (2) they did not train more parents:

These are resident people who could become advocates for different causes. They chose four who are still with them. Elsa, Beatrice, of course Cynthia, who is now a member of the staff, and, oh, what's her name, a fourth person. Her name will come to me. They should have developed that more. There should have been more advocates.⁴

For one respondent, ACT becoming a service providing entity was a disappointment:

When I think of Agenda for Children Tomorrow, I go back to when they first came to Bushwick. And honestly, the initial presentation, as well as the understanding, was that they were a citywide and were going to be working with us more or less as a liaison with.... They would be working with us more as a liaison between the local community and the city. So, we kind of looked on ACT as an advocacy program. And that was

fantastic because the sort of thing of what we had mentioned before of monies not coming into the community, services not being available, issues with ACS as far as even child abuse issues and things like that, ACT was going to be able to facilitate a lot of other services for us. And that necessarily didn't happen in my mind. It turned more into a service [inaudible 1:32] project over the years. So, from one end of the spectrum to the other, for me, that was a disappointment.¹

Another said ACT's involvement in direct services [i.e., Bushwick IMPACT] was perplexing; furthermore, Bushwick IMPACT holding similar types of meetings during Bushwick ACT Collaborative meetings was also perplexing:

What I never quite understood was how ACT ended up operating a program that I consider to be sort of a direct service in some way, and which also then duplicated the similar format of meetings as were true in the Collaboratives in terms of pulling together various networks, various providers and interested parties and holding a monthly meeting and trying to focus on bringing various speakers, et cetera.¹¹

CHANGES AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

The literature states that holistic and sustainable individual and community change are created by broader context or system change. The literature defines system change as improving the quantity and quality of services and other investments provided by outside systems, including social services, schools, the judicial system, commercial activity, and private sector investment. It also defines system change as increasing community residents' access to the structures that exist at the municipal and regional levels. This often involves a political empowerment agenda for the community that includes community organizing, better representation of neighborhood interests in city-level decision-making forums, or gaining commitments for improved corporate responsibility toward the community. Examples of this are evident in the respondent reports below.

General Changes at the System Level

Several respondents said that through ACT shifting perspectives of Bushwick, there was an increase in resources to Bushwick:

Okay. What I think it looks (l) it probably ACT was commissioned to identify certain issues that present itself in New York City communities. So, once they identified those communities that have what they want to assist in, then they probably go to the community, see what are the organizations or see who are the stakeholders in the organization, explain to them they're doing research or they want to assist, whether it's poverty, asthma, childcare and find out how the community feels about that particular issue. If they feel that there's a change they would like to have. Basically, I know whenever you have a change agent, you take the passions of the community and you just direct them in how to navigate ensuing positive change for that. Right. So that would be technical support. That would be exposing them to other resources that could yield the results that they want. It's sort of probably also giving them hope and empowerment to think they can change and to work on that issue.⁵

Yeah. But see, they were involved in it. You were there, so you know they got the information, and I'm saying the same thing I said about ACS and the people out in the field with people, they get the information from communities like this, and they go back and act as if they decide, it was their discovery they did. The same thing is happening with the hospitals. I see a difference in Wyckoff Heights, and Woodhall, I'm in a meeting down there every other month where the same thing happens. They send their people in, because we include them. They invite everybody to come, and they get stuff to go back, and people act on it. They act as if they discovered it and it was something—but as long as it's happening, I don't care if somebody take it as long as they're doing the right thing. I'm pleased with some of the things that I'm seeing as far as ACS and hospitals or on whatever is coming into our meetings and getting stuff and going back and acting on them.⁶

I think so. Because they're able to take what we get from on the ground to the higher ups and change things from that perspective up there. Because people are able to see, well, if this is what's going on in this neighborhood, then what about the other neighborhoods? And then, they start asking questions. And things start to change around. I saw the whole thing with the ACS regulation for parent's child support, the initiative, where this was such a strong thing and people were freaking out. Parents were, like, I'm not going to sign that, because then I'm not going to get child support.

They listened. ACT listened to what the parents were saying when it came to why the parents didn't want to sign the child support paperwork and relayed up to ACS. And then, ACS in turn relayed downward, you know what, these are issues that we have to deal with. And that maybe we have to take families by a case-by-case basis. And we can't just be so rigid with this one regulation. And so, I think that's a lot—that has to do a lot with the voices that are in this community and that are able to go up higher and talk higher to the higher ups.³

ACT raised Bushwick's visibility with government; and it also created opportunities for young people to take leadership at a broader level:

I would say that one of the greatest contributions that comes to mind for me was that ACT gave Bushwick visibility because, in my experience, it's something we tried to do as well. In my experience, Bushwick was a hidden community, with serious needs, often one of the neediest communities in the city, but had the fewest resources by—this community to me looked very similar to an East Harlem back in the '80s, a South Bronx back in the '80s and the '90s, but didn't have any of the resources that those communities had, and I think that ACT was good at least creating some attention, getting some of the government officials, getting funders to think about ACT as a potential community for new initiatives.

I think ACT was also a potential place for sort of young leadership. If we think about some of the folks who have come through Bushwick, **Peggy Nagaria**, John Paul Gonzalez, who had an opportunity to have a voice and to do some behind the scenes work in a way that wasn't typically happening because my sense was most of what was going on in Bushwick was happening program specific, provider specific but not the bigger community picture. So, I think ACT really gave an opportunity for those that were interested and had that bigger view to have a place to talk about it, to be with other people who viewed the world that way and to try and impact upon the community in a positive way.¹¹

Another system change included ACT connecting parents and service providers to top government officials to discuss community issues and recommendations on addressing them:

I think they provide us the overall structure, supervision and then the connections. Because through ACT, we have those higher up connections through ACS and through human resource and through DYCD. Because anything that happens here on the lower ground, we can then in turn tell to the ACT higher ups and then they in turn can be able to sit down with the higher ups and talk with them. I don't even think it's even that either because I've been able to sit down with Commissioner Mattingly myself. And I've never—as a parent, you would never believe that someone at my level could sit with a commissioner and talk.³

Basically, what ACT did was they would attend meetings with ACS, which is our funding source. So, then they would attend meetings with the directors, and they would find out what our concerns were. Basically, if we couldn't train all our parents and meet their needs, then they would also train some of the parents at their location. They could not streamline anything because they have nothing to do with the actual doctrines. We don't either. It comes from ACS, but we'd tell some of the parents, "I'm sorry," and perhaps ACS would help them streamline.

I'd say, because ACT would also hold meetings in Bushwick, and we would call in some of the powers that be, the decision makers to come in and actually meet with the directors and, of course, ACT was there too and some of the parents. Then we had the forum to really convey some of our concerns.¹⁰

Most supportive is helping to get children into daycare and Head Starts and that kind of thing. That's very, very supportive. And also in bringing people like the head of ACS and even union people, Sondra [**Sepaluv**] came. And she's in her 90s. She really understands a lot of the interesting dynamics related to unions and daycare programs. And the head of the Department of Health daycare program from the city they brought in to speak.⁴

I think those government members that did participate, you know, had an opportunity to get to know us, as well as we as a community get to know them. I thought that, given what we identified to them, that it brought at least in one case with the issues of homelessness a positive result. How I thought it educated the community about the government and so forth was, again, those community members—and I'm putting aside service providers—that those community residents that did attend that one can have involvement with government, that there are people you could reach out to, that there can be some results when you unite as a community and find a clear voice to what the issues are. So, in that respect, I thought IMPACT played—I thought ACT played a role.⁸

The only thing I can—I think that—and I don't know how they do it, but sometimes ACT can get to the people at the top quicker—and I don't know why—than sometimes we can. They are able to bring a deputy commissioner to the table, to actually sit down and listen to the people in the community. As opposed to being the voice for them, they will actually try to get the person here.¹⁰

I think in answering your question, I think I kind of answered that earlier when I made reference to it helped the community find a voice and articulate those issues in such a way, we're then followed by writing those papers and then sending them to the right parties for a response to them. I think that was—I don't remember to be honest. I don't

remember. I mean, again, in my mind it's been a while. That served as an example of it's not the community sitting down together and saying, "Put this down, put this down, write this down." It's you guys. It's the committee members. Hearing, having these hearings, if you will, and people expressing what the issues are, concerns are and then it being put down on paper.⁸

The only thing I can—I think that—and I don't know how they do it, but sometimes ACT can get to the people at the top quicker—and I don't know why—than sometimes we can. They are able to bring a deputy commissioner to the table, to actually sit down and listen to the people in the community. As opposed to being the voice for them, they will actually try to get the person here.

Then they just send out—they call you to keep reminding you and send out emails and facts to make sure you're there, so you can contribute to what the needs are of your community. So, that's how they've been helpful. I don't know how they do it, but they do it. They can get to the people on top, and it's very, very helpful—and bring them back to the community.¹⁰

ACT uplifted Bushwick's promising approaches/programs to citywide leaders who replicated these approaches/programs in other areas of NYC:

Yeah. I think very much so, and I think part of it is paying attention to Bushwick. I think unlike some of the other communities where perhaps there are elected officials who serve as a voice for all issues, not some issues, I don't think Bushwick had that, and so, I think ACT helped connect the community to government officials. Perhaps what ACT also did was provide opportunities, again, for young leadership to be spokespersons on behalf of the community in different venues, whether it was the larger ACT meetings that were held I guess quarterly or it was a panel at a conference or any of those kinds of things. It was an opportunity to create a voice you might not typically hear.¹¹

I think those government members that did participate, you know, had an opportunity to get to know us, as well as we as a community get to know them. I thought that, given what we identified to them, that it brought at least in one case with the issues of homelessness a positive result.⁸

I think that, again, we have—it has provided us to have the CPR [i.e., CPI] program they have now with Tracy Johnson and different people that was working from ACS coming into the community because Tracy was a member of all of the meetings back in the day, and that's one of the main things they have again is the fact that she—that ACS have these things kind of set up in Bed-Stuy and Bushwick is that they are beginning to see that these are real people over here.

And they need the same things, and I think they're beginning to see it's beneficial to them to be involved in these programs, and I like it. I think it's good, and it has been beneficial in the sense of people who would attend meetings. We have, you know, the commissioners used to come to our meetings and all of that, and some of them still do. They come, and they see and they hear and they get the information. They go back, and sometimes they even copy off things that are happening in these—they're just happening all over. They copy the programs. They see how good it [i.e., community building] works, and they've taken tidbits from what's happening here and putting it into the old program. If you go, you can see it. [The Commissioners] Come to our meetings. Of course, that's what they're doing [i.e., replicate what Bushwick is doing]. Definitely.⁶

Throughout ACT's life in Bushwick, it always brought a variety of opportunities to the community, including funding opportunities:

And I think that sometimes ACT was able to bring in some new funding opportunities, and there had been times when we had been—when there was some outreach to us saying, “Look, here's an opportunity. Are you interested?” That's actually how the Casa program came to us was through ACT and through Eric.¹¹

Changes at the System Level as a Result of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative

ACT was significant in bringing a \$2 million dollar, homelessness prevention grant (i.e., “Homebase”^{lxxxiii}) to Bushwick. This was also significant because it resulted in a formal working relationship between two agencies, the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services and the Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizen Council, Inc., who never had a formal working relationship despite providing services to the Bushwick for over a decade:

I think the two greatest contributions from ACT that have supported our community has been IMPACT—not IMPACT. I don’t think IMPACT was the greatest. I think IMPACT is number two. I have to say the Homebase was the greatest.

Yeah. I think that was the greatest support of us as a community, and I don’t think that everybody’s going to say that, but I can say that because it took the Collaborative working along with our elected officials and the agencies to recognize there was the issue and then to put the dollars in place to make sure there was a piece that prevented it. Now, I’m not saying it’s the best thing since apple pie, but it’s a group of people working together for the same result and understanding what it is. I think that’s the greatest, to be honest with you. And it’s obvious, because it was recently—not recently, but it was duplicated. It was not only in Bushwick, but in a couple other districts. Most recently, Homebase received an award.⁷

I think, the housing. I honestly first and foremost think the housing situation, just in the way that they looked at it and the way they acted on it and the way they implemented Homebase and all these other programs to help families in the community. That’s the way I see it from before I even started. And after that, I feel like IMPACT has been the greatest legacy for that, something that’s left in the community that is still sustainable and still working without too much of their guidance, something that’s parent friendly and that’s still working under the unique idea of what ACT was trying to put in the community.³

Early on, my recollection is around—I have to use events. I have to find out what was the event. When we held a major event at Wyckoff Medical Center, I believe the issue that were brought out was homelessness, and from there, Homebase was born, and that was a Collaborative where two major community-based organizations came together to provide preventive homelessness services for residents within the 11237 zip code area. I do believe that expanded beyond that core area, which covered a lot of people who lived in our community. Of course, we were concerned with Bushwick.

That, I think, was a major milestone for us as a community, because we had two community-based organizations that were really concerned with the same catchment area, if you will. However, they came together with their expertise in terms of housing services and case management services, so I think that was a major, major milestone that we met. I have to say the Homebase was the greatest [contribution].⁷

I think the positive impacts were on those two areas that I identified earlier. One is the issue of homelessness. I think in large part, Homebase was part of that.⁸

Another system change included the creation of a farmer's market and funding for its continued existence:

I don't remember. There was the [inaudible]. I guess, I was on that [i.e., the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Steering Committee] for a while. I wasn't on it for the whole time, though, that I was out there.¹²

No, I don't think it [i.e., decision making] was voting. I think it was more discussion and a consensus. I think that's how the whole thing seems to—that's my memory of it. I remember consensus. The other thing for us that came out of it, we made connections there that later have—that led to our working with the local farmers' markets, probably—we met people there that had interest in nutrition, the Cornell people, if I remember correctly.

Yeah, and all that. The tall, Africa American woman, what was her name? Oh, my gosh. But she started a Bushwick on her own, a Bushwick farmer's market on Wednesday on the middle of the week and whatever. We ended up taking it over. But now, we have funding for another group to take it over. So, things came—for the Health Department, things for our office certainly things came out, connections were made there that took us in unexpected directions. From ACT, we got to know Asantewaa. That was her name. And Asantewaa ended up leading us to a successful and a burgeoning food—farmer's market open now for the third or fourth year in a row, summer in a row. We met her there. And [inaudible 42:35]. Helping the children. Anyway, so....¹²

Changes at the System Level as a Result of Bushwick IMPACT

Another system change was funding from the United Way to support a parent involvement event:

They [i.e., the United Way] funded a lot of good stuff. Oh, yes, of course. That was through the ACT initiative. And, in fact, I'm still getting something from United Way. This block party, they send me volunteers. They send me food, because I need the volunteers desperately because everyone comes from all over. And I have a lot of food for everybody. And we have lunch for everybody. Good food. I mean, a piece of chicken, not hot dogs.

Well, you see, unfortunately, they [i.e., the United Way] only gave us—the first year they gave us more money. I think they funded the meeting of all of these residents together here. They funded [ACT's former Executive Director and Associate Executive Director] and their workers for the most part. They didn't fund us, except for the special events like the closing of the block. But I really don't know what exactly it was used for. I used to know, but I don't know now.⁴

Another system change included funding for Bushwick IMPACT for purposes of updating their technology system:

I believe they've helped with funding so that we can get more in sync with the way we use our computers and more in sync with the way we're using the data that collects the information on the computers. Other than that, I don't know anything else.³

Another discussed how ACT facilitated increasing the city's awareness about the ways in which the policies of the homelessness system contradicted the policies of the child welfare system:

What comes to mind, if you recall, was I think we sat with somebody from Citizens Committee for Children, who was the legal—I forgot what it was called. On one of the law suits, they were the person that was responsible to make sure the city was doing what they needed to do around homelessness, and we sat and we met with them and talked to them about our position paper, and I don't remember if it was before—I think it was before the breakfast, the legislative breakfast. But put out there, the issues that this community was raising about homelessness, and if you recall, most importantly, the interconnectedness around the homelessness issues, the greatest example being....In child welfare, right.¹¹

Another included changing the Administration for Children's Services' daycare application process from mail-based to in-person, community/Bushwick-based:

Now, presently, ACT is in Bushwick, and they're working with Bushwick IMPACT, and they're dealing with a lot of issues with parents are finding the daycare. Issues they're going through now with eligibility. They have changed the system. Their parents used to have a caseworker that would come into the community. As a matter of fact, daycare—Audrey Johnson Day Care Center was one of the daycares in Bushwick that housed the caseworkers. So, the caseworker would come here, and the parents would then bring the information to them. [Casework] From the ACS.

Yeah. And ACS—used to be ACD, the Agency for Child Development. Now it's ACS, the Administration for Children's Services. And basically, the parents would bring all their documents here, so it could be parents from the surrounding daycares, maybe John Coker, Grand Street Settlement—before it was Martin Dekores, Burnell Day Care, Horace Green Day Care, whomever. They would come here. ACS would set it up, and they would—that's why you see we still have the chairs in the lobby too.

The parents would use the chairs, and then they would wait. Then we had an office in the back they would use, and they would determine their eligibility. It was helpful, because if you were missing a document, you could go home and get your document. You could come back because you live in the area. They decided to phase that out, and now the parents have to mail in.

So, basically, ACT was helpful in helping us to—with the transition from having a caseworker here in your community to having to mail in your documents. So, the parents had to understand that because it was very difficult for them, and even with the language barrier, because most of the parents, I would say, in my daycare, 80 percent of the parents are second—English as a second language learner, and some don't speak English at all. So, the transition was a little difficult.¹⁰

Respondents also discussed the lack of system change as well. For example, one respondent said that the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's position paper on health presented at a Legislative Breakfast did not lead to substantial results:

One of the—the two primary issues that stand out for me, one of them being homelessness and the other being health issues, and we were able to organize a process around addressing each of those issues that I believe first started off with breaking down how the community perceived those problems and what was the information and the knowledge they felt they needed to be able to address it. We also were able to bring in experts who had the data information around each of these issues, health and homelessness, and then would hold monthly meetings that were very well attended and

would have key speakers that would address some of these issues, concerns, knowledge that needed to be given to the community.

For the issue of homelessness, that resulted in a position paper that was developed in collaboration with the ACT planner, a subcommittee and myself as co-chair, and also were able to plan what I recall in the last 20-some odd years being the first legislative breakfast here in Bushwick, particularly around an issue of concern. The breakfast was attended by over 250 individuals. It was a source of much excitement, as well as angst, but it also allowed us to move the agenda forward around homelessness in this community and ultimately was part of what led us to being able to obtain a—I believe it was a \$2 million grant for homelessness prevention for here in the community.

Knowing that that process worked well, we used a similar process around health issues, and for that, some of the primary issues if I recall were asthma, obesity, I think I'm forgetting a couple of other things. I thought it was child—I don't remember diabetes being a primary. Maybe it was under the.... Obesity, yeah. But we used the similar process: position paper, resulting, again, in a legislative breakfast, not quite as well attended, but still had maybe close to 150 to 200 people, if I recall. After that process, or somewhere around that time, the structure seemed to have change around the Collaborative, and it moved from monthly meetings that brought various providers together with a small steering committee that sometimes did a lot of the legwork to make these things happen to an attempt to formalize subcommittees around topic areas. And when that occurred, I, as the co-chair, was less involved and less interested, and I think it seemed to have lost steam. There was a lot of effort to keep it going. I'm confusing whether the paper that was—the health paper was done with some of the staff at ACT. I think we had someone assisting us.

Right. So, it was all around that time, right, that everything started breaking up. So, I think the take was after the health issues were raised, and there were like three or four of them, was to form subcommittees around those three or four issues to try and create some further collaboration. My perception was it became time intensive with not enough

leadership in each of those subcommittees to keep it going, and so, it's—the whole process just started to fade out, and at that point, I became less involved with ACT.¹¹

As noted above, reports on the goals of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and Bushwick IMPACT varied. Goals during the Bushwick ACT Collaborative were more consistent with creating synergy between Bushwick and public institutions, while the goals during Bushwick IMPACT were reflective of both bonding social capital within Bushwick and creating synergy between Bushwick and public institutions. However, reports on changes within Bushwick and between Bushwick and public institutions (i.e., at the individual, family, neighborhood, and system levels) are attributed to both the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and Bushwick IMPACT. One possible explanation is that bonding social capital is inherent to this work, even when the primary goal is to create synergy between a community and public institutions.

Furthermore, these reports of changes at a variety of levels also show that such change calls for a multi-dimensional approach. This layered approach is most synonymous with Smock's community building, civic, and transformative models.

OBSTACLES

Respondents also discussed obstacles as they related to goals, guiding principles, and operational strategies. One obstacle included insufficient parental involvement interfering with the Parent Services Project^{lxxxiv} realizing its fullest potential:

Well, you see, it became weaker and weaker because there wasn't a head. [Bushwick ACT's first local planner] had left. Now, I've always admired [ACT's former Associate Executive Director]. She's really a terrific person. And she has a lot of energy and good will and all of that. But she couldn't be here in Bushwick all the time, although I know Bushwick is close to her heart and [ACT's former Executive Director] too. But what had happened was until—and then, of course, what happened was [ACT's former Associate

Executive Director] came here and said she wants to open up a program called I think it was Parent Services.

Right. PSP, right. I said fine. I said, in fact, I'll give you room here so that you can really have an established place here. So, Parent Services Project, which then became IMPACT, was started here in this building. And [ACT's Director of Community Planning] first was involved in working get through. And we had a lot of people from the community, parents from the community. See, that was the problem. We never really involved enough parents to really get further than we should have gotten further. And with [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] and [ACT's Director of Community Planning], in starting something like the PSP, they brought families here to learn about their community.

And then, after that, if you remember, we had this wonderful dinner with all of these people on—this was on [**Riddle**] Avenue. There was a skating rink place. And certain people were given awards for helping to pull this project together. And so, IMPACT was born. And then, IMPACT found a place at 69 Central Avenue. And they began to develop themselves in the early childhood, which was great, because we always needed a resource very much like service coordination for families so that they understood where to go, how to get their children to daycare and also an interim place for their children to have fun at IMPACT. So, everything worked out in a very nice way.

And now, IMPACT I think has drawn very good people. And they do have exceptional meetings where—their meetings, they have at least 30 people or more. And they're from all over. And now, with charter schools becoming very important, even the charter school directors are coming to their meetings. The charter schools are not involved with preschools yet, so they wouldn't be coming to BCCN. But they do come to the IMPACT meetings, which is a perfect venue for them, because where would they go?⁴

Another obstacle included ACT's lack of support and coordination with other neighborhood networks (for e.g., the Bushwick Resource Coalition):

I think that because people in Bushwick meet too much, so that if you get a group of these people, if you've convinced them to come and they're going to air out their dirty laundry about these meetings. It's like repeating the wheel. The wheel is being repeated over and over and over again.

I think one of the things, if ACT were to do something—step up again and do something in a different kind of way in our community, one of the things that ACT should do is go into the child center organizations, schools, daycares, provider homes, libraries, wherever there's a child-centered atmosphere and support what's going on in a different kind of way. Because people take that in the wrong way; people take that as, “You know what? I haven't done it right, and you're going to show me how to do it better.” And people don't like that because they're invested themselves as it is.

So, one of the things that I think can happen in a different kind of way if ACT would want to recreate themselves in a big way is to go out there and lend support that way. That's off the top of my head.⁷

I think the positive impacts were on those two areas that I identified earlier. One is the issue of homelessness. I think in large part, Homebase was part of that. I think the 100-family shelter on Flushing Avenue was a result of that. Whether or not IMPACT played a strong, direct role in it is—can be argued. But I think it brought to the attention of the community, it certainly played a role in that.⁸

Another obstacle included the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's focus on children between the ages of 0 and 5 versus the ages of 0 and 21 during its health work:

I don't see it as consistent as it once was, say within the first five of those seven years. I think those were the most, from my perspective, I see those as the most cohesive years, only because I think ACT kind of changed its look over the last two years. I have to make reference to IMPACT. They kind of took over that setting that we once met around, so it

seems like their focus has switched from instead of 0 to 21, to the early elementary childhood level.⁷

Another obstacle included ACT's lack of connection between government leaders and the community leaders after the Bushwick ACT Collaborative ceased to exist:

Again, I wish they would continue to play a stronger role, maybe differently, but nonetheless, more so.⁸

Another obstacle included ACT's lack of follow up:

Okay, from my understanding, ACT is an organization that reaches out into the community and basically what happened for me, ACT put together a workshop that's ongoing for weeks and met and it was very informative. It gave us a lot of tips, knowledge, and information on what we could do to help my preschool here, gave us pointers, you know. And the workshop was just a great workshop.

Now, the follow-up afterwards, and I even said it at the end, in order-they even had a workshop here with our parents, which was good. That was one of the things that we had to do, we went back. So, now my thing is, and I said to them, I said the only problem I have in situations and workshops and people getting together is all great, but it's the follow-up. And that's what happened.

Yes. Exactly. See, I don't know-like, okay, to me, they try, by even putting that workshop together. ACT did try. Maybe there was no particular follow-up for that workshop, but maybe they've done other stuff that I don't know about. That was one workshop. They've been in existence for a while.¹⁴

Another obstacle included Bushwick IMPACT's Bushwick Early Education Committee's limited engagement of local daycare and Head Start programs:

I've been watching, monitoring, whatever the word is on who's on the committee [i.e., the Bushwick Early Education Committee] and who's working with it. And it's interesting to me that I don't see the local early childhood programs really participating actively on that committee. So, I'm not too sure, almost if it's the, whatever it is, the experts preaching to the experts. When I look at who's on the committee. That's of interest. I don't have their names in my head right now, but they're not.... None of the local daycare centers or Head Starts are actively on that committee. [Another Bushwick respondent] represents [a] Bushwick Head Start [Program]. She's generally at those meetings. She's very, very active with IMPACT. But in a way, it bothers me when I see it. And the main reason why it bothers me is because I say to myself, it's the same thing again. There's something wrong with what's in it.¹

Another obstacle included insufficient funding as a result of funders' lack of understanding of ACT:

And I think probably part of what makes it difficult to get something like ACT funded on a regular and consistent basis is that it's something many people don't understand the value of. It doesn't always—depending on what it is you want to measure, it doesn't always have measurable results. If you value the fact that people in the community were getting together and addressing issues and identifying them, perhaps better utilizing resources, then you could say every time ACT had a meeting and there were 50 or more people in the room, there was success, but if you didn't put a value on those things, then it was probably viewed as just another networking meeting.

I think that by ACT partnering with ACS, I think that's probably a very good move for ACT because it helps secure consistent funding for them, and ACS is sort of slowly trying to emulate what ACT has been doing over time. That's about it.¹¹

One example of this was insufficient resources to Bushwick IMPACT:

Yeah. I feel that their [i.e., IMPACT's] lack of resources probably prohibits or limits what more it could probably do in terms of—you probably work in a small scope. I have [inaudible] we can probably go 10, 15 [inaudible 23:42], instead of we need to expand.⁹

Another obstacle included insufficient funding inhibiting the promotion of comprehensiveness:

Well, it's very ambitious. That's a very ambitious statement when you're talking about businesses and social service groups and health. It's very broad. And there was one person. It just wasn't funded. It probably wasn't really quite the funding to be able to realistically achieve a very, very comprehensive approach, because I don't recall businesses being there. I don't really recall that, recall businesses. I recall some elected officials. I think that in a year—I guess it must have been maybe two years, two-and-a-half years. When did the ACT Collaborative—maybe two, two-and-a-half years, because you were followed by another coordinator, [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network Liaison]. I think.

I'm sure that there was a lot of time spent on your part making sure—getting people to show up, not that you had to, just following up and making sure that all the right people were notified, because it didn't seem to me that the ACT Collaborative coordinator had any help. I don't really know. There didn't seem to be a clerk around or somebody. If I'm observing correctly, a secretary to actually follow up on the issues that came up in the meetings, the questions that came up, the desires that came up at the meetings. It seemed like it was a piece of work to do that, let alone whatever other assignments the individuals had.

So, in terms of having, in context, kind of a one-person operation for a few years, it seemed that the coordinator certainly did bring together different sections of the—different pieces of the important sectors of the decision makers and the movers and shakers in Bushwick. Not business so much, but sometimes I think it would be even a more, I want to say much more sophisticated approach to figure out what is the businesses—what is their gain from coming to something like this? Even right now, just

tangentially, Ridgewood-Bushwick, the last years, have actually started to work more successfully with businesses in parts of Bushwick. But they're a huge organization. They have a team of people working on business development.

So, it's a great definition. But unless there's either a huge categorical mission that people will rally for or against, such as the Atlantic Yards, lots of people lined up for and against that across many different sectors, because it was such a huge event. You're kidding. That's about to happen. Nothing quite like that was happening in Bushwick. So, I would say in terms of gathering the right people that could have impact, who did have impact on children's lives, I would say it was fairly successful. Very successful for the fact that there was one person. I don't even know. Who even funds that? I don't know where the funding came from. What's it—some kind of....¹²

Another obstacle included ACT's insufficient brokering of funding between elected officials and community based organizations:

Where they've fallen—well, you see what I wanted, I want another Celebrate Bushwick. In other words, not just to involve us, but to involve the city council people and the state people, assembly and senate, because they have the money and they have funds that they could give out. And they don't give them out to the right people.⁴

Another obstacle included ACT not directing more of its resources to Bushwick:

Well, I wish they'd have had more resources to continue to be able to do what we were doing. So, I guess, least supportive that they didn't raise enough—okay, I can think of a couple things—they didn't direct enough of their resources to this community and it appeared that Mott Haven was sort of the chosen favorite. So, when there were opportunities—I had totally forgot about this, so thank you for making me pissed off again. So, when they had the opportunity to bring down I think it was a federal mental health grant or something, I don't know how the process was achieved, but it went to

Mott haven. When they had the chance to do Highbridge, I think that was driven by the stats for child welfare perhaps. I don't know.

I guess, if anything, I wish they would have chosen Bushwick for an initiative that was potentially resource rich, because I think that Bushwick was ready, and actually—thank you, because you're bringing up a lot of stuff now. I think the other thing was there were—and this is not just ACT but maybe ACT could have been the vehicle to make things happen. When I think about, for example, when BMCI was developed and we had this group of execs coming to a community like Bushwick on a twice-a-month basis to address child welfare issues with absolutely no funding. Then systems do what they do, and that kind of fell apart, but that was cutting edge that went on for several years, and I think there was an opportunity there, and had there been staffing and funding to do something with it or to link ACS and to get ACS to buy into an opportunity, we could have been doing then what ACS is now talking about now, whether it's Community Partnership Initiative or collaborations across agencies as they put out the new RFP. I think the stage was set for some of those kinds of projects to take place ten years ago.¹¹

Another obstacle included the Bushwick ACT Collaborative's lack of co-chair leadership:

I don't know the governance structure of IMPACT. I honestly don't know. From what I recall of the Collaborative, it was a very open structure. Talking about [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] – [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] didn't want to be the co-chair. Who was the other co-chair?

I don't know her. I don't know [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair #2]. I don't remember her. I recall early on we were supposed to have two co-chairs, governance, running meetings, taking over, directing the Collaborative, and they couldn't find a co-chair to save their lives. So, [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] technically became the chairperson and the leader, if you will. But she did an excellent job at it. She also consistently asked if anybody was interested because she

couldn't do it forever. She had to turn it over eventually, which was part of the "we" thing.⁷

Another obstacle included the Bushwick ACT Steering Committee's lack of long-term and consistent leadership and lack of financial compensation for leaders' work:

We had the interim committee, who developed the agenda structure for the upcoming meeting, did a lot of the work. I was on that committee. It was rough because there were a lot of players that kept coming in and leaving. So, the governance structure, theoretically it was written out, but it was hard to fulfill. Nobody wanted to do that work. It was work. Nobody wanted to do the work. And then, if you weren't intimately involved with ACT monetarily, how'd you keep up with all that stuff?⁷

Another obstacle included the Bushwick ACT Collaborative being perceived as competing with other neighborhood networks:

BRC. The BRC was a very, very important network in our community, and it was a network in our community that was important for a lot of reasons. It had depth and breadth. It went across the lines. The founder—I don't know if she was founder. The organizer, the person that was the fabric and the thread was Sister Betty. You know that. And she did a phenomenal job in pulling together all facets of the community across lines, and when I saw across lines, I'm talking about lines of protection because she had the police department there. The lines of the community board, she made sure I was there. The lines of elected officials, whenever we needed them, they were there. We had daycare providers and a lot of other people because they believed that the BRC was the organization that brought forth the providers that no one else knew how to connect with.

When we worked through an ACT Collaborative, tried to bring that organization that already had the breadth and the depth in our community, when we tried to bring them to the table, it looked like there was a struggle, and the struggle was on a couple of fronts. I think the struggle was on (1) you're going to take away something I built already; (2) we

tried this, it didn't work before, why are we going to do it again; (3) I don't like some of those players, those are not my people. Resulting in a severe split in the way in which the goal should have been met, and maybe I'm not saying that right. Resulting in less power; resulting in confusion a little bit because you had a lot of people who represented various levels of government torn. They didn't know which way they wanted to be a part of this. However, had everybody come together and said, "Look, forget what I feel. We're going to make it work," I think we would have had a stronger voice, a greater voice.⁷

Another obstacle included service providers' inconsistent participation and lack of connecting clients/residents to Bushwick ACT Collaborative meetings:

I think that ACT certainly encouraged community participation, and I don't know if it was just for ACT that one of the strategies that we attempted—we the Collaborative have attempted to use, we've been with other groups doing this kind of work, has been asking each provider to identify five clients and bring your five clients to the meeting. So, we're not asking for the whole world.

But I don't think that we did that consistently, and again, whether the messengers, the representatives for those providers felt empowered to do that and make it happen. And I think one of the greatest challenges even with providers was consistency, in terms of who came to their meetings on a regular basis? Again, I think that spoke to who was it that was coming to the meeting—**Vanessa Longes**, a majority of the folks were line workers, who were very interested and often very committed, but couldn't say yes or no to resources or to some decisions that made it difficult, which also points out why BMCI was such a missed opportunity.¹²

Another obstacle included ACT not providing sufficient clarity on the shift from Collaborative-based work to programming (i.e., Bushwick IMPACT):

I'm the only—I guess for me, the other thing was—and maybe I just missed it. I don't know. I would have liked a better understanding of how IMPACT was coming into the

community and what the long-term plan was and why a Collaborative was running its own program.¹²

Another obstacle included the local planner's departure:

The only thing I can recall is ACT providing technical assistance to ACT, to be honest with you. I remember [ACT's former Executive Director and Associate Executive Director] coming to the meetings. [ACT's former Executive Director] would kind of co-chair along with [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] sometimes. He kind of—I found him the linkage, if you will, from the Collaborative to wherever else issues went on different levels, so he was good, he and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director]. However, when they hired you as the local planner, the technical—or anybody, yourself as well as [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison], the technical assistance your position provided was more of a linkage between ACT itself and the different players in the community. You made yourself know, so you—you know.

They didn't have the same warm reception for [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] in the beginning. It was a change, and people around here get close to people, and they had a hard time letting go. It was a whole different kind of individual, and this is for the record, of the record, doesn't matter because I love him dearly. I just recently warmed up to [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison].⁷

I think it [i.e., the local planner's departure] left us with an absence of leadership with regards to ACT's involvement in the community because, soon after, I think the meetings stopped, and then it just didn't continue besides their further involvement in other areas. So, there was an absence felt, for me at least, with regards to that kind of leadership. While one liaison left to move onto another and offer his leadership within that context, it's a different context from which he's being a leader. So, it doesn't really answer to

general community's needs and need to voice its issues or concerns in a format like the one that ACT had back then.⁸

Another obstacle included the departure of ACT's leader, Eric Brettschneider:

You are asking the wrong person because I'm so—I like ACT so much, I like what I've seen, the results that have come out of ACT, and I don't know what else they could have done. The only thing I might suggest is I wish they could have kept [ACT's former Executive Director] here. I wish he could have stayed. I don't know what he left for, and that's not my business really. I think the people who were there from the early part and what they brought to it, if whoever came behind them could have had the same thing. They should have looked for people like that.⁶

Another obstacle included the community's need for education, most especially as it relates to prevention on all issues and opportunities to effect positive community change was also discussed:

They've [i.e., ACT has] tried [to promote community building], but they can't. There's just too many problems that we have. You have to understand Bushwick. One major problem Bushwick has: single mothers. Seventy-six percent of all families are run by single mothers. Do you know what kind of a problem that is? And these single mothers, they're trying to work. And what happens to their children? And there's always the issue they're going to be taken away, just like the example I gave you earlier. It's a terrible kind of situation.

Now, not only that, you also have many health problems. The big problem here in Bushwick is asthma and obesity. But asthma is a very—you can die from asthma. Through obesity, you get diabetes. And you can die from that too. They are serious, serious problems. Now, what they did, what Department of Health did and that's why I'm very angry at Obama for taking Frieden away, because he was a wonderful Department of Health commissioner. What they did was they worked with lead poisoning. They

worked with lead poisoning for every single year working it out, working it out trying to save those children from lead poisoning. And now, they have the lowest figure, lowest number of children who have been affected by lead poisoning ever in the City of New York. But that's working with it every single year, every single year. They have to do the same with asthma. And they have to do the same with obesity. And he was starting with this talking about fat substances and all of that.

What we eat. That was very—and he will have an effect. Of course, I think now that he's started something his assistants will take over and will continue, must continue because this is a very important issue, especially having to do with children, because what Mom eats is what the child is going to eat too. And for the most part, what the food was, French fries and hot dogs, let's face it, and pizza. Mainly carbohydrates. I would see a little kid, less than a year old, with a piece of a hot dog. But, you know, he can swallow and choke on that hot dog. The food that was given to children in this poor community was ridiculous. In other words, what I really want to say, I want to work with people like Frieden and to push these good ideas into the community so that people will be healthier and wiser.

No, it [i.e., ACT] hasn't made much of a difference, because we really have to have a kind of fast education. You know what I did? In fact, I'm going to give you is a copy of what I did. No, I'm using my only copy. Peeling lead paint turns into poisonous dust. I had this gentleman come to speak to parents and also my family workers to make them aware of all of these things about mold and the control for pest safety. And he gave an excellent presentation. And this is the reason why these people are coming around and they are doing the right thing for parents by helping them understand what this lead does. This lead will poison their child. And they can become retarded with ingestion of a certain amount of lead. And what can be done with that ingestion, the hospitals are working with it and trying to get the lead out. But what do parents know? Parents, especially immigrant parents and there's so many of these immigrant parents here in Bushwick, many, many, many, or teenage parents, what do they know?

It starts with education, absolutely. It starts with education. And I want to see this fellow, who was such an excellent presenter, go to every single daycare center to meet with every single parent so that they know what they're doing, because they don't know what they're doing.⁴

Another obstacle included insufficient resources to bring about systems change:

No. And I'll tell you why. It's not ACT's fault. You'd need a bulldozer practically to make incredible changes here. The sadness is why do changes come about from my point of view? What do I see after all of these years? I've been here for 33 years. The changes that take place are really a result of other factors. There's been a lot of gentrification, especially Williamsburg. And it's coming this way too. As soon as you have middle-class people, then changes are made. Poor people cannot make changes that easily, because they are overwhelmed. They're befuddled by all of this that goes on. It's hard for them. Whereas, middle-class people are motivated. When they want something, they'll go right to the mayor's office, it's that kind of thing, they feel they have a direct connection to all of these important people.

So, what I've seen is really quite remarkable. You take Williamsburg. Williamsburg is a different place. It has condos. Who thought that Williamsburg would have these fantastic condos, these buildings that look like Manhattan, but they do. And there's a lot of money. And these people want to build their own daycare centers for the rich, for the middle class. And maybe they'll invite a few poor children. Because they have to. That's where some changes will be made for the good unfortunately, because you need the money to make changes. And poor people don't have the money. And then, when money dries out, a grant is only for a few years, what do you do? If you remember, I had this wonderful Even Start. And it was a great grant. What happened? After three years, no more money. I had to fire everyone. Fire the people. I tried to get them jobs in other settings, but wasn't made to happen.⁴

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Several suggestions for overcoming obstacles were made. One suggestion was to conduct an assessment of all neighborhood networks, including their missions and goals, their outcomes, and how existing, effective neighborhood networks could work together more and be expanded. It was believed that Bushwick's CPI (BMCI) could benefit the most from this:

I don't have any recollections of them directly offering technical assistance, as I mentioned, other than through my observations and what I was able to gain from the modeling and so forth. I was unaware they were doing that. I'm glad to hear they're thinking of doing that technical assistance. From a community perspective—and I don't know who you go to—but that it would help us to say, "Let's identify what are the current, existing networks. Let's look at how these networks are running. Let's look at and understand what their missions are, and is it being effective?" And identifying those networks that are really just networks by name and it's just repetitious of others, those that have a fair response and actual impact on a community that could either be, even expanded or supported in some way, it could even be more effective or uniting one network with another where some have stronger things and others can make them even stronger. And then offering assistance to those networks to continue their missions effectively, I think would be a great beginning. I think CPI could benefit from some sort of technical assistance, whether it's leadership and how to build that effectively and effectively addressing its outcomes.⁸

Another suggestion was that ACT's definition of children should include children between the ages of 0 and 21:

I think ACT is, ACT could be, ACT should be planning for children's futures. Those are children from 0 to 21. I think the understanding that many of us have gotten is that we come together to identify problems and find solutions that will impact children from ages 0 to 21.⁷

Another suggestion was to promote comprehensiveness by promoting sustainability:

I think so, and that's just my opinion. ACT may see it differently, and if you interview someone else, they may see it differently also, but that's the role that I see, because ACT may not be around forever, the funding may not be around forever, so you can't hold people's hands. Our job is to empower people so they're able to stand on their own two feet. I think that's in any type of agency or services that come into your community. I believe in the old saying my mother taught us, "If you give someone a fish, they can eat for a day. If you teach them how to fish, then they could be able to eat for an eternity, as long as they can catch fish." So, I look at other resources or other agencies that come into our community the same way. I don't want them to hold the parents' hands. I would hope they empower the parents.¹⁰

Another suggestion was for Bushwick IMPACT leaders to advocate for government service system policies that are more child and family-friendly:

I think this [i.e., improving relationships with government service systems] is something should do and isn't doing. Also should work on trying to change policies. For e.g., ACD/ACS enrollment procedures to get services in a daycare center. Vouchers are no longer available. IMPACT thinks the following is a priority: early education, that every child should get early education by going to a Head Start Program or daycare center. ACS thinks childcare services should be only for mothers that work.¹³

Another suggestion was to consider existing neighborhood networks and ways to integrate them when setting up/expanding upon governance:

One of my concerns over the years, you know that I was always a little bit held back or defensive between the Bushwick Resource Coalition and ACT. So, it just seems appropriate that I should say that. Having been a founder of the Bushwick Resource Coalition back in the early 80s, that in my mind we had something good that was going. And then, when ACT came in, it was sort of like, oh, we have a plan, but they didn't

necessarily look at what was already there. So, the BRC, all of a sudden, was caught up in my mind a conflict of, well, we have something going that's kind of organizing the community.

If ACT is coming in, in effect as an outsider, they could've/would've/should've come in to support that which already existed. But that didn't happen. They came in with a plan of community organizing. So, that set up a conflict that in my mind was the beginning of the end for some community organizing that was already going on out here. And then, in effect, one thing to another, it did. It died. It was almost like there were parallel programs going for a while. And then, all of a sudden, it was like, you know, this is crazy. It's fighting to stay above water. So, we kind of let go of it, if that makes sense.

Because community organizing in my mind has a lot to do with the people of like mind or of like need, not necessarily like processes. Coming together at the table saying this and this and this is what we need. You had people coming to BRC meetings because they heard all over the city that there was something good that was going on out here. I think about a politician whose name I don't remember coming to the table because he heard that he really needed—this is what represents this community. And today he's in jail for all kinds of fraud. But I laugh because just the fact that people would think that they even should come to this group and yet at the same time the group did fall apart.

And it fell apart in many ways, one reason being, because of funding, because all of a sudden you didn't have the money to pay—all agencies didn't have the monies for so much support staff. So, it was harder and harder and harder to get out to be involved, not just in meetings, but in follow up activities, et cetera. And the other issue being, well, if there's a BRC meeting on Friday and there's an ACT meeting on Thursday, which one do I go to? So, it was kind of like divide and conquer. Not malicious, but logistic.¹

Additional suggestions included asking Collaborative members to contribute financially and connect Bushwick to foundations:

None [i.e., no information on the funding structure of the Bushwick ACT Collaborative] that I can recall. I mean, of course, in these economic times that's an issue, but be it as it may, I think when you ask for members to contribute some portion, there's ownership—a sense of ownership involved and somewhat more commitment or seriousness of their involvement. So, I mean, that would be one source. I guess also, other funding streams like foundations that would be interested in community building, especially in this climate I think. The community themselves can be stronger and more direct advocates for themselves, might be a worthwhile investment for foundations to consider contributing towards that end.⁸

Another suggestion included increasing individual donations:

You know something? Everybody's saying, when I talk, sometimes I speak when it comes down to funding, I see so many celebrities get off way too easy, the ones that can afford it, and they say you think Oprah should do her thing, but I'm saying if people can take money out of the United States to Africa and places like that to open up this, there's plenty of need right here. We should never—I'm working with an organization right now, and this is digressing a little bit. Brooklyn Mail Initiatives, and we're trying to work to help the DA Charles Hunter.... I mean I'm trying to help from the DA's office, Charles Hunter, see people go to prison, when they're incarcerated, it's a term they use "paying a debt to society," yet when they come out of prison they can't get a job. They're in the same status they was before. If they was a criminal before, how are they not going to be a criminal now if you don't give them the off to have a job? Nobody will hire them, and one of the things is that you have to be able to—like Nat James said we need to be [inaudible] and not have to pay the same debt over and over.

But people need to understand. I tell them, we don't have any funds for anything, and I'm saying they've got them there, and write and get some funds from some of the celebrities to get their funding. The same thing I say for this one. People got money to go to Africa and all over the world. This is America. If we have such a great need in America that some people will benefitted from us and they wouldn't be where they are financially if it

wasn't for the people in America and maybe some other parts of the world too, but get money from them. I'm saying ask, even if you don't get it. Why not? I belong to so many memberships of different museums, and so many of their contributors is private people. They're not the government.⁶

Another suggestion was to increase financial resources to community based organizations that provided support (office space, supervision, etc.) to local planners:

We had funding structure? We had money? Well, let's see. We had—that's an interesting one too. I guess if there was something else that ACT had given, they could have given more money for everything we did for ACT. I can't think of any funding structure. Maybe it was the lack of a funding structure for the Collaborative. Each Collaborative was assigned a local planner. A community agency served as a host agency. In this case, we were host agency, I guess from 1998 to 2005. Sound about right?

Or '04. And as such, we provided space, resources, support, not a computer—you brought your own computer—to the ACT planner, provided supervision and leadership, provided money for snacks and then got repaid whenever—I don't know—a month or two later. What else? When other local agencies hosted the meetings, although that was a city agency, so that's okay. That's what comes to mind.¹¹

Another suggestion was more training of community residents. This is how ACT will ensure sustainability:

The difference. That's difficult for me to answer, because I never really saw ACT—I saw ACT as being able to pull groups together. I think about with [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co chair] writing proposals together and things like that, that ACT kind of had a handling being able to try to make things happen. No question. [The Bushwick IMPACT Director] and the staff that's here now, it's not that they're having a big impact on the Bushwick community, but in the work that they're doing, it appears that they're doing not just fantastic work, but they're doing work that's impacting the community,

because as they're working with the residents and developing the residents, they in turn, then, are feeding out. And that's what I always look on as something of great value. So, I like what I see, as a person who is always looking to see our community be a better place.¹

Another suggestion was to provide more training on NYC's municipal services systems and how to navigate them:

We did a training with Family Justice about case management and another about benefits screening in other organization. We should get more trainings about city agencies.¹³

Another suggestion was to increase staff dedicated to community building:

Well, I certainly feel like they have embodied most of the subsets of those principles. I guess one where I don't think we ever did quite as well as we could have, but maybe that's where Bushwick IMPACT comes in, has been the ability to really pull in community residents, but I think that requires more resources and the ability to really do—sort of hit the ground running and be out there in the community and do little bits of work. For example, if there were a worker doing that level of organizing, that they're out there at a daycare center on a regular basis and at a school on a regular basis and start with small numbers of parents that eventually could grow into a larger number of parents. But I don't think there were the resources to do that, and I think the limitation that most providers experienced is that whatever funding we get, we get to do particular things, and anything outside of that is not supported by program funding.

So, if you got prevention funding, for example, you had to see X number of parents X number of times, and there were very specific lines, and there was very little room to do that kind of groundwork. So, but I think, other than that, I think that ACT embodied what you described.¹¹

Other suggestions included hiring more Bushwick parents for Bushwick IMPACT and retaining those who were hired:

I'm saying if you are good enough to open it up and we gave the training, it was supposed to be parents helping parents, a place where parents could go to get information from another parents and help them, and then you bring people with high degrees and whatever that put them in there that do not have the affinity of connection with—it's just like going to any other office. The main idea of IMPACT was to set up a center where parents would feel comfortable going in to talk to another parent and get what they need.⁶

I just believe that, in the beginning, they weren't listening for a lot of us who were saying that certain people didn't belong here. I'm not saying that the people that came on didn't do good, because at certain points they did, but at other points they made stuff a lot worse and a lot rougher. For what? Other staff members that were here that are no longer here, I feel like positions could've been made for them so that they could've stood on board.³

Another suggestion was to improve on follow up:

Okay, from my understanding, ACT is an organization that reaches out into the community and basically what happened for me, ACT put together a workshop that's ongoing for weeks and met and it was very informative. It gave us a lot of tips, knowledge, and information on what we could do to help my preschool here, gave us pointers, you know. And the workshop was just a great workshop. Now, the follow-up afterwards, and I even said it at the end, in order—they even had a workshop here with our parents, which was good. That was one of the things that we had to do, we went back. So now my thing is, and I said to them, I said the only problem I have in situations and workshops and people getting together is all great, but it's the follow-up. And that's what happened.

No follow-up. There was no follow-up. So it's very important, even if everybody don't show, for you to, you got to be able to pull some people together and brainstorm-what

can we do? What's our goal next? They want, see, to me, ACT was supposed to do that in order to keep-because we get caught up, we're caught up, because we got a job to do here. And with everyday life. So therefore, you need somebody to keep tapping those organizations that you involved in that workshop, to find out what else can we do? Come up with another idea. We were able to come up with that idea what to do and it was pretty productive. But there was no follow-up afterwards.¹⁴

Another suggestion was to conduct an evaluation of the Collaborative's goals and whether its process led to the goals:

Well, maybe next time before they end it, they could actually ask the people, the people who participated, what was the—I don't recall that being done. Maybe it was done at some meeting I wasn't at, but to really actually ask what was valuable, what wasn't valuable. I guess, again, because I came in later in the picture, whether or not you did—did ACT achieve what it wanted to achieve? I don't know that in Bushwick during the years that it functioned. If connecting community groups to one another and strengthening that network, I'd say it did that, but I don't know what else it set out to do. Because, again, we came in, we sort of wanted to get to know people and figure out who's who. But I don't know if there was a report written about ACT. I don't really know. I don't think I got a copy of anything like that. I think I might have read it. I think I would've been interested in it.¹²

I believe there were at least a couple of evaluations. Regretfully, I can't say I paid a lot of attention to them, probably because I didn't have the time, and probably because I was not so much into evaluation now. I guess now, if I were looking at evaluation, I would want to figure out what is some of the data that we need to be collection to better understand this process? What would tell us this process is working? But I honestly didn't pay a lot of attention to the evaluation.¹¹

Another suggestion was to evaluate Bushwick IMPACT by assessing their leadership development and literacy improvements:

I think for knowing that the—when I talked before about a measurable difference. It doesn't matter where it is. I think, when any type of evaluation's being done, it should be based on that: Where did you start and where are you now? Do you have any results? Do you have any numbers, any of those things? They have great results in the impact, and that's why I think when it comes down to evaluating, that's what it should be based on. What have you done? What is it you're the weakest at to see the difference that was made in your parents and the people that come in your lives? That's what they're doing. This is what they are basically do. They are more successful at what they're doing than most of the bigger programs around here.

Again, the parents, I think—the people have faith in them and believe they will walk them through and help them to get to where they need to get, and you base it on how successful are you at doing what you do, and you're very successful at doing what you do, IMPACT. I think that should be included in a part of the evaluation system when it's done and when people start to evaluate what IMPACT is doing and whatever. That's what you go on. They work, and the parents believe in them. The place is full; they have the children that's being taken care of and parents are comfortable to come, and this is what you need because those same people—and I go back to Beatrice again who she is like a very special person for me—they come in bewildered and scared and timid. You see them evolve. They was people who would not even say anything in a meeting, and I attend the meetings. And I go there two or three meetings later, and this person's all over the place.

And this is somebody who would not get involved before. They offer anything they need them to do, whatever, and it's important that it happens. I would love to see something happen where there would be something. They've got DVD programs and ESL all over the place, but they are not affected. We need to have something, a literacy program because GED is fine, ESL is fine. If you can't read, it's not going to do you any good. So, we need to take the cart from before the horse and go back to where we need to be and start with a literacy program in whatever language; but literacy, because people can't

read. They can't understand, comprehensiveness is 99% of what you're going to do. If you're taking any test whatever, you got to know comprehensiveness what you read and obtain it and all this type of thing. And a part of that, again, goes back to being in where someone's teaching you to read or whatever and how to maintain the home and other things and whatever.

And that's not happening because they're putting all these programs in front of people, the GED and ESL. I'm so sick of hearing it, and I'm not saying it's not important if they are ready for that, but you're not, you're not supposed to take it four or five times and no pass, and this is what's happening. Our people, a lot of times, they don't understand. They're not readers, and they don't understand. You have to go to the basics. You can't start at the top and come down. That's what I would love to live to see is them institute something at some point for parents where they could get some basic education as far as literacy and no shame in it and it would help them in so many other ways.⁶

CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

At the time of this study, one major concern was the discontinuation of Eric and Anthea's leadership style and ACT's current leadership's style:

The only thing I might suggest is I wish they could have kept [ACT's former Executive Director] here. I wish he could have stayed. I don't know what he left for, and that's not my business really. I think the people who were there from the early part and what they brought to it, if whoever came behind them could have had the same thing. They should have looked for people like that.⁶

CONCLUSIONS

Most Bushwick stakeholders understood ACT to be a concept that described them as a group invested in improving the quality of life for Bushwick's children and families. They discussed ACT's goals for change in three phases. Bushwick stakeholders believed that ACT promoted the guiding principles of comprehensiveness and community building but fared better on comprehensiveness. They considered their strengths in the areas of governance and technical assistance and their needs in the areas of funding and evaluation. Lastly, Bushwick stakeholders discussed several individual/family, neighborhood, and system changes and attributed many to the direct work of the ACT staff.

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW'S
ROLE AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES IN
TWO COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES,
BROWNSVILLE-EAST NEW YORK AND BUSHWICK

by

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Volume II

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of the Philosophy of Social Welfare, The City University of New York.

2012

Chapter 6: Government, Foundation, and Policy Advocacy Partners

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored Bushwick stakeholders' perspectives on understandings of ACT, their goals for change, their guiding principles, their operational strategies, and their individual/family, neighborhood, and system level changes. An exploration of government, foundation, and policy advocacy stakeholders' perspectives on these areas is the third step in this study.

Although an exhaustive and comprehensive analysis of government, foundation, and policy advocacy stakeholders' perspectives is not the purpose of this study, an examination of selected aspects of these areas will contribute to the grounding of CCEs in human experience, particularly in its variations across different stakeholders. Data describing these areas were gathered through interviews with government, foundation, and policy stakeholders involved with ACT. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings for this group.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF ACT

The foregoing literature states that there is no precise definition of comprehensive community efforts (CCEs) (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002; Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with the respondent arrays of understandings of Agenda for Children Tomorrow.

The literature also attempts to define CCEs by stating that comprehensive encompasses the range of measures and actions used to tackle social problems, and it includes the way these measures and actions are related, the person who undertakes them, and the ways people undertake them. Community refers to the political or administrative community, the community as a social group of belonging, or the community of individual interests within a specific geographical area. Efforts refer to private initiatives, isolated projects, integrated programs supported by

government, or all three simultaneously (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002; Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with most of the understandings below.

General Understandings of ACT

In keeping with the literature's definition of efforts, one respondent described ACT as a public-private effort between government, the private sector, and communities:

So, I think that Agenda for Children Tomorrow is a private-public partnership whereby the government sort of has certain goals around improving the lives of children and families, and private sector and the nonprofit community also wants to partner with that government in terms of developing strategies in communities—with communities to have better outcomes for children and families.¹

Other respondents elaborated on this definition by saying that the intention of this public-private partnership was to employ the action of empowering communities.

ACT, I understand ACT to be the organization that is building community collaboration, community partnership geared towards empowering the community, to be able to deal with a lot of issues and strengthen families, to be able to take care of their problem. Working with, not only the community residents, but the government agencies within the community, state and the city agencies and other stakeholders, including the faith-based to work towards a common proposal for depending on what the need of that particular community is.²

But my understanding of where ACT is now and I think the Agenda for Children Tomorrow may have had somewhat of a different agenda at its very early days, but I believe over the last—or most of the time that ACT has been in existence, it has focused on communities, realizing the importance of communities in the life of families and the connection of those families to their children, certainly, and it has tried to stabilize

communities, to empower communities, to bring the voice of community residents to various planning processes that deal primarily with social services, but not limited to that. I know they've worked in the mental health area and the education area, all here in New York City. New York City, as you know, is made up of 50 very different community districts, and ACT has been involved in many of those community districts, the communities they were involved in initially, and have since moved beyond those initial five communities, I believe, into other communities and looking for opportunities to integrate services into the communities as they empower the communities and increase the voices of the residents. So, that's my understanding of what ACT is about.³

One respondent agreed that the way in which ACT related their measures/actions was via a "bottom-up" approach and said this was different from government's approach, which is more "top-down."

But I was always really impressed with how much it had to—in the view of [ACT's former Executive Director] in particular, it had to come from the community. And I can share an anecdote about that if you want. I worked for the state for many years with [ACT's former Executive Director]. And then, after he left, I stayed. And sometime after he had started ACT, I got a call from a very close friend of mine who also knew [ACT's former Executive Director]. And she was in a very senior position with the state health department in public health. And they were doing all kinds of things that they could think of to increase immunization in communities. And they kept running into problems in the poorest communities in New York, because a lot of people just didn't respond to the outreach of the public health system. And Phyllis had this idea that ACT could be that vehicle, that they had connections in the communities. They weren't a health organization, but they could be a conduit to getting citizens to be—being asked to get their kids immunized. And in particular, immigrants, who were often distrustful of the arms of government and, in particular, illegal immigrants. All the ways we try to screw illegal immigrants in this country, we do want them to get immunized because it doesn't really matter who isn't immunized for the spread of a disease, whether it's the mumps or measles or anything else.

So, Phyllis said to me, “Could you arrange a lunch with [ACT’s former Executive Director] so I can pitch him this idea?” And she had hundreds of thousands of dollars that she was prepared to hand over to community groups. Quite frankly, she didn’t know the community infrastructure, because that was the vision to do this. And Phyllis is a terrific person, but I think she kind of expected, like anybody else, [ACT’s former Executive Director] would take the money and run. And [ACT’s former Executive Director] said, “Well, that’s really an interesting idea. And I really think it would be great if we did it. I’ll go ask the communities if they want to.” And I think Phyllis and I were both stunned. It was, like, no, you don’t understand. I could write you a check today. And it was, like, yeah, but it’s got to be theirs. I don’t tell them what to do. I bring opportunities. And this is a great opportunity; I will bring it. But this is not the way we operate. I don’t tell them that they have to all hire a community liaison to try to get people immunized. I ask them if they want to. I help them and encourage them, but that’s not what we do.

And that was years and years and years ago. But somehow, that always sort of described to me the approach. That it wasn’t this sort of top-down thing where every community had to have a half-time this and a full-time that and a project to do X, Y, and Z, but rather it had to come from them. So, the central part of that might have brought opportunities, might have said this is a great opportunity for you. But if one of the community groups said, no, we’re not going to do that, then they didn’t do it.

At any time, something else was likely to—somebody was likely to come along and say, hey, immunizations, do you want to do that? Which wasn’t part of the original mission, but if it fit with the view of the community in trying to organize itself and bring services to the community, then it was a doable thing, but probably in some places and not others. And I think that always was—that’s sort of the down side of it from its fit with government, which tends to see the need to provide services in a sort of universal way.

So, even going back to my example with the health people, it was frustrating to this official in the public health system that she couldn’t go back and report that they would

have 15 projects in 15 highest need communities. That didn't fit with their—they don't know how to do something in 13 of those 15 communities, because then they're sort of denying this public health benefit in two communities. How can they do that? And so, ACT always had this sort of different approach, which doesn't really fit well with the sorts of—the instruments of government and how the public sector sees it has to do its work.⁴

It was unique insofar as—and also, the other sector that was also there were important funders. So, this Collaborative, the idea was we were really going to have a hearing, a listening, and a practical make changes in assistance so it would better serve communities. The community effort was mind break and it was groundbreaking for children and family services because historically it's always been top-down, whether it's the academia or government that knew what's best for poor people and how they should get their services. For their power and authority to not be challenged, but to be considered one of many stakeholders or one of many participants in beginning to design these services.

That the time it came into—it had preceded the Dinkins administration as a planning effort, to my recollection, but it was during the Dinkins administration that the mayor endorsed the project, assigned it to the first deputy mayor, Deputy Mayor Fife at the time, who in turn assigned it to Donna Lawrence, who was the director of the newly formed mayor's office for children and family services. [ACT's former Executive Director] came in and set up offices with us, and together we were able to bring together from our end in the city, the appropriate commissioners that needed to participate in the process: Barbara Sable, **Eddy Chare**, Gladys Carrión over at CDA at the time.⁵

In keeping with the literature's definition of CCEs, another perspective was slightly more community-centered; it said that ACT is an initiative of local communities geared toward developing their capacities to partner with public services.

So, in general, at that time our sense of ACT was that it was an initiative of the local communities, supported to their best capacity by ACS in order to help those communities develop the capacity to partner with public services in general, especially with child welfare.⁶

Well, always from a little bit of a distance, but my sense of it has always been that it was about trying to organize in communities in a way that the city government could relate to and allow those local collaborations that were born to have a stronger access point with the city and therefore with the resources of the city than they might have if it was just a group of neighbors that somehow came together and started doing this work. And so, that provided some resources for that, some overall sort of structure in a fairly unstructured way I always thought.⁴

My understanding, it's private-public organization that is focused on community organizing and New York City with a specific focus on child welfare and how can we build communities' capacity around child welfare so that they can support the child welfare system and better support themselves. So, ACT's role is building capacity, and I remember [ACT's former Executive Director] always said that he believe ACT is [inaudible]. They connect different elements of each other—they connect people to people and resources to people so, again, you uplift from within a community.⁷

Another perspective said ACT helps local organizations build their capacities:

My basic understanding is they help community organizations who are working on child welfare issues. They help these organizations on developing their individual goals for themselves.... They help with technical assistance... help with building skill sets on community planning, strategic planning, moving strategic plan to live.... They are great at facilitating.... They move the abstract to concepts to the practical.⁸

Other understandings said ACT is an organization dedicated to the measures/actions of integrating services and increasing needed services.

ACT is an organization that is working to look at how services are delivered for children and families in NYC and pursue efforts to integrate services.⁹

Okay. In a nutshell, it's a public-private partnership between ACS—and [ACT's former Executive Director] was really the founder, and the intent of ACT is to improve service delivery in child welfare services by promoting coordination between agencies at a neighborhood-based level. And also, it functions kind of as a public policy think-tank and tries to promote neighborhood-based services as a service approach in general.¹⁰

ACT came about as the entity to do that, to move the work, and to move works specific to the needs of children and families and a neighborhood focus. Some of the earlier efforts then was to begin to look at what structures existed in neighborhoods to support that kind of effort toward improving service delivery for children and families and beginning to zero in on those neighborhoods that needed to be priority areas for that work, given both the prevalence of issues in those communities, but also utilization of services, the kinds of human services or children and family-related services. So, ACT was created to be the engine for moving the aid community, planning community development agenda.¹¹

It is an effort to bring together public and private stakeholders together to help plan better and more effective children and family services in communities and particularly in communities that receive the services and that predominantly in this city have historically not had the opportunity to have input in planning. Well, as I recall, especially speaking about Bushwick because I subsequently went to work, after leaving city government, went to [a Bushwick child welfare organization] – [another respondent] and I both did—and one of our sites was in Bushwick, so I was able to see some of the Bushwick work continuing under the ACT committee in Bushwick.

One of the notions was, in terms of community planning, was—a part of the premise was that services are distributed to the city unequally and they're disparate for a variety of reasons, whether it's because a city agency determines these are the kinds of programs

they need here or some communities—and I’ll say for childcare services, where limited programs are distributed throughout the city, and not always are they assigned to communities that need them the most or they’re disproportionately distributed.

What was important to ACT, as I said from the beginning, was we wanted to give communities an opportunity to look at what were the services that they had in the community, how were they distributed in their own neighborhood, where were the gaps, how were the services being delivered, were there agencies, programs that were not delivering the programs appropriately or effectively? Should they be redistributed in that neighborhood in a different way? What are the—we might have daycare programs for three- to five-year-olds, but we don’t have enough infant programs. So, being able to look at what exists in a community, how effective are they, and what can we recommend to do different. Because you had either the commission themselves or the representatives sitting at the table with those communities to help to listen to them, to go back and look at themselves and be able to take the changes to the people that had the authority to see it with their own eyes.⁵

Another understanding described ACT as a “think tank”—as the holder of solutions:

ACT is really a think tank... it is like trying to be a scientist to find a cure for something... they are the ones who have discovered cures in past.... so I go to them to bounce ideas off of them.⁸

Another understanding described ACT as a process and a set of parameters that ensures that all have equal power and say:

ACT is also good for institutional memory thing—if community wants to respond to an issue—ACT could give us history on issue—and help community be prepared for conversation—ACT has a real good understanding of all child welfare issues—can help community gain an even better understanding—helps community show to a meeting more prepared/with a strategy—very few people/organizations can do this.⁸

Well, one of the best things about it is that it's one of those things that everybody scratches their head and tries to figure out what it is. And because it's a process and it's a set of parameters that kind of contain the bounds of certain kinds of activities and promotes them, it's hard to define, because different specific things happen in those bounds that are going to be very different from one another.

For me, it was—it was and continues to be an idea that is based on a form of collaboration that always felt very real to me. Maybe because of my mental health background, maybe because of my interest in psychoanalysis and my practice of it that what we do together is collaborative in the sense that everybody's starting on the same page basically without any preordained power or authority in the situation.

And that I found highly unusual for a group of people to come together in that way—and I'm thinking now particularly of my original experience with [another former ACT Collaborative] that [a former co-chair] was running at that time. And the way they did it really was by a set of rules, which I can't articulate quite what the specifics were, but they were a set of policies, rules, guidelines and governance that ensured that every person at the meeting had an equal say. They ensured that there were no side deals being either brokered or brought to the table. That it created a form and an atmosphere where, when someone came with a preorganized, predetermined agenda that really wasn't open, it became so apparent and clear even to the person as they spoke—hopefully to people as they spoke—that it kind of got deconstructed in the process. And that was a difficult process for, particularly I think, people working in state, local, governmental kinds of positions to do, because they're so trained that this is not you, this is what you are when you're there and these are the rules of behavior that govern what you do there. And the rules of behavior that we had within the collaborative really suggested otherwise for people.

So, there were a few—I don't recall what I thought was more key than the other, but for example, when an RFP came out and people began to want to have the collaborative

down as a letter of support, because they were going for the RFP, if there was any competitive applications—meaning, simply, two or three agencies going for the same RFP, wanting ACT’s letter of support, but they weren’t working together, the letters **[weren’t going to be 4:19]** given to any of them. So, I think there were a few things that kept it real true to the spirit of it. And I also think that what I recall from the quarterly, the citywide meetings back then....¹²

Shifts in understandings of ACT were also raised. One respondent reported that it is hard to know what ACT has become:

So, I have questions about the group and about—and coming back in, I’m just trying to, what is it now? I know what it had been, because congratulations, you knew what it used to be. But trying to understand what it is now, what it’s evolving to. I’m not even sure what it’s evolved into since I left.¹²

This respondent also said ACT is difficult to describe because it is contextual:

....it can’t be defined because it’s contextual.¹²

Respondents also shared some observations of ACT’s existence in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick.

Understandings of ACT’s Presence in Brownsville-East New York

Respondents reported that during ACT’s involvement with the Brownsville-East New York Service Planning Areas (SPAs),^{lxxxv} there were several groups of non-traditional/non-child welfare organizations who invested and are a part of it.

I think my interaction with East New York—I don’t remember the early days, but I remember when we started to develop our SPAs, our Service Planning Areas, I remember

East New York was one of the communities that had really out of the box, like 50 community-based organizations that really wanted to be involved in child welfare. It was organizations like the library or a local business organization, and that idea of nontraditional people in that community wanting to see what they could do around child safety. I remember there was a senior citizen home that was involved. So, I remember that being a place where there were interesting people around the table, not just the traditional child welfare agencies. Of course, I guess that was sort of the ACT tradition, but I'm trying to think—I don't know, was East New York one of the original ACT communities? I'm not sure about that, and I can't remember whether—so, when I think about....¹

Respondents reported that the East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network^{lxxxvi} employed the measure/action of conducting a needs assessment, and based on their findings, developed committees to tackle these social problems:

East New York, I don't think I remember specific goals that East New York had other than—if I thought about it a little bit more I can remember. I remember—and I don't remember what the names were—but very early on, they set up about four or five committees, and it was focused on whatever those four or five different areas they wanted to work on. And actually, I do think one might have been adolescence, because I remember the young man that was heading that one actually got killed in a car accident.

Mark, right? So, there were committees, and there were focuses. I don't recall right now what their goals were, but I remember being impressed early on that they sort of structured themselves in a way they were talked about. They probably did the—I don't know if they did matching needs and services, but they did some type of needs assessment to try to figure out what they wanted to focus on and then had probably four or five committees to focus on that work.¹

Respondents reported that ACT was integrated into Bushwick's Neighborhood Based Initiative (NBI).^{lxxxvii} Upon the discontinuation of NBI, ACT continued to exist:

Bushwick was also a community that had a neighborhood NBA—an NBI, a Neighborhood Based Initiative or whatever the acronym is, the governor's or state's planning effort. So, I think we worked well with that Collaborative between ACT and NBA together. I think it had some of the same participants. Then ACT continued after the NBA ended.⁵

As with previous understandings of ACT, these understandings of ACT are most consistent with the first and third levels of social capital: bonding social capital within communities and creating synergy between communities and public institutions (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, these observations are most consistent with Smock's community building model.

As with Brownsville-East New York's understandings of ACT, these understandings also note the participation of non-traditional leaders in Brownsville-East New York's comprehensive community initiative. As previously discussed, this may be attributable to Brownsville-East New York's smaller service network. While previous reports account for their lack of understanding regarding ACT, these report a shift in their understanding from that of a social capital organization to one that is unclear. This shift coincided with the shift in leadership, from Eric Brettschneider to Linda Selvin; therefore, a possible explanation for this shift in ACT as a social capital organization to one that was unclear.

GOALS FOR CHANGE

The literature states that CCEs pursue three objectives: substantial change in distressed communities and a sustainable development and improvement process in order to improve conditions and opportunities for individuals and families residing in these communities; change

in the nature of relationships between communities and external service providers; and local change by drawing upon both local and external resources and knowledge. Simply put, CCEs seek change on the individual and family level, community level, and systemic level (American Writing Corporation, 1992; Barchechat, 2003; Barss and Associates, 1969; Brettschneider, 2001; Chaskin et al., 2001; Connell et al., 1995; Fishman, 1993; Milligan et al., 1996; and Stone, 1996). Remnants of these goals are evident in the respondent reports below.

Individual/family, community, and system change goals were identified as (1) improving the lives of children and families in communities by supporting the projects that communities wanted to focus on, (2) to break through some of the “old establishment” approaches, and (3) to integrate services, listen to communities, empower communities, and train communities.

So, I think at the very basic, the goals of ACT are to improve the lives of children and families in communities and to focus on projects that the community says they want to focus on. So, sort of driven—that the problems are articulated by the community, and then they help the community—they facilitate a strategy that the community would want to put together in order to solve those problems.¹

Our goals were to break through some of the old establishment approaches... to think about new ways—weren't so new—we all knew what we were supposed to be doing. Community organizations and folks to create change.¹³

I think, over time, the focus on children's services, the focus on families, the focus on communities, the focus on trying to bring, not only the narrow definition of child welfare, but also other services to the communities and other services that were present in the communities, to bring them together in an integrated fashion, in addition to listening to the communities, empowering, training the communities.³

These goals are consistent with the goals of social capital building (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000): to eradicate social, political, and economic inequalities. They are

also consistent with Stiglitz's recommendation to build political and economic capital by holding public institutions accountable.

Aspects of these reports on goals for change are synonymous with ACT's mission. However, these reports view ACT as an organization that went beyond its stated mission. Government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners viewed ACT as an organization that shifted "old establishment approaches" to ones that were more consistent with Smock's community organizing approaches. Specifically, ACT's approach developed local leaders and organized for broader social structural change.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING ACT

There are two principles that guide comprehensive community efforts: comprehensiveness and community building. (Himmelman, 1992; Kubisch et al., 1997; Mattessich et al., 1992; Rosewater, 1992; and Stone, 1996). All respondents agreed with this notion, and most agreed with their definitions:

Comprehensiveness: The full range of circumstances, opportunities, and needs of individuals and families living in CCE communities and the relationships among them.

Community building: Strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive community change.

The literature states that CCEs give attention to comprehensiveness and community building activities, in principle and/or action, and strive to achieve synergy among them.

Respondents believed that the promotion of comprehensiveness and community building led ACT to their goals; others believed that the lack thereof prevented goal attainment.

Comprehensiveness

One respondent said that ACT promoted comprehensiveness by listening to communities' perspectives on their needs and identifying a common agenda:

I think one of the things that stands out was when we was trying to build coalitions in the community, the first thing ACT did was to identify the strength in the community because all communities have strength. It's the same as individuals, and as bad as that person is, they've got a strength. One of those strengths is identifying the already existing coalition in that community, which using that as a jump-start, you respect what people are doing, trying to take care of themselves. Then you partner with them and come in and have a dialogue and listen to what they already have on their agenda. Bring in what your agenda is and finding a common ground how you can mesh it together. I think that was the key of trying to—that we use that kind of help us to get the community buy-in.

Also, when we begin to think about services that we did it jointly with the community, with the people who use the services, hearing from them what they think is the correct way, the services they need to kind of alleviate what their needs are. So, listening to those service users to educate us in terms of what they need. I think that stuff worked out pretty well.²

Another said ACT achieved comprehensiveness by bringing local leaders together to plan for integrated and effective programming:

I think the fact that they brought together on a local level those community service providers to come to—often in communities, there's not necessarily a healthy forum to have those discussions. There might be community planning board meetings. They might have all the services come there, but they don't come together in this area to plan effective programming or to identify you are working with this family in their youth program, but we're also working with a parent in this GED program, and we're working

with the younger children in the daycare program. What are we doing with the whole family as a whole? How can we ensure we're not competing? We're sharing strategies to the extent confidentiality, of course, allows, but we're working to help strengthen families and help to address what are the common issues and common concerns.⁵

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by looking beyond narrow, categorically-based child welfare approaches:

The word silo comes to mind, where there wasn't that recognition that we're basically in this together, that the Department of Ed, that health and mental health and DYCD, Department of Youth and Community Services and ACS, as the tired phrase—sentence goes, we all have the same families—HRA—we all have the same families, and we're dealing in different ways with those families, and why can't we recognize that and work together? That's really part of this long, historical process that thinkers of the system have recognized that communities are important, communities should play a part, that government should reflect and think more about communities and funding communities and providing resources and services to communities in a way that does not increase the bureaucratic process but sort of eliminates that and works together in some way. But ACT has been very involved recently in trying to eliminate some of those very significant barriers that exist.³

I think they've succeeded in promoting it [i.e., comprehensiveness] by kind of looking beyond narrow, categorically-based child welfare and trying to bring different players in a community into play in planning for children and families, the schools, the hospitals. They've looked beyond just the ACS contractors in terms of whom they try to bring to the table. Because it gives you a chance to hear familiar perspectives, to bled perspectives, to bring a wider range of resources to bear on community problems.¹⁰

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by holding quarterly, oversight meetings, open to all collaboratives and citywide partners/leaders:

The whole idea about bringing the front entities together on a quarterly basis.⁷

Another respondent believed ACT's promotion of comprehensiveness led to significant outcomes in Bushwick:

When one talks about comprehensive, one really means relating to the health, education, recreation, and other aspects of a community... not sure we are anywhere near thinking that through... ACT was in Bushwick—you would know better than I... Bushwick came a long way but when one thinks about how the health and education systems work together along with some of the income related/employment areas, we are far from where we need to be.¹³

So, I think that isolation factor, you know, in a very real sense, permeated a lot of their [i.e., government] thinking, and the systemic approach to it I think was reflected in the work they [i.e., ACT] try to do with government, where you don't just look upon it as child welfare services, but obviously, the connection to the economy, the connections to schools, the connections to so many other things influence and impact the provision of child welfare services, children and family services. And I think ACT had that approach and incorporated that comprehensive definition into their work.³

Another respondent said ACT made a modest impact on promoting comprehensiveness:

I think to a modest degree, it has... when we look at the various ACT areas, one sees interesting changes occurring but again without public policy approaches that really respond to the need for comprehensiveness, very hard to achieve... I give ACT huge credit for having done a lot but we are very afar from where we should be.¹³

Community Building

Community building was defined as a geographically bound area and what occurs when people who reside in this area have a common purpose that guides their activities and are supported by entities like ACT:

What happens when people who otherwise don't know each other living in a particular area have a purpose or construction that pulls them together and gives them common things to do. Communities build naturally out of that. You don't go and build comm—it's like what... what's a community? It's something that's already built. It's there, it's organic, it's something that happens as the outcome of people—who knows? People are there. And community comes out of that, so it comes out of human relationships, human needs, and everything else that springs out of that.

So, community's an idea. And it's ephemeral, it's not tangible. But it's there as an idea. And it is something that is commune, it's in common. And that comes out of people being close to each other geographically, meeting each other in some way, or working together. So, to me, when you provide a place and ideas that get people in a local area working together, you're supporting the community that's already been built.

And there are people who live in that locale every day, many of whom go to another locale to be a provider, a worker, whatever. So, ACT provides a forum whereby people providing services of whatever form in an area, whether they live there or not, can meet with people who live in that area whether they provide services or not. And that is a good idea that helps support a whole community. Because it's not just people who live in a community that's the community. And it's certainly not the people who come to work in there that's the community. It's not owned by anybody, no one's got a more central, it's an organic dynamic. So that ACT supports those—kind of like recognizes and supports it as something that you support and your value is that people are basically, when it's all over, inclined toward light or goodness that they—whatever.

Then you know something's... it's so vulnerable, you get trashed by the kinds of thoughts that go into, "What have you done? Show me!" You know? And it's value-laden

with a trust and faith about people. And what will happen if you—that positive will come out of providing a supportive thing for people, but people are terribly destructive, but in the end they try to be positive. So, to me, that’s what community [building] means.¹²

I think, what you said is part of the definition, but for me sounds too much like community members as kind of passive recipients of benefits that come from somewhere outside of the community. I think, for me community building is more joining with natural leaders in the community, joining with people who are already leaders, not presuming to teach them leadership skills, but listening to them and helping them access resources.¹⁰

One respondent believed ACT made a positive contribution in the area of community building:

In that area [i.e., community building], ACT has done a great job! In bringing people forward, often has depended on staff in a particular neighborhood/collaborative, there’s been a huge amount of building by ACT and staff gets a lot of credit for this... Washington Heights did a lot to build fiscal capacity... did a lot of other things... I think each of the collaboratives contributed to the extent that public policy allows.¹³

Another respondent said that ACT promoted community building by building trustworthy relationships with community leaders and sharing the risk of working toward outcomes:

In our field, we always talk about relationships, build trust, and it’s without that external effort to build a relationship there isn’t going to be any trust, and without that trust, you cannot work hand in hand. You can’t stand up and share—you have to share the risk to share in the outcomes. So, I think ACT has played a role in you have to stand side-by-side and share in that risk if you want to get to a certain point, that you have to stand up together and build that relationship. So, ACT has done that over the years.⁷

Another respondent said ACT promoted community building by enhancing local technology:

I know, the notion was we were going to be able to bring new technologies to communities to be able to demonstrate community-based organizations so they'd be ready to be able to look at them and include them in how they were delivering services, whether it was with a uniform application process or looking at more effective tracking, more programs, more whatever, youth services for them to be able to better track their numbers or—I think that was the notion that this would help in terms of community building. I mean, this is the feature of community building, giving whatever the newest technology, technological programs were available for communities to use.⁵

Respondents believed there were shifts in the goals and guiding principles, depending on what phase of ACT's existence and who was in leadership. The following shifts were discussed:

With [ACT's former Executive Director]... got involved in early 70s. was heading the child welfare agency... [ACT's former Executive Director] was a staffer—out of Queens Borough Prevention... can't remember name of org... but [ACT's former Executive Director] wrote a letter to me saying that he was concerned that most of the board members and senior staff at his agency were White... and most of the staff and kids were Black or Hispanic... I thought, "This is an important letter." I called him in and we started on a little collaboration to try to change board membership and the staffing patterns... was start... may not seem relevant but was very important to me... over years, we worked together... he came on as a staffer when I was Commissioner in NYS... had a lot to do with neighborhood emphasis... wasn't until later, when Dinkins was there, that [ACT's former Executive Director] conceived the idea that we should be looking at how to create neighborhood-based services—Dinkins staff supported... we identified neighborhoods/regions that were most at risk.... We moved Agenda for Children Tomorrow agenda with help of NYCT forward.... Letter was very imp because nobody was talking about division between Blacks and Whites.¹³

ACT started in 1990/91—started as a joint initiative with NYC—was a public/private partnership—lots of support from NYCT/UW—under David Dinkins—I haven't been involved in last 10 years... broad based initiative—lots of support from communities—

lots of support from city stakeholders... can't point to any outcomes... lots of work was around bringing together public/private partners.⁹

Staffing... [ACT's former Executive Director] was the first person hired... then [ACT's Director of Community Planning, under a different title then, whose responsibility was to liaison between ACT and the Mayor's Office]... assigned to work on ACT—funded by Mayor's Office... Then [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] came on... ACT was housed in Mayor's Office... This made it easier to collaborate/this allowed for a mechanism to access the community.... [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] was hired through private dollars... I didn't know what she was brought on to do... [ACT's former Policy Analyst's] role was to be liaison to ACT... A new administration moved ACT to ACS... My office was dismantled when Giuliani came in.⁹

My whole experience was ACT Central in relation to the **[whole]** collaboratives. Now, from my view, certainly Mott Haven's gone. I don't know if Jamaica is, or Bushwick is—everything's morphed, either disappeared or morphed into something else.

And none of those things feel like—but I don't have a good feel. But they don't feel like, “Oh, yeah, it's the same thing.” It's gone. And some things you can step in 10, 15 years later and things, new faces and it can be energizing, it doesn't have to be a **[dead shell]**. But that's—“Oh, yeah, this is why I liked it so much.” It's gone. But I don't know what—I'm not inside anything that's there to know what it feels like. So I just don't know. ACT Central got defined as the what it was by the creation of the collaboratives and their needs. Now to me, it's mishy-mashy and part of that's me, I'm just not in touch with it as much as I used to be.¹²

One respondent believed that ACT's strength was not community building:

That's not something I would consider an area of strength for ACT. I think by definition, ACT kind of—they kind of like to be thought of as the experts in community building, and I think it sometimes overlooks the expertise that already exists in our communities.¹⁰

In general, these reports believed that ACT promoted comprehensiveness via a “bottom up approach,” one that connected local communities with government leaders. This is consistent with the third level of social capital building, commonly referred to as creating synergy between communities and public institutions (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001). Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick’s reports on ACT’s promotion of comprehensiveness were more aligned with building their respective communities from within, i.e., bonding social capital within communities (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

There are two general features shared between Brownsville-East New York, Bushwick, and Government/Foundations/ Policy Advocacy Partners’ reports on ACT’s promotion of community building: (1) ACT built leadership among local leaders and (2) ACT believed that local leaders had the expertise and capacity to identify and address inequalities.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ACT

Governance

Respondents reported that ACT’s strength was in governance planning:

Planning is important—we never give enough attention to planning—we jump to getting work done—ACT instrumental in planning of governance and everything, really....⁸

I think that’s [i.e., promoting governance to increase community participation] a major strength of ACT. Not sure exactly how they do it, but I think they do it pretty well.¹⁰

Several respondents reported that ACT assisted with setting up governance, including staffing governance, for government systems and neighborhood networks:

In Brownsville-East New York was not a preexisting network, so we, at ACS, started our own child welfare network in Brownsville-East New York, and at some point, just based on that private-public agreement, funds—there were funds to hire a network liaison in various communities, Bushwick and Brownsville-East New York. Brownsville-East New York being two districts in Brooklyn. They were merged together to form one network, and at that time, a network liaison was hired for both Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. So, at that point, ACT played a role in the interviews. Let me add to that that with the agreement, the liaison would have been supervised administratively by ACT, and they would be supervised programmatically by the various networks. So, again, ACT was involved in helping us here at ACS build capacity. Forgot all about—brings back memories.

And part of the recruiting efforts. They have the recruiting efforts, part of interviews and to hire each liaison we had a couple of interviews and then the final interview the network representatives or the network executive board were part of the interview, and then ACT was part of the final interview to hire the specific liaison for Bushwick and Brownsville-East New York.⁷

I think ACT played a bigger role in helping us to set governance, and I think the key success was in terms of shared responsibilities. When you're working in the community, then you understand the community has to be part of the governance structure. So, that's something that government agencies, we're not kind of used to, sharing that. And when you're sharing it with the community, at the same time, you're putting responsibilities in their hand at the same time. So, if they are on the table, share responsi—share governance at the same time they are holding accountable of what is the outcome of that governance party. So, I think that's the role that they played, and I think it worked out very well, and another thing also in terms of governance, they had kind of helped us to come up with the attempts—the objectives.²

Well, with staffing, ACT when we was thinking about having the CPI liaison, ACT was instrumental and it help us to draw the job description that would be reflective of what

the goals and objective is about, to make sure we have something to identify the best candidate. Also, ACT was a part of when we did the [inaudible] of view they were a part of it, and ACT was also a part of it, and we developed a governance structure in terms of who reports to what. That's another key part in terms of the way the Competent Partnership is set up because the Coalition is not an entity, is not an organization, is not a registered corporation.

So, the Community Partnership still requires a contractor, a fiscal conduit who will be handling the money part of it. So, the CPI liaison, so there is a structure where the liaison is going to be reporting to the fiscal conduit in terms of their administrative part in what is going on, the time on leave issues, and that person with the technical ear on the idea of the fiscal agents because CPI is not a lead agent. Whoever is the fiscal agent is not a lead agent. So, the Coalition makes decision in terms of the program piece. So, the staffing becomes tricky in terms of who has the overall decision making. So, ACT was instrumental in kind of helping to set it up.²

As we have in the past few years begun to develop the Community Partnership Initiative, we have worked closely with a number of ACT programs and staff and they have taken part in the work of various Community Partnerships and have helped to staff each of them as they got going or as they pulled together a joint proposal to us.⁶

I'll go back and they absolutely helped in terms of governance and helping us set up a form of governance. Helped supply people to come and do [trees] missions, that kind of thing, do the work.¹²

According to the literature, governance concerns the creation of mechanisms to guide planning, decision making, and implementation, as well as to locate accountability and responsibility for actions undertaken (Blank et al., no date; Kingsley, 1996). This is reflected in two respondent's accounts. They said that ACT promoted consensus-based decision making, which decreased competition between organizations:

I just think there's a lot of competition that exists among neighborhood-based organizations, for the reasons we talked about, because they're competing for limited resources. So, this idea of having people see what they have in common and how working together can sort of help them or who is better suited to do what I think is very difficult. So, even—and I probably talk about communities in a more romantic way, “We're all together, and we're all on the same page, and we're all against the man,” there's a lot of in-fighting that goes on, a lot of people who are not on the same page.

So, being able to get sort of like-minded people agreeing on their values and figuring out who is best suited to do what and why collaboration among those agencies is very important is another big piece of the community building, and I think ACT spends a lot of time because they tried—the word consensus is insane. To introduce that into a community and to say, “No, we're going to try to make this work through consensus,” is probably one of the most radical concepts they have, but I think that's something that was very—at this venture that they certainly introduced that concept to this work in a way I haven't heard a lot of other people. You know, I don't even say I'm making decisions by consensus with communities because it's a hard, high standard to keep to.¹

They've served as kind of a neutral convener, which was important. Because groups like this can be very contentious and very conflictual, and it helps to have sort of a disinterested third party involved as a mediator and as a facilitator.¹⁰

Funding

According to the literature, CCEs are funded by private foundations, which are meant to be flexible and responsive to the priorities established by the local governance structure (Hayes, 1995). This was not reflected in the respondent accounts.

One respondent said that ACT made modest accomplishments with very little money:

Your report should point out what modest accomplishments have been made with very little money.¹³

Another said ACT was responsive to others' funding needs:

[ACT's former Executive Director] always said when one door closes, there is another door that is open, so just to continue doing what they do best looking for other ways, other ways to kind of get funding to help us and to move the agenda. They have been very responsive, and they know what to do I think.²

Technical Assistance

According to the literature, technical assistance may be provided by a funder or it may be sought by the CCE governance entity and other participants (Brown et. al, 1993; Chaskin et al., 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997). Respondents had a slightly different perspective on this. Respondents said ACT provided the model for community partnerships and neighborhood-based services; and they provided technical assistance on these areas:

Sure. At first, Bushwick, we had a partnership with a group called the Bushwick Managed Care Initiative, and there was not direct affiliation with ACT through that, but ACT was kind of a resource as we tried to build that partnership and [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] were people I could always consult about some of the issues we were having and also I could turn to a resource that we needed, like moderators for our public forums or any number of things.¹⁰

Historically, I think we have moved from the—and this is just ACS's perspective—we have moved from more general partnerships that had a clear leadership devolution to the communities who then worked together on various efforts driven by what they felt was most important. But organized in such a way that Community Partnerships existed and there were very clear mechanisms by which they were formed. And there was a citywide

centrality to [unintelligible] staff [unintelligible]. To the point where we are now in which the Community Partnership Initiative I think was heavily modeled on ACT's experience, but had a couple of very different aspects to them.⁶

We wanted our agencies to be exposed to what would a good CPI look like. What would you do with it? What could they do for you? What would you do for them? And some of them had that experience because they happened to be working in a community that had a CPI currently. Some didn't. Some barely knew what they were. So, what we did is we had ACT organize two or three, I forgot, forums where we invited our members and they invited all their friends. And we tried to do two things at those forums. One was expose some of the community groups who might have been interested in submitting a proposal for preventive services, for example, to what that meant and how they might do that. And maybe even find somebody in the room who currently was working in their community that they might want to partner up with. That didn't really happen, but that was one of the hopes.

And the other was to say and then ACT could bring in its experts and some people from CPIs to explain to everybody what do you really get out of a CPI. And just as an aside quickly, what I was hearing from our agencies was of the current 11, some of them were really good. Some of them were doing business. Interestingly, all of those had a history. They were former ACT—they were ACT sites or former ACT sites. Some of them actually went back to the old state days when the state funded NBI. Some of them had kept the infrastructure after that. On the other hand, some of the ones that were brand new, our agency's experience was that, quite frankly, they were a waste of time. Because as somebody said, the city—ACS organized these and said here's two things we are going to fund your CPI to do: help recruit foster parents, help identify community resources for families in the system.

So, anyway, ACT was our partner in helping explain and getting some leaders of some of the current CPIs to talk about how they worked when they worked well, what you might expect, what you might offer, so that—and from our perspective, this was all about

helping as many—from any perspective, it was helping as many agencies as possible, members or not was not important for this purpose, to develop the strongest possible proposals giving their agency the best possible chance of being successful in the RFP process. And so, that was our most recent work. Actually, we're holding a forum on Monday. We didn't get the re-grant. We didn't get the money back, but....⁴

I think ACT more than anybody else has been primarily responsible for moving ACS in the direction of neighborhood based, and I think that's something that's always going to be to their credit.¹⁰

So, even up to—if I fast-forward quickly to the community partnerships, when we were the first phase—and, well, Bushwick and East New York were not in the first phase, but after the commissioner came out and introduced Community Partnership Initiative to the communities, ACT was involved in providing technical assistance to those communities to have them develop their strategic plan on how to bring in other elements, other stakeholders that were not around the table to form a coalition or enhance the coalition that was already there.⁷

I think clearly, of all the city agencies, that was the most sustaining partner to ACT was clearly ACS, both in terms of informing its policy and practice direction—I mean, the fact that we're not talking about Neighborhood Based Services as a part of the child welfare mix is no accident. So, you have to say that some synergy came out of that relationship that helped inform that direction. The fact that you now have, to some degree, a DYCD talking about neighborhood funding of youth services is no accident.¹¹

Well, since I started working with Children's Services, I have always known that ACT has a lot of roots in the community, that they have been doing community work for a very long time. So, about ten years ago when Children's Services started the Community Partnership Initiative, so we were looking for an organization that has done a lot of work in the community in terms of building partnership. So, we reached out to ACT to kind of

help us be the connecting person, entity between the government and the community, seeing this is what they had been doing before.²

In addition, ACT provided technical assistance to community partners who applied for ACS' funding:

They provide excellent technical assistance to many community partners at—who have been getting ready to apply for the next ACS RFP. So, how should I think about wanting to get into this game, and what am I wanted to do, and who could I be partnering with, and how would I even start to think about that, and how could I make relationships. What did he used to call it, being the electrician and putting people together—the connector. I think the technical assistance around that for folks has been something they're very good at and have done.¹

ACT provided and, when needed, brokered technical assistance to ACS and the Collaboratives:

Initially, benefited from technical assistance provided by ACT... after internship completed, got a job with NBS... responsible for some community in the Bronx through NBS... consulted with [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training]... helped with concrete technical assistance—documenting the work, how to set up goals, how to capture outcomes, professional development, mentorship, understanding my role as a community organizer working out of a bureaucracy, ACS and history (community, partners) intelligence....⁸

Those are some of the things I just mentioned in the last [one]. They were our resource for providing assistance, technical assistance. [But] technical assistance where sometimes they would be the source of the resource, other times they would be how you go about finding it, when you might—I usually came away from a phone call with [ACT's former Executive Director] with some questions with five phone numbers of people to contact, who might be of help in this area.¹²

So, over the years, that's some of the work that we have done. Sometimes, over the years, we have had two or three citywide Neighborhood Based ACS forums, and ACT has always helped us in planning those events, those forums over the years that we had for citywide. And in the initial stage I remember [ACT's former Executive Director] providing technical assistance and training for us in terms of, again—because this was a new frontier for ACS dating back to 2000. Maybe in 1997 it was a new frontier, so [ACT's former Executive Director]....

[The new frontier is] The whole idea that ACS went into this feel of community organizing, taking a stronger look at the community and seeing how the community can support the work of child welfare because I think it was around the time where many child welfare systems were acknowledging that we cannot do the work alone, and these families we are serving in child welfare are not our families only, but they belong to everyone. So, everyone needed to pitch in to support these families, and the community they lived in was the most important resource. It's not something that came to child welfare 30, 40 years ago. That's a recent instance where child welfare has—and especially New York City ACS that had focused more on the community and how the community can help provide child welfare outcomes.⁷

According to one respondent, ACT's technical assistance was invaluable:

For me, in particular, the technical assistance they've given to my staff, who, again, none of us were trained as community builders. We came into government. We came into government to do foster care work, so the idea of what does it mean to sort of lead a meeting from behind or to bring about consensus. We didn't know any of that, so this idea really—sort of the training first and the ongoing coaching and the technical assistance we've needed as we've gone and moved through this work has been invaluable. I think in terms of what ACT has done for us.¹

Staffing

The literature states that most CCEs are undertaken by a core staff person who, as project director or coordinator, facilitates the planning process and takes responsibility for moving the project from planning to action (Kubisch et al., 1997). This was reflected in respondent accounts: ACT provided local planners to communities:

One is adding a sort of community organizer, just putting a body there whose full-time or half-time job is to do this is a big contribution. And I assume, at least where it's worked best, not to be in charge, but to facilitate and coordinate.⁴

Absolutely helped by providing local planners.¹²

Another respondent reported that ACT's staff diversity contributed to the richness of their work:

I think you covered most of the thing, but the ACT organizational structure is one of the things that kind of makes their work unique, and also their diversity in terms of hiring is also another area that makes their work unique to cover. They have diversity of staff that covers most of the ethnicities and the culture and the languages, and I think also that's one of the contributing factors in terms of—very good assets in terms of how things are working.²

Evaluation

One respondent said she was knowledge of Kay Sherwood's evaluation,^{lxxxviii} however; did not recall its specifics:

Kate Sherwood, years ago, I think, did an evaluation of some of the communities around ACT, and that may be the only one I can remember right now.¹

Another respondent said ACT also did the preliminary evaluation of ACS's CPIs; however, he was unable to recall its specifics:

I think they are part of—being ACT is also—we see them as part of the Community Partnership, so they participated, and I think Chapin Hall also spoke with them in terms of because before Chapin Hall^{lxxxix} got in, ACT was the first one that did preliminary evaluation.²

While previous reports provide local experiences of governance, funding, technical assistance, and evaluation employed by ACT, these reports provide more comprehensive views of these strategies employed by ACT. Furthermore, these reports are more reflective of ACT's original intention with respect to these strategies. What contributed to these differences? Possible explanations, at the government/foundation/policy advocacy level, include less transient leadership, more opportunities of interaction with ACT staff—for e.g., meetings, work projects, etc., better communication of ACT's intended purposes by ACT staff, among others.

CHANGES AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY LEVELS

According to the literature, CCEs attempt to foster fundamental transformation of poor communities and to catalyze a process of sustained improvement in the circumstances and opportunities of individuals and families in those communities (Halpern, 1994; Mueller et al., 1996; Rossi et al., 1994). In short, CCEs set out to promote change at three levels: the individual and family level, the neighborhood level, and the system level.

CCEs build capacity and improve the quality of life of individual neighborhood residents and their families. Specifically, they work to increase both the quality and quantity of activities designed to improve educational outcomes, employment, and the health and well-being of neighborhood residents. They also place priority on strengthening the personal, political, or process knowledge and skills that enable people to motivate and lead their peers. This is apparent

in respondent reports on individual changes ACT brought about for partners who, in turn, were able to be more effective at individual/family changes in communities.

ACT assisted one respondent with clarifying her professional vision; she reported that ACT also modeled this:

I think they actually helped me personally figure out what my vision and how to articulate a vision of what it means for communities to partner with government around child welfare. I don't think I had an idea of what the—how large that could be, what that should look like. And I think their work and their modeling that for me really helped me to develop my own personal vision about what I wanted for communities and children of color and disenfranchised communities in a way that nobody else was really talking about at that time.

They helped me to see the solutions for these kids are not going to be within the confines of this very narrow system. It has to come from the place where children come from families, and families live in communities. So, these 18 communities that we can point to had these high numbers of kids coming into care and have these reports, what could we be doing as a community to help that, to slow that down and to demand the services that we need in that community to keep kids out of care? How would I know that? I had no idea. I came into this very wide-eyed and very, "This is great. This is a great system," and all that kind of stuff. And I think you begin to see and understand a lot of things about poverty, about racism, about all these other things that affect what is happening for children and families of color in particular in the city, and I really feel like ACT provided that place where like-minded people can come together specifically at the ACT oversight meeting, but in these different communities to sort of not to keep people isolated and making them feel like, "God, this is just a screwed up community, Bushwick, we're all messed up, and everybody's beating each other, and they're beating the kids and there's all this violence," to start to think about what are those bigger influences that make it so, and how can we do something about that.

I did not have that perspective. I didn't understand it, and I really think that ACT and probably others too, but I can't really think of that many others that were having that kind of conversation at the time.¹

I was a little out of the system; frankly, at the point I became active with ACT and only because of [ACT's former Executive Director]. Helped to clarify my thinking more than anything else and to use a little bit of influence with philanthropic sector and policy makers and program people... This was not something I had ever envisioned... [ACT's former Executive Director] created this.¹³

One respondent said ACT groomed him into being a leader—both theoretically and practically:

I remember, one time we were in training, and the executive director then, [ACT's former Executive Director] was asking us, "Who is your role model?" just trying to kind of help us develop like your inner being, and there are a lot of forced talk about different folks that they would have as their role model. So, by the time we come to the next section, he had assembled all those people we had identified as our role models. We were shocked when we come over there you see your person right there. So, I think that was awesome. That was the greatest thing that has happened to me. Not only they do it in terms of the theory part of it, but also the practical part of it.²

Other respondents said ACT provided leadership development and supported leadership development opportunities for them:

I think giving me feedback. So, when I haven't done something that has been my best leadership self, I think that [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] and [ACT's former Executive Director] and others in ACT have given me feedback as a way to sort of improve. I think, as other leadership opportunities have become available to me, I just finished up the Annie E Casey Foundation 18-month fellowship a while ago, and [ACT's former Executive Director] was—did my recommendation for me. We participated in a 360 assessment—you know what those are. When people have to say what your reach

impact is and how they think about you. He participated in that for me. So, I mean, I think he has seen me grow and has seen where my weaknesses are and my strengths and has actively participated in helping me to become a better leader so I can be more effective to the goals that ACT has on the one hand, but also just because I think he's personally concerned about my leadership development.¹

And apart from ACT, apart from forming community coalitions, we—ACT also has force with leadership development. That is a lot of staff comes and goes, and the staff I have at that time they have some—they needed some kind of training to work in the community. They needed in terms of training to be leadership, not only in terms of ACS, but also in terms of the community. So, they help in terms of building leadership with the staff.²

Another respondent reported that ACT taught them the importance of sharing power with communities and remembering that each community is unique:

To be a good listener and not be judgmental and also to be able to accommodate other people's inputs in terms of what everything you do. Many times we come up with a script in terms of what we're going to achieve and how we want to do it, but working with the community is a whole different game. So, being able to listen and listen to what people have to say, listen to what their input has to be and also making a joint decision with the community. I think that's the greatest thing, and it takes time to work on that. I think that's what I carry along, and also patience. As much as you want to achieve outcome right away, each community is different. There is no one formal—you know, doesn't fit all. One hat doesn't fit all when you're working with a community, and that's another good lesson that I have learned. The way you work with Bushwick is different when you're working with the Lower East Side because of the cultural and the religious and environment factors. So, being able to factor all those things is key.²

Another respondent discussed the notion of uniqueness as follows: remember that one is always forgetting that they are thinking in a box; once one is able to do this, they are no longer thinking in a box.

I guess, I think ACT really forced this and put flexion on it in a very, very important way for me, but basically that I guess the lesson I learned was that—I'll speak for myself—wherever I go, I'm in a box. I'm always forgetting I'm in a box. And when I stop and think about "I wonder what box I'm in," I can at least see the walls and sometimes step out of it and meet somebody else. But I'm always forgetting I'm in a box. And that I really, from getting out of my office at St. Dominick's, looking down into taking walks and seeing that 8:30 in the morning when I'm going over to the Collaborative meeting three or four blocks from St. Dominick's, down, tumbling out of the brownstones are parents taking their kids to school, like anywhere else. Never would have seen that. Those are the things that stick that were a part of my learning that was there because ACT was there. And I was willing to learn them. So, is that an answer? No, don't forget that you're always forgetting you're in a box. You're always forgetting that. Well, when you remember that you're in it, you're pretty much somehow out of it a bit.¹²

ACT taught another respondent the importance of "paradoxical growth:"

Got to be a great facilitator... was able to pull out ideas out of people... "paradoxical growth"—e.g., we need X money to do something... this is an idea that comes out... someone else says, "We will never get that money..." we can let it die or we could flourish it... another e.g., in Highbridge, bridge had been closed for 40 years... lots of folks wanted to open the bridge... government said they need 10 million dollars to fix bridge... folks said impossible... got frustrated and discouraged... flipping idea over is researching—found work that had been done on trying to open the bridge, etc., info went back to the transportation dept—they allocated money to investigate what is/isn't possible re: opening the bridge... put committee together—came up with 100,000–200,000 to do... now, are moving towards raising 10 million dollars to open bridge.⁸

ACT taught other respondents that community collaboration is important—and government is able to do it:

I don't know, Nina. I don't know if there's a single thing that I could point to. I guess I would frame it, rather than as a lesson learned, more of a shared value about the importance of community and the importance of collaboration on the community level. And I guess if there's a lesson to be learned, it's that government can be moved in this direction.¹⁰

I learned through doing, convening with some of the community planning meetings, how to lead a meeting, how to create an atmosphere where people feel trust, where people can feel their opinion is valued and respected or they can feel they can, not only come to vent and critique what they long have complained about, but that there was going to be follow up, that there was going to be action to help to change, and not that somebody else was going to change it for them, but that they themselves were going to themselves help to make those changes.⁵

ACT taught another respondent that community building *is* possible and takes time:

I think what the most important lesson—I don't know if this is the most important lesson, but this is the first one that came to mind is that community building and collaboration building, in order for it to be effective, takes time. And I think as—from my point of view in government, I'm like I need it done. I need it done three months ago. I need it done right now. I want you guys to be organized. I want you to have an agenda. I want—and it's all about the pressure of getting it done, and I think what I've learned is that in order for this to work, it really takes time.¹

That community empowerment, that community building, both affirmed what I believed in philosophically, and it's doable and it can be done. I applied that same approach to other initiatives that I was involved in afterwards and other city initiatives that built on that experience.⁵

These two forgoing reports are most consistent with the first level of social capital: bonding social capital within communities (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

ACT assisted another respondent with navigating community personalities, politics, etc.:

I think, personally, is in terms of leadership development because community work, even though I finish my social work, community work you never get to know how intense until you begin to do that. I think at ACT was there. They help me personally in terms of not only being a leader within the agency, but also taking it to the community where you have to deal with different people, different personalities, not only the community people but also the politics that are in the community.²

ACT taught another respondent the importance of matching the funding to the mission:

Another lesson that I learned throughout the years is when funders give you money, they're strict in terms of what they want you to use that money for. So, instead of trying to work around it to get your own objective, it's better to pursue a whole different funding in terms of whatever area you think is missing.²

Another respondent said ACT did not help build his leadership capacity:

Not in any immediate way that I can think of.¹⁰

Changes at the Individual and Neighborhood Levels as a Result of Specific ACT Staff

Many respondents discussed the personal impact of ACT's former Executive Director and ACT's former Associate Executive Director's leadership styles:

So [ACT's former Executive Director] became very instrumental to me to sort of think about how would I start a community planning and development unit here at ACS and what would be the mission of that unit, and how could we work with communities to keep children safe and strengthen families.

I think one of the most important things, and again, I'm coming from a very bureaucratic point of view, is that when [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] were in the room, they brought the community voice into a room where they had access to power to influence policies that were going to be implemented in those communities. In addition to their hope for more financial resources and its direct impact on community building, respondents also discussed their perspectives on the deeper needs of the community.¹

...[ACT's former Executive Director] also we had—not also in terms of a group session, we had a dinner one-on-one for more relationship where we sat down and kind of really talked about work and talked about challenges. Also, I have his phone number not only during business hours, but cell during off hours to kind of call him and talk about any challenges or issues.²

[ACT's former Executive Director's] connections helped... He had/has a good ability to raise money. One of the things to highlight—leadership is KEY! A lot would not have happened without [ACT's former Executive Director]—this point can't be underestimated! His history with people/credibility/ and ability to pull people/resources together... As someone who needed to sell to mayor, could not have done without [ACT's former Executive Director].⁹

[ACT's former Executive Director]—personality, networking, on the ground and yet at a higher level—could speak to high level commissioners... [ACT's former Executive Director] spoke about Saul Alinsky... [ACT's former Executive Director] embodied Saul Alinsky.⁸

I mean, there's some general ideas, but I think what [ACT's former Executive Director] brought, which was invaluable, was an insistence that the—and the benefit of, political benefit of what you really do have a funnel of ideas from a very local level and are open to it and have a conversation and dialogue with that, it strengthens everything. So that

your ideas will get changed, but that being accepting of the influence of a grassroots (quote/unquote “grassroots”) information legitimizes it in a legitimate way. In a weird way.³

[ACT’s former Executive Director] is the Ultimate power broker, at least in my mind. Ultimate power broker. I guess [ACT’s former Executive Director] and [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director] brought name recognition, face recognition. That’s important. That is important to any organization, even though you build that infrastructure, that—because they say it’s a system, but sometimes you fall back. But it’s people that build the system, so they were two major pillars that it’s difficult to replace.⁷

The only other thing I would add about its start was that, in the same way, there was the attention to the issue of not making this yet another report, there was equally attention to what kind of leadership is required to lead such an effort. So, the leadership by an [ACT’s former Executive Director], for example, or the endorsement of the mayor [Dinkins] of the report coming out of this and the strategy coming out of it were, again, purposeful components of it, to suggest that while you want all of the kinds of stakeholder groups that I’ve talked about, that it’s also important to have talented leadership at the helm of these kinds of efforts in order to move the agenda and that that is an essential piece of whether these efforts really take off and yield any real benefits for communities.¹¹

CHANGES AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL

The literature states that CCEs are concerned with the accessibility and quality of social support, economic opportunity, and physical infrastructure within the target community. This encompasses efforts to improve or increase the housing stock, neighborhood infrastructure, the business/commercial sector, education and training institutions, the social and civic support network, cultural vitality, and other-quality-of-life activities. CCEs pursue strategies that focus on building the capacity of existing local institutions responsible for these aspects of community life or supporting the creation of new organizations to do so. CCEs are also concerned with the

qualities of collective life provided through community attributes such as strong personal networks, “social capital,” and a “sense of community,” as well as the community’s capacity to handle conflict, solve problems, and/or express its voice and represent its interests in the larger economic and political arena.

Neighborhood Changes in Brownsville-East New York

Respondents reported no experiences with neighborhood changes in Brownsville-East New York.

Neighborhood Changes in Bushwick

One respondent discussed an improvement in Bushwick’s social/civic support system and capacity building efforts of local organizations. She said that ACT pioneered case conferencing, advocated for more preventative-focused services, and shared best practices on working with Latino children and families.

So, I can’t remember, as you can imagine, all 59 different communities. I don’t have in the back of my head “Bushwick was focused on this,” and when I say that, it’s like it’s not standing out in my head, they were focused on immigrant communities, they were focused on adolescents, they were focused on babies. Actually, in the same way that I know that Bed-Stuy for a long time has decided through The Cradle and through a lot of their work that they wanted to focus on infants. I can’t right now say to myself that Bushwick stands out in my head for a particular goal around a particular population.

What does stand out in my head is that I do remember that they were—believe there was a case conferencing model that came out of there way before sort of other communities were doing case conferencing, and frankly before ACS has now made case conferencing

such a center of sort of the cornerstone in how we're going to practice moving forward in our improved outcomes for children initiative.

But I do remember that there was case conferencing going on in Bushwick. I do remember this concept of having activist executive directors that were there that were focusing on child welfare. Clearly, the Coalition for Hispanic Families and Children stand out in my mind in Bushwick because it is the only now run Latino organization that we have. I think back in the years, we had Luis Medina and Sincros Otley, but we don't have that anymore. So, [the former Bushwick ACT Collaborative's Co-chair] and the work that she has done there is for me, of course coming with my child welfare hat on, a real integral part of what was going on in that community. The idea of prevention and always feeling like Bushwick was pushing for ACS to do more than just put kids into foster care, but so galvanizing around what does the community need in order to keep their kids safe before they get into foster care.

And I guess I'd be making this up—I guess it was a focus on a Latino community and sort of we looked to that—I'm sort of saying I'm making this up because I'm trying to remember—as a model for how one has to deal with a Latino community as sort of the center of that population in that area.

I think the case conferencing model in Bushwick was a huge probably precursor to government really saying we have to do case conferencing and we have to have community members and other people around the table. So, that's huge, because that's going to change the way that everybody that comes through the front door of the child welfare system now receives their services.¹

This is consistent with the first level of social capital: bonding social capital within communities (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

One example of an education improvement included ACT assisting with decreasing improper placement of children into special education:

Outcomes of collaboratives ranged in a funny way from very specifics like having fresh markets... most important one in my mind was the Bushwick area where they began to think about the relationship between Head Start and early education and schools... there had been this tendency to put kids in special ed who were really not impaired... wonder movement to change the system in terms of how one evaluates the youngsters... in Bushwick, real effort to look at interconnections between early childhood and education and got transported to Washington Heights... I think this kind of thing needs to be recognized.¹³

Another example of capacity building of local organizations included ACT increased accessibility to available childcare programs:

So, I think what happened in Bushwick, as an example was the call for we need more childcare services, we need more effective childcare planning in Bushwick. I understand there was a childcare initiative that came out of Bushwick. That was a real clear way where communities came together to do a long-term planning around improving and expanding childcare services and began to do—and the result, as I understand—I don't know for sure—was that childcare programs were improved in the Bushwick community.⁵

Another example of capacity building of local organizations included ACT assisted with creating a wrap-around services center:

I don't know if my history is accurate. I know there were a lot of discussions on the state level to have these one-stop types of places so that a family didn't have to go to ten different places to apply for childcare, apply for child welfare, et cetera. So, they had one center that they helped fund in Bushwick that I recall that had that type of—they brought different programs together like Aiming Towards Happiness and United, you know, applications to be able to access different services and at one site you could get a daycare

center, food stamps, et cetera. I don't know if that place still exists, but that was one of their achievements that we supported, and I think that was a state side.⁵

Another example of capacity building of local organizations included ACT's involvement with the Bushwick CPI. This respondent said that their involvement was paramount to the success of it:

We were—our mission, ACS Neighborhood Based Services, part of our mission was starting these networks, networks of organizers, of stakeholders, of community, bring them together, again, to focus on child welfare outcomes, and ACT played a role. There was already a preexisting network that ACT was involved in Bushwick around that time. So, the question was should the ACS network join that preexisting network or separate. So, we kind of discussed that over a period of time, the “should we merge, or should we continue to be two or three separate child welfare networks in Bushwick.” So, that's when it became vivid that ACT's involvement was paramount to the success of any ACS child welfare network in Bushwick.⁷

Neighborhood Changes in Both Communities

ACT's primary vehicle for neighborhood change included developing Collaboratives and strategies in 5–10 community districts:

So, then I got the opportunity, I guess, to sort of give back a little bit of what they were giving to me, which was to help them as they started to develop their strategies in the ten different communities—or if it was five or seven or eight communities at the time.

Okay. So, yeah, I think ACT definitely has had an influence. The idea of Collaboratives and the function of a Collaborative—again, getting back to the basic, what's the purpose of having all these people come together and helping people to figure out how do you help people to come up with an agenda? How do you even know what your problems

are? Sometimes you're so steeped in them you can't even realize what they are. So, I think it's huge to do the collective—not strategizing—from my lawyer days, I would call it issue spotting. How do you get people to even articulate the issues? How do you get people to trust their own instincts in terms of what the best strategies would be, and then how do you get that to be translated into a community organizing strategy that you could use with your local officials, with the bigger government, with businesses in your community, whatever. Whatever it is, the it that you want, the traffic light on the corner because kids have gotten hit by a car, the childcare center that's a mess and the waiting room is horrible and you think you guys don't deserve that and you want that changed; how do you go about doing that?

I think, that is what they do best, and that's a skill, and people think it's not a skill. It's like you're organize and everybody's coming together. No. No, no, no. It takes time, and it takes a skill that I think I don't know many organizations—there might be a lot out there in different fields, but since I'm in child welfare, this is the one I know, that I think ACT is very concrete, has things and experiences they have learned over their 20 years of existence that we all now get the benefit of so we don't have to start from scratch in terms of what a community building strategy looks like. So, I think they've been very integral in that.¹

But when it comes to outcomes, when it comes to training, when it comes to clarifying issues, ACT is involved in all of those discussions, discussions that plan what needs to happen, as well as the implementation of those plans with the community, asking the questions that they raise, smoothing out some of the relationships.³

ACT created new coalitions in neighborhoods that did not have pre-existing coalitions:

By linking us to the already existing one and in communities where there is not an existing collaboration, they help us to kind of draw that from scratch.²

One respondent said ACT had the experience of coordinating complicated structures in community settings:

I think that ACT has the experience of coordinating what are complicated structures in a community setting.⁶

ACT also brought about neighborhood changes by fostering collective life. For example, ACT located community leaders' voices:

So, to me, the point of organizing is so that you can bring about change, so you're getting the services that you need in order to keep your families safe and to strengthen your families. So, I think the work that they did around that organizing and getting people un—to articulate their goals and their needs and to be able to say that and to push really did help give credibility to the organization and help put them into rooms, where they could get those people into rooms, where they could speak for themselves or where they would bring the voice of the community into conversation and many different aspects of policy development around child welfare or child development and children and families policies.¹

I believe it's the grassroots effort because, even today, but it was even more pronounced back in the late '90s, early 2000 that everything in child welfare is—was top-heavy, and if we are serving and trying to save families and communities, we never listen to what they have to say, what they needed. So, I think ACT's effort in engaging grassroots—the grassroots people and community, the boots on the ground, engaging those people and having them feel relevant or bringing them some relevance to their lives in terms of child welfare. I think that was the most important piece ACT has played in connecting people to people, people to resources and connecting people to their political entities. Yeah. Just connecting regular people who go about their daily basis to better services and better—better services and better organizations. So, that's empowering the grassroots efforts I think was the important contribution.⁷

ACT's value/had the capacity to engage people in community in a much more real and extensive way.⁹

Furthermore, ACT understood that in order to create neighborhood change, one had to share power with communities:

And this idea that—even that idea which you and I are taking for granted right now that the community even has a role in say in how kids should be treated from their own community, I think Western Anglo-Saxon people, White people, are very much it's about me, it's about my kid, and I'm making my decision and dah, dat, dah, dat, dah. So, this concept about how it's fundamental, community and why should we give a damn that Miss Lopez' kid just went into care and you people give a damn? I think that's hard for them to even get. What is that community.... That's about Miss Lopez, and I think to get people to understand, yeah, but what happens to her affects me because it's part of my whole, it's a different thing than many people have grown up with. Many of the people in power in government are not of the community.

So, that's why we're sitting here, we're talking about it like that's a given, but I think people in the back of their heads, that's why people are like, "Why is it relevant what you think?" I think getting that discussion on the table, I think ACT has played a very important role in terms of transferring sharing power with community, why that's important and how that helps you, government, get and achieve your goals and makes what you're doing better. Because ultimately, that's what government is going to respond to.¹

And I guess it's the power that you have within, and again going back to [ACT's former Executive Director], I think I spoke to him that I always admired Charlie Hollander, who worked for ACS. He was the general counsel for ACS. [ACT's former Executive Director] asked, "Who do you"—kind of the exact question, but he asked the group of us, and I mentioned Charlie Hollander. I think he's one of the more intelligent people and

one of the most humblest, humble people that I have met, right. I don't know if he knows my name, but I just admire him.

Then, at the next session, you know, [ACT's former Executive Director] brought Charlie Hollander to our meeting, to our training, and I was like a child, blushing like, wow! So, that power that you have, sometimes you need to exercise it, and it affects people in different ways. It motivates people in different ways, and so whenever you have the opportunity to help motivate someone, exercise that opportunity so that person can go out or go forward and do the same thing for someone else.

I think that's my personal story I take away from ACT, take away from [ACT's former Executive Director], that power like, wow. He sort of foresaw, okay, this is going to leave a lasting impression on Nigel. Even though it's a group of 15, but if I get to one person—what I said, in the Qur'an it says that if you save one life, you can save the world.⁷

ACT located community voices and shared power with communities by engaging them in the community planning process:

Intention of setting up collaboratives... important to bringing people together... was to engage people in the community planning process.¹³

Another respondent believed that ACT fostered collective life by facilitating collaboration between agencies:

More than anything else, I think their knowledge and experience in fostering collaboration between agencies. I think that's ACT's strength more than anything else.¹⁰

However, he said ACT was not strong on engaging community members and fostering collaboration between community members and service providers:

ACT is an organization that largely deals with and appeals more strongly to service providers and is not as strong in terms of engaging community members and fostering collaboration between community members and service providers.¹⁰

CHANGES AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

The literature states that holistic and sustainable individual and community change are created by broader context or system change. The literature defines system change as improving the quantity and quality of services and other investments provided by outside systems, including social services, schools, the judicial system, commercial activity, and private sector investment. It also defines system change as increasing community residents' access to the structures that exist at the municipal and regional levels. This often involves a political empowerment agenda for the community that includes community organizing, better representation of neighborhood interests in city-level decision-making forums, or gaining commitments for improved corporate responsibility toward the community. Examples of this are evident in the respondent reports below.

General Changes at the System Level

One respondent said system changes brought about by ACT included assisting major funding institutions to understand the interconnectedness of issues in poor neighborhoods:

And I think that ACT, at least for me, ACT over the years have helped to make that connection very real and to be able then to come back to an institution like this and say, "As we look at the work that's going on in the Jamaica Collaborative, in the Bushwick Collaborative, in the Washington Heights Collaborative, in the whatever other community Collaborative here are what we're seeing." We're seeing all of these issues appearing, and as we look across these communities, we're seeing them there as well.

So, it had a—it became the laboratory for seeing the connection between issues and beginning to help articulate that kind of a message to a major funding institution, and I would hope to others who also had the opportunity to sort of have that kind of eye on ACT relationship to see the work that it was doing and to see how it connected to much of their grant making and the focus of their institution.¹¹

Another system change included ACT increasing ACS funding of community organizing:

I think having community coalitions written into the RFP and actually having government give money to do community organizing is huge, and that's going to change the way preventive, foster care, childcare industries now feel like they have to deal with the community, have to incorporate the community into their work, so I think that's specific and concrete.¹

Another system change included ACT incubating promising programs as a way to increase government, foundation, and corporation funding for these programs:

So, what I understood was that most of the funds would go to—well, one was for the executive and associate director, and then the other funds were used to hire the local planners and sometimes they would get money from different organizations in order to do consultation work like we talked about, whether it's with one city agency or whatever and that I'm not so sure in terms of what money went to the Collaboratives, I can't really think of any particularly, other than maybe like Bushwick IMPACT, which is sort of a set program, initiative. I'd say that sort of in the incubation stage you sort of say, "ACT wants to have these cradle programs, or help to facilitate or manage the cradle." One City Strategy, IMPACT, those types of things with the hope they'll be taken over by government or by another not-for-profit and really given the funding streams they need. So, this idea they incubated programs was what I think in terms of funding for the Collaboratives.¹

ACT increased funding to support advocacy:

A few years ago, a national organization that my... organization belongs to had some grant money to give out, small grants. I think they were \$10,000 a piece, but they had to go to community development kind of work. And we were eligible because we belonged to this national group. But my organization doesn't do direct service delivery. But when I read it, it had ACT screaming from its page. So, I called [ACT's former Executive Director] and we ended up funding a project in Bushwick. And I think it—as I recall, it was training some Bushwick residents to be stronger advocates in a civic arena. And I think they were actually connected with daycare in some way, but I don't exactly recall that. So, we had that.⁴

ACT brokered funding for ACS. In turn, ACS provided funding for the Collaboratives:

Definitely, yes [—ACT has helped ACS secure funding from foundations].²

Absolutely, helped by providing local planners. Absolutely, provided either some funding to help support stuff, food and things like that, every year.¹²

ACT augmented New York City's interest to build communities:

I think the city would be less of a city and less of a city that is interested in community building and communities if ACT wasn't there.³

ACT understood community needs and how government works—and they bridged both:

Because ACT knows the inside and outside of the government. I think that's one of the organizations that is kind of unique. They are private organization, so they have this great relationship with the government. So, they know the policies and procedures inside that of the government, and at the same time, they have their expertise also in the community, which no organization could play at that time. So, they know both sides. Knowing both

sides, so they know how to kind of bridge it and marry it, whatever are the challenges in knowing how to take care of it.²

ACT was important in creating an ongoing structure between public and organizations in communities... ACT = eyes and ears to issues on the ground.⁹

I think that's ACT's probably greatest strength is that they live in the government side. They sit there. They can read that stuff. They know that stuff. They get on the mailing list. And then, they can get it out and help translate it to what it could really mean for you.⁴

Definitely. It's—they've [i.e., ACT] kind of served as a broker and a foot in the door with a lot of those organizations, with a lot of public organizations. In terms of the application of preexisting resources, I think they've always been a force for local involvement on the part of public agencies.¹⁰

So, I think ACT's effort in engaging grassroots—the grassroots people and community, the boots on the ground, engaging those people and having them feel relevant or bringing them some relevance to their lives in terms of child welfare. I think that was the most important piece ACT has played in connecting people to people, people to resources and connecting people to their political entities. Yeah. Just connecting regular people who go about their daily basis to better services and better—better services and better organizations. So, that's empowering the grassroots efforts I think was the important contribution.⁷

But ACT was clearly created to lead that effort and to lead it as an effort between key stakeholders and the fact that ACT exists with the partnership of community, stakeholders, governmental agencies and the sort of critical funding community was not by accident but by design. And those kinds of dimensions represented some new thinking in this field.¹¹

ACT increased communication and trust between communities and ACS leaders:

I don't know what the answer to that is. At that time, there were probably 47,000 children who were in foster care at the time, and another—we have about 29,000 now that are preventive services. There were at least that or more back in those days, 53,000 children who we touched through childcare and Head Start. So, we had 25 SPAs, but we covered the full city. This was the first time ever in child welfare that we had a unit that was dedicated to community—we called it community planning and development, and then we changed it to Neighborhood Based Services, and now it's called Community Partnerships.

So, to have 17 government staff whose role was, in shorthand, to do community organizing, to me was huge, and if you think about those different 25 SPAs having anywhere from 25 to 50 members in it, and then you think about those organizations having at least 100 staff members, and you think about how we started to talk about some of these concepts and the values and the importance of prevention and strengthening families, I think that language has certainly changed. I think the face of child welfare, what we think we can demand from government, what people understand about this is not just about bad parents who are beating up their kids. That really coming to understand this idea of the parent advocate, the idea of the importance of foster parents, the idea of placing kids back into the community where they came from, the trauma associated with putting kids back into foster care.

People were not having those conversations before. It was child welfare, was very narrow. It was sort of about foster care. Even the relationship that a community had with ACS, which still needed a lot to work on, I think the work that's been happening in Bed-Stuy and Highbridge and Bushwick and Brownsville-East New York really led the way to us having a different conversation and having our child protective staff as well as our childcare staff and our NBS, Community Partnership staff around the table with the community and the community really saying, "This is what we're thinking we need, and how can you help us?" And ACS saying back to the community, "We really need you to

report when you're seeing a child in danger, and you've got to trust us, and you have to work in partnership." Those conversations were not happening before. So, I can't give you a number, but I have to tell you that I think there was a real C change that occurred at that time because of this work.¹

Many times a community don't trust the government because of what they've gone through, and that was our biggest challenge when we started this work that ACT has done a lot of work in the communities. So, ACT also is not a government agency, a government organization. So, they are able to be there and tell the community we know these folks. We know things that have happened before, but at the same time, listen to them. Look at what they can bring to your community.

Also, ACT was able to tell the government, "Yes, we know you wanted to do this in the community. We want to do this type of outcome, but at the same time, you have to listen to the community and kind of know what is important to them." So, they played a good role in terms of being that person to bridge the communication and to help us get the buy-in from the community so they can begin to trust the work we intend to do.²

In our field, we always talk about relationships build trust, and it's without that external effort to build a relationship there isn't going to be any trust, and without that trust, you cannot work hand in hand. You can't stand up and share—you have to share the risk to share in the outcomes. So, I think ACT has played a role in you have to stand side by side and share in that risk if you want to get to a certain point, that you have to stand up together and build that relationship. So, ACT has done that over the years.⁷

I think their contribution was creating the table for a kind of dialogue and engagement that occurred between communities and government. I limit it to communities and government because I don't think the funding community, the private funding community was engaged in—that its level of engagement was equal to or comparable to the other two legs of the stool of community of government.¹¹

What was unique about the effort was that it truly brought together the highest levels of government that developed, designed, implemented, oversaw policy around these programs from State Department and federal, from city to sit at the table to hear and to participate in what was—how these programs are running together with community-based organizations and the families that receive those services, along with local elected and non-elected officials, mayors to come together in a real, systematic, long term—planning process.

I just remember it was, as I described earlier, of who was brought to the table in terms of the commissioners from the deputy mayor and the city governance side, who the representatives were, the members of communities that attended those citywide meetings. I think it was open to them all, and I think everybody had a voice at the table. The agendas were developed from the work that was being generated, so it was democratic insofar as it reflected the prior decisions and following up on agreed upon projects.⁵

So, I'm looking to bring it [i.e., the system] back to the time there was a much better, healthier relationship and a much more positive, productive relationship between government entities like Administration for Children's Services and the communities. So, I think ACT has helped in that way.³

It was just an awareness, providing the peak of an awareness between the two entities. I would call the community one entity and the government the other entity that, as I said, there was a need to speak, to communicate with each other.⁷

ACT accomplished this by maintaining a positive relationship with communities, ACS, and all other relevant constituents:

My answer around that is that ACT has a good relationship with the players—so they could broker and connect the community to these government players—for e.g., if community needs meeting, ACT could call meeting and serve as conveners.⁸

ACT bridged, as Saegert, Thompson, Warren (2001), and Putnam (2000) suggest, community needs to government by forcing both to join collaboratives and talk to the other:

I think ACT was a very, very important part of bridging that gap between government and community in terms of the concept of community participation.¹

Very pragmatically... by forcing two to be a part of a collaborative—to force each other to talk to one another.⁹

Another respondent said it more specifically: ACT influenced ACS to involve the parents' input into their child welfare decisions.

So, I think I alluded to it a little bit earlier when I talked about for us, our client is the parent and the child, and very often, this idea about the parent having a voice was not something—was actually very much against what child welfare thought about. We were like, “You’re the bad person, and you should not have a voice in this.” So, that’s one thing. So, in our mind, when we think community, I think, and the “we” being the collective government mind, it was the community is where these bad parents come from. So, now you want me to deal with these uneducated, poor, not really—inarticulate group of people because you think they have something they can say to me about communities. And I think this idea of the importance of community participation and the idea of the importance of the voice of the parent and parents and—I’ll say parent and residents because those residents don’t necessarily have anything to do with child welfare—was a very important concept that I don’t know where it came from in child welfare, but something that’s been developed over the years, and I think ACT has played a very important role in helping people say, “No decision about me without me.”

And this idea that—even that idea, which you and I are taking for granted right now that the community even has a role in say in how kids should be treated from their own community, I think Western Anglo-Saxon people, White people, are very much it’s about me, it’s about my kid, and I’m making my decision and dah, dat, dah, dat, dah. So, this

concept about how it's fundamental, community and why should we give a damn that Miss Lopez' kid just went into care and you people give a damn? I think that's hard for them to even get. That's about Miss Lopez, and I think to get people to understand, yeah, but what happens to her affects me because it's part of my whole, it's a different thing than many people have grown up with. Many of the people in power in government are not of the community.

So, that's why we're sitting here, we're talking about it like that's a given, but I think people in the back of their heads, that's why people are like, "Why is it relevant what you think?" I think getting that discussion on the table, I think ACT has played a very important role in terms of transferring sharing power with community, why that's important and how that helps you, government, get and achieve your goals and makes what you're doing better. Because ultimately, that's what government is going to respond to. They're like, "Just don't all feel touchy-feely, and I don't know why we're around the table. I can make a decision, and power feels like they know what they need to do." But if you're telling me that a case conference will actually have a better result and I'll be able to have more information about this family and have access to more services for them, they'll have better outcomes if I have a community person participating in that case conference, I get that now. This is not just about you coming into the room to tell me—to scream at me and tell me I'm a baby snatcher and this and whatever. You're really there to partner with me. I think that's different, and I think ACT was a very, very important part of bridging that gap between government and community in terms of the concept of community participation.¹

ACT facilitated communication between ACS and communities:

And the other piece would be—I started to say before that COFCCA, in one word, would have been advocacy. Now, I would say, and the point I make is that now I would be required to need two words. I would still say advocacy, but my second one would be communication. I spent most of my career in the government on the public sector side. And I understand how government agencies work. And I think I understand how they

think. Our agencies don't. It's amazing what they don't understand about how ACS approaches a problem or puts out a new rule. And on the other hand, despite all my best efforts, ACS and State Office of Children and Family Services and the government agencies that we work with don't understand how our agencies and their workers think about and approach problems. So, what I think we spend a lot of our time on actually is, I call it communication. There's probably a better word for it. But it's helping our agencies understand why and what and helping the government agencies understand why and how maybe. And I got a dozen examples of it; they're not that important.

But I think ACT does some of that same thing. They do that sort of translation service. So, the government's so proud. They've got all these different programs, but somebody's sitting out in Bushwick, they don't know how to do what you're thinking about. What does that mean to me? It's just a bunch of words. Somebody can bring that to them and say, well, we could do this. We could apply for this funding. Or we could hook up with this. I was reading the website for the City Health Department. And in every community, there's a such-and-such. And I had never heard of it here. So, I went and checked it out. And it turns out it's at this clinic over at the hospital, but they've always been facing this way. And we're behind there. We got to bring our folks in the side door. And I think there's opportunities and there's resources available that don't get to the people who need them. And some of its language, but some of it's just how would you do that. The how-to. And ACT can open those doors. I think that's ACT's probably greatest strength is that they live in the government side. They sit there. They can read that stuff. They know that stuff. They get on the mailing list. And then, they can get it out and help translate it to what it could really mean for you.⁴

Another system change included ACT training ACS on the notion of identifying needs and matching them to services.^{xc}

I mean, a lot of ways, but for the interest of time, I'm going to hit on the one most important one that always turns out. When we started this work they raised something we called [**inaudible**] services, the kind of training that ACT help us to facilitate. Where you

go to the community, you kind of identify the needs first before you begin to talk about services because a lot of the time in social work business, the work we do, when families not functioning in the way we're supposed to be functioning, the first thing that comes to our mind is services, provide services for the person.

So, address that with the [inaudible] services, ACT kind of helped us and the community to concentrate more on what it needs. You identify the needs first, and then you work with the whole community to find out what kind of services to match those needs, and once that is done, then you begin to kind of understand the trend of the needs in that particular community. Then the long-term goal is how would you use those needs to kind of provide services in terms of safety nets for that particular community, until waiting to a crisis situation, and then you already have an idea of what the needs are. Then once you put services, then you provide something for the families and children in that particular community. So, that's what kind of stands out in terms of how they help us to deepen the work of the community.²

ACT assisted ACS in setting up child welfare networks in communities that did not have any. community-centered, demographical data was used to facilitate this.

Definitely. By linking us to the already existing one and in communities where there is not an existing collaboration, they help us to kind of draw that from scratch. They help us do it, and also, they help us in terms of getting the community data that would have only been—because we have a lot of child welfare data that ACT also have access to community data. So, they kind of have that, use that with what we have to kind of help us build Collaborative, especially in those communities that doesn't have already existing Collaborative like Brownsville-East New York.²

In addition, staffing local community partnership initiatives during the proposal writing process and/or start-up phase was also done to facilitate this:

As we have in the past few years begun to develop the Community Partnership Initiative, we have worked closely with a number of ACT programs and staff and they have taken part in the work of various Community Partnerships and have helped to staff each of them as they got going or as they pulled together a joint proposal to us.⁶

ACT convened ACT Oversight meetings with all leaders to discuss the macro forces of racism, poverty, etc., and the strategies to address them:

And I think that because of [ACT's former Executive Director's] experience in child welfare and understanding that, because of [ACT's former Associate Executive Director's] sort of community building rootedness in the community, they helped me to see the solutions for these kids are not going to be within the confines of this very narrow system. It has to come from the place where children come from families, and families live in communities. So, these 18 communities that we can point to had these high numbers of kids coming into care and have these reports, what could we be doing as a community to help that, to slow that down and to demand the services that we need in that community to keep kids out of care? How would I know that? I had no idea. I came into this very wide-eyed and very, "This is great. This is a great system," and all that kind of stuff. And I think you begin to see and understand a lot of things about poverty, about racism, about all these other things that affect what is happening for children and families of color in particular in the city, and I really feel like ACT provided that place where like-minded people can come together specifically at the ACT oversight meeting, but in these different communities to sort of not to keep people isolated and making them feel like, "God, this is just a screwed up community, Bushwick, we're all messed up, and everybody's beating each other, and they're beating the kids and there's all this violence," to start to think about what are those bigger influences that make it so, and how can we do something about that. I did not have that perspective. I didn't understand it, and I really think that ACT and probably others too, but I can't really think of that many others that were having that kind of conversation at the time.¹

The whole idea about bringing the front entities together on a quarterly basis. Oversight, yeah, meeting that ACT has....⁷

ACT increased exposure of innovative and effective programs throughout New York City:

I came out of community-based organizations before I went into government. I worked with two communities in the Lower East Side and the Upper West Side before I went into government, and through my government experience and particularly through my ACT experience, I was able to see activities in all parts of the city, get to know and better understand the diverse ways that programs operate the creativeness, the innovative and effective programs that are going on, to get to know a lot of other leaders around the city. So, it provided me with both the information, knowing where these people—these programs were at, the leaders that were there. It gave me those contacts, that insight.⁵

Get your feedback and get everybody in the flow. So, to me, that was the most palpable, ongoing, supportive gift from ACT Central and vice-versa.¹²

ACT linked citywide services to local communities:

ACT was an organization I could always consult about trying to bring CWOP services to a local level, particularly in communities where ACT had a presence.¹⁰

ACT produced “data books”—i.e., books of demographical information and available services by community district.^{xci}

I think, at one point, we [i.e., ACS and ACT] produced data relevant books for each community district, data about preventive foster care and child protective issues, data about information on the poverty and just general demographics of community districts. So, we had a collaboration on that over the years. I think we produced maybe two or three series of these books, was time consuming and cumbersome at times, but we produced those books.⁷

ACT increased the visibility of minority-led agencies:

I think one of the—I think other aspects of it that are important in terms of capacity building, I think historically, in the city, it's been a perception that most of the child welfare child services were run by and led by organizations that did not have a lot of diversity in its leadership, were not necessarily minority-run agencies or agencies of leaders from those neighborhoods. And I think that what ACT enabled were for those organizations that may have been smaller but they were headed up by a person from that neighborhood, they were able to begin to compete and be recognized and obtain more contracts for them to be able to offer a program within their inner community so they were able to grow and be recognized as delivering comprehensiveness or effective quality services, just as well as the traditional settlement house or the bigger, older agencies that historically had been the majority of the contracts in the city.⁵

These reports are prime examples of all three levels of social capital: bonding social capital within communities, bridging social capital between communities, and creating synergy between communities and both financial and public institutions (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

ACT survived for over twenty years—a remarkable accomplishment:

Sometimes the time has to be right for these things to take off, if the time isn't right, but I think the whole idea of it is ACT has sustained for, I think, 20 years?⁷

I think, in many ways, if you look back on it, from my perspective, anyhow, not just as a person here, it's really been quite remarkable how long ACT has been able to continue playing the role that it has. Usually, I've seen it, it's an up and down kind of thing. I think New York should be really proud and ACT should be really proud. Their ability to patch together support year after year after year.⁶

And what was unique about ACT, and I must say stunned that it has lasted as long as it has, because it was always this sort of public/private partnership. You can't find too many of those around. And when you do, if they last three years or as long as the first grant, that's pretty remarkable. This was always housed in the public building, some city staff, but also foundation supported and grant supported. And I think they've always found the way to make that work, which in a bureaucracy, just getting the office space can be an enormous hassle. And turf wars break out over things like office space in government offices.⁴

Respondents implied that ACT was able to accomplish all of their system changes and survive for over twenty years because they were trusted and viewed as a neutral body/convener:

ACT was trusted/viewed as safe... neutral body....⁹

They've served as kind of a neutral convener, which was important.¹⁰

I think what was momentous at the time was because the Dinkins administration truly was—many people that had helped to get Dinkins elected and that had worked with Dinkins in the **president**'s office, including Donna and myself and [ACT's former Executive Director], used to work, not for the president, but he helped to—he was part of—Donna oversaw a child welfare commission, I think it was, that Dinkins had started in the president's office. So, there was the history and track record, and there were a lot of recommendations from that period of time during the president's office that Agenda for Children Tomorrow was a natural way to implement those recommendations.⁵

Changes at the System Level – Both Communities

ACT linked ACS to existing organizations and coalitions/collaboratives in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick.

Well, since I started working with Children's Services, I have always known that ACT has a lot of roots in the community, that they have been doing community work for a very long time. So, about ten years ago when Children's Services started the Community Partnership Initiative, so we were looking for an organization that has done a lot of work in the community in terms of building partnership. So, we reached out to ACT to kind of help us be the connecting person, entity between the government and the community, seeing this is what they had been doing before.

So, specifically, in Bushwick and Brownsville-East New York, what we're trying to do is find if there is any existing coalition so we try to piggyback on that existing coalition instead of trying to reinvent the wheel. So, ACT kind of—that's when we started working with them, so they kind of have for us identified the already existing coalitions and try to build on what is already in the community. That was about ten years ago.²

Part of our proposal to the foundation was that we would subcontract with ACT. I think my organization is wonderful, but our relationship is with our member agencies, not with non-member agencies by definition. I don't know who's—I know who has a contract with the city that chooses not to be a member of ours. That's fine. But I don't know that there's a community group in the Lower East Side that is preparing to bid on this contract. We worked with ACT to do a couple of things. And at the same time—let me just say, because I always think that we're better off if things are mutually advantageous as opposed to I'm giving you an advantage or you're giving me an advantage. We have better relationships when we're both getting something out of it.⁴

I don't know about bringing new resources, but I would think in terms of the application of preexisting resources, I think they've always been a force for local involvement on the part of public agencies.¹⁰

In comparison to Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick reports, government/foundation/policy advocacy partners' reports of changes at the individual and family levels are unique. Specifically, they reported on the ways in which ACT contributed to their own

leadership development, in an effort to be most effective at creating change at the individual/family levels in local communities. Much of this leadership development focused on community change *is possible*, partners have the power to make it happen, and ways to navigate the challenging components of community change. Lastly, these reports are unique because they attribute Eric and Anthea's leadership styles to their leadership development.

Most concerning is this group's lack of specific reports on changes at the neighborhood level in Brownsville-East New York. This confirms Brownsville-East New York's accounts of a smaller service network and, therefore, more reliance on non-traditional leaders to provide the help that is traditionally provided by service organizations.

Most significant is this group's reports on changes within ACS brought about by ACT. Specifically, changes associated with ACS leadership valuing community networks and implementing them, and in some cases, fostering them where they preexisted.

OBSTACLES

Respondents discussed obstacles as they related to ACT's goals, guiding principles, and operational strategies. One of the most prominent obstacles included, at the time of this study, ACT's struggle with funding/sustainability and vision since the departure of ACT's former Executive Director and ACT's former Associate Executive Director:

I think the challenge is going to be that there's such this history and it was so about these two people, leadership is great, but when it overcomes the organization and becomes about the organization, that's not so good. I think we're learning that in terms of sustainability.¹

Yeah. One of my concerns is it is about the sustainability of the staffing model. We have set it up as the public-private partnership. I get the pros and cons of that, but I think it has

been something—what is the word I’m looking for? An insecurity, an inconsistency around what ACT can really do if you’re sort of at the mercy of particular city agencies.

So, in the beginning—and I could be wrong about this, but I get the impression that Donna, because she was the deputy mayor, probably—I don’t know if she gave them five things, and it came out the deputy mayor’s budget. I think when you’ve got to negotiate with six different commissioners and everybody’s going through their own stuff, it just leaves you—who wants to be worried about who’s going to get cut and that stuff all the time?

And I just feel a frustration where many times people are like, “I don’t know what ACT does.” That’s just F-ed up. Somehow we’ve got to be able to say that in a really concise way, get people to get it and have them really feel like this is a really good tool and I’m glad I have ACT, not I don’t know what ACT does, but I like [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director] and [ACT’s former Executive Director], so I’m going to tolerate them.¹

So my—but it’s a group of people meeting, and [ACT’s Executive Director]’s new. It sounds to me, just from observation that, like everybody else, while survivability has always been a driving energy in ACT, how you just survive, it’s particularly challenging now. And I think that [ACT’s Executive Director] is at the very beginning of learning about ACT and the outcome will be her permeability.¹²

I guess this might be like be a bill for sustainability, so I don’t know how much—because, yeah, with the transition when [ACT’s former Executive Director] and [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director] left at the same time, and I’m sure there was a lot of thought that went into it, but I think that was a major blow for ACT, and I know they’re trying to catch up with [ACT’s Executive Director] and [ACT’s Director of Community Planning] and [ACT’s Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training] leaving now, but you want to build that infrastructure and build that strength. I think with [ACT’s former Executive Director] and [ACT’s former Associate

Executive Director] leaving that took a massive, like the heart, a leg, arm, eye from ACT, right. So, hopefully they can—ACT can rebuild and be stronger, but that I believe was like a major hit for ACT.⁷

It's interesting that, when the organization was going through that transition, the question that many asked was maybe this is its natural debt, that it has served its purpose, and the work that needs to happen going on maybe requires some new entity leadership, et cetera. I think there was a case made for the continuation of it. Whether it is pursuing that agenda or not, I would say that at this point that it is not. Can it pursue that agenda given its leadership? I don't know.

On the funding side, I think therein was ACT's real challenge. While it started with private dollars, it was a limited number of private players, and over time, the private support has more to do with—this is my take on it—had more to do with the personal relationships than an investment in the strategy itself. The—because the public—because the agenda was so narrowly defined, the level of public dollars and investment in it was also narrowly secured because we couldn't tap all the pots, because the effort was so narrowly defined.

But even in those pots that we defined, because government is so tied to this notion of kind of a procurement process that the little dribs and drabs that it got, did not give it the kind of infusion of public dollars that allowed it to be more than a kind of instrument of carrying out specific kinds of tasks for its key public agency. And the rest of what it did, it was—it had more to do with the relationship than being funded to do it.

So, that sort of restriction of funding, both on the private side and the public side, left it always in the sort of limping along fashion in terms of its ability to really do, I think, a lot of what it might have wanted to do but just didn't have the financial wherewithal to do it, nor a sense of stakeholder buy-in to a larger agenda to allow it to do anything more.¹¹

Some respondents attributed this to the lack of ACT's community presence via collaboratives:

Right [—if ACT got its identity from the locales and a lot of that is gone or different now, what's their identity now?]. And also got its energy, its [parent] in terms of energy was Child Welfare. No, I'm sorry. Its energy was the need and intent—recognition, need and intent of a reform. A reform of Child Welfare. Not revise, reform. That's not—nobody's talking about reform, any of them, really. There are a lot of revisions, which are nice, but not a reform of something.

So that's what—to me, there's a little... it's lost from my perspective, that's what organized how I saw people and now they got like nothing there and I'm looking for something. And something will come. A part of it's the loss of what was and coming to grips with that and always trying to find it again here, there and everywhere, it's not. Yeah [—it's gone].¹²

The degree to which ACT serves as the convening table for communities now, I would say that it does not. So, it sort of asks the question then of what is its role if we can't sort of ascribe to it those things, which set it up as being the distinct agency that it was.¹¹

ACT's lack of engagement of more city government agencies was an obstacle to comprehensiveness:

Well, it could have been more around comprehensiveness to bring city government into play across the agencies in a more aligned way.¹¹

Well, I do think that, at the appropriate time, perhaps after the next election, we should try to pull ACT into the Mayor's Office, to Linda Gibb's area of responsibility and see if we can't work together to develop relationships and have a clear set of roles. I have no idea, for example, how much knowledge of ACT there is in HRA. But it would be good for us together I think to talk.⁶

ACT being perceived as community building experts was an obstacle because it was not their strength and it overlooked local, community building experts:

I think, by definition, ACT kind of—they kind of like to be thought of as the experts in community building, and I think it sometimes overlooks the expertise that already exists in our communities.¹⁰

Another obstacle included the challenges associated with securing long-term funding:

Because so many organizations have to focus on short-term goals because the capacity, if you're going to—and my other passion is undoing racism, right. That's another life work, right. So, the way the system is structured is there's always—it has to be a three-year plan, a four-year plan, a five-year plan. Seldom you're going to be on a five-year plan, and by the fifth year it's when you're picking up steam, and then all the funding for your five-year plan goes away, and it goes to some other effort.

So, the example, the One City, One Community was a three-year effort. So, people in Bedford-Stuyvesant—you know, the word was now getting around Bedford-Stuyvesant, like, “There's this mayoral initiative called One City, One Community.” So, by the time the work got around to the community, it's gone. That's the difficulty that who's going to take on the effort to fight poverty or undo racism? It's life work, and you have to constantly get funding for these efforts, and funders want to see a quick return for their efforts. That's why I see the difficulty.⁷

ACT's funding contributing to mission stray was another obstacle:

Now, what I think happened, and I could be totally wrong, was the politics of how ACT was going to be support financially, so where they were going to be getting lines from in terms of other city agencies and where they were doing their fundraising sort of—and even when ACS came into existence and their partnership with ACS sort of made them very focused on child welfare, which, frankly, that would not have been, as I just said to

you a few minutes ago, would not have been probably what I would have liked for ACT or what they would have probably liked for themselves. But it's sort of like you go down that line because of who is paying your bills or who's supporting you. I think that got them off track a little bit, and I think we started to focus on child welfare in the traditional sense of child welfare and got away I think a little bit from that bigger agenda—no pun intended—because of how the funding was.

I will even say just as an aside, but for you to know, Nina, is that ACS in this last RFP that we've been doing and even in the commissioner and my articulation of what Community Partnerships is doing right now, we have specifically decided ACS is not the place where traditional community building 101 is going to happen. I'm not giving communities \$300,000 and saying, "You guys define what you want to do based on how you think communities can really help children in child welfare." We decided not to do that because we felt as though I don't know if we're ready to do that. This is money. We don't want to do it in that way.

And what we said to them was, "We're child welfare in the traditional sense, and what we need your help with is we need community folks to come to our case conferences. We need you to recruit folks in this community for foster care. We need you to help us think about the partnership between preventive agencies and childcare and Head Start, and we need to find places in your community for kids who are in foster care to visit with their families because we want those kids to be reunified, and we think that can happen with good visiting." That was not saying to them, "Take this \$300,000 and you guys come up with what you think the strategy should be around children and families," which was very different.

So, there's pros and cons to that once a government comes in and they're giving you a contract and what you have to do for them. So, the good thing about Agenda for Children Tomorrow, a little bit was that they could have played this other role where they're like, "Listen, that's all cool, but we got housing issues. We've got a homeless population here. We've got this. We've got kids coming back from jail and fathers coming back. ACS,

that's cool, and we're going to use this \$300,000 to overlay that, but how do we connect those things that are going on in the community." I think, somehow we've gotten off that track a little bit, and I feel like in the olden days—and I don't know if that was because of how it was organized at city hall or the relationships—there was more of ACT's purpose is the integration part, not just a whole one piece of it.¹

So, I think, that to me was the beginning of it that ended when it became part of the city and ACS. So, that went, like the pregnancy and the birth and then the, I don't want to say the child took over the household, I don't know—whatever, it went into foster care, something like that.¹²

Another obstacle included ACT staff working in local communities for extended periods of time as a barrier to hiring from within; therefore, inhibiting community building:

You know, I don't know if I'm going to answer this because I'm defensive about it, but I do think there is something about placing somebody in a community to play that role for a period of time and the importance of possibly not needing that role anymore because a community takes it up in a different way, sort of like the incubation kind of idea and having the community take it up in a different way, or not having one person do it for a long period of time so that you can get a different flavor in there. So, having somebody do it for three years and having somebody else come in because of their ability to get stagnated in that one way of doing it. I think we have [Bushwick IMPACT's Director], and having somebody that can coordinate and do agendas and all that kind of stuff and help set goals is important, but I wonder there's probably pros and cons of that, right, because of this outside person is always doing it, this ACT person does it, may make Children's Aid Society say, "I want to have somebody on staff whose job is doing that," and we should all be taking turns playing that role, and it's collective because it matters, not that we're depending on this outside entity to do it.

So, I think, probably in its original concept, ACT would say, "We're there to provide the glue for a little bit of time and eventually we want the community to take that over," not

that the ACT person is not part of the community, but I'm using it in that way. So, I think there's something to say that people could get used to it in a way that is maybe not so great and healthy to community building. I think that making sure—how do you know when that time is right to go, how do you know when that time is right to change? I don't know the answers to all of that, but I think it's tricky.

I think an example right now is [CCENY's Community Coordinator] in East New York. I've heard different things. I think—I don't know if Easy New York still needs a planner, but I definitely think it's time for [CCENY's Community Coordinator] not to do it anymore. Then, one wonders if they don't have it for a period of time, will people still be engaged, will they still do it, and if you're not engaged because you don't have it, then how much have you really done to—Sustain it. So, it's tricky, so that's what I think about staffing.¹

Well, but if you look at the ACT planner, the ACT planner was—I always viewed them both in their role and in their actual practice as a short-term instigator. They never turned out to be long-term investors in a neighborhood. They go in and they stimulate. They support. But it is always that local leadership that emerges that actually becomes the sustaining glue. So, to say that you need the ACT as if it was the permanent enabler, it never has been that. And to be honest, I'm not certain that's what communities need because the reality is the community talent is there. It's the degree to which some outside buzz comes in and awakens it, or we recognize it as being there and support it from the beginning.

The tendency is to not support that which is there, but to bring something in and for us to then validate our findings of what's there and sanction that person as—sanction, ordain, whatever—that person as the bona fide leader, and then everybody starts supporting that person. When if we had gone there from the beginning, we probably would have seen that person any....¹¹

ACT's lack of participation in rigorous evaluation was a missed opportunity:

I don't remember how old ACT had been around before it did its first evaluation, but one of the things that we do poorly, aside from the visioning, is to insist on the rigor of evaluation. In fact, it's because we think when dollars are precious that you devote those dollars to the service side. We accept the fact that whatever we get is acceptable, not what we set out to do. So, in any kind of undertaking, the absence of the rigor of evaluation to ACT or anything else I think was, yet again, one of those just missed opportunities in terms of the vision of what we were doing and the commitment to anything that had a long-term agenda of real change. So, for me, evaluation has to be a critical component of what we do.¹¹

ACT's human service focus was considered a shortcoming:

I think that while the focus was on human services, it was, one would say, a part of the strength and the limitations of a community development strategy because no community exists purely on the availability or even the need for human services, but on a more comprehensive understanding of what makes for sustainable, livable communities. And I think the almost exclusive focus on a human service focus was I think maybe one of the sort of, in hindsight, shortcomings of the vision and the focus....

Where I think that it could have done more was to push the agenda of a comprehensiveness strategy to move it beyond human services and to have done that—well, to have done it and, more importantly, to have introduced it early in the process so the kinds of gains we might see in those communities would have gone beyond just a service enhancement and might have had more of an economic focus to it, might have had more of a kind of quality of life stamp than one of communities and their pathologies.¹¹

While respondents believed that there were obstacles, they also believed that there were ways to overcome them.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Figuring out where ACT is needed, developing goals to meet those needs, and accomplishing them was one suggestion made to overcoming aforementioned obstacles:

I think [ACT's Executive Director] is just going to have to define for herself what does she want to get done. What are her goals? What are the two or three things she wants to get done in the next two years, and get that done? I think trying to pay attention to the history and say, "Well, we've always done XYZ, so I want to continue to do it" might not be the best thing. So, if she does say to herself....

So, continuing to make sure that ACT's considered relevant I think is going to be a challenge, and I think you have to do that in order to attract funders, in order for people to see a need for you and for you to be able then to put your advocacy, agenda forward. So, that's what I think.

To be able to have [ACT's Executive Director] to be able to say, "I have five staff. They're good staff. I'm going to have them for a while. They're coming from the deputy mayor or whoever, so it's the deputy mayor, so I don't have to focus on one particular agency, her vision, the government vision or flavor of the month right now is going to be around service, public service and around anti-poverty, and I'm going to work on that with you for the next two years," makes them relevant, makes them not having to be chasing after business, makes people feel like, "I could do X, Y and Z."¹

If I were [ACT's Executive Director], I would take a step back, do a thorough strategic review of what is cooking in communities, and what is added value of ACT now....⁹

Figure out what ACT is under their leadership and get the funds for that.³

The change in leadership, I think first and foremost. I think so much was based on where it was and where it is, they almost have to redefine themselves and rebrand themselves, remarket themselves, and I'm not sure how any of that is going to play out. One priority is really to analyze what is occurring in the most devastated neighborhoods because the economy cannot be ignored....¹³

Some respondents said they believed there was a need for ACT to continue to be a voice for community needs:

But they need to—to greater and lesser extents, I'm sure and I know, but they've managed to survive. And there is something—part of it maybe is incorporated in that survival idea, but showing—somebody once said just showing up is half of it. Being there, making them pay attention. [ACT's Executive Director's] saying, hey, we got to cut. We may have had to cut the Jamaica program in my example and the immunization drive. But you know what? Commissioner Mattingly, I'm still here on your advisory panel. And I'm going to keep speaking up for the needs of these communities. And I know you had to cut CPI funding 10 percent last year. And I know that was painful. But you're going to have to keep facing me when you do that. It makes it harder. Having those relationships and being there is an important part of just reminding people.

And I think that that's an important role for the leadership of ACT to be there, to say, hey, what have you done over here lately? How come we cut—I know you had to cut, but why not do this? Or let's think creatively about how to get some funding to open up that other side. So, I think that that's important.

And that assumes—there's a big assumption there, which is that ACT somehow continues to be able to be that voice. If you cut off the Jamaica program and you stop doing the immunization and then you cut off East New York. And then, you do this. Then, pretty soon, you're just you sitting there. And you don't really have that sort of constituency. So, that's the inside business sort of thing that's got to get done too.⁴

The other thing I think they can do is, I think they can continue to be a liaison between government and communities, but they're going to have to step up to the plate. I think they still have some room to play that card and to play it well for a number of communities, but they've got to step up to the plate to do it, or they're going to lose that chip.¹¹

There needs to be the forum where—not forum, but opportunity for communities to be trained so that it can be better participants in those planning sessions where they themselves know and learn how to be effective, to set their own agenda, to be able to speak articulately about their issues, how to write down their problems, to learn the skills that one needs in order to participate more effectively with the powers that be that traditionally determine how those resources are allocated.⁵

Others believed there was a need for ACT to continue to facilitate communication and trust-building between government and communities as well as coordinate community networks:

And another thing is also concentrate on helping the government agencies communicate to the community in terms of what is going on so that trust issue before, where the government come in, get into the community, they pull out. So, what is the right message, right way, right language to communicate to the community in terms of what is going on so they can understand?²

I think an ACT forum—an ACT structure needs to continue because planning is a dynamic situation. Communities are forever changing. There are needs. There are experiences. There needs to be in place a forum where communities can go to have real involvement in planning the better provision of services for communities.⁵

Well, I expect and hope that ACT will continue to help partners and will be expected by the partners, invited by the partners to take an active role ongoing. I think that ACT has the experience of coordinating what are complicated structures in a community setting. And I hope that they would still continue to be used for that purpose. I think also, of

course, that their central role of representing communities' involvement in public systems, especially child welfare, I hope and expect that will continue, as well. Bringing together people, bringing together local partners to share lessons, experiences, and issues.⁶

Another respondent suggested initiating nurse-family partnerships:

Well, my advice to ACT about working with us is to keep open to possibilities as they arise, because we need to do that, as well. But that the future from our perspective is going to lie with community partnership expansion and deepening **the work 21:12**. And so that's where ACT can—I'm just talking about ACS, there's so much else out there, there's so much that's so very important that I think that that's the best direction for an ACS partnership.

But if you think about all the things that are out there, we've helped to fund Nurse-Family Partnerships, for example. There's no reason, and it wouldn't be related to us, that ACT shouldn't be very helpful in trying to get them going, keep them going. Not just Nurse-Family Partnerships, but the other **model**, as well.⁶

Another respondent believed there was a need for ACT to work on decreasing poverty in the poorest communities:

One of my passions is—the first one is I always say in a country—maybe pre-September—not September—October 2008, with all the richness in America there's no reason why any American should be poor or poor to the degree where Americans are poor. I come from [a Caribbean country], so expectation is in a developing country there are going to be poor people, but in America that so many people—depending on what you listen to, what you read that it could be a quarter of the country or one in every four children live under the poverty level. I'm thinking there was some effort, some connection that ACT made with the mayor initiated on poverty and fighting poverty.

So, that's like—I don't—no. Maybe I'm being selfish, but that would be a tremendous effort, and it's life work. It's not going to happen for how many generations; but it, it's an effort that could be continued because, yeah, the history of ACT is organizing communities. And this movement is not only going to come from the top. It has to be a diverse group. So, you have to empower the people on the ground, so I think that's something that would be a noble effort.⁷

Others believed that the most pressing need was for ACT to focus on its survival—on becoming a permanent entity:

A very smart person, I was on a panel once. I can't remember what the session was, but I remember that Diane Heggie, who now works with me, was the facilitator of it. And I remember the panel consisted of [ACT's former Executive Director] and myself. And we're very close friends, but I think that makes it hard sometimes to admire a friend. And I didn't have this book with me at the time. This is my phone book. And I don't take a lot of notes in it. And I think I actually have taken this out now.

No, see, the first thing I wrote in here... [ACT's former Executive Director]... said three things that day that I wrote down. And one of them is my motto this year for my members. We just had our annual meeting. Actually, [ACT's former Executive Director] spoke at—that's just a coincidence. But when I got up to give my report, what I said to them was "Institutional survival is a good idea." And maybe for me, because I am a friend of his, maybe that coming from [ACT's former Executive Director] was more surprising to me than it would've been coming from me or from somebody else, because [ACT's former Executive Director], to me, was this sort of innovator in developing community stuff in the city and all this other crazy stuff. But that's what I would say—that's what I've said to my agencies is your job, in my view, your priority over the next two years is to survive.

Now, there's a footnote to that. And my footnote would be you sometimes have to face the fact that given whatever the conditions, if you sit back and really think about

something seriously, you're no longer able to provide a quality of service that you feel good about, then that ought not to be your motto. So, if the funding goes down so much and you're slashing staff and you're holding on by your fingernails, but if you were to sit back and say putting aside my commitment to this institution and all of our programs and all of the staff who are dependent on it and their families and the board and the clients, I don't feel good about it anymore. I'm scared. I can't sleep at night. I think we're not doing the job. Then, maybe you need to close or do something else.

So, I think ACT for the next two years: survival. So, if ACT were to look at its business right now. And I'm not nearly close enough to even know what that is. But if they were to look at their business right now and say for some reason this project, we got a \$50,000 grant to do this, but when I look at it, we're spending \$55,000 on it. I think they need to say it's good. Maybe you look at it and say, but it's adding so much value to these other things we do that we need to do it. Well, fine, that's good. But you ought to look at that. You ought to really, really look at that and say, you know what? We can't afford that. We can't afford to be taking our very limited dollars. And it was a great idea, but they've cut the funding and we added to the staff.

Or they look at it and say, for some reason, we're able to figure out that our Jamaica site is costing us money. Then, you've got to say, well, is it fair to Bed-Stuy and Kingsbridge and someplace else that Jamaica's become a net drain on the operation. I'm sorry to let Jamaica go. We've invested so much in it. But you know what? I have to look at the—I think the board or whoever they—we're not a 501(c)(3) and [ACT's Executive Director] need to be able to say when the dust settles, when things get a little better, and I'm saying in two years, I hope to God it's two years, how do I make sure ACT is still here vibrant enough to do what it does? And that's the priority.⁴

Right, 20 years, so it—Rome wasn't built in a day. These efforts, where all these things usually happen from top down, and I think this movement—and this is a movement where you gradually impress upon people that in democracy everybody should have a voice, and it's not going to be an equal voice, but everybody's going to have a voice. So,

it's a movement, and it's going to take time. So, I think ACT has to continue that these challenges are always going to be there, but for the greater good, this movement, and this effort has to continue.

The other thing that I find fascinating is that they now have an opportunity to give the organization a kind of institutional leg that it has never had before. It is not an incorporated entity. It was sort of the loosely formed structure. It is just beginning to talk about the notion of a board, as opposed to an oversight committee, to begin to see itself as having in place those kinds of infrastructure that speaks to a sustained organization, as opposed to the sense of a kind of time limited office that was created to carry on a specific task, and when it's done or somebody declares that it's over, it's dismantled.

So, I think that it is, for the first time, beginning to make some of those kinds of steps that makes it a permanent entity, and I think from an institutional standpoint, it needs to do that because then it can do the kind of fundraising. It can do the kind of accountability to the external world that's critical for it, both to generate support, and to be viewed as a viable effort that's going to be around for some time.¹¹

Enhancing comprehensiveness by working with public entities—beyond ACS—and private entities, especially those with decision-making power to change systems/policies, was another suggestion:

You know, I think ACT needs to continue to do—I would say, now that we've had this conversation, more getting back to that original mission of the comprehensiveness of that role and what they could play in that.... Working with other city agencies like health, that would be great to get some real collaborations around health, outcomes in the city, to do some work—more work around childcare and Head Start, getting more to that traditional, preventive community building stuff, I would love to see that.¹

When we look at the various ACT areas, one sees interesting changes occurring but again without public policy approaches that really respond to the need for comprehensiveness,

very hard to achieve.... I give ACT huge credit for having done a lot, but we are very far from where we should be.¹³

You have to look at the city administration and how its structure and then you have to look at how they relate to the local activities... then take a deputy mayor or some high position and staffing him or her out... I would do this in all communities... In 60s, “little city halls”—what was good is that it brought people together to reflect on the needs with heads of systems... seems to me that this is what we need to focus on... there are heads that are sympathetic to what ACT was doing... but you need reps who have decision making power... for e.g., swine flu, would be great advance if health commissioner designated the right people talking about flu with school districts on what should they be doing....

Got to have scholarly and practical analysts that put together a plan that the mayor will buy... my guess is that politically Bloomberg would buy in... if he wins, which I think he will... take collaboratives and not politicize, but get them better connected to representatives at local level. With different collaboratives, you will have different constellations... might need a somewhat different group/congregation in Brownsville-East New York... got to get with city government officials who are dedicated... big challenge will be how do you allow this to happen without diminishing the power of the obstacles... when you bring government into play, which is what I am suggesting, you have danger of diminishing power of local input.¹³

I think there needs to be a big push for systems change... This needs to be informed by work in communities... This is hard for organizations to do both... But this will lead to change that is needed.⁹

Priorities should be to not put all their eggs in one basket—look to other government systems... to create a real type of strategic type of coordination with government systems... when we look at clients we serve, they are multiple system clients... move

away from the silos we've been in—branch out... and do work that integrates these silos more.⁸

The other piece is that this notion of viewing the work, not as incremental improvements or measures, but in a more comprehensive, sustaining way. It's also not a part of our makeup. I always use the concept of in what year of our lord will we get to the level of community improvement that matters for communities, and it's this notion that the opportunity can wait until we bring about these modest changes, as opposed to recognizing that it really does call for a massive engagement and infusion of resources, vision and commitment. We're not there. That's not how we approach social policy. We don't do it at any level of engagement, and that's from federal to city. We don't think that way. We don't work that way.¹¹

If you look at some of the work that came out of the work of the Wagner School, the Women of Color Policy Network, that looked at this notion of developing communities, when they looked at the indicators of what makes for healthy, thriving communities, it is the existence of certain indicators and the absence of those and particularly when you start talking about multiple indicators being absent, then it would only suggest that, unless you address those multiplicities in some fashion that recognizes that the absence of them and the absence of them to that kind of a level dictates the health and welfare of everybody that lives in that community, then it seems to me that you have no choice except to go a comprehensive intervention. Anything else sort of begs the question of in whose interest are you working, because it certainly isn't the larger community, because all of these things are a part of the mix.

In fact, as the Wagner School looked at that, one of the things that they did was they ranked what we call the 52 community districts in the city, and their list would say of the 52 there is some 20 or so neighborhoods within the city that are communities that are either communities at risk in terms of the absence of some multiplying numbers of these indicators to those communities where they are so without that it sort of begs the question of, "Why would we think life in these communities would be any different?"

So, it does say the evidence is there in terms of what makes for a healthy community, and if that is our agenda, if that is truly our agenda, then our investment has to be comprehensive, and anything short of that is—and I’m not quite certain I can coin it yet—but is somewhat disingenuous.¹¹

I would hope that when the opportunity comes for New York to focus on a community development strategy, that we really look to—that we not only look to, but that we insist on a comprehensive strategy, that we insist on a community engagement strategy, that we insist on a strategy that brings the—I like the use the notion of the three legs of the stool where you recognize the critical stakeholders: community, government and the private funding, that they are partners in that process. That those are some of the elements that we insist on in the work going forward and that anything short of that will not get us the kind of outcomes that we want for New York or, for that matter, any urban center that has the kinds of challenges that we’ve got.¹¹

One respondent suggested meeting with Linda Gibbs to figure out if there is a need for this:

Well, I do think that, at the appropriate time, perhaps after the next election, we should try to pull ACT into the Mayor’s Office, to Linda Gibb’s area of responsibility and see if we can’t work together to develop relationships and have a clear set of roles. I have no idea, for example, how much knowledge of ACT there is in HRA. But it would be good for us together, I think, to talk.⁶

Prioritizing community building over direct service delivery was another suggestion:

So, being really clear about what the work is of community building, what the small goals are of that work and how to really leverage that with what is going on and other funds that are coming into the community and how to make that more effective is more, I think, what a network’s role is, as opposed to have more money to do direct projects sort of thing.¹

Others believed that ACT needs to focus on community building:

I guess what I'm saying more is that I think that is or should be the goal of a lot of our work in child welfare is to create communities for children that are supportive and nurturing and safe, and the more you can do that, the less you need traditional child welfare services.

I think it's just essential. I think you're just—you're not going to get anywhere without it. Without it you're just kind of a sewing circle, and you're just kind of a group of professionals talking among yourselves. I've just wasted too many years of my life in that sort of thing to want to keep doing it. You're not going to build community without people from the community being represented and empowered in that conversation. That's my basic thinking on it. You can probably document enough impact to attract some continued funding, but can you really fundamentally strengthen a community without the participation of the people who live there? I don't see how.¹⁰

The role that it can play is to the degree—well, I think to the degree it can be a support and resource to those communities that are moving a community planning agenda on their own that where ACT can be sort of this kind of mobile team of ready expertise and skill sets to inform that kind of community process, then I think they represent a value add to the work in communities.

I see us in a timeframe where the opportunity to focus on a return to community development is possible, and I want to think that with this possibility that one of the things we're able to do is to take the lessons from the ACTs and from other kinds of efforts, recognize their limitations and not use them as the model of what the work needs to look like going forward. And for me, there's a difference between using them as lessons and using them as the models.¹¹

Facilitating and brokering funding was another suggestion:

I mean, other than them being an advocate and sort of promoting the model nationally and locally so if there are places where people are interested—so, IMPACT, right, suppose IMPACT was something Bushwick said we really want to do XYZ, could ACT play that role of helping them to get their meetings with funders and do certain things of that sort that would be harder for the local folks to do to facilitate that and give them access to that? That's probably a role they could play. I think, being up on all the different RFPs that are going on in the city and communicating that to the networks is another role—on the Collaboratives—is another role they can play.¹

[ACT's former Executive Director] always said when one door closes, there is another door that is open, so just to continue doing what they do best looking for other ways, other ways to kind of get funding to help us and to move the agenda. Well, regarding the situation how things are, I'd like to them to focus more on identifying funding because a lot of the work we have started, because the city's in a financial crisis, and the nation as a whole. Find another way to get other funding sources to help us continue the work we're doing.²

A way that they could play a role—help communities understand and access fed funding... for the kind of work that ACT is doing... help organizations/collaborations understand and access this money to help with sustaining their work.⁹

Yeah. I think the second thing [i.e., on shifting entities like ACS on how they should spend their money] is how ACT could help. I think—yeah. I think that's the major way that ACT could help is by their influence on public agency, but I don't know what the extent of that influence is going to be going forward, and I'm not sure how receptive the public agency is to it.¹⁰

Increasing early education and K–12 education funding in ACT neighborhoods was another suggestion:

Second, to focus on how to get early education and regular education funds into the areas that currently exist.¹³

Continuing to provide technical assistance (for e.g., replication, leadership development, etc.) to ACS' CPIs was another suggestion:

Yeah, [ACT can help by providing technical assistance] to the CPIs, now that the CPI—the Community Partnership is in the new RFP that is coming out. The one we did before was a demonstration project; a lot of good things came out of it as a result of their involvement. So, moving forward now, the RFP is out for them to also continue to have cause as we deepen the work.

My vision for ACT helping is looking into lesson learned from the pilot and finding a way to use the lesson learned to go deeper into accomplishing and measuring those child welfare outcomes. Are families and children better as a result of the Community Partnership Initiatives, and what makes this community better than other communities, and how can you replicate what it is working in one area in another area? Also, being that the Community Partnership is not covering the whole 59 districts, how would you translate whatever is working from those 11 communities to engage in communities at that part of the CPI? Because of the budget restriction, the agency, we don't have the finances to cover the whole 59 community districts, but we hope with ACT's expertise, they can help us pool outcome and the strategies that is working from those 11 communities or those challenges and helping us to move forward to the other, non-CPI communities.

And also, I'd like them to focus on leadership development, because now there's a lot of layoff going on, not only with ACS, with other governments who are part of the Community Partnership and organizations that the few staff that is going to be left and how do you do a leadership development in terms of reorganization, what can we—do with less, working with what we have now so you can pull out the best out of someone's

potential. There's no likelihood there is going to be more hiring, but how do you train and give leadership to those who are here to work.²

I'm not sure. It's just, there's so many uncertainties there now. Ideally, what I would like to see is ACT bringing the kind of influence to bear on the public agency that they have in the past and to see Competent Partnership become more central to the work in that agency. I guess that would be my aspiration for ACT?¹⁰

I think, in terms of ACS, but only in terms of ACS, the future will be heavily linked to Community Partnerships. And ACT's really very, very helpful work we would hope to continue and expand with the new sites when we get there. I also think that the central pulling together of community efforts, including not just community partners, is something that's very worthwhile and important to us. Beyond that, I think opportunities will come, but I'm not—you never know what they are until they actually happen. We are open to a lot of things, it's just a question of how we can help resource stuff.⁶

Increasing evaluation was another suggestion:

It the obvious one is there's a lot of questions and a lot of things that we still need answers to. There's a lot of stuff that we know that works, and being able to promote that more so that we can be pioneers in this work around the country, I think evaluation would probably be very helpful for us to be able to make sure we have lessons learned. You know, resources are tough, and evaluation is sort of the last thing that people think about. So, I think we probably—I'd say we probably don't spend enough time.¹

With support from the mayor, establishing collaboratives in every NYC community district was another suggestion:

Tap into the next admin to expand collaboratives so that they are citywide... Over five years we can do all of the areas of the city... this would be great but will certainly be a challenge, especially with a new admin... thinks Bloomberg with go for this.¹³

FUTURE CONCERNS

Most future concerns centered on funding and staffing. For example, some were general concerns about the lack of both:

It has been a struggle here in New York City to continue support for them and, from the very beginning, we've done things, which I think were innovative about staffing. And I think there should continue, there should be into the future more opportunities for them as we have the resources. It's complicated in New York because of the contracting process and New York City's way of doing business around money is not very susceptible to flexibility. So, that's why I think it got started the way it did. I think it's good, but you would wish we had other options than New Yorkers for Children or the staffing approaches that we've taken. But I don't know right now when we'll be in a position to work differently than we have.⁶

Challenging because resources are low now... have to have lots of credibility in community.⁹

ACT is strapped for resources... that will be the challenge.⁸

Concern about 2011. Concern about what happens when carryover funds run out. Concern about the foundation support not only to ACT, but to everything it currently supports or **[can't support for]** the support. What happens when stimulus dollars run out?¹²

The same challenges that we all share in just working in a real resource-starved environment.¹⁰

Other future concerns focused on a variety of aspects of funding and staffing. For example, some respondents voiced their concerns about the new leadership's impact on fundraising:

And now I think with the change in leadership, so you don't know, you don't have [ACT's former Executive Director] who knows everybody in every community in the city and at every agency in the city.⁶

Don't know about ACT's current status... Don't know how people have responded to [ACT's Executive Director]... Sense that there isn't the same level of support for ACT as there was when [ACT's former Executive Director] led it... It is going to be hard to keep ACT going in a big way... If ACT came to me for funding, would be harder to push through... Harder with [ACT's Executive Director]... Needs someone with a knowledge base of community work—not just service delivery.⁹

I've known organizations that have attempted to transition from the founding fathers, founding mothers and successful—I think that's going to be the hardest, most difficult part of going forward. I think when you think of ACT you think of [ACT's former Executive Director], you think of [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] because they were such a part. They started it—or [ACT's former Executive Director] started it, and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] was there shortly thereafter that.³

Another funding concern included the current competitive environment:

Challenge: Very competitive—ACT needs to uplift its role.⁹

Another funding concern included foundation and government's decreased interest in community development:

Unfortunately, our commitment to social agendas comes in sort of spurts where we could be excited for a short while, and then we move on. So, I think a part of where we are now is—it has lost its appeal. It's no longer—and I'm not even going to use that term—but

it's no longer the focus of the work, and it's no longer the focus of the work of government, of funders, and while I would say that communities probably remain committed to the notion of community improvement. It does not have that kind of reach outside of its own community, in terms of the other two critical stakeholder groups. There is not now a funded community interest in community development, and there's not now a governmental interest in community to development. So, I think that's a part of why I almost feel like we're now in a sort of maybe we can get back to it mode with the current administration. But I think that certainly is a critical part of it.¹¹

Lastly, a staffing concern included the ACT Advisory Board's decision to forego appointing one of the interim executive directors (ACT's Director of Community Planning) or ACT's Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training) as the permanent executive director and its impact on the organization's future survival:

I mean, I've met the new executive a few times, and she seems very competent, very qualified. I guess, like a lot of other people, I can't help but wonder why some of the people who were already there and serving in an interim leadership role were not able to continue in that role.¹⁰

CONCLUSIONS

Most government, foundation, and policy advocacy stakeholders understood ACT to be a citywide organization invested in improving the quality of life for children and families in ten community board districts. They discussed ACT's goals for change as improved, integrated, and decentralized services for children and families in these ten districts. Government, foundation, and policy advocacy stakeholders believed that ACT promoted the guiding principles of comprehensiveness and community building. They believed ACT made significant accomplishments on all of their operational strategies; however, their funding was limited. They also acknowledged that they were least versed in ACT's evaluation mechanism. Lastly, government, foundation, and policy advocacy stakeholders discussed individual changes in the

context of ACT building their personal leadership to be more effective at individual/family change for poor children and families. They were unable to articulate any of ACT's neighborhood changes for Brownsville-East New York; however, they discussed several for Bushwick. They were also able to report on ACT's system changes.

Chapter 7: ACT Staff

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored government, foundation, and policy advocacy stakeholders' perspectives on understandings of ACT, their goals for change, their guiding principles, their operational strategies, and their individual/family, neighborhood, and system-level changes.

An exploration of ACT staff's perspectives on these areas is the fourth step in this study.

Although an exhaustive and comprehensive analysis of ACT staff's perspectives is not the purpose of this study, an examination of selected aspects of these areas will contribute to the grounding of CCEs in human experience, particularly in its variations across different stakeholders. Data describing these areas were gathered through interviews with ACT staff. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings for this group.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF ACT

The previously mentioned literature states that there is no precise definition of comprehensive community efforts (CCEs) (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002; Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with respondents' arrays of understandings of Agenda for Children Tomorrow.

The literature also attempts to define CCEs by stating that *comprehensive* encompasses the range of measures and actions used to tackle social problems, and it includes the way these measures and actions are related, the persons who undertake them, and the ways in which people undertake them. *Community* refers to the political or administrative community, the community as a social

group of belonging, or the community of individual interests within a specific geographical area. *Efforts* refer to private initiatives, isolated projects, integrated programs supported by government, or all three at once (Brettschneider, 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997; Frug, 2002; Walsh, 1997). This is consistent with most of the understandings below.

One understanding of ACT was consistent with the literature's definition of comprehensive community efforts, in that it was an organization that built community-driven coalitions in local communities that promoted the well-being of children and families in these communities:

I guess just sort of basically I feel like when I explain ACT I would say we were in five communities where we were sort of building coalitions around child welfare. I can't think today. But sort of just building coalitions in communities to try to help promote the well-being of families in that community in a variety of different ways. But it's community-driven, so the planner would listen to the community and then take their agenda on for themselves and do what they need to do. Because the planner was with ACT, they could then go back and connect to government and to other resources to help that community.¹

It's in many ways a convener. It brings together a constituency, largely of community-based service providers and government service providers, and some policy folks, and some community-based advocates to focus on a variety of issues that are largely related to the well-being of children. That's how I see ACT.²

ACT's measures/actions were intended to advocate and support children via a partnership with local communities that were supported by private and public partners as well:

ACT is a public/private partnership that focuses on facilitating collaborative work between the various parties engaged in child welfare, kind of family and community partnerships. I can't remember if this is the way [ACT's former Executive Director] used to describe it, but to take care of the child, you need to focus on the family. To take care of the family, you need to focus on the

community. So, the work that ACT did focused on those three components with the goal of advocating on behalf of children, providing a support system for children.³

These reports are consistent with all three levels of social capital building (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

One compared ACT's measures/actions to the "glue" for many communities. Putnam suggests this when he compares the dimensions of bonding social capital to "superglue":

Yeah, I think—greatest contribution. Well, I feel like without ACT in a lot of communities there would've been no glue. So, I really think that ACT was the glue that held a lot of communities together to get things accomplished. I really feel like without a local planner a bunch of people can get together, but if no one's assigned, nothing gets done. So, I feel like that was huge for ACT to come in and do that.

Well, I guess I'd just say what I said before about ACT really being the glue. And that helped building communities in that way, and really sort of giving some structure, just structure and support to the community leaders so that they could help make changes that they wanted to make.¹

ACT's additional measures/actions included bringing people together, especially those who normally would not come together, to create positive change. This respondent elaborated by saying that this happened because people trusted ACT, and that not many were doing this until ACT started doing it:

...unique structure—if we have folks vested, something will change, positive change will come about. In the early years, novel idea to bring communities and stakeholders together. Now, a no brainer.⁴

So the answer is yes, I think we have helped influence that relationship between local service systems or even local people at times with government, specifically ACS. Because both government and folks in the community trust us. They both know that we're not going to put them in a jam, so to speak, in a sticky situation or an undesirable position. And so they trust that when we say we want to bring two people to the table who might be at opposing ends of the spectrum or who might think that they're at opposing ends of the spectrum, because of that trust they have in us, they come to the table, because it's us doing the asking. And more often than not, what we've been able to accomplish is to help people to understand that they're really not at different ends of the spectrum, that ultimately the goal, whether it's government or community, community-based organization specifically, is to help families. And sometimes we get lost in the translation about what "helping" means.

So I think that's the biggest way in which we've helped build those relationships.⁵

I think the value it brings is the goal of getting a large group of people in a room and focusing on issues that concern children and families from the point of view of neighborhood and community and local needs, and focused on the needs of children and families.

And I think the presence of that has allowed dialogue to take place that otherwise would not take place around those issues. So, I see that as a real value.²

More of ACT's measures/actions included helping build communities' capacities and uplifting their voices, measures consistent with bonding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

ACT tried to validate the local leaders' experiences...the big issue was did government validate these folks' experiences...was there sometimes, wasn't there at other times...needed to build their capacity in order to tell their stories...we

were there to help state the community's case...needed a coordinated body to help them tell their story...was about building their capacity so they could tell their story... also helped with constituency building, advocacy...not only about building capacity of community leaders, but gave John Sanchezes and Denise Rosarios a voice...they benefited from ACT from a career standpoint...no one ever talks about leaders standing on the shoulders of ACT/agencies...ACT brought people who were never at the table to the table...⁴

I think we've done a really good job of it more, again, in Bushwick though the Collaborative there and now we—and now IMPACT.⁶

Absolutely. On one hand, by being the greatest advocate of building of communities, I give that entire idea and support to ACT because it would not have happened—we would not have gotten this far if it wasn't for ACT.⁷

Other respondents described ACT as an organization that used the measure of building local human service collaboratives with the goal of approaching child welfare in a more comprehensive manner than was traditionally taken. They said that these efforts were built on pre-existing coalition neighborhoods, and involved city government commissioners who needed to pay more attention to these neighborhoods' needs:

I guess the original goal, which evolved over time and kind of was affected by the various leaders and players. The original goal was to build an informal team of local human service, child welfare, economic development players on a neighborhood level and take an approach to child welfare that was more comprehensive than was traditionally taken.

Ultimately, it evolved to make sure that those local coalitions are building on existing coalitions—we call them collaboratives—were tied as well to commissioners on a city level, who we thought needed to work more closely together with each other, as well as be more responsive to neighborhoods.⁸

Well, ACT's main role is to develop, throughout New York City, either collaboratives or coalitions and/or collaborative projects. And our reason for doing that is manifold. One is to help improve the way services are delivered in neighborhoods. Another is to reduce duplication of services. If we can get people talking about what they're doing in communities, the hope is that we can make better use of resources if we have people really—we can make better use of resources if we can have people really look at what's available in the community, in a given community, what the needs are. And kind of focus as a group on figuring out how to address those needs in a non-duplicative way.⁵

ACT was described as a unique collaboration between stakeholders both internal and external to local communities interested in improving these communities and helping them fend for themselves, consistent with bridging social capital across communities (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

ACT is a unique collaboration between stakeholders within NYC that have an interest in improving communities...when we talk stakeholders, we are talking about folks who have a vested interest in communities, whether they live there or not. We take a bird's-eye view and say "Who are these folks who have a vested interest in seeing this community improve?" City players, the mayor, government, etc.—folks who have a stake in communities—people who have a vested interest in communities—people who want to improve communities...So that communities can fend for themselves...⁴

Several respondents discussed ACT using the measure/action of an intermediary to bring communities, government, and foundations together to improve community outcomes and city-wide policies. They described ACT as utilizing a bottom-up measure to improve community outcomes and access to top-down systems, including improving their city-wide policies:

Act is probably most widely known as an intermediary that brings communities together with government and foundations to improve community outcomes. Also, to improve city-wide policies. Looking at ways to increase access to foundations. Three-legged stool—communities, foundations, and government.

Bottom up in nature. But at same time, using top down systems and access to make things happen.⁹

So, what is ACT? Yeah, it's an entity that serves as an intermediary between communities and government. I think that's been an important function that it's played over the years.¹⁰

Intermediary organization; to facilitate community and their articulation of their goals; connect resources in communities with stakeholders; public/private nonprofit; individual donations in area of child welfare; intent was "to be invisible" as intermediary...¹¹

One respondent said ACT was an intermediary catalyzing change, and that it never saw itself as a competitor with other organizations for items such as funding, leadership, etc.:

On the other hand, ACT never had a lot of power. ACT never had a lot of authority. ACT never had a lot of money. Other organizations have had a lot of money, but for a very short period of time—other similar organizations, I mean. Other organizations have focused in on a single neighborhood like the Harlem Children's Zone, and I think that that has captured the idea that it's expensive doesn't matter as much as the fact that it's actually demonstrating and illustrating what a really comprehensive approach could look like, so at least you could see it instead of debating about why it's too costly. Then, maybe we'd shock ourselves and find out what we think is expensive isn't so expensive and kind of doing that too many places would be too expensive, even for Harlem Children's Zone.

So, we never built a building. Part of it is, Al Kline at Columbia talked about the fear of Ediface complexes, getting carried away with buildings, but other people argued that sometimes the buildings give you sustainability and permanence and a sense of community ownership. But ACT was not a competitor to community-building organizations. It was a go-between. It was an intermediary. It was a facilitator. In that such, it never saw itself as being another organization, competition for funds or leadership, but a catalyst for change.⁸

Another respondent said that ACT was invested in communities' success, which communities appreciated, and that this was a way to dodge the question, "What are you doing in my community?":

I think it's a good point. I think groups, while others may have felt like, "Oh, how could you come into my neighborhood?" that would have been your first thought: you're coming into my neighborhood to tell me. I think for some communities it gave credibility and validity. Wow, we've got this organization that's interested enough to come out to our territory to work with us, our home turf, to work with us to give us time, to give us resource, and I think eventual—I think it came to lend credibility, even if some people might have had resistance to it at the beginning. I think it really ended up being—I think it was a good point. I think people really liked the fact that there's somebody outside their own community interested enough in them.⁶

Several other measures and how they were related were discussed. One included a description of ACT as an organization that focused on integrating services, giving communities a voice, and connecting communities to city government and other resources, consistent with all three levels of social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

Okay. I work here and I cannot recite the mission statement. Having worked here, I do more and more see ACT as a group that brings people together, conveners, facilitators, a group that can—has the luxury of looking at the big picture because

we're not involved with direct program and looking at how to improve services so they are more community based. I see us as an organization—is this okay?—I see us as an organization that is focusing on service integration and giving communities voice and connecting those communities to city government and resources and other types of resources.⁶

Another measure included ACT's valuing and striving for an authentic “bottom-up” planning process:

...and it [the goal of the collaborative] also was to respect the bottom-up process and to have a genuine bottom-up process that wasn't just kind of playing with these collaboratives to make it seem like they had a role in plans that had been conjured up elsewhere.⁸

This respondent elaborated by stating that ACT conducted community research by asking community leaders/residents what they wanted:

And I'm sure they did a lot of research in the community, because that was huge to ACT, to actually go out and ask the community what they wanted before they did anything.¹

Another measure included ACT as an organization that connected communities to citywide power sources:

ACT is there to support us. ACT's there to connect us to a broader citywide dialogue. I think because of ACT historically having connections to city government, and people in policy and decision-making positions, we still have those connections at ACT. And IMPACT has been able to activate those on our own in a lot of ways. But, still, ACT has a really crucial role there for connecting a community to a source of power. And that's been one of the tag-lines of ACT. ¹⁰

ACT was described as the testing ground for ACS:

Yeah, no, definitely. That's when I sort of go back to the testing grounds, I feel like ACT did this thing in the community and it worked well for so many years. And then, ACS sort of said, "Oh, yeah, neighborhood networks, yeah, community work, that's what we need to be doing. It's working. It's doing this. Let's do this." And so, now they have this unit dedicated to community partnerships. And it's evolved, right?¹

So, I feel like in a way it was like a testing ground for ACS in a way. I also feel like the impartiality of ACT made it a great place for ACS to set roots in the community in a way that was more benign to community than as if ACS had gone in there themselves.¹

Additional measures included ACT as an organization that provided technical assistance and capacity-building:

And then the other piece of it, I think, is technical assistance and capacity-building. And that could be anything from organizational development to development of coalitions to capacity-building for individuals.⁵

ACT is an organization that helps through the partnership with public and private organizations to build capacity in at-risk neighborhoods and throughout the city. So, it is really, in my opinion, an organization made up of people that are able to relate and find what someone or some group needs to be able to advance themselves. I think it's a very flexible and talented organization that is essential to the communities and the city.⁷

Well, to my understanding, I know Agenda for Children Tomorrow is a private-public agency that supports communities with technical assistance in terms of improving the well-being of children and families across the city. So, it

collaborates with CBOs, faith-based organizations, and all the city agencies that are involved in the child welfare system. So, they have staff members in the field explaining what ACT does and what it can do to upgrade whatever policy decisions communities are taking. So, that is my understanding of what ACT does.¹²

ACT was also described as an entity that organizes, educates, and connects communities to systems so that they gain a better understanding of communities' needs:

ACT, in my experience, has been—it was an agency that kind of helped drive people towards addressing the needs in each individual community. Because in any community that ACT worked, everything was set up a little bit differently, depending on the amount of partners that we already had there, the kind of political pull or leverage that they had. How organized were they already.

So kind of come in to ACT in Bushwick, they did a lot of the organizing of thoughts, more so. Because there are a lot of different people that are still working for, in their own agendas, kind of push their own mission and goals forward. And a lot of times they can't take off their blinders to see how it connects to the person next to them who's doing the exact same thing, or something supportive or congruent to what they're doing. So instead of making the easy connection of, "Okay, let's partner with these people and we can move our agenda forward, we can service more people and deliver more impact," that doesn't happen a whole lot.

So that's a lot of what ACT did here. They kind of were able to knock out some of those walls, kind of explain and show people that everybody's, we're all in the same boat, we're all moving for the same goals, which is to make the community a much better, improve the quality of life in each community that they work in. And do it easier, I guess, instead of trying to work so hard against the grain. That's what they do.

So it's a couple of different things. They help do the organizing. They kind of shed light a little bit on the situation, so people can see what's actually going on and how they can get to those things better. And then they try to connect those to the system. To the city, to the state. To try to get the people who run everything to understand what the different particular neighborhoods are going through, what the particular needs are. And how, by shifting a little bit of what they do, they can make a much bigger impact on the goals of each individual neighborhood that ACT is working through.¹³

ACT was described as an organization that does invisible/behind-the-scenes work that is not easily funded:

We do the invisible work. We're behind the scenes. It's the work that's hard to get paid for. It's the work that's hard to get noticed. It's the work of bringing together a coalition, bringing together a group of people. And then how do you support them? How do you give them the assistance, how do you bring in extra training to make things meaningful and sustainable?⁶

Another respondent said that there is an inherent flexibility built into doing the "invisible," which allowed for ACT to help communities with what they defined as their needs:

I think that it's most supportive because, when you're doing the invisible, you can pretty much do anything; you can define that in any way you want to. It gives you the flexibility and the latitude to help people in any way you see fit at that time. So it's the things that people know that you're charged with doing, whether it's through your mission, or through your principles, or through your funding. But it's also going with the flow of whatever the community says it needs.

I think that the flexibility of that is what is most supportive in that whole contribution in the context of doing the invisible.⁵

Other respondents discussed the ways in which their understandings of ACT have shifted over time:

ACT was started over 20 years ago in response to a paper that [ACT's former Executive Director] worked on with the Mayor's Office around collaboration and coordinated services, I daresay service integration; I don't know if that was a term that was being used at that time. And how part of the gist of the paper was how communities could benefit, or social services could benefit from some collaborative effort in communities that, by bringing together organizations and other key stakeholders in communities around specific issues—in this case, child welfare—that we would be able to influence the way that we provide services by hearing from all those different voices.

I think from there, ACT became a project, I hesitate to say, “of the Mayor's Office,” I'm not sure if that's technically correct, but it was housed in the Mayor's Office and got a lot of support from the Mayor's Office and from private foundations. And ACT at that time started to conceptualize and develop the first of five collaboratives. The goal was to create 10. And those collaboratives were in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bushwick, Mott Haven in the Bronx, Queens and...oh, Washington Heights.

And for a number of years, ACT had local planners who were working in those neighborhoods, in those five neighborhoods. ACT at some point moved from the Mayor's Office in terms of housing, moved into the Administration for Children's Services space. And I think, as a result of being in that space, became more focused on child welfare in the context of ACS. Because I think probably prior to being housed at ACS, ACT's focus was a little bit broader than—when ACT said “child welfare,” it was a broader definition than the protective services definition that ACS gives to “child welfare.” But when you're sitting in someone's house, you start to focus on what the rules are in their house and what they want to feed

you; you've got to eat what they feed you. And so, as a result of us having to eat what we were being fed, we became more focused on this whole ACS concept of child welfare. And got very ACS-heavy in our work.

But that was a long time in the making, didn't happen automatically. So for a long time we had those five collaboratives. We had local planners who manned or womaned those five collaboratives and provided—a term which [ACT's former Executive Director] did not like—servant leadership, but I haven't come up with a better one yet. Servant leadership to those collaboratives—and that's servant leadership meaning both a part of the leadership and helping to guide, to set the agenda and to guide the direction of the coalition as a part of the leadership—but at the same time being the person responsible for doing all of the [unintelligible work 7:43], including the invitations, the minutes, the communications piece, the research, and everything that needs to be done in order to keep the collaborative running and keep people connected in the collaborative.⁵

At this point, ACT no longer has collaboratives. I think that we lost, for lack of a better term, our last local planner in maybe 200...towards the end of 2006, beginning of 2007. And that was the Jamaica local planner.⁵

I think that it's always been a part of our work since the beginning. I think that as we had to begin to write proposals to request funding and support, specifically to do that work—and we've gotten more intentional about the way that we articulate that—I think that in the beginning and in the past, it was just an expectation, an expected part of the work. If we were to work in economically-challenged communities, then what you find is that the organizations that are in those communities are as challenged as the families that you're trying to help economically. And so they need a lot of help and support.

And the expectation was that the local planner would be able to provide that technical assistance and that help and support to those organizations and to that

collaborative. And so when you talk about an organization that is a part of the collaborative that might be losing resources because they don't have—they can't afford or don't have a proposal writer, can't write—it's a really super-grassroots organization and they're not used to writing the kind of sophisticated proposals that are going to take them to the next level, then that became the local planner's role or the organization's role, to make sure that we provided some support, whether it was formal or informal, to make sure that the organizations that we were working within our collaborative survived, no matter what their needs are. So if it's providing some sort of help with an organization that's in fiscal trouble, they need someone to help, it may or may not have been the local planner or an ACT staff person that helped them directly, but we would find someone who could help and who could provide that kind of help and support to the organization.

In later years, as we began to refocus and speak differently about the work that we do—because it's the same work, we're still doing the same work, but I think we just talk about it differently and it's in a different context, and we learned to articulate those things better as the organization grew and changed. We had our own set of needs that we had to meet, and one of those needs was to be able to better articulate the invisible. Because all of those, that type of technical assistance and the capacity-building, all of that stuff fell within the realm of the invisible. That Kay [Sherwood] talks about in her report and [ACT's former Executive Director] always talks about, that we're always behind the [unintelligible 19:05] invisible and that's exactly what it is.⁵

That's a hard question, because ACT is in such a transition space right now. I worked for ACT when [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] were there. And that was 20—you got me? That was eight—I was there for maybe two years or three years when they were there. And ACT was one thing. And then, they were gone for a year. And now we have

[ACT's Executive Director] and it's something new. So, it's really in a transitional phase.¹⁰

Mostly it has been like that because, in taking over the liaison as I was doing, the day-to-day running of the whole thing, I'm also involved, you know, with the running of the CPI, but the majority of the work is done by Eva, a little bit different from my role when ACT employed me as the liaison for Brownsville-East New York, you know. I would always—sometimes bring a lot of the subcommittee members to ACT's central office. For instance, about two of the subcommittee members were shipped into meeting places from Brooklyn to Manhattan. So, I was able to show the committee members where I work and what ACT can really do for them. I have already given an example of linking resources to the schools. I mean, that was big.

So, the only thing that really hindered us was the finance, and we didn't have enough money to do the things, really, we envisioned to do. So, those periods of time, ACT, as I said already, was very much involved. Now, presently, it's not like we used to be, because to my knowledge about [inaudible], ACT was given specific assignment by ACS when the CPI started, and the implementation process, and stuff like that. But after all the things had been implemented and all the necessary staff members were put into place, ACT's role diminished. So, I think my era as the SPA or the network liaison—ACT's role was more intense than at present.

I don't know whether the CPI would take advantage of what ACT does now. I don't know. See, the thing is, there are so many places in the CPI now that I guess maybe either ACS, or individual CPIs, or Brownsville-East New York have to sit down and decide we should let ACT do certain kinds of training for us periodically that may be about leadership roles, about budgeting, about this and that. We haven't come up with something; we decided now, though, to do a training in August where ACT would take the lead. Besides that, I don't see

anything very big for ACT. I don't know other communities, but in terms of Brownsville-East New York.¹²

So, not that it's totally diminished. It's playing a key role, but it used to be a broader thing. Right now I think the early childhood area, ACT is playing a critical role there.

So, as I said, people think they have money, they have the resources to move to—I mean, to diversify themselves wherever they want to go. I guess that's the main reason why, to me, ACT's role has been diminished there.¹²

The CPI, to be honest, is not like the networks, because initially, I don't know, because ACT was one thing. ACT did all those things with the network without receiving any amount of money because, like I said, we had small amount of money coming from New Yorkers for Children, and ACT was instrumental in terms of us getting that money and in a very prudent manner, because the money was very small. This CPI thing is ACT's role. Initially with those CPIs that started in the first phase, Bed-Stuy, Jamaica, and Highbridge, ACT was really involved from the beginning to the middle, and I think the funding was still there. And those of us who started in the next phase, you know, ACT got involved after the point of the strategic planning for all the second-phase CPIs. Then, after that, maybe Bushwick could say ACT is involved because of IMPACT, and that is a different story. But with us in East New York and Brownsville, not as much.¹²

At one time, you know, when you left, there were people who came. We had about—the place was so full with a lot of staff members doing so many things for ACT. Gradually, everybody started leaving, and ACS would not fill in. So, if you have people, you have the knowledge, the idea to do stuff, but you don't have people to help you out.¹²

They don't have the same presence anymore. They don't. It's just, even at IMPACT or even through, like the Bushwick CPI, they don't have the same connection. Technically, I'm not connected to ACT anymore.¹³

Yeah, technically, but I really—I'll tell you, they show up at meetings. When we're having meetings with ACS, [UPS], I'll run into them there. But I don't know what kind of influence they have. Because I don't see it—like, I don't see it on my level as much.¹³

Understandings of ACT's Presence in Brownsville-East New York

One respondent said the Brownsville-East New York neighborhood network's transition to a CPI was smooth because of their pre-existing network with an array of service providers:

The only thought I had was, actually, their Neighborhood Network did bring in, before it became a CPI, even though it was by child welfare, they had libraries involved and mental health and developmental disabilities, and because they had that in place, they have more going—they have that in place now when it became a CPI, and I see other neighborhoods that started without a Neighborhood Network that just started as CPI Coalition, and they have a harder time for naming all those partners.⁶

Another respondent said the Brownsville coalition emerged after ACT's initiation of collaboratives in other neighborhoods. He said it emerged as an ACS Neighborhood Network and later as a CPI. ACS Neighborhood Networks, as well as their CPIs, were modeled on ACT's approach to neighborhood coalition building; however, their definition of child welfare was narrower than ACT's definition. In addition, ACT supported ACS's neighborhood networks and CPIs by employing the roles of educator and convener:

Well, Brownsville really emerged later, almost as part of ACS, Administration for Children's Services initiatives. They kind of also embraced and adopted the ACT

approach to neighborhoods and coalition building, except that they were looking in regions, and they were going to go with a network in every community, and their focus was a little bit narrower, in terms of child welfare primarily. We were trying to broaden out and consider child welfare a broad rubric for the whole range of community needs and issues. So, they created this network, and they helped fund a similar position to the local collaborative, local planner, and they called it a liaison.

So, we found ourselves working there and building, again, a coalition modeling a certain kind of leadership that was less rhetorical and more outcome-oriented, but I don't know that, other than an educational role and a convener role, I'm not sure that the products, policy, program development product were as concrete as in some of the other communities.⁸

Another respondent discussed Brownsville-East New York stakeholders' lack of understanding of ACT:

But all in all, I think people who are really involved in the work, they are aware of ACT and what ACT does. People sometimes may be knowledgeable about what we do, but they are not much involved in the work that we do, so when you ask them about it, "What is ACT?" they know because of me, it is ACT. What ACT really does, they know the basics. They help with technical assistance and they are not giving direct services to them, but they are behind the scenes shipping things out. So, some of them are very knowledgeable and others are not.¹²

Understandings of ACT's Presence in Bushwick

One respondent said that the Bushwick Collaborative (under Bushwick ACT's first local planner's leadership) did not identify themselves as "ACT." The Bushwick ACT Collaborative

viewed Bushwick ACT's first local planner and ACT Central as ACT—i.e., they did not identify themselves as ACT:

Didn't ID themselves as ACT—looked at Bushwick ACT's first local planner and ACT Central as ACT—didn't want to give up their identity.⁹

One respondent described ACT's history with IMPACT:

Went to Ethel S. on developing advocacy programs with children and families... decided to create parent access point model...work became about developing and promoting models that worked...PIINS project was another example...absence of local planners pushed this work forward to stay alive...also, I was more attracted to this...[ACT's former Executive Director] did more of child welfare stuff...when early learning project/UW came around... asked me to put together a proposal... I mentioned work with Frieda Spivack...conducted a survey, in Bushwick and WH, on funding for early childhood childcare and education...ultimately was about expanding funding/services...three things created IMPACT—was on the Childcare Inc. Committee, was working with the United Way to create early childhood project, was working with Frieda and other Bushwick leaders on early childhood childcare and education issues...UW was about funding linking services and increasing parent access...ACT said, "We can help! We can help you with creating a model."

Went to Bushwick and Washington Heights and convened parents...collected information from them...developed a model, parent information access points...parents told us this is what they needed...we created this and got funding for it...also created and implemented capacity-building workshops. [Bushwick IMPACT's first lead coordinator] days...did all these workshops...when we were done, we realized we had this big parent body...were ready to be engaged...we selected them to help lead first parent access point/IMPACT....came up with criteria...needed to create a governing body...needed readiness of

community....needed to build capacity of existing services...needed families...etc.

Came up with an ACT oversight concept. Local design team grew out of this...parents were on it...and a variety of service providers/leaders...still need to take information to hospitals...local design team became the foundation of the group...this is how early childhood project was born...then name changed from parent access point to IMPACT...⁴

Another respondent said that ACT's current presence is Bushwick IMPACT:

So, in terms of where ACT is now, ACT's presence in Bushwick? It's a memory. It's a standard. And I think its 21st century incarnation is IMPACT. Well, maybe not 21st century, but its 2006 incarnation is IMPACT. So, I think in a way it might have made sense that ACT did step out of Bushwick, because we did have IMPACT.¹⁰

This respondent went on to describe their understanding of Bushwick IMPACT's history:

Yeah. I started doing work with childcare I guess 2000, 2001. There was a federal grant, the Early Learning Opportunities Act, that came to New York through the United Way. The United Way convened various philanthropists and childcare advocates. ACT was one of them. They had three key goals. They were mostly around systems delivery, or more effective systems and delivery system of childcare. Increasing access was one of the three goals. And they called ACT in to research that. "What does accessibility look like?"

So, ACT did a wonderful job, in my understanding of it, in terms of visiting 10 different neighborhoods, looking at who was there, who was doing childcare, who were the leaders asking questions, doing surveys, holding town hall meetings of leaders. They brought up focusing on Washington Heights and Bushwick to do

more intensive research and get a picture of what was going on with childcare from a parents' perspective. What was the access issue? What were some of the barriers? What were some of the solutions? And they created these beautiful portraits of what a solution would be, what a response to inaccessibility to childcare would actually look like. And that was in the form of a proposal for the parent access points, which today is IMPACT.

So, initially, it started right around the time of 9/11, so that was, right, 2001. So, I think it stopped and started—the citywide coalition started around then. So, ACT's role, where ACT really got going doing the research, I think, was not until 2003, 2004...2003. And then, there were a lot of stops and starts, because once they came up with this proposal, they waited for funding. The funding that came in was miniscule. The whole budget was something like \$280,000. They got \$35,000.

So, ACT started from the parent empowerment. ACT started to roll out IMPACT by bringing parents together, training parents, training them to be advocates for childcare and referrals to social services. And the whole idea of a parent access point was a one-stop shop kind of service center for parents, anything that they needed for their children.¹⁰

Another respondent discussed their understanding of Bushwick IMPACT's Bushwick Early Education Coalition (BEEC):

Yeah [the local design team became the Bushwick Early Education Resource Coalition which became the Bushwick Early Education Coalition].¹³

Not like ACT [i.e., the Bushwick Act Collaborative] used to do. Again, because they're focusing highly on early childhood intervention, so they're made up of

day care providers, early childhood intervention, Head Start programs. And that's kind of—it's almost like they pigeonholed themselves into this. Because their focus is early childhood intervention.

In the long run, probably they might start to deal with some of those overlapping issues that might work on a community level, but right now they're kind of pedaling against the tide. Mostly what they're focusing on is the funding changes that are going to be happening, the shift from the pre-K programs to the Department of Education, as opposed to the Head Start programs. So they're kind of scrambling to come up with ways of dealing with the foreseeable issues that are going to be with that. Kids that are going to be caught in that middle gap, parents that are no longer guaranteed childcare, having to, if you're in a pre-K program, that you're going to have to reapply for kindergarten, because there's no, you don't get grandfathered in, and some parents don't know that. So it's a lot about trying to educate the parents of the neighborhood, trying to address the issue that one of the Head Starts is closing down.

So there's a lot of things that are happening—that keep happening. Like, two months ago, it was the change in funding for agencies that weren't at capacity. So then there was a big push to make sure that everybody was at capacity, so that they wouldn't lose funding and classrooms wouldn't close, and then all these kids would be, parents would be struggling to find childcare. There's constantly pulling up data around the number of kids that are here that don't get care.

So a lot of their focus is just, like I say, on early childhood intervention.¹³

Another respondent (who, at the time of the study, was a former ACT employee) did not associate ACT with Bushwick IMPACT:

But because it is so much of a community-driven project...the CPI, the BMCI...No, it's more community-driven [than ACS=driven]. Because they want

us to come up with a plan, they want—about the stuff, the partners that we have.

IMPACT is a huge partner. It's not ACT. It's IMPACT.¹³

Like previous reports on understandings of ACT, these reports document ACT as a organization that bonds social capital within communities and creates synergy between communities and public institutions. Unlike previous reports, these reports highlight ACT as an organization that bridges social capital between communities. Furthermore, these reports highlight ACT's "bottom-up" approach, as well as ACT's doing the invisible. In general, Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick do not reflect these two associations. Possible explanations include ACT as an outsider, ACT as a citywide organization, and that ACT's work with communities was indeed very visible, as evidenced by local planners and liaisons.

GOALS FOR CHANGE

The literature states that CCEs pursue three objectives:

- substantial change in distressed communities, and a sustainable development and improvement process in order to improve conditions and opportunities for individuals and families residing in these communities
- change in the nature of relationships between communities and external service providers, and
- local change that draws upon both local and external resources and knowledge

Simply put, CCEs seek change on the individual and family level, community level, and systemic level (American Writing Corporation, 1992; Barchechat, 2003; Barss and Associates, 1969; Brettschneider, 2001; Chaskin et al., 2001; Connell et al., 1995; Fishman, 1993; Milligan et al., 1996; Stone, 1996). Remnants of these goals are evident in respondents' reports below.

Individual and Family Level Goals for Change

One respondent said ACT's individual/family and community change goals were to keep children safe and free from neglect and abuse, and provide parents with support so that they could prevent crises involving their children. These were social capital goals that were critical in a community like Bushwick with little political or economic capital/power:

I don't know about mobilizing communities. That varies depending on the neighborhood, but getting organizations and agencies to work together more effectively and comprehensively. But a lot of it is around service delivery, I think. And I don't know that ACT has a broader agenda of what it really believes for children and families. Obviously, the basic goals, child welfare, very broadly speaking, children should be safe, free from abuse and neglect, parents should get the support they need to be available for their children and support their families and prevent crises.¹⁰

Another respondent described Bushwick IMPACT's individual/family and community change goals as educating parents about the importance of early childhood education and enhancing family literacy. They also link families to needed services in and beyond the community:

Okay, their goals. Their goals are basically to educate parents about the importance of early childhood education, increase the amount of literacy for young children, along with the interaction between parent and child.

As far as I understand it, that's their primary, and they do a whole bunch of things that are around that. Because that leads to improving community, self-esteem building, advocacy. And at the same time, being a referral source for parents who need any kind of support to help that happen. So while they're working on the literacy and stuff in-house, they're also working on the concrete needs of the parents, because the parent's not going to focus on the internal stuff until they take care of the stuff that...

Yeah, making sure they got a house, the benefits are lined up, we help them find jobs. That's another thing that's happening more recently, is more and more people are coming through the door asking if we can help them find employment. And people are telling—their husbands, because a lot of the times we deal with the moms—their husbands are in need of work.

So now they're trying to scramble for resources around employment. And that just comes out of the fact that this is what they see is happening, so they're trying to be proactive with some of those things.¹³

Neighborhood Goals for Change

One respondent identified the following as ACT Collaboratives' goals:

The goal of the Collaborative was to establish 10 goals that would impact, in a strategic way and reflect the interests and the needs and the facts in the community, that would improve the well-being of families and the safety of children in those neighborhoods. And that, I think, probably remains the goal. And it also was to respect the bottom-up process and to have a genuine bottom-up process that wasn't just kind of playing with these collaboratives to make it seem like they had a role in plans that had been conjured up elsewhere.⁸

System-Level Goals for Change

One respondent identified ACT's system change goals as connecting city government to local neighborhoods in an effort to make services responsive and accessible, consistent with bridging social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

Oh, gosh, let's see if I can get it right. Connecting people to communities and communities to sources of power or something like that. It's not exactly. And so, I think that is an important role of ACT.

I see ACT as a set of principles. I see ACT as a broad—the mission broadly stated—there's a very specific mission about building neighborhood collaboratives. While I was at ACT, we really tried to define and refine the mission statement. So, I don't want to get into those details, because I think it's more pertinent to say that what ACT has done for New York City has been part of a movement to get the city to look at neighborhoods as important entities in serving families. So, neighborhood services, ACT focuses a lot on services, service provision from the angle of keeping it responsive to the users of those services. Keeping those services accessible, so meaning neighborhood-based, and accessible in the sense that language barriers don't prevent people from accessing services, accessible in the sense that people don't have to go through 16 different hoops to find childcare, for example. Navigating systems. ACT has worked at a number of different levels with ACS administration to rewrite steps to accessing OST [i.e., out-of-school time], summer camp, things like that.¹⁰

Of all the reports, these reports come closest to capturing the essence of ACT's intended goals. One possible explanation includes the challenges associated with communicating the goals of an intermediary organization like ACT, and the inherent position of staff having to constantly refine their articulation of such an organization.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING ACT

There are two principles that guide comprehensive community efforts: comprehensiveness and community building (Himmelman, 1992; Kubisch et al., 1997; Mattessich et al., 1992;

Rosewater, 1992; Stone, 1996). All respondents agreed with this notion, and most agreed with their definitions:

Comprehensiveness: The full range of circumstances, opportunities, and needs of individuals and families living in CCE communities and the relationships among them.

Community building: Strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive community change.

The literature states that CCEs give attention to comprehensiveness and community building activities, in principle and/or action, and strive to achieve synergy among them.

Respondents believed that the promotion of comprehensiveness and community building led ACT to their goals; some believed that the lack of these principles prevented ACT from meeting their goals. Some believed that both were ACT's central principles:

These were core values of ACT...were consistent throughout...always went back to these principles...ACT always communicated this to the outside world...ACT deferred to communities; ACT believed communities were the face/should be on the front page. Was not about ACT...¹¹

I think ACT—those two principles we talked about, not viewing people in isolation in terms of a complex array of needs and differences too, plus being neighborhood-based is a rock solid, core principle—those are rock solid, core principles of ACT. And they kind of inform how they approach things.²

Comprehensiveness

One respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by being responsive to the community's real needs:

The way you're describing comprehensiveness to me also has a touch of the word holistic in that you want to think systemically, you don't just fit one approach to every community. So, like you said, if you're starting a program, you're going to think about what the families in this community really need, and in that way, I think that has truly been that ACT has embraced that fully and completely. Again, I think IMPACT has done an incredible job of doing that, of saying, "This is what people in this community need," and they're very responsive. Because there's not a lot of hierarchy there, when somebody – when parents in Bushwick say, "This is what we want for children; we want this kind of group," they can get that kind of group going within a month or two.⁶

Another respondent said ACT also promoted comprehensiveness by building a fireplace where people gathered and used the ACT profiles to prompt concrete discussions, an example of bonding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

The other thing that defined it is the particular fireplace we built, the profiles. If you meet about how to improve services, you get a lot of philosophical debates. If you put down a profile with facts and questions about a neighborhood and you ask people to get engaged around that, that's a better process for having more concrete discussion, and if that profile has in it material about housing and jobs and crime and volunteerism and building assets, the discussion has the opportunity at least to cut across the silos, to cut across the boundaries. So, I think that made a very important contribution.

If the only tool you have is a hammer, as we always say, you see every problem as a nail. If the only data you have is about doubled-up apartments, that leads you to a discussion about homelessness and about cultural patterns in living and about the reasons that people are doubled up, or unaffordable housing/affordable

housing. But if you have that and child welfare data, the discussion then might veer to some other areas, and I believe deeply in serendipity, serendipity being bringing together two things that usually don't go together to create a third thing that has importance and value. So, we fostered several serendipities, and that kind of serendipity is very connected to comprehensive service delivery, and we were very inspired by Liz Shore and her book, *Within Our Reach*, which said things that work are comprehensive and flexible and neighborhood-based.⁸

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by bringing people together on the ground but that this was difficult to accomplish at a citywide, policy level:

Well, I guess inasmuch as it's ACT's goal to be sort of comprehensive on the ground and cross barriers and take people out of their silos, I feel like they accomplish that. I don't feel like, on a policy level, I don't even know if that's part of their mission. But I don't see that on the policy level they're able to do that. And even in my position now we're trying to get agencies to work together. And it's really difficult. And I can't even point to an example of where ACT tried to do that, except by having staff lines from HRA and ACS and other city agencies. I feel like that was sort of one bridge. But you can't point to another example where they really brought in other government agencies. I remember working with HRA. And I remember working with ACS. But never together, always separately.¹

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by being inclusive:

That's very interesting because—I don't know if I've quite realized this, but one of our governance guidelines was inclusiveness, and I think there is a strong connection between a governance guideline that says we're inclusive, which means you don't sit around at a meeting and say, "What are you doing here? Why are you here?" You just say "Hello" and "Welcome." That approach to any kind of organization meeting that is intended to build some kind of strategic impact,

that approach ends up bringing more people from a greater variety of places than a process or a governance structure that says, “Here are our criteria for being here,” or “Here are the various levels of authority you get, depending on what street you live on or whether you belong to a particular profession or are focused on a particular discipline.” So, the openness of the membership leads to an openness of participation.

Regardless of respondents’ perceived relationship between ACT and Bushwick IMPACT, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, the Child Welfare Neighborhood Network, and the Brownsville-East New York CPI, they believed that there was a relationship between underlying principles and goals.⁸

Another respondent said ACT promoted comprehensiveness by developing an inclusive collaborative and convening it:

...comprehensiveness was supported because developed a collaboration that was inclusive of community—ACT was comprehensive and a convener.⁹

One respondent said ACT did a better job of promoting comprehensiveness than ACS because the collaboratives started locally; the neighborhood networks grew out of the ACS system:

When I think of comprehensiveness, I think of involving as many components of systems that contribute to a family’s well-being and, from that point of view, I think that ACT did a better job than the current neighborhood networks, because the neighborhood networks started from child welfare. Collaboratives started differently and did not start out of one system.

So, yeah, I think that has—the holistic approach has been part of ACT’s value system and its programs. Service, the comprehensiveness, I think we strive for it. Comprehensiveness is the way I’m describing an inclusion of as many systems as

possible. We strive for it and, I think, as I said, the collaboratives are better than the current neighborhood networks.⁶

Another respondent said that ACT promoted comprehensiveness by recognizing that communities have more than one need, and there are many ways to meet communities' needs:

I think by looking or by recognizing there isn't just one need or one approach to meeting that need. So, my understanding is that's how everyone here at ACT has worked, and I think it's key. I think it's absolutely key.⁷

Another respondent said that ACT promoted comprehensiveness, but not to the extent that it became an unattainable standard:

Comprehensiveness scares me if it becomes an obstacle. I think the spirit behind comprehensiveness is correct. I don't think you can effectively provide service in terms of family service or service to children unless you think of some compositive needs and complications in life that need to be addressed. You can't deal with a problem in isolation. I agree with that.

I would be afraid of comprehensiveness creating a standard that can't be met because of limitation, so if we're not doing everything for everybody, we're failing. However, if we recognize that people are multidimensional, families are multidimensional, and we may have a service to offer, but it's in the context of this multidimensional need, I agree with that. And I think ACT agrees with that. I think if you instead work in isolation, you frequently won't be effective, because you're ignoring these other factors that are at play. That I agree with, especially when you're working with children and families of need and in poverty.²

She went on to say that ACT assisted the Bushwick Early Education Coalition in achieving comprehensiveness by connecting them to other resources locally and at a citywide level, consistent with bridging social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

Right. So, I think comprehensiveness for BEEC is us assisting them, and learning about different pieces of what's going on in the city that directly relate to them, and bringing it to them in different ways, such as Maryanne Schretzman came to them. That was really local, city government coming to them and giving them the facts. The other piece is assisting them in going to visit various early Head Start programs or early childcare programs and have other organizations come in from outside the community to help sort of find out what's happening, what's going on. Is this appropriate? Do they need to be certified? So, there's whole different levels of support and information that's coming, different levels from very, very neighborhood-based to bringing in resources.⁷

She mentioned that she believed Bushwick IMPACT was created with an eye towards comprehensiveness, because it always sought input from stakeholders and participants, from the design phase to its current phase:

I think, with IMPACT, I think definitely the design for IMPACT was created with an eye towards comprehensiveness and really utilized a lot of different stakeholders looking at issues from a few different angles, used—what's it called? We're talking about services for parents, so use parents to design what they need. There's been a constant feedback in the early years of IMPACT when I first started. We were constantly, every workshop we held, it was always time for debriefing at the end with the participants and then with the parent advocate staff.

Any time we created a program, it started with a focus group. And it's slow. It's slow to do it in that collaborative way. But I think that collaborative way helped lead towards comprehensiveness. ACT oversight meetings having hundreds and hundreds of people that it invites, there's something kind of exciting about that, from bringing lots and lots of people together, because they seem to share value. And if you're not in the same room, if you don't talk, how do you know what's

going on? And let's just do this the old-fashioned way, get together and meet and talk.¹⁰

Community Building

Another respondent defined community building as geographically-bound and encompassing leaders empowering themselves to influence neighborhood-based services:

One comment about that. In some people's minds, there may be a difference between community and neighborhood, and neighborhood may be community-based, but it may be neighborhood-based, meaning neighborhood is a geographic area. And you have a storefront, and you have a church, and you have a school. Now, not everybody goes to the same store. Not everybody goes to the same church. Not everybody goes to the same school, but they all live together, and they kind of walk places, take the bus places, and there's a geographic thing that happens.

In some people's minds that's synonymous with community, but in other people's minds when you talk about community, you're talking about the Seventh Day Adventist group or the Hispanic community. Within the Hispanic community you might be talking about Dominicans and Puerto Ricans or something. I don't know. So, the definition of community sometimes, when you use that phrase, in different people's minds, they may all agree with what you're saying, but they may have something different in mind. ²

And I think ACT, historically, has been more neighborhood-based focused, and I think they've used "neighborhood" and "community" in an interchangeable way, and maybe the distinction really doesn't matter. Maybe the thing I'm thinking about really doesn't matter, but in some people's minds, when they hear

“community,” they think of groups of people. And I think ACT has seen the focus to be neighborhood, and the geographic grounding is important.

Of course, that geographic grounding, in many instances, can create a sense of community, and there are some geographic groundings where the community kind of identifies as a neighborhood and this is our community. But then, within a neighborhood, there’ll be some groups, and there’ll be other groups that see themselves as different communities that are in the same neighborhood. I think ACT is saying, “We should be neighborhood based,” and that might mean we have different groups involved, but we want to be a neighborhood-based approach, and I think the geographic grounding is important for the work of ACT.

So, I think, in terms of empowerment, where does this come in, in terms of empowerment? It’s empowering people from a geographic area to have an impact on services they need and have an impact on defining, not only what those services are, but how those services are provided.²

Another said ACT helped bring the notion of low-hanging fruit to the community-building world:

The other piece is, “low-hanging fruit” was a concept almost like sensitivity training that started in the corporate world, and we helped bring to this world, to the world of human service and community building.⁸

Bushwick ACT attempted to build community by continually engaging community leaders in the planning process:

I think the collaborative meetings were a pretty substantial effort in that direction, and even with what was a kind of gap, after you left, I think that ACT really made efforts to do that and continue on through the work, especially with [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network’s Liaison] and calling people and trying to really engage different perspectives on what should happen. Yeah.³

The Bushwick ACT Collaborative ensured community participation by tapping Bushwick IMPACT's parents:

I think the example that sticks out most to me is ACT's project, IMPACT, and the parents from IMPACT who were residents and worked in the program. There was at least some representative parent from that program at every Bushwick collaborative meeting, and often more than just one. And I think we had the release of the report at Wyckoff Hospital, and one of those parents spoke at the project. So, I think that was how we particularly facilitated residents coming in.³

One respondent said ACT has community participation in Bushwick IMPACT; however, it was less predominant with the Bushwick ACT Collaborative:

IMPACT is a different type of project, and they are incredible at community participation. And that's because, again, it's a family support approach that's holistic and respectful, and parents know it, and they feel heard, and it's a peer-to-peer approach, so they feel heard and their involvement is tremendous.

I don't think the collaborative really had much community participation. I mean, they had a couple of residents.⁶

Another respondent said ACT understands that true community involvement is a long-term project:

...and I don't understand what happens with funders. They just really want to fund for a short time, not understanding the nature of collaboration, that it is a long-term project. It is not a five-year project. You want community involvement? This is not a five-year project if you want true community involvement.

So, I'm very heartened the one or two times you get to hear funders who actually understand that. I was at one funder's briefing, and it's such a breath of fresh air when you hear a funder say, "When we fund we understand these are nine- and ten-year projects," because that's how real life works. These are not three-year. So, in some ways, the funding sets us up to do less of that capacity-building, that I was just saying 15 minutes ago was so important, and it's the underfunded part.⁶

One of these reports compares ACT to ACS with respect to the promotion of comprehensiveness. The report states that ACT did better than ACS, because collaboratives were led by community leaders, whereas ACS's neighborhood networks were led by government. Furthermore, the way ACT came to exist in Brownsville-East New York (see endnote lxviii) adds further complexity to this notion.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ACT

Governance

According to the literature, governance concerns the creation of mechanisms to guide planning, decision making, and implementation, as well as to locate accountability and responsibility for actions undertaken (Blank et al., no date; Kingsley, 1996). This is reflected in most respondents' accounts.

For example, respondents said that ACT made decisions by consensus, which was good because it was flexible. ACT also had a loose governance structure that expedited the work. Furthermore, communities viewed ACT as a gateway to city government access:

Efficient decision making? When I was there, more about understanding issues, get folks to speak about the issues; more about convening and planning for funding responses, planning for meetings with City Hall. Decision making that did happen was by consensus. Good—because flexible! About getting to happy

outcome as a whole on outcome. I liked that structure, because doesn't lock one in to strict, bureaucratic structure. Informal in its decision-making model—ACT's strength.

Because we didn't have strong governance structure...helped move things forward. People felt ACT was a good group. If there were people in group that weren't so collegial/could function in a loose process, maybe would not have worked. Folks at table respected each other and saw ACT as helping them gain access, so it worked; they cooperated. If less homogenous, would have been necessary to have more structure.

What made group legitimate—there was integrity behind the work—based on staff in community and folks in ACT central office, there was trust/legitimacy. People had a high level of trust. At end of the day, comes down to trust. What helps trust? People are there for you, for community, not in it to make ACT better. Not part of model. People saw this; people responded to this positively. ACT came in to give something, not to take something away.⁹

I think that one of the pieces is that you can't work in isolation, and communities could certainly be working away, but without access, and I think that's obviously what ACT has always brought was access and information, and that's what makes it successful. Otherwise it's just, you're working in isolation and you could be spinning your wheels.⁷

One respondent said that, in addition to ACT building on what already existed in communities, ACT used the tools of consensus and diplomacy to build further:

This mechanism of working with community, acknowledging who's there, not starting something separate if it's not warranted. If there's an existing group, you work with the existing group. And I think ACT also—this whole idea that ACT was built on tools of consensus and diplomacy was a great contribution.⁶

Another respondent said that ACT was ahead of the curve on consensus-building when it started doing it in the 1980s:

I think we were ahead of the curve in terms of the value of consensus-building. If you just take a look, do a literature search in the year that ACT was formed or the years that ACT was forming in '88, '89, '90, just look up the title "consensus-building" and what's available in those years versus what's available now on consensus-building, or even the use of the idea of common ground.⁸

Other respondents reported that ACT's inclusive approach facilitated community—i.e., resident and client—involvement. For example, ACT worked with groups such as the Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP), whose mission was to give voice to parents with children involved with the child welfare system by bringing them to the table; however, a balance needed to be struck between parents already at the table and those who were trying to get to the table or didn't know about the table:

Well, it comes from the inclusiveness, and it comes from the idea that you have to ask the question, "Who speaks for a community?" Is it the local nonprofit that we deal with all the time, whose director lives in another county, or might or might not be from the same ethnic class or the same ethnic group, or might seem like they do but not really carry the cultural values of the predominant members of the community?

So, I think that it was inevitable that we would try to bring more residents into the mix, and our sense was always like a focus group. You can't have everybody in the room to represent all the consumers, but you can have enough of a variety that you get a variety of perspectives and you aren't misled about the community. Then, by being open to anyone, there was always the opportunity to expand the circle. Having larger forums helped, and having refreshments helped, as you know.

So, we did what we could but, ultimately, what I think my conclusion was, the way to make that happen is to work with other intermediary groups like CWOP, for example, who, once we were connected to them, it made a lot more sense to have them invite, prepare, and involve. It was also interesting that they would sometimes get exclusive. We had to fight that. They wanted CWOP parents, and yet you'd have unconnected parents who wanted to come in. So, you had the concept of us the intermediary at odds with the concept of inclusiveness.⁸

My impression is, the value that it brings and the role that it plays is by taking a collective, inclusive approach to developing governance structures. So, it's not hierarchal. It seeks input, and ACT as an organization kind of brings that perspective. So, I have an expectation that's what it's done, and so I have an impression it's done that. I haven't observed it. That's what I've been looking for, as a role that ACT would play and that would make it effective. Does that make sense?²

One respondent discussed Bushwick ACT's governance structure (under Bushwick ACT's first local planner's leadership). They described it as having two co-chairs, a local planner (i.e., Bushwick ACT's first local planner), and a membership-at-large:

Had co-chairs. After that, that was it. No other officers. Local planner, co-chairs, and membership at large.⁹

ACT's governance promoted organizational collaboration within the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and accountability with Bushwick IMPACT; it had less of a role in promoting accountability between organizations:

I think the collaboration ACT has had a big role, and Bushwick was a big example of the homelessness prevention and how to work together to bring that money in, and there's other examples in other networks that were not part of these

geographic areas. Even IMPACT, that was collaborative. We brought lots of people in before we ever even opened our doors. We had quarterly meetings where 30 agencies would show up and talk about the program.

So, I think ACT has had a tremendous role there. I think because IMPACT is an ongoing program, ACT has had a role in accountability. Nobody knows where the buck stops. It's at IMPACT. I think IMPACT is different. It's not a collaborative. It's not a network. And I think we've had less of a role in accountability in the others. So, for example, in Bushwick when there was the homelessness prevention that came through, we had very little—we had nothing to do with accountability, and it might have been good if we did, but it wasn't built in and, again, it's a resource. Not only a resource, but we didn't end up being part of that collaboration, homelessness prevention. So, I think accountability is something we had less to do with.⁶

One respondent said that ACT was unique, in that it managed to survive as a result of the relationships it built and its founder's leadership. She also said that it managed to do this without a 501(c)(3) status—i.e., without a directors' board—which was good because it allowed ACT's staff to really focus on the work versus fringe benefits, pleasing funders, etc.:

It means certain things that I don't know if many organizations have had this many. I'm sure they do, so I'm sure we're not the only ones. But we are quite unusual in how we are organized. And the fact we don't have a board; I think that will be a key thing. I just think if you're going to talk about ACT, you have to talk about how it's structured and also the fact that we—the funding, this public-private dance we've done. I don't know, Nina, how you can write and underscore the role of diplomacy and where we've gotten, that you have a director who is brilliant figuring out how to keep ACT alive and in the good graces of three different mayoral administrations. And we are not a 501(c)(3), and I think that's important to talk about that; let's be honest. We have not had a functioning executive board for the last three years. I think the first three years of ACT there

was a functioning board maybe longer, where execs really did take direction and have somebody they could go to and help us with direction.

I think, for a long time, ACT functioned because of the relationship and smarts of its director. We had advisory, but it really wasn't an advisory board, and we don't have a—we're not a 501(c)(3), so we don't have a board of directors. I think it's important to talk about somehow. If you're going to talk about replication or how we compare with others and evaluation, I don't know. Somehow it is just different than other organizations.

Right now that's the decision. I don't know if it's going to stay that way. But I do think that initially it really is an organization that's more nuanced than others, and allowed the director to follow his good instincts in how to bring people together. I think we could become a 501(c)(3) and that might be fine. I think one of the downsides would be we'll look like the other organizations and have to do a lot to please the board, and the board has this and this to say. You do the fundraisers, and it might end up looking a whole lot like other organizations.

But I do think one of the values of not having been a 501(c)(3) and being an incubated project was, I do really think that has allowed us to focus on the work and not have to focus on payroll and health insurance and—oh, my gosh, I think it's worth every penny.⁶

According to the literature, governance is both structure and process (Kubisch et al., 1997). One respondent said that ACT valued process, which contributed to its sustainability over time:

ACT is all about process...Integrity of ACT remains today because we paid attention to the process/relationships—this is what is sustaining ACT today...⁴

Funding

According to the literature, CCEs are funded by private foundations, which are meant to be flexible and responsive to the priorities established by the local governance structure (Hayes, 1995). This was not reflected in the respondents' accounts. For example, one respondent said that ACT was funded through the private and public sectors. She went on to say that ACT's commitment led to the sustainability of their public/private funding model over several city administrations:

Funding of ACT—public sector money to support staff; private to [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director]—to keep them neutral...wow! Public and private funding drove public and private collaboration...helped form agenda...helped prove our theory that, needed to have at the table was a form of showing investment/interest in outcomes...Barbara Blum, X Stable....Has been hard to maintain over a variety of administrations... Yes, this funding model is sustainable over time! Once there is a commitment to the work/concept/institution, totally sustainable over time! Yes, there is the reality of competing with government priorities as a result of less available resources...if commitment is there, yes, sustainable!⁴

In addition, ACT blended funding to complete its work effectively:

I have some awareness. I wouldn't be an expert in it, but my sense is that it's a combination of blending funding sources that include private funding and government funding, and it will sometimes use in-kind contributions as a funding stream, meaning that personnel who are hired and employed by another entity would be assigned and supervised by ACT, so ACT would necessarily have to go and raise dollars to pay that person, but someone is contributing that person's time to the effort. So, ACT blends all those sources of funding to be effective.

I don't think it's the only entity that blends funding. I think most successful not-for-profits find ways of blending funding. Community-based programs do that all

the time, I think, so I don't know that that's unique. It's effective, and part of the reason it's effective at attracting the in-kind contribution embodied in a person, not just space or goods, but services, like a person, is the result of confidence, and is dependent on leadership. Some confidence in the leadership of ACT has allowed entities that have funded a person to have that funding stream be assigned to ACT so that person is an ACT person. It's not unique to ACT. I think others do that as well. I think other organizations have done that, at least I know of some others that do.²

Technical Assistance

According to the literature, technical assistance may be provided by a funder, or it may be sought by the CCE governance entity and other participants (Brown et al., 1993; Chaskin et al., 2001; Kubisch et al., 1997). This was in alignment with one respondent's account. This respondent said that ACT provided technical assistance in the form of linking local organizations to outside organizations that were successful at fundraising:

Technical assistance...I think we did a great job of brokering groups that many organizations didn't know about. A lot of money was wasted by a lot of groups, probably still is, but not as much as used to be, on people who hired people to be consultants and facilitators and planners and organizers who were not worth the money they were paying them. A lot of money was spent chasing after funding without any knowledge of the risk or the likelihood of success, and so, a lot of small, grassroots organizations in particular wasted a lot of time and money, and I think we upgraded their ability to search out and select the opportunities and the players that they needed to team with.⁸

Another respondent had a slightly different perspective. She said that ACT provided technical assistance to local leaders such as Bushwick ACT's last local planner, and Denise Rosario,

Coalition of Hispanic Family Services Executive Director; however, they did not provide as much technical assistance to Brownsville-East New York:

I think that IMPACT doesn't really—IMPACT, I think that's what we're going to move into, is providing technical assistance for others on how to do the peer advocacy piece. And I think the collaborative in Bushwick—I'm not as clear about the technical assistance piece here. I think we provided you with assistance, and I think we provided a lot of assistance for the Coalition for Homeless Families—Coalition for Families and Children, right. We did lots of technical assistance there. I'm trying to think of East New York. That was—we probably have not provided as much technical assistance there.⁶

Staffing

The literature states that most CCEs are undertaken by a core staff person who, as project director or coordinator, facilitates the planning process and takes responsibility for moving the project from planning to action (Kubisch et al., 1997). This was reflected in respondents' accounts: ACT provided local planners for communities:

Well, I think the local planner was a huge gift to the community. It was a huge resource, connections to city agencies.¹

The most important contribution was always, in my book, the facilitator or local planner, and when the right person was with the right group at the right point in time, that was the glue.⁸

It's been an entity that has provided technical assistance, in the sense of planners and liaisons to help mobilize communities.¹⁰

There's a range of things. One is the placement of organizers in neighborhoods. I think that it's a resource that was needed that created efficiencies, created organizational structure that was useful. So, I think providing community organizers to a community, that's important.

I guess I can think of critical contributions ACT has made, and they would be in categories. The times that it's been in neighborhoods with neighborhood planners, I think having that person there was a critical contribution to bringing communities together and making them more effective and making them stronger.²

One respondent said that ACT local planners were tasked with facilitating access to city government:

Folks who were part of a collaborative got access to city government—the impact of having a local planner.⁹

Another said ACT attempted to make local planners true intermediaries between city government and local leadership—to forge consensus, reduce tensions, improve trust and respect, and enhance communication. He said that ACT was not interested in local planners who would over-identify with city government and be the co-opters of local leaders:

Let me jump quickly to one comparison to the local planner challenge, and that is the role of parent advocate in schools. The current chancellor of the New York City Schools hired 1,000 parent advocates—I think they're called parent advocates—and did it in a matter of weeks, and we did some of the training for them, as I think you know. And the tension from the beginning was, Would they become over-identified with the parents and kind of end up being the battering ram against the authority of the principal or whoever else, the school superintendent at one time? Or would they over-identify with the principal and just be the co-opter of parents? Or would they be a true intermediary, as we hoped

local planners would be, to bridge the downtown and the local forces or, in the case of schools, the administration versus the parents, to forge a consensus around some things to reduce tensions, improve respect and trust, and enhance communication?

That's what we were trying to make happen.⁸

Another said ACT local planners' unique role in their respective communities was that they convened all local leaders; no other local person had this role:

I think what sets ACT's staff apart from all the other leaders in the neighborhood is that it's every single ACT staff person's responsibility to convene all of those other leaders. And that's a function that none of the other leaders have. So while an ACT staff person might be a leader in their own right in the community, it's always, always, always your responsibility to also be a facilitator and a coordinator and to make sure that, whatever's happening, whether it's something programmatic at IMPACT or something broader at the Coalition, that whenever decisions are made, that the leadership or the ACT leaders that are in a community, always become the conveners that all of the others get all of that input, that inclusiveness and that work towards that comprehensiveness that we talked about earlier.⁵

Another reported that local planners did the work that otherwise would not occur:

It holds things together. It provides a reasonable person that otherwise wasn't there that defines a role that needs to be done that wasn't being done. With the local planners it's someone who will convene people and bring them together, support them and facilitate networking without threatening to take over what other people are doing. I think with the [Bushwick IMPACT's Director] role it's running a program that otherwise wouldn't be run. So, the consistent theme is

filling a role that's not otherwise being filled, not taking over a role that's already being filled. It's not a replacement model. It's a fresh resource type of thing.²

According to this respondent, ACT hired staff through consensus:

...to hire through consensus. That had a secondary benefit that when people realized we weren't actually imposing the hires but had involved communities in everything from the design of the job description to the criteria for selection to the actual screening and that we often deferred to them and went with their choice against our preference, that we did secret ballots and it turned out more often than people realized we were in total agreement with the secret ballot, and then we'd debate. That whole process, that whole "we're not going to hire until we are in agreement," that had impact for the larger organization, as well as for the potential success of the individual planner.⁸

So, in Bushwick, in the context of IMPACT, all the people who worked with the local design team in designing IMPACT were also involved in hiring all of the people who are the advocates there now. Before ACT deployed the program directors to that neighborhood, there was a lot of consultation also with local design people, to make sure that the person that ACT was putting there was a person that the community liked them, felt comfortable with them, agreed upon.

And in the context of the Collaborative, well, the ACT staff person that's being the liaison, that is [CCENY's Community Coordinator], that looked like a steering committee of the then-Brownsville/East New York Neighborhood Network coming together to interview a whole host of people and making a decision about who of all of those people who were interviewed was hired.

And I think in the new person, the CPI liaison, ACT's role was in helping to facilitate a similar process amongst the stakeholders who were participating in

that collaborative, so it wasn't just one or two people making the decision about who got hired, it was the [unintelligible 1:43:14] people from the community.⁵

Another respondent pointed out that ACT attracted a talented and eclectic staff; this made ACT malleable, flexible, and able to produce a variety of products. However, lack of mission clarity and workers have been a challenge:

But I think ACT is very much a product of who is working for it at the time, whatever talent happens to be there. ACT kind of exploits those strengths, which is a kind of exciting thing, because ACT has attracted an eclectic group over the years at various times. And so, I think that's been one of its strengths, because it was so malleable and flexible. And [ACT's former Executive Director] always used to like to talk about "low-hanging fruit." So, you had people who could do a lot of different things. But when there's not a clear mission and then there's turnover, I think there's a little bit of a hole right now.¹⁰

ACT offered supervision and support to local ACT staff:

So much of work was organizing...pushing forward was more on the ground...in the early days, not a whole lot of...there was supervision and support...had regular contact with them/helped with strategy and opportunity support...⁹

Hmm. Trying to think of one. I'm really trying to think of something, I'm really drawing a blank. I mean, in general, I could say support for me. Because when there were times when I was stuck with a situation or how to handle something or what would be the best avenue to go, I could always call somebody or wind up sitting there with [ACT's former Executive Director] and talk about what's going on. He would suggest strategies, people to talk to. You could give this person a call, kind of point me in the right direction to help keep things like that moving.

And that was one thing—ACT was pretty much an open door. I could ask anybody for pretty much anything and I usually got some pretty good advice and definitely some good help.¹³

The literature states that, in some CCEs, additional staff provide administrative assistance or manage individual activities, such as community organizing or specific projects. This is consistent with one respondent's report: ACT provided additional staffing to support leaders and ACT staff in Bushwick in accomplishing their goals, including producing a health position paper:

...but I did work with Bushwick. And the focus I did with Bushwick was around health initiatives for examining the community, talking to people in the community and identifying various places or areas to kind of support and bring healthy initiatives to Bushwick.

I think at that time, I'm not sure if [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison]—you had left, and I'm not sure if [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] had taken over as the Bushwick coordinator in addition to other areas, and so, I sort of helped support him doing that work, in addition.

I think the research that we did, and the talking to the collaborative, getting their ideas about what the community needed, what the kids needed to create healthier alternatives, whether it was how much open space there was in the area, and that it needed more open space, and that it needed more support for mental health services. So, we took what they told us. We synthesized it, and then we did outside research to support that work.

We came up with a paper that I think was pretty good.³

As a result of the challenges associated with maintaining local planner funding, ACT refined their focus on providing technical assistance, strategic planning, and general support to ACS' CPIs:

As a result of constantly losing local planners and local planner lines because of this whole snafu around the city, again, we had to think about what we could focus on, and we ended up focusing more on providing technical assistance and strategic planning and support to the city coalitions and collaboratives, rather than trying to fund our own collaboratives, because we just didn't have the resources.⁵

When local planners departed, sometimes there was a void, and local leaders continued the work:

Sometimes the void was there, and what they were [supposed to be] doing was not being done, and other times there seemed to be some continuation of what they were doing that was kind of organic and self-propelled by the neighborhoods.²

Evaluation

One respondent said that, during her tenure, there were no evaluation mechanisms:

As with every initiative, document outcomes—conduct independent evaluations. Tracking outcomes/trends/issues. Directly linked to bringing in more funding. A big factor...

No evaluation mechanism when I was there...

Would have been helpful to have a standard evaluation of all collaboratives after three years—would have been helpful from a learning and replication perspective.⁹

Others said Bushwick IMPACT has been evaluated; however, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and the BENY CWNN/BENY CPI (i.e., the CCENY) were not evaluated. Respondents said CCEs are difficult to evaluate:

We've been most involved with IMPACT. IMPACT has had an evaluation—an initial evaluation in process by [Metis] Associates. I don't think East New York has ever been evaluated, nor BMCI, nor the Bushwick Collaborative. I think they've all been written about, and I'm sure you're finding in your research—that's why you're doing this. It's the hardest to evaluate, and I think CPI, they've come up with very specific goals in order to try to evaluate. We're getting on track with IMPACT, and IMPACT actually does have a database system where it uses a software package to do tracking of people's involvement with the program. And we're getting better and smarter all the time about how to use that even more and more effectively. So, I think that's happening.⁶

It's ACT doing the invisible. I think it's that. I think it's fuzzy. It's a soft science, hard to really prove. I think it's hard to demonstrate. But I think it's necessary.

IMPACT had a preliminary evaluation conducted after our first year. It was vaguely useful. It was very positive. But it was very thin, really qualitative, which is really all it could be at that time. I think it's hard to evaluate something that you don't have clear goals for or clear outcomes in mind. So, how can you evaluate if we've gotten that or not? So, I am very focused on evaluation. I think ACT knows that it had to happen. [ACT's former Executive Director] definitely pushed for evaluation. But he was just evaluation, let evaluation happen. And it wasn't about thinking through what did we really need, what kind of evaluation.¹⁰

Another respondent recalled child welfare evaluations of the BENY CWNN and the BENY CPI (i.e., the CCENY) that were conducted:

Well, definitely we, much like any other thing that we're involved in, we're [unintelligible 1:46:10] people in terms of designing the evaluation tool. So I think I recall two evaluations associated with what's now the East New York Coalition and those were the—back when it was the Brownsville/East New York Neighborhood Network, it was the Terry Mizrahi evaluation. And then more recently the Chapin Hall evaluation of the CPIs. And I can definitely say we were at the table with the Terry Mizrahi one, and we definitely did a lot of work with Terry Mizrahi in designing that evaluation.

With CPI, the CPI evaluation, I think it was more indirect input. I think that much of the evaluation came out of the design that we had helped create for Bridge Builders. And Chapin Hall modified that for their CPI evaluation. So I would say that we had indirect input into that.⁵

This respondent went on to say that ACT was not one of the official evaluators; however, they did assist with the evaluation process:

Yes, so we have not been a facilitator, we have not been an evaluator, we've not been the administrators, none of that.

And I guess the other piece is supporting the coordination, so making sure that the evaluators [i.e., Metis, the evaluators of Bushwick IMPACT] have all of the right people and the context for those people to interview for the evaluation.⁵

Another said that ACT is in a position to assist with CPI evaluations:

We could certainly help them with the process [i.e., help ACS with the evaluation process], and I think we'd love to play that role. As you know, ACT is sort of an outsider in a way. We're insider but outsider. So, we can maybe be a little bit more objective in thinking about any aspect of it: Whom do you want to pull in? How do we interview them? The whole process.⁷

Another said that a few assessments, not evaluations, of ACT have been conducted:

No objective, outside, external evaluation. We've done a number of small evaluations. And we do assessments with our participants, but it's not part of a whole plan.¹⁰

Yes. What we did was, we managed an assessment by interviewing leaders in the community services world around the city to ask their view of what value they thought ACT could bring, and then we generated a memo to ACT that articulated what our findings were.

We did a process where we drafted a memo that articulated priorities in terms of contributions that ACT could make, and that helped ACT define its agenda in the early years. So, that was a role that I played.

There were really good ideas, and they ranged from big-picture, ambitious ideas to very practical things. If I remember, there were like six or eight things that were a focus.²

The literature states that evaluations may be formative, providing feedback to various effort stakeholders, such as funders, staff, or residents, or more summative, seeking to provide evidence of ultimate or periodic progress after a given period of time (Connell et al., 1995; Fetterman et al., 1996; Fraser et al., 2002; Kubisch et al., 1997). This was in alignment with one respondent's report:

There was a need to reassess projects against mission, so that there were many things that ACT could do, but the question was, "What is our mission, what are we really dedicated to, what are we going to reaffirm as our mission?" Then, in light of that, how do we evaluate the various projects we're doing or could do to make sure they conform in supporting that mission? So, we're not just doing

things we can do and we'd like to do, but we're doing things that are more strategic in terms of supporting this mission the state has reaffirmed.

The other dynamic was, we have staff who have certain capacities and strengths and weaknesses, and how are we best evaluating how to maximize the strengths of our staff against mission and minimize exposure to their weaknesses? You could do all kinds of things to strengthen someone's weakness, but you could spend a lot of time on weakness when you don't have a lot of time and resources to spend on that where, if you were better about matching strengths with projects, then the weaknesses would be minimized in terms of their drag factor, kind of dragging progress.

So, there's some question about, Look, look at the staff. Look at our strengths and weaknesses and assign people based on, not what they just want to do, but what they're good at and what they can really have added value on. So, there was that exercise going on.

This was all bottom-up. It was very much staff speaking to Anthony and [ACT's former Executive Director], and I was the facilitator and the leader around this, kind of leading that dialogue. And my role was to hold group sessions, and I also held individual sessions where I met privately with chief staff persons to kind of get their assessment and weave that theme into this strategic planning process. The result was the new mission statement, and some judgments about our projects would or would not be done, and some thought about involving staff. I think there was an expectation on the part of the staff that, when this process was over, things would be a lot more streamlined and less harried, and that expectation was not met. Because the nature of the work that ACT does, it's not streamlined and it is harried and it is very much project-driven. So, that didn't change much.

But what did change was, it was a reassessment of mission and a reassessment of what we still have to do. So, ACT didn't become involved in a reactive

environment, where it would present what a project is. “Oh, we can do that. Let’s do it.” And after the strategic planning process, there was another step. “We can do this project, yes, but does it match mission? Does it make sense to use our scarce resources on that?” So, that conversation kind of was reintroduced to the dialogue. So, that was, I think, a productive result from this process.

I think the change in leadership occurred at the conclusion of the strategic planning process. The strategic planning process ended on, say, a day, and then six months later there’s the leadership transition. I don’t think it’s cause and effect, but one might think that the strategic planning process was, not only a time of reflection for ACT as a corpus, but it was a time of reflection for everybody involved with ACT. So, individuals reflected on where they were at their point in life and development.

So, I would expect that it allowed [ACT’s former Policy Associate] to say, “What do I want to do? What’s my strategic plan in terms of how I’m using my time and talent?” And it gave an opportunity for [ACT’s former Executive Director] to think about, “How am I using my time and talent?” I think it gave the same opportunity to [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director], but I don’t think [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director]’s transition resulted from her conscious decision. I think she did make some decisions about what she wanted to do with her time and talent, but I don’t think those decisions were consistent with what she ended up doing. So, I think there were other life forces that came into play that caused her to go to Trinidad. She didn’t come out of that and say, “I think it’s good for me to go to Trinidad.” I think she had other career interests that she wanted to develop, but another path developed, because life takes over.

I also think other folks were involved; Bushwick ACT’s first local planner was involved. I think she had the occasion to think about what she wanted to do.

Yeah. I didn't answer the other question, though. Oh, that's the question, right? How do we get to the point where—right. I don't know if it is mission stray as much as I think all the projects that ACT got involved in connected to work it was doing. And I think there would be occasions that were very similar to occasions at the beginning of ACT, where ACT would interact with others in city government or in community or in the academic world and ideas would arise. And someone would say, "This is a good role for ACT," and someone else would say, "I can see us doing that. That's exciting. It's a need. Let's do it." And that's a healthy thing. That's a good thing.

What happened was, the enthusiasm for that dynamic became the norm. ACT had started with a structure where there was staff and there was a board of advisors, and the board of advisors were reported to on some regular basis, three times a year, something of that sort. The board of advisors, maybe there are five or six people. I don't remember how many people. Some number of people. Eight people, whatever.

So, staff, [ACT's former Executive Director], and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] would need to present to the board of advisors and say: State of the ACT here. What's going on? State of the Nation: State of the ACT. Here we are, and this is what we're doing. This is where we're going. And the board of advisors would say, "How does that fit with mission? Does that make sense?" or "How do we help with that?" or "How do we reassess ACT's role?" So, the board of advisors provided a function that was an oversight function in a constructive way that I think all groups need.

I think, over time, some advisors leave, some advisors come. I don't think the board of advisors was as nurtured as it needed to be in terms of membership, like a board would be where you have a term and you have an eye on, "Well, we need new board members, and how do we keep the existing board members involved?"

And maybe some of the existing board members have run their course in terms of where they're at in life.

So, this interaction with a group removed from daily operation but committed to the mission faded, and so, functionally, ACT became operational and dealing with operational needs in terms of getting things done. Let's get this training program done. Let's get this one city, one community thing done. Let's get the ACT thing going—I mean, the IMPACT thing going, the Bushwick. And how is that going? How do we fund it? Is it staffed right? And how do we deal with these issues, the details of manage product?

And there was no occasion that was structural that caused ACT as an entity to say, “How does this fit with mission, and is this strategic? Yes, we can get this, and we can get funding for this, but does that make sense?” Maybe the answer would have been yes, but there would have still been that natural dialogue that would have forced attention and time on the question of, Is it strategic, does it match mission, and do we really have the resources to handle it in terms of staff time? I think it was more ad hoc, and it was operational driven, staff driven, and it didn't have that extra step, which I think is a healthy kind of constraint. Does that make sense?₂

This respondent went on to say that there are no good models for the evaluation of CCEs:

Okay. We're talking about evidence-based models to community-based organizations. And I was talking about an article that, I think, Professor James Jennings from Tufts wrote in the last couple of years about the effect that an evidence-based measurement approach can have on community-based not-for-profits who are engaged in effective advocacy work or relationship building that strengthens and empowers poor people.

When you apply an evidence-based approach, it's very similar to what I'd call a baseball analogy, where you're looking at someone's batting average or home runs or how many strikeouts, how many runs they scored, how many wins they have. You start to look for quantitative measures, because otherwise you feel unsatisfied. You feel that you don't know what you're paying for.

If you shift to an evidence-based approach and, therefore, are valuing productivity based on numbers—how many people served, how many people improved their reading scores, how many people are in housing that weren't in housing—if that becomes the measure for performance, then you might choke off advocacy, which has impact. It goes beyond the numbers of direct service. Or you might choke off relationship building, that has empowering effects that strengthen poor people in terms of getting control of their lives. You lose those qualities that are very important in community-based not-for-profits' perspective and from a community's perspective, but doesn't lend itself to hard number measurement evidence. We may need to think about, I guess, the framework we're using or the measurements we're using. If we want to have an evidence-based approach, we need to take into account advocacy and social capital building, that isn't necessarily the same as looking at someone's batting average or home runs or those types of things that are hard numbers.

I don't know in the social sciences that we've developed thinkers in the area of evaluation that have come up with effective models for measuring this in a way that makes sense. The concern is that, the more we move to evidence-based approaches, if they do not take into account these other, what some people might call “soft” qualities or intangibles—I hesitate to use “soft” or “intangible,” because it kind of seems to diminish the value of these things—then we may be choking off a really cost-effective, important aspect of community-based organizations that is advocacy, that is relationship building, that is empowerment. And I think of that in the context of ACT, because in our discussion about ACT, when you talk about “What's the impact of ACT?” a lot of what ACT does would

fit into the category of advocacy or empowerment or strengthening community-based organizations that doesn't necessarily lend itself to an evidence-based model.

I mean, you can measure how many meetings someone from ACT has. How many stakeholder meetings have there been, how many have they attended, how many organizations have they worked with, how many times have they sat down with people? I don't know if that's in itself satisfying enough, because then what you're valuing is activity that isn't necessarily impact measurement.²

The internal evaluations, I think, are project-based. I think they get tied to projects, and so, whenever there's a funding stream, it has an evaluation component. So, that gets applied and carried out. In terms of ACT as an entity, any time evaluations happen, it hasn't been a self-evaluation. It's been—I think some external party has come in and done an evaluation. I know that's happened...A woman did one. Yes [Kay Sherwood].²

Some of these reports capture the benefits of ACT's operational strategies, including the flexibility that is allowed for via a consensus-driven, decision-making process; the ability to expedite work because of its loose governance structure; the ability to focus on the work and not on administrative details as a result of *not* having a 501(c)(3) status; a public/private funding model that allowed for its long-term survival. Lastly, a talented and eclectic staff made for a malleable and flexible organization that produced a variety of products. BENY and Bushwick reports were unaware of some of these strategies and their benefits. One possible explanation includes ACT's central office's location in lower Manhattan versus these two communities' location in the borough of Brooklyn. In addition to geographic distance, another possible explanation includes the distance from the day-to-day work/operations of the ACT central office.

CHANGES AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY LEVELS

According to the literature, CCEs attempt to foster fundamental transformation of poor communities and to catalyze a process of sustained improvement in the circumstances and opportunities of individuals and families in those communities (Halpern, 1994; Mueller et al., 1996; Rossi et al., 1994). In short, CCEs set out to promote change at three levels: the individual and family level, the neighborhood level, and the system level.

CCEs build capacity and improve the quality of life of individual neighborhood residents and their families. Specifically, they work to increase both the quality and quantity of activities designed to improve educational outcomes, employment, and the health and well-being of neighborhood residents. They also place priority on strengthening the personal, political, and/or process knowledge and skills that enable people to motivate and lead their peers. This is apparent in respondents' reports on the individual changes ACT brought about for staff and partners, who in turn were able to be more effective at enabling individual/family changes in communities.

For example, one respondent said ACT/ACT's former Executive Director fostered her creativity and bolstered her confidence. She said that ACT taught her how to implement a variety of projects:

I think from a personal standpoint I felt like working at ACT, and especially working with [ACT's former Executive Director], was a good place to foster creativity. And I feel like because [ACT's former Executive Director] had so many great ideas and I think he really inspired his staff, so I think maybe it built my confidence to be able to work there and be able to implement ideas that I had working there. And I can think of one in particular idea. But, yeah, I think that was a big piece of it.

And also, just the amount of work there at ACT. There was a lot to do all the time. And I was stressed out at times. It wasn't a place you could just sort of come in and relax and do your work. There was a lot going on. And I think [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] was good at creating vision, along with

[ACT's former Executive Director]. And then as staff you really have to implement that vision. So, that was hard work. So, I guess I learned about how to implement different projects, and that's really helped me in my current role.¹

Another respondent said that ACT provided work experience that helped build another respondent's skills and confidence: ACT taught her how to manage people twice her age:

Gave work experience in terms of building skills, confidence. Lots of coaching from ACT centered on managing folks twice her age.⁹

Another said ACT helped its privileged staffers work through their classism and racism:

I feel like ACT—and this is very personal—but I feel like I was new to New York and I had to be in every community all the time. I felt like I was everywhere across the city. And for myself being a sheltered, suburban girl, white woman, it really made me feel...it made me always recognize the power differential in terms of race and class and being from downtown versus being in the community. And I feel like those are really important observations and values I think that I learned there that's always in the forefront of my mind. And I feel like that came somewhat from my work at ACT.¹

Another reported that ACT taught that one did not have to be high profile to be persistent and outcome-oriented:

I think the greatest learned lesson was that you didn't have to be on the front page of the *New York Times* or have a very high profile if you were persistent and outcome-oriented.⁸

Another said ACT taught humility. It taught to not assume that people know less, but rather that the local planner is a vehicle to helping communities understand what they need and how to get there as well as achieve their goals, and that the local planner never gets in the way of a process:

Being humble. Not assuming people don't know as much as you. Realizing that you are just the instrument/vehicle to help them figure out what they need and how to get there. To be a supportive entity to help folks achieve their goals. Not getting in the way of a process.⁹

Another stated that ACT gave staff the space to lead, and it taught them about leadership development:

You know what? Giving me the space to just run with it. And I think helping me access the—I think the PSP training was very helpful for me in terms of gaining some tools, ways of looking at things, ways of understanding leadership development so that I can in turn do that with others. Yeah.¹⁰

This respondent went on to state that ACT taught facilitation:

Yeah, I'm definitely a much better facilitator. I think I'm a very good facilitator. And I think a lot of that has come from just this seed that's been planted from ACT, by watching people do it and then by doing it.¹⁰

Another described the attributes that ACT taught:

My biggest lesson was deference, maturity, patience...never about me...about others...not about self-preservation...about being wise...not about instant gratification...about strengthening long term relationships...¹¹

Additionally, ACT taught staff how to purposeful connection with others:

I'll tell you, the other influence that they have is through me: they train me. Like, I had a bunch of skills when I first came to this, but I didn't have the tutelage, I didn't know all the tools, I didn't know the—I'm a really nice guy, so I'm real

sympathetic, I can sit there and talk to you, I connect well. But there's connecting well, and there's connecting well to move towards a goal. That took a little bit of time for me to understand, and working with ACT helped give me that. And I don't know if I would have got that anywhere else. Because up until then—it's one of the reasons I like working with ACT so much. It just seemed like a really good fit; it made a lot of sense. There wasn't a lot of the—I didn't have any morale issues working with ACT.¹³

ACT taught staff how to speak confidently in public forums about community needs:

Most definitely. Some of it through honing my leadership skills. It was first starting out as a liaison; I'm kind of at the beck and will of who I'm working with. But at the same time, I'm still leading, moving forward the goals of the agenda. So it's almost like I had to learn how to do that. Not just take orders and move it forward, but also interject my own vision, my own ideas. Had to get a little confidence in being able to speak up. I'm sitting there, and I'm a liaison, and I'm sitting there with directors of every other agency. To be able to say what I have to say without being, "Oh, I'm going to trip over my words! Are they even going to listen to me?"

And that's changed a lot, to the point where now I'm a lot more confident. I can speak in front of large crowds of people. I can sit at the table with the director of ACS and just be honest about what I see in my opinion, without having to worry about, "Oh, am I going to say the wrong thing? Oh, I don't want to step on anybody's toes." No, it's about the community, it's about moving forward, it's about everybody working together, and that's something that I got from being exposed to that kind of thinking at ACT. Which I think is one of the reasons that ACS liked to listen to us so much, because we would give them the straight talk about what's what and what's working and, really, what's not working. And let's not ponder why it's not working, but let's make it better. And not point fingers.¹³

ACT also built staff to the point where they went beyond the parameters of ACT:

“Maybe that’s the mark of ACT’s success. To get in there for people who need ACT and then they go beyond ACT...Harlem Children’s Zone was initially involved with ACT. [The director] certainly doesn’t need ACT anymore.¹⁰

Respondents also discussed what they learned about the nuts and bolts of community work. For example, ACT taught that everyone has a valuable role, that process is more important than outcome because it has implications for the quality of the outcome, and that the right approach and the right mix of ingredients is important:

Relationships matter...and that everyone plays a valuable role...in order for change to happen, need to acknowledge everyone’s role...and everyone’s role is important...this is important to the change process...must also appreciate the role that each stakeholder plays...the process is just as important as the product/outcome! Process is a tad more important because it has implications for the quality of the product...

The ACT approach is what carries us today. Got to have the right structure in place to make this happen...can have the right ingredients, but if you don’t have the right approach, doesn’t work...got to know how to mix the ingredients in the right way, ‘cause if not, the cake will fall apart...⁴

Respondents also emphasized that ACT taught that one must think about the feasibility of implementation, not only ideas:

One thing I learned is, when you’re doing any sort of project to identify advocacy steps or things to do, things to achieve, from the outset, you should really think of how you’re going to implement those things, kind of have some ideas and think about them as you’re going along. Because the problem is, if you come up with the ideas and then you start thinking about how to implement it, a lot of time will

pass. So, your ideas might not even be—the things that fostered the basis of your ideas might have shifted, and there might be more important things that needed to happen...At the same time, I'm now remembering the report that we did, and we definitely had short-term, mid-term, long-range goals for each piece, which I think was positive.³

ACT also conveyed that the work translates into putting a set of values and principles into practice:

The most important learned lesson that I have got from all of my work with ACT is that this work is not about technicalities. This work is about values, and this work is about principles. And if you are going to accomplish anything, no matter what you're trying to do, from building a coalition to building a program to just helping people on a daily basis, you have to have the appropriate set of values and principles around doing this work. And you have to help other people embrace those values or principles, or you just won't get the progress that you [want to see].⁵

ACT taught the value of the neighborhood collaborative—the importance of staffing these collaboratives and bringing people together. It also taught the importance of diplomacy and inclusiveness:

“I really do think it's about—the longer I'm here, and I've been here a long time—understanding the value of those original collaboratives and going back to all the lessons we've learned from that: the importance of bringing people together, the importance of funding, the importance of staffing it. I think the other lesson learned is diplomacy, whether I personally can institute that over time. But we have two founders, I think, who were the master and mistress of diplomacy, and I think that was tremendous to make this such a nuanced organization.

And I think the other lesson learned is of inclusiveness. And, again, I credit [ACT's former Executive Director] with having that sense of inclusiveness, and I think that has been very valuable. That's what I'd say. I mean, there's a lot more, but that's the short version.⁶

In the context of ACT itself as an organization, I just wonder how much of my growth is attributable to the organization and the fact that, because of the way that ACT is structured and because of the work that we do, I get the opportunity to learn from this exposure to all of these different things, and how much of it is attributable to the individuals. Because I learned a lot, a lot, a lot from [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director]. And would I have been able to learn as much as I've learned with a different set of—with different leadership at the organization? I 99% firmly want to say “No, I wouldn't have.” And that's just because [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] believe in this whole concept of inclusiveness that is a principle that they share, and hope that people will embrace in our work and in communities and with government and everywhere else, is a practice here at ACT.

And because ACT's former Executive Director and ACT's former Associate Executive Director included everyone in everything, I learned a lot through that, in addition to being able to interface with them individually.⁵

First, I think that I came from a human rights background, where we were very critical of government and power and really fighting against power. I was always protesting. That was the way of doing things. And I think I was ready to change. And I didn't necessarily know how or what the alternative was. But I saw something in ACT early on that, okay, we're not advocates. We're not antagonists. And I think that has been very powerful for me. I've learned how to be much more diplomatic and get people to work together to really talk things out.¹⁰

ACT taught that capacity-building is critical:

Okay. The most important thing I learned from my work at ACT was the critical importance of capacity-building and—not capacity-building, although that’s really important—but consensus-building, and how incredibly difficult the work is and, in some respects, thankless and tiresome. But I can’t overstate the importance of it in any work you really do involving more than one person, but especially within communities that are disenfranchised.³

Importantly, ACT also taught how *not* to go into communities and take over:

I also learned so much from ACT about how to do that [i.e., how to be the glue]. That you don’t just go into a community—and let me tell you, it doesn’t happen everywhere. I just thought everyone knew that rule, that you ask communities first, but not everyone does that.

I think this piece about working with the community and asking people what they want relentlessly, I think that’s really something I learned from ACT. And I try. Being somewhere now [that] doesn’t do that as much as they should, and it’s easy to forget; it’s easy to not do that. It’s easy not to ask the community. It’s easy to just do what you want to do. And I try to always remind myself of that. And I also just feel like I learned a lot there in terms of just being comfortable in the community.¹

Right. I think through that [health position] paper, that was one of the greatest things. One of the greatest things about working at ACT was the project that I did in Bushwick; it’s something that I take with me in my other jobs, and it’s one of the reasons I like my job now, where I do policy work, but it’s very connected to what’s happening on the ground. So, I’ve done my research, I’ve looked around, and I’ve said, “There’s this great idea.” So, then I go around to the people who

actually deal with the everyday stuff that's happening. And I say, "Does this work?" and they're like, "No, because of this reason." "Okay, what if we did it this way?" "That would work." Then I go back. And it's hard, and it's kind of exhausting sometimes.³

The farmer's market was—I think that was one of the things that came up in these collaborative meetings: "This is going to be great." People said, "We can't have it at this time. There's nobody here at this time. You shouldn't have it at..."—I think it was some point in the afternoon—"You should have it earlier or later, because the kids are getting out of school at that time and maybe that would be more convenient..."

I remember having conversations with [ACT's former Executive Director] about what was going on in the collaborative, and feeling frustration over my sense of not being sure what to do, and thinking there was a place to go but not clear about how to handle that, and [ACT's former Executive Director] saying to me, "You provide the support to build their capacity to make those decisions. But if the decision is not going to get made, or if they don't want to go in that direction, they want to go to another direction, then it's your job to support them and go in whatever direction they need to go." You give them your options. In some ways, it's like being a lawyer. You give your client all the options. You provide them with all the support they need and the knowledge they need, and then they make the decision.³

Respondents also discussed the lessons associated with leading an organization like ACT. For example, ACT taught that good things can come out of an organization with a flat structure; however, one must have the personality to handle it:

It also was a training ground, in that I could practice things that I learned and have someone give me feedback around whether or not this is working: "No, you can't do that." And the feedback, again, didn't just come from [ACT's former

Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director], but others in the field who were, like, "What the heck did you say in that meeting? We understand why you said it or why you did it, but don't ever do that again."

And the reason why I said 99%, because the other piece of it is, it's personality. Because I know that there have been folks who have come and gone through ACT who unfortunately didn't learn anything, didn't take anything away, did not have a successful tour in the organization. So your personality has to lend itself to independent learning, to absorbing everything, to the ad-hocracy that is ACT. Because as much as you have people who want order and who want this kind of bureaucratic structure in an organization, this is not that kind of place. And so there's that whole concept of ad-hocracy, and it kind of being a flat organization, and everyone being more collegial than having a supervisor manage that relationship. It can go one of two ways, depending on your personality and what your individual needs are.⁵

ACT taught how to conduct an employment search as well as how to carry out the hiring process; ACT also taught how to supervise:

Well, I guess [ACT's Director of Community Planning] has been instrumental in trying to give me focus on what to do to either get outcomes—I mean, right from the beginning, where we were starting to hire a liaison, ACT really guided me how to submit the job quest to various websites around the city in terms of posting the job opening. ACT was instrumental, number one, in guiding me to where I could attract bright people or where people traffic there a lot. So, I give them credit.

Secondly, the questions that were necessary to ask the applicants, ACT was instrumental there. So, up to the point where the liaison was hired. ACT also helped me, in terms of supervising the liaison, in terms of certain things that might not be necessary with the work, because I've been there for a long time,

and this was another transition where the goals were a little bit different from what I was doing...to get a proper understanding to transition from what I was doing to what we are doing now. ACT helped me to coordinate the work and also be able to help shape the liaison to think sometimes, because she came from a different background, so it's a social wake-up. Then, coming to child welfare, my presence really shaped her to understand the child welfare staff, the key players in the community that can help the work, key agencies that can help, and those that can retard their progress.

So, all in all, as a coordinator and as the supervisor for the liaison, whatever success comes out of this particular thing is this has—all these groups has been—especially with [ACT's Director of Community Planning]—has been instrumental in asking me questions and seeing where my shortfalls are and how to expand them, but especially with the Head Start childcare. Because in part at least doing this early childhood stuff and very, very successful that we have been able to bring IMPACT staff to our CPI, inviting them to do presentations, and also how to implement the family advocates or parent advocate piece that can help us do referrals, cross-referrals from childcare to preventives to Head Start. So, I give ACT credit in terms of shaping my knowledge about early childhood. It's one key area.¹²

In addition, ACT taught policy formulation and implementation, program development and implementation, community organizing, and service evaluation:

Well, I've learned a lot from ACT in terms of how policy is formulated and implemented and how behind the scenes—not direct services, per se—can be also very, very important. Through ACT, I've learned that not giving direct services alone, but something has to back it up, in terms of how to proceed in terms of giving services. ACT has taught me this technical assistance about how to develop the programs, how you implement them, how they are successful, how to solve whether those programs will be successful. So, I learned a lot about ACT in

terms of community organizing. My strength has been there, how to figure out how services should be allocated to the communities, and how to evaluate to see whether services are reaching them. That's what I learned from ACT.¹²

Respondents also discussed individual changes they had observed in other ACT staff members:

Well, one day I went into [ACT's former Executive Director]'s office and I was working on the Parent Involvement Network. It was PIN somehow. Anyway, so I came into [ACT's former Executive Director]'s office. And I'm, like, You know what? We could do this thing with incentives, where we tell parents: "If you go to your kid's school night and your kid goes to school every day and they do this..." then we can give them points on a card. And then, they can use their card at Barnes & Noble and other places where they can get stuff for their kids. And he was, like, "I love it." I thought he was going to totally be, like, "that is the worst idea I ever heard." And he was, like, "I really like it."

And so, we created all these Parent IMPACT Network cards and we gave them out. And people liked them. We didn't get a lot of people to actually contribute to be able to voluntarily say, Okay, they're going to support this project, like industry. But it was really great that [ACT's former Executive Director] was really supportive of the idea. And I remember the box of PIN cards sitting in there for so long, because we spent a lot of money on getting them produced. And, in the end, I don't know how cost effective that strategy was. But, yeah, I just really liked that he was into it and he was open to it.¹

It's interesting that you took us there. Oh, well, you said "challenges." I was thinking about the work, but an internal challenge, again, is back to the values and principles. And if you have the leadership—we have new leadership [i.e., ACT's Executive Director] here. And our new leadership does not share our traditional values and principles around work, either, whether it's child welfare, coalition-building, collaboratives; those values are just not there. It's a different set of

thoughts and processes and values. So that's going to drastically change the way that ACT works in communities. It's going to change whether or not ACT will be working in communities and whether or not ACT will be focusing on child welfare.⁷

I think the culture of the organization really got off to a great start with [Bushwick IMPACT's first Lead Coordinator]. I think she just is very unique in her enthusiasm. And whether it was happenstance or what, ACT put her into the role of setting the tone, and she did a great job. And I think that's carried itself. And I think I've definitely been able to build on it...

It's a luxury. That's too much of a luxury to do what [ACT's former Executive Director] used to do. And I think [ACT's former Executive Director] always did have a grand master plan somewhere. He didn't share it with people, perhaps.¹⁰

CHANGES AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL

The literature states that CCEs are concerned with the accessibility and quality of social support, economic opportunity, and physical infrastructure within the target community. This encompasses efforts to improve or increase the housing stock, the neighborhood infrastructure, the business/commercial sector, education and training institutions, the social and civic support network, cultural vitality, and other-quality-of-life activities. CCEs pursue strategies that focus on building the capacity of existing local institutions responsible for these aspects of community life and/or supporting the creation of new organizations to do so. CCEs are also concerned with the qualities of collective life provided through community attributes such as strong personal networks, "social capital," and a "sense of community," as well as the community's capacity to handle conflict, solve problems, and/or express its voice and represent its interests in the larger economic and political arena.

General Changes at the Neighborhood Level

ACT built capacity by providing technical assistance to communities interested in applying for CPI funding:

For example, a very good role I felt was when CPI started. [ACT's Director of Community Planning] was doing most of this. She was going out to the communities when this was being presented, the whole RFP early on, and she was helping the communities figure out how to apply for CPI, and understand what that meant, and what does that mean to work together. That's a good example of TA.

And I think it was really useful, because she was working with ACS. We're housed by ACS. We're supported by ACS. So, she was supporting a city government, but from an impartial position supporting communities to do something effectively.¹⁰

ACT also built capacity by enhancing technological infrastructure in communities:

I think we were good at popularizing; GIS, geographic information systems and GPS were something that. Unlike some of the things that drove us was the fact that we had experience and knowledge, those of us who were staffing it or in the leadership. GPS and GIS, I can't imagine anyone who knew less about it than I did, but once I saw it and once [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] saw what it was, it was so clear to us that it was miraculous. And we were trying to tell the *New York Times* in 1990 that they had to get a look at ArcInfo and MapInfo, and they had to write stories about it, and they—"I don't get it. What is it about?" The whole time, but the people we spoke to were senior reporters and editors.

Then we knew enough about it that Richard Murphy, formerly of Readlin, then Youth Services Commissioner, invited us to share what we had learned through our network of friends and contacts with his staff. He then, through Larry Murray, adopted for the Youthline a help line for young people, the GPS, GIS information that we brought to them. They were so grateful that they gave us computers. They donated computers to ACT for all of our field offices, almost as a thank-you for having brought that.⁸

ACT improved community life collectively by increasing the participation of ethnic leaders and second-ranked communities:

I think, too, we've caused an involvement of ethnic populations that didn't always get visibility, as well as communities that were always ranked second, it seemed, in any search for need, Bushwick being a prime example. When the March of Dimes went to pick a community, they had a tie in terms of data between Bed-Stuy and Bushwick, and I raised my hand and I said, "Bushwick always comes in second in these need races, these races about need. Let's just pick them, because they've not been picked before." And March of Dimes made, even before ACT's Collaborative, made—for that reason made Bushwick their prime target neighborhood.⁸

ACT also created safe forums for civic dialogue:

I also think that it's provided an opportunity for ACS to have access to a dialogue that it would not be able to have on its own. I think if community groups come into the room to talk with ACS in a forum that's convened by ACT, I think ACS has a certain comfort and confidence that it's going to be a productive dialogue. And I think the community-based organizations also feel it will be an honest and productive dialogue. So, there's a sense of confidence and comfort that allows for a positive dialogue, rather than a more contentious one.

I think, in terms of ACS, it's played a critical contribution by creating a two-way dialogue, by giving a point of access to ACS leadership to folks in the community, where ACS leadership would feel capable of expressing themselves and engaging in a dialogue with community people and not feeling vulnerable that they were being manipulated to some risk of being set up.

So, I think ACT's been able to get ACS to come into the room and be open with folks in a community, in a way that I don't think otherwise might happen. At the same time, I think it gave community folks an opportunity to come into the room with ACS and express their concerns about things ACS was doing, and give them critical—in the sense of criticism—feedback that was well thought out and well managed without it becoming an irrational attacking. So, I think it's created a constructive dialogue and opportunities for constructive dialogue between community-based organizations and ACS, in a way that otherwise wouldn't have happened. I think that's important. I think it's the ability to convene people, who are usually not convened together, that work for government or work for not-for-profits or in the community or that are consumers of services, that's been a critical and important role that ACT has played. And I don't think—if ACT weren't around, I don't think that role would be played. Maybe it would. Maybe the void would be noted and there'd be some other organic development that would create the role of it. ACT doesn't have any competitors doing that. It's not like others are stepping up trying to do that, so I think that's been important.²

Changes at the Neighborhood Level in Brownsville-East New York

In Brownsville-East New York, there were several examples of collective life improvements and capacity-building, outcomes typical of social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000). For example, ACT provided validation of Brownsville-East New York's efforts, and ongoing supervision and support to CCENY's Community Coordinator:

East New York, I think we've been supportive. I think what's been good about our role with East New York is, East New York is a community with really a lot less resource. It's kind of striking how much less resource East New York has in terms of the number of providers, even sometimes the quality of providers. It's just agencies; no agency has its headquarters there. There's not a one. That's not true. There may be some now.

Anyway, I think what ACT has really provided there has been some kind of validation of their efforts and of their value and, by providing the supervision and the person of [CCENY's Community Coordinator], I think gave ongoing support to a network that might not have thrived otherwise. I think they would have started, but I think we really helped them thrive.⁶

ACT assisted with activities, for example, a substance abuse conference and a child abuse prevention poster contest:

I think for East New York the result has been support of some of their activities, which I think are very good, their substance abuse conference. They had done this whole child abuse prevention poster contest, and I'm not saying ACT brought all of it, but I think by having ACT involved, we were able to enhance whatever they did.⁶

...they had this breakfast and other events where [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] would be invited to come to the community to become master of ceremonies or guest speakers. And so that's where people started to know ACT from [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] talking about themselves, about what they do and why they are there.¹²

ACT also assisted with increasing family engagement in schools, an example of bonding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

ACT is always there to help. So, it's not only in terms of a broad-based kind of work that ACT does. We link resource with schools, for instance. When Brownsville-East New York network decided to link resources to schools, ACT was there to help us to engage these families, because we found that families were not taking advantage of the resources in the communities. So, we—the policy, how to walk through the policy with the school staff and some of the agencies in the communities, how to bring the resources in the schools...

As I said earlier, the technical assistance that has been given to us, in terms of knowing when to tackle the problem, and the timing and the steps that should be taken. For instance, when we were doing the linking resources to schools, ACT made it known that it is difficult to get the parents to come, but there are certain people that, when we get them involved in the process, who will be able to bring them because we were looking narrowly initially. So, the goal was to reach as many families as possible.

So, ACT came in, shaped the whole policy towards that goal, and we were able to connect to, for instance, these parent coordinators, guidance counselors, the PTA president, the librarian, and all these people. We were just going to deal with the principal, because we thought they had the authority to give us a go-ahead and give us a space where we can conduct our business. Then [ACT's Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] on all the Network days were able to tell us that, no, you have to spread it to include all the schools, so that everybody will be on the same page and nobody will be upset about anything. It really did work very well when we did that. Like I said, we adopted two schools initially, one in Brownsville and one in East New York.

So, we were able to [inaudible] and reading skills. We brought the library people in there, registered 2,000 students with library cards, and we brought parents who

also, for the first time, were trying to read, give them library cards. We supplied books from the library to second- and fourth-grade students, over 1,000 books that we gave to them.¹²

ACT provided planning, job development, and parent engagement strategies to Brownsville-East New York:

In terms of giving us the guidance when to act, when not to act, the people you should talk to to get attention, what you agreed to do also was very key. So, it made us reach our goal of empowering community residents to use the resources at their level to help. Otherwise they wouldn't have known or wouldn't even bother to come to the schools together. So, not only in terms of parenting skills, job development, and everything that we did in the schools, we credit ACT with a role.¹²

ACT assisted with the start-up of an ACS neighborhood network that increased communication between community leaders:

I'm thinking about East New York first. I think East New York was one of those communities that did have no voice. I don't think there was any coalition of providers that I knew about beforehand. And so, ACT's role in helping that neighborhood network get started and thrive was important, and I do think people in East New York are talking to each other more...⁶

ACT assisted the neighborhood network/CPI with grant writing and accessing services:

...we've helped them with grant-writing, we've helped them with service issues. When their individual organizations have been having trouble either finding support for a client or figuring out what kind of support they could give to a client, we've helped with that.⁵

We wrote a small RFP to one of our operations and, at that time, [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] guided me. We got about \$15,000.00 to purchase school uniforms, because one of the schools was using uniform code in the school, everybody should wear the same attire, and most of the children were poor because they were coming from the shelters, and the families couldn't even purchase for them. So, we were able to write to a couple of places, and we got \$15,000.00. We went out there to buy clothes for all the needy students. So, I'd say it was a tremendous, tremendous collaboration between ACT and the Network.¹²

ACT assisted in building the Brownsville-East New York Neighborhood Network and then, later, the CPI—leadership that was less rhetorical and more outcome-oriented; they also played an educator and convener role in Brownsville-East New York:

We found ourselves working there and building, again, a coalition modeling a certain kind of leadership that was less rhetorical and more outcome-oriented,...⁸

ACT provided a significant amount of technical support to Brownsville-East New York:

I'll start with East New York...I think we definitely have provided a lot, a whole heaping lot of technical assistance to Brownsville/East New York and there's no doubt about it.⁵

So, ACT has been trying to find out whether there should be some rotations...maybe a co-chair can be there for one year and then another person will come in rotating, and which is better. So, they are trying to guide us. Right now we have some of them trying to step down and for others to come. So, me and [CCENY's Liaison] have been talking [with ACT's Director of Community Planning about] the selection process. How do we have to consult the community residents, who they think are the best, or [whether] we don't need to do that. Only participation that can be used to pick a new leader, or do we have to see whether

there's leadership qualities in them that we can utilize, or what is it? Because the person's a director of a program that we should bring.

We are in the process of deciding right now, so we are talking with [ACT's Director of Community Planning] also to find out. So, ACT has been around in terms of trying to find out what kind of strategy is best for the CPI.¹²

Changes at the Neighborhood Level in Bushwick

In Bushwick, there were several examples of collective life improvements and capacity-building. Bushwick leaders valued that this occurred outside of government and elected officials' forums—i.e., via the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, which paved the way for Bushwick IMPACT:

I have to say—and this is if you talk about both communities in particular, going back to [inaudible], I still hear and still talk to people how the collaborative had an impact on Bushwick. And people really valued—there were a number. I get feedback, and I hope you're getting this feedback. People really valuing what the collaborative offered, which was a systematic way for a large number of providers to get together, exchange information, and work on issues together. And I do think that has led us to then be able to start IMPACT. I still think there's a need for a collaborative out there, because people miss it.

It's so interesting. The longer I'm doing this, I see that model of the collaboratives was just really a good model, and people still want to go back to it. It's just a very tough model to find. To have one place—and I guess some communities have it. I think the other thing that was honestly good in Bushwick about having the collaborative, it offered a place for people to get together outside of the political system, because [Mike] there's a very powerful elected official there, and he has regular meetings. I've never attended those, but I know they're regular. So, that's

good, and I think it serves the community, but I think there was a need to have somebody outside of that. So, that has been good, and I think what we're doing now with IMPACT is tremendous for the community. We get nothing but rave reviews about it, and most pleased about it. Mostly women who have come through who have gained so much, whether it's just getting a service referral and getting a child into childcare, but the parents who get more involved, whose lives are changed. It's been tremendous.⁶

ACT's ability as a stakeholder here made it really easy for IMPACT to phase in; I'll give it that. Because a lot of times, when it comes to Bushwick, new agencies, new people, they're seen as outsiders. You have to gain the trust of the community. Everybody is super-stressed in what they're doing, so they don't have the time to jump on something unless it seems like a valid, viable project, something that's going to have legs and is going to be worth being a part of.

The fact that ACT was such a phenomenal partner here and had already laid down the legacy and had the track work down, bringing in a project that trained parents in the community to become parent advocates, getting themselves set up, getting themselves linked to other projects, people being—particularly like the partners that work with children, to come on board to their local design team in the beginning, and be part of the whole planning of what they were going to do, probably made IMPACT. Because, in the beginning, IMPACT didn't even know what they were going to do. They originally started by sending out fliers to all the HRA, child daycare providers here. The family daycare providers. Because there were a lot of calls coming in from them to ACS. So they figured if they trained the daycare providers better, there'd be less calls to ACS. So it was a fundamental, "Well, we're trying to cut down the number of calls."

That training eventually became—the people that they trained, they picked and chose the ones that became parent advocates, and were working here and in Washington Heights. So this evolved almost daily from, "All right, what are we

going to do with these people?” “Well, all right, let’s do this.” And now, “Okay, well, let’s focus on families and children.” They didn’t have guidelines. They didn’t know what age group they were going to work with, what was their goal.

There was a lot of that that was happening at ACT, to decide how to best utilize IMPACT. And at the same time, they’re trying to give them a footprint in the community. Get them involved, get those parents to meetings, get them connected. If it wasn’t for the fact that ACT already had those connections in place, that they were able to bring their legitimacy to the IMPACT program, I’m more than positive that IMPACT would have gotten where they are today if it wasn’t for ACT, but it probably would have taken a lot longer. There would have been a lot more struggle, and they wouldn’t have had the legitimacy that they had. Because they had to do a lot.

And I remember, because my office was there, seeing the struggle sometimes. And they were, “All right, now we’re going to be focusing on kids from 0 to 8.” So they kind of went from all families to this. And now to younger. Now they’re trying to do, like, they’re doing Born Learning projects, and trying to work with preschool kids, and focusing on the importance of early interventions that are going on.

A lot of those decisions wouldn’t have been made if ACT wasn’t feeding them this stuff, because the directors at the time, like Jennifer, were kind of new at this when it came to the leadership part. Because they were interns before. So they kind of helped give the leadership, they kind of helped the vision, and kind of led the way as they narrowed down what their scope was going to be, what their goals were going to be, and how they were going to do it. And that made it easy.

I know that I personally did a whole lot of trying to get them recognition. Inviting them, telling them which meetings to go to and, at the meetings, explaining the program and how it worked. Because at that time, the parent advocates were still

kind of new, too. They had just gone through the training. They hadn't gotten their community organizing legs yet. And some of them are still involved with the program today and they've blossomed. Like Cynthia in particular, who's been there the entire time, and has gone from parent advocate, she's in charge of community projects and outreach. If it wasn't for that, they wouldn't have been where they are right now...

Because they took the politics out of it. That's one of the things that slows down a lot of the stuff that happens here in Bushwick, is the politics. Who you're affiliated with. It pretty much comes down to if you're in Vito Lopez's camp or not.

They just, from the jump they said "this isn't going to be—this isn't political. None of what we're going to be doing is political." They came out there. "We don't have an agenda." They did what other people don't do. They just stated their position from the beginning. This is not a political thing. You can come on-board if you want to, politicians were more than welcome. In fact, they were the leverage that we were trying to acquire as we did this stuff, because you really can't do anything groundbreaking without a politician behind it. Because they have a lot of say as to where some of that money goes, as far as city projects, discretionary funds. ¹³

Leaders valued the Bushwick ACT Collaborative; it had an active membership because the meetings focused on process; therefore, every step of the way, leaders gave input on decisions:

The Collaborative had a pretty decent membership. They kept on adding more people as they went. The concept was easy to buy into, because there wasn't any hidden agendas; it was all laid out, very transparent. It was all about trying to make connections with other agencies that were doing the same kind of stuff.

Particularly, the collaborative would connect. It just made sense. It really just made a lot of sense. And being a resident of Bushwick, I didn't see all of that. That's a lot of stuff, a lot of the stuff that happens I didn't know about until I became a resident. I mean, until I became involved with the BMCI and particularly the collaborative. Because, when I started with the BMCI, that child [welfare] network was only six agencies strong. It was just the contracted service providers. And now it's more than 30. When I came on board with the collaborative, the ACT Collaborative, the membership was well over 60, I would say. And maybe 75 or 80 or 90 by the time it kind of dissipated.

So, coming into it at the time, the ACT Collaborative was almost like this flowing stream. It constantly kept moving. And I guess that was one of the selling points. Because it made it interesting; it kept people coming. It wasn't just like the same meeting every time; everything had a different flavor, there was always some kind of a goal. And it was a process, because a lot of times it was the membership that decided what the next steps were.¹³

ACT created safe forums for civic dialogue between community leaders and elected officials—for example, Bushwick's legislative breakfast on housing/homelessness, and example of bridging social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

Well, I think the keyword is trust. We created a safe forum for civil dialogue about issues that often evolved into political—previously evolved into political maneuvering or aggressive, adversarial advocacy, picketing...

Direct action, shaming, and embarrassing. And nobody ever said that wasn't a legitimate way for things to work, but we did recognize early you couldn't one day be adversarial advocates and the next day be collaborative partners. So, what ACT did was created a place where those who might be engaged in even litigation would come together and there would be an always-civil dialogue discussion and

more progress and problem solving and more kind of, “What can we do that’s constructive?”

So, that was incredibly valuable, as well as trust building, as well as helping people earn respect, hearing that people defied the stereotypes that might have existed from a distance, once they got close up.

You remember some forums in Bushwick that political players would stifle, would demand that they instead people seek a more deferential route to them as elected officials than actually have an open dialogue and convene in large numbers? We kind of uncorked that. And I think that was very valuable. I know you played a role in making a lot of that happen in the housing issues there, which was one of the most significant things that happened, I think, in Bushwick, a kind of problem-solving, planning, program development, and also education about tenants rights, about public housing, about private housing, about cleaning up vermin. People were ignorant about some of the vehicles that were available. That became known in Bushwick and was later used in Bed-Stuy and was shared broadly, when previously it was like a little niche program that a lot of people didn’t know about.⁸

On the housing issue here in Bushwick, we were able to get some attention from the city, the politicians. They came to the table to talk about it, knowing that we had—and these were some of the politicians, like Vito Lopez, who sometimes had been fighting us on several different things, were able to come to the table. Organizations who sometimes didn’t work together came to the table, because it was all about the Bushwick as a whole. It was one place where you could leave your politics at the door and you could sit across the table with people you would never sit across before.¹³

The Bushwick ACT Collaborative developed a model for addressing community needs from a community perspective:

Definitely. We were following the ACT blueprint when it came to this kind of stuff. Consensus, straight consensus from the community. Bring everybody to the table, everybody that you can get together. Everybody talks it out. Everybody agrees. No votes, everybody agrees. We move as one unit forward.

Then comes the information gathering. We all pool our resources. We tap into whatever we can, get as much information together. The idea is that, you do that for enough times, you get enough information together, all right, we can choose what's going to be our battle. Again, that's done by consensus. Come up with those two or three things; we put together all of that. and then we try to find out who can help us make this happen on every level that's local. The city government, systemically. And then we just plug those in. And we shake up the cage and we made some things happen. That was pretty much it.¹³

Furthermore, ACT sought and integrated community input when designing the Bushwick IMPACT model:

I think ACT does that really well in building the collaboratives, and I think we did it really well in building the Coalition in Highbridge. I think we did it really well, and took those same principles and moved them to IMPACT by using that same mechanism of governance, of: We have a local design team, and they meet quarterly. There was lots of community input. This was not just a program that started by somebody having a good idea.⁶

In terms of staffing, I think ACT had a great model early on for hiring. This whole selection process with parent advocates, it's been really ingrained in IMPACT's parent advocates with the whole process, is that it's collaborative, what the criteria is for bringing on parent advocates. They need to have demonstrated leadership, a number of criteria. And the way you do that as a group. and you vet people. And so, I think that was something great that they set up.¹⁰

Examples of capacity-building included ACT-conducted training on governance, strategic planning, agenda setting, and CPI expectations for BMCI/Bushwick CPI and Collaborative leaders:

I think, with Bushwick and BMCI, I know I personally spent months and months doing trainings on strategic planning, and I think that helped them be in place and understand what was needed for CPI.⁶

I think the collaboratives, absolutely. I think the idea of neighborhood-based services. I don't know a lot of what was happening around the collaboratives. But in looking at it, what little I know, and where Bushwick is now, and the things I hear people say, I think training that ACT did with organizations or directors around strategic planning and agenda setting, I think that really sunk in with people.¹⁰

ACT also provided capacity-building for Bushwick IMPACT's staff:

So for IMPACT, we've done a lot of capacity-building with the staff there, because the staff are—they didn't start out as staff, they started out as residents and clients of a sort. And we did a lot of capacity-building, and people who, some of whom had never had a professional position. So we did a lot of—our technical assistance at IMPACT was also in the form of capacity-building for staff.⁵

ACT supported the Bushwick CPI via Bushwick IMPACT's work on the childcare/prevention work group:

I really don't know if I can answer that question directly. I would have to say, because they're helping, ACT is helping keep IMPACT running, that that's a direct effect on the how it affects the Bushwick Community Partnership.

They [i.e., Bushwick IMPACT] are taking an incredible amount of initiative. And I have to, that's why I'm saying, a lot of that has to do with the setup, ACT being there and giving them—the fact that [Bushwick IMPACT's Director] is now heading it up, as opposed to one of the interns before, and she was part of the ACT staff and was in the office and knows her thing.

So they run a really tight ship. And that has helped immensely when it's come to the CPI. Their subcommittee has met and exceeded their goals for [unintelligible] childcare.¹³

So they knocked it out of the park, and I think a lot of it has to do with following that ACT model, and that foundation and the training and the stuff that comes from ACT. And even the parent advocates that are working for us now as consultants were parent advocates that used to work at ACT, but their funding kind of like at IMPACT. And the funding kind of shifted, so they couldn't keep them on as consultants anymore. And it just happened to be that BMCI came along and we had some money to do that and we were able to keep them working...

Yes, through stipends, as consultants. So they were still able to do the stuff; they would still be able to be referrals, do referral stuff and childcare stuff for IMPACT, as they're doing childcare and referrals for the CPI...

IMPACT is probably, and [Bushwick IMPACT's Director], probably run the most efficient subcommittee that we have. And that, I have to say, they are, when it comes to meeting the goals, the tasks, the ideas of a subcommittee for CPI, they have it on point. They've taken what our tasks are and they've made it their own. They branch into other parts of what they do to help affect that. And we're talking about, like, coordinating those services with the preventives and the childcare. They're more connected now to the childcares and much more connected now to

the preventive services, which helps them with their basic referrals and the stuff that they do.

They write their own reports and report them to me. I don't have to do a lot of micromanaging in that committee at all. Referrals to childcare and to preventive services, that was a part of their task. That was the quantitative outcome desired to that, was that you'd have to be able to make so many referrals between childcare and Head Starts and the preventive services. Now, it was hard at first. So they were just making referrals to childcare from the community. I think they exceeded over 167, and we did like 40.¹³

This led to the initiation of the Bushwick Early Childcare Coalition and the enrollment of many children into early childcare, a direct result of binding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

They had an enrolment day. The CPI was able to pull in the funding to be able to change a regular library literacy event into this enrollment event. We had a phenomenal turnout; I think over 100 parents showed up. And 100 parents showed up with all the documentation that they would need to be able to enroll their kid. They didn't just show up with their kid, they showed up with the kids, copy of the birth certificate, the whole nine.¹³

ACT also conducts capacity-building via Bushwick IMPACT, which improves parent-child interactions, another direct result of bonding social capital (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

Parents report that, after their child comes to IMPACT for a couple of activities, that things look different for them, and parents do treat their children differently after being there with us, and we're not a daily childcare center. We're a family support center that has a certain approach to a family, which includes respect for

the parent and the child, and teaching solid early childhood values and parent-child interaction.⁶

CHANGES AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

The literature states that holistic and sustainable individual and community change is created by broader context or system change. The literature defines system change as improving the quantity and quality of services and other investments provided by outside systems, including social services, schools, the judicial system, commercial activity, and private sector investment. It also defines system change as increasing community residents' access to the structures that exist at the municipal and regional levels. This often involves a political empowerment agenda for the community that includes community organizing, better representation of neighborhood interests in city-level decision-making forums, and/or gaining commitments for improved corporate responsibility toward the community. Examples of this are evident in respondents' reports below.

General Changes at the System Level

One respondent said that system changes brought about by ACT increased connection/communication with ACS:

I think we have had an effect. I think, with East New York, East New York is now connected through CPI, is now connected to ACS. But before that was not as connected, because it was ACS Neighborhood Network, and they weren't...they didn't have...they were ramped up now that they've become CPIs, but I think before that, by having [CCENY's Community Coordinator] there and [CCENY's Community Coordinator] having access to [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] and the chairs having access to

[ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director], I think we were able to bring more resource and government resource. Yeah, ACT had to be very supportive of East New York.⁶

We've helped them with all kinds of drama and stress they have, especially now the CPI is there, when they have communication issues with ACS.⁵

I can give you a great example of what recently happened. This might be a common thing, although it's the first time I'm experiencing it. We've had many cutbacks in Head Start in the most at-risk neighborhoods, and I know one of the staff members here actually encouraged one of the CPIs to write a letter to Commissioner Mattingly saying how upset they were because the particular community was so extremely impacted by this decision. And they did, and they wrote it on their own. They sent it off to Commissioner Mattingly. Commissioner Mattingly wrote back a fabulous letter, referred them to the person actually who is head of early Head Start, and she also wrote a very long letter addressing their concerns and then said, "Call me. Let's talk further, or I'll come out to the CPI and talk with you all." So, I think with a little bit of urging on our side—because it took several months—but we said, "This is really an issue for you. Write the letter." And they did, and I think it was rewarding for them.⁷

So, right now, one of our subgroups, the childcare subgroup, has tried to bring in ACT; [ACT's Director of Community Planning] is a member of the group. By the way, in terms of that particular subgroup, ACT has played a role very well from IMPACT staff members to central office. We wrote to the commissioner recently about daycare reductions, daycare slots, kindergarten slots in East New York and Brownsville. [ACT's Director of Community Planning] was very instrumental. We all decided on our own to write the letter, but [ACT's Director of Community Planning] also played a key role in terms of shaping how the letter could get the commissioner's attention, and it really did. When the commissioner got that letter that day, he quickly replied to us and said, "I read your letter. Can one of the

deputy commissioners come and meet us?”

So, on August 13th we are meeting the deputy commissioner, and [ACT’s Director of Community Planning] emailed last Friday with ACT. ACT did the research in East New York about all these things, so if we could use a basis for that meeting...

Well, ACT assisted, especially ACS, especially when we have problems and we talk to ACT, [ACT’s former Executive Director] or [ACT’s former Associate Executive Director] can pick up the phone and ask Commissioner Bell or Commissioner Mattingly in terms of giving us the right thing to do if we are confused. So, ACT links to government agencies, especially ACS.¹²

Another respondent said that ACT created system change by changing government’s perspective on communities and vice versa. However, he said that the challenging part is measuring the impact of this:

I don’t know that I could speak to that. I’ve got to think it’s happened, and just by causing the commissioner’s office to spend time on preparing for an ACT meeting to think about an issue that’s important to community people, and by causing community people to spend time thinking about that as well and coming to the room together... We’re all very busy. Commissioner’s busy. ACS is busy. Community people are busy. And it’s so easy to stay isolated and complain about “we’re not understood”; “our needs aren’t addressed.” But if you’re in the room together, it just changes the perspective. It causes both sides to feel we’re working on something together, and I have got to believe it creates a need to address that. It may not be at the level that both sides had expectations that it would be addressed. There may be a standard of achievement or perfection that’s expected that may not be achieved, but there is a change. I think there is a constructive, positive movement to path from both sides.

I don't know how to measure that. I don't know how to articulate that. It may not happen the day after the meeting. It may not happen for months, but I think it just changes the whole dynamic. That, I just believe, has to have an impact, but I don't know how to help you measure that.²

Another system change by ACT included educating ACS leaders on the true reality for people on the ground:

I see ACT as a support to ACS or as a back office to ACS, in a sense helping ACS really grasp what the reality is for people on the ground. But I think ACS has gotten better at it. I think a lot of the stuff that ACT was doing in the early years, 20 years ago, wasn't really being done anywhere, even 10 years ago probably. And I think maybe it's to ACT's credit, and it would be great to really know this, but I don't know how we ever would, the effect that ACT really had of really changing the way government does business. I think it's part of a much bigger movement. But I think anyone from city government who's involved with ACT who maybe had an inclination to work with people. That seems obvious to us from our positions working in communities, but it's obviously not obvious. So, I think they've been bolstered by ACT. And they've been shown the way by ACT.¹⁰

Another system change by ACT included changing ideology and culture:

So, yeah, I think in terms of ACT, I think that is a way of describing how ACT makes change. Changing ideology, maybe changing culture as much as ideology, more or more so.¹⁰

One respondent referred to this as “forging and bridging vertical and horizontal social capital” (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000):

I think that the thing we did probably that was most important was to make those connections, to connect people who—before there was wide use of the term “social capital”—we were forging, bridging social capital. We were forging bonding social capital. We were going vertically, and we were going horizontally, and we were crossing disciplines and crossing economic and ethnic status, so that was important.⁸

ACT bridged communication gaps between communities and government by initiating community collaboratives and citywide oversight meetings, thus creating bilateral communication between the two groups:

...coordinate planning process between government and local...process of connecting conversations between government and communities...Came up with collaboratives to connect all the silos...this was about integrating communication...⁴

On a citywide basis, the power to convene, which is what I started with, to get in the room a couple hundred people that represent community-based organizations, not-for-profit service providers, policy folks, government folks who are doing service and policy to focus on issues from the perspective of community, has created a dialogue. And it has helped make neighborhood-based approach to service a good thing, one that's valued, one that we of course will talk about and we of course need to focus on. I think, absent ACT, if you ask people, they might say, “Yes, of course we agree with that,” but it wouldn't be a living objective. I think ACT has caused it to become a living objective, because of this ability to convene folks and talk about it and focus on it. So, it kind of has life to it. So, I think that's been important.²

ACT influenced ACS to adopt ACT's formula of doing community work:

I think of ACT...it's funny. I think differently of ACT now than I did then, probably. But I feel like ACT was maybe intended to be sort of a laboratory for ACS to sort of test out things in the community, maybe. And I say that only because ACS really took over ACT's role of doing the neighborhood networks.¹

For example, with CPI now, the whole notion of CPI, Community Partnership Initiative, isn't that interesting, that city government funds community partnership? What does that really mean? City government co-opting grassroots organizing? You could look at it from a few different perspectives, but I think ACS sees what works in other places around the country, sees things like ACT. What ACT has done gets validated. And it has integrated into the way of doing business, that you need to do things in partnerships, that communities need to innovate solutions.

So, in terms of—the question was how ACT has assisted, or concrete outcomes? I think we can try to tease out a long-term impact. That's the hypothesis. That ACT has had a long-term impact of influencing the ways of doing business towards a more community empowered. Empowered in the sense that communities are more active in how services get delivered and how their agencies are compensated, and in looking at things from a community perspective. And the expectation that's how things work well if they're done properly, because in various city agencies, that's where things are going.¹⁰

Another respondent described this notion as ACT influencing ACS to realign their resources to meet community needs:

Yeah, I would say the second part of what you said about [government was more receptive to communities' needs and] reallocating resources, because I really do feel like—it's funny. I left ACT and then I came back to ACS a year-and-a-half later working for FCLS, Family Court Legal Services at ACS. I worked there for two years...

I remember I came back, and one of my first meetings was, the commissioner did these leadership forums every quarter or something. And I went to one of those things. And I BlackBerryed [ACT's former Executive Director]. I'm, like, "I'm listening to the commissioner and everything he's saying sounds a lot like ACT." And I felt like everything ACT had been doing in the communities was now being mainstreamed by ACS.¹

ACT assisted ACS with the design of neighborhood networks/CPIs and their accompanying request for proposals. ACT also assisted communities with applying for funding, and once awarded, provided technical assistance to Bushwick and Brownsville-East New York throughout their funding periods:

...informed the design of ACS networks...helped with writing the RFP...we were the facilitators, conveners...⁴

I think we have a lot of influence to ACS developing the Neighborhood Networks and then developing the role of a liaison to support that. I do believe that was ACT's influence at that time that made that happen.⁶

Then we did lots of design RFPs with ACS, for example, and to evaluate the RFPs, as well as to implement some of the awards that came out of the RFPs. So, I think we were on all sides of funding, and if you add up all the dollars we brought to communities or enabled or kind of played some kind of helpful role in, that's a lot of money over a lot of time. A lot of money going to a lot of neighborhoods that usually didn't get any or, if they got it, they got it with a lot of strings attached, and sometimes they got it through deals with local elected officials.⁸

The CPI was introduced, and ACT was giving the assignment by ACS to help design the whole thing and also to give technical assistance to the stakeholders in

every community that was selected to be a CPI, all the 11 communities. So, ACT was there when the commissioner came to introduce CPI to East New York and Brownsville. [ACT's former Executive Director] was there when we were doing the strategy planning, the tools needed to write a better plan and to guide it throughout the work.¹²

ACT helped with the initiation of CPIs, most especially with providing technical assistance/knowledge and skills building for the local leaders of CPIs. When necessary, ACT also advocated for CPIs' needs:

I think the governing structure of the CPIs in general are—takes great work to get the commitment. Whether they are staff from nonprofit agencies who have reinvestment in the neighborhoods to step up to the plate and take on a leadership role that, in most cases, they bring a great deal of skill and ability to lead themselves. They are in some ways leaders as well, and are able to bring these community members together and get the work groups going, etc. However, that's not always the case, and there has been a lot of support to, again, teach and bring, and sort of get folks to understand what it's like to work in that federation model where there's consensus and where there's agreement, as well as to still lead. Because I think that's a very, very difficult thing to do. Whether you're in an organization, a for-profit company, a nonprofit company, or working with a group of mostly volunteers, that is a hard place to be, especially if not everyone is aware of what it is or how you need to operate.

So, I think ACT has gone in and supported the co-chairs, which are the leaders of the CPIs, so that they can gain new skills or make the skills stronger...my concern is where one, two, and three years out, some people are ready to step down and we need to go in and actually rebuild or recreate the structure or a different structure, because we don't know what's going to work with the new folks coming in and how that becomes sustainable.

This is something I've actually been really focused on, to always be there and to be available for helping, no matter where you are. If you're at a \$50 million organization or a \$300,000 organization, you need help through a transition. It's very unlikely that a transition can happen smoothly on its own. So, I think they're more vulnerable, and I think ACT needs to be there. I think also, as we all know, we go through stages, and so...capacity-building is not a one-shot deal and then you're out. I think you constantly need to be there, because people are constantly changing, not only positions that they're in, but just relationships are changing. They're organic. The whole CPI is organic, so needs change, strengths start to change or are needed where they weren't before. So, not only were we there...was ACT there to get them up and running and help with all these different aspects.⁷

Yeah. Not just our CPI, but I think all the CPIs. And also trying to advocate to make sure that they stand behind what they say. But I don't know what happens when it goes to that level. I'm not privy to the stuff that happens that high up. But I know that my voice is being heard and that somebody is passing it on to, hopefully, the person that it needs to get to.

So that, in that aspect, they are helping to support us to make sure that we're running. Because every agency who's taken the lead is doing that. So they're pulling all their lines of credit. They're having to pull the money, with the hopes that they're going to get reimbursed soon enough so that they can continue to make payroll and whatever they've got to do. And that's not just us, but all of the [unintelligible] are kind of in the same boat.¹³

Others reiterated that ACT assisted CPIs with communicating issues to ACS:

When they don't get paid, it's a huge deal. People do call us, and then we go to ACS, and we talk to our contacts there...

The fiscal conduit, yeah. We hear about that all the time. We go to budget meetings. “What’s the right procedure? What’s the right process?” And what we have found is that ACS may not necessarily know, even if they have four different departments there represented talking to fiscal agents and the co-chairs of the CPIs. I can only imagine how frustrating it is to them, because I sit there and constantly need clarification, and they are constantly...so, I think the funding issue is great, that they have the financial support.⁷

ACT convinced ACS of the importance of having one liaison for every neighborhood, networking and raising funds to pay their salaries:

When Scoppetta was there and he started his Neighborhood Networks, at that point I know there was disappointment that there weren’t any designated liaisons. There was an office of neighborhood services, and they had some liaisons, but it wasn’t a one-to-one proportion. So, that’s when I think ACT said, “To do this properly, we think networks need their own liaison,” and ACT went out and raised money for five positions.⁶

Initially, that coalition started out as the Brownsville/East New York Neighborhood Network. And they were funded; two main sources of funding was the NEKC grant that paid for the liaison. And then later, with support from ACT, [ACT’s former Executive Director] specifically, he helped secure not just for that network, but for others, the other five, as well. I think it was \$10,000 or some amount of thousand dollars. I don’t remember specifically the amount for the networks, to support their programming. So whatever programs they decided they wanted to develop for the networks, they could use that money to support their programs. That was in the beginning, and those were the two ways that ACT helped generate funding.⁸

I guess one of the things is that the networks had funding from New York. ACS raised private funding for the networks, so the conduit was the New Yorkers for

Children, and ACT was, [ACT's former Executive Director] was a member of the board of directors at New Yorkers for Children. So, he had a huge say in terms of dispensing money to the networks.

So, ACT's influence was there. When we were writing the RFPs for that money, the money was there, but we had to go through a process to just write money and explain what the money would be used for. [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] was the one who guided all the liaisons. So, every step that was taken, ACT was involved then.¹²

ACT increased the number of government representatives who go to Bushwick and Brownsville/East New York to speak to leaders about local issues—for example, childcare inaccessibility and rectifying this:

IMPACT clearly is more city government, because...one of the things it does is created a great relationship with the ACS Head Start childcare folks. Brought them out to the community to talk to us, to talk to other childcare providers and, by impacting them, we have created a direct link. We have now a link. You know, the deputy mayor's family service coordinator has been out to Bushwick, and so I don't know if those things would have happened if ACT wasn't in the picture. If they had been a freestanding family resource center, I don't think they would have had that access. So, we've been able to bring different city commissioners out there.

I think the staff at IMPACT has much more resource at their fingertips to actually resolve issues of childcare access, and there's a lot of issues around childcare access. It is tough, and they have the people they can call. I think it's also helped other community childcare providers understand some of the application eligibility process, and, like I said, it's so complicated.⁶

We recently brought—there's a new director or coordinator; I'm not quite sure what her title is—for family support services in the Mayor's Office. ACT went, myself and some staff members, over several months went and talked about their goals, our goals. Ultimately, what happened is, we got them to start visiting the various CPIs, more so for better communication, what's going on in the city. Because they're really an agency or department of the Mayor's Office that is to inform, inform various communities, as well as they have their own goals of what they want to accomplish besides communication. The CPIs have been really appreciative of hearing from the office what's going on. It's a direct link.⁷

I think the connections with, for example, Jeanne Mulgrave from DYCD, ACT brought her to IMPACT to talk with IMPACT's staff and IMPACT's partners, people from childcare centers, from after-school programs when there were changes in OST, which is Out-of-School Time, after-school programs. And she and some of her staff were there. It was a real frank conversation about what was going on, what our concerns were, how certain areas weren't being served. So, I think that was very concrete assistance. And we have other examples. People from ACS that ACT has also introduced to us and brought here...

I'll give you an example with ACS's childcare. We have a good friend, LaVerne Parker, in ACS childcare. She's client services and family support, or that was her title. So, she'd come and spoken to IMPACT's groups, a big coalition; it was called the LDP at the time, around problems with enrollment. There were a lot of administrative glitches that directors were dealing with when they had kids switching from HRA to ACS or vice versa. Paperwork would get lost or delayed, or re-certification wouldn't happen and the centers weren't getting paid. And LaVerne literally fielded individual questions at the time and then calls. So, people would just call her. She was a direct line to making change happen. And then, what she in turn did was make sure cases got circulated among her directors, so assistance commissioner of childcare and HRA.¹⁰

ACT assisted with the development of ACS's youth advisory board. They also supervised and continue to supervise staff who manage this project:

We worked with ACS to develop their youth advisory board, and I supervised the staff person doing that...⁶

ACT increased funding to communities:

I think because ACT had—and I can't remember the term that [ACT's former Executive Director] used—but because ACT had these, was it flat forums or standing? I don't know, some kind of board in each community. It was, each community had the capacity to do certain projects. So, when United Way came to ACT and said, "We want to work in two communities," ACT was a perfect place to say, "Okay, let's work in Bushwick and Washington Heights," because they had the capacity to do it...

Collaboratives, right. So, they were able to take on certain projects because of the ACT presence. So, I think in that way ACT brought resources to the community, funding. And I know they did something hybrid that really leveraged a lot of public and private money. But, anyway, I think in that way they did. Where a small community-based organization might not have access to United Way, but ACT did. So, I think in that way it was beneficial.¹

We are responsible for bringing money to a number of the neighborhoods, money that they wouldn't have seen, to do good things. And sometimes they executed well. Sometimes they executed better than they would have without our assistance, but we didn't control that money. Sometimes that money flowed directly. Sometimes it flowed through us, but we didn't hog it. We brought Ford Foundation in, and they worked with us on some of our community-building efforts.⁸

ACT developed the child welfare, minority agencies group:^{xcii}

I developed child welfare, minority agencies group...⁴

ACT produced community profiles:^{xciii}

I think the profiles we did were a contribution, not only for the communities, but for the city as a whole. It's now almost standard to see profiles of communities that aren't categorical only.

For a long time we've had health analyses of communities, but this had health, housing, economic development, jobs; it showed that those things were related in a way, both as the cause, as well as the remedy.⁸

ACT assisted the Citizens' Committee for Children with integrating ACT Community Profiles into their "Keeping Track" report:^{xciv}

"Keeping Track" would not have existed without ACT Community Profiles. [ACT's former Executive Director] was on the "Keeping Track" committee meetings, gave them guidance on using ACT Community Profiles.⁴

ACT survived several mayoral administrations, and has been able to advance its mission and goals:

...it's amazing how many mayors ACT has been through and still been able to sustain and move forward their goals and mission.⁷

All of these reports are consistent with outcomes typical of the three levels of social capital building (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

Changes at the System Level in Brownsville-East New York

Respondents did not report any experiences with changes at the system level in Brownsville-East New York.

Changes at the System Level in Bushwick

ACT accomplished many system changes for Bushwick, including fundraising, coordinating policies, developing programs, increasing resources, researching and writing documents, and building leadership:

When I was there, rejuvenated early childhood providers...mobilized...in Bushwick...coordinated groups/got them together, have done a lot on fundraising, coordinated policies, program development. Organic model that ACT was helped this happen. Because I was there, as local planner, got off the ground. Got this group to City Hall and onto the radar of city agencies. Helped government understand community needs better/brought more resources to Bushwick. IMPACT grew out of Bushwick Childcare Network...on modest scale...ACT brought resources to the community.⁹

The technical assistance we provided in particular was around the writing of the report and, in addition to that, while that report was being researched and written, we supported the collaborative to kind of more, I guess, programmatic stuff, doing the report, putting on the end of the year—not the end of the year, but the release of the report centered around a conference. And I think, subsequent to that, there were some discussions about leadership building, but I wasn't so involved in that, I don't think.³

I do recall that we did some sort of research, and identifying funding sources for the various projects, and identifying contacts for who to go to regarding park space, for some reason, and facilitating conversations with people within the collaborative to identify contacts and funding sources. And the reason my face is

all crunched up right now is because I'm thinking there are specific things we did around that, and that we were involved in the collaborative, but I can't remember specifically what they are.³

ACT influenced ACS to adopt Bushwick's case conferencing model:

Well, I was thinking of case conferencing stuff that you worked on. And that could be another place where ACS adopted that policy. And they're doing case conferencing like crazy over there now.¹

Case conferencing would not have existed without Bushwick's case conferencing model...⁴

ACT initiated and maintained Bushwick IMPACT, which has led to a variety of outcomes, including its public and private funding:

The examples that I can think of are the work that I did on the early education stuff, which is now Project IMPACT in Bushwick. And it's really hard, because I think in a neighborhood like Bushwick, where IMPACT really took hold, there was a great leader there who felt confident enough to be part of the conversation at ACT.¹

There's no doubt in my mind that we've improved the lives of children through IMPACT. I mean, just what happens there on every level I find profound, especially the social networks that are being formed of the mothers who come. The fact they now know people, the fact they have birthday parties together, the fact they go together to register their children for camp or school, small but profound steps. Then you've got the bigger steps, where you have 15 parents who are now eager and feel proud to be designated as parent ambassadors, and they're going to go out in the community and talk to people about the value of early childcare.⁶

They're funded by, I would say, 98% by a grant from the United Way. Maybe I'll say 94%. Because we have some small grants for some discrete things like read-alouds and some specific programs that IMPACT does. And then we have the government in-kind support in the form of a staff line, which is the executive [unintelligible 1:23:02] the program director.⁵

I think IMPACT has been a really huge contribution. IMPACT has operationalized this in terms of community building, positive community change. We do have systems set in motion with our staffing, with parents that we're training to go out and do this work to create change around early education...

ACT certainly helps with United Way. It was all ACT's relationship with United Way that brought ACT into this in the first place, that United Way has pretty much, 90% of it, supported IMPACT.

IMPACT is definitely [providing technical assistance] with CPI, because we're working with a group of childcare centers and preventive agencies, trying to get them to talk to each other. We've created a tracking system so they can talk directly to us, to each other, know when referrals have been made back and forth, know when someone is being sent over, know when a parent has waited three, four weeks to get a service. It's not being utilized sufficiently.¹⁰

ACT increased education funding:

The Danforth Foundation, the national foundation, ended up bringing money about transition planning and education to Bushwick.⁸

ACT brought the Summer in the City Project^{xv} to Bushwick:

Not so much with Brownsville-East New York. Yes, to Bushwick and Washington Heights, because of the parent involvement network/IMPACT and Summer in the City Project. Funding was given from NYCT to organize doing after-school with HRA, funding per child for every child that qualified. Used NYCT funding to improve communication with HRA. Summer in the City project was training to build parent involvement/empowerment, parent access, and general community building. Also did technical capacity-building with organizations providing childcare to kids and families. Was around review use of grant money, how to get them to organize their services for children in the future. Project fostered belongingness; built community because ACT was responsible for overseeing NYCT funding/HRA funding in their communities: Bushwick, Jamaica, Mott Haven, Washington Heights, and Bedford Stuyvesant. Piloted enrollment program—ACT provided technical assistance/capacity-building on this—to enhance their capacity to serve children in their second and third years. Became tool for organizations to rally behind/advocate for their needs/become their voice. HRA point person was Kay Hendon. Was a 5/7 year project which morphed into other things with funding/leadership change. Was for summer only but advocated for year round—since when was childcare a summer-only need? Was a public/private effort but only for 80 agencies. Agencies loved ACT's involvement...would not have been a complete project without ACT and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director].¹¹

Again, all of these outcomes are the result of the three levels of social capital building (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

Similarly to government/foundation/policy advocate partners' reports, ACT staff discussed the ways in which ACT fostered their leadership development for the purposes of being able to bring about changes at the individual and family, neighborhood, and system levels. When asked about changes at the individual and family levels, BENY and Bushwick reports focused less on their leadership development and more on actual changes brought about by ACT, both directly and indirectly, for individuals and families in their respective communities. One possible explanation

for this difference includes race and class differences between the two groups. In addition, several of the BENY and Bushwick respondents, versus government/foundation/policy advocate partners and ACT staff respondents, came from BENY and Bushwick. They did not need to be educated about local issues, etc. because they lived the experiences of these issues.

These reports discuss changes at the neighborhood level—generally, in BENY, and in Bushwick—in the context of “technical assistance.” This differs from BENY and Bushwick reports, which viewed changes at the neighborhood level that were brought about by ACT as an equal outsider that developed local leadership.

Most common among these reports on general changes at the system level by ACT include improved communication between communities and ACS, as well as an increase in ACS’ local partnership work. Most concerning is the lack of reports on BENY’s changes by ACT at the system level. This is best understood when the history of BENY’s neighborhood partnership is considered. ACS, with assistance from ACT, initiated BENY’s partnership; therefore, it is harder to create change at a system level when the system—i.e., ACS—is the partnership. This was not the case in Bushwick. The neighborhood collaborative was created locally, with ACT’s assistance; therefore, it was easier to reform ACS because funding was not directly at stake.

OBSTACLES

Respondents also discussed obstacles related to goals, guiding principles, and operational strategies. One respondent said ACT is an organization that is defined by its founder, ACT’s former executive director. She wondered whether the organization would be able to sustain itself without the founder/former executive director:

One of the fears was that ACT is an organization that belonged to [ACT’s former Executive Director]...and is so identified with him that it may not be able to sustain itself on its own.⁷

Another respondent said that ACT's decision to do ACS' community-building work (CPIs) narrowed their focus:

But ACS has ACS's mission and it's very narrow, and I think that in terms of how that served Bushwick narrowly. So, in terms of ACT calling that a project, it's narrowed ACT focused. That's what I feel.¹⁰

One respondent said that ACT did not do well at sharing learned lessons between ACT communities:

I think the information exchange, for example, whatever you figured out in Bushwick, I don't know if we really did a great job in getting that information to the other five communities. I think we could have used—I know when I was here we tried, but we never ended up doing anything; I shouldn't be putting this on tape—but systematic, about all planners come to the office every two weeks for a meeting regularly. We really have to hear what each other's doing, and how did you figure this out politically? I mean, some of the stuff you figured out was tremendous, and I'm not sure we did a good job getting those lessons learned to everybody.⁶

One respondent said ACT's community profiles were not utilized to their fullest potential:

If you look at the initial data books...community profiles...out of NYU: they completed ten profiles for ten communities ACT was trying to target...profiles were definition of comprehensiveness. Looks at statistics on health, housing, early childhood education, and an array of issues that communities faced. Deficits based, looked at things that needed to be fixed, but a good start. Looked at connection between the issues... good conversation starters. Only happened once because of funding. Did analysis that resulted in the 10. Not sure how

comprehensiveness played out on the ground... not sure Bushwick used community profile...used for fundraising...perhaps could have used it more.⁹

One respondent said that policy change is very time-consuming, and this frustrated ACT communities:

If the community was ever sort of annoyed at ACT, like, Oh, my gosh, I don't see the results of what we were doing. Maybe that was really the issue, was just the amount of times it takes to move mountains of policy.¹

Another respondent said that ACT did not decrease poverty sufficiently:

My expectations are that, no, I don't know what the outcome is, because I see ACT has been here for 20 years and poverty is pretty standard, median income that's still around \$18,000 or lower, still one of the highest neighborhoods indicating reports of abuse and neglect.

We still have a lot of kids being taken out of Bushwick and put in foster care in other neighborhoods.

Or we have five less kids going out of foster care, going into foster care. So, yeah, we have to be grateful for the small steps, but we've got to keep the big goal in mind. I think ACT has become a business, like city government has become a business, like community organizations and lots of social services agencies. And I don't necessarily blame the people who are doing the work. It's part of the whole big climate. It's a part of the direction our country has gone. And I think ACT is too comfortable, and they have their hours and they go home like anyone else do in children's work in New York City.

And there are people who are really dedicated, but you know what? Community organizing, you get something done. That's why people burn out, because it is

intensive work. I don't think it's a mark of success to have, oh, 20 years' longevity in this work. But whatever you accomplished, what have you changed? So, are you really willing to get your hands dirty? I think that's where I'm coming from. So maybe it's not fair to put it on ACT. because they don't necessarily claim to be that.

But I think if you're talking about community building, well, look at the community, for God's sake. Now, this community is gentrifying really quickly, and people are even more crowded in their housing. If ACT is serious, they would have someone here every single day running around the community, literally, physically going and meeting with people and talking. Pounding the pavement; that's what's needed. That is what's needed if we're talking about change in Bushwick. I don't know if it makes sense for ACT to be it. I mean, I could see it. But I think that's what's needed. And everyone wants to be these consultants and these intermediaries.¹⁰

Respondents said that Bushwick ACT did not follow through on the goals of its health-position paper:

I don't know if I'd say "the least supportive," but something I was really disappointed with was that we weren't able to follow through on that as much, and I'm not sure if that was just ACT. It's not even clear to me if that was our particular role, or what our role in moving those things forward would be.⁶

I think the worst thing that happens is when things get started and then they fall flat and things don't go anywhere. The health—the legislative breakfast with the health paper—we had talked about it yesterday. Nothing happened with it. There was no movement. I think to get things started and no movement...¹⁰

I like to think that I did a pretty good job. At the time, we were still working on medical issues. As far as the legislative breakfast and the paper that we put out,

we were able to get that out. I don't think it had the far-reaching and solid effect that the housing one did, because it just happened. As we were putting it out, there was money for the homeless; they were coming out for homeless services. It was kind of like, Well, all right, there's money coming out. You guys have made a large enough claim that you need some help; we're going to do that.

It was a little bit different with the medical, because a lot of that was a lot of internal agencies, talking about how we could better serve that. And I think that some of that was done, with connecting with the schools and the asthma programs. So a lot of the basic connections were made. The paper went out. But there wasn't a whole lot...there was no big spark afterward.¹³

According to respondents, ACT was able to promote—and was successful at—comprehensiveness on the ground; however, it was not successful at it with government service systems:

Well, I guess inasmuch as it's ACT's goal to be sort of comprehensive on the ground and cross barriers and take people out of their silos, I feel like they accomplish that. I don't feel like, on a policy level, I don't even know if that's part of their mission. But I don't see that on the policy level they're able to do that. And even in my position now, we're trying to get agencies to work together. And it's really difficult. And I can't even point to an example of where ACT tried to do that, except by having staff lines from HRA and ACS and other city agencies. I feel like that was sort of one bridge. But you can't point to another example where they really brought in other government agencies. I remember working with HRA. And I remember working with ACS. But never together, always separately.¹

One respondent said that one obstacle was that ACT was lacking in community building:

Not sure how successful ACT was in community building...not one of ACT's

strengths...In the beginning, thinking back to Bushwick, probably more so...Folks came to the table for common purpose...would have been good if more residents, but was more provider based. This is why I say ACT lacked in community building. More could have been done.⁹

Another said ACT had challenges in working with community leaders who did not share the same values and principles (for example, that families' voices should be included and supported):

The biggest challenge is the same thing, it's about values and principles. Working with people who don't have those shared values and principles. You can hire me to come and develop a family engagement program for you in your organization or in your initiative, but if you don't have the same values around families, either being involved, being included, the kind of support that families need, or hearing from families about the kind of support that they need, then there's nothing I can do to change the way that you work with families. I could write you the most comprehensive, wonderful program you've ever seen in your life, but you're not going to be able to implement it if you don't really believe that families should be at the table, and if you don't believe that families should have a voice, and if you don't believe that you should be inclusive and supportive.⁵

One respondent said that ACT's approach is top-down, and that their lack of clarity of purpose drives this:

I think ACT needs to really, really value its community people. Anyone like [CCENY's Community Coordinator] who works in the community, we've got to pull what he's doing, what he knows, what he understands and integrate, use that to inform ACT's mission. See, I think what ACT has done, in my experience there, ACT more so uses what they know to inform the comprehensiveness, so it's really top-down planning. And it probably depends on the gravitas or the experience of the liaison or the planner, how much there's this back and forth...

I think people who have been doing this for a long time, they know. And I think, look, you've been doing this for 15 years, you see repetition, right? You see cycles. You see patterns. A lot of times for someone who's newer, oh, everything is new. So, what drives that? Not anything cynical, necessarily, but really being able to see things and just say, All right, do this, do this, do this. And I think what drives it is, again, not a clear enough sense of purpose.¹⁰

Another respondent said that ACT's structure was a little too loose in some communities:

I'm trying to think of another community where it didn't work so well. And maybe it's just a little bit too loose. Do you know what I mean? Maybe there just wasn't enough structure. And maybe that's more of the operations piece. But I think it worked well in some places. And I think it may have not worked well in others. And I think that was maybe to do with more of the operations piece.¹¹

She also said that ACT did not have a formal accountability structure:

Well, see, I don't know if I'm getting off topic here. But the oversight committee was something I never really understood at ACT, and I still don't. I feel like I think the genius, in a way, of this model is that it is sort of a private/public partnership. And you have the support of government, but you're independent in another way, too. And so, you're free to do a lot of things. But I felt like, well, a lot of times when I was there, I'm, like, "Who's accountable? I don't get this." So, a lot of times I'd be, like, "There needs to be a board. There needs to be a real board of directors who's telling the leadership what they need to be doing. And someone needs to be accountable at the end of the day."

And I felt like the communities were definitely brought in on decisions. I know that they were totally involved in hiring the planners, which I think was great. I don't know how much they really had to do with leading ACT. I don't know what

they felt their role was. I know the oversight committees were really used as just forums for sharing information, not for really—and, I mean, honestly, when an oversight committee is 300 people, they really can't be making decision for you. It's more of an audience.¹

She added that, at the end of the day, ACT is ultimately an outsider:

I think ACT Central...I don't know. They are downtown coming into your community. And they're outsiders in a way. Even though they try so hard to have a base in a community, at the end of the day, they're still outsiders. So, I don't know if that answered the question.¹

One respondent said that ACT did not do a good job at promoting themselves and their accomplishments; this contributed to a lack of understanding of ACT:

Maybe a drawback, and it's really kind of hard to say, because I know the role of the intermediary is to be in the background and not be the one in the forefront stamping their name on accomplishments. But I feel like ACT didn't do a great job of promoting themselves. And, again, I don't know if that was part of the mission, that you're going to stay in the background and make things happen, but other people are going to take credit for it. I know that was part of it, too. But I feel like ACT didn't do a great job of publicizing its accomplishments. And I feel like a lot of people out there are, "What is ACT? What does ACT do?" Especially even at ACS, lots of people are, like, "I don't know what ACT is."¹

Another said ACT's doing the invisible contributed to communities not understanding ACT and its work; therefore, they did not approach ACT for assistance when they should have:

Okay. I think that when you think about this whole concept of doing the invisible, I think that that can take on a dual, most supportive/least supportive contribution.

I think that it's least supportive because then you don't define yourself as a thing. When you look at BPN, you know that's [Brooklyn] Perinatal Network. When you look at the Miracle Maker, that's foster care. And though they may have other programs, the biggest thing is foster care. When you look at most other organizations, you can easily identify what their input is, their contribution, what they do.

I think that it's been not supportive for communities. We're just talking about communities; let's not even talk about us as an organization, how this hasn't helped with—I think for communities, it's not a supportive position, because then people don't know what to come to ask you for. And because they don't know what to ask you for, they don't ask. And there have been times and situations that I felt that we could have helped people who were in a bind, or just helped to focus something, or help to create something or manage something, that we were not invited to the table because people didn't think that was a table we should have been invited to, because they don't really know what we do.⁵

Respondents agreed that ACT was underfunded, and it did not have a formula for how much to charge for the work/activities/projects:

The tension may not have been as strong for the staff if the expression of value, in terms of projects, had funding that was more realistic in terms of the job that ACT was being asked to do. So, there was a source of funding. There's a job that ACT can do somehow related to mission, but the amount of money that was given didn't match the cost that was associated with doing the project. So, necessarily, ACT would be getting some money in from this but, in terms of resources, they're spending more resources on it than the money they're getting. So, in a way, they're subsidizing, by time, an endeavor that's earning money for the organization. But there was no exercise to match how much money they were getting to how much it cost to do. That wasn't happening.

So, we got some money available. “We’ve got \$20,000.00. Okay. It’s there already.” But they’re already doing things. They already have a job. So, we were taking time that was paid for from other sources to subsidize projects that were supplying some funding, but not a sufficient amount of funding to cover the whole thing. So, I think that created some of the tension.²

There were times when funding drove ACT’s activities:

There’d be dollars matched with opportunities, and so there’s a need to sustain the organization. And so, yes, we want to do theater that’s kind of artsy and developing theater to the next stage, but they want a tap-dance show, right?

They want a tap dance. We can tap dance, and we get some money. We can support it. Maybe it’s not that stark, but certainly—and in some ways the existence of funding for something is an expression of value. So, if someone is willing to fund something, some entity somewhere has decided this has value and there’s a need to do this, and that source of value has said, “ACT can do this. ACT can help us with this.” So, in a way, it’s helping ACT define its value in a real dynamic way that makes sense.

The problem is, the definition of value is not done within the context of ACT’s mission statement. The definition of value is done in terms of assigning money to something. It is done within the context of whatever mission statement that entity has. So, there’s an overlap. There are overlapping circles, but sometimes that overlap is thinner and thinner, and then it draws you into another direction.²

Others said funding was difficult to obtain, because conveying the importance/added value of doing the “invisible” was difficult. One way ACT survived was by shifting to ACS funding; however, as ACS adopted ACT’s philosophy, they needed/funded ACT less:

Full scale and scope of ACT never got realized...because of insufficient money!
 We knew local planner enough! Needed two [ACT Associate Executive Directors] working, two [Bushwick Local Planners]...not enough resources!
 What got in the way was challenges associated with conveying the importance/added value of doing the invisible...we could have marketed ourselves better! Part of it was a resources issue, but part of it was the need to do the visible, i.e., programming! This helped our role become more defined...people started to see us differently...doing the visible brought in more funding, but not for local planners...for ACT Central to do more of the visible...

As we promoted ACS community building work, we became less needed...this helped bring about a more coordinated child welfare system on the local level...as we became more successful at getting ACS to embrace our philosophy, it freed us to do more visible work...initially, we got money from the Mayor's Office, which was great in terms of maintaining local planners. However, we wound up shifting to funding from the child welfare system. This became an issue, because as we reformed the child welfare system, they needed us less...

We moved to ACS, because part of our goals was to reform the child welfare system...went from Ninfa Sigara to child welfare...moved because ACT's influence would be greater, would be accepted...As we improved ACS, they needed ACT less, and this created an environment where our role changed...skill levels of local planners versus ACS community builders. Knowledge and skills were worlds apart...This is when [ACT's former Executive Director]/[ACT's former Associate Executive Director] realized the internal structure was limited...couldn't keep local planners in the long term. Changes in administrations affected funding, too. When administrations changed, needed to create/reestablish new relationships.⁴

I think it's great that ACT can be sort of a chameleon and be whatever it needs to be in order to make a community successful or whatever they're doing successful.

The downside is that we have absolutely no profile, because we're under such financial restraints right now.⁷

This contributed to ACT's difficulties in navigating its public/private funding structure. For example, when being funded by public systems, it was difficult to challenge those very public systems, to implement flexible programming, to fire workers, to fill vacancies immediately, etc.:

The other thing I think ACT could have done differently, and still, I think, we struggle with, is to define our role about advocacy. Because while we have always been a public-private initiative, that has kind of implied we don't want to take positions that might offend one or the other, because we do toe this line. But the more you get involved with community, you want community to have a voice that's going to imply advocacy, and that might also imply having to take a position that's not favorable with the city agency you also have a relationship with. So, I think that still is something to be wrestled with.⁶

IMPACT is funded mostly through private dollars. But, again, ACT fits no other model that I know of, where part of our staff is paid for with public dollars and part of our staff is paid for with private. So, for example, the director out at IMPACT was paid with—she actually has a city line. Very, very unusual. All the in-kind...that's supported because of the ways we support ACT from the central office, and most of the central office is paid for with city dollars; you could never replace that with private dollars. It's been a very important part of how ACT continues to function, and it's been good, and it has had its disadvantages as well, because it's public dollars. It means you've got less flexibility...

The only other thing, for the record, I think, in your description of ACT is, again, our very...how we sustained ourselves for 18 years being this public-private that truly half the staff is paid by public, half by private. I just think any description of ACT needs to include what that means on the ground. What that means is, you can't fire certain people. What it means is, you're not always at liberty to hire.

What it means is, if somebody leaves, you can't replace. What it means is, you can't bite the hand that feeds you.⁶

There's no loose threads. It's a great relationship. Preferably, I would like to have all ACT staff and no ACS staff, and I say that from a management standpoint. That it's very, very difficult, as well as—I don't know if this is something you're going to get to or not, but it's a great pet peeve of mine right now. I can't stand computer technology systems, the phone systems. I mean, there's so much of ACS that's here that does not work when you want to get things done, and you don't have a bureaucracy, and all of a sudden you're forced into this bureaucracy. It creates a great logjam, and it's just not a way that I like to work. It's beyond frustrating to me.

The savings is great, though. We have our rent, our computers, our phones, and seven staff people. What am I going to say? But I have to figure out and have not figured out: How do I balance that? How do I make this work better for us?⁷

One thing I can say about ACT is that they've always had the talent and the know-how [sic.] to be able to navigate through different situations, different political environments. But without the funding to be able to do that or the freedom with that funding—because you can get funding, but you might be: “This is what we've got to do.” If they get funding for technical assistance for the Bushwick CPIs, all the CPIs, that's great. But then that doesn't do anything for the local planning or being able to revitalize the network.¹³

The inability to fill publicly-funded vacant positions in a timely manner made continuity of work flow impossible. This is, in part, what prompted ACT to influence ACS's absorption of ACT's community work:

I think the short version is that we saw clearly that coalitions and collaboratives work best if there's a full-time staff person. So, I think those liaison and planner

positions were imperative, and any time people in those positions left and we couldn't fill them, mostly the collaborative or the coalitions stopped functioning. Not all the time, but most times.

And as I've said to you and maintain to others, I think it is one of the hardest positions, because you have to have somebody that can do everything, from pull together the logistics of a meeting to the same person being able to do strategic planning, and somebody who is independent and yet knows how to answer to 10 people. I just think it's one of the most challenging...⁶

What's happened over the years is that our ability to continue to employ local planners became inconsistent as a result of that, what we now call the public-private partnership between ACS and private foundations. Because we've never gotten enough private foundation money exclusively to support five local planners. Over time, those local planners became government employees. They were employed by either...ACS or HRA are the two that were involved at the point at which I came on board.

And because of the way that government works, when someone leaves, it's really hard to get a replacement because of budget constraints, because the commissioners lose lines and a number of other issues. We haven't been able to fill that seat quickly enough to support the collaborative, because when you leave a collaborative unsupported for a year, it starts to disappear.

So, as a result of us not being able to have consistent local planner representation in the collaboratives, and not being able to have consistency in how we were able to hire people on those lines, we kind of had to refocus the way that we work with collaboratives. And we started to refocus somewhere around—I want to say, not even '98, 2001, maybe? When we got our first grant from [unintelligible 13:43] that came through ACS. Rather than to hire people to focus on ACT collaboratives, we got a grant to help ACS to build its own collaboratives, which

they were calling ACS Networks. And so we hired five, and now we were calling these folks “liaisons,” network liaisons to do the work of a local planner, except with the ACS Networks.

And then once that funding ended, the vision was that ACS would see the importance of having a person in communities to coordinate this work, and then hire those folks who were on that temporary, private Fund for the City of New York for us, but [NEKC] money. The hope was that ACS would see the importance of that role and hire those folks as ACS staff persons. But, again, the same thing happened, that ACS waited until the last minute, and the money was running out. People can’t afford to wait for a year in order to get on a city line. And so many of the liaisons then, much like the local planners, found other jobs, because they couldn’t wait. And, at this point, we have one last man standing, who was the only liaison who actually did get hired onto a government line from those private lines...

And then, on the public side, we’re also losing staff because of budget cuts and things like that. And if you don’t have folks to do the work, then how do you continue to be an organization and get the work done? So we have challenges on both sides.⁵

I’m not sure if this is going to answer your question, but we have had significant cutbacks over the last six months, and so it’s really put a great deal of...it’s put us at a deficit in staying in the communities.⁷

Another obstacle included ACT’s lack of clarity on their direction in a funding-starved environment:

I think what’s going to be really hard is the funding cuts at ACS. And it makes me nervous for ACT’s survival. It really does. And so, I don’t know what their plans are. But I don’t know. I feel like ACT—I don’t know how much of a local

presence they have anymore. I don't know what kinds of projects they're doing centrally. I don't really know what they're doing. I feel like they've sort of been—from my experience, seems like they've been a little bit hodgepodge in terms of the projects they take. It doesn't feel like it's—it's sort of following money, maybe, or following the requests and for TA.¹

One respondent said that this contributed to ACT's funding defining its work, rather than ACT's work defining its funding:

I definitely think funding has driven ACT's choice of projects, but I don't know that funding necessarily drives the top-down as much. I think that there was not enough cohesion at ACT in terms of time spent to planning. This is a contradiction, because here I say ACT is all about process. But some people at ACT were all about process. And some were, "This is what we do." I think it could've been really exciting if it was really a meeting of the minds in a regular way to define agendas. What drove that? I think that's just simply because that's how ACT evolved over time.¹⁰

And yet capacity-building in ACT is underfunded; funders and communities do not believe it is a priority in a funding-starved environment:

[Capacity-building is] hard to fund. It's underfunded...I think it's not only the funding. I think, on everybody's part, figuring out it's important to make time for it. It's everybody's issues, and I think it's going to become more challenging now, particularly as the child welfare pressures become much stronger for agencies. So, the people who might have been and have been involved on a voluntary basis are going to feel more pressured, and I think their capacity is going to be diminished, capacity to be involved with the collaborative efforts.

It's a challenge. Capacity-building is a challenge because you don't, as an outside entity, want to come in and say, "You know what? You guys aren't functioning so

well.” So, the diplomacy that’s needed, and the time is great, and the relationship building. You really have to have those skills and make it work, because to get people to see and to want to do that, capacity-building I think is a long haul.⁶

I think [Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick leaders] get it [capacity-building and its importance]. I think that they agree that it’s something that is needed and necessary. I think that where they might disagree, either with ACT or with each other, is its prioritization. So it probably holds a higher weight with us than it does with them.

I think it’s a resource issue. I think that, given a choice between spending money on one thing or another, capacity-building always gets the last, the dregs. And it’s also defined by, in those communities and in every community, I think, that funders and foundations take the lead on that and this is something—funders and foundations think that capacity-building is a soft thing that they’re not going to see results from in the timeframe that they want to see results. So they have a tendency not to fund it. And organizations respond to funding, where they can get money. And so, when you talk about funders, whether it’s government as a funder or a private foundation, if this is not something that people are going to put money behind, funders are going to put money behind, agencies are never going to embrace it the way that they should.⁵

ACT’s policy and program products in Brownsville-East New York were perceived as less concrete than other communities:

I’m not sure that the products—policy, program development, product—were as concrete as in some of the other communities.⁸

ACT Collaboratives were not set up for new community members; this required ACT to do capacity-building to level the playing field:

I was saying that it's not just capacity-building for organizations, but also for individuals. Whether it's community members—we have this mantra that we repeat all the time that we want folks from the community—families, young people, people who might be clients of the agencies that we're working with—to participate in these collaboratives and these collaboratives' efforts, but a lot of times we don't make it our business to make sure that we build their capacities to function at the table as equals or as equal as possible.

And so in order to level the playing field, a lot of times we have to work with these folks to make sure that, when they come to the table, they understand the terms we're using, they understand the issues, they understand either what their role at different meetings are, the expectations of them. And also give them the tools in order to be able to function. If we want them to do a presentation, we have to make sure that they're prepared to do that presentation.

So those are just some examples of capacity-building for individuals. A lot of times we have to do the same thing for individuals who are on the so-called [specialist 3:29] side, as well. So I think those are all of the roles of ACT in the community, and our goals.⁵

When the Bushwick ACT Collaborative reached a point where it did not have a full-time, paid staff person, things fell apart:

The meetings stopped happening. Because the meetings stopped happening, then that same kind of cohesive, overseeing body, the steering committee, wasn't meeting, the regular people weren't meeting. People would talk about how they really missed those ACT meetings. But no one really took it upon themselves to be, like, “Well, hey, we're just one person, we're the community, we should be able to do that.” And that never happened.¹³

Bushwick IMPACT does not do—and cannot do because of their focus and funding limitations—what the Bushwick ACT Collaborative did when it existed:

Yeah, they're here with IMPACT, but that's IMPACT. IMPACT's doing what they do. IMPACT doesn't do what ACT does or what ACT was doing while they were here.

The ACT presence isn't the same, even though they're represented by Bushwick IMPACT. And although IMPACT is doing a lot of what ACT would have been doing, like overlapping. They do all their stuff around early childhood intervention, because they have to deal with the fact that they have multiple funding streams and they have to kowtow to a couple of different people to make sure that they're doing X, Y, and Z. Like right now, they have to make sure that they're doing specific activities. And they probably are a little understaffed. Some of those things go to someone else, but they can't because of the funders that they have. That they need to continue to do these activities.

So they don't have the same kind of freedom that ACT had when the collaborative was running here. Because the collaborative's goal was to take those community issues and deal with them on several different levels, ultimately going to a systemic level and trying to address those issues with the city and the state. And [our] local elected politicians, the people had more leverage than the individual CBOs here.

IMPACT isn't doing that. They can't. So that's what I mean when I'm talking about the fact that the meetings aren't happening, the collaborative's not—nobody picked up the banner and kept moving with it when the funding ran out. And that's kind of sad, because they're probably—I know they're probably—there are different collaboratives all over the place, and there are probably some that had a similar structure and probably can still run without funding. And a lot of that

might have to do with leadership and a couple of different issues that work with the dynamics of an agency or an organization of that size or with those goals.¹³

Bushwick IMPACT is more identified with the United Way than with ACT:

And that's why I say about the cheerleading, because there is that, it's IMPACT. Or is it ACT or is it—? It's not. Because I don't know if that's stated as clearly as it needs to be...

If you walk up to the IMPACT office, you see the United Way sign in the front in the window. It doesn't say "An ACT Project." It probably will say it on some of their paperwork, but when they talk at meetings, it's about IMPACT and IMPACT and IMPACT. No one uses the word "ACT" anymore. So that's what I mean about, that ACT isn't getting cheerleaded like it needs to. And I don't know what needs to happen or why it's not.¹³

Over time, ACT's presence in Bushwick became more ACS-focused, rather than focused on child welfare in a broader sense:

My understanding is that ACT's involvement was primarily around child welfare issues, in the sense of child abuse and neglect, foster care, prevention, things like that, as opposed to things like childcare, which IMPACT does. And my guess is that, as the years went by, the involvement started to get more ACS focused, as opposed to more broadly.¹⁰

Bushwick ACT staff managed to navigate the tension between ACT Central and the Bushwick ACT Collaborative; this was more of a challenge for Brownsville-East New York staff:

I think her [i.e., the CCENY Liaison] role hasn't really been defined, as well. Not just vis-à-vis the Coalition, but the liaison who's already there. So, regarding how well we've done, we've done a great job, I think, with IMPACT. Because it's a

program, it's our program, it's easier in designing a governance structure. I think if you look back in talking about Bushwick and the coalition, the collaborative, when we had the Bushwick ACT Collaborative—I wasn't there when it was formed, but looking from kind of the outside, I think that the local planner was clear about who she worked for and what her role was vis-à-vis both of those two entities. I think there might have been tension at times between the two, or maybe all the time between the two, but I think that you had a seasoned professional who was able to manage those tensions and really understood what her position was and her role in that structure was.

And I think that that understanding has not been translated to the liaison. And that's, the fault is on both sides.⁵

As a result of ACT's struggle to maintain funding for staff and programs, their influence has diminished:

I think that somehow we have to figure something out about IMPACT because, having been in human services a long time, it is an excellent program that's doing great work, and yet, we struggle with financing it.⁶

Regarding the economic climate, I think that, much like every other organization, a huge challenge is funding. We've had a good balance of staff that have been on public and private lines. We're losing some private staff—well, we're not losing private staff yet, but we're in danger of losing private staff if we're not [unintelligible 1:52:39] to get funding to pay them and to support our programs. This is going to have the hugest effect on IMPACT, because that's where most of our private funding is.⁵

...there are all the city cuts, ACT has lost a lot of staff...

Let me say, if IMPACT couldn't sustain itself, I wouldn't attribute that to ACT. I wouldn't claim that as a flaw or fault of ACT, because we've already been operating on our own for two years—one year, two years for the most part. Truthfully, we're not set up in a really sustainable way, because we have everybody here working 150%. We don't have enough staff. And that's not sustainable. So, until we can raise money, if IMPACT totally flops, that'll be because of the environment, because ACT wasn't there looking over its shoulder. But we've been saying we don't need to be a child of ACT anymore also. So, I wouldn't attribute that to ACT.

After November, I don't have any clear assurance of money. But I'm also, at the same time, resentful because I have been talking about this problem since August. I wrote a very clear memo of what needed to be happening. I submitted it to our steering committee, which is now like our board. It's a much more organized, serious board. And everyone's, like, "Oh, yeah, yeah, it's really serious." Well, really mobilize, then. You want to be the board. You don't want me to have contacts with the board, so do it and get results.

So, this is what's very real to me right now. I cannot run a quality program, and promote it, and do evaluations of it, and build it, and do all the staff development, and raise money. I can't do it.¹⁰

ACT doesn't have enough staff members now. It used to be they had a lot of staff members who ACT could delegate all the time to go to the community right now, and they don't have enough. Right now, I think Sandy is attached to Highbridge, specifically there. Who else? Everybody's gone. It's one of the sad facts, that they don't have enough people to spread the news. It also diminishes the influence you manage to have.¹²

I'm not connected to ACT. I'm not at the office anymore; I'm not privy to what's going on behind the scenes, ACT doesn't have that same kind of impact.

IMPACT is out there a lot. But I don't know if IMPACT cheerleads ACT as much as it probably needed to be.

But, no, they don't got that—it's not like I could say ACT is one of our partners. Because I don't really see their influence. I mean, they're probably working with ACS way at the top on some of the structured stuff...

In fact, I think one of the reasons that they kept me on was to make sure that the legislative breakfast was going to take place. Because my funding was actually going to end up end of September. And the legislative breakfast didn't happen till November, so they kind of worked to keep me on there. And then, come the new year, I was part-time doing this kind of stuff. So it was just kind of trying to maintain what we had going. We still had great meetings. But we lost the second chair, so it was just Denise again. Because it was part-time, I don't think I had the effective capacity to be able to groom another co-chair. At the time, ACT wasn't able to guarantee that they were going to be able to continue funding the liaison, and I never really knew where that money came from, if that was through ACS or that was through some other funding.¹³

Personnel. I think they need talent and holding onto talent, and that means funding. If you're going to do any of these functions, you need talented people to do them, and ACT historically has attracted talented people in phases in their life. It's been very effective at getting people for three-year, two-year, four-year stints, where it was very exciting for them to be part of ACT at that point in their passage of life...development. And there was a richness of their contribution, and it's hard to imagine ACT having developed the way it did without that, but that is clearly—it's episodic...

It's something that needs to be refreshed. I think most people who have worked at ACT wouldn't work at ACT for more than a two-, three-year, four-year period. And that would be a terrific period, an exciting period, but then there would be a

period where they'd be growing into something else in their life, whatever that might be. So, I think to be able to continue to attract that type of talent, you need to be on the lookout for it, and you also need to be able to fund it and finance it.²

Another respondent contributed ACT's funding challenges to its lack of strategic planning:

We have such a small amount of money now. Let's come up with a year plan, a three-year plan, a five-year plan. ACT's not big on planning, in my experience.¹⁰

According to one respondent, ACT did not help communities tap into long-term funding, and it did not teach communities how to tap into funding for themselves:

Maybe ACT was sort of in that mode. Maybe ACT was more about doing for the community versus helping the community do for themselves, in a way, around funding. In other ways I think they were all about, "Let's help the community do it for themselves." But maybe in terms of the funding piece, maybe ACT relied too much on discrete projects versus a way to get money into a community for the long term, to sustain them.¹

Another respondent said there was a need for technical assistance in the form of leadership development:

But sometimes talent needs to be groomed. And it's not so much stroking egos, but basically trying to identify the people that are in positions that don't give them the ability to be able to shine like they can shine. And that might mean a mother of two who's working at home, but who's totally involved in her PTA, and the Educational Council, and whatnot, and is definitely focused and just needs a place to get polished and to learn how to use her voice.¹³

While respondents acknowledged that ACT's non-paternalistic approach helped communities figure out what they needed and how to make that happen, their approach did not prioritize follow up/through:

It's also a difficulty when you're doing a collaborative work with many different groups, finding who's responsible for what, and ACT's role wasn't, "We're going to come up with something and then we're going to put it in your community." It was, "We will help you figure out what you want. We will help you get the resources that you need to get it in there." I think one of the positive things was that ACT was not paternalistic in that respect. "I will come in from Manhattan and show you what to do, Bushwick." I think we tried to be really conscious about, "What do you want? What do you want?" But one of the problems with that is the follow-through is not necessarily as strong as if it's just me taking care of my business.³

I think that ACT has been an organization that has always put out to, whether it was Bushwick, Brownsville-East New York, any of the CPIs or any of the communities, that, "We're here. What do you need? Give us a call and we're going to help you." I think that, in general, most people know that, that we're there to help, with something we may not have identified, but people who come to us for assistance with something where they need help. Also, ACT has been able to go in and identify needs that they may not be aware of and offer assistance. So, I guess it's twofold. I think that is actually a real strength of ACT, because the folks who have worked at ACT, from my understanding, have never been intrusive. So, it's a good relationship.⁷

Respondents said that, at times, there was a lack of clarity around staff roles, and insufficient staff to conduct follow-through:

There was no local planner. There was a liaison to the Child Welfare Network—is that what it was called?—that was [the former Bushwick Child Welfare

Neighborhood Network's Liaison]. And my role when I came in was to help write the policy report, though I came in, and [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] and I kind of did the collaborative work together. I think it was definitely an issue, because I remember having conversations saying, "It's not clear who's supposed to be doing this and who's in charge of doing this." And without that clearly defined, it's not going to work. There will be times that it works. There will be times that it doesn't. People will step back because they don't want to step on anybody's toes. People will step back because they have other things to do and nobody said to them, "You are responsible for this." I remember a lot of conversations about that...

Because you're not clear who's supposed to be doing what, and saying, "I will be the local planner for Bushwick, but you need to give me the role of local planner and stop giving me all this work over here." Or, "I'll take 50%." We need to have a clear conversation about what's going on to fill this vacuum, or to step out.

And not being—not a clear definition of what happens. Because I'd moved beyond doing the paper into supporting the collaborative, and then once the paper was done—while I was doing the paper, it made sense. It made sense that I was doing all the other work, not all the other work, but doing the work surrounding supporting the collaborative. But once the paper was done, I was supposed to be moving on to my next project, but there was no planner there, and [the former Bushwick Child Welfare Neighborhood Network's Liaison] was really absorbed with the work that he was doing for the network. So that was the point when the conversations started really coming out about, "A decision needs to get made, because otherwise we're leaving them in a lurch."³

I think, personally, could have used more support in defining his [i.e., the CCENY Community Coordinator] and role vis-à-vis the collaborative or the Coalition and ACT. I think that he's not sure who he works for. And that's everybody's fault. Not just ACT's fault, but it's ACT's fault in that I feel like we should have taken

the initiative, sit down with the co-chairs to define that. ACT leadership and the co-chair leadership of the collaborative. And then together share that message or that decision with the liaison, and that's never happened. And now we have a second person who's come into the mix as a liaison to the liaison. I don't remember what her name is, but she's the person who was hired with the CPI funds...

And I think her [i.e., Eva's] role hasn't really been defined, as well. Not just vis-à-vis the Coalition, but the liaison who's already there.⁵

I think one gap with ACT, which is a gap with everyone I see, it has to be followed through to the end. You have a great idea. You provide some initial TA, but it's got to be consistently. There's got to be consistent oversight and support. And I don't mean micromanagement, but as things evolve and things change, you've got to be available to be a sounding board.¹⁰

One respondent characterized this as ACT's enthusiasm for projects outnumbering staff resources to support them:

I participated in leading a strategic planning session with the staff, and I think it was in 2006 when it started. Whenever the transit strike in New York was, when the transit leader got arrested. December? And the strategic planning process started then and it went on for about a year. And it was with staff, and the objective was to revise the mission statement and recommit to a more focused mission because, at that point in time, ACT had grown many heads, had gone in many directions, and the enthusiasm for projects was greater than the staff resources to support the projects.

So, ACT was finding itself at a huge buffet of wonderful projects, and not able to handle it all with the level of attention and quality that they liked.²

Respondents said ACT did not provide sufficient support to the local planners:

I guess I feel like—I'm just thinking of one particular planner. She had a great work ethic, but she was always at a loss as to what she was supposed to do. So, I feel like in a way the community work that ACT does is as good as the planner that was there. And I think that could've been, I think if there had been more support or direction from ACT Central, perhaps, then maybe there wouldn't have been so much variance. So, it would've been less up to the individual, because they would have been getting more consistent support from Central. You know what I'm saying?

And I know that every job is just figuring it out. And maybe it's a characteristic that's needed in a planner, is that they're sort of flexible and can go with it and can figure things out and they're resourceful. But I still think that maybe there could have been a little bit more direction from Central to the planners.¹

I think we were very fortunate with having the planners and the liaisons that we did, but I think that there were lost opportunities to do even more with that group. Like when the liaisons came on, to build the capacity even more. And I think, again, that's really a struggle for every organization. We ask for monies to do programming, but don't always build in the capacity-building and the supervision and the training and the time that all takes.⁶

Another thing that's interesting about ACT, and I know I'm sounding very critical right now, but I think it's because ACT has really great, great principles. And ACT out in the community, ACT out in New York City is very impressive. A lot of people historically have been impressed, like when [ACT's former Executive Director] runs a workshop or a meeting, as ACT's staff, we're not necessarily privy to that kind of training of the ACT way.

So, in terms of how ACT might have been more supportive, have a real training guide, and a plan that it does for staff and volunteers. And a couple of years ago, [ACT's Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training] and I put that together for volunteers and interns. I don't know the extent to which we still use it. So, I think PSP guided a lot of staff in the last four or five years.¹⁰

Respondents discussed the challenge of ACT local planners having to navigate the tension between ACT Central's expectations and the co-chairs' expectations:

The planner also reported to that co-chair, so it was sort of a divided allegiance: "Am I doing what this co-chair says, or am I doing what ACT says?" And so, I guess they bumped up against each other sometimes.¹

The planners had two stresses on them, I think, and you could share your own experiences, of course, but one was, "Do I do what the people who I work with locally want me to do, or do I do what the larger organization and leadership wants?"

And the other tension was, "Do I focus in as I'm supposed to on 10 doable tasks, or do I respond to the urgent call to come to a meeting today that may or may not have anything to do with a goal? How focused, and how much do I need to stay on my outcomes versus make sure I don't lose the support I need to stay on my outcomes?"⁸

Respondents reported that, without local planners, ACT Collaboratives were weaker and the work was inconsistent:

There was an inconsistency in the work that we were able to do, because it depended on individuals' availability for whatever the time was, and I think the collaborative was weaker without the local planner.³

I'll tell you, them not being here is—it's definitely been felt. There's been a little bit of—it's changed a little bit... Oh, man. It's been a struggle. Because since—it was almost like it was a straight halt. It wasn't like a real—kind of like, "All right, we're phasing things out." It's kind of like, there's no more funding. It just got to the point where I couldn't continue to do it...

More so when you, Nina, slipped out of that spot. I think a lot of the confidence that some of the agencies had in the collaborative also slipped, too, because—and that's a problem when everybody knows you and you're in that position. When you're not anymore, they kind of assume—they panic a little bit. "Oh, are they going to keep going?"¹³

One respondent said one obstacle was the need for, yet absence of, collaboratives:

I still think there's a need for a collaborative out there, because people miss it.⁶

Other respondents discussed ACT's weakness in terms of evaluation; they said part of the problem was that ACT and others did not know how to evaluate an intermediary's work:

I think evaluation is really weak all around at ACT. And I know special service people have been saying this forever. But I guess it's just hard to measure, in a lot of ways, the impact of bringing people together, and having them network, and having them know each other and the relationships. I think that's such a huge part of that that I think maybe we haven't figured out how to measure that yet. And so, that's probably part of the problem. They're an intermediary, like we are here, which is also very hard to describe. People don't fund intermediaries per se; they fund direct services. So, I think that's also a challenge for ACT.¹

I think it's a challenge, and I think at some point we just have to go on what is known about best practice, and can't evaluate everything to know it actually has a specific impact. I'm just not sure how coalitions of any sort have ever evaluated

themselves on having impact. I'd be curious, besides these kind of coalitions. So, has it been our strength? No. But I don't think it's anybody's strength.⁶

Another respondent said that ACT documenting its work was important because it did the “invisible”:

ACT is complicated...ACT does the invisible...we discussed the importance of doing the visible...not being shy...not stepping on people's toes...but at the end of my time at ACT, we talked about the importance of being more visible...

I am having a hard time articulating what I did, because we were so focused on doing the invisible...we were all about creating the environments/resources so local leaders could do their work best...we weren't about the spotlight...ACT and who we are was special...we were unique...when I think about [ACT's former Executive Director], he is special—crazy, but special! We were about diplomacy; we were ambassadors, deferential, supportive...

Credit didn't go to us; credit went to the outcomes...we didn't spend a lot of time on chronicling our development/outcomes...[ACT's former Executive Director] tried with the assets inventory library...but we really needed an archivist.⁴

Since ACS Commissioner John Mattingly's tenure, ACS has shifted from ACT's community-building model to Annie E. Casey's community-building model:

“Yeah. There is a tremendous shift in terms of what it used to be. I guess ACT is so—the model ACT uses, and they still use that, if you really need them, but I think with ACS it was a good—ACT, as you said, a community building. ACS has so many areas to deal with, and part of it is community building.

A new commissioner comes in, he or she interrupts everything that had been flowing very well. I don't know, maybe due to their own legacies they want to

leave behind. “When I was here, I did this, I did that.” Or maybe personality problems with staff. So, ACS has shifted a lot from the collaboration that ACT used to have. To me, I guess, ACT’s model is still around in the community building. Through private and public collaborations, it’s there. I guess ACS is a wholly public agency, deals with private organizations like the Casey Foundation and all these people, so it’s shifted heavily from ACT to the Casey Foundation model. If you are aware that a lot of us have been going to Cleveland over the years when Mr. Mattingly became the commissioner, to learn about what Cleveland does and incorporate Cleveland’s models to New York City models. Which I think is great.¹²

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Respondents made a variety of suggestions for overcoming obstacles. One respondent said that ACT needs to transition from a founder/leader-based organization to a mission-based organization:

We are trying to create a sustainable organization, because of all the work that ACT’s done over 20 years is so important and we want it to continue, but we want to be able to continue as an independent organization. When I say that, I don’t mean necessarily independent, holding its own 501(c)(3); I’m talking independent from [ACT’s former Executive Director].⁷

Another said that ACT needs to figure out its goal and develop purposeful relationships that will advance that goal:

It’s so strapped for finances and human resources that they need to be clear on what their goal is and then find places to jump in, but not just blindly go out and

make relationships that we'll be able to use at some other point. I don't think we can do it blindly anymore.¹⁰

Respondents suggested that ACT focus on the goals of providing capacity-building, technical assistance, and strategic planning to the CPIs. They also suggested ACT continue to convene service providers at forums where difficult topics are discussed, and continue Bushwick IMPACT:

You know, I think I said this before, but I think the priority for ACT is to understand what we do and do it well. So, I do think a priority is to get our hands much more into the CPI work and to offer, however we end up offering it, the capacity-building, technical assistance, and strategic planning. When we did that in a more concerted effort with the first three CPI communities, it was very welcome in at least two of the communities, and I think we have a lot to offer there.

I think we continue to look at places where we continue to do things, like this other proposal I just sent, a network where you can convene, where you see a gap and you can convene. I think I want ACT to continue to be an organization that brings up hard topics and gets them discussed, and be seen as a convener of providers to provide forums for these discussions. And the other priority is IMPACT.⁶

I think that the conduits literally are just the dispersers of the money. So, the CPIs are the people that actually should be budgeting—keyword. With any agency, when you have set your goals for the year, you do that through your budget. So, just like when I was in business school, graduate school, and specialized in nonprofit and public administration, we learned that when we're dealing with people who may not have run an organization before, they need to understand that as well. When you make up your goals at the beginning of the year, you reflect it in your budget.

So, if they have \$150,000, every penny spent should go to meet their goals, their mission, what is it we're going to do this year. I don't know that they know that. I know that there have been lots of difficulties in spending the money down in some of the CPIs, not all. And that may have had to do something with: they got the money late, they weren't sure what they could spend the money on. But I would also definitely conclude they didn't know, "Let's start with having this budget reflect what it is we want to accomplish." So, I think there's capacity and technical assistance that needs to be done in the CPI, so they could better utilize it and make it work for the CPI.⁷

Another respondent added to this by saying that ACT needed to become a stronger organization by providing consensus-building, government connection, and general support to communities:

I feel not well informed to answer the priorities, because it's been about three years since I've really been involved with ACT and know what they're doing, especially what they're doing in Bushwick. But I think the priorities should continue to be consensus-building, providing technical assistance, capacity-building, giving people a connection that they can call on to help support them or get their message out to stakeholders in funding areas or the government.

The challenges, again, this is something, because I haven't been there, I don't know what the internal structure of ACT is and how it's operating. So, I think before you can talk about any external—and this is just a general statement—before you can deal with any sort of external challenges, you have to have a really strong internal organization and consensus within the organization.³

Another respondent reiterated that ACT needed to return to connecting communities to city government:

I think there's going to be a process of getting back into the communities at the level that we need to be, so that we can meet that goal of being a great resource of people to turn to, and building the relationships as well, both for myself and for staff to have an interest at the top, middle, and everywhere. When I say the top, I mean the commissioners and folks, and I think that's going to be a different type of relationship than it had been, but they need to be built.⁷

One respondent said that Bushwick IMPACT embodies many of ACT's principles and should continue under ACT's leadership:

...while it is away from our original mission in that it is providing direct service, I think it embodies so much of our values that it needs to be a priority for us, that we need to figure out how to keep it funded. There's been talk about handing it over. I do think because of the way ACT runs things and because of our guiding principles, that it will look different under our stewardship or whatever than somebody else's. So, I think that's a priority, is keeping IMPACT going.⁶

This respondent did not believe that IMPACT should be relinquished to the community:

Initially there was talk about, "We start it and hand it over," like we do many of our projects. But I think we should sustain it, because I think we know something, so I think we should sustain it and keep growing it in as many ways as possible, and I think one of the ways to grow it is that peer-to-peer approach, how I keep thinking that's the component we need to market to others. So, there you go.⁶

Another suggested that ACT should continue and scale up Bushwick IMPACT, continue the ACT oversight meetings on topics of the day, and continue their historical facilitator role:

Well, I guess the question of where do I think they should go, the answer to that may be different if the point of view of where you're looking is different. What do I mean by that? Where do I think they should go from a survival perspective, in

order for ACT to survive? Maybe that's a survival strategy type of thing. Where do I think they should go from the point of view of communities in New York? That might be a different answer. Where do I think they should go from what's become their constituency? That also may have a different answer. So, let me think about that.

I guess the first thought that comes to mind is, there are visible, concrete things that get done that are worth doing and continuing to be doing. One of those is the IMPACT—I'll use the word "demonstration"—activity in Bushwick that works with the community-based early childcare givers. That's a useful thing to continue. There's a direct service thing that's happening that wasn't happening without them being there. It's an interesting model. It's a model that I think is scalable. It's a model that others can use, so I think ACT needs to continue to support that, and do that, and make that available as a way to support work in other neighborhoods with similar profiles, poor neighborhoods that you need quality early childcare.

ACT has the periodic, what are not called stakeholder meetings, used to be called oversight committee meetings. And I think there's a constituency of followers that come to these meetings. Any number from 80 to 200 people show up that are typically people involved in service; service providers are typically attending those meetings. Others attend as well, but I guess the nucleus of people who attend, from my view, would be people involved in either government agencies or community-based organizations or citywide organizations that are providing services primarily related to child welfare. And these, I guess, quarterly meetings are focused on the topic of the day. They are an occasion to get people in the room who know what's going on in this particular issue that's useful to service providers, and it enriches their capacity to be able to continue to do service, and renews their commitment. There's a service there that's provided.

And the topics change. Sometimes they have to do with, What's the latest RFP going to be from ACS or private not-for-profit service providers? There was a recent one that had to do with the New York City CEO undertakings around poverty and economic empowerment. So, I think that's an important thing to continue.

So, that function of being a nonthreatening facilitator that isn't trying to take over someone else's turf, so to speak, but is available to facilitate networking and coordinated efforts, that's a valuable function. So, I think those three types of things I see as valuable, from New York City's perspective, from poor community's perspective, and from the constituency groups.²

Respondents suggested strategic planning, and developing a focus that will help communities:

I think they need to really maybe do some strategic planning. Maybe they're doing it already. And just think about, I guess, where they want to focus. And that's your question. So, I don't know.

The community is always going to need a lot of support. And I feel like they shouldn't maybe go away from that original mission of working in partnership with the communities, even though ACS has sort of taken it over. They can find a role for themselves somewhere in that next. You don't want to be duplicative. But, at the same time, I think carving out a role for themselves in the community is going to be the most important contribution that they could make, going to those local leaders.¹

For me, I'd like us to be a little bit more focused as an organization, and I think that is the consensus from several people who have a long history with ACT. So, we're sort of in a process, because I am fairly new and really needed to get to know ACT before I make any recommendations or suggest anything. I think that would be very helpful to meeting ACT's goals of raising its profile and staying

flexible but knowing what we do best. It's wonderful to be able to do almost anything, but it's important to do certain things well. I just think, in this environment, at ACT's age, that we really need to focus on this piece.⁷

And, you know what? The thing is, ACT constantly changes what they're trying to do and how they do it. So it might not be a local planner, but it might be spending some time trying to figure out, just think-tanking to figure out what's the next thing to do that'll help carry, to move the community to the next level.¹³

Another respondent suggested increasing visibility by being more concrete and in depth. She said ACT needs to own its agenda, scale up/duplicate models, and develop a focus:

We have to build on what we know now about what works...for me, being visible about how we do our business is a new ACT...be more public about what we do, and be proactive about it...we need to take what we learned all these years and move it the next phase. Got to be more visible and more concrete...need to own our agenda...need more depth in our work...scale up, replicate models! Identify what you want to do...can't be narrowly defined...unless we don't want to remain a CCI... maybe we want to be concrete...if I was there for next several years, would be more concrete.⁴

Another respondent said that ACT should develop enough specificity so that it is still general enough, but staffers are able to explain it in one sentence:

We should be specific. We should be general and stay as general as possible, as long as we are focused enough where I could go to someone in a community and say, "What does ACT do?" and they could give you an answer pretty quickly, and I'm not sure that happens right now.⁷

Another respondent suggested that one way to do this is to convene trusted colleagues and ask them, "What is ACT? And what should we focus on?" in an effort to stay relevant:

Establish itself with a clear mission and purpose, because of the transition it's been in. Get feedback from trusted colleagues. Convene folks who know and care about the work. Ask them how to stay relevant. Many of the issues are still the same. Got to focus on, "Who are we? What should we focus on?" This is priority.⁹

Another respondent said that ACT needs to develop a policy agenda and develop its defining guidelines. She said that ACT needs to base this on common learned lessons in ACT communities and filter this up to city government:

I think ACT could really use some defining guidelines around its agenda, its policy agenda. I think it needs a policy agenda, because ACT has such great access to city government. And they should have people in that office who can bring things to that level. And they don't anymore.

I think that—yeah, one, sustainability planning and then to make systemic change. Okay, we're doing this in a direct service way for IMPACT. This is a fabulous laboratory for information for what works, what doesn't work, especially when we interact with our other partners. A lot of great stuff comes out of it. And that's got to be brought to a city government level. And because ACT is in a number of other neighborhoods, lessons learned, common themes have to be analyzed. I think ACT is in a position to be more analytical and say, "What are we learning from this? How can we bring the debate to a higher level? How can we use this information, turn it quickly into a one-page policy brief, bring it to our friends in city council who are already supportive?" And this is ammunition for them to go to OMB or to fight for a bigger budget or something.¹⁰

Another respondent suggested developing a blueprint for how to do community planning work and train on it:

...learned lessons? Perhaps providing more training...in a lot of ways, stuff was being designed as we were doing it. Would have been good to have a road map, like a blue print. A training mechanism/method for how to do planning work in a community.⁹

Another said ACT needs a leader who can do grant reporting, marketing, and public relations:

Now the funding landscape is so entwined with reporting and promotion and PR, you really need the same person to do all those things. We can't just have a clear separation of tasks.¹⁰

Another said ACT needs to increase funding so that it is able to hire more staff and implement more of its good ideas:

"I think that in a lot of areas that I work in, not just in ACT, but in other places, it's easy to come up with ideas, but the kind of implementation of the idea, it's obviously a challenge. You have to find the funding sources. You have to find the resources, people, which is always difficult.³

One thing I encourage ACT is, either through the board members or members, to increase the fundraising efforts to bring in more staff members to do the work.¹²

One respondent said ACT needs to fundraise, so that it can pay itself for the capacity-building and technical assistance that are offered to the CPIs:

I want to be very well funded, so that we can go in there and offer it and not charge the CPIs. That's a huge goal of mine, actually. That's what I'm focused on right now, and we're doing a needs assessment at each of the CPIs, so that we can get a better sense of what are the needs and where would they need help. And I, hopefully, will raise a great deal of money so that we will just go out and do it. Of

course, the CPI needs to want us to come in, but hopefully they will. We can provide it.⁷

One respondent suggested that ACT access CPI funding to provide operational support to the CPIs:

The funding [trips] that we have with ACS is kind of set. I don't know if they could do work to negotiate some advance upfront money to make operations—make it easier to do what we're doing, so that we're not constantly playing catch-up. Or try to help ACS figure out a system so that they can process their payments more appropriately. At least, if we're talking about directly for the CPI, that would be it. Because they say they can do it in two weeks, but it's never happened.¹³

She also said that ACT needs to fundraise so it can pay itself for going into communities and providing them with support:

What I understand from ACT's history is, they were always in the community and they had the finger on the pulse of what was really going on. And that was, on one hand, a real luxury because there wasn't ever anything they needed to find out, or if they need to find something out, they were easily able to do so.

So, a goal of mine is to build up staff, so part of what we do in our normal routine is, we're in the community, as well as raising money so we can go in and provide support where needed. I don't know how quickly that will proceed, but that's the goal.⁷

According to respondents, ACT needs more contingency plans for when funding ends:

I think ACT needs contingency plans. When a funding stream ends or a person leaves their position, I would like to see an ACT that is very dedicated to a

program. The collaborative could be seen as a program or a planner, but they keep it going.¹⁰

One respondent made suggestions for how ACT could generate funding quickly and, therefore, survive. One recommendation was for ACT to do consulting or fee-for-service:

From ACT's perspective, in terms of being a surviving organism, how does it continue to be able to finance that? Then I think it needs to make itself available to do consulting work, fee-for-service work, support work around project initiatives that become episodic and ad hoc and have a beginning, middle, and an end. A six-week training project, twelve-week consultancy around case management, three-week assessment of needs in a particular neighborhood. I think those types of services become things that can be fundable in this type of climate and that can be income-generating.²

Another suggestion was to develop a marketing strategy for how to continue needed services at a community level:

The second area would be thinking through a clear strategy as to how to market services that are needed, so that the core services that are really needed continue to get funded.²

ACT needs to have more of a role when city government agencies release funding concept papers. For example, they need to disperse these papers to ACT communities to get feedback on how they should be modified, and filter this information back to city government agencies that put out funding position papers:

I have an idea, so let me get to that one first. When city government comes out—before they come out with RFPs, they have concept papers. I think that is the place that ACT should be very active. So, when DYCD, for example, came out with a concept paper around family resource centers and family literacy, they

need to be racing around talking to all their community partners getting their feedback and coming up with this fabulous concept paper, because they can organize. So, that influences funding streams, which has a much broader umbrella effect, right?

So, they could really get their tentacles in the community, see what really, truly makes sense, because any fundraiser who does not work intimately with the program people is just doing a disservice. And so, city government is limited. They have their priorities. So, I think that's one way, in terms of funding, that ACT could really have a citywide impact.¹⁰

Respondents said that ACT should do an assessment of which entities are still funding community work, and disseminate it to all leaders doing community work:

This will probably have to do with some of the stuff that ACT does—I'm sorry, I have to talk about some of the stuff that ACT does generally, which is to see the trends and to create a plan to take advantage of or to position themselves for that.

Because right now, I don't know what the funding trends are. I know that the economy's tight, but there are some foundations that still have money; there still are some places that—there are still ways to get money through certain projects. There's probably money that's hiding somewhere—there always is—that hasn't been touched yet, or you always hear about [was never used 83:35].

And to figure out where to start tapping into some of the funds that would be available in these kind of times—because right now, everybody's using the usual funding sources. And that means that foundations are getting inundated, they're not giving out as much money, they're not reviewing as many applications. There are some places that put out four or five RFPs a week to try to keep up. So to figure out trends and position ourselves for, you know, tapping into that.¹³

I think the value ACT can bring is brokering, trying to match up the organizations in the local communities to funding streams and funding sources. I don't think ACT will raise money to finance them.²

Another respondent said that ACT needs to be open to alternative ways of generating funding for Bushwick IMPACT:

I don't see where ACT is. IMPACT, for example, I was talking with some of the staff. And when I first found out we were going to get a big cut from one of our key funders, I was, like, "Damn it, how are we going to do payroll? How are we going to keep going?" And Frank, one of my staff, was just, like, "You know what we can do? We can open ourselves as a café. We can take on a business model." We've got enough—we do so much catering inadvertently because we're always doing refreshments and things. And we have Elsa, one of the parent advocates, who's become a caterer. And, yeah, we can create some sort of business model. That's not something I think that ACT is necessarily receptive to, evolving like that. And IMPACT might have to do something like that.

One of the things I wanted to do since I started here was create a salon. The neighborhood is changing so much, that's why I want to get the backyard fixed up. And we have a lot more to do. But open it up for the evenings and the nice weather and have standup, music or poetry slams. And we could bring in the young kids, along with up and coming artists, and charge small fees to keep IMPACT running. And I don't want to hear naysayers. I'm well aware that that's not easy. It's not automatic assurance of income streams. But there's a way to do it. It's creative. And I don't want ACT to hold us up.¹⁰

One respondent suggested that ACT provide technical assistance on the evaluation of community work:

I think making the case to continue to get funding—probably a really important area where they might provide technical assistance is thinking through measurement, thinking through evaluation. We talked earlier when we started about the real challenge of evaluation models to capture value that’s being provided. I think in this shrinking resource environment, where there’s so much competition for scarce dollars, having a good evaluation model that communicates the value as being achieved, the bang for the buck, so to speak, would be an area of great assistance for community groups.²

Another respondent said that Bushwick IMPACT is interested in doing more technical assistance, and suggested that ACT supervise this process:

IMPACT is looking for ways to provide more technical assistance. That would be nice, if ACT could come in. Although I think IMPACT is positioned to do that, but maybe ACT could help supervise the process more.¹⁰

One respondent suggested hiring flexible and resourceful local planners:

I know that every job is just figuring it out. And maybe it’s a characteristic that’s needed in a planner is that they’re sort of flexible and can go with it, and can figure things out, and they’re resourceful.¹

Challenge—the people/leaders! Because CCIs are so dynamic in nature, it is really hard work! Got to have the right people, got to have folks who thinks outside of the box, someone who is creative...roll with the punches, understand what change and transformation are...what both mean at a neighborhood level.⁴

Another said ACT needed to improve staff utility:

Since I’ve been here, we’ve had three, actually three and a half people leave ACT. One on their own, two were let go, and I have a full-time person who has gone to

part time because of funding issues. The person that left, we were unable to replace that person because of funding issues.

So, I think that what I've learned from that, is that everyone that's here has to be utilized to their fullest so that we can still move forward. That's what I'm in the process of doing, is restructuring what it is that everyone does, and making sure that we are all focused on what it is that we need to get accomplished, and raise some money to support it and, hopefully, grow and be able to raise more to hire more staff. Is that helpful?

Another said that ACT needs to have well-connected staffers focusing on specific issues. In addition, ACT should also partner with organizations that have staffers focusing on specific issues. Lastly, ACT should play a coordinating function between those entities that are focusing on the same/similar issues:

I think you need people there who are quick, who can write, that's one, who have a lot of relationships. ACT has always had the bit about all the relationships that it has with everybody, about building relationships to get things done. Much more focused on process than product. So, use those relationships to an end.

What would the model look like? I see desk officers, the ACT office filled up with people who are versed in certain themes, whether it's childcare or a neighborhood. Maybe not a neighborhood, but themes. I could call a childcare person and I say, look, Joyce...

Also, maybe that wouldn't be it, to have desk officers. But because there are people at Federation for Protestant Welfare Agencies doing daycare counseling, doing pieces of this, let's use them. Let's use them, right? And let's really be part of an active coalition. And I think New York is a tough place in a lot of ways because people are so—not people, but organizational people are very competitive. And they want to be the one to be recognized for pushing X, Y, Z

forward, as opposed to, “Let’s push the issues forward as a coalition and we’ll all sign on.” And I think it’s the funding climate. It’s the recession that’s making it worse.

At the same time, the city is really pushing for Coalition, Coalition. And funders want you to be a part of the Coalition. But it’s really how can I use this Coalition to make myself stand out? But I think ACT, because one of the ACT principles that I mentioned early, that ACT is basically about a set of principles. And one of those is relationship-building, right? So let’s use those to a clear end, not just store them up so we can take them out when the time comes. But let’s think strategically. So, I don’t know, really, what the model would look like, but I think it would look like really activating tentacles in all parts of the city geographically, and at city agencies, government level. And pick a few issues.

For example, let’s look at education. Who doesn’t care about education? But ACT is in a position to do it from so many different angles. How does ACS work, impact educational outcomes? How does HRA? Department of Health? It’s not just DOE. One of the problems with ACS childcare is that ACS is charged with child welfare, and ACS runs the subsidized childcare system. So, their focus has not been historically on quality education. It’s custodial care. Department of Ed needs kids to enter school ready to learn. Where is the coordination? Where’s the continuum? DOE should be charged with childcare if that’s the outcome. Or ACT should be really pushing for this. More integration of systems into one city whole, like with the Mayor’s Office, for example. I think that is the position that ACT could do, really pulling the pieces together.¹⁰

One respondent said that ACT should hire one Bushwick IMPACT staff member dedicated to community building:

Yes, I think IMPACT is very well positioned. But I also think that IMPACT, like ACT, we are ambitious. Our agenda is ambitious in a lot of ways, so we can’t do

everything well. I think we've got a few people at IMPACT who can do the community building, but not everybody can. And we don't have a clear enough format for prepping people for that. It's more kind of apprenticeship, to learn as you go. So, I definitely need a dedicated person. And I think what we would need to do is just luck into the right person at this stage.¹⁰

Another suggested providing one staff person for Bushwick IMPACT's Bushwick Early Childhood Education Coalition:

I feel it's straightforward. She's [Bushwick IMPACT's Director] done a fantastic job of—now she's organized—the local design team has changed into an early childcare coalition, and they will be taking on an advocacy agenda. But, again, because it's becoming more of a coalition that wants to do that kind of saving positions, etc., identifying needs, it is clear that it needs a staff member. Whereas before it was more of an advisory group in IMPACT, and now that they want to change. And I think it's a good change. Again, the challenge will be: How do you staff that?⁶

Another suggested making Bushwick IMPACT the vehicle for restarting the Bushwick ACT Collaborative:

It's a shame that we didn't find a way to use IMPACT as a vehicle for keeping the collaborative going. It would have made a lot of sense to house a planner at IMPACT and do that kind of community work. And we definitely talked about it. It's really a resource question, and we didn't prioritize that. But I think ACT should have prioritized that. I think if ACT had been very, very clear on its missions and its origins, it would have figured out a way to make that happen.¹⁰

Another agreed with the importance of revitalizing the Bushwick ACT Collaborative with a local planner, and making it a position that is sustainable by training community leaders who are in need of grooming and could potentially take it over later:

Okay. I would definitely want them to be able to reclaim a presence here. If not in just Bushwick, but in some of the other neighborhoods around here that also need that kind of support. It might take the shape of a local planner, to be able to kind of revitalize. From after the last hiatus, somebody had to come through and rebuild ACT. I definitely think that that would help. Figure out some way to make it sustainable, so it's not just: Somebody comes in again and then two years or whatever, three years, do good work, and then it falls apart.

So it might mean a planner, but then also the technical assistance to try to be able to groom some other—like, people from the community, to be able to carry that on. Because there are people that definitely, we definitely have the talent here to be able to do that. But sometimes talent needs to be groomed. And it's not so much stroking egos, but basically trying to identify the people that are in positions that don't give them the ability to be able to shine like they can shine. And that might mean a mother of two who's working at home, but who's totally involved in her PTA and the Educational Council and whatnot and is definitely focused and just needs a place to get polished and to learn how to use her voice.¹³

One respondent said that ACT needs to understand that Bushwick IMPACT has reached adolescence in terms of program development and, at this point in time, needs different things:

They need to—and I use this parent/child analogy. IMPACT has really taken the ball and run with it. I think ACT started us out in a great place. It was a great design. And we've taken the ball and run with it. And we're growing. It's like a parent who has a hard time seeing that their teenager is in an entirely different place than they were when they were five. And so, if ACT is going to be useful to IMPACT, they need to continue to evolve and realize we need different things. And I think a benefit of having [ACT's Executive Director] come on, a new leadership, is that [ACT's Executive Director] sees that to some degree, because she came in and sees IMPACT not in its infancy, but in its adolescence.¹⁰

Another said that ACT needs to rectify the impact that the departure of its former Executive Director and former Associate Executive Director had had on the organization:

I'm not really sure what you're asking me. I feel like you're seeking something. However, what I will address is, I think that I'm surprised—I was incredibly surprised that there was such a lack of communication with the staff that was here, amongst themselves, and that there was a lot of hostility. That does happen when there's a lot of transition, and so, I think I came in at a very awkward time. I'm assuming that when [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] were here, that they were more of a bonding agent and able to diffuse and almost act as a—I'm sure there's better terms, but a mom and dad, and then there was this whole crew here. Of course, [ACT's former Executive Director] had this great vision, and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director] was able to orchestrate the whole thing and implement it. So, I think there was real structure to meet people's various needs.

They both leave. Other staff goes. They're without true leadership for a year and a half, and then we have cutbacks. So, I think there's been a great deal of trauma that's gone on here, and it needs to be repaired and we need to be able to focus on that, recognize that happened, start to rebuild and move forward.”⁷

FUTURE CONCERNS

The most prominent future concern was funding. Specifically, locating relevance will be a challenge:

I think it's finding relevance. I think it's going to be hard. I think that to the extent that they're not in communities anymore, if they were to go back to communities,

people might say—I don't know how that ended. So, I don't know if people will be, like, "Where have you been? Why are you back?" Look what happened before. Maybe projects fell off the radar and people are pissed. I don't know. So, that might be complicating for them.¹

Definitely funding and keeping its work relevant so that it can continue to generate the support that it needs.⁹

Funding. Definitely be a big thing that I would see. I know that they've lost a position or two right now. You can't spearhead great community programs without some kind of funding. You can't do the technical assistance unless you can pay somebody for their time.¹³

I don't have a good feeling about ACT, though. I don't see where ACT is going. I don't have ideas anymore. And I don't have the energy to think about that.¹⁰

I think the challenge is staff and funding, because they also lost some of their staff, and we have some ACT workers who are also on ACS payroll. Because of the financial situation, we have to kind of let them go or cut out their hours. Also, I know ACT has been getting funding, but they don't have enough funding even for some of their projects; they don't have the capacity to continue doing what they've been doing.

We have a CPI liaison who is on ACT's payroll, and with this whole reorganization, ACS couldn't pay the individual, [CCENY's Community Coordinator], for five days. So, we was hoping ACS would pay for two days and ACT will pay for the remaining two days, but it didn't go through because of ACT's limited funding.

What wound up happening is that [CCENY's Community Coordinator] just works three days. The two other days, ACT couldn't give him that. That affected his

work in the community. So, I think the challenge will be staffing and funding for them to do that.¹²

One respondent said that ACT's historical role of focusing on "the other" compromised its funding and its mission:

This was ACT's Achilles' heel, this idea of putting ACT last...This wound up hurting them around funding and mission...Mission was *not* about ACT's goals but rather community's goals...[ACT's former Executive Director] tried to convey ACT. You know, the "puzzle piece" was the image/became its logo...ACT was the "electrician," was about connecting children and families to resources/opportunities...Is it possible to be about "other" and have a clear mission?¹¹

Lastly, another respondent said there is a new set of players, and they do not have connections with various other players nor a commitment from government:

The challenging part is that it's a new set of players and that it doesn't have all the connections with various players, and it doesn't have commitment from government, so the generic collaborative. Everybody's got their own kind of project, whether it's a one-city strategy project or the ACS networks or the Highbridge project.⁸

CONCLUSIONS

Most ACT staff had a good understanding of ACT, its goals for change, and its guiding principles. They believed that ACT achieved significant accomplishments on all of their operational strategies. Lastly, ACT staff discussed individual changes in the context of ACT's building their personal leadership to be more effective at individual/family change for poor

children and families. They articulated ACT's neighborhood changes for Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick, as well as ACT's system changes for Bushwick.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Introduction

This study examines the meanings that four stakeholder groups associate with ACT's role and primary responsibilities in the goals, outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies of two communities—Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. This chapter summarizes each group's meanings and ends with implications for future social work research.

ACT's Relationship with Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick

Each of the four stakeholder groups—Brownsville-East New York partners, Bushwick partners, government, foundation and advocacy partners, and ACT staff—proposed different meanings associated with ACT's relationship to Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick.

Most of the Brownsville-East New York partners had clear and definite understandings of ACT's relationship with their respective communities. Some of these understandings shared common characteristics, while others were markedly different. The most prominent understandings were either associated with specific ACT staff members or a project of the Administration for Children's Services. Many perceived ACT as an "outsider" organization that partnered with the Community Coalition of East New York and prior to that, with the Brownsville-East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network. Some Brownsville-East New York partners did not have an understanding of, or lacked clarity on, ACT's relationship with Brownsville-East New York.

Each of the Bushwick partners shared similar understandings of ACT and its relationship with their communities. The most prominent understandings focused on ACT's early years in Bushwick, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, or Bushwick IMPACT. Some Bushwick partners did not associate ACT with these three phases, but rather, had generalized understandings of

ACT. Furthermore, many perceived ACT to be an “insider” organization that was integral to the success of the previously mentioned phases.

The government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners understood ACT in terms of its relationship with Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. However, their understandings of ACT’s relationship with Brownsville-East New York were articulated with less detail than the relationship with Bushwick.

All ACT staff articulated similar understandings of ACT and its relationship with Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick, of which ACT’s historical presence in the communities was the most prominent theme.

ACT’s Role and Primary Responsibilities in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick’s Goals and Outcomes

Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick’s Goals for Change

Each of the four stakeholder groups offered their own meanings associated with ACT’s primary responsibilities in the goals for change, outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies for Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick.

Most of the Brownsville-East New York partners had understandings of ACT’s role in Brownsville-East New York’s goals— some were similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings indicated that ACT shares its goals with the Brownsville-East New York’s Child Welfare Neighborhood Network or the Community Coalition of East New York. This is consistent with the previously mentioned understanding that ACT is an outsider organization that collaborates with BENY CWNN and CCENY.

All of the Bushwick partners had understandings of ACT’s role in Bushwick’s goals — some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings associated ACT’s goals with one of the following phases: ACT’s early years in Bushwick, the

Bushwick ACT Collaborative, or Bushwick IMPACT. Some Bushwick partners did not associate ACT's change goals with these phases, but rather, had generalized understandings of ACT's goals for change. These goals included bringing together those who were invested in the well-being of children and families, creating sufficient energy to address the issues that impacted them at the community level, identifying community needs and connecting them to available resources, giving residents advocacy training, and granting community leaders/partners access to information and high level government officials via ACT Oversight meetings.

Most government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners had general understandings of ACT's primary responsibilities in terms of its goals for change; however, their understandings were the most limited, compared to the other stakeholder groups. For instance, none of their understandings were specific to the goals espoused by Brownsville-East New York or Bushwick. Instead, they focused on improving the lives of children and families at the community level by supporting the projects that communities wanted to work on, "breaking through some of the old establishment" approaches, integrating services, listening to communities, increasing empowerment in communities, and training community leaders.

All of ACT's staff had understandings of ACT's role in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's goals – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings linked ACT's goals with one of the following areas: individuals and families, neighborhoods and systems. Their understandings specifically referred to keeping children safe by ensuring that children are free from neglect and abuse, supporting parents in keeping their children safe and connecting the municipal government to local neighborhoods in order to provide responsive and accessible services.

Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's Change Outcomes

Each of the four stakeholder groups had their own meanings associated with ACT's role in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's change outcomes. Outcomes at the neighborhood and systemic levels included hiring BENY CWNN and CCENY staff, training community leaders via the ACT Oversight meetings, improving BENY's relationship to ACS, assisting with the coordination of government-funded services at the neighborhood level, developing a strategic

plan for accessing ACS CPI funding, increasing funding and facilitating quick responses when the BENY CPI requested the assistance from the Administration department at Children's Services.

Most of the Brownsville-East New York partners had understandings associated with ACT's role in Brownsville-East New York's change outcomes – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings associated ACT's role in Brownsville-East New York's change outcomes with specific ACT staff members, for example, the CCENY Community Coordinator. This association was greatest in the area of individual and family change outcomes. Other prominent understandings considered neighborhood and systems change outcomes to be the result of ACT, BENY CWNN, or CCENY.

All of the Bushwick partners had understandings of ACT's role in Bushwick's change outcomes – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings connected Bushwick's individual and family change outcomes with Bushwick IMPACT. Examples include increasing hope and the utilization of leadership knowledge and skills among residents to effect change in their families' lives. Other prominent understandings associated Bushwick's neighborhood and systemic change outcomes with Bushwick IMPACT or the Bushwick ACT Collaborative.

The neighborhood and systemic change outcomes associated with Bushwick IMPACT were teaching parents about neighborhood resources and how to access them; enriching literacy among children and families; creating a system of communication regarding available day care slots, thus increasing the number of children in day care and head start programs; increasing funding for a parent involvement event and a technology system; and changing ACS's day care application process from mail-based to in-person and community-based.

Neighborhood and systemic change outcomes associated with the Bushwick ACT Collaborative included creating a space for the exchange of information as well as discussing and addressing community issues, developing homelessness and health position papers, presenting these papers at legislative forums, initiating a nutrition-physical activity program for school-aged

children and creating a \$2 million homelessness prevention grant. Some Bushwick partners did not associate Bushwick's individual/family, neighborhood, or systemic level outcomes with Bushwick IMPACT or the Bushwick ACT Collaborative. Instead, they had a generalized understanding of the outcomes and pointed to instilling hope in residents; building relationships; bringing programming to the community; increasing awareness of the services system; bringing government officials to the community to discuss community issues; learning how to address community issues; increasing Bushwick's resources; raising Bushwick's visibility with the municipal government; presenting Bushwick's promising programs to the municipal government for replication in other communities; and increasing funding.

Most government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners had understandings of ACT's role in producing change outcomes. The most prominent understandings associated individual and family change outcomes with actual ACT staff members, for example, the personal impact of the Executive Director and the Associate Executive Director's leadership style. Other prominent understandings included neighborhood change outcomes in Bushwick, but none were mentioned in Brownsville-East New York. Neighborhood change outcomes in Bushwick included improving the social/civic support system, the capacity building efforts of community organizations and decreasing the improper placement of children in special education. General neighborhood change outcomes for both communities included developing collaboratives and strategies, coordinating complicated structures, fostering collective life and sharing power with communities. Finally, many understandings pointed to systemic change outcomes in both communities, such as increasing awareness in the major funding institutions in terms of the interconnectedness of issues, increasing funding, increasing the municipal government's interest in building communities, and increasing collaboration between governmental and local leaders.

All ACT staff had understandings of ACT's role in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's change outcomes – some were the same or similar while others were different. The most prominent understandings did not associate individual/family change outcomes with either of the communities. Instead, they articulated generalized understandings by focusing on outcomes such as providing work experience, teaching humbleness, building leadership, teaching

facilitation, teaching deference, teaching maturity, teaching patience, teaching delayed gratification, strengthening long-term relationships, teaching public speaking, teaching the fundamentals of community work and teaching policy formulation and implementation. Some of the most prominent understandings associated neighborhood and systemic change outcomes with both communities; however, no systemic change outcomes were associated with Brownsville-East New York. The specific neighborhood change outcomes mentioned for both communities included providing technical assistance, enhancing technology capacity, improving collective life by increasing the participation of ethnic leaders and “second-ranked” communities and creating safe forums for civic dialogue. The specific systemic change outcomes mentioned for Bushwick included fundraising, coordinating policies, developing programs, researching and writing documents, building leadership, encouraging ACS to adopt Bushwick’s case conferencing model, initiating and maintaining Bushwick IMPACT and launching the Summer in the City Project.

ACT’s Role and Primary Responsibilities in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick’s Central Principles

Each of the four stakeholder groups presented their own meanings associated with ACT’s role and primary responsibilities in terms of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick’s central principles.

Most of the Brownsville-East New York partners had understandings associated with ACT’s role in promoting Brownsville-East New York’s central principles – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings connected the promotion of Brownsville-East New York’s central principles with CCENY. Very few understandings were associated with ACT.

All of the Bushwick partners had understandings of ACT’s role in terms of promoting Bushwick’s central principles – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings associated the promotion of Bushwick’s central principles with ACT,

specifically with the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and Bushwick IMPACT. Other prominent understandings acknowledged that promoting the central principles connected to community building was a greater challenge for the Bushwick ACT Collaborative than for Bushwick IMPACT.

Most of the government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners had understandings of ACT's role in the promotion of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's central principles. The most prominent understandings reflected generalized understandings rather than specific understandings for each community.

All of the ACT staff had understandings of ACT's role in the promotion of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's central principles. The most prominent understandings reflected generalized understandings rather than specific understandings for each community.

ACT's Role and Primary Responsibilities in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's Operational Strategies

Each of the four stakeholder groups had their own meanings associated with ACT's role and primary responsibilities in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's operational strategies.

Most of the Brownsville-East New York partners had understandings associated with ACT's role in Brownsville-East New York's operational strategies – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings connected governance with CCENY, and funding and technical assistance with ACT. Other prominent understandings did not associate evaluation with CCENY or ACT, but pointed out that ACT was well versed in this topic and should have been more involved. There were no understandings connected to staffing, with the exception of the previously mentioned associations.

All of the Bushwick partners had understandings associated with ACT's role in Bushwick's operational strategies – some were the same or similar while others differed. The

most prominent understandings associated governance, funding, technical assistance, and staffing with ACT, specifically the Bushwick ACT Collaborative and Bushwick IMPACT. However, other prominent understandings associated evaluation with a lack of clarity.

Most government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners had understandings associated with ACT's role in the communities' operational strategies. The most prominent understandings made general associations between ACT and operational strategies such as governance, funding, technical assistance, staffing, and evaluation. Compared to the Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick partners, this group demonstrated in-depth understandings related to ACT's role in the communities' operational strategies.

All of the ACT staff had understandings associated with ACT's role in the communities' operational strategies – some were the same or similar while others differed. The most prominent understandings made a general connection between ACT and governance, funding, technical assistance, staffing and evaluation. Compared to the other three groups, this group demonstrated the richest understandings of ACT's role in the communities' operational strategies.

Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's Obstacles, Overcoming Obstacles, and Future Concerns

Each of the four stakeholder groups had their own meanings associated with Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's obstacles. The understandings shared by the Brownsville-East New York partners were in the areas of goals, central principles, and operational strategies. The prominent understandings demonstrated by the Bushwick partners concerned their relationships with the Parent Services Project, the parent organization of Bushwick IMPACT, the Bushwick ACT Collaborative, and Bushwick IMPACT. The most common understanding concerning obstacles among the government, foundation, and policy advocacy partners was in the area of funding. The most prominent understandings of obstacles among the ACT staff concerned issues related to founder's syndrome (McLaughlin & Backlund, 2008), doing the invisible (Sherwood,

1999), remaining relevant, following through, being a diminishing presence in the community and infrastructure.

Each of the four stakeholder groups had their own meanings associated with overcoming these obstacles. The Brownsville-East New York partners emphasized understandings associated with strengthening social capital (Stagner, 1997) between BENY leaders and ACT, increasing funding and strengthening evaluation. The understandings emphasized by the Bushwick partners included strengthening social capital with neighborhood networks and augmenting operational strategies such as funding, technical assistance, staffing and evaluation. The understandings presented by the government, foundation and policy advocacy partners included survival/becoming a permanent entity, increasing funding, developing relevance and reverting to working in communities. The understandings emphasized by the ACT staff included shifting to a mission-driven organization, developing relevance and related goals, increasing visibility by becoming more concrete, returning to communities and increasing funding.

Each of the four stakeholder groups had similar meanings concerning future concerns. For instance, ACT demonstrated meaning associated with funding, survival, relevance, and at the time of this study, leadership capacity.

Implications for Future Social Work Research

The histories of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick (see Chapter 2) indicate that many factors contributed to the decline of social capital in both communities. Many of these factors align with those highlighted by Putnam (2000). This decline led to the erosion of many critical areas in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick, including but not limited to its economy, health, education, welfare, safety, productivity, happiness, and democratic participation. As demonstrated in Chapters 4 through 7, the respondents' understandings, goals for change and principles describe ACT as an organization whose purpose was to increase Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's social capital, thus improving a variety of domains.

Saegert, Thompson and Warren (2001) highlight the levels at which social capital operates: within communities, between communities and between communities and financial/public institutions. They refer to the building of social capital within communities as “bonding,” between communities as “bridging,” and between communities and financial/public institutions as “creating synergy.” Chapters 4 through 7 show that ACT is perceived as an organization that facilitates social capital at all three levels, especially through bonding within communities and creating synergy between communities and public/financial institutions.

Putnam (2000) writes that bigger collective problems require bridging as an antidote, and this type of social capital is better for linking to external assets and diffusing information. According to Saegert, Thompson, and Warren (2001), bridging social capital brings greater resources and opportunities into poor communities.

The respondents reported fewer accounts of ACT as a facilitator of bridging between communities. However, their quarterly Oversight Meetings acted as a significant bridge between communities. While the primary purpose and outcome of these meetings was to create synergy between communities and funders and the city government leaders, a secondary outcome was the bridging that occurred between the ACT communities.

It is unclear why the respondents provided fewer accounts of ACT as a bridging entity. Did the respondents simply forget the ways ACT served as a bridging entity, or were they merely unaware of these activities? Were there simply fewer examples of ACT as a bridging entity? If so, was this outcome intentional? Did other factors affect ACT’s capacity to bridge social capital between communities? These areas and the benefits and drawbacks of bridging social capital between communities warrant further study.

Compared to the Bushwick respondents, the Brownsville-East New York respondents emphasized a greater reliance on an informal, community-based service network—such as faith-based institutions—for assistance with their needs. It is unclear what contributed to this difference between the communities. Does Brownsville-East New York have a smaller formal network? Was their formal service network comparable? If so, was it accessed less due to the

community's mistrust? Did opportunities exist in the past for formal services to establish themselves in Brownsville-East New York? If so, were these opportunities overlooked? To what extent did leaders approach the municipal government to establish formal services? What were the results of these interactions? Do the current community leaders have an interest in establishing more formal services in Brownsville-East New York? If so, do they have a plan to execute this desire? All of these important questions warrant further examination.

The following questions also warrant further study: What are the benefits and drawbacks of an informal, community-based, service network versus a formal, community-based, service network? How do the benefits and drawbacks of each type of service impact individual, family and community problems?

Respondents from Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick documented the ways that ACT built individual leadership capacities. The most prominent example was Bushwick IMPACT resident/parental leadership building programs. In addition, Bushwick IMPACT employed the residents/parents who conducted these programs. The Brownsville-East New York child welfare network built the leadership capacities of the service providers and residents while the Bushwick Collaborative developed the service providers' leadership capacities. In the former, ACT filled the role of an outsider/technical assistance provider, and in the latter, it worked as an insider. These differing roles were the result of ACT's origins in both communities (see endnotes lxviii and lxx).

It is worth noting that at the time of this study, residents did not lead the Brownsville-East New York child welfare network and the Bushwick Collaborative; the co-chairs were service provider leaders who typically resided outside of these communities. This was also true for Bushwick in the early years of its existence. It is worth examining the cause of this dynamic by asking the following questions: Was there an authentic disinterest in assuming this type of leadership within the community? If so, was this disinterest connected to the lack of financial reimbursement for assuming a leadership position? Did formal leaders (such as the service provider leaders) lack a formal system for ensuring that residents were in leadership positions and that residents were trained for these positions? Another area worth studying is how to

facilitate the transition of residents into leadership positions as well as the benefits and drawbacks of such an endeavor in the short- and long-term.

The final area identified for future research is the differing impact on social capital between resident-led and service-provider-led networks, specifically in terms of bonding within communities, bridging across communities and creating synergy with public/financial institutions. It is also worth investigating how these differences affect a community's political and economic capital.

There was a common lack of clarity among the Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick reports concerning ACT's funding structure and evaluation mechanism. It is unclear what has led to this lack of clarity; however, it is important to contextualize this issue through further research.

As discussed in Chapter 3 and endnotes lxviii and lxx, the Administration for Children's Services community partnership in Brownsville-East New York preceded ACT's work in this community. Prior to 2003, the Administration for Children's Services approached ACT for assistance with their community partnership work, including but not limited to staffing and strategic planning. To some degree, this explains Brownsville-East New York's understanding of ACT as part of the Administration for Children's Services and as an organization that provided technical assistance to the Administration for Children's Services. However, it remains unclear what contributed to their lack of clarity on ACT's funding, which may warrant further study. For example, was the lack of clarity related to failed communication, or did it result from other issues? Furthermore, in what ways has this lack of clarity perpetuated or hindered Brownsville-East New York's work?

ACT has never evaluated Brownsville-East New York's community partnership work, which may explain this community's lack of clarity on this issue. However, it should be noted that the Administration for Children's Services hired an external evaluator to evaluate their community partnership work. Furthermore, ACT has conducted two major evaluations of their organization—including several interviews with local stakeholders—however, both were prior to

ACT's work in Brownsville-East New York. Nonetheless, this topic warrants further study. For example, did the evaluation conducted by the Administration, review ACT's work in Brownsville-East New York? If yes, what were the major findings, and was this feedback incorporated into Brownsville-East New York's community partnership work for the purposes of improvement?

Bushwick's lack of clarity concerning ACT's funding structure and evaluation mechanism certainly warrants further study, given ACT's long-standing history there. A couple of Bushwick leaders were included in one of ACT's major evaluations; however, this was not noted in any of the reports from this community. Questions for further study include: Were the findings of this report shared with the Bushwick leadership? If so, how was the information shared? Were the results used to improve ACT's work at a local level, and if so, how was it used for this purpose?

It is worth paying special attention to the effect that ACT's leadership style had on the development of the leaders in each of the four stakeholder groups. It is also worth considering the role that this dynamic played in facilitating individual, family, neighborhood, and systemic changes in each group. A deeper study on this topic could yield helpful information on the types of leadership styles, knowledge, and skills that were developed or hindered in this process. Finally, it is worth examining how to maintain leadership development, which will be crucial to achieving ACT's goals when a transition in ACT's leadership inevitably occurs.

One major difference between Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick is that Brownsville-East New York's community partnership work began because of the New York City child welfare system, specifically the Administration for Children's Services. Later, ACT entered into a partnership with the Administration for Children's Services and assisted with their community partnership work in Brownsville-East New York. Bushwick, on the other hand, began its work when the community came together with ACT's assistance. It was only then that the Administration for Children's Services, with ACT's assistance entered the Bushwick community to conduct community partnership work.

The way that the community partnership work began and changed over time in Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick raises a series of questions that warrant further study. For example, are there any significant implications stemming from the fact that the Administration for Children's Services founded the community partnership work in Brownsville-East New York, especially since they determined the goals of this work? Did the Administration for Children's Services share the same goals as the community? What implications arose from the community-led process in Bushwick? Did the community's involvement in Bushwick affect social, political, and economic capital, and if so, how were these factors impacted? What are the implications of ACT assisting with community partnership work? Did ACT's presence enhance or compromise its standing in either community? Did ACT's presence help the community build its social, political, and economic capital, or were these factors hindered by ACT's presence?

Implications for the Development of a CCE Evaluation Model

CCEs continually face the challenge of developing an appropriate evaluation model. The respondents in this study expressed concern about the untold stories and unrecognized contributions of CCEs who build social, political, and economic capital (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren; Putnam) and ultimately improve the lives of poor children and their families. The respondents suggested that this lack of public understanding negatively affected the amount of resources available for such endeavors. These concerns were expressed in the context of Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick's operational strategies—including evaluation—and their obstacles. These concerns as well as the development of a proper evaluation model for CCEs are echoed by a movement led by The Aspen Institute.

The phenomenological method employed in this study highlighted the ambiguity of CCEs and their susceptibility to the respondents' social constructions. Much of these constructions result from the respondents' stakes in their respective CCEs. The CCEs in this study were too fluid to derive or impose any particular evaluation model. CCEs do not lend themselves to neat program "outputs." Therefore, a phenomenological, rather than a conventional, evaluation strategy is preferable in order to understand their functions. Furthermore, it is impossible to

make definitive statements about the effectiveness of both CCEs due to their great fluidity and complexity.

Nevertheless, social workers may wish to continue the study of CCEs using a phenomenological approach to increase our understandings of them, thus paving the way for a more refined definition of CCEs and better operationalization of them. This may lead to a more refined evaluation model.

Finally, it is essential to develop a sensitive, ethical, and grounded evaluation model in human terms. To implement a CCE, the researcher must examine the parts of people's lives that define their worldviews and provide meaning. In this case, the researcher must be sensitive and respectful of differences when conducting studies in cross-cultural settings. The challenge of evaluating a CCE's goals, outcomes, central principles, and operational strategies is magnified when the basic social, political, and economic needs (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren; Putnam) of poor children, families, and communities are unmet. Therefore, the researcher should not underestimate the power of CCEs to meet these needs by reforming financial and public institutions (Wilson).

Endnotes

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^{lxv} Imperative to this study is the understanding of ACT's origins in both Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick. In Brownsville-East New York, the Administration for Children's Services—via community partnership initiatives and, prior to this, via child welfare neighborhood networks—came into existence prior to ACT. The Administration for Children's Services, prior to 2003, requested ACT's assistance in their partnership work. Specifically, ACT supervised staff in Brownsville-East New York and led the partnership work, from set up to implementation, etc. In Bushwick, the NBA/NBI (see endnote viii) came into existence prior to ACT. Upon their discontinuation in Bushwick, ACT transitioned from its follower role to that of leader.

^{lxvi} The Brownsville-East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network (B-ENY CWNN) started in approximately 2003 and was an ACS, community initiative. Its goals were to lower the number of children in foster care and to create a stronger safety net for children and families by targeting schools that were generating most of the neglect/abuse calls to New York State child neglect/abuse hotline.

^{lxvii} The East New York Community Partnership Initiative (ENY CPI) is synonymous with the CCENY. It is an initiative of the Administration for Children's Services that began in the fall of 2006. The purpose of the East New York CPI is to develop and bolster community coalitions to participate in the improvement of child welfare outcomes in their neighborhoods. Specifically, its goals are to increase connection/communication/cross referrals between child care centers and head starts; to provide community representatives (aka as community hosts) for every child safety conference; to recruit foster parents; to train community representatives to supervise foster care, family visits; and to bridge the communication gap between service providers and schools. ACS offered \$150,000 to CCENY. Begun as a one-year program, the CPI program was extended with continued funding within the scope of the ACS Request for Proposals that was issued in May 2009. ACT facilitated the initial working sessions in each of the eleven communities and provided intensive technical assistance to the first three communities during the strategic planning phase. ACT continues to be available to all of the CPI coalitions, consulting as needed on a variety of issues.

^{lxviii} ACT's former executive director was ACT's founder.

^{lxix} The Administration of Children's Services is New York City's child welfare system that contracts out more than twelve services, including foster care, prevention, and child care.

^{lxx} The Neighborhood Based Alliance (NBA) was a state initiative born out of the new York State Department of Social Services; specifically, out of Governor Mario Cuomo's Decade of the Child in the early 1990s. NBA was also commonly referred to as the Neighborhood Based Initiative (NBI). ACT's involvement was to inspire the NBAs in neighborhoods where ACT existed prior to NBA. In addition, ACT and NBA worked in some overlapping neighborhoods. ACT and NBA agreed that where NBA led, ACT would follow, and where ACT led, NBA followed.

^{lxxi} The Bushwick Resource Coalition was a neighborhood network of service providers that gathered monthly in an effort to network. They existed prior to ACT entering into Bushwick.

^{lxxii} The former local planner of Bushwick ACT is also the former local planner of Mott Haven ACT and the former Director of One City, One Strategy.

^{lxxiii} Community case conferencing was a service coordination project that started in New Zealand and came to New York City in the late 1980s/early 1990s. It was replicated out of many entities; however, its current modern day version that involves parents in the coordination of their family services was pioneered by the Executive Director of the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services.

^{lxxiv} The former Coordinator of the Bushwick Community Case Conferencing Project (1998–2001) is also the former Director of the Bushwick Community Development Unit (2001–2004).

^{lxxv} The Bushwick ACT Collaborative was a network of leaders invested in improving the quality of life for children and families in Bushwick. It existed in two phases: the first phase existed in the early 1990s under the leadership of Bushwick's first local planner, and its second phase restarted in early 2000 under the leadership of the Executive Director of the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services and the Director of the Bushwick ACT Community Development Unit.

^{lxxvi} The Parent Services Project started in 1999 via a grant from the Elizabeth Guttman Foundation and Danforth Foundation, which focused on education transition from childcare to the K–12 system. It was modeled on California's Parent Services Project.

^{lxxvii} Bushwick IMPACT is a neighborhood-based family resource center with a mission to empower parents to maximize their children's potential by strengthening families, enriching community life, and influencing the systems that affect them. IMPACT is located in a welcoming storefront in Bushwick and has trained community parents to staff most of its operations. IMPACT works with mothers with children under eight and since it opened its doors in November 2005, has served more than 1500 parents and children through four program areas: leadership

development, child development supports, family literacy, and family supports that include information and referrals to services that meet whole family needs.

^{lxxviii} The Bushwick CPI, also commonly referred to as the BMCI (Bushwick Making Children Important), is an initiative of the Administration for Children's Services, which began in the fall of 2006. The purpose of the Bushwick CPI is to develop and bolster community coalitions to participate in the improvement of child welfare outcomes in their neighborhoods. Specifically, its goals are: to increase connection/communication/cross referrals between childcare centers and Head Starts; to provide community representatives (aka as community hosts) for every child safety conference; to recruit foster parents; to train community representatives to supervise foster care, family visits; and to bridge the communication gap between service providers and schools. ACS offered \$150,000 to the Bushwick CPI. Begun as a one-year program, the CPI program was extended with continued funding within the scope of the ACS Request for Proposals that was issued in May 2009. ACT facilitated the initial working sessions in each of the 11 communities and provided intensive technical assistance to the first three communities during the strategic planning phase. ACT continues to be available to all of the CPI coalitions, consulting as needed on a variety of issues.

^{lxxix} ACT's early years in Bushwick were during the early 1990s under Bushwick's first local planner's leadership.

^{lxxx} The SPARKS Program is a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene initiative that started in approximately 2006. It is a nutrition/physical activity program for children and operates out of schools and some childcare centers and Head Starts. This endeavor grew out of the connection made between service providers who were active in the Bushwick ACT Collaborative

^{lxxx} Homebase was a homelessness prevention program funded by the Department of Homeless Services in the amount of \$3 million dollars, which began in 2004/2005. At its inception, the lead agencies were the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services and the Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizen Council, Inc. (RBSCC). At the time of this study, RBSCC was the lead agency.

^{lxxxii} Seiderman, also known as Ethel Seiderman, is the former founder and executive director of the Parent Services Project, a San-Rafael, CA-based organization that engages and strengthens families by working in partnerships with educators and service providers to take leadership in assuring the well-being of all children, families, and communities.

^{lxxxv} The Brownville-East New York Service Planning Area (SPA) was geographically-determined by ACS for purposes of placing services and neighborhood networks. Rather than using NYC's fifty-nine community board districts, ACS divided NYC into thirty-nine SPAs, which were, from their perspective, more in alignment with their resources and neighborhood network goals. (See below.)

^{lxxxvi} The East New York Neighborhood Network, aka as the Brownsville-East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network (B-ENY CWNN), started in approximately 2003 and was an ACS, community initiative. Its goals were to lower the number of children in foster care and to create a stronger safety net for children and families by targeting schools, which were generating most of the neglect/abuse calls to New York State child neglect/abuse hotline.

^{lxxxvii} The Neighborhood Based Initiative was an ACS project (under the Office of Neighborhood Based Services) with the following goals: to align services to neighborhoods; redeploy services to neighborhoods; and encourage neighborhood-based placements, especially where reunification was the plan.

^{lxxxviii} Kay Sherwood's evaluation was conducted when ACT turned 10 years old and examined ACT's accomplishments/contributions. Upon [ACT's former Executive Director] and [ACT's former Associate Executive Director's] departure in 2008, Kay Sherwood surveyed ten of ACT's stakeholders on what they thought should happen. There were many concerns.

^{lxxxix} Chapin Hall was the evaluator of the Highbridge Project. ACT was part of the Highbridge Project's leadership team; they reviewed the evaluation design and provided input on the qualitative component; they also did problem solving, as needed. Lastly, they also did the original plan, which included followup, for the community.

^{xc} Matching Needs and Services grew out of a Dartington and Bristol, England-based initiative that ACT informed ACS about—specifically, Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta and Deputy Commissioner Linda Gibbs in approximately 1997. There was agreement that there should be a needs assessment along the lines of this model's needs assessment in every neighborhood. Matching Needs and Services began under ACS's neighborhood networks, which ACT helped design. ACS informed staff to inform all networks that they would have to execute Dartington/Bristol's Matching Needs and Services Model. ACT argued that if local leaders already had a just as

good or better needs assessment, to go with them. However, ACS was rigid and went with the former. Specifically, Matching Needs and Services was a stage development process to the neighborhood networks. The goals of the neighborhood networks were to align services to neighborhoods; redeploy services to neighborhoods; and encourage neighborhood-based placements, especially where reunification was the plan. ACT coached, pressing for changes, training staff, fighting for a more bottom up approach—i.e., a less rigid and bureaucratic approach.

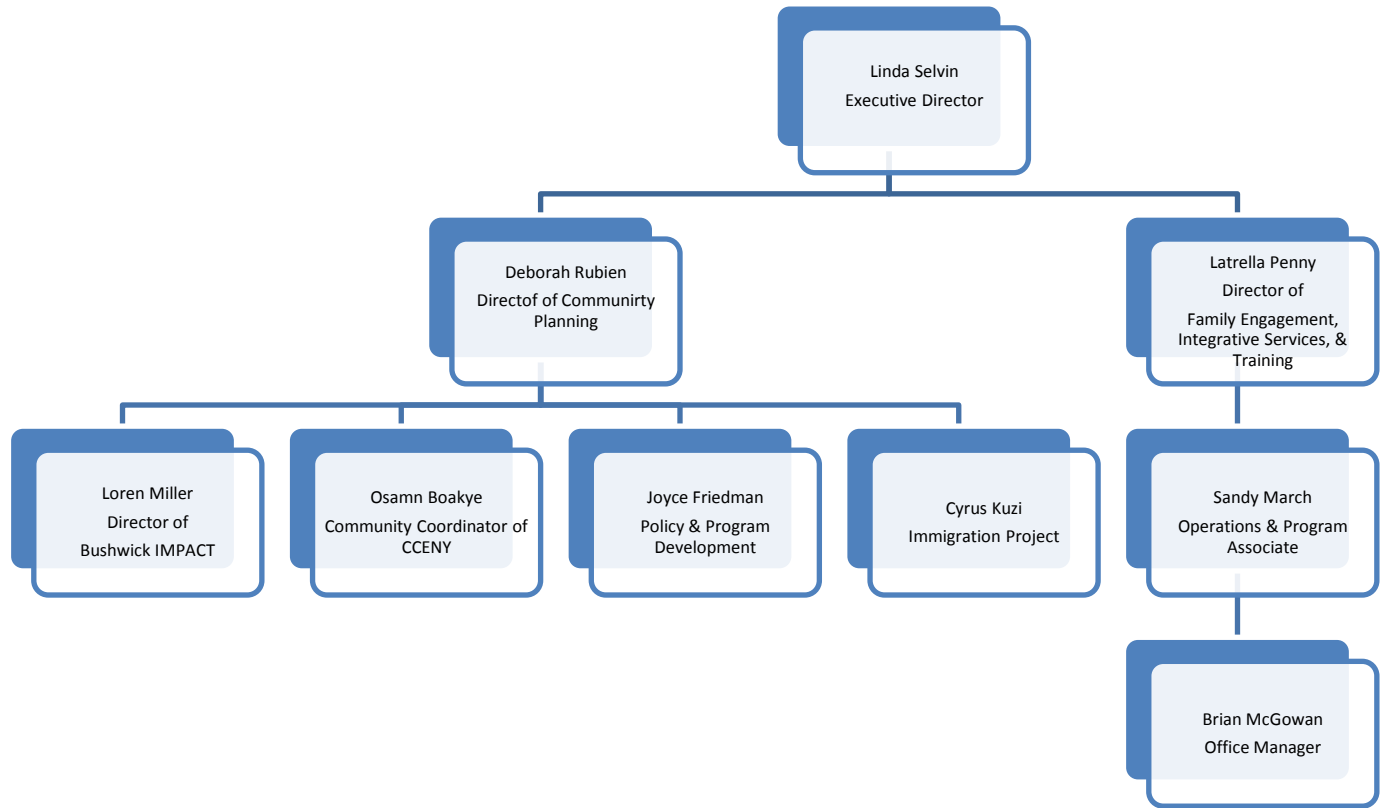
^{xc1} Data books, aka community profiles and the “fireplaces” of community organizing efforts, was one of ACT’s first accomplishments in approximately 1990. ACT collaborated with New York University, Hugh O’Neill, Denise Zeller, and Jim Welsh to produce this comprehensive, multi-disciplinary resource, which focused on community assets and needs. It included the use of GIS (i.e., mapping information) and described the questions that could be raised in engaging communities to address their needs with the goal of service integration/bottom up planning. Furthermore, it made the case for the importance of a data-driven, community development strategy as opposed to doing a mission statement without data. Data books became the model for the Citizens’ Committee for Children’s (CCC’s) “Keeping Track” report. ACT/[ACT’s former Executive Director] served on CCC’s “Keeping Track” Advisory Committee. ACT made the case that it was possible to collect data at a community board level—not only on a county level. In addition, when ACT was still in its formation, it applied to do the child wellbeing index via the Fund for Child Development. This proposal was not granted; therefore, it was never executed.

^{xcii} The Minority Agencies Task Force started in 2006/7 and ended in 2008. It was conceptualized by ACT (i.e., ACT’s former Associate Executive Director and ACT’s Director of Integrative Services, Family Engagement, and Training), with heavy involvement from the New York Community Trust (i.e., Pat White). ACT brought the players together and got ACS to buy into it. Part of the Task Force was appointed by Commissioner John Mattingly (i.e., Anne Williams-Isom), with involvement from the United Way (i.e., Dale Joseph). The Task Force worked to support minority-led agencies; specifically, they responded to a *New York Times* series that was viewed as critical of minority-led agencies. Many were so excited to have the Task Force that they became overloaded. There was a real question as to how active the city ultimately wanted to be in capacity-building.

^{xciii} Community profiles, a.k.a. data books and the “fireplaces” of community organizing efforts, were one of ACT’s first accomplishments in approximately 1990. ACT collaborated with New York University, Hugh O’Neill, Denise Zeller, and Jim Welsh to produce this comprehensive, multi-disciplinary resource that focused on community assets and needs. It included the use of GIS (i.e., mapping information), and described the questions that could be raised in engaging communities to address their needs, with the goal of service integration/bottom-up planning. Furthermore, it made the case for the importance of a data-driven, community development strategy as opposed to doing a mission statement without data. Data books became the model for the Citizens’ Committee for Children’s (CCC’s) “Keeping Track” report. [ACT’s former Executive Director] served on CCC’s “Keeping Track” Advisory Committee. ACT made the case that it was possible to collect data at a community board level, not only on a county level. In addition, when ACT was still in its formation, it applied to do the child wellbeing index via the Fund for Child Development. This proposal was not granted; therefore, it was never executed.

^{xciv} “Keeping Track” is a bi-yearly report produced by the Citizens’ Committee for Children. (See Chapter 6, endnote xxx.)

^{xcv} The Summer in the City Project, funded by the New York Community Trust (NYCT), promoted summer opportunities for children and was led by ACT at NYCT’s request. This project had a heavy parent engagement component. ACT conducted a survey of programs that did major work with children of all ages in distressed situations and mapped these programs. This project occurred for four consecutive summers, between the summers of approximately 2000 and 2004; it no longer exists.

Appendix A. Organizational Chart of Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT)

Appendix B. Recruitment Letter, Brownsville-East New York Collaborative

February 1, 2009

Dear [Insert Name],

I hope you are well, especially in your endeavors on behalf of the children and families of New York City.

As a former Local Planner of the Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT) Collaborative (1998-2004) and a current PhD Candidate at CUNY, I am contacting you and many former/current members of the Brownsville-East New York Collaborative to tell you about an evaluation study I am conducting of Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT). I hope you will be willing to participate in this study, since we have a unique opportunity to learn about how ACT influenced the Collaborative.

Since ACT's inception 20 years ago, no research study has focused solely on ACT's essential role in the start and development of neighborhood collaboratives. It is unique in a number of ways, and I am interested in ACT's impact on the Brownsville-East New York Collaborative. Specifically, I am interested in ACT's impact on the goals, principles, and operational strategies of the Collaborative.

Over the years, many leaders have been involved with the Brownsville-East New York Collaborative. My plan is to conduct in-person interviews with as many who are willing to participate in this evaluation. I would like to set up a time to interview you at a convenient time and place away from the offices of ACT for a two hour interview. I have particular questions for you to answer about ACT's impact on the Collaborative's change goals, such as individuals, families, neighborhood, and/or systems change goals; ACT's impact on the Collaborative's central principles, such as comprehensiveness and/or capacity building; and ACT's impact on the Collaborative's operational strategies, such as governance, funding, technical assistance, staffing, evaluation, and/or program evaluation. And there will be plenty of opportunity for you to raise issues that I may not have thought about. I will audiotape the interview with your permission, or ask you if I can take notes, if you do not want to be audiotaped.

I am committed to taking every precaution to protect your identity. If you agree to be interviewed, prior to the interview, I will discuss the measures I will take to maintain confidentiality to make certain you feel they provide adequate protection.

Please contact me via telephone or e-mail as to whether or not you want to be interviewed. Also, if you are in touch with former/current participants of the Collaborative, please pass this letter along to them. I want to ensure I have reached as many former/current participants in the Collaborative as possible. If you agree to be interviewed, I will be able to answer any questions you have then.

Thank you for all that you do for children and families.

Sincerely, Nina Moreno, (718) 751-6901, ninafabiana@aol.com

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter, Bushwick Collaborative



February 1, 2009

Dear [Insert Name],

I hope you are well, especially in your endeavors on behalf of the children and families of New York City.

As a former Local Planner of the Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT) Collaborative (1998-2004) and a current PhD Candidate at CUNY, I am contacting you and many former/current members of the Bushwick Collaborative to tell you about an evaluation study I am conducting of Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT). I hope you will be willing to participate in this study, since we have a unique opportunity to learn about how ACT influenced the Collaborative.

Since ACT's inception 20 years ago, no research study has focused solely on ACT's essential role in the start and development of neighborhood collaboratives. It is unique in a number of ways, and I am interested in ACT's impact on the Bushwick Collaborative. Specifically, I am interested in ACT's impact on the goals, principles, and operational strategies of the Collaborative.

Over the years, many leaders have been involved with the Bushwick Collaborative. My plan is to conduct in-person interviews with as many who are willing to participate in this evaluation. I would like to set up a time to interview you at a convenient time and place away from the offices of ACT for a two hour interview. I have particular questions for you to answer about ACT's impact on the Collaborative's change goals, such as individuals, families, neighborhood, and/or systems change goals; ACT's impact on the Collaborative's central principles, such as comprehensiveness and/or capacity building; and ACT's impact on the Collaborative's operational strategies, such as governance, funding, technical assistance, staffing, evaluation, and/or program evaluation. And there will be plenty of opportunity for you to raise issues that I may not have thought about. I will audiotape the interview with your permission, or ask you if I can take notes, if you do not want to be audiotaped.

I am committed to taking every precaution to protect your identity. If you agree to be interviewed, prior to the interview, I will discuss the measures I will take to maintain confidentiality to make certain you feel they provide adequate protection.

Please contact me via telephone or e-mail as to whether or not you want to be interviewed. Also, if you are in touch with former/current participants of the Collaborative, please pass this letter along to them. I want to ensure I have reached as many former/current participants in the Collaborative as possible. If you agree to be interviewed, I will be able to answer any questions you have then.

Thank you for all that you do for children and families.

Sincerely, Nina Moreno, (718) 751-6901, ninafabiana@aol.com

Appendix D: Telephone and E-Mail Scripts

Telephone:

Hello [Insert Name].

Thank you for calling me about the study. It is great to hear from you. I think about the work of the Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick Collaborative a lot.

Would you like to discuss the evaluation study?

Let me fill you in a little on what I have in mind. Projects similar to ACT exist and some have even been evaluated. However, ACT is a unique project, and since its inception 20 years ago, no research study has focused *solely* on ACT's role in the development of neighborhood collaboratives throughout New York City. I think it is worth knowing about how participants of the Brownsville/East New York/Bushwick CCBEs experienced/ experience ACT.

This study is an exploratory study- i.e., I am very interested in understanding your actual experience of ACT. The best way to do this is via a semi-structured interview. There are other research instruments around to measure various outcomes- one example is a survey; however, it would not get to what is important to you and this is what I want to know about.

Does this sound interesting? Do you want me to keep going?

Ok, so because this is an interview, and because I want to give ACT a report- and I want you to feel free to say what is on your mind- you need to know how I am planning to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Ideally, I would like to audio tape the interview, but I can also take notes. If I tape the interview, I will transcribe it immediately, but eliminate any identifying information- I won't write your name, gender, etc.- anything that can be used to identify you as an individual. When I write up the findings, if I want to use a quotation from your interview as an example, I will disguise it, even if it means changing factual information so that no one would know who you are. I am interested in the themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews, not your experience as an individual person.

Do you still think you want to participate? Can we decide on a time and place to meet for two hours?

It can be anywhere you want, except at the offices of ACT- some other office in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick is fine or a public place.

Great! I will bring consent forms for you to sign for the interview and the audio taping, and I will also have a list of resources about how CCBEs navigate their change goals, central principles, and operational strategies.

Remember, you can drop out at any time, so, if you change your mind, just get in touch with me to let me know.

But as of now, we will be meeting at_____on_____at_____. I will confirm by phone the day before we meet, or you can call me anytime.

Here is my phone number and e-mail address: 718.751.6901 and ninafabiana@aol.com.

E-Mail Response:

For people who decline:

Thank you very much for getting in touch with me. I appreciate it.

If there are any former/current members of the Collaborative that you are in touch with who you think may be interested in participating in this evaluation study, please ask them to contact me.

Thank you,
Nina Moreno
718.751.6901

For people who want to participate:

Thank you for getting back to me. I am very pleased you want to participate in the evaluation study. I think I can discuss the study best over the phone? Could you e-mail me you number and a date and time when I can call?

Thank you,
Nina Moreno
718.751.6901

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form, Brownsville-East New York Collaborative**Informed Consent**

Nina Moreno is a PhD Candidate at the Hunter College School of Social Work, and she was the local planner for the Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow Collaborative between 1998 and 2004. You are invited to participate in a study to evaluate the experiences of participants of the Brownsville-East New York Collaborative from the beginning to the end of their work with the Collaborative. You have been identified as a participant because you participated in the Brownsville-East New York Collaborative and are over the age of 18. It is anticipated that, at a maximum, 80 individuals will participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

You are being asked to participate in a two-hour, in-person interview with Nina Moreno. During the interview, you will be asked questions about ACT's impact on the Collaborative's change goals, such as individuals, families, neighborhood, and/or systems change goals; ACT's impact on the Collaborative's principles, such as comprehensiveness and/or capacity building; and ACT's impact on the Collaborative's operational strategies, such as governance, funding, technical assistance, staffing, evaluation, and/or program evaluation. And there will be plenty of opportunity for you to raise issues that I may not have thought about. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place, outside of the offices of ACT.

There is a direct benefit of a \$10. American Express gift card for completed interviews; prorated gift cards will be available for incomplete interviews. Furthermore, participation may give you the opportunity to reflect on your professional work. Although the risks of your participation are minimal, it is possible that you may experience some discomfort from discussing past or current challenging experiences. In the event that this happens, the researcher has a list of resources that you may contact should you need them. You can choose not to answer any particular question, and you may stop the interview at any time.

The researcher will tape record the interview with your permission, or take notes if you prefer. You will be given a separate form to indicate your permission for tape recording the interview. No one but the researcher will listen to the tape. Your name will not appear on any transcripts or notes and no information that could identify you as an individual will be transcribed. Once transcribed and all information that could identify you as an individual removed, the tapes will be destroyed. All materials related to this study will be kept in a locked file cabinet in Nina Moreno's home office to which only she will have access. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years, after which they will be destroyed.

Nina Moreno will analyze the de-identified, transcribed data using standard thematic qualitative research methods. The researcher intends to use the results of this study to write a paper for purposes of her PhD dissertation and for ACT. She also intends to use the results of this study to write a paper for purposes of submission to a peer review journal once it has been approved for dissemination by ACT. Only aggregate data will be reported. All identification about you, your agency, and others who participated will be omitted or disguised. Despite these precautions, you should be aware there is a small chance some people at the agency may be able to discern your identity.

The researcher is mandated to report to the proper authorities suspected child abuse and any indications that you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or others.

You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits or services to which you are entitled.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact Nina Moreno at 718.751.6901 or by e-mail at ninafabiana@aol.com or her faculty advisor, Dr. Irwin Epstein, at 212.452.7030 or by e-mail at iepstein@hunter.cuny.edu. You should contact the Hunter College IRB Office at (212) 650-3053, if you have questions regarding your rights as a subject or if you feel you have experienced a research-related injury.

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form for my records and future reference.

Participant's Name

Date

Signature

Researcher's Name

Date

Signature

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form, Bushwick Collaborative



Informed Consent

Nina Moreno is a PhD Candidate at the Hunter College School of Social Work, and she was the local planner for the Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow Collaborative between 1998 and 2004. You are invited to participate in a study to evaluate the experiences of participants of the Bushwick Collaborative from the beginning to the end of their work with the Collaborative. You have been identified as a participant because you participated in the Brownsville-East New York Collaborative and are over the age of 18. It is anticipated that, at a maximum, 80 individuals will participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

You are being asked to participate in a two-hour, in-person interview with Nina Moreno. During the interview, you will be asked questions about ACT's impact on the Collaborative's change goals, such as individuals, families, neighborhood, and/or systems change goals; ACT's impact on the Collaborative's principles, such as comprehensiveness and/or capacity building; and ACT's impact on the Collaborative's operational strategies, such as governance, funding, technical assistance, staffing, evaluation, and/or program evaluation. And there will be plenty of opportunity for you to raise issues that I may not have thought about. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place, outside of the offices of ACT.

There is a direct benefit of a \$10. American Express gift card for completed interviews; prorated gift cards will be available for incomplete interviews. Furthermore, participation may give you the opportunity to reflect on your professional work. Although the risks of your participation are minimal, it is possible that you may experience some discomfort from discussing past or current challenging experiences. In the event that this happens, the researcher has a list of resources that you may contact should you need them. You can choose not to answer any particular question, and you may stop the interview at any time.

The researcher will tape record the interview with your permission, or take notes if you prefer. You will be given a separate form to indicate your permission for tape recording the interview. No one but the researcher will listen to the tape. Your name will not appear on any transcripts or notes and no information that could identify you as an individual will be transcribed. Once transcribed and all information that could identify you as an individual removed, the tapes will be destroyed. All materials related to this study will be kept in a locked file cabinet in Nina Moreno's home office to which only she will have access. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years, after which they will be destroyed.

Nina Moreno will analyze the de-identified, transcribed data using standard thematic qualitative research methods. The researcher intends to use the results of this study to write a paper for purposes of her PhD dissertation and for ACT. She also intends to use the results of this study to write a paper for purposes of submission to a peer review journal once it has been approved for dissemination by ACT. Only aggregate data will be reported. All identification about you, your agency, and others who participated will be omitted or disguised. Despite these precautions, you should be aware there is a small chance some people at the agency may be able to discern your identity.

The researcher is mandated to report to the proper authorities suspected child abuse and any indications that you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or others.

You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits or services to which you are entitled.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact Nina Moreno at 718.751.6901 or by e-mail at ninafabiana@aol.com or her faculty advisor, Dr. Irwin Epstein, at 212.452.7030 or by e-mail at iepstein@hunter.cuny.edu. You should contact the Hunter College IRB Office at (212) 650-3053, if you have questions regarding your rights as a subject or if you feel you have experienced a research-related injury.

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form for my records and future reference.

Participant's Name

Date

Signature

Researcher's Name

Date

Signature

Appendix G: Audio Tape Recording Release Consent Form

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AUDIO TAPE RECORDING RELEASE CONSENT FORM

Protocol # _____

Researcher: Nina Moreno

Title: Qualitative Evaluation of Agenda for Children Tomorrow's Role in the Brownsville-East New York and Bushwick Collaboratives

As a part of this project, an audio tape recording will be made of you during your participation in this research project. Indicate below the use of these audio tapes to which you are willing to consent. This is completely voluntary and up to you. In any use of these audio tapes, you will not be identified personally.

The audio tapes will be used by the researcher for
purposes of this research project.

The researcher will transcribe the audio tape.

I have read the above description and give my consent for the audio tapes to be used as indicated above. I have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form for my records and future reference.

Participant's Name

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature

Date

Appendix H: Referrals

Bridge Builders

John Courtney
Child Welfare Fund
c/o Fund for Social Change
666 Broadway, Suite 830
New York, NY 10012
(212) 529-0110 office
(212) 529-9996 fax
<http://www.bridgebuilderscpi.org>

The Coordinated Children's Services Initiative

Tyler Spangenberg
NYS Office of Mental Health
New York City Field Office
330 Fifth Avenue - 9th Floor
New York NY 10001-3101
(212) 330-1650 office
(212) 330-6359 fax
http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/Childservice/child_svc.htm

El Puente

Luis Garden Acosta
211 S. 4th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11211
(718) 387-0404 office
(718) 387-6816 fax
<http://www.elpuente.us>

Harlem Children's Zone

Geoffrey Canada
35 East 125th Street
New York, NY 10035
(212) 360-3255 office
(212) 289-0661 fax
<http://www.hcz.org>

Appendix I: Interview Guide

Opening

1. What is your understanding of Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT)? What is your understanding of its goals, role. Describe it.
2. What is your understanding of how ACT got started here? What is your understanding of ACT's history here?

“ACT is an initiative that brings together New York City neighborhood residents, service providers, community and business leaders and local government officials in an alliance where all share the same goal: to make life better for the neighborhood's families and children.”

In some neighborhoods, this mission takes place in the form of a formal structure such as a collaborative while in others, this mission takes place in the form of a child welfare network. Sometimes it takes place in the form of a program or some formation of all three. Furthermore, in some neighborhoods, the lines between all of these structures are not as black and white and more grey...

3. Tell me about your involvement with ACT (remember that for Bushwick folks, ACT may = IMPACT) in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick/other neighborhood(s). Was it through the collaborative/network/program?
4. What is/was your understanding of the goals of the collaborative/network/program?
5. Can you talk about specific ways ACT has helped you in your work? How has ACT made a difference in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick/other neighborhood(s)?

Goals: Change at the Individual and Family, Neighborhood, and Systems Levels

1. What kinds of contributions from ACT have been most supportive/least supportive (i.e., strengthening) to Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick/neighborhood(s)?

-
2. Based on your experience, how has ACT assisted Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick/neighborhood(s) to improve its relationship with government service systems like the child welfare system- i.e., the Administration for Children's Services?

Probe, if appropriate: Did this help government's understanding of community needs? If yes, in what ways? Did it help bring about more resources for the community? If yes, what types of resources?

3. Based on your experience, how has ACT assisted in the changes you wanted to bring about for the families and children of Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick/neighborhood(s)? This may include examples of changes at the children and family level, changes at the neighborhood level, or changes at the systems level.

Central Principle: Comprehensiveness

According to the literature, there are two central principles that guide community building initiatives; they are comprehensiveness and capacity building (Himmelman, 1992; Kubisch et. al., 1997; Mattessich et. al., 1992; Rosewater, 1992; Stone 1996). The next two sets of questions will explore these principles and their relationship to your work with the collaborative/network/program; it will ask how ACT assisted in/promoted these principles.

According to research, the central principle of comprehensiveness has been defined as, "...the full range of circumstances, opportunities, and/or needs of individuals and families living in a neighborhood and the relationships among them. Comprehensiveness is not categorical approaches that focus on discrete problems or opportunities in isolation from other facets of life. It also calls for a constant consideration of systemic connections among issues."

For eg., a focus on the creation of jobs in a given neighborhood without taking into account residents' educational circumstances or their need for supports such as child care, transportation, and training would be limited both in vision and in potential benefits.

-
1. Do you agree with this? Do you have a different definition of “comprehensiveness”?
 2. Based on your experience, how has ACT assisted in/promoted achieving “comprehensiveness”?

Probe, if appropriate : How did “comprehensiveness facilitate/hamper the work of the collaborative, network, or program?

Probe, if appropriate: How much emphasis should be placed on trying to achieve “comprehensiveness” in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick’s work?

Central Principle: Community Building (Capacity Building)

According to research, the central principle of community building (capacity building) is defined as, “...strengthening the capabilities of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to work, individually and collectively, towards fostering and sustaining positive community change.”

Provide more of a definition, if needed: “For individuals, community building (capacity building) focuses on enhancing the capabilities of community residents to access resources and effect change in their lives through a range of mechanisms, with leadership development often playing a central role. At the associational level, community building (capacity building) focuses on the nature, strength, and scope of relationships (both affective and instrumental) among individuals within the community and, through them, connections to networks of association beyond the community. These are ties of kinship, acquaintance, or other more formal means through which information, resources, and assistance can be delivered. Finally, for organizations, community building (capacity building) centers on developing the infrastructure of formal and informal institutions within the community to provide goods and services effectively, and on the relationships among organizations both within and beyond the neighborhood to maximize resources and coordinate strategies for community improvement.”

-
1. Do you agree with this? Do you have a different definition of community building (capacity building)?
 2. How has ACT assisted in/promoted community building (the capacity building) in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick?
 3. Based on your experience, do you think that community building (capacity building) should be an end in and of itself, or should it be viewed as an instrument for achieving outcomes? In other words, do you think that community building (capacity building) should be a main goal of the collaborative/network/program, or do you think it should be part of the strategy towards achieving other goals?

Operational Strategy: Governance

According to the literature, the operational strategy of governance is defined as, "...the creation of mechanisms to guide planning, decision making, and/or implementation as well as to determine what are the accountability and responsibility structures for actions that are undertaken."

1. Do you agree with this? Do you have a different definition of governance?
2. What was/is the governance of your collaborative/network/program?
3. Tell me about community participation in your collaborative/network/program. What does it look like? How has ACT helped with community participation, especially of residents and clients, in the governance of Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick?

Probe, if appropriate: How has this impacted, both negative and positive, implementation of the collaborative/network/program?

Probe, if appropriate: How has this impacted, both negative and positive, impact of the collaborative/network/program?

Probe, if appropriate: How has this impacted, both negative and positive, legitimacy of the collaborative/network/program?

Probe, if appropriate: How has this impacted, both negative and positive, sustainability of the collaborative/network/program?

4. How did/does ACT assist with governance to promote:
 - community participation (this includes all leaders, especially residents and clients- i.e., users of service systems) in the planning, management, and implementation of the collaborative's/network's/program's goals?
 - collaboration among organizations in the neighborhood?
 - efficient and effective decision-making within the collaborative/network/program?
 - getting the work done within the collaborative/network/program?
 - legitimacy (i.e., acceptance) of the collaborative/network/program within and beyond the community?
 - Accountability (i.e., taking responsibility for the collaboratives'/networks'/programs' actions)?

5. When you think about when and how ACT got involved with Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick, do you think it was the best time and way, or do you think it would have been better for them to get involved at a different point in time and in a different way?

Probe, if appropriate: For example, what difference do you think it would make if ACT's involvement in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick started out focusing on another area that community leaders deemed important (for eg., health, juvenile justice, education, etc.) and then moved into child welfare?

Probe, if appropriate: Is there a particular sequencing of process components that works better than others? What about outcome components?

Operational Strategy: Funding

According to the literature, the operational strategy of funding is defined as, "...grants by public and private foundations, which are meant to be flexible and responsive to the priorities established by the local governance structure...funds typically do not cover ongoing program costs, but rather costs associated with planning and management, capacity building, and/or new activities...at times, funding may come in the form of in-kind contributions"

Provide more of a definition, if needed: "...funds are not meant to replace major public-sector funding streams such as education or safety or private-sector investment, but rather to help ensure that those dollars are used as effectively as possible and to leverage increased financial flows into the community."

1. Do you agree with this? Do you have a different definition of funding? What is it?
2. What is the funding structure of your collaborative/network/program?
3. In order to be effective, resources are a necessity. How did/does ACT assist with funding?

Probe, if appropriate: What part of your work with the collaborative/network/program has been most appealing from a funding standpoint?

Probe, if appropriate: Is funding at the correct level and allocated appropriately?

4. Do you have recommendations to ACT on how they may facilitate future levels of funding, flexibility of funding, duration of funding, purpose for which funds can be used, review/accountability procedures, and/or roles of funders (beyond providing financial support)?

Operational Strategy: Technical Assistance

According to the literature, technical assistance “...may be provided centrally by a funder or it may be sought by the governance entity and other participants. It may be furnished by one or multiple providers. It may focus on process issues (such as governance, strategic planning, or board development,) or programmatic issues (such as service provision, financial instruments, or land use). Technical assistance providers may be used as supplementary staff to get concrete work done or they may be asked to promote long-term capacity building by focusing on the transference of skills and knowledge to community residents or organizations.”

1. Do you agree? Do you have a different definition of technical assistance? What is it?
2. One of ACT’s goals is to provide technical assistance. How has ACT helped with technical assistance as it relates to outreach, leadership development, planning, etc. within Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick?
3. How has ACT helped with technical assistance on the collaborative’s systems reform goals? the CPI/child welfare network’s mandates? IMPACT’s change goals?
4. (Linda Selvin) Would you pay for technical assistance?
5. Allow me to ask a few questions on capacity building specifically... Do you consider yourself a leader in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick? Do you think ACT helped build your capacity as a leader? How? Be specific.
6. Do you think that the leaders of Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick agree on capacity building (i.e., knowledge and skills building)- for example, its definition, its importance, and the strategies for achieving it? Who could benefit from it?
7. (NEED TO WORD DIFFERENTLY FOR CITY AND ACT LEADERS) How has ACT assisted in/promoted the capacity building of children and families in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick? Of organizations (i.e., the social service network) in Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick? Of the neighborhood as a whole? Provide examples of capacity building in each of these areas.

Probe, if appropriate: How did this capacity building facilitate identifying and implementing solutions to problems?

Probe, if appropriate: Which strategies have been most effective for developing capacity that leads to addressing problems?

Operational Strategy: Staffing

According to the literature, staffing "...may be a core staff person who, as project director or coordinator, facilitates the planning process and takes responsibility for moving the project from planning to action. In some, additional staff provides administrative assistance or manage individual activities, such as community organizing or specific projects."

1. During your work with the collaborative/network/program, was there a local planner/liaison? Both? What were their names?
2. What was the impact of having a local planner/liaison? What was the impact of the local planner/liaison's departure?
3. What is your understanding of who was/is the staff of the Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick collaborative/network/program?
4. What were/are the staff's critical functions?
5. Throughout ACT's assistance with staffing with respects to training, interpersonal skills, level of professionalism, knowledge of the community, cultural issues, etc., what have been the learned lessons?

Operational Strategy: Evaluation

According to the literature, evaluation "...is the measurement of whether the intervention was effective...it can be formative, providing feedback to various effort stakeholders, such as funders, staff, or residents...evaluation might be more summative, seeking to provide evidence of ultimate or periodic progress after a given period of time...evaluation might serve a "social learning" function, attempting to draw out generalizable lessons for policy and for future research and experimentation...evaluation can promote the community capacity building and

empowerment agenda of the effort, especially if evaluation tools such as theory specification, data collection, and information analysis are in the hands of the residents or community institutions.”

1. Do you agree with this? Do you have a different definition of evaluation?
2. What did/does evaluation process look like for your collaborative/network/ program?
3. Was ACT involved in your evaluation process? If yes, how?
4. If yes, how did/does ACT’s involvement in evaluation help with:
 - managing Brownsville-East New York/Bushwick?
 - assessing progress toward outcomes/change goals?
 - reporting to funders and the outside world?
 - community building?
5. If no, how could ACT help with evaluation?
6. How did/does ACT help with activities that relate to your outcomes for neighborhood’s children and families, organizations, and/or service systems?

Probe, if appropriate: How has ACT assisted with formulating indicators of progress/regression?

Probe, if appropriate: Which indicators have been most useful/least useful?

Probe, if appropriate: Which are most easily measured/most difficult to measure?

Closing

1. What has been the most important lesson you have learned about your work with ACT?
2. What are your priorities for ACT’s involvement in the network/program over the next year? 2 years? 5 years?

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3. What do you anticipate will be the most difficult challenges facing ACT during the next year? 2 years? 5 years?
 4. Given the current economic context, what do you anticipate will be the most difficult challenges facing your collaborative, network, and/or program in the next year? 2 years? 5 years?

Appendix J. ACT Accomplishments, 1995-2005

Gains and Accomplishments, 1995-2005

Suggested Category: Program

Date of Accomplishment: October '95

Description: **The Early Childhood Coalition Transition Project.**
This plan implemented by the Agenda for Children

Tomorrow and the Early childhood Coalition of Washington Heights/Inwood was started to help children make the transition from childcare and Head Start to Kindergarten. The goal was to facilitate the psychological, educational and logistical transition for children and their families to improve their children's education and receipt of much needed community services.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains

Date of Accomplishment: November '95

Description: ACT contributed to a report entitled "Consideration for Implementing Managed Care in the New York City Child Welfare System". The working draft report sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Welfare agencies, inc. and the Children's Defense Fund of New York, was commissioned by the New York City Task Force on Managed Care in Child Welfare. It presented guiding principles to inform the implementation of managed care methods in the child welfare systems in a way that is consistent with sound child welfare practice.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains

Date of Accomplishment: November '95

Description: ACT's Executive Director Eric Brettschneider attended the Lutheran Social Service of Metropolitan New York's Foster and Adoptive Parents luncheon. The event honored foster and adoptive parents engaged with the Lutheran Social Services Inc.,

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains

Date of Accomplishment: Oct '95

Description: ACT's Director Eric Brettschneider was interviewed for an assessment report of the New York Community Trust's Bushwick Geographic Targeting Task Force project. The effort was intended to provide comprehensive grant-making resources to the Bushwick community.

Suggested Category: Resource

Date of Accomplishment: July '95

Description: ACT Bushwick contributed to the Bushwick Resource Coalition Children and Family Committee. ACT's role was recognized in developing a needs assessment of the available Bushwick mental health services for children. The assessment was presented to the Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health and the Director of Children and Family Services for the State office of Mental health Services.

Suggested Category: System-wide change

Date of Accomplishment: June '95

Description: ACT Washington Heights Collaborative joined as a member of the organizing committee for **Credit Where Credit is Due**. The committee was responsible in creating the Community Development Credit Union(CDCU) whose aim is to establish a credit union in the Washington Heights/Inwood community to provide credit and banking facilities, primarily savings and checking accounts to underserved clients.

Suggested Category: Conference

Date of Accomplishment: June '95

Description: Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director facilitated a workshop entitled "Transitions to Independent Living: Making Positive Community Connections". The workshop was part of the ninth annual Independent Living skills Conference held at the McGinley Center at Fordham University

Suggested Category: Planning

Date of Accomplishment: Jan. '95

Description: The Comptroller of the City of New York, Alan Havesi invited Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director to participate on an advisory committee on foster care. The Comptroller commended ACT for its leading role in the child welfare field. He remarked that ACT, in its inception has dedicated itself to the welfare of children in less fortunate neighborhoods of this city. ACT will aid the Comptroller's advisory committee in developing meaningful services to New Yorkers in a cost effective manner.

Suggested Category: Program

Date of Accomplishment: April '95

Description: ACT was selected as one of several agencies that will provide assistance to city agencies by disseminating summer program information to the five ACT coalitions located in Bushwick, Mott Haven, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Jamaica and Washington heights/Inwood.

Suggested Category: Program

Date of Accomplishment: Feb. '95

Description: One of the earliest dialogues and collaboration on the issue of case conferencing begins. At an ACT oversight committee meeting, the then Human Resource Administration (HRA) Commissioner, Lillian Barrios-Paoli, with the guidance of Rea Stein and Susan Sabor, said that HRA was working with ACT to design a conferencing mechanism to assure a coordinated case planning for welfare-to-work and other cases. Also at the meeting the Bushwick ACT Collaborative announced that it has established a case conferencing model to better serve the children of at-risk families by strengthening communication among agencies and families, school officials, clinics, workers, drug counselors and preventive workers from one of Bushwick's preventive

programs. The scheme with the help of facilitator will meet to develop a strategic plan and advocate for the family and arrange follow-ups.

Suggested Category: Event/program
Date of Accomplishment: March '95
Description: Eric Brettschneider ACT Director was invited to attend Best Beginnings Open House. The event was also attended by 130 persons including elected officials, members of New York City administration, community leaders and residents. Best Beginnings a New York-based human services organization provides families of new-borns and young children with the support they need to become healthy, self-sufficient and productive citizens.

Suggested Category: Project Planning
Date of Accomplishment: Feb '95
Description: The New York Community Trust releases its concept paper on the Neighborhood Strategies Project-Organizing Committee for work. In the spring and summer of 94 ACT was selected as one of the lead organizations to research and identify a number of communities to consider as partners for the Neighborhood Strategies Project. The mission of the Neighborhood Strategies Project is to invest in communities to create opportunities for economically disadvantaged residents so that they can make full contributions as productive citizens in society.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: Jan '95
Description: Heartcase Home Inc., an Independent Living Skills training program for adolescent women, invited Eric Brettschneider to assist in providing guidance on Heartcase' program reform

Suggested Category: Program Development
Date of Accomplishment: June '98
Description: Through the urging of New York Community Trust, ACT was invited to apply for the Family Unification program as part of ACT's neighborhood-based initiatives. The Family Unification program is a federally funded program aimed at preventing family separation by providing subsidized housing to families in the child welfare system

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: June '98
Description: Jamaica ACT organizes a forum: "Community Development and Demographic Change-Demographic Change and City Planning Mapping Technology in Community Development and Creating Partnerships." The event invited guest speakers from New York City Department of City Planning, University of Chicago and the Bureau of Census, United States Department of Commerce.

Suggested Category: Program
Date of Accomplishment: May '98
Description: New York Community Trust announced that its collaborative effort in securing funding for the federal government welfare-to-work demonstration grant has been achieved. ACT played a significant role in the Neighborhood Strategies Project (NSP). The NSP, an economic development project, has as its goals workforce development, business and job creation, and community building. ACT was instrumental in researching and identifying communities that will serve as demonstration sites for the initiatives.

Suggested Category: Program
Date of Accomplishment: May '98
Description: ACT Jamaica reported advanced work in its collaborative. With the coordination of Jamaica Local Planner, the Parks Council received a \$150,000 grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation to support new open space projects in Jamaica and Staten Island. Another important milestone was in the area of technology. The New York State Advanced Telecommunication Project (NYSATP) encouraged the Queens Technology Consortium's application for advanced telecommunication infrastructure in disadvantaged areas of Jamaica, Corona/East Elmhurst and Far Rockaway. ACT Jamaica was the principal writer for the proposal team. The Collaborative also played an important role in the formation of the Queens Technology Consortium which brought over 70 businesses, hospitals and CBO's to enhance the telecommunication capacity of underserved communities in Queens.

Suggested Category: Program
Date of Accomplishment: May '98
Description: ACT signed a linkage agreement with Youth Force Inc. as a response to the fiscal year 1988 Beacon School Program initiative Request for Proposal (RFP) from the department of Youth and Community Development. The Beacon Advisory Council an offshoot of this proposal will get support from ACT. Using ACT as a model, the Beacon will develop the Beacon Advisory Council. ACT will provide training and technical assistance to Beacon staff on how to assess needs and strengths and make appropriate referrals for services, assist the Beacon to establish case conferencing, and to explore ways to expand preventive services for the community.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: July '98
Description: ACT sponsored a discussion workshop led by Lon Myers, co-author of Really Reading. The discussion was on 10 simple and effective methods to develop a child's love for reading. The workshop explored engaging and creative activities which can be done with children to show them how much fun reading can be. The event was hosted by St. Francis Xavier Action Youth

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: Feb '98
Description: Mott Haven ACT Collective completes a youth survey. The survey questioned a youth. 35% of the respondents were from P.S.30. 95% were in school

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: Feb '98
Description: ACT hosted top leadership of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In an appreciation letter the visitors thanked ACT, and said the trip was "informative and rewarding". The visit provided the Illinois staff an opportunity to think differently about child development issues and share experiences and approaches of both cities. ACT was invited to reciprocate the visit.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June '98
Description: ACT's Executive Director was invited by the City University of New York's (CUNY) Center for Urban Research to speak to the leadership of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). DYCD's primary focus is to contract with community-based organizations that provide services as a means of promoting individual and neighborhood development. ACT was invited to provide some guidance and program development strategies.

Suggested Category: Program Proposal/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: Jan. '98
Description: The Park Council submitted a proposal to the Rockwell Brothers Fund. ACT partnered with the Park Council in developing the proposal. The aim of the proposal is to expand its open space work in communities such as Jamaica Queens, integrating high quality open space initiatives with the on-going neighborhood efforts in those areas.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains (Forum)
Date of Accomplishment: Dec. '98
Description: ACT's Executive Director moderated a forum entitled: "The Adoption and Safe Families Act: How New York's legislative approach will impact families and children". The forum held at Fordham University aimed at providing an opportunity for policy makers and service providers to come together to discuss current legislative approaches to New York's implementation of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The forum was attended by over 180 professionals representing voluntary child care agencies, legal service offices, the schools of law and social work of major children's lawyers groups, court appointed advocates, parent advocates, bar associations, the legislature, a wide range of elected city officials and community groups. The panel presentation included Hon. John Johnson, Commissioner, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Roger Green, Chair, New York State Assembly

York City Administration for Children Services, Micheal Gage, Administrative Judge for the New York City Family Courts, Michael Arsham and a few other prominent city officials.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: Nov. '98
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider attended the Jobs plus/NJ Conference in Baltimore. The event focused on building and sustaining multi-agency contribution. The event was organized by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC)

Suggested Category: Program Development/Planning
Date of Accomplishment: Nov '98

Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited to speak to the board of the Charles Hayden Foundation. The discussion was about the demographic trends, and then implications for youth service groups in particular New York City's School-based youth population. The Charles Hayden Foundation's mission is promoting the mental, moral and physical development of school-aged youth in the New York City and Boston communities. The foundation also disburses \$13million year to youth development and school reform efforts.

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: Nov. '98
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited to speak with participants at the CORO Foundation's leadership New York Program. The event was a one-day exploration of New York City's child welfare system.
Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: Oct. '98
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited by Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields to participate as a panelist in the borough's first annual parent convention. Over 1,000 people attended the event. The convention proceedings were compiled into a resource guide.

Suggested Category: Donation
Date of Accomplishment: Oct. '98
Description: IBM's Corporate Community Relations program donated 1 PC with CD Rom, 6 laser printers, 7 sound cards, 2 think-pads and various soft-wares. The market value for these products was \$22,222.70

Suggested Category: Award/Nomination/Strategic Gains

Date of Accomplishment: Oct. '98
Description: Eric Brett Schneider was nominated by Nicholas Scoppetta, Administration for Children Services (ACS)'s Commissioner, for the 1998 Brooke Russell Astor Award. The award was established at the New York Public Library in 1987 by David Rockefeller to honor an outstanding individual whose work has not yet been accorded significant public recognition, but whose dedication and perseverance have made an important contribution toward improving the quality of life in New York City. The reception was held in the Trustees Room of the New York Public Library.

Suggested Category: Report/Strategic Gains
Date of accomplishment: September '98
Description: ACT's Executive Director was interviewed for a report by Harvard University John F. Kennedy school of Government. The report was to compare the Annie E. Casey Foundation's activities on-going in the field of child welfare.

Suggested Category: Proposal/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: August '98
Description: ACT assisted the Children of Alcoholics Foundation (COAF) in developing a proposal. The proposal, submitted to the New York Community Trust would enable COAF to provide training on parental substance abuse to staff in non-profit and city agencies working in neighborhood s throughout New York City.

Suggested Category: Forum
Date of Accomplishment: August '98
Description: ACT's Executive Director moderated the foster care and family services "Building Neighborhood by Supporting Youth". The event was organized by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), the New School for Social Research and the Enterprise Foundation.

Suggested Category: Grant Award/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: July '98
Description: With the assistance and support of ACT, the Early Childhood Strategic Group (ECSG) led by Charlie Paprockie received a grant for \$20,000 from the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation. The award will support the work of ECSG, committed to developing strategies for quality early care and education for New York City's children.

Suggested Category: Forum/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: December '99
Description: ACT participated in a one-day forum at the Hunter College School of Social Work, entitled "Bridging the Gap". The event was organized by the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning. The goal was to identify best practices and challenges in developing collaboration between child welfare and the substance abuse treatment communities.

Suggested Category: Planning Conference

Date of Accomplishment: October '99
Description: ACT facilitated a roundtable half-day planning conference, entitled: "Building a Stronger New York City: Opportunities and Challenges for Philanthropy and the Public Sector", organized by the City Connect Committee of the New York Regional Association of Grant-makers (NYRAG). The Conference aimed to examine the role of philanthropy and local government in addressing major issues in New York City over a period of 5 years. The goals of the conference are to identify issues which philanthropy and the public sector are wrestling with and to develop strategies for how these sectors can work together in addressing these issues.

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: October '99
Description: ACT facilitated a panel discussion entitled: "Shaping the future of kinship care: How today's issues impact on tomorrow's families". The event was organized by the New York Committee for Kinship Family Care, and held at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Work.

Suggested Category: Planning Conference
Date of Accomplishment: March 2000
Description: ACT participated and facilitated the Bedford-Stuyvesant Child Welfare Task Force Church/Agency Collaboration sub-committee.

Suggested Category: Planning/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: August '99
Description: ACT, Executive director was a guest speaker at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies Members Advisory Council

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June '99
Description: ACT's Executive Director presented a lecture: "Protecting Children through Community Partnership". It was organized by the Committee on the Family Court and Child Welfare of the New York City Law Association (NYCLA)

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: May '99
Description: ACT, Executive Director facilitated a strategic planning forum to the national Center for Children in Poverty. The event was entitled: Linking an Early Childhood and Family Development agenda with Community Development and Building efforts.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June '99

Description: ACT's Executive Director attended a forum organized by the National Resource Center for Permanency Planning held in Chicago in collaboration with the Jane Adams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois. The forum was held to report on the findings from a joint Chicago and New York based study examining the caseworker, agency and system-wide factors that influence decision making about permanence for young children in foster care. Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director represented New York City by offering remarks as part of a panel of respondents to the findings.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: April '99
Description: ACT contributed to the Universal Pre-Kindergarten conference organized by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Council on Children Pre-K Conference

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: April '99
Description: ACT's Executive Director participated in the affordability forum organized by the General Services Administration

Suggested Category: Proposed Planning
Date of Accomplishment: June '99
Description: ACT participated in the planning process for East Harlem Safe Start Initiative proposal, submitted by the Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator. The effort will build on existing collaboration to provide both direct and referral services targeting prevention and intervention for every young children who are exposed to or at risk of family violence (e.g., domestic violence, child abuse and neglect).

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June '99
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited by the Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields to attend a planning meeting, as co-convenor of the second annual Parent convention.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Forum
Date of Accomplishment: June '99
Description: ACT is invited by Youth Force to attend a forum entitled "Election Day is Over- Now What". The panel included elected officials and representatives of selected advocacy groups.

Suggested Category: Community Presentation/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: May '99
Description: ACT, Eric Brettschneider presented "A New York Power Trip" a lecture on New York City social capital. The lecture was presented to the National Community Building Network Conference held at the Marriott Hotel in Brooklyn, New York

Suggested Category: Report
Date of Accomplishment: May '99
Description: New York City Capstone Team in collaboration with ACT releases "Snapshot into the future: Promising Practices for Family Reunification". ACT identified the collection, preparation and dissemination of information on promising initiatives designed to improve collaboration and service delivery among child welfare and substance abuse providers as one of several actions integral to building a strategic agenda toward finding creative solutions to the child welfare and substance abuse dilemma. A Capstone team of students at the Robert Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at NYU, worked with ACT from September 1998 to May 1999 to assist ACT on this task. ACT asked the team to identify and compile a summary of existing "promising practices" in the area of collaborative efforts between child welfare and substance abuse agencies/organizations.

Suggested Category: Forum
Date of Accomplishment: December '99
Description: ACT co-sponsored a forum entitled Non-profit Boards and Neighborhood-Based Services. As New York City agencies, like the ACS, re-deploy their contracts and build connections among various children and family programs, the implications for the affected non-profit agencies and their boards are significant. This forum focused on how boards could re-invent themselves and reassess their duties, and also how these changes could affect an agencies mission. Speakers at the event included ACS Commissioner, and former ACT Co-chair Nicholas Scopetta, the Executive director of Citizens Committee for Children Gail Nayowitz, the Vice-President for the Fund for the City of New York, Alphonso Wyatt.

Suggested Category: Position Paper (Report)-ACT Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: November '99
Description: Bedstuyvesant Child Welfare Task Force, ACT's Collaborative released a position paper on the Adoption and safe Families Act (ASFA), developed by the Collaborative's Legislative and Confidentiality Sub-Committee. The paper in responding to the ASFA act, employs that reunification, while providing other essential services, i.e. clinical and job training, housing should be a major focus. It argued that ASFA leans too much on adoption as opposed to reuniting children with their biological parents.

Suggested Category: Forum
Date of Accomplishment: Oct. '99
Description: ACT was invited to participate in the Family to Family Conference. This conference is one of several initiatives that ACS has undertaken in order to restructure the culture of the foster care system.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: December '99
Description: ACT's Executive Director was invited by Fordham University's Inter-Religion Institute on Urban Poverty to assist in the strategic formation, development and planning of the institute.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: December '99
Description: ACT was invited to participate in the conference, "Shaping the future of Kinship Care: How today's issues impact on tomorrow's families" The event served as an informational seminar. It sought to imparting facts and impressions on the most recent and highly discussed child welfare issues, community-based services, the family to family treatment modality, and the 1997 Adoption Safe Family Act (ASFA).

Suggested Category: Program Development/New Initiative
Date of Accomplishment: December '99
Description: ACS vision of developing neighborhood service delivery was announced by Mayor Giuliani and ACS Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. The announcement was a big plus for ACT. ACT has long suggested this initiative and clearly with new infusion of money, over \$700 million, the mayor announced that ACS will now deliver services to foster children and their biological/foster parents in the neighborhoods they live. Commissioner Scoppetta said "The contracted agencies will not only be able to provide services to children and families close to their homes, but also will be able to form strong alliances with all medical and social service organizations in those neighborhoods".

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: June 29/30 2000
Description: ACT participated in an ACS sponsored 2-day conference, "Creating Partnership for the 21st century: Moving Families toward Permanency". The event was co-sponsored by Children First of the Fordham University School of Social Services, Administration for Children Services (ACS), James Satellite Academy for Child welfare Training, Fordham University School of Law and the Department of Health and Human services. Hon. Scoppetta, ACT's former Co-Chair gave the keynote address. Eric Brett Schneider along with Pedro Cordero, Director, Community Planning and Development ACS presented a workshop: "Servicing aging out adolescents in a neighborhood-based system".

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Panel Discussion
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: A panel discussion on children living with violence hosted by Ray Suarez, senior correspondent with PBS Newshour, led a panel discussion on the impact that living in a violent environment can have on a child. Other panelists include Shay Bilchick, Executive Director, Child welfare League of America, Jeffrey Eddleson,

Director of the Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse, and ACT's Executive Director Eric Brett Schneider.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: The conference was organized by the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (NCASA). ACT attended and provided valuable insights relating to child welfare legal delinquencies.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: ACT was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on policies affecting New York City's low-income families. The event was sponsored by the National Center for Children in Poverty- Columbia University's Mailman school of Public health.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Final Report
Date of Accomplishment: January 2000
Description: Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) submitted its WHI (Washington Heights) Solutions 2000 project. The project is an initiative of the Washington heights Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), and ACT. The WHI/Solution 2000 will provide assistance in resolving and/or trouble-shooting case-specific problems related to child welfare-to-work and related resource needs, provide on-line access to needed resource information, help the WHI Collaborative document neighborhood-wide service gaps and recurring problems, and more effectively advocate for their resolution.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Panel discussion
Date of Accomplishment: September 01
Description: ACT was invited to attend an event organized by the Institute for Education and Social Policy. After the September 11 terrorist attack, education policy advocates were concerned that the American public engage in thoughtful and informed public dialogue about the state of education in New York and how federal funding for education could diminish because of militarized national policies. The main speaker for the event was Professor Katarina Tomasevslei, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Education, whose mandate is "to report on the status throughout the world, of the progressive realization on the right of education".

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Report
Date of Accomplishment: December '01
Description: ACT contributed to a report prepared by Public Advocate Mark Green. It was a brief policy statement on the state of child welfare in New York City.

Suggested Category: Grant Award
Date of Accomplishment: December 2000
Description: ACT received \$500 from Time Warner through its Volunteer Project Grant Award. The money was given through Pamela Booth's volunteerism. The agency of her choice was ACT. Pamela Booth worked as office manager and administrative secretary.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Planning meeting
Date of Accomplishment: December 2000
Description: ACT was invited to speak and contribute to a planning session of the Central Brooklyn Youth Task Force. The thrust of the meeting centered on planning a youth retreat, and how ACT could support and provide leverage for the task force.

Suggested Category: Civic Responsibility (Internship Program)
Date of Accomplishment: September 2000
Description: With ACT's assistance and support VISA, a community service program was established. The program is coordinated by Hillel/JCF at New York University and NYU Brønftan Center. It places students in a variety of exciting internships in Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Mott Haven, all communities where ACT has a presence.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: November 2000
Description: ACT was invited to participate in the 4th annual Domestic Violence Conference. The conference entitled, "Domestic Violence the Next Generation" was organized by New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and Safe Horizon. Eric Brettschneider moderated a panel discussion entitled, "Domestic Violence through the Eyes of a Child". Over 400 social workers attended the conference held at the New York Academy of Medicine.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Conference
Date of Accomplishment: December 2000
Description: ACT supported and moderated the 2nd Annual Regional Educational Workshop. The event was the outcome of the partnership between Black Women Agenda and Miracle Makers. The theme was "Rebuilding communities, neighborhoods and families for the support and advocacy of children and families in foster care and adoption services". The purpose of the workshop was to establish a coalition of community organization who will serve as advocates and supporters of children and families in foster care and adoption.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Award
Date of accomplishment: Monica Bunch, ACT's Bedford Stuyvesant Local Planner was selected to receive the 21st Century Leadership award given by the Protestant Board of Guardian. The Protestant Board of Guardians is a not-for-profit social service agency

providing an array of services to individuals who are confronted with problems and barriers threatening their survival as a family. The 21st Century Leadership Award is for demonstrating outstanding leadership in a profession. It is to convey high achievers under 40 years old, an appreciation of accomplishments and encouragement for involvement.

Suggested Category: Program development/Local planning
Date of Accomplishment: August 2000
Description: Central Brooklyn Youth Advocacy Task Force produced a focus group document co-written by ACT Bedford-Stuyvesant Task Force. The document identified barriers to youth development.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Local planning
Date of Accomplishment: July 2000
Description: The New York Times publishes an article about a new credit union bank opening a branch in Washington Heights. ACT assisted the credit union as it organized and developed the organization.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Panel Discussion
Date of Accomplishment: July 2000
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider moderated "The Voices of Youth" panel discussion at the Administration for Children and Families Regional Conference.

Suggested Category: Survey/City-wide planning
Date of Accomplishment: August 2000
Description: Over 1,000 volunteers gathered at 12 areas in Manhattan to begin the City's first comprehensive effort to survey the homeless. The project with support and planning from ACT was organized by the New York City Department of Homeless Services.

Suggested Category: Survey/Local Planning
Date of Accomplishment: June '03
Description: The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene informed the Jamaica ACT Collaborative about assisting with producing the Jamaica Community Needs Assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to identify and address the health needs of the South Jamaica community.

Suggested Category: Program Development/Local planning
Date of Accomplishment: A planning meeting was held at the New York Housing Authority, to begin to organize a pilot coordinated case conference. The pilot would bring together case-workers from all involved agencies of a client once a month to discuss cases with multiple agency involvement. At the meeting it was decided to choose one neighborhood to pilot the program. After discussing the possibilities of Red Hook and Sunset Park it was decided that the group would continue working in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The group has already matched cases from Community Board 3 in Brooklyn.

Suggested Category: Conference/Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: April '03
Description: Brownsville East New York Child Welfare Network hosted its 2nd Annual Breakfast forum entitled: **Child Abuse, Prevention through Awareness**. ACT's Eric Bettschneider moderated the panel discussion. The invocation was given by Reverend C. Vernon Mason, Executive Director of New York Theological Seminary, Project Uth Turn. The keynote speaker was Dominic Carter, political news reporter, NY1.

Suggested Category: Report
Date of Accomplishment: May '02
Description: New York Community Trust releases a report of the Neighborhood Strategies Project (NSP). It was a compilation of four learning and strategic sessions focused on the workforce development arena in New York City. The sessions also focused on policies and best practices, working with employers and the role of the public sector. The New York Community Trust committed and spent \$6,284,000 in grants to this effort. It also announced that these funds were jointly contributed by the Lu Esther T. Mertz Trust (\$3,374,000). The New York Community Trust (\$1,450,000) with 10 other foundations contributing various funds.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Project Development
Date of Accomplishment: August '02
Description: The Children of Alcoholics Foundation in collaboration with the New York City Administration of Children Services (ACS) and Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) through the support of ACT reported on the status of their collaborative effort. It provided training through this collaboration to the Center for Court Innovation Program for Family Treatment throughout New York State.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Community discussion.
Date of Accomplishment: August '02
Description: The National Community Building Network (NCBN) coordinated a powerful series on civic engagement and democracy. One of its committee, the Protecting Voting Rights and Power Team, dedicated to expanding democracy, created the series **"Lessons in Democracy"** as a means to spur conversation and action among NCBN's diverse members. The **"Lesson in Democracy"** project includes a set of interviews with individuals from diverse backgrounds-including voting right activists, youth, individuals who choose not to vote, and individuals who cannot vote. ACT's Eric Bettschneider was interviewed on issues of democracy by NCBN's Danya Steele.

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: August '02
Description: ACT in collaboration with Parents in Need of Services (PINS) had an exhibition at the Learning Leaders Conference: "Together in Learning". There were approximately 350 learning leaders parent volunteers in attendance from

across the city. ACT's staffer Allison Harte explained she had the opportunity to discuss PINS with attending parents. Over 100 parents were signed on to the PINS mailing list.

Suggested Category: Program Conference
Date of Accomplishment: August 2003
Description: President Bush arrived in Pittsburgh, PA this day. Jumpstart Corps members joined the Presidential motorcade. The President, in his remarks, acknowledged Jumpstart's work with improving children's education. ACT's Executive Director Eric Bettschneider and ACT's Associate Executive Director Anthea McLaughlin are board members of Jumpstart. ACT has supported Jumpstart's work through strategic planning, retreats and various program development schemes and initiatives.

Suggested Category: Program Conference
Date of Accomplishment: July '03
Description: ACT was invited to attend and contribute to a panel discussion organized in conjunction with the United Nations. The conference was entitled: **"From Reaction to Prevention: Civil society forging partnerships to prevent violent conflict and promote peace"**. The event was designed to bring together people working on various aspects of violence prevention in the New York region and around the world.

Suggested Category: Oversight Committee meeting
Date of Accomplishment: June 2002
Description: At the ACT oversight committee meeting, ACT local planners presented to the committee members and participating audience the state of employment in four communities (Washington Heights, Bushwick, Jamaica and Bedford-Stuyvesant). They presented the specific problems related to employment, the resources currently available to augment unemployment and specific recommendations to improve employment outcomes. One common similarity in these neighborhoods was the impact of the September 11 attack. All neighborhoods reported job dearth, lack of coordinated employment services, and minimal wage-sufficient employment opportunities. All five planners suggested solutions including but not limited to comprehensive job training, counseling and placement.

Suggested Category: Youth Engagement
Date of Accomplishment: September 2002
Description: ACT in conjunction with the Riverside Church and the Ghetto Film School presented **"The Sacred Stories Project"**, a video public screening featuring young artists from the South Bronx, Harlem and Washington Heights. All screen plays were adopted from religious parables and stories Ghetto Film school students heard on visits to houses of worship throughout New York City.

Suggested Category: Program Development/City-wide planning meeting
Date of Accomplishment: September '02
Description: New York City Department of Education Office of Early-childhood Education organized their regular city-wide Early-childhood education meeting. The meeting was attended by school district early-childhood education directors, coordinators and pre-kindergarten teacher specialists. The presentation and discussion focused on the following topics: Early-childhood Administrative updates; best practices in early literacy; literacy resource materials, UPK centers, updated networking, building school district capacity. ACT is a member of the committee.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Agency promotion and support
Date of Accomplishment: November '02
Description: Through the help of ACT, the coalition of Hispanic and Family Services presented "Celebrity Auction and Fundraising". Air Jamaica provided 2 roundtrip economy class tickets from New York to any of the following Air Jamaica destinations: Jamaica, Barbados, St. Lucia, Grenada and Antigua.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Planning Development
Date of Accomplishment: April 2002
Description: ACT was invited to help organize and plan the development a Collaborative by the Agency for Lower East side Networking. The network's breakfast was facilitated by ACT's Eric Brettschneider. Using an informal model, all participating agencies were introduced and asked to provide what resources and services their agencies have and also asked to address the group with a tangible need required by the agency. In the aftermath agencies' representatives circulated the room seeking out the agencies that they had determined could provide them with the help their agency needs.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January '02
Description: The ACS Commissioner's bulletin reported in its January 4th edition that the new Neighborhood Based Services unit, ACS field offices, direct care staff, and contract child welfare providers are working closely with 25 community-based networks across the city, for example in Far Rockaway, the Domestic Violence Consortium, joined the local network to help preventive and foster care providers focus on domestic violence issues. Together they are seeking ways to reduce the occurrence and impact of domestic violence in the Rockaway community.

Suggested Category: ACT/ACS Network/local planning
Date of Accomplishment: June '02
Description: The Southeast Queens Neighborhood Network (SEQNN) presented a conference called "Strengthening the Connection: Partnering with faith-based leadership in serving our community". The purpose of the event is to encourage a sharing of perspective, and experiences related to faith-based /agency collaboration. ACT's Eric Brettschneider facilitated the panel discussion.

Suggested Category: Needs Assessment
Date of Accomplishment: July '02
Description: The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in collaboration with Jamaica ACT in developing Jamaica community needs assessment (health) provided a detailed schedule and delegated responsibilities of Jamaica ACT. ACT's roles and responsibilities were defined – attending surveyor's debriefing sessions weekly, attending and actively participating in steering committee meeting weekly, marketing the survey, setting up radio broadcasts and press release, attending community meeting, marketing the project to community organizations, conducting outreach to faith-based organizations. Also ACT Jamaica local planner will conduct survey follow-up by helping to organize focus groups, organize community forums, locating sites to post results, working with ACT Jamaica committees to develop follow-up plans utilizing the data gathered.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/City-wide planning
Date of Accomplishment: June '02
Description: ACS and the New York State Office of Alcohol Services organized the Third Annual Cross Systems Training Conference. ACT was invited to participate. The event was designed to foster collaborative efforts across the fields of child welfare and substance abuse.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Community Forum
Date of Accomplishment: June '02
Description: The Child Welfare Organizing Project collaborated with ACT to produce the "New Parents Rights Workbook". The workbook and training curriculum provide basic training both for parents learning how to deal with the family court and foster care systems and for experienced parent advocates and organizers who need a systematic way of sharing information with other.

Suggested Category: Program Development/City-wide planning
Date of Accomplishment: September '02
Description: ACT and a group of representatives from the child welfare community developed New York Salutes Parent (NYSP), a public awareness campaign designed to help parents meet the challenges of raising children and provide the basic ingredients necessary for their children's healthy development. ACT's Eric Brettschneider also contributed suggestions and policy frameworks to the advanced parent influence on quality parenting.

Suggested Category: Program Support
Date of Accomplishment: September '02
Description: ACT's Family Involvement Impact Network (formerly known as the Parents Involvement Network PINS) presented its coffee time series-coffee time for parents and care givers. Both groups were invited to meet with counselors from the Youth Line who will help them find services in their neighborhoods to support, encourage and improve their children's education.

Suggested Category: Program Support/Development
Date of Accomplishment: Spring '02
Description: The Juvenile Rights Division of the Legal Aids Society launched a new program called the Education Advocacy Project. The program identifies JRD's clients who are the subjects of child welfare protective proceedings (e.g. abuse and neglect) and have developmental and educational needs and obtains services for them through the Board of Education and the Early Intervention Program. ACT advised the Legal Aids Society and ACT's Executive Director sit on the advisory board on matters relating to foster care and their developmental and educational needs.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: September '02
Description: The National Community Building Network (NCBN), the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Institutions and Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT) presented a reception for NCBN members and New York Metropolitan Area Community Builders. There was a discussion on "Structural Racism and Community Building".

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Local Planning
Date of Accomplishment: July '03
Description: The Division of Child Protection's presented its 2003 quarterly managerial retreat. The retreat's theme is "Neighborhood Based-Services". ACT's existing neighborhood networks participated at the event held at the Zion Baptist Church in Brooklyn New York.

Suggested Category: Program Support/Development
Date of Accomplishment: February 2002
Description: ACT's Parent Involvement Impact Networks (PINNS), the United Way of New York City in partnership with ACS organized the Affirmation of Life Program, a community ceremony for parents' caregivers and children. The event was intended to celebrate remembrance, forgiving and love. It featured music, poetry, dance and storytelling. The location was at the Point at Hunt's Point in the Bronx. Kewulay Kamara, ACT's former local planner presented music and storytelling. Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director facilitated.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Program support
Date of Accomplishment: February '02
Description: The Department of Homeless Services organized the "Principles Planning Retreat". ACT was invited to participate. Draft principles were developed from the discussion and were further informed by subsequent DHS management meetings. These principles are meant to help direct policy, formulate practice guidelines and protocols and provide a framework for staff training. Also they are meant to serve as a cornerstone for DHS and contract agency self assessment of progress toward established goals.

Suggested Category: Program Support
Date of Accomplishment: April '02
Description: The Bronx Youth Court an offshoot of an effort began by youth organizing inside the city's juvenile jail is an experiment in which Bronx teenagers arrested on misdemeanor charges and minor felonies are judged by a jury of their peers. It is operated with the sanction of the city's Probation department. Its mission is to steer the accused away from crime and provide some restitution. Among the judges, jurors and lawyers are those whose own sentences included serving in the youth court. The youth court was established by Youth Force. Youth Force gets technical support from ACT and is a member of ACT's Mott Haven Collaborative.

Suggested Category: Internship (Program support)
Date of Accomplishment: February 2000
Description: ACT participated in the Colgate University's "A Day in the Life" program. The program provides current Colgate University students with job shadow experience. Students visited a wide variety of workplaces across the country. ACT's Executive Director, Eric Brettschneider is an alumni of Colgate University.

Suggested Category: Program Support
Date of Accomplishment: January 2000
Description: The Bedford Stuyvesant Child Welfare Task Force published the first issue of its newsletter. The newsletter aimed to provide up-to-date information on CWTF activities reveal, current policy changes and their impact on social and economic services, primarily in the areas of children and families. Its editorial team included ACT's CWTF's local planner, Monya Bunch, former Child Development Support Corporation staff and current ACT's staff, Kolawole Osakue.

Suggested Category: Program Development
Date of Accomplishment: January 2000
Description: Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) - the United Way of New York City, for the Washington Heights/Inwood (WHI) Solutions 2000. The initiative is a collaborative effort of the Washington Heights Inwood Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) and ACT. The project benefits NMIC and its local collaborative of community-based partners by enhancing individual and collective capacity to resolve case specific problems in areas including public assistance and welfare reform, child welfare and related services. Although the emphasis of the project and the report is on child welfare and welfare reform problems and their interface, all related issues are also addressed.

The project has provided an effective sustainable and centralized mechanism for resolving case specific problems in which barriers to service delivery are encountered with city bureaucracies or in accessing needed services particularly in the areas of welfare-to-work and child welfare.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains/Media
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider participated as a panelist on a discussion on children living with violence hosted by public television's Ray Suarez. The discussion focused on the impact that living in a violent environment can have on a child, and how CASA/GAL volunteers can help deal with this complex problem. Other panel members included Shay Bilechick, Executive Director, Child welfare League of America, Professor Jeffrey Edebow, Director of the Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse.

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: June 29 and 30 2000
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited to speak as a panelist at the annual Child Welfare Training Conference, co-sponsored by the Fordham University Graduate school of Social services and ACS. The conference entitled, "Creating Partnerships for the 21st Century: Moving families toward permanency" was intended to address issues related to families and children who are known to the child welfare system. Conference participants included case workers and supervisors from the public and non-profit child welfare agencies, as well as representatives of domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health agencies. ACT's Eric Brettschneider presented a workshop entitled "Servicing Aging out Adolescents in a Neighborhood-Based System".

Suggested Category: ACT structure/Program Planning
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: ACT Central organized a breakfast meeting at Edgar M. Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life. The meeting focused on the status of Act's collaboratives and ACT's current role city-wide. It discussed the Collaboratives functions, structures and leadership, the role of co-chairs in each of its five neighborhoods and the description of ACT's local planners' responsibilities.

Suggested Category: Planning
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: The Mott Haven ACT Collaborative presented a forum entitled "ACS reform plan: a year after implementation in the Bronx."

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was a panelist at the 19th annual conference of the National Court Appointed special Advocate Associate (CASA). The conference focused on ways it can continuously improve its work with children. It introduced its National CASA curriculum. It explored new ideas on topics ranging from diversity, strategic planning, cultural sensitivity, fundraising and public relations.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains (Panel discussion)
Date of Accomplishment: June 2000

Description: The National Center for Children in Poverty sponsored a roundtable discussion on policies affecting New York City's low-income families. As a result of changes in federal and state law as well as initiatives undertaken by the Giuliani administration, the city's welfare system has moved away from its traditional focus on the provision of cash assistance and has begun to place much greater emphasis on helping families support themselves through work. The panel discussion intended to help develop a broader understanding of the impact of these changes and on issues affecting the City's low-income families and to help build consensus for changes in federal, state and city policy that will enhance their well-being. The National Center for Children in Poverty is headed by Barbara Blum ACT's former co-chair and current emeritus.

Suggested Category: ACS Executive Board (planning meeting)
Date of Accomplishment: April 2000
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited to become a member of the Executive Committee of New Yorkers for Children. Nicholas Stoppetta in extending the invitation acknowledged and expressed the beneficial role of an effective Executive Committee.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: April 2000
Description: The Church/agency Collaborative subcommittee of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Child Welfare Task Force invited ACT's Executive Director, Eric Brettschneider to participate and support its clergy/community brunch held at Brooklyn based Cornerstone Baptist Church.

Suggested Category: Program Planning
Date of Accomplishment: March 2000
Description: A community dialogue between funders and service providers was organized by the Mott Haven ACT Collaborative. The event was moderated by Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director. The following funders and foundations were represented:
 Daphne Foundation
 Creative Lifestyles
 Mayor's Office of Grants Administration
 Citizens Advice Bureau
 United States Department of Labor
 New York Community Trust

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: September 2003
Description: Child Care Inc organized a meeting that included in attendance United Neighborhood Houses, Federation of Protestant workers Agencies

(FPWA), the United Way of New York and ACT. The meeting sought to bring converging ideas relating to child care and child welfare.

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: Nov 2003
Description: The Substance Abuse sub-committee of the Brownsville/East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network organized the first Annual Substance Abuse Training Conference. ACT's Eric Brettschneider moderated the legislative luncheon held later that afternoon, the conference entitled "**Collaborative Will and Imagination**. Addressing substance abuse issues together for a stronger community" was meant to respond to the emotional well-being of the most vulnerable children and families. Invited guests included local politicians, community-based organizations, the faith-based community, entertainment and sport stars.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: September 2003
Description: The New York City First Day Coalition, working to engage families in their children's education and to promote the Board of Education's Chancellor's vision of parent friendly school supported the event. First Day is a national grassroots movement that brings together schools, families and communities in celebration of education. ACT's FINN program is a member of the New York City First Day Coalition.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains (Program support)
Date of Accomplishment: September 2002
Description: The Ghetto Film School with support from ACT and the Riverside Church staged its 2002 public screening. The Ghetto Film School is a not-for-profit visual arts organization targeted toward young people.

Suggested Category: Conference
Date of Accomplishment: July 2005
Description: ACT was invited by America Friends Service Committee to a workshop organized in connection with the United Nations Conference "**From Reaction to Prevention: Civil society forging partnerships to prevent violent conflict and promote peace**". The event sought to bring together people working on various aspects of violence prevention in the New York region and around the world.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January 2001
Description: The New York Public Advocate's office released a report entitled: Justice Denied: the crisis in legal representation of parents in child welfare proceedings. Describing the findings of the report Laurel Eisner, the organization's General Counsel, said the report documents the severe crisis in New York City Family Courts and it's importance on children and families including unnecessary and/or excessively lengthy foster care stays. The report also describes the likely financial cost to

the city, state and federal governments of excessive foster care. Agenda for Children Tomorrow helped to connect the Public Advocates office with Joseph Semdie of the United States Children Bureau, who was apprised of the report in a letter.

Suggested Category: Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: March 2000
Description: The ACT Bedford-Stuyvesant Child Welfare Task Force presented a forum entitled: Fiscal Responsibilities of Non-Profit Providers facilitated by Samira Elfiky. The 3-hr. workshop was designed to help enhance fiscal shops and addressed issues such as: funding methodologies, internal controls/audits, maximization of rates and fund, care day projections budget planning and administrative overhead.

Suggested Category: Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2000
Description: The ACT Bedford-Stuyvesant Child Welfare Task Force organized a workshop entitled: Developing a Quality Assurance Shop. The workshop was designed to help agencies develop outcome instruments to measure compliance and program effectiveness and strength organizational practices.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: November 2003
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider accepted an invitation from the City of New York's Office of the Mayor to participate in the city-wide planning initiative to end chronic homelessness. Other participating members of this body include but not limited to William Rudin, Chairman, Association for a Better New York and Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Senior Vice-President United Way of New York.

Suggested Category: Program support
Date of Accomplishment: June 2003
Description: HarlemLive the award winning critically acclaimed web magazine produced by teens from New York City, sent congratulatory messages to ACT for its funding support and network support in generating additional grant money and funders' awareness. HarlemLive is a journalism technology and leadership program that teaches students how to run an on-line newspaper. Its mission is to empower a diverse group of youth towards leadership.

Suggested Category: Local Support
Date of Accomplishment: April 2003
Description: Ms Sylvia Betty, Executive Director of National Council of Negro Women of Greater New York forwarded To ACT a letter she wrote to Pfizer Inc. In the letter addressed to Mr. Anthony Barricelli, Manager, Corporate Information Technology Division of Pfizer, Ms Betty thanked the company for donating and installing through the United Way of New York and ACT, a state of the art computer system (computers) and a terrific local area network. The letter acknowledged that the newly installed computer lab and desk top system for all NCNW employees and will

allow for substantial versatility in the agency's administrative and program execution capacities. ACT Jamaica local planner, Kolawole Osakue was assigned the task to identify the agency in need of technology improvement and provide a technology needs analysis for the United Way approval.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: The New York City Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, ACS, ACT, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Medgar Evers College, the Miracle Makers sponsored the a conference entitled "**Celebrating Social Work and Demonstrating Contributions**". The conference was a call to all social workers in Central Brooklyn to join together to demonstrate the contributions they make to the service systems, agencies and communities where they work. Invited speakers were Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes, and then state Assembly Member Roger Green, Chair of the Assembly Committee for Children and Families. The moderators were Dr. Robert Schacter, Executive director, National Association of Social Workers/NYC Chapter and Latrell Penny, Local Planner ACT Bedford Stuyvesant. Dr. Edison Jackson, President Medgar Evers College gave the opening remarks while Alphonso Wyatt provided a powerful motivational speech of words and encouragement.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June 2003
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider moderated the 3rd Parent Advocate/Specialist Consortium. The goal of the consortium is among others to provide support and a networking opportunity for parent advocates specialists across agencies as well as for the coordinators of these programs. The focus of this conference is legal and family court issues. Panelists include representatives from ACS, 18-h, Legal Aid Society, South Brooklyn Legal services and the Center for Family Representation.

Suggested Category: City-wide advocacy
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: The Council on Children and the Committees on Children and the Law, Family Court and Family Law and Juvenile Justice of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York (ABCNY), chaired by ACT's Eric Brettschneider, wrote a letter to Mayor Bloomberg expressing its strong support for New York City's most vulnerable children by advocating for the restoration of child welfare funding cut from the Executive Budget for FY 2004. Gail Nayowitz, Executive Director of the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York expressed gratitude to Eric Brettschneider in a letter she thanked Eric and the entire Council and Bar Association for doing the letter. She concludes "It is an important show of support for children, youth and families and a wonderful demonstration of leadership during this time of fiscal crisis."

Suggested Category: Program Support
Date of Accomplishment: April 2003
Description: The New York City Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education presented a copy of Pre-kindergarten Performance Standards

to ACT. In it the founder of the Head Start Program, Dr. Edward Zigler, Professor of Psychology, Emeritus of Yale University stated that the Pre-Kindergarten Performance Standard is "a truly impressive statement of the goals of preschool education. A well balanced whole child approach that can serve as a healthy antidote to the current overemphasis on an overly cognitive approach to the education of the young child" In a letter to Eric Brettschneider, Eleanor Okoli, Director of the Office of Early Childhood Education the document, a standard-based document, is structured to address the development of children in all learning domains and to provide teachers with information that will guide their practice.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited to be a member of a select audience that will observe the live taping of a Frontline/Fred Friendly Seminar on a national dialogue on child welfare. The following panelists participated in the taping: George Miller, United States Representative from California, founder and former chairman of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families; Kathleen Blatz, Chief Justice, Minnesota Supreme Court; Eloise Anderson, former Director of Social Services for California; Marcia Robinson Lowry, Executive Director, Children's Rights Inc.; Cynthia McFadden, Senior Legal Correspondent, ABC News; Sandra Jimenez, Director of Advocacy for Policy and Planning, NYC Department of Homeless Services. The program was broadcast from the Columbia University Graduate school of Journalism.

Suggested Category: Local Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: February 2003
Description: The Mott Haven ACT Collaborative invited Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Linda Gibbs to speak at a forum. The Collaborative wanted her, as keynote speaker, to talk about the status of homelessness in New York, and offer an overview of the current situation including any current DHS activities and plans that have been made to address housing/homelessness that could be elaborated on. Also they asked that the Commissioner speak on any specific localized efforts for Mott Haven. Also given Commissioner's Gibbs experience with child welfare and her knowledge of cross systems issues, any thoughts or insights on these would be helpful to incorporate to the address. Eric Brettschneider was also asked to facilitate a fishbowl discussion, which will focus on the planning process for housing development. The event was hosted by FRIENDS. The following panelists were present: Gabriel Broadbar, Director of Housing, Policy and Development, ACS; Miriam Cotto, Executive Director, F.R.I.E.N.D.S., Inc.; Dr. Louis Josephson, Assistant Commissioner, Child Development, Child & Adolescent Services, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Sheila Krentz and Lucy Zaslow, Adult Basic Education, Phillip Morrow, President, SOBRO; Yolanda Garcia, Executive Director, We Stay/nos Quedamos; Crosby Innan, Resident Director, Jackson Avenue Family Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureau; George Rodriguez, Chair, Community Planning Board #1, Candace Tringero,

Director of Foster Home Services, Jewish Child Care Association and Ted Weinstein,
Director of Bronx Planning, Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

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Suggested Category: Local Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: March 2003
Description: The Youth Violence Prevention Coalition invites ACT to participate in an anti-violence conference entitled "Silence the Violence" held at the New York City College of Technology in downtown Brooklyn. The conference brought together a diverse audience of Brooklyn youth and their families, as well as educators, social workers, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, and law enforcement personnel in discussion around issues impeding the productive capacity of the community's youth and the identification of strategies to address them. The primary objective of the conference is to inform and consult with youth and other community stakeholders, as well as to facilitate the development of positive alternatives to violence that will engage youth as active members of the community.

Suggested Category: City Wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: The New York State Citizen Review Panel wrote a letter to the New York State Commissioner of Children and Family Services Honorable John A. Johnson, requesting a meeting to consider the efficacy of the New York State Citizen Review Panel and examine ways in which the panel can be of genuine assistance to children and families. The panel is charged with examining the policies and procedures of the state and social services districts to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. Eric Brettschneider and David Lansner are both co-chairs of the New York State Citizen Review Panel (NYC)

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: April 2003
Description: Administration for Children Services (ACS) invited Eric Brettschneider to the moderator at its first Citywide Neighborhood Network Conference. The theme of the conference was "Community Partnership to Strengthen Families". Mr. Brettschneider is a member of the Neighborhood Based Sub-committee of the Commissioner's Advisory Board. The conference was held at the ACS Children's Center in Manhattan.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: The ACS office of Youth Development, sent a thank you letter to Eric Brettschneider for sponsoring the second annual College Mixer. The letter confirmed that the students attending were enlightened to be among their fellow peers and made connections "that can last a lifetime". In attendance was also the ACS Commissioner.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: Eric Brettschneider was asked to host a 5-person delegation from Belarus, all of whom are non-profit directors. Only one of the five works in youth related issues, the other four work for the arts, the environment, and women's issues. They were in the United States for three weeks. The visitors Eric hosted where in a program designed to focus on public-private partnerships (partnerships with city, state, federal levels) for the delivery of social services-using youth-focused non-profits as a case study. The United States Department of State organized the trip.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: June 2003
Description: The Central Brooklyn Coalition on Child Abuse and Neglect presented its Annual conference on Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention held at the Long Island University. ACT's Latrelle Penny and Roots Revisited's Michael Hooper welcomed the participants. The following workshops were presented:
How to Talk to Children about War and Terrorism-Edwidge Jean (CAMBA)
Relaxation Techniques-Wetsy Ramos-(PRFI)
Compassion Fatigue-Todd Pietruszka-(CAMBA)
Stress Management-Dr. Kensasha Shabaka

Suggested Category: City-Wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: September 2003
Description: Prevent Child Abuse New York City held a meeting at New York county Lawyers' Association entitled "Doing More with Less: Managing ourselves and our agencies in difficult times". ACT's Eric Brettschneider and Jim Purcell, Executive Director, Council of Family and Child Care Agencies were the guest speakers.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: October 2003
Description: ACT received a letter from Leslie Koch announcing her recent appointment by Department of Education Chancellor Klein. She is the Chief Executive officer of the Fund for Public Schools. The Fund for Public Schools is an independent, non-profit organization managed by the Department of Education's Office of Strategic Partnership. Its mission is to support public education fundraising and fostering partnership with the private sector and enhancing the role of the arts in the public school system. Ms Koch in her letter looked forward to working with ACT.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: Over 400 New York City parents, community leaders, and concerned New Yorkers joined Citizens Committee for Children (CCC) on the steps of City Hall to thank the City Council, the Mayor and the New York state Legislature for devising a plan to raise revenue in order to prevent budget cuts. Sponsors of the event

were Agenda for Children Tomorrow, Child Care, Inc. Children Defense Fund-NY, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Commission on the Public's Health System, Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies, Day Care Council of New York, Emergency Campaign for Child Care and Early Learning, Federation of Protestant Welfare agencies, Human services Council, Neighborhood Family Services Coalition, New York City Youth Alliance, The After School Corporation, UJA-Federation of New York, United Neighborhood Houses of New York, and the YMCA of Greater New York.

Suggested Category: Local Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: ACT got a memorandum from Suri Dutich, Director of Intergovernmental and Public Affairs/Youth Policy Development. The purpose of the memo is to set out the initial details for a youth-focused staffing initiative in the Department of Employment (DOE) One-stop Centers. The memo describes DOE's understanding of the basic structure of the service delivery and suggestions for next step.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: September 2003
Description: The New York City First Day Coalition working to engage families in their children's education and to promote the New York City Department of Education's Chancellor's vision of parent-friendly schools supported First Day of school celebrations on September 8th at more than 300 public schools throughout New York City. First Day is a national grassroots movement that brings together schools, families, communities in celebration of education. The Vermont-based First Day Foundation now estimates 10,000 participating schools across country, each offering First Day of School events designed to welcome families back to school and encourage their continuing involvement throughout the year.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: June 2005
Description: Nine New York City agencies that administer Healthy Families New York (HFNY) home visiting programs in high-risk neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs submitted funding proposals to access city funding to expand Healthy Families primary prevention services to any eligible family in the neighborhoods that they currently serve. One of the cornerstones of HFNY is working closely with community partners. The proposal showed that these agencies have built strong relationships with hospitals, health clinics, early childhood programs and social/health service agencies in the communities they are based. ACT provided recommendation letters to all participating agencies.

Suggested Category: Local Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: The Bushwick ACT Collaborative organized a meeting to discuss the first part of a three part series on preventing homelessness which will focus on tenants' rights. The tenants' rights panel included Karen Chery (Congressman Ed

Towns' Office), Allison Cordero (St. Nicholas Neighborhood Corporation), Ann Duggan (Coalition for the Homeless), Richard Rathbun (Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizen Council, Inc.), and Julius Wilson (Housing Preservation and Development)

Suggested Category: Local Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: The Mott Haven ACT Collaborative hosted a Law Day event. The focus was to introduce service providers and consumers to various agencies providing legal services to Mott Haven residents. The event was supported by the Bronx District Attorney's Office, Bronx Defenders and the Legal Aid Society.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: ACT was invited to join a project organized by ACS with support from Children's Rights, Inc. Lawyers for Children and the Juvenile Rights Division of the Legal Aid Society. The project's primary aim will look at issues that affect youth over 12 in foster care. It will focus on those youth placed in congregate care settings. The rationale for this type of project is to better understand 1) the needs of youth coming into care, 2) the placement options available to youth, and 4) the experiences of youth as they move towards permanency. The project is designed to provide a wealth of information that ACS and its vendor agencies can consider in an effort to improve services to the youth population.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: January 2003
Description: The Deputy Commissioner for the State Education Department/University of the State of New York, Honorable James A. Kadamus, responsible for the Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education invited ACT to join the Task Force on Closing the Performance Gap. The New York State Board of Regents has established two major goals for education in the State: to raise the academic achievement of all students; and to close the gaps in student performance where they exist. In December 1998, an advisory group was empaneled to help the Board of Regents develop strategies to close the gaps in student performance.

Suggested Category: Program Development
Date of Accomplishment: February 2003
Description: The ACS Child Care and Head Start division collaborated with ACT Summer in the City (ACT-SIC) program to refine eligibility and access, and improve the quality of services.

Suggested Category: Local Collaborative Report
Date of Accomplishment: August 2003
Description: The Harlem Neighborhood Based Service Providers in collaboration with Neighborhood Based Services of ACS prepared and submitted a report on its Central Harlem Walking Tour. The concept of the Walk emerged as a result of a

meeting. This meeting provided insight about Central Harlem foster care placements. More children are placed in foster care from Central Harlem than any other community district in New York City. With combined data from ACS and other participating agencies, it was decided to walk through areas of the six census tracts to obtain a more comprehensive picture. The tour reinforced knowledge about the Harlem community. It assisted both ACS and the Harlem Neighborhood Based Service Providers to reintroduce themselves to the consumers.

Suggested Category: Local Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: January 2004
Description: The Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow held a forum entitled "Taking a look at Bushwick and Williamsburg's health profile." A presentation was made by Adam Karpatt, MD, MPH Assistant Commissioner and Director of the Brooklyn District Public Health Office.

Suggested Category: Report
Date of Accomplishment: December 2003
Description: The United Way of New York City and Child Care released a report entitled: "*Bringing it all Together*". The report profiles New York City early childhood programs that—through collaboration, partnership, and/or blended funding strategies—have expanded and enhanced their programs. The report was produced as part of the New York City Early Learning Project, an initiative of the United Way in partnership with Child Care, Inc., Agenda for Children Tomorrow and Citizens' Committee for Children, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The report also provides recommendations and an analysis of lessons learned from the experiences of these innovative programs to help guide other early childhood agencies as they seek to adopt similar approaches, as well as to inform and influence our public sector partners as they work to create a more seamless early childhood system for New York City's children and families.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: December 2003
Description: William Schroeder, counsel and partner at Sullivan and Cromwell, ACT's pro-bono legal partners, wrote to Eric Brettschneider of his plans to meet with Brother Ed Phelan, Executive Director of the Highbridge Community Life Center. The meeting was to discuss the law suit that is pending against the Center by the Palazzolo Holding Company. The Highbridge Community Life Center is 501c3 community based organization that runs adult education classes for adults, counseling services families, after school programs for youth and also helps tenants to organize to improve their buildings and their quality of life. The organization has been particularly helpful to groups of tenants in buildings with severe disrepair. The owners of these buildings have hundreds of building violations. In one building at 1030 Woodcrest Avenue after tenants tried unsuccessfully to talk to their owners, HCLC helped them organize a press conference outside the building. According to Mr. Phelan's complaint

when Washington Mutual declined to refinance this mortgage based on the deplorable condition of the building, the building owner sued HCLC for: a) tortious interference with a contract and b) slander for a total of at least \$1,460,000. The addition, the owner secured a (Temporary Restraining Order) TRO preventing HCLC from entering the building to talk to tenants, effectively impeding the tenant's rights to invite organizers in to their building, and, by extension, to organize effectively. Mr. Ed Phelan asked that Eric Brettschneider assist in securing Sullivan and Cromwell as a pro-bono law firm to fight this litigation. By January 2005 ACT was informed by Bro Ed Phelan of a settlement with Palazzolo Holding Company. The company dropped its law suit and HCLC dropped its counter suit. Bro Ed Phelan wrote to Eric Brettschneider to thank him for connecting him to Bill Schroeder and Sullivan and Cromwell.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: November 2003
Description: Children's Rights Inc. released a report entitled "Time Running Out: Teens in Foster Care. The report examines the experiences of teens in group and residential care in New York City. The study was undertaken jointly by Children's Rights, the Juvenile Rights Division of the Legal Aids Society, and Lawyers for Children. It involved extensive interviews with young adults and professional stakeholders in New York City to better understand how youth ages 12 and older fare in congregate care settings, the extent to which they achieve permanency, and their experiences as they transition from foster care. ACT contributed views, opinions and invaluable resources for the report. The Policy Director, Ms Madelyn Freudlich thanked Eric Brettschneider for his role in the development of the report.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: October 2003
Description: Children for Children's Action Board celebrated National Make a Difference Day with a special project on October 25 2003. Make a Difference Day was created by USA Weekend magazine. Approximately 30 kids ages 6 to 13 attended a mural project at P.s. 20, located in Manhattan's Lower east side. As part of this signature project designed by artist Allen Furbeck, Mr. Furbeck taught the children to make beautiful painted Plexiglas mural panels that will help to decorate the school. Children for Children is a New York not-for-profit founded by parents to foster community involvement and social responsibility in young people. It offers youth service and philanthropy programs—including CFC's Celebrations Program, Children's Action Board Programs, special events and Projects, Do Your Own Thing and Kids for Community. These programs create opportunities for kids to engage hands on in volunteering and giving from an early age. Anne William-Isom, ACS liaison to ACT is a member of the board of directors at Children for Children. ACT was responsibly for making that connection.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: ACT Executive Director was invited by the SIRUS FUND to participate in a field trip of selected locations in Brooklyn.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: The Child welfare Fund sent ACT a copy of the Child Welfare Fund's 2002 Annual Report. In addition to the many projects described in the report, the Child welfare Fund and the Open Society initiated a donor's collaborative, called The Partnership for Family Supports and Justice, which also includes the New York Community Trust, Morgan Guaranty Trust/DeCamp Foundation and the FAR Fund. The partnership aimed at developing a new approach to child welfare services which will be implemented in High-Bridge in the Bronx. It will make a wide range of social services available to all families in the neighborhood, provide exemplary legal representation for families that become involved with the child welfare system, and involve parents and youth in the process of change. The project was carried out with the assistance of ACT and cooperation of ACS.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: June 2003
Description: ACT got word from the Department of Community Engagement at the Department of Education to begin discussions on assisting to develop a parent training curriculum that will be used in the Department of Education new Parent Academy.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: May 2003
Description: Anthea McLaughlin met with a variety of children advocates to review and discuss ACS child issues relating to but not limited to: School-age Transfer
Child Care Eligibility Transfer
Parent Fees
UPK-state restoration and early care education issues in the Department of Education.
Attending were:
Nancy Wackstein-UNH (Chair)
Andrea Anthony-Day Care Council
Nancy Kolben/Amy Cooper-Child Care Inc.
Nataasha Lifton-UNNYC
Gail Natowitz/Candice Anderson-CCC
Anthea McLaughlin-ACT

Suggested Category: Community Collaboration/Program Planning
Date of Accomplishment: November 2003
Description: Bridge Builders, a program supported and co-developed by ACT held a one day retreat entitled "To Preserve The Families of Highbridge." Eric Brettschneider facilitated two workshops on **Governance Structure** and **From Vision to Reality: The implementation Plan**

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: April 2003

Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider moderated the first one-day Citywide Neighborhood Network Conference. The Commissioner for ACS William Bell provided the greetings, while Ann William-Isom, Assistant Commissioner, ACS welcomed participants. Geoffrey Canada of Harlem Children Zone was the Keynote Speaker. The following were panelists:
Bronx: Catherine Allen, Abbott House

Manhattan: Regina Lawson, Harlem Dowling
Queens: Rodney Pride, ACS/DECS
Brooklyn: Helen Jordan, New York Urban League
Staten Island: Madeleine Duran, ACS/DCP
Executive Director: Miriam Cotto, F.R.I.E.N.D.S Inc.
Reverend Alfonso Wyatt Allen AME Church and Vice-President Fund for the City of New York (FCNY)

Testimonials were presented by the following:
Bronx: Bitye F. Malone, Leak&Watts Services, Inc.
Manhattan: Doris William, Grand Parents' Empowerment Movement
Queens: Kessie Cheatham, Early Childhood
Brooklyn: Joan Wittig, Cumberland Diagnostic Center
Staten Island: Namon Atis, Project Uth Turn
Liberty Management Group, Pattie Espinal Ritcher

In moderating the panel discussion, Eric Brettschneider asked questions relating to identifying challenges that Neighborhood Networks face and steps they have taken to address them. Other issues concerned around the ten components each network has successfully implemented and what panelists contributed to those components; how instrumental have sub-committees been in carrying out Network projects; how has participating in the network increased panelists' knowledge of the community; how has the network changed how panelists see their relationship with ACS; how instrumental is the Faith-based organizations in the network and how do networks get them involved, what is the role of the Executive Directors in the network and how do networks increase their participation.

Suggested Category: Community Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: February 2003
Description: The Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow
Collaborative organized a community dialogue with Linda Gibbs, Commissioner Department of Homeless services. The event was co-sponsored by Bushwick Child Care Network, Bushwick Managed Care Initiative, Bushwick Resource Coalition, North Brooklyn Child Care Health advisory Council and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Suggested Category: Community Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: August 2005
Description: The Brownsville/East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network After-School Tutorial Sub-committee presented its First Annual Appreciation Day. The Keynote Speaker was Richard Buery, CEO Groundwork, Inc. The

event featured award presentations, dedication of a new library, the Mark Young Library, recognition of students and tutors.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June 2005
Description: William Schroeder, ACT's counsel at Sullivan and Cromwell invited ACT to participate, as the law firm hosts a book discussion with author Heather Williams of her recently published book *Self Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*. Dr. Williams is a former attorney with the US Department of Justice and the New York State Attorney General's Office. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In the book, *Self Taught*, Dr. Williams explores the history of African American self-education during and after slavery, the value African Americans placed on literacy and the great length to which they went to acquire and deliver education. While several authors have focused on the role of the northern missionaries in this education process, very little has been written on the role that the slaves and freed-people had in the movement to educate their people. Dr. Williams' book takes an in-depth look at their immeasurable contributions. ACT staff attended the event.

Suggested Category: City-wide Category
Date of Accomplishment: June 2005
Description: The ACS Parent Advisory Workgroup of which ACT is an active member invited Eric Brettschneider to help facilitate their next meeting. The meeting discussed the Parent Workgroup operational guidelines. In the 200 ACS planned and established a Parent Advisory Workgroup. The mission of group is to explore and address the issues that parents and caregivers face when dealing with child welfare system, and to effect positive changes by working in partnership with ACS staff. The group is comprised of parents and primary caregivers whose children are being served by ACS and ACS' contract agencies.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: June 2005
Description: Sanctuary for Families provided ACT with its latest Annual Report called *Transformations: stories of Lives Reclaimed*. This special edition celebrates Sanctuary's 20th anniversary with the stories of 21 sanctuary clients. Sanctuary thanked ACT for support over the years and in assisting the organization in receiving a grant from Viola Benard Foundation. ACT Executive Director is a past member of the Foundation's board. Sanctuary is an organization whose mission envisions a society in which freedom from domestic violence is a basic human right. It is dedicated to the safety, healing, and self-sufficiency of battered women and their children.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: December 2004

Description: The final evaluation report of Bridge Builder Project was submitted by Fred Wulczyn of Chapin Hall University of Chicago. The Bridge Builders Project is a program by a group of community-based human services agencies located in and around the Highbridge community of the Bronx, engaged in an effort to improve the child welfare services available to the residents of Highbridge. Historically, the need for child welfare services in Highbridge has been higher than other parts of New York City, including other similar neighborhoods. Although no single factor accounts for why the need for child welfare services is so high in Highbridge, there is a strong belief among the organizations involved that wider access to appropriate child welfare services will influence the situation positively and improve outcomes for children and families.

The organizations joined in the Bridge Builders collaborative include: Highbridge Community Life Center, Citizens' Advice Bureau, The Bronx Defenders, Woodcrest Center for Human Development, Child Welfare Organizing Project, ACS, Alianza Dominicana, St. Barnabas' Child Advocacy Center, Legal Services of New York-Bronx, Community Elementary School #11, Community Elementary School #126, and Community Elementary School #73. Technical Support was provided by ACT.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: November 2004
Description: ACS Commissioner John Mattingly invited ACT's Eric Brettschneider to Commissioner's Community Forum "listening to Community Voices". The event was held at CES 11, (school auditorium) 1257 Ogden Ave, Bronx, New York 10452

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: April 2004
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider was invited by the United way of New York City to serve on a Planning Committee that will help set up the agenda for UNWNYC's Community Action Area in Education and Early Childhood Development. The work of this Planning Committee is the next step in implementing the UNWNYC's Community Action strategy, adopted by its Board of Directors in June 2003. This new strategy is designed to address more effectively health and human services needs of New Yorkers through focused initiatives in five key areas-Education and Early Childhood Development, Access to Healthcare, Housing and Homelessness, Sustaining the Non-profit Sector, and workforce Development. The committee's plan also centered on how UNWNYC can best make an impact on the education continuum from early childhood development through K-12 and then on to further education or work. It will help identify several programmatic areas for further action, defining and shaping the work of UNWNYC in this important area.

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: 1999
Description: In his book "*A History of Supportive Services For Families in Poverty*" Robert Halpern wrote extensively in the chapter B, on how ACT role and policy work have contributed widely in the development and philosophy of

social service delivery of children services. It quotes ACT's 1995 document **"The ACT Implementation Project"**: "a family needing child care, income support, counseling and educational assistance should be able to find help at a single location in its own community. This is the heart of ACT's service delivery paradigm, an offshoot of a 1998 report entitled "Untangling Family Services". 12:51:58 PMhis report criticized the fragmentation of prevailing services in poor neighborhoods and recommended the "creation of a locally-based planning process to coordinate the efforts of human service and economic development programs in designated neighborhoods" A History of Supportive Services for Families and Children is published by Columbia University ©1999.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: February 2005
Description: Mike Arsham Executive Director of Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP) informed ACT, in a letter, that the recent issue of its publication Represent has a piece entitled "Parents' Perspective". It was written by Kevin Edwards, a June 2004 graduate of CWOP's East Harlem Parent Leadership Curriculum. Mr. Edwards has family roots in both East Harlem and Highbridge. Subsequent to his graduation, Mr. Edwards was hired by the Fund for Social Change to assist with design and implementation of the Integrated Service Plan for Highbridge Partnership for Family Supports and Justice (a.k.a. The Bridgebuilders of which ACT is the technical advisor.)

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains
Date of Accomplishment: January 2005
Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider received a Thank you letter for his involvement in the third annual New Yorkers for Children "Network to Success" event. The event provided students with practical knowledge about insights into various industries. It gave students an invaluable opportunity to interact with professional in an environment that fostered open communication about careers and unlimited possibilities.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: June 2005
Description: The Central Brooklyn Coalition on Child Abuse and Neglect, with support from ACT, organized its Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention entitled "Articulation to Action". Two workshop sessions were presented. The first morning session consisted of:
 Crisis Intervention
 Youth Engagement and Empowerment (Presented and facilitated by youth)
 Early Intervention/Infant Well-being
 Domestic Violence
 Family Client Engagement and Involvement
 Child Abuse Certification
 The Afternoon session was entitled: "Strengthening Linkages: Collaboration Equals Success".

Suggested Category: Strategic Gains

Date of Accomplishment: February 2005

Description: The New York Foundling Hospital sent ACT a copy the Strategic Plan 2005-2007. The Strategic Plan lays out the future direction of the Foundling Hospital of the future and focuses specifically on its objectives for the next three years. Over the course of this three-year plan the Foundling will build the capacities it needs and the foundation that is required to accomplish its long term goals. The New York Foundling helps children, youth and adults in need through advocacy and through preventive and in-care services that strengthen families and communities and help each individual reach his or her potential. ACT was a valued collaborator with planning group.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative

Date of Accomplishment: September 2005

Description: The United Way of New York thanked ACT's Eric Brettschneider for serving on the Selection Committee for NYCWorks, a New York City Council Workforce Development Initiative administered by UWNYS. NYCWorks aims to decrease the alarming rates of joblessness and the economic impact it has on their neighborhoods. As a result of this UWNYS partnered with the New York City Council and jointly designed a Request for Proposal that would seek out the best ideas and experience in workforce in the city. ACT was invited and participated as a member of process serving on the Selection Committee for NYCWorks.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative

Date of Accomplishment: June 2005

Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider participated in the Mayor's Out-of-School Time (OST) planning process. This planning process resulted in unprecedented collaboration among City agencies, community based provider organizations, foundations, parents and the community to help design and implement the new OST system. The planning process was facilitated and coordinated by the Fund for the City of New York, and was supported by a grant from the Wallace Foundation. Together they developed a vision for a quality OST system, and a consensus on OST goals and program outcomes. In his thank you letter to ACT, Ester Fuchs, PH.D, Special Advisor to the Mayor for Governance and Strategic Planning, said OST developed a database with demographic, programmatic, health, economic and educational data to serve as a new baseline for planning in order to better meet child, youth, community and family needs.

Suggested Category: Strategic gains

Date of Accomplishment: May 2004

Description: ACT's Eric Brettschneider assisted Jumpstart Inc. in connecting with CUNY management team. He asked to meet with CUNY's senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer to begin discussions on recruiting students from CUNY to work with low-income preschool children.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative

Date of Accomplishment: March 2004

Description: ACT Executive Director, Eric Brettschneider, and also Chair of the Council on Children Association of the Bar of the City of New York, was invited

by Judge Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge of the State of New York, to participate in a child welfare roundtable. This discussion will bring together a variety of practitioners and advocates, to address means of promoting permanency for New York's children, a critical component of the state's effort to improve compliance with the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act. Among the issues the roundtable will examine will be the ASFA and Family Court-related child welfare and juvenile justice proposals submitted both by the Office of Court Administration and the NYS Office of Children and Family and Family Services, as well as issues regarding children residing in the custody of relatives. The roundtable is intended as an off-the-record, informal discussion that may serve as a catalyst for legislative action. The goal will be to give participants an opportunity to raise and answer questions, address concerns, narrow the issues and clarify varying perspectives.

Suggested Category: Strategic gains
Date of Accomplishment: April 2004
Description: The Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education, Joe Klein wrote to ACT Executive Director, thanking him for passing a copy of the play *Now Let Me Fly: The Struggle Toward Brown v. Board* by Marcia Cebulski. In his letter Chancellor Klein appreciated the play's recognition of the importance of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown* to the system of public education in New York City and throughout the United States.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: June 2004
Description: The Bushwick Agenda for Children Tomorrow held a meeting entitled "A Community Dialogue on Immigrants and Barriers to access of Quality Medical Services. Approximately 30 people attended this meeting. Meeting participants were members of the Bushwick Collaborative, other service providers from the community, a reporter from the Brooklyn Observer, and staff from Legal Aid Services. The Collaborative had representatives from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Victor Hunter, Director of Minority Health), the Health and Hospitals Corporation (Stephen Bohlen-Sr. Associate Executive Director, John Jurenko- Assistant Vice President, and Rosemarie Ortiz-Manager Patients Account) and the Mayor's Office (Mary Hagood-Brooklyn Manager Health Insurance access: Health Statistics initiative)

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: June 2004
Description: The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc., hosted a policy forum entitled "Creating a Latino Child Welfare Agenda: Creating a strategic framework for change. The forum was attended by approximately 30 people, including advocates and directors and/or members of organizations in the child welfare arena. The following represented:
 Elba Montalvo, Executive Director, CHCF
 Joseph Semidei, Deputy Executive Director, CHCF

E. Gonzalez, Vice President, Puerto Rican Family Institute, Inc.
 D. Rosario, Executive Director, Coalition for Hispanic Family Services (CHFS)
 E. Loperena, Executive Director, NY Council on Adoptable Children (COAC)
 S. McDougall, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Child Protection, ACS
 Dr. M. Phillips, Fordham University Graduate School of Social Work
 Dr. I. Earner, National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning
 M. Arsham, Executive Director, Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP)
 Councilman Bill Perkins.

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: June 2004
Description: The Brownsville/East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network Liaison wrote a document entitled: "Advocacy and Referrals as Effective Tools in Preventive Services Programs." As a response to EricBretschneider request on how advocacy and referrals would be used by the Network Education/Prevention Services Sub-committee to adopt some schools in Brownsville and East New York, the Liaison noted a few steps that must be taken as the Sub-committee continues to examine the needs of the children.

1. Effective definition of problems that require social action
2. Development and maintenance of diverse constituencies
3. Building and supporting coalition
4. Conceptualizing and implementing systemic studies of the problem and the forces affecting it.
5. Disseminating findings in strategic forums
6. Astutely recognizing political factors that control the targeted population.
7. Applying sound judgement as to where and when pressures can be effective.

As a backdrop he posited utilizing three classes of advocacy to achieve these steps: case advocacy, class advocacy and policy advocacy.

Suggested Category: Strategic gains
Date of Accomplishment: June 2004
Description: Leigh Singer, Esq. Program Director Youth Advocacy Center wrote to ACT requesting that participating CBO's representatives who attended the recently concluded YAC's training (Socrates in Foster Care) return completed Feedback Forms about the training. YAC hopes to collect information from these staff so it can use it as a guide when advocating for larger scale policy changes.

Suggested Category: Community Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: July 2004
Description: The Central Harlem Neighborhood Network's Education Committee made plans for two events for the Parent Coordinators in Manhattan. According to a memo sent to Eric Bretttschneider, Sheryl Rencher, Regional Parent Support Officer, Department of Education, requested follow-up workshops that would include the ninety (90) Parent Coordinators and the thirty five (35) Substance Abuse Prevention Specialists in District 10. The Education Sub-Committee is exploring

community based diagnostic services that will provide appropriate reports to support mental health referrals of students.

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: March 2004
Description: A collective of individuals and organizations came together to organize "Uniting for Solutions Beyond Shelter" a planning conference on ending chronic homelessness in New York City. As an offshoot of Mayor's Bloomberg's call on leaders to create a 10-year, multi-sector strategic plan to overcome homelessness, this collaborative of business leaders, academics and researchers, service providers, policy makers, and advocates have come together to identify shared goals and create an impressive list of draft recommendations. These initiatives are focused on:

Overcoming street homelessness
 Implementing a "prevention first, shelter second" agenda
 Rapid re-housing for those experiencing homelessness

Resource investment
 Eric Brettschneider, ACT's Executive Director is on the Coordinating Committee of the collective

Suggested Category: City-wide Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: November 2004
Description: ACS, at a press conference announced the Child Safe Initiative. Eric was thanked in letter from John Mattingly, ACS Commissioner for his presence at the press conference saying "your presence helped to show the strength and diversity of the child welfare community in New York, as well as our commitment to protect children and strengthen families throughout the City"

Suggested Category: Community Collaborative
Date of Accomplishment: May 2004
Description: ACT Jamaica through the assistance of the former Local Planner, Kola Osakue, wrote a proposal to the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation requesting \$30,000 to support for its Wave of the Future Initiative. The proposal, written in collaboration with Jamaica Service for Older Adults (JSPOA) and the Council of Senior Centers and Services of New York City (CSCS), intends to help senior centers in New York City reinvent themselves to better serve today's seniors while planning for the needs and interests of tomorrow's older population. The initiative will be based around the planning project of JSPOA, the lead senior center in the proposed project. JSPOA has begun identifying new opportunities to engage older citizens in activities in their community and developing relationships and leveraging resources to create new models of civic engagement. In 2005 JSPOA began going through a planning process to concretize these ideas and develop a strategy to implement them. On October 12th 2005 a forum was held at York College entitled "Options without Walls". The forum was organized by JSPOA, CSCS, and Jamaica ACT. The opening welcome and greetings presented by Marcia Gibson, President, JSPOA; Igal Jellinek, Executive Director, CSCS; Eric Brettschneider, Executive Director, ACT. Carol J. Hunt, JSPOA. The Guest Speaker, Richard Goldberg, Executive Director, Coming of Age, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The

Morning Facilitator was Denise Williams, Assistant Commissioner Department of Youth and Community Development. A group discussion followed.

Suggested Category: Local Collaboration
Date of Accomplishment: July 2005
Description: The Commissioner for Juvenile Justice, Honorable Neil Hernandez wrote to Dale Joseph of the enthusiasm of his agency to work with One-City/One Strategy in streamlining the provision of social services to better serve children and families in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Department of Juvenile Justice is part of the One City/One Strategy collaborative. Dale Joseph is the initiative's Director.

Current Projects by Neighborhood

Project: NYC Early Learning Project/Parent Access Points
Neighborhood: Washington Heights/Inwood, Bushwick
Date of Accomplishment: Launched in 2001. Currently operating-2005

Description: The Parent Access component of the NYC Early Learning Project is being facilitated by Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT). The goal is to create community-based Parent Information Access Points to ensure that families know about the resources available in their communities and where to turn for information on child care, early learning and child development. Washington Heights/Inwood and Bushwick were the two communities selected for participation, based on leadership and willingness by local providers to be actively engaged in the process, readiness of the communities, including capacity, scope of existing resources to build upon, and coordination potential, as well as the existence of related activities, history of successful collaboration and need.

Project: The Bridge Builders: To Preserve the Families of Highbridge
Neighborhood: Highbridge. Strong ACT Central role
Date of Accomplishment: 2004. Currently on-going in 2005
Description: ACT is in its third year of working with the Coalition for Reform in Highbridge, now known as Bridge Builders. The Coalition formed in response to the high rate of foster care placement from the census tracts in the Highbridge, Bronx community. A group of foundations, including Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, agreed to fund reform efforts in the community in order to decrease the rate of foster care placement. The goal was to engage collaboration among child welfare, legal, health, housing and education systems. Components of the reform include: youth and parent empowerment, implementing family support services, diverting families from investigations to services and offering legal representation to parents.

Project: One City/One Community
Neighborhood: Bedford-Stuyvesant. With Strong Act Central role
Date of Accomplishment: May 2005
Description: ACT facilitated an effort among twelve city agencies to improve service delivery and coordination for clients. The effort began in the Bedford Stuyvesant community and uses case conferencing as the cornerstone of its methodology. ACT coordinated the initial steps of the effort including the conceptualization of the project using lessons learned from many of ACT's past initiatives, the hiring of staff and serving as an incubator for the project. The goals of the project are:
 To improve service delivery and coordination for clients
 To create an institutional response to addressing unintentional bureaucratic barriers
 To better coordinate the delivery of assistance
 To maximize the effectiveness of the City's resources
 To improve client self-sufficiency and responsibility

Current ACT Central Projects

Project: HRA/CUNY Informal Family Child Care Training Project
Date of Accomplishment: July 2004
Description: ACT's Informal Family Child Care Training Project completed a six-month program of peer support for informal caregivers in Bushwick and Washington Heights. "Informal caregivers" refers to childcare providers who care for one or two children in their commonly own home and are not licensed. It is the type of care most commonly used by parents. The program was funded by the Human Resource Administration. ACT worked collaboratively with City University of New York's Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, local Head Starts and local family day care networks. ACT has since started to work with IMPACT/Parent Access Project in Bushwick and Washington Heights to incorporate the informal provider groups into their program services.

Project: KidsSmart Early Learning Project/IBM Team Tech
Date of Accomplishment: On-going
Description: KidsSmart and Teaming for Technology are two programs providing technology to preschoolers and families in underserved communities. Kids Smart brings up-to-date computers equipped with age appropriate educational technologies into preschools, while Teaming for Technology assists community-based organizations (CBO's) in developing, enhancing, and maintaining technological competency to improve service delivery.

Teaming for Technology is also a national partnership between United Way of America, IBM Corporation, and the Corporation for national and Community Service. Here, in New York City, the program partners are the United Way of New York City, IBM, Baruch College, and four non-profit umbrella organizations-Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT), Asian American Federation of New York, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, and United Neighborhood Houses. ACT was selected as part of this

project because Teaming for Technology targets community agencies that help young people and their families within underserved communities.

Project: The Parent Services Project
Date of Accomplishment: Since 2002 and On-going
Description: The role of the Parent Services Project is to build relationship and parent support, provide self directed activities and secure program development opportunities. ACT as local intermediary has provided local oversight, technical assistance and coordination to the PSP project in partnership with Fort George Enrichment Center and ace Integration Head Start since July 2002. ACT's intermediary role offered PSP the opportunity to gather practical intelligence on ways for PSP to work in New York and to articulate what their contributions have been to activities that serve as the foundation for the future vision of PSP.

Project: Department of Education Parent Coordinator Training

Projects in Development

Family Engagement Institute
 Timeline of Neighborhood Based Services
 Healthy Families NYC Home Visiting Program
 Partnership with Children's Mental Health Alliance (CMHA)
 Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Appendix K. ACT Progress Report, August 2007 – July 2008

Agenda for Children Tomorrow

PROGRESS REPORT



August 2007 – July 2008

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AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW

PROGRESS REPORT

August 2007 – July 2008

INTRODUCTION

ACT's mission is to promote the well being of children, families, and neighborhoods in New York City by working to improve services and to strengthen the capacities of communities. In addition to this mission, ACT has adopted several Guiding Principles that serve as the basis by which services are delivered and new projects or programs are adopted. These principles are centered on:

- **Family Engagement**
 - ACT maintains the perspective that a child's strength derives from the strength of his/her family.
- **Parent Empowerment**
 - ACT is dedicated to building the capacities of parents and families to advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities.
- **Community Building**
 - ACT strives to ensure that communities have the capacity to implement well-needed services.
- **Service Integration**
 - ACT promotes service integration through its work with various community coalitions and its partnerships with city government institutions.
- **Bottom-up Connected to Top-down Planning**
 - ACT actively works to connect the communities to decision-makers in city government and vice versa connects the city government officials to the neighborhoods.
- **Diplomacy and Consensus Building**
 - ACT has a strong belief in the need for diplomacy in building collaboratives.
- **Accessibility and Cultural Competency**
 - ACT encourages that services are easy to find and easy to use for residents of all communities.

Throughout the year ACT staff has worked vigorously to uphold these Guiding Principles while working to achieve organizational goals. ACT is known for its work in facilitating partnerships, bringing people together and providing much needed technical assistance to various projects that reflect our core principals. Much of this work is behind the scenes. For this reason we thought it important to report on our numerous activities for this past year. This report reflects ACT's progress and actions from August 2007 through July 2008.

We begin by discussing ACT's projects in partnership with ACS. Subsequently, we discuss projects and programs to which ACT lent expertise by providing technical assistance, developing program models, and assisting with integrating services. We conclude a discussion of how ACT has continued to foster positive relationships with our stakeholders and finally, we outline ACT's next steps.

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AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW

PROGRESS REPORT

August 2007 – July 2008

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OVERVIEW

While the accomplishments of this past year are many, one of the highlights is the exciting transition of the Bridge Builders coalition, supported by a donor's collaborative effort, to a community controlled coalition with a new governance structure. From the inception of Bridge Builders, when ACT was asked to form a coalition of providers in Highbridge, ACT continues to provide intensive technical assistance and capacity building to the leadership of the Bridge Builders collaborative in addition to the many community residents actively involved in the coalition.

ACT's relationship continues to be one that is productive and valuable for all stakeholders. In addition to our assistance on the ACS Community Partnership Initiative (CPI), we worked with ACS to implement and manage an initiative that connects three new immigrant communities to traditional child welfare services. Conversely the initiative is also increasing the capacity of ACS staff, particularly child protective workers, to provide more culturally sensitive services to families of Mexican, West African and South African communities.

ACT's work with foster youth continues as we are about to finalize plans for a host organization that will sponsor the foster youth advocacy model that we have been promoting. A new development with foster youth is our intensive work with ACS to develop a new Youth Advisory Board for NYC Children's Services.

Finally, ACT has been able to maintain steadiness and growth through this last year's period of management transition. Some programs have come to successful fruition, active work continues on a number of ongoing projects and new projects are being started.

PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACS

ACT's relationship with ACS continues to be a strong one. ACT provides critical assistance to ACS on a number of projects, including Community Partnership Initiative, Immigration Community Partnership Initiative, Brownsville/East New York Child Welfare Network, Youth Advisory Board, and Bridge Builders. Progress from each of these projects will be described in this, and other, sections of the report.

Community Partnership Initiative (CPI)

CPI began as a demonstration project in 11 neighborhoods with the goal of re-orientating and re-thinking the manner in which child welfare work services are offered in New York City. One community coalition in each of the 11 neighborhoods was awarded a \$150,000 grant to improve child welfare outcomes. Coalitions were charged with addressing four goals:

1. Promote innovative approaches to a coordinated service delivery system that will bridge the gap between Head Start, child care and community-based preventive services.

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2. Participate in family conferences to contribute to decision making about the needs, service, and safety plans appropriate to particular families' circumstances.
3. Support existing foster and adoptive parents and recruit new ones in communities where they are needed.
4. Facilitate visits between parents, children, and siblings in foster care.

When CPI was launched, ACT organized and facilitated 22 working sessions in the 11 neighborhoods to explain the CPI initiative in detail, to answer questions about the original Scope of Services and to facilitate coalition building in each neighborhood. ACT provided intensive technical assistance to the three neighborhoods in the first phase of the project.

In the past year, ACT has continued to be involved in the CPI coalitions to the extent that our resource allows, given that there are over 44 work committee meetings and 11 coalition meetings each month. ACT continued to provide technical assistance to the all of the coalitions on an as-needed basis. Our activities included, but were not limited to:

1. Attending meetings (all neighborhoods)
2. Assisted in developing a process and guidelines for the hiring of the coalition liaisons utilizing a collaborative process and a consensus model (East New York, Elmhurst)
3. Promoted the involvement of smaller immigrant serving organizations in the coalitions (most neighborhoods)
4. Provided materials for the development of by-laws (Mott Haven, Elmhurst)
5. Provided guidance on the formation and goals for the work groups – family visiting, child care/Head Start and prevention, team conferencing and foster care recruitment (Jamaica, Highbridge, Bedford Stuyvesant, East New York, Elmhurst)
6. Assisted in the design of a community forum where the CPI coalition reported back to the community on its progress (Bedford Stuyvesant, East New York)

Immigration Community Partnership Initiative

ACT is implementing the Immigrant Communities in Partnership Initiative (ICPI) project with the NYC Children's Services to serve the growing population from West Africa, Mexico, and South Asia. Initiated in July 2007, the ICPI project's primary goal is to connect new immigrant communities to child welfare services. ICPI also works to increase the cultural awareness of the child welfare workers, develop capacity of immigrant-serving organizations, and provides interpretation, cultural brokering at case conferences, and support services to families in need.

With a contract from ACS, ACT played a central role in the planning and implementation of the ICPI project. During the contract period, ACT assisted ACS in developing the RFPs, creating policies and

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procedures, providing technical assistance in budgeting, invoicing, and contract management, and promoting the ICPI project throughout the child welfare system. Simultaneously, ACT worked with the immigrant serving organizations to understand the child welfare system, provided trainings in key child welfare areas and helped disseminate child welfare information via community forums. ACT developed working coalitions of the West African and South Asian CBOs, the first in each of these communities. ACT managed all referrals from ACS, primarily protective service workers, ensuring timely responses from ACS workers and CBO staff. ACT also presented at and co-facilitated cultural awareness presentations for ACS workers and spoke at community education forums to inform immigrant communities about child welfare.

ACT successfully managed a portfolio of 13 organizations through the ICPI project, and helped create the first South Asian coalition of its kind to tackle the growing child welfare needs of the South Asian community. Since July 2007, ACT has directly managed the referrals for 145 families from Mexico, West Africa, and South Asia, and estimates that approximately 20 more families were referred to ICPI-contracted CBOs directly by ACS. Among the 145 families, approximately 110 families needed interpretation services in primarily Spanish, Mixteco, Fulani, Bambara, French, Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu. Other interpretation services included indigenous dialects from Ecuador and Honduras, Wolof, Ibo, Sinhalese, and Tamil. Staff from immigrant serving organizations participated in over 80 case conferences with ACS workers that included formal and informal family case conferences, child safety conferences, and elevated risk conferences.

ACT is currently working with ACS to design and implement an evaluation of ICPI and its effectiveness. The evaluation project is scheduled to begin in August and ACS and ACT will work together to implement the project and collect data.

Neighborhood Networks – BENYCWNN

The Brownsville/East New York Child Welfare Neighborhood Network (BENYCWNN) was awarded the Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) one-year grant (\$150,000) from the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) in June 2007. As mentioned previously, the grant called for four specific goals: bridging the gap between head start, child care and the preventive services; to participate in family team conferences to contribute to the decision-making about family needs, services, and safety plans appropriate for family circumstances; to facilitate quality visits between parents, children and siblings in foster care and finally to support existing foster care and adoptive parents and recruit new ones in communities where they are needed. Because of the rise of mental health cases in East New York, the Coalition added mental health as the fifth goal. The Coalition therefore conducts its work through five subgroups based on the five goals stated above.

Some of the activities of BENYCWNN have been absorbed by CCENY. The Coalition conducted a successful such for a Liaison to coordinate the activities of the groups. Ms. Asia Thomas was hired on April 14, 2008 and is supervised by the BENYCWNN Liaison, Osman Boatkye. Mr. Boatkye is supervised by ACT.

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CCENT has been able to accomplish much of the four goals given to us by ACS as well as the fifth goal that the Coalition added through collaborations with the community-based organizations, churches, ACS-contract agencies and others. Below is the list of the subgroups and their accomplishments and the processes used to achieve their goal.

- **Head Start/Child Care Subgroup**

Stated goals in the strategic plan: (a) identify all child care options/providers in East New York. The subgroup has identified all child care providers in the area and is now in the process of doing one-on-one outreach to each of them; (b) to create user-friendly information packets for parents of all community support services and distribute to all childcare providers. A resource contact list has been developed and given to all participants; (c) inform child care providers of preventive services to avoid excessive central registry contact. Participating providers have been informed of the preventive services in their areas. Three referrals have been made from Children's Corner to New York Psychotherapy and Big Brothers Big Sisters; (d) informational workshops on child care best practices. An informational workshop was conducted on April 30th for 80 child care providers.

- **Family Team Conference**

Stated goals in the strategic plan: (a) develop partnerships with other foster care and prevention agencies and offer incentives to their participation. The subgroup has successfully engaged Women's Prison Association (WPA), Brooklyn Bureau of Community Services (BBCS), New York Urban League (NYUL) and Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) -- all preventive agencies; (b) design a presentation for parent groups and to prepare for upcoming family team conferences. WPA along with ACS has developed a presentation tool for the training of the community representatives; (c) recruit potential parent advocates from the specially trained clients to attend and assist with family team conferences. The subgroup has recruited and trained 16 community representatives, out of which 12 are actively doing family team conferences. To date 20 family team conferences have been conducted.

- **Visiting Subgroup**

Stated goals in the strategic plan: (a) to identify and engage additional foster care agencies in the East New York area for complexity in CCENT aims. The subgroup has engaged SCO Family Services, Little Flower, St. Vincent Family Services and Concord Family Services that are currently working with the subgroup. 4 pre-visits and 3 actual visits have been conducted. 25 community residents have been trained by the subgroup to become visit hosts; (b) expand the list of resources/ facilities that can host interactive, educational and/or recreational and fun environments for family visits. There are a number of different resources that were identified in the area, including Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Children Museum and Brounsville Recreational Center; (c) develop a schedule of availability, amenities and requirements for each of the existing hosts for family visits. There are 15 hosts that will be scheduled along with the locations of the visits.

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- **Recruitment and Support Subgroup**

Stated goals in the strategic plan: (a) to convene orientation sessions in neighborhoods identified as having greatest potential for foster parent recruitment. The subgroup has convened one event session at a 330 Hinsdale Street to recruit potential foster and adoptive parents. 18 people signed up at the event. Five presentations were conducted at Community Board 5 meetings, the 75th Police Precinct and other neighborhood events. In all 29 people have signed up. Their names have been distributed to the foster care agencies for evaluation and training; (b) solicit community newspapers to publish targeted East New York advertisements for potential foster parents. Ads have been submitted to two religious newspapers: *Low Express* and the *Tablet* for publication; (c) contract with a foster care agency to provide the "Model Approach to Positive Parenting" (MAPP) training. The four foster care agencies working with the Subgroup will provide the training schedules for the parents who signed up.

- **Mental Health Subgroup**

Stated goals in the strategic plan: (a) to develop and implement a public awareness campaign regarding the stigma associated with mental health and wellness. The subgroup has developed a plan to start monthly public workshops beginning in July; (b) identify existing additional resources (even out of area) for evaluation of depression, anger disorders and other signs of mental malaises for teens and families. The subgroup has identified 3 resources: New York Psychotherapy and Counseling, Institute for Community Living and First Net. Their contact information will be presented on bookmarks that will be widely distributed in the community before the end of July.

In November 2007 (Election Day), the BENYCVNWN Substance Abuse Prevention Subcommittee sponsored its 5th annual substance abuse training conference at the Brooklyn Children's Center. Over 400 people attended, including a sizable number of recovering substance abusers.

BENYCVNWN continues to work with ACS field office to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect through the development of additional services for teenager and teen parents. At a meeting convened between local ACS field office, the ACS Deputy Commissioner and the BENYCVNWN network, services for teens and teen parents was identified as a critical need by the protective service workers assigned to East New York. Since that meeting, BENYCVNWN has worked diligently to identify additional services by creating linkages and partnerships with existing programs. This work is done through the Teenage Services Subcommittee.

Neighborhood Network – Bushwick

In Bushwick, the coalition selected to receive the CPI award was the existing ACS Neighborhood Network, called BMCI (Brooklyn Making Children Important). In the past, ACT hired and supervised the Network Liaison for BMCI, until funding no longer was available to support that position. One of ACT's successes at the time was to weave a network of services between the BMCI Liaison, the services represented by EMCI and ACT's then new Family Resource Center (IMPACT) in Bushwick.

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ACT has been able to renew these relationships since BMCI's decision to hire the original liaison, Raul Rubio, for the new CPI Community Liaison position. BMCI is renting office space for a nominal cost at the IMPACT center. IMPACT is taking a lead on the child care/prevention work group for BMCI (to be described later in the report). Mr. Rubio's placement at IMPACT once again formalizes an important informal network of services and allows IMPACT and its parent advocates easy access to information about services. Conversely, the parent advocates provide an important source of information and perspective to the BMCI coalition members.

Youth Advisory Board

In March 2008 the Assistant Commissioner of the Children's Services Office of Youth Development (OYD) approached ACT and asked for our assistance in developing a new youth advisory board. The purpose of the Youth Advisory Board is to offer the youth perspective on foster care policy and program issues; to advise the ACS Commissioner and other key decision makers; and to make recommendations on improving the current foster care policy and programming.

Deborah Rubien, one of ACT's Interim Associate Executive Directors, and an intern began working on the project. The intern, Precious Ward, was soon hired as a part-time staff person, specifically to work on youth issues. Ms. Ward is a former foster youth from California and is in New York City to work on her graduate degree.

Ms. Rubien and Ms. Ward began to meet with OYD staff to design the project. The decision was made to gather a small group of youth to function as the Steering Committee and to charge them with designing the structure and mission of the Youth Advisory Board. Ms. Ward worked with OYD staff to convene this group. Ms. Rubien and Ms. Ward helped to devise agendas for each meeting and provided training to build the capacity of OYD staff and participating youth to develop agendas and to document the meetings through writing minutes. ACT provided materials to support mission development and strategic planning.

Ms. Ward worked actively with the group for the past four months, meeting weekly and nurturing the leadership of each of the members. The group has developed its mission, its goals and objectives. In addition they have developed outreach strategies to engage youth from each of the 34 foster care providers that contract with Children's Services. At the quarterly meeting on July 11, 2008 with staff serving adolescents in all of the contract agencies, the youth gave a presentation that was very well received by those attending the meeting. Their presentation was well organized, inspiring, relaxed and genuine. Applications were distributed for staff to pass on to the young people in their agencies. It is expected that interviews and selection for youth representatives will take place in August and the first Youth Advisory Board Meeting will take place in September.

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Bridge Builders/CPI

Over the last year, ACT has been facilitating a process of transitioning the Bridge Builders project from its current organizational governance, and fiscal management structure to a federation model nonprofit that is administered by the community. ACT is guiding the transition process by providing strategic planning, organizational development, leadership development, technical assistance, and capacity-building to the Bridge Builders.

In addition, this past year Bridge Builders was awarded a \$150,000 Community Partnership Initiative (CPI) contract from ACS. The original Bridge Builders successfully incorporated new agencies to participate in the CPI related work groups and successfully expanded its geographic boundaries to include all of Community District 4 for the CPI related activities.

Strategic Planning: ACT designed, coordinated and facilitated a series of multi-level strategic planning sessions for the Bridge Builders project that included all project stakeholders (funded and non-funded Bridge Builders partners, new organizations engaged through ACS's CPI, parents and other community residents, government agencies, and funders).

In 2007, ACT facilitated the first phase of the Bridge Builders transition process. Activities in this phase included two Transition Planning Preparatory Retreats held in March 2007 and May 2007, which were coordinated, convened and facilitated by ACT. Over 30 project stakeholders participated and the primary goals of the retreats were to review and take stock of where partners and participants were in the project, assess project needs, and to stimulate thinking about what direction the transition should take. In addition to meeting those goals, partners revisited the original vision and goals for the Bridge Builders project, gained consensus on commonly used terminology, created a taxonomy of those terms, heard stakeholders' feedback on a Chapin Hall Evaluation Report, heard stakeholder perceptions about the governance of the project, developed a portrait of the project's current decision-making structure and heard stakeholder thoughts and expectations for the future.

The second phase of the transition planning process began in October 2007 and included a series of discussions facilitated by ACT designed to help project stakeholders understand and discuss what the transitional options are, decide on plan for some immediate next steps, and gain consensus about what shape the transitional structure should take. Topics discussed at the retreat included organizational models to consider for the Bridge Builders/CPI, fiscal management needs, future leadership and staffing needs, and the development of a leadership, capacity-building, and training plan.

ACT subsequently created a Strategic Implementation Plan for the transition, incorporating decisions made at the retreats. ACT also coordinated the creation of four subcommittees to manage the implementation needs identified in the Strategic Implementation Plan (Staffing, Fiscal Management, Funding, Nonprofit Incorporation / Board of Directors). With coordination and facilitation from ACT, the Fiscal Management Subcommittee selected a community based fiscal conduit to respond to the fiscal management needs of the project. The Staffing Subcommittee was successful in selecting a new Executive Director for the project.

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Organizational Development: ACT has been facilitating the process to create a new organizational structure and creation of a tax exempt organization to administer Bridge Builders/CPI. ACT has researched and presented organizational models for the partners, and is guiding the process to develop a governance structure for a Federation Membership model that project partners selected as the most feasible structure for the Bridge Builders. ACT continues to coordinate and facilitate the subcommittee that is driving the development of the selected structure and creation of the organization's by-laws and Board.

Executive Search and Recruitment and Leadership Development: ACT continues to provide coaching and modeling to the leadership of Bridge Builders, including project directors, co-chairs and community representatives. The recent hire of the Executive Director for the project is an indication of how leadership has been cultivated within the project. The new Executive Director, who joined Bridge Builders in 2005 as the Foster Care Coordinator and later became the Program Director, was selected from pool of 35 candidates. ACT guided the search for a new Executive Director for Bridge Builders/CPI by developing a job description and announcement, advertising the position, designing the interview rating sheet and coordinating the interviews.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building: In November of 2007 ACT, on behalf of the Bridge Builders, submitted a proposal to the United Way of NYC for the Direct Technical Assistance Grant to help develop a leadership training series. The grant was awarded in December of 2007 and DKB Consultants was assigned to work with ACT on developing a leadership institute for the project. Debra Keenan has been the consultant working with ACT from DKB. In addition to facilitating two focus groups and having numerous discussions with project partners, Ms. Keenan has created an outline and budget for a curriculum for the Institute.

ACT continues to facilitate the transition planning process and document all challenges and opportunities to lead the Bridge Builders project successfully through its transition.

Partnership with COFCCA

The Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) approached ACT to assist organizations in responding to the upcoming ACS Request for Proposals to contract for all foster care services, preventive services and community coalition initiatives. Originally due for release in the end of March 2008, the expected release is now in the summer of 2008. Funded by the New York Community Trust and the Child Welfare Fund, COFCCA will be offering consultant services to organizations to help with program design and proposal writing. ACT will provide technical assistance to the group of consultants that have been vetted through COFCCA on the area of community initiatives, utilizing ACT's long history of developing collaboratives of service providers and its recent work with CPI coalitions.

In addition, soon after the release of the RFP, ACT will convene borough based meetings to advise organizations, especially non-traditional child welfare providers, who may be interested in responding to the RFP. Finally, ACT will assist organizations in the utilization of data to inform and craft their program design.

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Work on this project began with the ACT Oversight Committee meeting in April 2008. The purpose of that meeting, which will be described in detail later in the report, was to begin the dialogue about community response to the RFP. Some of the suggestions made at the meeting were:

- o For ACS to allow smaller organizations new to child welfare to contractually partner with larger organizations for a short period of time;
- o For ACS to pay attention to the needs of the fast growing immigrant communities and to contractually support culturally sensitive programming;
- o To address the issue of being able to recruit enough staff to work in low-income neighborhoods;
- o For ACS to assist agencies to build infrastructure and internal capacity to collect data;
- o For provider agencies to focus on building leadership within their agencies;
- o For the child welfare community to acknowledge that ACS cannot fix the societal problem of racism, and to acknowledge issues of power and privilege; and
- o For ACS to fund the community coalition initiatives with the level of staffing truly needed to accomplish the goals

Brooklyn Perinatal Network

In addition to the work that ACT has done with Brooklyn Perinatal Network (BPN) as the lead of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Partnership, we have provided technical assistance and consultation on organizational development issues. BPN's primary purpose is to facilitate collective responsibility and community involvement to improve maternal, child, family and community health.

ACT continues to play an instrumental role in the development of the Brooklyn Perinatal Network. During the course of the year, BPN and ACT met several times to discuss programmatic needs and challenges. Core issues articulated during these meetings were: identifying funding sources to which BPN could apply, assistance with recruiting viable board members, help with creating and recruiting a board of advisors that would provide ongoing strategy support and program planning and the need of an intern or staff person to help assist with fundraising efforts and technological developments.

ACT worked collaboratively with BPN to address the highlighted issues. ACT conducted an assessment of the current board and provided BPN with recommendations to strengthen and enhance the capacity of the board. ACT also researched and developed a comprehensive list of funders and grants that are committed to supporting health and community service areas. ACT staff helped write a proposal for a grant to support strategic planning assistance, development of the board of advisors and to establish an aggressive marketing strategy that will be implemented over the next few years. During this process, ACT also helped BPN create and organize their first annual report. ACT also recruited, screened and interviewed interns throughout the course of the year to help continue with fundraising efforts and to assist with BPN's technological challenges. Overall, ACT greatly assisted BPN in setting the foundation

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so it can engage in an intensive strategic planning process to develop the organization's internal infrastructure in order to improve service delivery.

Pipeline Crisis: Winning Strategies for Young Black Males

Leading up to the Pipeline's third annual plenary session on July 11, 2008, ACT's Interim Associate Executive Director, Deborah Rubien was an active member of the Early Care and Education Working Group. The group was comprised of representatives from the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. ACT helped shape the agenda of the Working Group and proffered the success of ACT's IMPACT Family Resource Center as a model for the program initiatives to be undertaken by the Working Group. ACT helped identify East New York as a community with a large African heritage population and a community with many early care and education needs that are not being met.

Prior to this year's plenary session, ACT staff and interns assisted Pipeline volunteers finish the website, edit documents and assist with the session logistics. As with last year's session, the 2008 meeting brought together 1,000 participants from the financial industry, law firms, education and human services to listen to a panel of experts as well as inspiring speeches from Congressman Charles Rangel and Pipeline honorees, Bard College President Leon Botstein, for the Bard Prison Initiative, City University of New York Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, for the City University of New York Black Male Initiative, and Dr. Roland Fryer, for the New York City Million Motivation Campaign.

Finally, two ACT summer interns for 2008 are undertaking a research project to assess the current status and service gaps of early care and education in East New York. The results will inform the work of Pipeline's Early Care and Education Working Group.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Turnaround for Children

In 2007 ACT developed a family engagement model for Turnaround for Children's (TFC) "Safe School, Successful Student Initiative", a project that provides an array of mental health supports in city schools to improve children's academic outcomes. A key component of the family engagement model is the Family Engagement Specialist (FES), a full time staff person to work in the schools to execute the core principles and tasks; ensuring that the model is implemented successfully. ACT played a lead role in recruiting, screening and interviewing several candidates for the FES positions for each of the middle schools. ACT also trained and provided several professional development opportunities to the FES throughout the course of the year.

ACT worked collaboratively with Family Engagement Specialists to coordinate a professional development workshop and a parent workshop on family support resources and programs for parents and students (including an overview of the ACS system). The workshop addressed some of the challenges that parent coordinators and attendance monitors have in asking the right questions when

children are not coming to school, how to partner with parents to improve attendance and how to find resources for parents whose children are truant. In addition, there was a presentation on ACS, its mandates, and services for parents whose children are in need of more intense forms of supervision.

Early this school year ACT designed and presented a mini-professional development workshop on increasing adult sensitivity and awareness in the lunchroom. The workshop was attended by school aides and assistant principals and used music and movement to demonstrate the challenges children might face in hearing, understanding, and following instructions in the lunchroom. Also this year ACT presented a workshop on strategies for engaging families to the TFC social work interns.

ACT believes that one of the key components of effective and meaningful family engagement in schools is to understand the needs and issue areas that families are confronted with and to have an understanding of the communities families live in. Community Mapping is a process that can help schools connect families with viable resources in the community. ACT developed a Community Mapping Resource Guide for each of the five TFC middle schools. The goal of the Community Mapping Resource Guide is to build the school's capacity to partner with local community organizations and social service agencies that can help meet the social, academic, economic and emotional needs of the families. ACT worked with TFC Family Engagement Specialists, Education Coaches, and Social Workers to enhance each school's understanding of local resources, to help develop and foster working and formal relationships between school and neighborhood based organizations, to teach school staff how to connect with local organizations and social service agencies and to develop and maintain positive community ties.

To create the guide and inform our search, ACT staff made visits to the communities that Turnaround schools are located in and interviewed (formally and informally) school and TFC staff. ACT also conducted research, including Census Bureau and DOE educational statistics that revealed the academic achievement needs of schools, cultural and ethnic population of communities, reading of reports outlining the challenges that families and students are facing).

We hope that schools will be able to use the guide to improve their connection to services and other resources in the communities they are located in, and that the guide helps schools understand how government services are zoned and which office they can connect to when families need help and support. We anticipate that the guide will make it possible for appropriate school staff to make connections with service networks and to develop relationships with community providers whose programs can be more directly responsive to school and family needs.

The staff of the schools Turnaround supports consistently identified communication with the City's child welfare agency as a challenge. In response, ACT facilitated the development of a working relationship between TFC and New York City's Administration for Children's Services through ongoing information sessions, ACS/TFC group meetings, and one-on-one relationship building. ACT has also facilitated the development of a partnership between TFC and Children's Services to create a pilot project, modeled after the Bridge Builder's School Strategy¹, which will test ways of improving the communication and relationship of schools with ACS.

¹ ACT convened, coordinated, and facilitated community residents and organizational partners to write a proposal for funding to implement The Bridge Builders. To Preserve the Families of Tightbridge. In its fifth year, Bridge Builders is a five year old child welfare reform project that has

Youth Public Policy and Advocacy Program

ACT is coming to the successful completion of its work in developing the foundation for a foster youth advocacy program. Based and inspired by the success of California Youth Connection, the goal is to develop an advocacy organization for foster care youth, led by current and former foster youth. Originally asked to undertake this project by the ACS Office of Youth Development, ACT continues to work closely with that office. ACT, along with Ronni Fuchs, the Director of Community Resources in the ACS Office of Youth Development, has been meeting with stakeholders within the youth development field to identify a host organization to develop the program.

In the Fall 2007, a meeting with Center for Court Innovation (CCI) revealed a potential interest in starting youth advocacy program, based on the success of its Youth Justice Board. Through a series of meetings with ACT, ACS and CCI consensus was developed on the mission and parameters of a new youth advocacy program. At a meeting with a small group of stakeholders in May 2008, all indications were positive for CCI as the host organization. At the time of this writing, CCI is revising its initial Statement of Interest and a Memorandum of Agreement is being developed. It is anticipated that the responsibility for the development of the youth advocacy program will be transferred to CCI within a month. ACT will continue to provide technical assistance, convening of stakeholders and connection to resources in addition to some staff time of our Program Assistant for Youth Issues, who is a former foster youth with experience in a number of foster youth development programs.

SERVICE INTEGRATION

IMPACT: A Family Resource Center

ACT's IMPACT Family Center is a thriving family support program in Bushwick that utilizes a peer-to-peer approach at it works with hundreds of families to access the services they need for their young children and other family members. With a focus on literacy, family engagement and parent empowerment, IMPACT helps families to improve their children's school readiness and success. While there are myriad aspects of IMPACT that we can report on, here service integration will be the focus.

In 2002 in an effort to improve parents' access to high quality early care and education, United Way of New York City's Early Learning Project commissioned ACT to develop a community-driven replicable model. ACT researched and built IMPACT in collaboration with a team of 25 neighborhood organizations and local parents. Its quarterly Local Design Team meetings continue to bring together these agencies to exchange information and to improve the coordination of services. ACT helps to bring commissioner-level policy makers to IMPACT meetings, primarily from Children's Services (formerly

ACS), DYCD and the Mayor's office, to promote dialogue and two-way information flows between the community and city government.

In November 2005, IMPACT officially opened its doors to Bushwick and surrounding communities. Today, Bushwick IMPACT is a neighborhood-based family resource center with a mission to empower parents to maximize their children's potential by strengthening families, enriching community life, and influencing the systems that affect them. IMPACT targets mothers with children under eight and in 2007, Year II of operation, served more than 1000 parents and children through four program areas: leadership development, child development supports, family literacy, and family supports that include information and referrals to services that meet whole family needs.

IMPACT's unique model, which includes six neighborhood parents trained as Parent Advocates, relies on a strengths-based, culturally competent peer-to-peer approach, bringing to life the "parents helping parents" philosophy that is key to our success in Bushwick. In the past year, IMPACT's team has tripled to sixteen regular staff, five full-time, five 19-25 hours per week, four interns and volunteers; and two expert consultants, one in one early education the other in child development, parenting and special needs.

Bushwick, a stressed neighborhood with more than a 50% high school drop out rate is representative of other New York City neighborhoods. IMPACT responds by strengthening the foundation and community context for achievement early on. IMPACT's team has established its effectiveness at coaching peers to address the continuum of concerns faced by families struggling to raise children in challenging circumstances. To achieve long-term solutions for families in Bushwick, IMPACT strives for a more responsive system of early care and education and works towards that goal from three levels: with parents and families; through coalitions with community and city-wide partners; and at the city agency level, primarily with Children's Services (formerly ACS). Our community partners include child care centers, schools, hospitals, libraries, museums and social service agencies.

To increase family literacy IMPACT hosts on-site read aloud programs, family cooking music and art programs. IMPACT's family literacy program has solidified and increased in volume and quality through three key partnerships: the Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Children's Museum, and Aris in Bushwick, an all volunteer collective of local artists. Through 84 literacy activities in the last year, IMPACT has exposed 504 parents and children to positive reading experiences. A core group of 17 parents and children under eight consistently participate in activities designed to stimulate a love of reading, improve self-expression, and promote positive family bonding associated with learning.

Through city wide collaboration IMPACT gains experts' best practices, demonstrates child care and education policy in real time and informs efforts to better coordinate services and share resources. IMPACT has served as the lead organization for the Bushwick CPT's child care/preventive services subcommittee, designed to increase referrals between early care and education centers and preventive service agencies. Since December 2007, IMPACT has convened, coordinated and facilitated planning and development meetings with child care centers and preventive service agencies (PPRS) across Bushwick. In less than five months, IMPACT has helped to stem vacancy rates by referring 75 children to child care centers, with 25 enrollments confirmed. After the first quarter of the contract, the following concrete advances were made:

- Geo-mapping of all Early Care and Education Centers (ECE) and PPRS agencies serving Bushwick was carried out, in order to visually locate proximity between services;

- A referral guide was created and distributed for ECE and PPRS, so that they can, at a glance, have all the contact information, services provided and eligibility criteria available to them when referring families. Each of the five PPRS agencies was paired with 6-8 ECE centers, according to the results of the geo-mapping

- The blueprint for the CPI Tracking System (for the full committee) was created through Zoho Creator (an on-line database that all CPI agency members will be able to access and be responsible for maintaining and inputting data).

- The referral process and tracking system were presented at three PPRS agencies and for four child care center Directors.

IMPACT's role in this effort clearly demonstrates the model's strength as an intermediary for facilitating child care enrollment and increasing utilization rates.

In this past year, IMPACT has continued its growth as a holistic family support center and has become a thriving community program, drawing parents of young children to its doors and empowering them to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

One City/One Community

Although the One City One Community Project closed its doors in October 2007, ACT continues to work to share the lessons learned by the project with public and private providers across the city. During this period, One City's work has been focused in four areas:

- Interagency Case Coordination and Case Conferencing
- Work Group Facilitation
- Transition and Adoption
- Evaluation

Interagency Case Coordination and Case Conferencing

By the end of the pilot project in October 2007, One City/One Community served over 275 families through its case conferencing model since its inception in December 2004. This was accomplished with support from ten partnering City agencies and several non profits.

One City served residents of Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn who are involved with at least two city agencies and/or city contracted non-profit agencies and whose problems with these agencies cannot be resolved without high-level intervention. A typical One City consumer is a single parent-headed household with limited income, unemployed, previously homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Families typically have an average of three elementary aged children.

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For most of the families, a lack of interagency communication, lack of service coordination and receiving conflicting information or instructions from caseworkers are the primary reasons for their involvement with One City. Our goal in working these families was two-fold: 1) liaise with senior managers and facilitate case conferences with the families and senior managers in order to resolve the issue(s) quickly and holistically; 2) identify and analyze areas of systems improvements which are then shared with agency Commissioners.

In addition to providing valuable coordination services to clients, One City's work with clients has provided a vehicle for the identification of policy barriers. Some of the policy recommendations included:

- Review and modify the intake process at DHS's Prevention Assistance Temporary Housing (PATH) for families with Section 8 vouchers.
- Establish a liaison within NYCHA and ACS to intervene when removal of children from NYCHA housing is imminent due to housing conditions
- Amend existing housing subsidy policy (HSP) for "But For Housing" ACS clients.

Work Group Facilitation

During the three year pilot program the One City Staff established and facilitated two interagency work groups that focused on Informed Consent/Interagency Client Data Sharing and Web Site. The accomplishments of the workgroups include:

Interagency Informed Consent Protocol: Facilitated by One City/ACT, an interagency work group of program and legal staff designed an informed consent protocol that will allow for the ease of interagency client information sharing. With support from the City's Law Department and input from several city agencies, a draft consent form has been created that has been endorsed by the Project's leadership. The City plans to pilot and evaluate the process within one agency (possibly the New York City Housing Authority) and develop a phased-in process that would include additional social services agencies.

Web Site Development: One City convened an interagency Website work group whose charge was to conceptualize an information Website for human service workers that would enable them to learn about new policy precedents within their agencies and others, as well as to more easily navigate city government on behalf of their clients. One City staff administered surveys to over 400 City and non-profit line staff and managerial staff from five City agencies to inform the use and content of a Website as a tool for navigating within and across agencies. The top three priority uses of a Web site as identified by respondents were: 1) the ability to search for resource people at agencies via telephone numbers, for the purpose of clarifying agency policies, procedures or services; 2) the ability to easily locate information about city agencies' services or programs to assist clients; and 3) the ability to search for information about programs and services using a search engine. The results of the survey and the work group's recommendations were forwarded to the Deputy Mayor Gibbs' office for review and follow-up.

Transition and Adoption

In March 2008 ACT took the first step towards disseminating the lessons learned from One City by hiring Ms. Danette Molina as our Cross Systems Specialist. In this partnership with CRADLE, the federally funded system of care in Bedford Stuyvesant, the One City Cross-Systems Specialist integrates

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the work of One City and CRADLE in Bedford-Stuyvesant and other areas of the city by providing training sessions on navigating city agencies. Beginning with Children's Services, a series of trainings was developed entitled: *Demystifying Children's Services*. The purpose of the series was to increase the knowledge and awareness of community members, as well as, private and governmental service providers about the scope of New York City's Children's Services.

In addition, the *Demystifying Children's Services* series was designed to provide information on how to access the many resources and services offered by the agency. Another goal was to improve the perception of New York City Children's Services within the communities they serve. The series also provided an opportunity for private and governmental service providers to become familiar with the Children's Services policies and procedures in order to encourage integration with their programs. The need for this Series was identified based on feedback from community members who voiced concerns surrounding their views of the agency's function being adversarial in nature coupled with the perceived inaccessibility of the agency. In addition, interagency and intra-agency service providers expressed an interest in obtaining additional information about the services and resources offered by the agency.

The five-part series included the following topics and were presented by ACS staff:

- Overview of Children's Services
- Child-care/Headstart
- Preventive Services
- Child Protection
- The Family Assessment Program (FAPS Division)
- Office of Youth Development
- Office of Community Partnerships
- Community Planning/IOC (Improved Outcomes for Children)

The *Demystifying Children's Services* series was well received by the attendees, which averaged forty per session. The Series commenced on April 30th and ended on May 28th 2008. The Cross Systems Specialist will expand this series to other communities in New York City and is working on developing a similar series that will "demystify" other government agencies in New York City.

The Cross Systems Specialist is also working with CRADLE staff and community members on developing a plan for sustaining the lessons learned from One City through CRADLE beyond the end of CRADLE's federal grant.

Evaluation

The Brandeis Evaluation, entitled *A Management & Policy Study of Mayor Bloomberg's One City/One Community Strategy*, was completed on September 3, 2007. ACT is currently working on the development of a transition plan which will provide direction for how the City might adopt elements of the One City model into its human services infrastructure so as to improve interagency collaboration and client service delivery.

STAKEHOLDERS

The convening of key players that directly work with and impact the lives of children and families throughout New York City presents a unique opportunity for partners to discuss core issues and recent policies that shape the lives of the communities that we serve. During these forums information and ideas are exchanged about recent developments in child welfare, education, health and other service delivery systems. The Oversight Committee Meetings present an opportunity for partners to strategize about solutions that will address some of the challenges facing children and families.

ACT organized two Oversight Committee meetings during the course of the year. The topic for the meeting in October 2007 was, "Early Care and Education" and the topic for the Oversight Committee meeting in April 2008 was "Collaborations and Partnerships in a New Era of Child Welfare." The participants of this meeting are ACT's key stakeholders, including, high ranking government officials, community members, families, funders, community based organizations and educators.

During the "Early Care and Education" meeting, a dynamic group of presenters consisting of Jennifer Jones Austin, former Family Services Coordinator of Deputy Mayor Gibbs' Office, William Schroeder of Sullivan and Cromwell, ACS Commissioner Mattingly and Deputy Commissioner Anne Williams from ACS shared recent developments in New York City government, specifically highlighting policies shaping the early child care, child welfare and educational systems. Jennifer Jones Austin spoke about the Deputy Mayor's Early Care and Education Steering Committee and her vision for a unified early care and education system.

Following the presenters, an esteemed group of panelists responded to the vision described by Ms. Austin and to the comments from ACS Commissioner Mattingly and how recent government policies/initiatives can support the work that is needed in this area. The panel was composed of: ACS Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Roberts; Francis Ayuso, Project Director of the Bridge Builders Project; Ngozi Moses, Executive Director of Brooklyn Perinatal Network; Dr. Frieda Spravack, Executive Director of ACE Integration Head Start; Dr. Kathryn Salisbury, Director of the Coordinated Children's Services Initiative, operated by the Mental Health Association of NYC in collaboration with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; and Vani Sankarapandian, Senior Policy Analyst from the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies engaged in a discussion about early childcare and education.

The next Oversight Committee meeting in April 2008 focused on collaborations and partnerships between New York City Government, specifically New York City Children's Services, and non-traditional community child welfare agencies in light of the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) that has expanded its scope and definition of "child welfare service providers". There were several presenters and panelists that expressed the perceived challenges and the exciting opportunities linked to the upcoming RFP. The panelist consisted of Denise Rosario, Executive Director of Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, Dianne Heggie, Associate Executive Director of Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies, Dorothy Worrell, Executive Director of Harlem Dowling, Wayne Ho, Executive Director of Coalition for Asian American Children and Families and John Courtney, Co-Director of Partnership for Family Supports and Justice Fund for Social Change. Several New York City Children's Services government officials were present to engage in a meaningful dialogue about capacity building, partnerships and also helped to clarify some policy and programmatic changes.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

ACT continues to offer professional development and mentorship opportunities to students interested in the nonprofit, child welfare and human services field through internships. ACT has ongoing relationships with Hunter College's Public Scholar Program, Harvard College's Center for Public Interest (CPIIC) and New York University Department of Metropolitan Studies. In addition to these fine institutions, ACT hosts interns from many other schools, ranging from high school level to graduate school.

This past year, ACT hosted a year-long Public Service Scholar from Hunter College, three students from NYU's Metropolitan Studies, a graduate student from NYU's Wagner School of Public Policy, two graduate students from SUNY Binghamton's Public Policy program, two students from Harvard University, a graduate student from Columbia University School of Social Work and two high school students from Bushwick, Brooklyn.

Interns work on one or more projects depending on their interests and the time sensitive priorities of ACT. This summer interns are researching the early childcare service delivery system in East New York, providing support to the Pipeline Crisis/Winning Strategies for Young Black Males and designing and implementing an evaluation of the Immigration Community Partnership Initiative. This past year interns have worked on creating a database for ICPI, creating a community mapping project for Turnaround for Children, designing an evaluation of the immigration project, developing curriculum for IMPACT's Read Alouds and organizing activities at the Brooklyn Public Library on weekends.

ADVISORY BOARDS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

ACT's Interim Associate Executive Directors receive requests to participate in a variety of advisory groups, boards and other meetings to offer our expertise. A sample of those activities follows.

1. Preventive Services Guidelines. We attended focus groups sponsored by the office of ACS Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Roberts, Division of Family Support Services, to gather information and solicit feedback in the writing of new guidelines for preventive services.
2. RDS Advisory Group. ACS invited ACT to be members of an advisory group for the Recruitment, Development and Support of Foster Parents. This is an advisory group to Associate Commissioner for Family Permanency Services, Eric Niklas.
3. Head Start Governing Board. ACT's Interim Associate Executive Director was asked to sit on the 9 member Head Start Governing Board, responsible for the oversight of ACS's 76 delegate Head Start agencies serving over 19,000 children in New York City.
4. Advisory Panel for NYC Early Childhood Professional Development Institute. The Advisory Panel advises the leadership of CUNY's Professional Development Institute on its many projects to promote the professional development of the early childcare workforce.
5. DYCD Interagency Coordinating Council on Youth. ACT staff was invited to sit on the Court Involved Youth Workgroup of this DYCD Council.

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DEPUTY MAYOR'S OFFICE

ACT continues its relationship with the Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs' office and the Family Service Coordinator. ACT's Interim Associate Executive Directors met with Ron Richter, the new Family Service Coordinator. One of his priorities is early care and education and he is interested in the IMPACT model. A site visit is planned for IMPACT so that Mr. Richter can see first-hand the success of a family support model that uses a peer-to-peer service mechanism.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

In the summer of 2007 ACT faced significant leadership changes. The founding Executive Director, Eric Brettschneider and the Associate Executive Director, Arthea McLaughlin, left the organization to pursue other personal and professional endeavors. Deborah Rubien and LaTrelle Penny were promoted to Interim Associate Executive Directors and have been providing leadership through the transition phase. A Transition Team was formed last summer and is chaired by Eric Brettschneider. Three members of the Transition Team, Eric Brettschneider, William Schroeder (Sullivan & Cromwell) and Linda Lausell Bryant (Inwood House) comprise the Executive Search Team. The team contracted with Community Research Exchange to conduct an executive search and results should be announced soon.

Since the writing of the last report, and the change in leadership, the following staff changes have taken place:

1. Sandy March, formerly the Special Assistant to the Executive Director, was promoted to Program Operation and Program Associate. She is actively working with the Bridge Builders project, taking a lead on many important activities, such as the search for a fiscal conduit as Bridge Builders moves towards incorporation.
2. Danette Molina was hired in March 2008 as the Cross Systems Specialist.
3. Precious Ward was hired in March 2008 as the Program Assistant for Youth Issues. Prior to that, Ms. Ward was an intern with ACT from September 2007 - February 2008.
4. Kenia Ortiz, an administrative assistant, left ACT in February 2008 to move to another position. The vacancy was not filled due to a hiring freeze and Ms. Ortiz' responsibilities have been absorbed by other staff.

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NEXT STEPS

The next steps for ACT include, but are not limited to:

1. ACT will explore the expansion of the Immigration project, specifically focusing on technical assistance and capacity building. This year's involvement with CPI identified a need for such services for smaller immigrant serving organizations.
2. ACT will convene meetings of the topical workgroups for the 11 CPI coalitions to facilitate much needed information exchange among the groups.
3. ACT will work with COFCCA to insure a broad range of access and ability to respond to the upcoming ACS RFP. ACT will convene borough based informational meetings and will also work with the consultants to advise on the development of community initiatives.
4. ACT will work with IMPACT leadership and stakeholder to develop a strategic plan for its future, which could include replication of the entire project and/or replication of some of its components.
5. ACT will continue to support and supervise the BENYCVN/NN Network Liaison as the complexity of his portfolio increases with the growth of the CPI coalition.
6. ACT will continue to provide technical assistance to the Bridge Builders/CPI coalition as they move to incorporation and community control.
7. ACT will continue to offer trainings that assist with service integration by providing information and access among city agencies, in addition to follow up on other ways to incorporate the lessons learned from the One City/One Community Project.
8. ACT will continue to provide technical assistance to the new foster youth advocacy program after transfer to a new host organization is completed.
9. ACT will continue to assist Children's Services Office of Youth Development in the formation of its Youth Advisory Board.
10. ACT's Interim Associate Executive Directors will continue to work with the Transition Team to insure a smooth transition for new leadership and viability of the organization.

**Appendix L. Agenda for Children Tomorrow: Gains and Accomplishments, Initial
Inventory, 1990-1994**

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most recent draft

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Gains

AGENDA FOR CHILDREN TOMORROW

GAINS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

INITIAL INVENTORY

1990 - 1994

December, 1994

(5)

SECTION TITLES FOR INVENTORY OF ACT'S
GAINS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS (1990 - 1994)

- A. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW (including SUPPORT OF TWO ADMINISTRATIONS)
- B. FUNDING SUPPORT
- C. COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES: COLLECTIVE
- D. COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES: INDIVIDUAL
(Mott Haven, Washington Heights, Bushwick, Jamaica, Rockaway, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Ft. Greene, and South Brooklyn)
- E. CITYWIDE IMPACT OF ACT
- F. STATEWIDE IMPACT OF ACT
- G. NATIONAL IMPACT OF ACT
- H. SECURING RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES
- I. PIONEERING POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND PRODUCTS
- J. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
- K. CAPACITY BUILDING
- L. SUPPORT FROM VOLUNTEERS, INTERNS, COLLEGIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHERS

M. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

N. FUTURE (ONGOING) PRIORITIES

O. MILESTONES AND MISSES (or, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FRUSTRATIONS) 1994

IN THE BEGINNING.....

In 1988, the Agenda for Children Tomorrow (ACT) brought together representatives of governmental and non-governmental provider agencies in a unique collaborative effort to effect improvement in the City's human service delivery system. Three Task Forces were created, the names and participants of which appear at the back of this section, and without whom this project could not have moved forward.

The first phase of ACT's efforts identified several characteristics of successful reform recommendations:

- * specific action-oriented proposals, including plans for implementation;
- * public/private sector cooperation;
- * follow-up activities including advocacy, outreach constituency building and monitoring.

This phase, which concluded with the publication of a report on three public policy issues, generated the following products for the issue entitled "Untangling Family Services":

1. a detailed description of the elements of a locally-based system, including mission and goals, characteristics, a service selection method and suggested service emphasis; and evaluation standards;
2. a proposed management structure for the new system;
3. an implementation plan outlining the steps that the Mayor and city administration could take immediately.

Thus, the outcomes produced by ACT's initial task force of private philanthropic and social service leaders were recommendations for addressing the fragmentation of services targeted to high-risk communities and families. Key among the recommendations was the implementation of a locally-based planning process to coordinate the efforts of human service, health and economic development programs in designated neighborhoods. The ACT Implementation Project was established to launch that planning process.

In January 1990, the ACT Implementation Project was authorized by New York City's newly-inaugurated Mayor David Dinkins, whose support committed all government agencies of New York City to working together collaboratively in the development and support of a system of comprehensive, locally-based services for children and families. In January 1994, this commitment was renewed by Deputy Mayor Nifa Segarra on behalf of newly-inaugurated Mayor Rudolph Guiliani.

The overall purpose of the ACT Implementation Project was to:

"create and evaluate 10 community district-based collaborative groups of health and social service providers, consumers and concerned others in order to create services for children and families that are comprehensive, non-duplicative, accessible, supportive of families' needs and easy to use; and to connect economic development, housing and employment decision-making and resources to this network."

The ACT Implementation Project was designed to enable service delivery to become "family-focused, client-centered, and neighborhood-based," and to initiate a large-scale shift in focus towards more widespread provision of preventive services. Services were to be co-located wherever feasible, but in all instances were to be integrated through a collaborative approach to problem-solving involving the public, private and voluntary agencies servicing designated neighborhoods.

At the heart of ACT is a vision of the way family services ought to work. Too often a family now travels to several different agencies in various locations, to receive child care, income support, family counseling, or educational assistance and just as often they are blocked at selling the service or confused by the fragmentation and overlap of services. ACT hopes for the day when regardless of which "door" the family entered to receive services, parents would be guided to the right place(s) to get help in an efficient coordinated way.

The ACT Implementation Project provided New York City with a new focus, and a new perception of family and community as partners with service providers that involves all parties as collaborators.

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION TO INVENTORY OF ACT'S

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND GAINS (1990-1994)

At the most recent meeting of Agenda for Children Tomorrow's Oversight Committee, a community participant described ACT as a "life-form, a prototype for the future." This adds new meaning to the thought that ACT is evolving. Ultimately, the results of ACT's work will be assessed on the basis of measurable outcomes for children, families and neighborhoods. Local capacity to evaluate will be primarily focused on our evaluative work.

ACT works to achieve "bottom up" planning in a "top down" environment, while simultaneously seeking to influence changes in government to support the visions for community collaboration that are developed locally. Through a central political structure and a versatile approach to communities, ACT has widened its circle of impact.

While a formal evaluation plan is being designed through Public/Private Ventures and the Ford Foundation, it is valuable to review those accomplishments and gains which ACT has achieved since its inception. This inventory describes the process results, concrete products, and tangible movement of agendas for change achieved by ACT. Although any judgment may be premature, the promise of ACT is unquestionable. The partnerships of trust which have been forged, and the support two consecutive city administrations, are among the unmeasured testaments to ACT's work and goals. It is also important to note that, during the past four years, ACT has had no staff turnover*.

Perhaps this inventory can serve as a basic reference tool to inform our funders and evaluators, and upon which ACT can build. We will continue to add to it in the coming months, documenting ACT's work and providing a reference binder which will be available upon request by those individuals who are interested.

* One intern joined ACT's staff and subsequently entered law school.

Section B

FUNDING SUPPORT

Since its inception in 1989, ACT has been almost entirely supported through fourteen private foundation and corporate gifts. However, in-kind office space and equipment have been generously provided through the Mayor's office; and the City and State have contributed public dollars, as indicated below:

PRIVATE FUNDERS

- * The Aaron Diamond Foundation
- * The Booth Ferris Foundation
- * Chemical Bank
- * Freddie Mac
- * The Ford Foundation
- * The Foundation for Child Development
- * The Ittleson Family Foundation
- * The J.P. Morgan Charitable Trust
- * The New York Community Trust
- * The New York Foundation
- * Primerica Foundation
- * The Pinkerton Foundation
- * United Way of New York City
- * Valentine Perry Snyder Foundation

PUBLIC SUPPORT

- * The State of New York/Neighborhood Based Alliance Grants
- * The City of New York/Human Resources Administration
(Funds to match private dollars for support of local planners)
- * The City of New York/Community Development Agency (CDA)

* [A complete list of actual grant amounts, dates and funders follows in this section]

COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES:

COLLECTIVE

Section C

COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES:COLLECTIVE

(MOTT HAVEN, WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, BUSHWICK, JAMAICA)

Over the past four years, local ACT collaboratives have been established in four communities and they in turn have hired local planners. They have each achieved their own individual milestones, which are described in detail below. However, they share a number of gains and some have achieved collectively:

- * Developed "local collaboratives" in four communities thus far - Mott Haven, Washington Heights, Bushwick, and Jamaica. These collaboratives are akin to a "coalition of coalitions" and are comprised of service providers, community residents and leaders, religious and public sector representatives. These collaboratives form the core of "bottom-up" planning. Several City agencies (including the Office of AIDS Policy and Coordination, Office of Drug Abuse Policy, Human Resources Administration, and the Federal Office) have requested audiences with the collaboratives.
- * Hired four local planners who are working with the collaboratives. The planners are located in: Washington Heights, Mott Haven and Bushwick. A fourth planner is transitional and is doing initial work in the next six targeted communities. The city's Human Resources Administration (HRA) has identified appropriate funds to match private monies raised by ACT, to support local planners for \$150,000 in Fiscal Year '94.
- * Held a successful 2-day planning retreat, attended by representatives of the Bushwick and Mott Haven collaboratives and city agency representatives, to convene players and motivate partnerships that can follow through on community requests. The evaluation forms from the first retreat showed positive results. The retreat leader was impressed by the participating team's progress at a subsequent second retreat.
- * Held a similar retreat for government and private-sector representative with collaboratives from Washington Heights and Jamaica. These retreats provided a foundation for solidifying the collaboratives and strengthening their relationships with government and voluntary partners.
- * Distributed information on grants.

Also:

- * Three targeted ACT communities -- Central Harlem, Mott Haven and Bedford-Stuyvesant -- have been selected to pilot the city/state Community Based Homeless Prevention Program. The goals of this project are to strengthen the delivery of services available to help families maintain housing in order to avert shelter stays, and to stabilize the housing stock in those neighborhoods. The State Department of Social Services has allocated \$1 million towards this program, which includes community needs assessments. (Memo 10/13/93 = To: City/State Work Group FR Katherine Napoli)
- * The collaboratives' work includes progress on these activities:
 - vacant lot clean-ups to develop Green Thumb projects,
 - identifying 10 potential sites for midnight basketball courts in collaboration with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation,
 - organizing Early Childhood Coalitions,
 - organizing job shadowing programs for junior high school students in conjunction with local development corporations.
- * The local planners and ACT's Consultant, Anne Mitchell, are engaged in an important planning process with the BOE Early Childhood Supervisor/Liaisons from each of the Community School Districts. They seek to educate the central Board of Education and Community School Districts about ACT, to highlight some successful attempts at easing children's transitions into school, and to plot next steps in ACT and the ECE Unit/ECE Liaisons working together. <memo 3/10/94= To: Eric Brettschneider FR: Anne Mitchell.>
- * In each community an organization has volunteered space, generally without reimbursement of any kind, and service and equipment support for local planners. Current sites and planners are:
- * Distributed City Family, a publication to inform that portion of the spanish speaking community that can not read English well, have not completed their education but need clear information in order to better their quality of life in the City, four times a year.
- * The city's computerized Youthline was obtained from the Department of Youth Services and incorporated into the collaborative's information systems.

MOTT HAVEN

Local planner: ELLEN GOOLSBY
SOBRO
384 East 149th Street
Room 330
Bronx, NY 10455
*(718) 402-4700 (W)
(718) 585-9402 (Fax)

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

Local planner: CARLOS PINEDA
Dominican Women's
Development Center
359 Fort Washington
Suite 1G
New York, NY 10003
*(212) 740-1929 (W)
(212) 740-8352 (Fax)

Bushwick

Local planner: DALE JOSEPH
Bushwick Community
1420 Bushwick Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11207
*(718) 443-5552/3 (W)
(718) 452-4843 (Fax)

JAMAICA

Local planner: KEWULAY KAMARA
York College
Division of Adult
and Continuing Education
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11452
*(718) 262-2495 (W)
(719) 262-2730

Section D

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONESMOTT HAVEN

- * The collaborative has established a management group for governance.
- * Mott Haven has been designated by the State as an NBA site for Fiscal Year 1994-1995.
- * Mott Haven ACT, issued two sets of recommendations to the city, which were adopted in principle by the Department of Employment in its blueprint and have already been reflected in some of DOE's policies.
- * A local planner was hired in January of 1993; and a needs assessment was completed.
- * The result of a study conducted by the Mott Haven ACT revealed a mismatch between job development trends and the current JTPA curricula. This collaborative, having identified Economic Development and Self-Sufficiency as its top priority, focuses on examining issues related to employment in this area.
- * ACT compiled statistics used to show the importance of the East Side Settlement House -- serving 25,000 people annually -- to the South Bronx. <East Side House Settlement, Winter 1994>
- * Mott Haven ACT is working with the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association on a joint venture to bring approximately 300 jobs to the community. Through a \$25,000 grant from The New York Community Trust, a public interest/private capital partnership is being explored with a renowned Swedish paper manufacturing recycling company to establish a work site in Mott Haven and provide employment to residents.
- * Mott Haven ACT has contributed to and participated in efforts initiated by Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, to formulate a comprehensive plan for a strategic, 300-block area in the Bronx. Involvement has included a Kick-Off Conference, Advisory Council and Work Groups focusing particularly on engaging youth.
- * At the April 1994 Mott Haven Collaborative meeting, representatives of the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) announced a federal grant for community-based, comprehensive services for children who are experiencing

emotional/behavioral problems and their families. Those present voted to work with OMH on the grant application and agreed to conduct outreach for subsequent meetings. Subsequently, over 40 people met to discuss how the community might best meet the needs of this targeted population (participants included parents and parent advocates, day care directors, foster care agency representative, school personnel youth service providers, community health workers and staff of local elected officials.) A work group was formed to develop the proposal based upon OMH's application on behalf of Mott Haven ACT for \$17 million in HHS funds.

- * Mott Haven is one of two to three communities being seriously considered by the New York Community Trust for funding to stimulate economic development.
- * Donated office furniture and computers.

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES:

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

Section D

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONESWASHINGTON HEIGHTS

- * Washington Heights was the first ACT neighborhood to receive a NYS Neighborhood Based Alliance (NSA) planning grant of \$75,000 to develop a Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) and has been designated by the State as an NBA site for Fiscal Year 1994 - 1995.
- * A local planner was hired in April of 1993; and a Community Needs Assessment has been completed.
- * The "outreach" stage of the NBA Neighborhood Advisory Council was completed, including the private and public sectors and the Ecumenical Coalition of Washington Heights/Inwood, as well as community and school boards.
- * Community involvement in the local planning process has been furthered by the formation of 13 working committees whose work is linked by a focus on Human Services, Community Safety, and Economic Development/Revitalization.
- * A total of nine focus groups were conducted to further solicit input from community participants and which covered three geographical areas of Washington Heights/Inwood.
- * ACT sponsored a retreat on conflict resolution.
- * A Youth Committee was created and expanded.
- * Washington Heights/ACT received a \$132,000 competitive grant from the Community Development Agency (CDA), to enhance the organizational capacity of the collaborative; develop a Needs Assessment; secure computer equipment; and to compile a Resource Directory of Services.
- * The collaborative participated in Empowerment Zone meetings, assisting in the development of recommendations, defining geographic boundaries, strengthening ties between ACT and Community Board #2, and working with HUDC.
- * Washington Heights/ACT met with HUD and NYCHA to forge connections between economic development and the provision of social services.
- * Representatives from Washington Heights and Inwood participated in The New York Community Trust's new initiatives on economic development. Washington Heights is one of two or three communities under serious consideration

by the Trust to receive funding for this purpose.

- * Supported (advice and advocacy) the site location and funding of a School Based Health Clinic in the George Washington High School, scheduled to open in September of 1994.
- * Local planner planned and coordinated a visit to Washington Heights by the Coro Foundation's "Leadership New York" participants, which highlighted community-based services for youth.
- * Worked with the Mayor's Poster Project and helped to distribute posters to community-based organizations to "humanize" and beautify their office space.
- * Worked with the Children's Aid Society and other community-based organizations to explore the opening a Working Papers Center for the young people in Community Board 12, who now must travel to other boroughs for that purpose.
- * Linkages were made to the Board of Education and a meeting was convened by ACT with all of the Early Childhood Coordinators to facilitate the transition from Head Start to public school.
- * The local planner worked with ACT's Oversight Committee to explore possibilities of streamlining the process whereby permits are issued to service provider who are attempting to renovate space for child care.

* ACT Drafted a plan for the Early Childhood Coalition
Transition Project of Washington Heights Incorporated in July
06'95 ✓ added to computer 8-8-01

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES:

BUSHWICK

Section D

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONESBUSHWICK

- * Bushwick was designated by the State as an NBA site for Fiscal Year 1994 - 1995.
- * A local planner was hired in October of 1992 and a community needs assessment was completed.
- * ACT developed, in conjunction with existing collaborative representatives, an inclusionary model of decision-making and strategic planning.
- * The Bushwick ACT/Child Care Network, in partnership with School District 32, co-sponsored the first "LET'S GET ACQUAINTED" event with community representatives and school officials.
- * A tracking form was developed in collaboration with School District 32 Early Childhood and Pre-K Coordinators, and Bushwick Child Care Network, to ensure that Day Care and Head Start children were registered for school. The form is to be used as a tool to identify the strengths of students as they leave Centers; a way to bridge the communication between Centers and local schools; and as a tracking mechanism to decrease the number of Day Care and Head Start Children that missed registration in prior years. Verbal feedback from principals and Center Directors was very positive; a quantitative evaluation is forthcoming. Next year's goal is to add one to two "set-aside" days for Center children to pre-register for school and ensure inoculation. 100% of the eligible children in day care were enrolled in
- * Bushwick Act has secured a Columbia University Fellow to research and develop a model of transition from Head Start and day care programs to school, for potential citywide replication. [Summer of 1994] (see attached report, Dug Slater). ✓ added 8-8-01
- * Bushwick ACT/Child Care Network raised and presented a policy recommendation to the District School Superintendent, that kindergarten registration and Language Assessment Battery testing conducted on-site at Day Care and Head Start Centers. This is being seriously considered for adoption in that community.
- * Generated \$25,000 worth of donated office furniture and equipment to new program of Bushwick Community Service Society (AIDS Multi-Service Agency program) from United Way's Gifts-In-Kind program. Donated gifts (soaps and

(previous page missing here. It's in the computer)

- * ACT recommended a firm to develop an architectural design of Bushwick's Multi-Service Center's lobby in order to create a family-focused and inviting environment for the community.
- * In harmony with one of ACT's goals to cut bureaucratic "red tape", Bushwick ACT facilitated linkages between the N.Y.C. Board of Education and a community-based child care program that serves developmentally delayed children.
- * A proposal for \$10,000 was submitted to five foundations to support a Bushwick Shadow Program (mentoring program for 15 junior high school students placed at local retailers). The Shadow Program's goals include:
 - Demonstrating the relevance of academic skills to career advancement, and encouraging students to pursue higher education.
 - Improving neighborhood relations and promoting mutual understanding between local business people and youth.
 - Helping students make informed choices about their education and career through self-directed vocational exploration and goal-setting.
 - Fostering the personal and moral growth of youth through mentoring relationships with adults.
- * An additional \$150,000 from CDA was secured to conduct:
 - * Community forums (2)
 - * Needs assessments
 - * (6) Focus groups with
 - Consumers of services and clients,
 - Service providers, and
 - Business people.
- * Facilitated linkages between the N.Y.C. Board of Education and Community-based child care program serving developmentally delayed children.
- * Assisted in the architectural design of Bushwick's multi-service center lobby, creating a family-focused and inviting environment for the community.
- * Bushwick ACT has met with a coalition of mental health services providers to assist with strategizing around applying for Community Reinvestment funding from the State in 1994. IN partnership with prevention program and service provider directors ACT will help determine the mental health needs of the community and conduct a needs assessment.
- * identifying sites for a citywide recreation program to develop a new center. the Police Athletic League to develop a new center. <memo 11/8/93= To: Josephine Pamphile FR:

Anthea McLaughlin>

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES:

JAMAICA

Section D

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONESJAMAICA

- * Jamaica has been designated by the State as an NBA site for Fiscal Year 1994-1995.
- * A local planner was hired in March of 1994; and a working collaborative structure has been established. A policy board was convened; and committees -- or action groups -- have met regularly, focusing on Health, Human Services, Education, Recreation, and Economic Development issues. These groups are the foundation for focus groups who will update ACT's community profile and increase local participation in the planning process. The policy board is the core of a local governing body.
- * A community needs analysis has begun with the help of a consultant and collaborative members.
- * A CDA grant has been signed and the requirements of a newsletter and community survey have already been fulfilled.
- * Jamaica ACT in partnership with York College and the Urban Renewal Committee of South Jamaica, Inc., has worked to secure HUD funding for a Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC). Goals are to formulate strategies to combat chronic unemployment and dependency; design and implement a development plan for South East Queens; and to develop community leadership skills.
- * Jamaica ACT has assisted proposing Americorp Volunteer Service, a domestic Peach Corps-type program, which will recruit, train, and deploy 100 community outreach workers in the areas of health and human services, including family violence.
- * Membership on the collaborative has expanded, gaining the support of the Southern Queens Park Association, the largest multi-service center south of Liberty Avenue. A working relationship has been established with the Greater Jamaica development Corporation (GJDC), as well as with community elected officials.
- * Community Mediation Services, Inc. -- a member of the ACT collaborative - has been selected as a recipient of the Mayor's Award for Racial Harmony and Diversity for 1994. This effort is to develop programs that help youth and families avoid the Family Court System through conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving which empowers the disputants to find solutions.

- * Community Mediation Services, Inc. received a Chemical Bank grant with ACT's help.
- * Jamaica ACT assisted with the development of a June 1994 proposal to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development which requested the designation of that area as an Urban Enterprise Community. The fundamental goals of the proposal include facilitating local economic activity and employment opportunities; enabling home ownership and economic self-sufficiency for residents; enhancing public safety; encouraging small business formation and entrepreneurial activity; strengthening Jamaica's intermodal transportation hub; and supporting the collaborative work of ACT. If this proposal is funded, it will leverage additional monies: the City has agreed to match the SSBG Title XX funds in an amount up to \$2.95 million, and the State is very interested in matching dollars on a project-by-project basis.
- * The Pew Foundation has made monies available for neighborhood preservation in communities that have stable home ownership working families, but are at risk of decline due to lack of continued support and financial resources. They are distributing \$800,000 to community foundations to be matched by an additional \$400,000. The New York Community Trust is applying on behalf of Jamaica; and the ACT collaborative is a critical component of their comprehensive approach to revitalizing this neighborhood, which includes a focus on families and school-to-work training for residents.

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES:
ROCKAWAY

SECTION D

INDIVIDUAL COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES

ROCKAWAY

The Rockaway community in Queens was not one of the original ten neighborhoods targeted by ACT for the development of a collaborative. Yet it is the classic example of a community empowering itself and taking action, for no fewer than a dozen organizations formally requested that ACT "immediately declare Far Rockaway the next site for your implementation project."

Far Rockaway represents unusual and skewed demographics: 25% of the population living there are on public assistance, 25% of all public housing in Queens is located there, and 26% of the land in Rockaway is currently vacant. As one of Rockaway's community leaders stated, "Sheer desperation caused us to form an ACT."

Still in its earliest stages, Rockaway ACT has formed committees to address Social Services, Youth Development, Housing, and Economic Development. Residents have formed a Farmer's Market/Flea Market to sell their own wares, and are seeking to train "everyday people" in economic and employment opportunities.

Future progress within this community will be a goal of ACT and this Inventory shall continue to document Rockaway's milestones.

Appendix M. Coulton and Hollister's (1998) Administrative Data Sources for Small Area Measures, pages 168-171.

Table. Administrative Data Sources for Small Area Measures (continued)

EDUCATION

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
Public school records: Records of students enrolled in public schools	• Children absent more than 20% of days (%) • Children passing proficiency exams (%) • Children with preschool experience (%)	Confidential records, maintained by local board of education; availability and format vary by jurisdiction; information reported to the state is usually aggregated to the building or district level and is therefore unsuited to small area analysis
Head Start Records: Individual records of students enrolled in Head Start	• Eligible children attending Head Start (%) • Average months enrolled	Confidential records, maintained by local Head Start agency or agencies; availability varies

HEALTH

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
Vital Records: Birth, death, and fetal death certificates	• Pregnancies with adequate prenatal care (%) • Infant mortality rate • Teen birth rate • Births to unmarried mothers (%)	Available annually from state vital statistics office; may include census geographic codes; index portion of certificate with address available under confidentiality agreement for valid research purposes; matched birth-death file available but often delayed by several years
Communicable Diseases Information: Records of reportable disease incidence	• Cases of diseases, including STDs	Confidential records, maintained by state and local health officials; availability and format vary by jurisdiction
Immunization Records: Records of student immunization status	• Kindergartners fully immunized by age 2 (%)	Confidential records, maintained by local school districts; availability and format vary by jurisdiction
Medicaid Claims: Claims for medical services	• Annualized rates of ambulatory care utilization • Care obtained from emergency rooms (%)	Confidential records, maintained by state Medicaid agency; availability and format vary by state (as states move to managed care, use of claims and reporting requirements may change)
Hospital Discharge Files: Reports on hospital discharges	• Age-adjusted rates of hospitalization	Confidential information, published by zip code by some hospital associations; availability varies; low incidence may make rates unreliable for small areas

SOCIAL SERVICES

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
Public Assistance Files: Monthly eligibility and payment files	• Recipients per 100 population • Total dollars paid per month • Long-term recipients (%)	Confidential records maintained by local or state human services agencies; format and availability vary; months must be linked to determine duration of reciprocity
Subsidized Day Care Records: Records of children receiving day care subsidies	• Children in subsidized day care • Vouchers used in day care homes (%)	Confidential records, maintained by local or state human services agency; format and availability vary
Day Care Licenses: Records of licensed day care providers	• Day care slots by type • Increase in day care slots (%)	Confidential records, maintained by state licensing authority or local child care resource and referral agency; availability and format vary
Child Welfare Records: Records of children in custody or receiving protective services	• Children taken into care annually • Children under agency supervision • Children in foster placement	Confidential records, maintained by local and state child welfare agencies; availability and format vary
Mental Health, Alcohol, and Drug Services Records: Records of individuals receiving services through mental health and substance abuse treatment systems	• Persons in treatment • Clients keeping regular visits (%)	Confidential records, maintained by local boards; availability and formats vary

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTICIPATION

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
Voter Records: Voter registration lists	• Eligible voters who are registered (%)	Public records, maintained by local board of elections; available for small areas
Membership Records: Local organizations' membership records	• Neighborhood residents who are members (%)	Organizations vary in recordkeeping methods and willingness to release information; if addresses are recorded, small area measures can be developed
Community Directories: Parks, playgrounds, churches, libraries, and other facilities	• Number and type of institutions	Directories vary in accuracy and specificity; computerized yellow pages have wide coverage but include only organizations that have chosen to be listed
Public Transit Information: Routes, schedules, and ridership	• Average travel time to key locations • Direct routes to neighborhood	Available from local transit authority; travel times and distances may be calculated using mapping software
Automobile Registrations and Licenses: Records of	• Automobiles per capita	

HOUSING

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
HMDA Information: Records of loan applications and approvals	- Conventional loans (%) - Loans denied (%) - Financial institutions making loans	Public records, available annually from the Federal Reserve Bank's Financial Institutions Council
Local Property Tax Data: Real property records	- Tax delinquent properties (%) - Median housing assessed values - Residential parcels (%)	Public records, maintained for taxing purposes, available from local tax assessor; format and ease of use vary by jurisdiction
Building and Demolition Permits: Records of permits issued	- Value of construction (%) - Buildings demolished	Public records, available from city building department; may not be computerized
Housing Code Enforcement Reports: Records of violations	Properties with violations (%)	Public records, available from city building inspection department; may not be computerized
HUD Information: Records of public and subsidized housing units	- Total public housing units - Persons per unit in public housing	Available annually from federal Department of Housing and Urban Development in computerized format; geo-coding may be missing

ECONOMY

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
ES202 Information: Employer industry classification, total employment, and payroll	- Change in total employment (%) - Employment in manufacturing (%)	Confidential employer reports filed with the state employment services agency; in many states, reports can be obtained for research purposes with proper safeguards
UI (Unemployment Insurance) Wage Record: Employee earnings and weeks worked	- Former welfare recipients in jobs (%) - Average earnings of training participants	Confidential individual records filed by employers with the state employment services agency; records do not include addresses, so must be merged with another data source for small area analysis; confidentiality protections as for ES202
UI Claimant File: Information on applicants for benefits	- Unemployment insurance claims filed - Average weeks of benefits paid	Confidential records of individual claims filed with the state employment services agency
Business Directories: Selected listings of businesses, published by Cole's, Harris, Dun and Bradstreet, and others	- Total establishments, by industry - Change in establishments (%)	Commercially available from vendors
CDBG Information: Records of expenditures	- Dollars expended annually - Expenditures by category (%)	Available from local Community Development Block Grant administrator; difficult to allocate to small areas because many expenditures are not neighborhood specific
Municipal Income Tax Records: Employer tax withholding records	- Total dollars generated by employers - Increase in tax dollars	Highly confidential data; information aggregated to the neighborhood level may be available by request
Training Program Records: Records of trainees in public programs	- Persons in training - Trainees placed in employment (%)	Confidential records of trainees, maintained by state or local human service department (JOBS program) or state employment services agency (JTPA program)

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Data Source	Indicator Examples	Availability
Municipal Police Records: Records of crime reports, victims, suspects and arrests	- Crime rates - Crimes committed by residents (%)	Maintained by municipal police departments; availability varies by jurisdiction; most departments follow Uniform Crime Reporting procedures
911 System Data: Calls to local emergency dispatch system	- Calls reporting domestic violence - Change in calls (%)	Maintained by regional agency; availability varies by jurisdiction
Juvenile Court Filings: Records of charges filed	- Juvenile crime rate - Juvenile filings for violent offenses (%)	Confidential records, maintained by county court; availability and format vary by jurisdiction
Coroner's Reports: Records of deaths	- Homicides involving firearms (%) - Suicides involving drugs	Maintained by local coroner; availability varies by jurisdiction; may not be computerized
Child Maltreatment Reports: Records of reports to child protection authorities	- Children with maltreatment reports (%) - Reports that involve neglect (%)	Confidential records, maintained by local or state child protection agencies; availability limited and requires strict confidentiality protections
Liquor Licenses: Permits to sell alcoholic beverages	Number and type of outlets	Public records, maintained by state bureau of liquor control

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