

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

RESEARCH & POLICY INITIATIVE UPDATE 2013

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



RESEARCH FOR ORGANIZING



## RECENT RESEARCH AND POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Research and Policy Initiative at the Community Development Project has had another exciting year. In 2013, we co-hosted an innovative conference, released five new reports in partnership with community groups and are providing research support for three legislative campaigns that grew out of our research projects. As always, we also continue to coordinate and support a number of coalitions and alliances working to build power in New York's low-income communities.

As a result of our research support, community organizations have seen their social justice campaigns move forward and their organizing work continue to grow. Our trainings have helped increase the capacity of community organizations and furthered leadership development efforts. Reports, education and advocacy tools have strengthened organizational base-building and increased the presence and profile of community organizations in the media and with government officials.

This update includes information about reports recently published by CDP in partnership with a number of community-based organizations. It also includes information on some of our current and upcoming projects.

For more information about our reports and current projects, please contact Alexa Kasdan, Director of Research and Policy at [akasdan@urbanjustice.org](mailto:akasdan@urbanjustice.org). Thank you for your continued support of the Community Development Project!

Alexa Kasdan  
Director of Research and Policy

## CDP CO-HOSTS CONFERENCE ABOUT INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ORGANIZING



On June 4<sup>th</sup>, CDP, the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), and Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) hosted a conference and exhibit, *Partnering for Impact: Innovative Collaborations for Effective Organizing*. Over 200 people attended the day-long conference which explored how grassroots community organizations and resource groups can partner to organize for justice and social change. Partnering for Impact featured panel discussions, interactive case studies and hands-on workshops that allowed participants to build skills and explore innovative examples

of participatory research, planning and design. Following the conference, there was an exhibition that showcased 17 innovative collaborations between grassroots community organizations and resource groups. These partnerships are examples of how collaborations lead to work that could not be produced solely by the community organization or resource group.

Check out the booklet, opening presentation, project posters, videos and more from the conference here: <http://cdp-ny.org/pfi/>

## NEW REPORTS

### A PEOPLE'S BUDGET: A RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT ON YEAR 2 OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN NEW YORK CITY



On October 9<sup>th</sup>, CDP hosted a webinar to release a new report, “A People’s Budget: A Research and Evaluation Report on Year 2 of Participatory Budgeting in New York.” Participatory Budgeting is a ground-breaking process where community members, instead of elected officials alone, decide how public funds should be spent from start to finish. Year 2 of Participatory Budgeting in New York City expanded upon the success of Year 1 by bringing together almost 14,000 New Yorkers from eight City Council districts, 6,000 more participants than Year 1. Data collected from over 8,200 surveys, 30 observations, and 63 in-depth interviews show that many of these participants were from diverse backgrounds, and that Participatory Budgeting engaged community members who would not otherwise participate in politics or have contact with government. Through PB, eight Council Members allocated almost \$10 million in capital discretionary funds to the 46 winning projects selected by community members in their districts.

Read the report here: [http://cdp-ny.org/report/pbreport\\_year2.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/report/pbreport_year2.pdf)

### THE BURDEN OF FEES: HOW AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS MADE UNAFFORDABLE

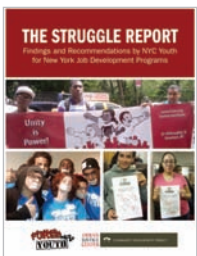


On September 14<sup>th</sup>, CDP and New Settlement Apartments’ Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA ) held a press conference to release a new report, entitled “The Burden of Fees: How Affordable Housing is Made Unaffordable,” followed by a policy briefing and discussion on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The report shows that landlords are systematically charging tenants non-rent fees—a confusing and oftentimes illegal set of charges added to a monthly rent statement. The data, collected from surveys and rent bills from almost 200 tenants in rent stabilized apartments in the Bronx, show that the problem of non-rent fees is serious and widespread. The report offers recommendations to better regulate non-rent fees and protect rent stabilized tenants. Over 150 people attended the press conference and policy

briefing, and the report was covered in the New York Times, El Diario and Bronx News 12. CDP and CASA are using the momentum from the report release to start a legislative campaign prohibiting the fees detailed in the report.

Read the report here: [http://cdp-ny.org/report/The\\_Burden\\_of\\_Fees\\_FINAL.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/report/The_Burden_of_Fees_FINAL.pdf)

### THE STRUGGLE REPORT: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY NYC YOUTH FOR NEW YORK JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



On June 5<sup>th</sup>, CDP and FUREEous Youth held a press conference to release a new report, “The Struggle Report: Findings and Recommendations by NYC Youth for New York Job Development Programs.” The report documents the challenges youth face in finding employment and evaluates existing government youth job programs, which in recent years have suffered from insufficient funding and a lack of connection to youth needs and interests. The report lays out recommendations to provide better employment and training opportunities for youth, as well as strategies for connecting youth to these opportunities. Speakers at the press conference on the steps of City hall included youth who have participated in employment programs, then-City Council Member (now Public Advocate) Letitia James, and the office of

State Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

Read the report here: [http://www.cdp-ny.org/report/The\\_Struggle\\_Report.pdf](http://www.cdp-ny.org/report/The_Struggle_Report.pdf)



## MORE THAN A HOME: HOW AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR NEW YORKERS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS WILL PREVENT HOMELESSNESS, IMPROVE HEALTH AND REDUCE COSTS



On May 17<sup>th</sup>, CDP and VOCAL-NY released a new report, “More than a Home: How Affordable Housing for New Yorkers Living with HIV/AIDS Will Prevent Homelessness, Improve Health and Reduce Costs.” This report examines the impact of denying affordable housing to permanently disabled people living with HIV/AIDS who receive rental assistance. The report lays out a simple, humane and cost-saving solution: ensure that homeless and formerly homeless people living with HIV/AIDS pay no more than 30 percent of their income towards their rent. Speakers at the report release included NYS Senator Brad Hoylman, a Representative from the office of then-NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn, and several VOCAL members and leaders who are living with HIV/AIDS and personally impacted by the rent share burden. The release was covered by the Metro, El Diario, WFUV radio, and NY1 noticias.

Read the report here: [http://cdp-ny.org/report/More\\_Than\\_A\\_Home.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/report/More_Than_A_Home.pdf)

## TIPPING THE SCALES: A REPORT OF TENANT EXPERIENCES IN BRONX HOUSING COURT



On March 15<sup>th</sup>, CDP and New Settlement Apartments’ Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) released a new report, “Tipping the Scales: A Report of Tenant Experiences in Bronx Housing Court.” This report, which is the result of over 1,000 surveys, 3 focus groups and 15 judge observations, documents tenant experiences with Bronx Housing Court. About 2,000 tenants go to Bronx Housing Court every day and it is estimated that about 95% of tenants do not have legal representation while 90% of landlords do. Our research shows that current court protocols and policies are insufficient to level the playing field for unrepresented tenants in Housing Court. This report provides simple, common-sense steps that can be taken to ensure that all tenants receive fair treatment. Over 120 people attended the report release. Various media outlets covered the event, including the NY Times, the Daily News, News 12 and Metro.

Read the report here: [http://cdp-ny.org/report/CASA\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/report/CASA_Report_Final.pdf)

# CURRENT PROJECTS

## DOMESTIC WORKER JUSTICE PROJECT

CDP is working with Damayan, Adhikaar, National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), Domestic Workers United (DWU) and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) to provide research and documentation support in their efforts to improve standards for domestic workers. Currently the groups are wrapping up a dialogue process between employers and domestic workers and evaluating existing trainings available to home care workers. They are also designing a training program that incorporates the values of the Caring Across Generations campaign. CDP will write a short report documenting the dialogue process to share the innovative dialogue model and lessons learned with other groups working to improve working standards for domestic workers.

## LOWER EAST SIDE COMMUNITY RESILIENCY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WITH GOLES AND HSC

CDP, Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) and Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) are conducting community-based research and planning focused on Hurricane Sandy. The groups are currently administering surveys with residents and conducting interviews with organizations based in the Lower East Side. These research efforts will be used to support the Lower East Side Long Term Recovery Group (LES Ready) by developing a report of findings and recommendations assessing what worked and what did not work in terms of government and community response to the storm. LES Ready will then use the findings from the report to assist in their creation of a community-based disaster relief plan.

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING CONTINUES TO EXPAND FOR YEAR 4 IN NYC

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is in its third year in New York City and now has nine participating Council Districts. CDP sits on the citywide steering committee and chairs the research advisory board to observe and document the process and provide recommendations for improvement in coming budget cycles. Next year the PB process is set to expand significantly, up to an anticipated 21 Council Members, and CDP is currently working with the Participatory Budgeting Project, Community Voices Heard and several other New York City organizations to expand PB into other pots of capital funds within the city council and other parts of the NYC government.

## ORGANIZING ASIAN COMMUNITIES IN PUBLIC HOUSING WITH CAAAV

CDP is working with CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities on a project to document the experience of Asian public housing residents and to identify the issues and needs of this community. CDP is conducting background research, creating research instruments, supporting data collection and performing data analysis. At the end of this project, CDP and CAAAV will produce a report summarizing the findings and providing recommendations for NYCHA.

## DOCUMENTING THE IMPACT OF SANDY ON NYCHA RESIDENTS

CDP and groups from the Alliance for a Just Rebuilding (AJR), including Community Voices Heard (CVH), ALIGN, Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE), Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES), Red Hook Initiative (RHI), New York Communities for Change (NYCC) and Faith in New York are partnering to conduct research on the effect of Hurricane Sandy on NYCHA residents. The groups are surveying NYCHA residents and the data will be used to produce a short report to bring public attention to the situation of NYCHA residents following Sandy.

## WAGE LIEN WORK

CDP is partnering with Chinese Staff and Workers' Association, National Mobilization Against Sweat Shops (NMASS), Legal Aid, AALDEF and others in the SWEAT (Securing Wages Earned Against Theft) coalition on a campaign to pass legislation that will allow workers to more easily secure payment of stolen wages. CDP is providing support for the campaign's research, which will document workers' struggles to collect wages and build momentum for the bill.

# TURNING RESEARCH PROJECTS INTO POLICY CAMPAIGNS

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS WITH VOCAL-NY



Building off the momentum of a new report developed in partnership with CDP, a strategic report release event and compelling new media coverage of the issue, VOCAL-NY re-launched their state legislative campaign to cap rent at 30% of income for people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City's "independent living" rental assistance program.

## PROTECTING IMMIGRANT WORKERS WITH THE JUSTICE FOR JOB SEEKERS CAMPAIGN



In 2012, CDP and New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE) released a report, "Dreams and Schemes in Queens, New York: Immigrant Struggles to Find Work and Get Status in the Face of Consumer Fraud." Based off the findings of the research and recommendations included in the report, NICE launched the Justice for Job Seekers Campaign aimed at passing legislation that will enforce stricter regulations on employment agencies and better protect immigrant workers who use these agencies. CDP continues to assist the coalition by providing ongoing strategic research and legal support.

## PROHIBITING NON-RENT FEES WITH CASA



The release of CDP and Community Action for Safe Apartment's (CASA) new report, "The Burden of Fees: How Affordable Housing is Made Unaffordable," revealed how pervasive the issue of non-rent fees is in New York City. Based on the findings in the report, CASA formed a coalition and launched a statewide legislative campaign aimed at eliminating non-rent fees. Currently, bills have been introduced in the Senate and Assembly and CDP is providing ongoing campaign development and research support to the growing coalition advocating for the legislation.

## RESEARCH AND POLICY IN THE NEWS



**Be Our Guest: The incoming city administration should expand participatory budgeting**

December 9, 2013 BY ALEXA KASDAN and RITCHIE TORRES

[http://cdp-ny.org/media2/dailynews\\_09dec13.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/media2/dailynews_09dec13.pdf)



**Nonrent Fees for Bronx Tenants are Focus of Advocates' Report**

September 13, 2013 BY WINNIE HU

[http://cdp-ny.org/media2/NYT\\_Sept13.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/media2/NYT_Sept13.pdf)



**HIV/AIDS patients in NYC forced to choose between paying for rent or basic needs**

May 19, 2013 BY ALISON BOWEN

[http://cdp-ny.org/media2/metro\\_19may13.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/media2/metro_19may13.pdf)

# URBAN JUSTICE CENTER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, RESEARCH AND POLICY INITIATIVE

CDP's Research and Policy Initiative partners with and provides strategic support to grassroots community organizations to build the power of their organizing and advocacy work. We utilize a "participatory action research" model in which low-income and excluded communities are central to the design and development of research and policy. Our work consists of the following:

**Participatory Action Research Reports:** From start to finish, we work with our community partners to design, administer, analyze and write participatory action research reports. These reports are used by our partners to educate community members, engage elected officials, garner media attention and advocate for socially just policies.

**Grassroots Policymaking:** With community organizations, we research and develop ground-up policy solutions to problems they identify and document.

**Popular-Education Curriculum Design and Research Training:** Our trainings and tools assist communities in designing and conducting their own research. We also conduct trainings on a variety of research topics to build the capacity of our partner organizations.

**Strategic Campaign Research:** We conduct background research and develop fact sheets to provide strategic data in support of organizing campaigns. Our partners use these materials in leadership development and base-building and to educate elected and government officials about specific issues and campaigns.

**Research for Organizing Toolkit:** Our website and toolkit provides resources for organizations to conduct participatory action research (PAR), a people-centered, power-building research method. We have compiled trainings, tools and tips from our work over the last decade into a web-based resource that includes case studies featuring CDP's community partners, workshops, worksheets and templates. This toolkit is designed for organizations and individuals that want to use PAR to support their work towards social justice. For more information, please visit: [www.researchfororganizing.org](http://www.researchfororganizing.org).

For more information, please contact

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