



Community Development Project Research and Policy Update:

2009, The Year in Reports



2009: Research and Policy Accomplishments

This has been an exciting year for the Community Development Project's Research and Policy Initiative. Along with our work to help coordinate citywide coalitions such as Right to the City, Beyond Ground Zero and the OUR Waterfront Alliance, we have published eight Participatory Action Research reports with our community partners. These reports have spanned topics from the access to public space for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Youth to the public health impacts of police harassment. While the topics of our reports vary, one critical component remains the same: the research is designed and implemented by those most impacted by the issue being studied.

Our research has had direct results in the communities where our partner groups organize and has had a measured impact in bolstering the organizing work of our community partners. The reports have helped draw media attention to critical issues in low income communities around New York City; they have provided concrete educational tools to conduct outreach to community members; and have created advocacy tools to educate elected and public officials about critical issues.

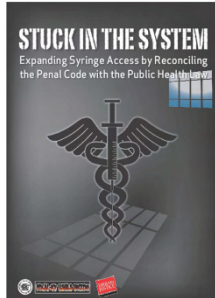
This newsletter will provide brief descriptions of the reports we have released in 2009 (and one in 2010) and some of the press attention our reports have received. The reports are listed in chronological order, with the most recently released first. For more information about our current projects, please contact: Alexa Kasdan, Director of Research and Policy at akasdan@urbanjustice.org.

Thank you for your continued support of the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project and have a great 2010!

– Alexa Kasdan, Director of Research and Policy,
Urban Justice Center, Community Development Project

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NYCAHN, “Stuck in the System”



In partnership with Voices of Community Advocates and Leaders (VOCAL) and the New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN), the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project released a new report on January 29, 2010. The report documents the experiences of participants in syringe access programs who have experienced police harassment and arrests for lawful syringe possession. Although the New York Public Health Law authorizes syringe access programs, the New York State Penal Code was never updated to reflect changes to the Public Health law regarding syringe possession or residue. The inconsistency in state law has created mass confusion among law enforcement, leading to harassment, arrests and even jail time for drug users who lawfully possess syringes. This, in turn, reduces participation of active users in syringe access programs, and discourages safer injection and disposal practices. The results

from this research will hopefully act as an outcry to reconcile the contradictions between the Penal Code and the Public Health law, leading to more humane practices that will benefit all of New York State. [View Report](#)

FUREE, “Food Fight”



“Food Fight: Expanding Access to Affordable and Healthy Food in Downtown Brooklyn” is a report by the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project, in partnership with Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE). The report, released on December 12, 2009, focuses on the limited access to affordable and healthy food in downtown Brooklyn. In the summer of 2009, FUREE members surveyed over 150 Fort Greene/downtown Brooklyn residents to learn how limited access to food impacts the community, particularly the low-income residents of the nearby Ingersoll and Whitman public housing developments. This report, Food Fight, outlines the major findings of the survey, including that residents find the food at their local grocery stores too expensive, that residents find the quality of food at their grocery stores

to be subpar, that residents must travel long distances to reach grocery stores, and that residents believe local grocery stores should provide more jobs. The report also includes several policy recommendations to improve access to healthy, affordable food in Downtown Brooklyn and across the city. Among others, FUREE and UJC recommend closer monitoring of the freshness of food in grocery stores, that grocery stores should pay their employees a living wage and prioritize the hiring of local residents, and that until new grocery stores can be constructed, the city should provide bus service to grocery stores to low-income residents of Fort Greene. [View Report](#)

OUR Waterfront, “The People’s Plan”



“The People’s Plan” was released Saturday, October 17, 2009 at 82 Rutgers Street, on the Lower East Side and by the East River Waterfront. The release event was attended by community members, elected officials, representatives from various community based organizations, and members of the press.

In 2005 the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), the City's official economic development organization, launched a plan to dramatically redevelop the waterfront in the Lower East Side and Chinatown. Overall, these plans were not responsive to the needs

of the surrounding community and did not include any mechanisms for community input or participation in decision making about the development. In response, several community organizations formed the OUR Waterfront Coalition to ensure that those most impacted by the development could share their concerns and input about development plans. Over the past year, the OUR Waterfront Coalition has completed a comprehensive community visioning process to determine and document the community's response to the proposed redevelopment of the East River Waterfront. This process also enabled the communities surrounding the East River to develop their own concrete plan for how the waterfront should be developed. This report, the “People’s Plan,” documents the findings of the visioning process and includes the results of 800 surveys; visioning meetings with about 300 residents; architectural renderings of the community's vision, and a financial analysis including budgets and pro-formas. [View Report](#)

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Beyond Ground Zero, “We Count!”



The BGZ report “We Count: Documenting the 9/11 Health Crisis 8 Years Later” was released in September 2009 and was featured in various news sources including NBC New York, New York 1, The Chief, and New York Daily News. Eight years after the events of September 11, 2001, thousands of residents, workers and students in the New York metropolitan area continue to suffer profound health consequences from the fallout of the 9/11 disaster. The report documents the results of 211 community health surveys distributed to residents, workers and students across New York City but with a focus on lower Manhattan. In light of the failure of an adequate government response to this public health crisis, this survey highlights the shortcomings of the New York City EHC system in treating the diseases brought on by 9/11 and advocates areas in which to improve treatment. UJC and BGZ developed several recommendations for Congress and President Obama, including expanding the geographic

area for who can be treated, compensation for those unable to work due to 9/11-related illnesses, and developing a network between HHC doctors and doctors in the community to allow those affected to continue to see their private doctors. [View Report](#)

Right to the City Platform



Right to the City is a national alliance dedicated to anti-gentrification efforts and to enacting policy measures of most concern to low-income people of color. Right to the City exists in eight cities across the nation, including Boston, Washington, DC, Miami, Los Angeles, New Orleans, San Francisco, Providence, Rhode Island, and New York City. RTTC-NYC is made of 23 community-based and non-profit organizations from all over the city. On May 8, 2009, Right to the City's New York chapter released its citywide, grassroots policy platform. This platform unifies the demands of the RTTC-NYC member groups related to community development, gentrification and displacement. The goal of the platform is to help build the power of low-income people of color in urban areas and to create urban policy that is central to the needs of low-income people. This platform has six sections, including: Federal Stimulus Funds; Community Decision-Making Power; Low-Income Housing; Environmental Justice & Public Health; Jobs & Workforce Development and Public Space. Each of the sections lays out the political context, RTTC-NYC's principles and policy demands in order to ensure that New York City makes low-income residents a priority in any future policy. CDP provided policy support and coordination in developing this platform. [View Report](#)

ROC-NY, “The Great Service Divide”



The ROC report “The Great Service Divide: Occupational Segregation & Inequality in the New York City Restaurant Industry” was released in March 2009 and was featured in various news sources such as Crain's New York, The Huffington Post, and Nation's Restaurant News. CDP provided primary research support to ROC-NY in conducting qualitative analysis. As one of the largest industries in New York City, the restaurant business has proven to be one of the most resilient through the current economic crisis. Yet, unjust hiring and promoting standards, including lack of opportunity for workers of color, continue to plague the industry. Through the use of matched pair testing, demographic canvassing, focus groups, and wage analysis, this report demonstrates the enormous gap in interview, hiring and promotion practices between white workers and workers of color. The report further demonstrated that this gap ultimately leaves workers of color unable to access higher-wage, more coveted jobs. [View Report](#)

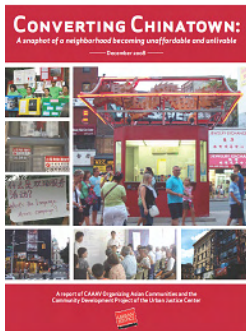
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FIERCE White Paper



The FIERCE White Paper was released on Monday March 9th, 2009 at the LGBT Center in Manhattan's West Village to over 100 people including representatives of elected officials, media, community based organizations and members of the LGBTQ community. FIERCE's White Paper documents the Hudson River Park Trust's failure to include sufficient public space in the redevelopment of Hudson River Park, as called for in the Hudson River Park Act. The white paper highlights the LGBTQ community's concerns about safety on the pier, lack of community involvement in the development process and the importance of community public space and social services in the face of economic crisis. It recommends amendments to the Hudson River Park Act to include community-run and developed space, measures for increased accountability, and increased decision-making power for community stakeholders in the development of the Hudson River Park. By prioritizing the development of safe public space and community involvement in decision-making processes, our white paper policy recommendations will help create the conditions for the creation of an LGBTQ youth center, schools and athletic fields - services and recreation space critically needed for LGBTQ youth and the surrounding West Village community. [View Report](#)

CAAAV, "Converting Chinatown"



The CAAAV report "Converting Chinatown" was released on Wednesday March 4th, 2009 at the Surdna Foundation. The attendees included a combination of elected official representatives, members of the press, community members, members of other community organizations, and Chinatown residents. Press coverage included but was not limited to Daily News, Epoch Times, World Journal, and Sing Tao Daily. This report includes findings from a tenant survey, a small business survey, and a canvassing survey of more than 100 blocks in Chinatown. The resulting data shows how Chinatown's low-income tenants and small businesses are facing serious pressures from the rush of development over the last 10 years, and shows that the resulting gentrification has led to landlord harassment, tenant evictions, and rising rents, all of which are combining to displace long-time residents. The report also documents small business displacement that has occurred as the customer base has left the neighborhood. The report also includes

various policy recommendations such as an expansion of tenants' rights; requirements that new developments include housing that is truly affordable for low-income people; that the Department of Buildings enact stricter guidelines for private development; that there be more community input into land-use policies such as rezoning; and that the city should encourage small business growth. [View Report](#)

Right to the City Condo Research



In addition to releasing the New York City policy platform, Right to the City-NYC, with the research support of UJC's Community Development Project, has been busy with an ongoing citywide research project to identify empty condos in New York City that can be turned into low-income housing. Since the summer of 2009, members of Right to the City organizations have been walking the streets of 298 New York City census tracts in nine different community districts to document the true extent of the problem posed by empty condos and stalled construction in low-income communities. To date, this primary research has shown that 601 buildings in nine community districts contain a significant amount of empty units, or appear to be stalled in construction. In addition to this primary research, CDP has been conducting

secondary research to turn up information about tax arrears, building violations, building permits, prices of available units, and many other pieces of information. The research will soon be compiled into a report that will be released this spring and will be used to advocate for the conversion of empty condos into low-income housing. [View Report](#)

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Research and Policy in the News

The reports generated by CDP's Research and Policy initiative have received some great press coverage this year! Below is a sampling of some of the stories that have been written about our work with community organizing groups.

NEW YORK POST

Grocery Grumbles in Downtown Brooklyn

December 16, 2009

By Michèle De Meglio (Courier-Life)

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/brooklyn/grocery_grumbles_in_downtown_brooklyn_vKpTi6kwsjtSZNMNHZsSk

The New York Times

Group Urges Opening of Vacant Condos to the Poor

November 4, 2009

By Bao Ong

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/11/04/groups-urge-opening-of-vacant-condos-to-the-poor/?scp=2&sq=%22right%20to%20the%20city%22&st=cse>

DAILY NEWS

Murky laws endangering New York's syringe exchange programs: study

January 29, 2010

BY Katie Nelson DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2010/01/29/2010-01-29_cops_state_law_sticks_it_to_safeneedle_push_study_sez.html



Group Urges Action in Wake of Latest WTC Health Report

October 21, 2009

By: NY1 News

<http://www.ny1.com/1-all-boroughs-news-content/107701/group-urges-action-inwake-of-latest-wtc-health-report>

Gloria Medina/EDLP
El Diario: 2009-09-23

Nueva York — "Justicia para Willets Point" decían algunos de los carteles que portaba ayer un grupo de comerciantes del área de Willets Point en Queens, que



Urban Justice Center, Community Development Project, Research and Policy Initiative

The Research and Policy Initiative at UJC's Community Development Project draws from participatory-action research methodology to provide assistance to community organizing groups working in low-income, largely immigrant communities and communities of color throughout New York City. We provide methodological and technical assistance in research and policy to help strengthen and further the strategic development and implementation of our partners' organizing campaigns. Although the community members and organizations are well aware of the issues and problems in their communities, participatory-action research provides an important framework and concrete tools to help systematically document the experiences, deepen the analysis and strategically inform the efforts of community members.

Assistance Provided:

- Development, design and implementation of participatory research methods;
- Development and design of qualitative and quantitative research instruments such as surveys, focus groups, interviews and canvassing tools;
- Development and conducting of trainings focusing on various participatory research methods;
- Assistance in strategic development of public policy recommendations;
- Assistance in strategic media and communications work;
- Secondary research and literature reviews;
- Development of databases;
- Quantitative and qualitative data analysis;
- Production of reports and other materials to be used for program development, outreach and advocacy;
- Assistance in the development of programmatic, organizing and policy-oriented strategies stemming from research.

For more information, please contact
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