



Community Development Project, Research & Policy Initiative Update

Winter/Spring 2010

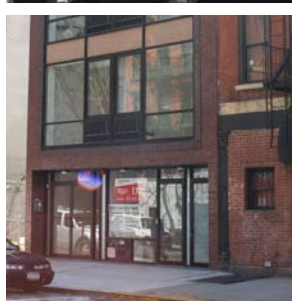


Recent Research and Policy Accomplishments

The Research and Policy Initiative at the Community Development Project has been busy this winter and spring! After releasing eight community-based research reports last year, we have kept up the momentum in 2010 and have released four new reports with our grassroots community partners. In addition, we continue to coordinate and support the development of several citywide and national campaigns to fight for justice for low-income people.



Our research has had direct results in the communities where our partner groups organize and has had a measured impact in bolstering the organizing and leadership development 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 new reports we have released in 2010 and some of the press attention our reports have received. The update also includes some of the projects we are currently working on that are soon to be complete. For more information about our reports or 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



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATE

NEW REPORTS

We Call These Projects Home: Solving the Housing Crisis from the Ground Up

We Call These Projects Home
Solving the Housing Crisis from the Ground Up



In partnership with the Right to the City Alliance and the Advancement Project, the Community Development Project (CDP) of the Urban Justice Center released a new report on May 18, 2010, *We Call These Projects Home: Solving the Housing Crisis from the Ground Up*. The report was released in Washington, D.C. at a congressional briefing co-sponsored by Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Representative Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY). The briefing was led by a panel of public housing residents. The report represents the voices of public housing residents across seven cities and includes quantitative and qualitative data analysis from Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Oakland, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. The report also includes various policy recommendations calling on Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to strengthen and expand public housing. [View Report](#)

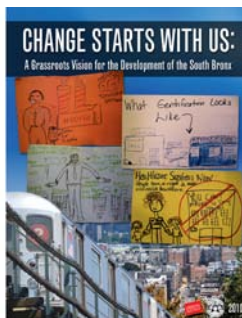
People Without Homes and Homes Without People: The State of Vacant Condos in Select NYC Neighborhoods



On May 11th, 2010, in partnership with Right to the City – New York City Alliance (RTTC-NYC) the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project released a report documenting the thousands of vacant condo units across New York City. "People Without Homes and Homes Without People: A Count of Vacant Condos in Select NYC Neighborhoods" presents findings from a citywide, participatory research project where hundreds of members of RTTC-NYC walked the streets of 245 census tracts in 9 community districts, over three months. Canvassers identified over 4,000 vacant units that could be converted into low-income housing for those in need. The report lays out RTTC-NYC's principles and several policy options to convert and maintain these units as permanently affordable housing for very low-income people. RTTC-NYC is calling on city officials to facilitate the conversion of these vacant units into low-income housing.

The report was covered by various media outlets including The Wall Street Journal, The Daily News, The Metro and Crain's New York Business. [View Report](#)

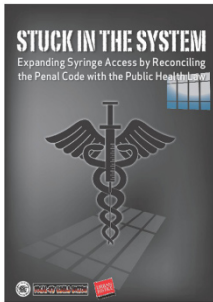
Change Starts with Us: A Grassroots Vision for the Development of the South Bronx



Throughout 2009, Mothers on the Move (MOM), a member-led social justice organization, conducted a three-part visioning process with the support of the Community Development Project's Research and Policy Initiative. The highlight of the process was an all day community visioning event where South Bronx residents were encouraged to dream big about future development. The extensive visioning process involved MOM members, community members, elected officials and other stakeholders, and culminated in the release of *Change Starts with Us: A Grassroots Vision for the Development of the South Bronx*. The document summarizes MOM's vision for future development in five areas- Housing, Environmental Justice, Education, Jobs, and Public Space, offering long-term development goals as well as short term solutions to problems facing South Bronx residents. [View Report](#)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATE

Stuck in the System: Expanding Syringe Access by Reconciling the Penal Code with the Public Health Law



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 this report documenting 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.

With research support from the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project, VOCAL conducted surveys, in-depth interviews and additional literature reviews. The results from these surveys and interviews will hopefully act as an outcry to reconcile the contradictions between the Penal Code and Public Health law, leading to more humane practices that will benefit all of New York State. [View Report](#)

OTHER CURRENT PROJECTS

South Asian Worker's Rights Project with DRUM

In partnership with Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM), CDP is currently coordinating a research project focusing on the experiences of undocumented South Asian workers in Jackson Heights, Queens, particularly taxi drivers, domestic, construction, restaurant and retail workers. CDP is providing support to DRUM in developing a community survey and conducting focus groups and in depth interviews to document the stories and experiences of undocumented South Asian workers and to identify the issue areas and sectors most in need of organizing and advocacy. This research will be compiled into a report which is scheduled to be complete in late summer or early fall of 2010.

Mekong Community Needs Assessment with CAAAV

Over the past year, CDP has been working with CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities to conduct research to determine the needs and priorities of the Vietnamese and Cambodian communities in the Bronx. With the research support of CDP, this project has been led and implemented by youth members of CAAAV. The research aims to support CAAAV's campaign to develop a community center and create a sustainable Southeast Asian (SEA) community in the Bronx and the larger New York City metropolitan area.

New York City Public Housing Report Card with GOLES/PHROLES

The Community Development Project recently began a research project with Public Housing Residents of the Lower East Side (PHROLES), which is a project of Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES). Through direct services and grassroots organizing initiatives, PHROLES learned that the New York City Housing Authority's management were often dismissive of residents' housing concerns, had poor language access, lost confidential paperwork and misinformed residents on housing policies and procedures. These practices often resulted in unnecessary emotional distress and dilapidated living conditions for residents, and most gravely- eviction due to frivolous termination proceedings. PHROLES has teamed up with UJC's Community Development Project to document the above problems and show the need for NYCHA to make reforms. Currently, PHROLES members are conducting surveys in public housing developments throughout the Lower East Side. Data from the surveys, will soon be compiled and released in a report in the fall of 2010.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATE

New York City Research and Organizing Toolkit

The NYC Research and Organizing Initiative (NYCROI), which is coordinated by UJC's Community Development Project, is a collaborative project that was formed by numerous organizations in NYC. These groups identified the need for training and skill development in order to strategically generate research that will support and advance grassroots organizing in New York City and beyond.

Currently, CDP is working with NYCROI to develop a curriculum and toolkit for organizers and members of grassroots organizations to build concrete research skills for social change. The curriculum and toolkit is set to be released in the summer or early fall of 2010.

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;
- Leadership and staff development focusing on research and public policy skills;
- Development of popular education materials and curriculum.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT RESEARCH AND POLICY UPDATE

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.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Vacant Luxury Apartments Could Come Within Reach

MAY 12, 2010

By R.M. Schneiderman

<http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2010/05/12/will-nyc-vacant-luxury-apartments-go-affordable>

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

THE HUFFINGTON POST

We Call These Projects Home

May 19, 2010

By Bill Quigley and Tony Romano

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bill-quigley/we-call-these-projects-home_b_581784.html

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For more information, please contact
Alexa Kasdan
Director of Research and Policy

Urban Justice Center, Community Development Project
123 William Street
New York, NY 10038
646.459.3011

akasdan@urbanjustice.org
<http://www.urbanjustice.org/ujc/extra/community/research.html>

