

Jobs and Housing: Old Programs and New Paradigms

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Public housing in the United States began as a jobs program but job training programs are a relatively recent intervention in public housing policy.¹ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) signed the U.S. Housing Act in 1937, persuaded by Eleanor Roosevelt's intervention, intensive lobbying by organized labor (Leavitt 1995), and mostly by the need for jobs. As demonstrations and marches focused attention on evictions and people sleeping in tent cities, providing jobs for unemployed construction workers and housing for "one-third of a nation"ⁱⁱ was a means for checking conflict and increasing consumption (Radford 1996; Lichtenstein 2002).

By 1968, the public housing population earned on average about \$10,000, too little to cover an authority's operating costs, an original condition of the 1937 Act. The 1968 Brooke Amendment limited tenants to paying 25 percent of their income for rent, later changed to 30 percent under President Ronald Reagan. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 also included Section 3, a little-known provision which allowed local authorities to hire public housing residents to work on modernization projects. After the 1992 Los Angeles civil disturbance, Section 3 was strengthened, and in 1994, an interim rule clarified type of activities and recipients who could be covered. Under Section 3, funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) can be used for job training and childcare. Most Section 3 jobs continue to be in the building and construction trades or within public authorities.

Beginning in 1993, the potential for job creation and job training emerged in the evolution of the Homeownership Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) program. In 1998, a Jobs-Plus demonstration project was begun in public housing in six cities, including two sites in the City of Los Angeles.ⁱⁱⁱ

This paper briefly reviews HOPE VI and Jobs-Plus as a backdrop for understanding alternative programs in Los Angeles that address issues about housing and or jobs. These alternative projects – Union de Vecinos, Worker Centers, and Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice (FCCEJ) -- organize from the ground up and build community capacity. John McKnight distinguishes three approaches to community building: the therapeutic vision (the client as consumer), advocacy (protection of groups of consumers, etc.), and the community vision "where people's gifts are shared and their fallibilities accommodated, where care can replace service or advocacy, and where labeled people are integrated rather than segregated" ("Managing Holes" 2004, 1). The three alternative projects that reflect the community vision differ by scale, location, stage of organizational development, and emphasis.

The first two alternatives are unable to guarantee jobs but all three develop and sustain a broader community-vision based on their members' opinions and participation. Each has a different emphasis: Union de Vecinos focuses more on housing, Worker Centers on jobs, and the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice (FCCEJ), the most comprehensive, on both. Public housing programs explicitly target residents (or clients) for services and call on service organizations, industries, and companies as providers. The alternative approach is about building the capacity of existing people and improving the existing community.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part provides an overview of the HOPE VI and Jobs-Plus programs and the second analyzes the three alternative examples. Policy questions conclude the paper.

Background: Overview of HOPE VI and Jobs-Plus

The history of HOPE VI lies with the government's growing withdrawal from providing permanently affordable housing for people who cannot afford market-rate housing. From 1974 on, HUD looked for ways to divest itself of public housing stock. The first approach transferred developments to tenants or intermediaries who would sell units to tenants (Rohe 1995). In 1984, the Public Housing Homeownership Demonstration (PHHD) expanded the sales program. The numbers were never large (Rohe). Obstacles included lack of funds for counseling, repair of units before transferring, replacement housing, and accommodating non-participating tenants (Rhoe 441). In 1987, Congress passed Section 21, approving transfer of housing developments to resident management corporations (RMCs). Again sales were low. The relevance of jobs and incomes to sales is evident. Unless resident incomes also rise, increasing maintenance and operating costs can not be met. Other problems associated with sales concerned process. The authorities required a sign-off by resident advisory bodies that do not represent all the tenants' views. The Washington, D.C.-based Center for Community Change documented the views of residents at seven sites around the country who lauded or bemoaned the program (2003). Among the negative comments are feeling deceived about the option of returning to the "revitalized community, lack of "genuine" options for relocation, poor administration for those accepting Section 8 vouchers, loss of a sense of community, disbelief that their homes had to be torn down, limited participation or obstacles to any meaningful input, and difficulty accessing services.

In contrast to prior programs, HOPE VI, implemented in 1993, focused on demolishing units and re-tenanting with people of mixed-income. In 1996, the U.S. Congress eliminated the provision of one-for-one replacement and HOPE VI became the government's centerpiece for decreasing the permanent provision of affordable housing. Another provision in the legislation and available funding makes it conceivable that the direction of the program could have been different (National Housing Law Project, 13):

Public housing authorities (PHAs) can use up to 15 percent of their HOPE VI funds, up to \$5.25 million per grant, for community and supportive services (CSS) to increase opportunities for resident employment and self-sufficiency. Section 3 of the Housing Act of 1968 requires the use of hiring preferences for public housing residents and low income persons by PHAs and others participating in HUD housing programs, including HOPE VI. **Rather than encouraging self-sufficiency by providing residents with higher-income neighbors, self-sufficiency might be encouraged by providing jobs — and training, childcare, and other services to allow residents to take these jobs** (National Law Housing Project, 14) (author's emphasis).

Some residents interviewed for the Center for Community Change voiced disappointment about providers telling them about training and job opportunities that never materialized (Center for Community Change 79, 95). Levy and Kaye (2004), in summarizing the results of the community support services of HOPE VI, address issues such as the relation of employment status to redeveloped HOPE VI projects. Unemployed residents were not allowed to return and Levy and Kaye suggest more flexible screening criteria as well as offering job counseling and training to the unemployed and underemployed (also see Sard 2002).

	HOPE VI	Jobs-Plus
Year started	1993 implemented	1998 implemented
Stated Intent	Physical improvements; management improvements; social and community services in response to residents' needs	Raise employment levels and earnings of public housing residents
Strategy	Demolish severely distressed properties and redevelop mixed income communities	Saturate sites with services; Provide job readiness and job search assistance, education and vocational training opportunities, support services, e.g. transportation and child care; Financial incentives through limiting increases in rents because of higher earnings; Community support for work through resident outreach
Rationale	Mixed-income communities help poor tenants on the path to self-sufficiency	Increase share of employed residents who can stay in community
Outcome	Demolish and displacement; Remove permanent public housing units from inventory	By June 2002, engaged over 3,000 residents, placed 2,000 residents in jobs since program began (Kato et al. 2003)*
Community Services	15% of grant can go to supporting development of childcare and healthcare centers, schools, job training programs, and retail space Section 3	Concentration on jobs and support services

Insight about Jobs-Plus, introduced in 1998, is drawn from the MDRC (formerly Manpower Development Resource Corporation) evaluation^{iv} and previous studies of job training programs. Three components – employment-related services and activities, financial incentives, and community support for work job training – make up a comprehensive package to create self-sufficiency among public housing tenants with the

object of raising their incomes (Kato et al. 2003). The Jobs-Plus Program provides financial incentives that lower rents or keep them at a flat level regardless of incomes going up, tantamount to a housing subsidy and resulting in an increase in disposable income.

The MDRC evaluation reports that in L.A., HACLA itself is a major source of employment. They hire residents as full-time staff or through creating “long-term paid internship positions and a paid work experience program” (Miller 2002, 91). Residents were also hired temporarily for the 2000 census count. Jobs for youth were available at Imperial Courts during the summer months through the housing authority, including a Drug Elimination Program (about 25 residents) and with Southwest College through HACLA’s maintenance and landscaping departments. The Imperial Courts strategy was summarized as being mainly “preemployment, job readiness, and job search services,” without a “formal strategy for increasing job retention and promoting wage progression and care advancement among working residents” (109). At William Mead Homes, Jobs-Plus has successfully linked residents to full- and part-time jobs at HACLA.

The comprehensiveness of Jobs-Plus is promising. There is a “but.” In “Failing but not Fooling,” 30 participants were interviewed at five public housing sites in the Jobs Partnership Training Act (JPTA), a pre-welfare reform jobs program (Leavitt and Ochs 1993). Another 30 interviews were with staff in job training programs that the literature identified as successful. JTPA offices were located on public housing sites and like Jobs-Plus, increased accessibility for residents although it wasn’t unusual to hear participants negatively refer to residents who weren’t aware of the program. Similar to Jobs-Plus most work was low paid, in the service sector and turnover occurred frequently. Job tenure was insecure or hours were unknown from week to week, especially in retail. Leavitt and Ochs found that placements were not guaranteed at the end of the training period and lag times existed between training and placement.

The study identified the following characteristics among successful job training programs: identifying job demands and placements **prior** to the onset of training; ensuring on-the-job experience geared to employers’ actual needs and state-of-the-art techniques; facilitating the participant’s getting a high school diploma or its equivalent; providing adequate, accessible, and flexible hours for child care and other supportive services; maintaining services such as child care and counseling during training **and** for at least one year post-training; providing for household medical benefits in order for people to develop a cushion and encourage saving money; and providing housing assistance, such as waivers prohibiting rent increases. Jobs-Plus incorporates many of these and could serve as a complement to HOPE VI. Yet studies of JTPA and Jobs-Plus point to a systemic problem: as long as jobs are low wage and housing subsidies are unavailable poor people will be squeezed. Having to settle for a job that pays a low wage means housing options are curtailed and other survival mechanisms kick in, including overcrowding, accepting poor to deteriorating physical conditions, and paying upwards of 50 percent of income for rent.

The housing authority as well as the three alternative projects faces similar problems that they cannot control. This includes the state of the economy and the dynamics of local labor markets which, in turn, are influenced by global events (Flaming et al. 2001). The

persistence of low-wage work, especially for those with less education, is recognized in training programs and support services. Packages like these are necessary but remain insufficient for entering the job market. The alternative projects discussed below provide another and essential component that lies in an articulated community vision.

Description and Comparison with Community-Vision Programs

Union de Vecinos (Union of Neighbors) organized in 1996 in response to the first of the HOPE VI demolitions of three contiguous developments, Pico Gardens, Aliso Village, and Aliso Extension. The Union expanded organizing to include other public housing developments and residents in private property in the surrounding Boyle Heights community. Worker Centers have arisen throughout the United States, primarily in response to the infringement of workers' rights although some are extending their work to include housing rights. The Centers primarily serve immigrants who are low-wage restaurant workers, janitors, day laborers, and garment workers, etc. The six Worker Centers in the City of Los Angeles are mostly located within communities where immigrants either work and or live. The oldest has been in L.A. for 30 years and the youngest is a few years old. The Worker Centers formed the Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Organizing Network (MIWON) and advocate for issues such as amnesty and legalization for immigrants. The Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice is a community-based regional (CBR) project (Matsuoka in process; Pastor et al. 2004)^v that covers an area of about 200,000 people located adjacent and south /southwest of Downtown L.A. The Staples Center, home to the Lakers basketball team, is a major regional draw as well as the centerpiece for a new Sports and Entertainment District that will include hotels, restaurants, and other commercial facilities. FCCEJ's labor-community alliance is responding to this type of large scale development which causes displacement of existing residents and reduces the affordable housing stock.

Figure 2. Comparisons between Public Housing and Alternative Projects in the City of Los Angeles by Place, Process and Constituency, and Outcome

	Place On Site/Off Site	P r o c e s s a n d Constituency	Outcome
Public Housing	<p>HOPE VI: Imperial Courts (489 units), 1,500 plus people William Mead (415 units), nearly 1,300 people</p> <p>Jobs-Plus: easy access to workforce development and resources; jobs on-site and off-site</p>	<p>Public housing residents</p> <p>Elected Resident Advisory Council signs off on authority’s plans;</p> <p>Community residents are hired, e.g. community coaches (Jobs-Plus), modernization, Section 3 (HOPE VI)</p>	<p>HOPE VI: Net loss of public housing units; Displacement of residents; “Lost” residents who leave without relocation benefits</p> <p>Jobs-Plus: 1,156 participants enrolled in 5 years; more than 650 placed in jobs, 525 in full-time jobs. 438 in educational activities and 245 in skills training program</p>
Union de Vecinos	<p>Pico-Aliso public housing; Boyle Heights residents; Estrada and Dana Strand public housing</p>	<p>125 core members from 13 committees from Pico-Aliso, can mobilize 80 to 100 per committee</p> <p>consensus decision making, direct democracy</p>	<p>Housing: Created better relocation policy, ensured 42 units assigned to low-income families, delayed demolition for 2 years at Pico-Aliso; trained Aliso Village residents in negotiation of relocation packages; stopped demolition at Dana Strand; formed resident committee at Estrada Courts that led to HACLA repairing damaged roofs for three buildings; formed coalition with Inquilinos de Maywood around health and housing issues; trained health promoters; expanded to 13 committees</p> <p>Jobs: hired members as Union staff; served lunches to workers in surrounding area</p>
Worker Centers*	<p>Community location for Center; objectives start with businesses where workers are, or residences in which workers live</p> <p>Koreatown, Historic Pilipinotown, Garment Center, day labor sites</p>	<p>Organic Leaders who emerge from organizing and member decision-making; negotiate; mutual learning with Center staff</p>	<p>Jobs: Worker Rights, Law Suits against discrimination; successful in getting back pay; demonstrations and picketing to publicize cause; leadership building; formed coalitions; lobbying</p> <p>Housing: collaborating with cdc around housing; tenants around conditions</p>
FCCEJ**	<p>South and east of downtown: Community area includes about 200,000 residents including parts of Skid</p>	<p>Prior committee, Organizing for a Responsible USC Coalition committees Expanded Coalition to</p>	<p>Innovate Community Benefits Agreement re. Housing, Jobs, plus other needs</p> <p>Jobs - 70% of 5,000 jobs will</p>

	<p>Row and Downtown</p> <p>Local CDC in the area (Esperanza Housing Community Development Corporation); Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE); Community residents; Citywide and community coalition partners including clergy, local unions, students, environmental groups, technical assistance providers, local institutions, academics</p>	<p>meet large-scale development from both USC and AEG Land Arena Company (Staples Center +)</p> <p>Negotiating with developers</p> <p>ESL classes</p> <p>Economic survival class (70 community residents and students graduate)</p>	<p>be unionized or pay be living wage; 50% of new jobs will be hired locally; community-run job and training center with seed money from developer; Affordable housing: minimum 20% housing units affordable to low income; developer provide \$650,000 revolving loan fund, no interest, for nonprofits to build affordable housing Parks and Recreation: developer provide \$1 million for parks and recreation facilities within a 1 mile radius; between \$50,000 and \$75,000 for community members to identify site and participate in planning; Environmental Planning: ongoing Coalition Advisory to handle such issues as construction, traffic, pedestrian safety, waste management, air quality and "green" buildings; Parking: Developer will help establish preferential parking; pay residents' parking costs for 5 years.</p> <p>Planning and fundraising for Community Land Trust; establishing Displacement Free Zone with no net loss of units</p> <p>Fight evictions</p>
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*Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA), Pilipino Workers Center (PWC), Garment Worker Center (GWC), Immigrant Restaurant Workers Association (IRA), Instituto de Educacion Popular del sur de California (IEPSCA), Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Workers Organization Network (MIWON)

** See Figueroa Corridor web site in references

Figure 2 highlights differences among public housing, Union de Vecinos, Worker Centers, and the Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice. Each of the alternatives is discussed below.

Union de Vecinos

In Boyle Heights, demolition for HOPE VI began on August 7, 1997. The fight began earlier for residents who resisted demolition. Thirty-six families received flyers from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) – slipped under their doors at night -- informing them that they had sixty days to relocate and that Section 8 would be

available. According to the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, “Roughly 250 residents opted for Section 8 housing during construction and [have] the option to return to the site” (Housing Research 1997). This does not account for the chilling effect that followed the eviction notices and residents relocating on their own, forfeiting the subsidy.

Organized residents changed the authority’s fast track process to raze Pico-Aliso in one stage. A core group of families who received the eviction notice and two people in an existing project of Proyecto Pastoral -- one had been unceremoniously fired and the other voluntarily left -- formed Union de Vecinos (Union of Neighbors) in January 1996.

We went to various agencies in the community for support but were turned away. We decided to organize ourselves and refused to leave. We delayed the demolition for two years until we received written guarantees that we would stay in Pico Aliso. During this process we discovered that we needed an organization (Union de Vecinos N.D.).

Union de Vecinos uses many different strategies: testifying at public hearings, lobbying politicians and public officials, marching, and at one point winning a majority of seats on the Residents Advisory Council (RAC). This last strategy proved to be time consuming to the point of neglecting residents’ needs. Art has been integrated into participatory planning. Union de Vecinos has partnered with UltraRed, a sound and visual team, whose videos offer a comparison between the housing authority’s proceedings and the residents’ activities. Their work was performed in Germany and in an exchange visit with council housing residents in Ireland. Another tool was members developing and conducting an independent survey of residents. The HACLA survey relied on questions that could be interpreted as biased and led to the authority reporting that residents were in favor of demolition. The Union survey showed that tenants’ higher priorities were jobs for themselves and education for their children.

Once there were 577 units of existing public housing. Of 421 new units, only 280 were for public housing tenants and 60 were senior apartments. Eighty-one were detached courtyard homes, of which more than 30 are slated for sale. Clear distinctions exist between public housing and the townhouses in location, architecture, and the amount of green space. The rental units, other than senior housing, are situated alongside a busy freeway, and are surrounded by a fence. The townhouses surround a courtyard with porticos typical of new urbanism; parking is dispersed in each courtyard; a grassy area is behind each house and offers a quasi private and common backyard. Recently, HACLA erected fences around the grassy areas, making it difficult for more spontaneous use. To sustain the organization whose decision-making process is based on consensus and direct democracy, the two key organizers worked at other jobs, solicited donations, and sought grants. From 1996 to 2001, Union de Vecinos was run primarily by volunteers and with small grants to train public housing resident organizers. Twelve participated in an eight-month training program that lasted for a year-and-a-half. Enough money was raised to hire residents as permanent staff to strengthen the organization. Members from the Union de Vecinos also started a catering service, offering lunch to the community and workers in the nearby industries in order to maintain the costs of operating the office (located across the street from the new townhouses). From its initial focus, Union de

Vecinos expanded its organizing to the rest of Boyle Heights. Thirteen committees exist who send representatives to an executive body and the strength of their organizing partially lies in their ability to mobilize approximately 800 to 1,000 people at events. At the same time as construction at Pico Gardens proceeded, the Union de Vecinos was organizing residents at Aliso Village. Aliso was completely demolished in one stage; HACLA's rationale was that structural deficiencies made units unsafe to live in; their cost estimates for rehabilitation, including removing lead and asbestos, were higher than clearing the site and rebuilding. The Union hired its own structural engineer to make an inspection. His evaluation was that the buildings could be rehabilitated. The authority also wanted to avoid the delays that were experienced at Pico as a result of existing tenants' demands and input. Some tenants remained at Aliso Village until the bitter end. The majority did not return; many moved to other public housing such as Estrada Courts in Boyle Heights and others to locations further away.

The HOPE VI formula prevailed – fewer public housing units, some senior units and more than 90 townhouses of which some will be for sale, and new market price homes. One part of the project is close to the Blue Line metro rail station that is under construction. In and around the station, signs are evident of private rehab of apartment buildings and stores are being bought and remodeled. McCormick, Baron, Salazar and Associates are the developer-owners of much of the site. Low-income families who met strict entry requirements later turned to the Union -- now recognized as one of two resident groups in the new development -- about eviction notices or being asked to voluntarily leave or be taken to court. The councilman for the area weighed in on the issue of stringent management rules and the Union organizers have said that an attitude shift has occurred.

Worker Centers

Worker Centers have been categorized as: immigrant specific, multi-ethnic, employer or industry specific, community focused, policy advocates, legal advocates, leadership developers, and union-backed (NAAFE N.D.). Analyses about Worker Centers are typically in relation to unions and the organization of labor. The potential for community focus and the relation of workers' low wages to housing options is the basis for including this alternative in the discussion.

Worker Centers can be viewed as new democratic spaces in the United States or as Osterman et al. call them new institutions (2001). The North American Alliance for Fair Employment (NAAFE) broadly identifies Worker Centers:

The majority of Worker Centers share a common goal: to help workers help themselves in ways that traditional trade unions have not been able to. Most approach this goal by drawing on broader communities of interest such as ethnicity and/or by linking workplace specific issues such as wages, benefits, working conditions, and respect on the job, with some form of direct service such as legal aid, ESL [English as a second language] courses, computer training, worker rights education, or leadership development (NAAFE no page)

Janice Fine's typology more closely captures the link between community and labor in the phrase community union (2003). In a recent national study (forthcoming 2004), she identifies an "immigrant worker center" as:

community-based mediating institutions that provide support to low-wage immigrants. Part settlement house, fraternal organization, local civil rights organization and union, the centers we looked at pursue this mission through a combination of successes (4).

Fine identifies the different approaches Centers take as: service delivery, advocacy, and organizing.

Worker Center staff and members were interviewed in Los Angeles and San Francisco (Leavitt in process) in 2003 and 2004 and asked to define the term "Worker Center." These interviews illustrate what others have pointed out, that Worker Centers deliver services, may have case managers on staff, and deal with day-to-day events, but their vision is to empower members. A sample of responses is found below on the need for safe space, a process for decision-making, and going beyond work issues. Worker Center participants identify the significance of a physical place or focal point that is easily accessible to people who can ask, "Where have you guys been or what's going on? It's an accountability issue."

[Our] centers are the beginning of community centers where working people can come and participate in the ongoing development of the centers . . . what does that mean? Let's say there is a group of workers that want to organize around medical insurance; then let's organize around that issue. Or we have a group of people who want to develop their skills in certain areas, so let's work on that goal. We want the centers to be a community resource . . . and some of the communities we work [with] have no community centers.

The strong linkage to worker's issues as defined by the workers means that Centers can shift agendas to meet needs and widen the member base. The Korean Immigrants Workers Advocates is in the process of moving toward a community-wide agenda after spinning off the Immigrant Workers Association from a campaign for workers' rights at a market in Koreatown and providing an early home for the Pilipino Worker Center. Some Worker Center participants see the need to go beyond worker issues.

I think a Workers Center has . . . [to] deal with other community issues too, and has to play that role in the community, and really consciously trying to push the community in a progressive direction.

One respondent pointed out similar class issues in labor and tenant organizing.

housing work. . .[it is] very similar. . .to organizing workers because here you're raising contradictions between tenants who are all Chinese, and then also some, often, if not always, landlords who often happen to be Chinese. So again, it's a

question of rich and poor, it's a question of class differences in the community. There's a question of justice. . . work with tenants has been the same organizing model; it's that we get the tenants to protest, we get the tenants to go to the government or rent board, or even in the case of public housing tenants then it's directly—government is the landlord

Ultimately, the Centers have to meet the workers' needs and be worker driven and housing issues may or may not evolve.

What a Workers Center should do is basically unite the workers or the members that get involved, and then to actually empower them. So uniting them and empowering them would kind of be the two functions of a workers center. . . .In this way, achieving one gain for one worker is insufficient -- change that and add what they have won

The impact of Worker Centers extends beyond their members by changing regulations and “outing” employers who withhold wages. For example, after two years of campaigning, the Garment Worker Center and other activists persuaded the Los Angeles City Council to unanimously adopt the toughest ordinance against sweatshops. The GWC and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California successfully ran a three-year national boycott against an L.A.-based company, Forever 21. The Worker Centers provide a potential ally for community-based groups who are already engaged in housing issues. The Pilipino Worker Center is collaborating with a community development corporation for housing that will benefit more than their members. The FCCEJ is the broadest coalition of the three alternatives and is engaged in comprehensive planning including house and with a diverse array of other institutions. The GWC and KIWA are two Worker Centers that are part of their coalition.

Figueroa Corridor Coalition for Economic Justice

The FCCEJ is a comprehensive model that connects issue and place organizing to coalition building, employing a democratic process, developing a long-term vision, and negotiating short- and long-term wins around both economic and workforce development and housing.^{vi} The convergence of two large developers -- the University of Southern California (USC) and the L.A. Land Arena Company, the developers of the Staples Center Sports Arena – was the catalyst. David Koff, with the International of the Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees (HERE, now Unite HERE) describes the FCCEJ: “The coalition’s goal was to prevent the destruction of a community which over the years has already suffered a great deal of displacement from the building of the Convention Center and the Staples Center” (Padwa 2001). In addition to HERE, the unions that belong to the coalition include the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1877, Operating Engineers Local 501, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 33, and Teamsters Local 911, and 29 community groups ranging from religious organizations, health groups, worker centers, environmental groups, students, community development corporations (Esperanza Housing Development Corporation, [EHDC], plays a lead role), citywide technical assistance

groups (e.g. the Los Angeles Community Design Center and the Enterprise Foundation-sponsored project on homeownership), etc.

FCCEJ was preceded by the Committee for a Responsible USC who fought two main battles -- one about the rights of food service workers who were working without a contract and the other about the university's buying properties in surrounding neighborhoods. In 1998 the FCCEJ emerged in response to further gentrification and displacement. Their strategy anticipated the need for community support in future labor struggles and acknowledged the fact that thousands of union members -- food and service workers, home care workers, and janitor -- lived in the neighborhood, and shared the broader community concerns (Haas 2002, 91) of affordable housing, park space, and parking. FCCEJ pulled together activists who recognized and were respectful of and to each other.

when labor negotiations went sour, the coalition took up the issue so the developer would understand that workers' concerns were also community concerns. And, when the coalition's negotiations on affordable housing hit a brick wall, the unions took up that issue, letting the company know that affordable housing was an important issue for union members as well (Haas 94).

Haas emphasizes:

What was really unique was the coordination and the solidarity between the community and labor. Labor, environmental groups, housing groups, quality of life associations, local block clubs—all coming up with something together instead of making one piece of the community more important than another" (Padwa 2001).

The Service Employees International Union Local 11 won a contract for 450 food service workers at Los Angeles' new Staples Center. The FCCEJ won a community benefits package that includes the following: Twenty percent of new housing for low-income households and \$1.3 to \$2 million available to nonprofits for producing affordable housing and at no interest. As of this writing, Esperanza and the 1010 Housing Corporation (two local CDCs) received \$650,000 in zero-interest loans. FCCEJ is actively promoting and finding financing for the development of a "net free" or "displacement free" zone where one-for-one replacement of units will offset any demolition. The coalition is researching the use of land trusts as one way to control growth and prevent speculation.

Under the agreement, developers agreed to guarantee at least 5,000 jobs that will pay a living wage of \$7.27 per hour plus benefits, and that at a minimum, half of the new hires will come from the adjacent neighborhoods. The unions, in separate agreements, secured a promise of neutrality from management in future union card-check elections at the Staples Center and entertainment complex" (Padwa).

Workforce development is occurring primarily through job training and preparation. Housed at SAJE, funds are partly from the Staples Agreement, and the collaboration brings together the L.A. Trade Technical Community College, the Downtown Women's Action Center, the Garment Worker Center, and the Korean Immigrant Workers

Advocates. An innovative class on “Economic Survival” offered information about worker and tenant rights and tied issues about individual household economics to community-wide struggles over displacement and the local economy. During the course, the Staples Center turned to the class when it was recruiting for jobs and hired some of the participants. Seventy students graduated and plans exist for continuing the course.

Conclusions

The three community-vision examples share an approach to understanding the complexities that govern people’s lives. People do not segregate their lives into housing and economic needs. The “community vision” projects recognize that acquiring jobs will fall short of raising the standard of living unless wages are high enough to afford market rents. Embedded in this recognition is that something additional is needed that sustains peoples’ beliefs over the long run. This translates into building a shared sense of community and a vision to continuously unite around. Indigenous leaders emerge and are necessary to carry the tremendous amount of work that is required to make progress. Without them, the organizations are shells. Organizational wins along the way are essential to awakening and reinforcing people’s convictions.

What would it take for bureaucracies such as public housing authorities to add empowering tenants to their agenda and do they have the capacity to do so? Would they see this as working themselves out of jobs? Is this desirable? William Peterman (1996) has explored these issues in relation to resident management. He concludes:

Whatever the prospects for successful resident management, the link between it and empowerment is at best weak, no matter which meaning [conservative, liberal, or progressive] is used. Resident management does not automatically lead to ownership, as its conservative proponents argue; nor does it guarantee personal or community power, as its liberal and progressive proponents argue” (487).

Short of full empowerment which in some cases means ownership, other issues remain that concern the degree to which residents are superficially involved.^{vii} Invariably a public housing authority cites time commitments and efficiency as reasons for not going more slowly in involving residents.^{viii} The alternative models operate with a different time frame where building trust is about deepening relationships. Based on the Union de Vecinos’ experience with HOPE VI, it is difficult to reconcile a public authority’s commitment to its tenants outweighing HUD deadlines except under duress. By the time Resident Advisory Councils or Resident Management Councils are consulted in HOPE VI, the authority’s imprint is in place. The authorities use public meetings as a substitute for participation. Survey analyses about complicated issues simplify the choices. Translation into other languages spreads disinformation. Technical subjects are treated superficially without analyzing the implications and allowing people to make informed decisions.

As examples of an alternative paradigm from the bottom up, Union de Vecinos, the Worker Centers, and FCCEJ are modeling new institutions with built-in lessons about who holds power and who controls resources. As long as the greater political will and

commitment is missing to achieve full employment, a quality education for everyone, and social housing, the alternative projects are the true examples of collective and individual “hope” and existing tenants are the “plus.”

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ Approximately 1.3 public housing units were built over a period of 50 years; since 1974, Section 8 vouchers and certificates have served 2.1 million people. Approximately 3,300 public housing authorities (PHAs) operate in cities and counties in the United States. California has 124 PHAs that control 44,953 housing units. Los Angeles is considered a large public housing authority with 8,393 low income units. Including Section 8 project based units, Section 23 senior units, 772 non-subsidized units, and 16 homeownership demonstration and HOPE III units, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) owns and operates 10,406 units and provides housing assistance to 54,406 households. Section 8 units total 37,736 (Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles N.D.). Figures vary: the Annual Consolidated Report for 2003-2004, reports that reconfiguration of apartments into larger units at three of 18 developments, the public housing unit count is 6,218.(City of Los Angeles, 2004).

ⁱⁱ The phrase, “one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished” is from FDR’s second inaugural address.

ⁱⁱⁱTwo HOPE VI projects include Harbor Terrace (previously Normont Terrace) in the southern part of the City, not far from the L.A. Port and, Pico-Aliso in the Boyle Heights section. Only Pico-Aliso is discussed here. The Jobs-Plus demonstration is at William Mead Homes near downtown Los Angeles and at Imperial Courts in Watts in South L.A.

^{iv} The final evaluation was not publicly available as of this writing.

^v Pastor et al. (2004) define CBR: “This perspective emphasizes the need for community-based and faith-based organizations to alter regional rules and rhetoric in a way that will improve outcomes for low-income communities. Strategies emerging out of this approach include efforts to link low-income residents to dynamic growth sectors, advocacy to insure that transportation systems serve all communities, and programs to improve indigenous home ownership in low-income neighborhood in the process of gentrification” (4).

^{vi} The area is: Martin Luther King on the south to 8th Street on the north, and Western Avenue on the west to Alameda on the east.

^{vii} Wendy Moschetti, recommends involving residents in self-evaluation studies.

^{viii} See Stan L. Bowie, in Kato et al., 2002, “Jobs-Plus in Chattanooga,” the Program began with “strongly emphasized resident empowerment through formal control of the program, and it gave the Resident Management Corporation (RMC) of Harriet Tubman Homes primary access to positions on Jobs-Plus Governance Board and on program staff.” Bowie attributes their “inadequate professional training and experience,” as contributing to the “program’s subsequent administrative and operational difficulties” (39 n. 1). This author believes an interim period where experienced administrators and management staff train residents might be one way to approach such a situation.