

**A SURVEY OF SELECTED NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING
SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY BUILDING FIELD**

**Junious Williams
Jessica Pitt
Liane Yee**

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, community building has emerged as a powerful, comprehensive approach to neighborhood improvement. Increasing numbers of national and local organizations use community building to describe the ways in which they work to improve outcomes for children and families in low-wealth neighborhoods. As a local and national technical assistance provider and resource to the field, the Urban Strategies Council (the Council) set out to conduct a limited scan of the national organizations providing programs and services to support community building practitioners.

In June of 1998, in the course of discussion between the Council and The Annie E. Casey Foundation on the current state of the community building field, Ralph Smith of Casey posed the question: what national support structure exists for practitioners in our growing field of work? Spurred by this discussion, the Council set out to conduct a limited scan of a number of national organizations offering support to the community building field.

In early 1999, the Council surveyed a dozen national organizations involved in community building support to identify the core strategies they employ to support practitioners and the development of the field. We also asked about the target populations for their supports and services. The twelve organizations were not selected through scientific sampling methods and are certainly not a representative sample; rather, they include organizations known to us and engaged in work that they identify as community building.

This report presents the findings of the scan. The report begins with a brief review of community building definitions. It then presents a summary of the methodology used to conduct the scan. It continues with a review of our findings about strategies used by the responding organizations and the target populations that are the focus of their work. The report concludes with implications we draw from this limited scan and a discussion of possible next steps for the field along this line of inquiry.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY BUILDING?

The practitioners interviewed for the scan are all deeply involved in community building, and all have an in-depth understanding of the complex nature of the work. While we did not specifically ask them to give a definition of community building, for purposes of this report, we present a sample of definitions that survey respondents use in their written work.

The Aspen Institute's Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families defines community building as:

“The process of improving the quality of life in a neighborhood by strengthening the capacity of neighborhood residents, associations, and organizations to identify priorities and opportunities and to work, individually and collectively, to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change.”

According to PolicyLink, a newly formed organization focused on providing policy, capacity building, and media and communications support to community building efforts:

“Community building is continuous, self-renewing efforts by residents and professionals to engage in collective action of problem solving and enrichment that results in improved lives, greater equity, strengthened relationships, networks, institutions and assets, and new standards and expectations for life in community.”

The National Community Building Network, a 300-member Oakland-based organization of practitioners, governmental officials, technical assistance providers, academics, and foundations offers a set of core principles that guide their work. These eight principles articulate important elements of the community building approach:

Integrating community development and human services strategies; forging partnerships through collaboration; building on community strengths; starting from local conditions; fostering broad community participation; requiring racial equity; valuing cultural strengths; and supporting families and children.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The Urban Strategies Council designed the National Community Building Support Structure Scan to answer two important questions about a selected group of practitioners:

1. What strategies do their organizations employ?
2. Who are the target groups for their community building activities?

The process of identifying and selecting organizations to include in the scan was highly subjective. Council staff drew up an initial list of organizations which were familiar to us, whose work we identified as being national in scope and directed toward supporting community building efforts at the local level. Based on preliminary discussions with these organizations, we added several other organizations to our initial list, resulting in a final count of twelve surveyed organizations.

Council staff drew up an initial list of potential strategies and target groups that was used to develop a survey instrument. Between December 1998 and March 1999, telephone interviews were conducted with the selected organizations. Recognizing the likelihood that organizations work at differing levels of intensity with respect to various strategies and target groups, we also designed the interview questions to reflect the dimension of intensity level.

During the interviews, respondents were asked to provide background information on their organizations, emphasizing the role that they have played and hope to play in the community building arena. They were asked to indicate which of the core strategies were primary, secondary or used on a limited basis by their organizations, to state if they employed other core

strategies not covered by the interviewer, and to describe each strategy used. Respondents were encouraged to explain how and for whom their organization provides support for each core strategy that applied to them. Interviewees were then asked to classify each target group as a primary, secondary or limited focus of their work. Finally, we asked for recommendations of other groups that should be interviewed.

Information from the interviews was compiled into two matrices that show the relationship between each organization and their strategies and target groups, respectively (Figures 2 and 6 in this report). In June 1999, we sent a copy of the summary to each interviewee with a request that they review and make corrections to the organizational summary. We made the appropriate revisions and prepared the final matrices that summarize strategies across organizations and target groups across organizations.

The major limitation of this study stems from the limited and highly selective number of organizations included in the survey. The organizations were selected based on the experiences and contacts of Urban Strategies Council staff. Admittedly, this selection method introduced some biases, including, minimally, a bias toward inclusion of organizations who do work similar to our own since they are more likely to be known to Council staff. A second limitation is the period during which the surveys were administered and the reporting of the results. The initial surveys were conducted between January and March 1999; follow-up was conducted in June 1999. Even with this relatively recent follow-up, it still may be the case that some organizations' activities have changed, rendering some of the results outdated. The results presented should be read as a snapshot of strategies and target populations that the organizations were focusing on in early 1999.

While we recognize the limitations of this effort, we intended it to be preliminary in nature, and to provide a basis for a more comprehensive survey of the field if the preliminary scan suggested the need to do so.

CORE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY BUILDING

During interviews with the twelve organizations, respondents identified and described the core strategies they employ. A list of twelve strategies emerged in the final analysis, which we organized into four categories that proved helpful for the analysis (Figure 1). After reviewing the survey data, we concluded that there are at least two additional categories of activity that are critical to support the field. They are community organizing and financial resources. Although the analysis that follows does not include these two categories, we recognize that they are essential components of the support structure for the field. For an elaborated discussion of these components, see Appendix A. See Appendix B for descriptions of each individual strategy.

We asked respondents to classify each core strategy according to the level of intensity with which they employed a given strategy. Those identified as "primary" we assigned a value of "1," "secondary" a "2," and "limited" a "3." See Appendix C for descriptions of the levels of intensity.

Figure 2 presents the core strategies in which the twelve surveyed organizations are engaged. Figure 3 summarizes the number of organizations identifying the various strategies as primary, secondary or limited.

To get a sense of the overall concentration or intensity of organizations' efforts for given strategies, we also used the intensity level classifications to calculate a total weighted score for each core strategy across organizations. To arrive at the weighted score, we inverted the values previously assigned to primary, secondary and limited (e.g., primary strategies were given the greatest weight and each primary core strategy was given a numerical value of "3"; secondary strategies were given the next greatest weight and a value of "2", and limited was given a value of "1"). We then summed the scores for each strategy to arrive at a total weighted score. A summary analysis of overall and weighted scores appears in Figure 4.

Core Strategies: Key Findings

1. Documentation and analysis and knowledge dissemination were the primary strategies most frequently cited by respondents, with eight organizations naming documentation and analysis and seven naming knowledge dissemination among their primary strategies. These two strategies not only were the most frequently identified primary strategies, but they also represented the strategies on which the groups concentrate most of their efforts overall, with weighted scores greater than the next highest scoring strategies by ten points.
2. Among the three knowledge and information development strategies, the organizations expend considerably more effort on documentation and analysis than on research, and the least intensive effort on evaluation. Intensive technical assistance was cited as a primary strategy by five organizations, as was research. Less intensive technical assistance was a primary strategy for only one organization, but either a secondary or limited strategy for nine organizations.
3. Four organizations mentioned networking as a primary strategy. Training and evaluation both were cited by three organizations as a primary strategy.
4. Technical assistance (intensive and less intensive) and training received weighted scores that placed these strategies in the mid-range of intensity level, about ten points below the leading strategies and ten above the lowest intensity strategy.
5. Only two organizations reported promoting uses of technology as a primary strategy.
6. Communications and media, and influencing policy each were primary strategies for only one organization.
7. Communications and media as a strategy received the least intensive effort among the organizations, scoring some 25 points lower than documentation and analysis and knowledge dissemination.

Figure 1. Core strategies

Knowledge and information development

- Research
- Documentation and analysis
- Evaluation

Knowledge and information transfer

- Knowledge dissemination
- Networking
- Clearinghouse
- Communications and media
- Promote uses of technology

Direct assistance

- Training
- Less intensive technical assistance
- Intensive technical assistance

Policy development and advocacy

- Impact policy

Figure 2. Core strategies by organization

	Aspen Roundtable	Chapin Hall	Development Training Institute	EZ/EC Consortium	HUD	MDC	NCBN	PolicyLink	Program for Community Problem Solving	United Way/Natl. Community Building Ctr.	Urban Institute/ NNIP	Urban Strategies Council/ CBSC
Training			1	1	2	2			2	1	3	2
Technical Asst: Intensive			1			1			1	1		1
Technical Asst: Less Intensive	3	3	3	2	2		3	2		1	3	2
Promote Uses of Technology				3			2	1	3	2	1	
Documentation & Analysis	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	2	1
Research	1	1						2	1	1	1	3
Evaluation	1	1						3		1	2	
Knowledge Dissemination	1	1	2	1		1	1	1	2	1	2	3
Networking	3		2	1			1	1		1	2	3
Clearinghouse	2			2			2	3	3		3	
Communications & Media								1		3		
Impact National/State/ Local Policy	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	

KEY:

1

← Primary

2

← Secondary

3

← Limited

Figure 3: Number of organizations using selected strategies, by level of intensity

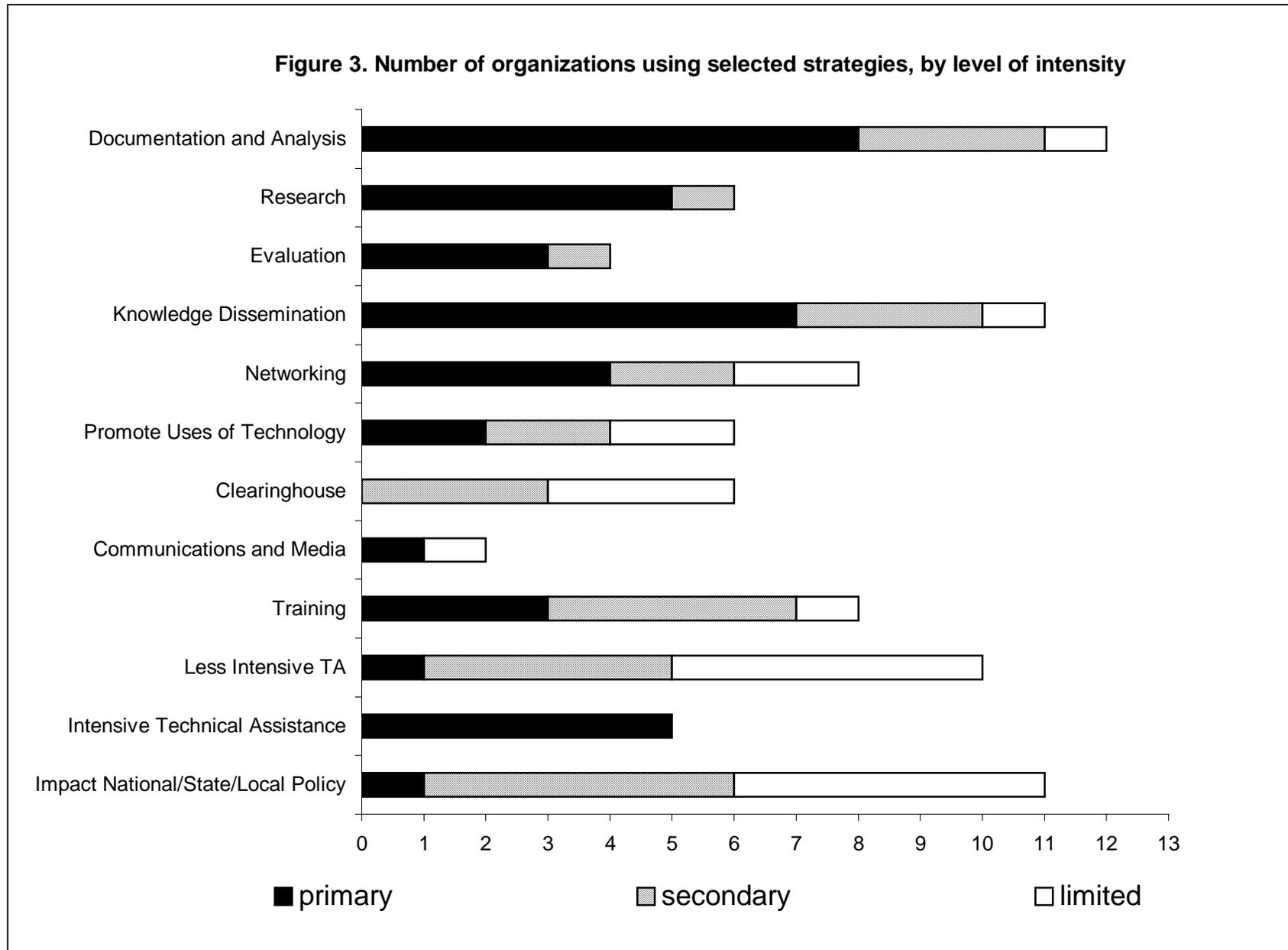


Figure 4: Summary analysis of core strategies

Categories & Core Strategies	Total no. of organizations employing strategy	No. of organizations employing strategy at given intensity level			Weighted score	Remarks	
		Primary	Secondary	Limited		Overall score	Weighted score
Knowledge and information development							
<i>Documentation and analysis</i>	12	8	3	1	31	All 12 employ this strategy.	Aspen Roundtable, Chapin Hall, and United Way identified four related research strategies (research, documentation and analysis, knowledge dissemination and evaluation).
<i>Research</i>	7	5	1	–	18		Ranked in the mid-range of weighted scores.
<i>Evaluation</i>	5	3	1	–	12	Received fewer mentions as a strategy than any of the items under the knowledge development and knowledge transfer categories.	Evaluation scored relatively low compared with the other knowledge development items.
Knowledge and information transfer							
<i>Knowledge dissemination</i>	11	7	3	1	28		
<i>Networking</i>	8	4	2	2	18		Ranked in the mid-range of composite scores.
<i>Clearinghouse</i>	2	–	3	3	9	No organization listed clearinghouse as a primary strategy.	Although documentation and analysis and knowledge dissemination ranked highest, clearinghouse and communications and media – two methods of transferring information – ranked lowest.
<i>Communications and media</i>	6	1	–	1	4	The fewest survey respondents identified this strategy.	
Direct assistance							
<i>Training</i>	8	3	4	1	18		All direct assistance strategies were ranked in the mid-range of composite scores.
<i>Less intensive TA</i>	10	1	4	5	16	Of the ten organizations employing, only one listed it as primary.	
<i>Intensive TA</i>	5	5	–	–	15	No organization listed it as a secondary or limited strategy.	
<i>Promote uses of technology</i>	6	2	2	2	12		
Policy development and advocacy							
<i>Impact policy</i>	11	1	5	5	18	Of the 11 organizations employing this strategy, only one identified it as a primary strategy.	Ranked in the mid-range of weighted scores.

8. None of the organizations identified clearinghouse functions as a primary strategy.
9. While there was substantial intensive effort devoted to knowledge dissemination, the organizations are not concentrating effort on communications and media or clearinghouses as methods of knowledge and information transfer. Networking was the specific information transfer strategy receiving the most effort.

Core strategies: Analysis of responses

During the interviews, the organizations described how they employ specific strategies (summarized in Appendix D). Based on the important findings and their responses, we observe that:

1. The surveyed organizations employ a variety of approaches to information development and transfer. Across the organizations, a number of research and documentation methods are being employed with a focus on a broad range of issues important to community building. Dissemination activities tend to rely on publications, seminars, and networking activities.
2. Respondents expressed concerns about the direct assistance strategies, citing both lack of adequate funding and the need to develop better practice as challenges in this area of work. Nevertheless, respondents reported exploring a variety of innovative approaches to both training and technical assistance to improve the effectiveness of their support.
3. Almost all the organizations are involved in efforts to impact policy. Their activities in this area tend to focus on policy research, analysis, and education.

A major portion of the twelve organizations' work to support community building focuses on documentation and analysis and knowledge dissemination. For a relatively new but rapidly evolving field of work, these focal points seem to make strategic sense. The ability to document and understand what is happening in community building and then to disseminate that information is instrumental to improving practice and broadening the scope of the work. It is worth noting that while "knowledge dissemination" (making tools, information and research available to a wide audience) ranked highest among the strategies for information transfer, "networking" ranked next highest in this category, suggesting a commitment to sharing and building on the knowledge of people who do community building work.

While the strategies categorized as "direct assistance" (training, intensive and less intensive technical assistance and promoting uses of technology) receive substantial attention, the responding organizations devote considerably less attention to direct service provision. As several respondents noted, training and technical assistance is extremely expensive and the funds to provide the quality, intensive supports of this nature are frequently not available. This limitation is reflected in part in the identification of target groups where the respondents frequently qualified the target groups with "selected" to indicate a limited scope within the target populations they serve. Respondents also noted the need to develop and refine methods and practices for technical assistance and training, and identified innovative approaches to providing quality and sustained support. Given the rapid increase in the number of communities and organizations seeking to adopt or expand community-building approaches, it appears that the availability of direct assistance, at least from the surveyed organizations, is quite limited.

Of all the strategies we surveyed, the one receiving the least attention is communications and media. Only two organizations identified it as a strategy, and only one identified it as a primary

strategy. Although the organizations are focusing substantial attention on information transfer, they tend to direct it toward people in the field, as opposed to the broader community.

Eleven of twelve organizations cited impacting policy among their strategies, but only one cited it as a primary strategy. From their descriptions of the strategy, the organizations concentrate their efforts on policy research, analysis, and development. However, the organizations tend to shy away from direct policy advocacy. While this may be understandable in light of one's non-profit status or the reasonable cautions of those working in an emerging field, it does call the question of who is doing direct policy advocacy for the field.

TARGET GROUPS FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING SUPPORT

During interviews with the twelve organizations, respondents identified the target populations for the various strategies used by their organizations. A list of seventeen target groups emerged in the final analysis, which we grouped into six types that proved helpful for the analysis (Figure 5). See Appendix E for descriptions of each target group.

We also asked respondents to classify each target group to reflect the intensity of their efforts with each target group. Those identified as "primary" we assigned a value of "1", "secondary" a "2", and "limited" a "3." See Appendix C for descriptions of the levels of intensity.

Figure 6 presents targeted groups by organization. Figure 7 summarizes the number of organizations identifying the various target groups as primary, secondary, or limited.

Figure 5. Target groups

Local community building organizations and leaders

- Self identified community builders
- Selected community builders
- Community builders in selected cities
- Grassroots or local leaders

Intermediary organizations

- Community development corporations
- Community building intermediaries (CBIs) generally
- Community building intermediaries (CBIs) selected

Higher education

- Academics
- Community colleges

Media and general public

- National media
- Opinion leaders
- General public

Government and policy makers

- Local government
- Federal agencies
- National policy makers

Financial support organizations

- Funders
- Financial institutions

Figure 6. Target groups by organization

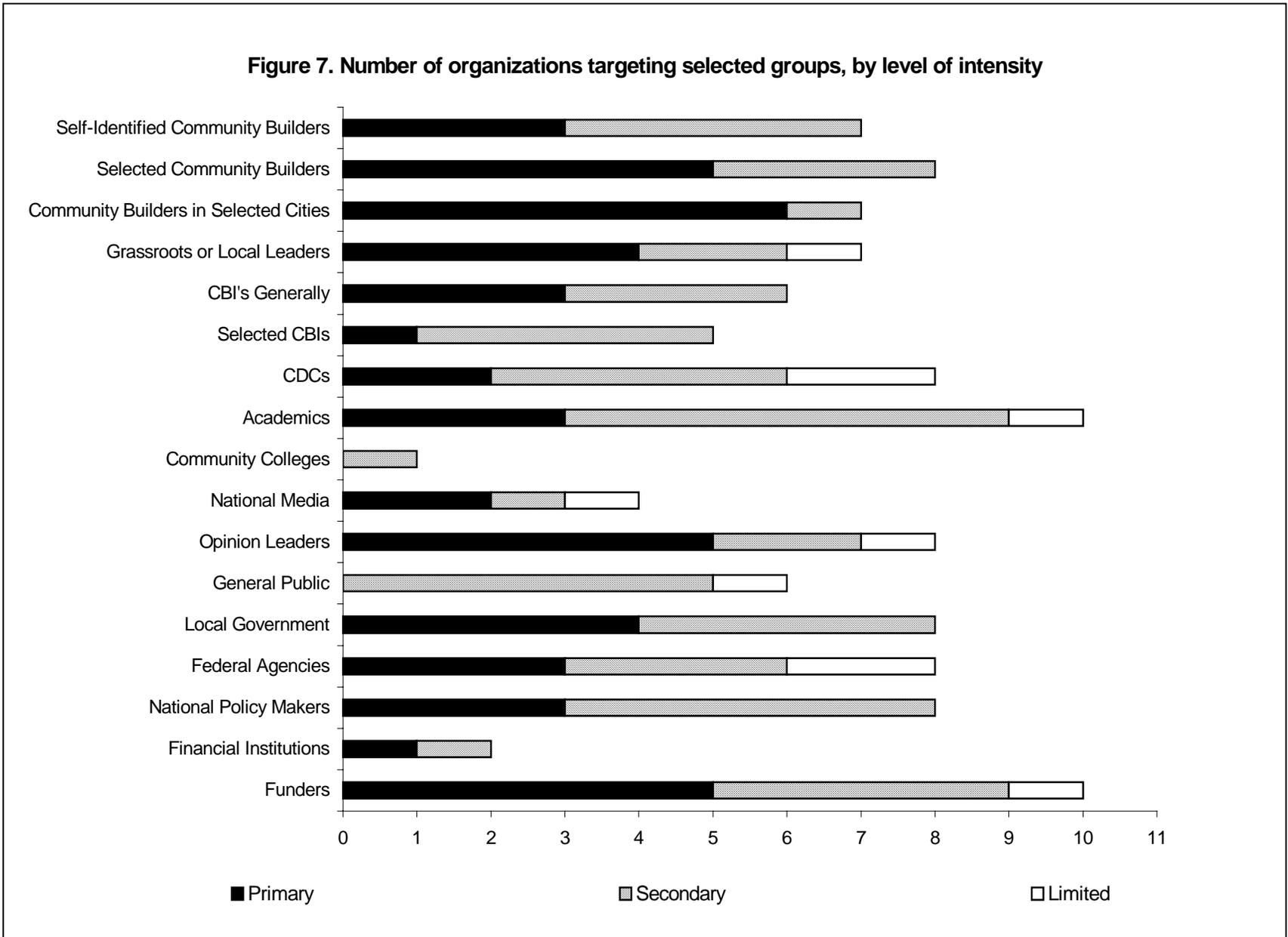
	Aspen Roundtable	Chapin Hall	Development Training Institute	EZ/EC Consortium	HUD	MDC	NCBN	PolicyLink	Program for Community Problem Solving	United Way/Natl. Community Building Ctr.	Urban Institute/ NNIP	Urban Strategies Council/ CBSC
Self Identified Community Builders		2			1		1	2		1	2	2
Selected Community Builders	1	2	2		1			1	1	1		2
Community Builders in Selected Cities		2		1	1	1		1		1		1
Grassroots or Local Leaders		3			2	1	1	1	1	2		
CBIs generally	1	2			1		1	2				2
Selected CBIs		2	2		2			2				1
CDCs	3	2	1		1	2	2	3		2		
Academics	2	1			3	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
Community Colleges						2						
National Media		3			1			1		2		
Opinion Leaders	1	2			1		3	1		1	1	2
General Public	2	3			2	2		2		2		
Local Government		2	1		1	2	2	2	1	1		
Federal Agencies	3	2		1	2		3	2	1	1		
National Policy Makers	2	1	2		1		2	1		2	2	
Funders	1	1		1	2	3	2	2	1	1	2	
Financial Institutions			1			2						

KEY:

1 ← Primary

2 ← Secondary

3 ← Limited



To get a sense of the overall concentration or intensity of organizations' efforts toward a given target group, we also used the intensity level classifications to calculate a total weighted score for each target group across organizations. To arrive at the weighted score, we inverted the values previously assigned to primary, secondary and limited (e.g., primary target groups were given the greatest weight and each primary target was given a numerical value of "3"; secondary targets were given the next greatest weight and a value of "2", and limited was given a value of "1"). We then summed the scores for each target group to arrive at a total weighted score. Figure 8 shows the total number of mentions of each target group as primary, secondary, and limited, and the total number of mentions for each category. A summary analysis of overall and weighted scores appears in Figure 9.

Target groups: Key findings

1. The category of local community building organizations and leaders was the most frequently mentioned target group. Six organizations identified community builders in selected cities as their primary target group, and five identified selected community builders. Grassroots leaders were cited as primary by four organizations, and self-identified community builders by three organizations. This category was most frequently mentioned as a primary target (18 mentions) and as a target overall (29 mentions).
2. Funders and opinion leaders were also frequently cited as target groups, with five organizations citing each of them.
3. Four organizations cited local government as their primary target. The category of government and policy makers was the primary target for ten organizations, and ranks second as an overall target.
4. The public was not cited as the primary target for any organization, nor were community colleges.
5. Financial support organizations and higher education were the two least frequently mentioned target group categories, receiving six and three mentions, respectively.
6. Higher education received the lowest number of mentions as a primary target group, and received the lowest total mentions of any target group.
7. Every type of target group listed was named as a secondary target by at least one organization.
8. According to weighted scores, funders have the highest concentration of focus by the responding organizations, followed closely by academics. Community builders, local government, opinion leaders and national policy makers are all the focus of substantial attention from the responding organizations, falling in the mid-range of weighted scores. Financial institutions, community colleges, the national media, and the public receive the least concentration of focus.

Target groups: Analysis of responses

Local community-building organizations and leaders were the most frequent primary target groups cited by the responding organizations. However, when we weighted the responses by level of intensity across the organizations, funders and academics receive slightly more of the organizations' attention than do the community builders, local leaders, opinion leaders or national policy makers. This suggests that the organizations collectively have a wide scope of targets. They are attempting to continue the interest and support of funders while at the same

Figure 8. Number of mentions per target group, by level of intensity

	Local Community Building Organizations and Leaders					Intermediary Organizations				Higher Education			Media and the General Public				Government and Policy Makers				Financial Support Organizations		
	Self-Identified community Builders	Selected Community Builders	Community Builders in Selected Cities	Grassroots or Local Leaders	TOTAL	CBI's Generally	Selected CBIs	CDCs	TOTAL	Academics	Community Colleges	TOTAL	National Media	Opinion Leaders	General Public	TOTAL	Local Government	Federal Agencies	National Policy Makers	TOTAL	Financial Institutions	Funders	TOTAL
Primary	3	5	6	4	18	3	1	2	6	3	-	3	2	5	-	7	4	3	3	10	1	5	6
Secondary	4	3	1	2	10	3	4	4	11	6	1	7	1	2	5	8	4	3	5	12	1	4	5
Limited	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	2	1	-	1	1	1	1	3	-	2	-	2	-	1	1
TOTAL	7	8	7	7	29	6	5	8	19	10	1	11	4	8	6	18	8	8	8	24	2	10	12

Figure 9: Summary analysis of target groups

Categories & Target Groups	Total no. of organizations targeting group	No. of organizations targeting group with given intensity level			Weighted score	Remarks	
		Primary	Secondary	Limited		Overall score	Weighted score
Local community building organizations and leaders						Category most frequently cited as a primary target group (18 mentions), as well as most frequently cited target overall (29 mentions).	
<i>Self-identified community builders</i>	7	3	4	–	17		
<i>Selected community builders</i>	8	5	3	–	21	Third most frequently cited target group. Second most frequently cited primary target.	High concentration of focus.
<i>Community builders in selected cities</i>	7	6	1	–	20	Most frequently cited primary target.	High concentration of focus.
<i>Grassroots or local leaders</i>	7	4	2	1	17		
Intermediary organizations							
<i>CBIs generally</i>	6	3	3	–	15		
<i>Selected CBIs</i>	5	1	4	–	11		
<i>CDCs</i>	8	2	4	2	16		
Higher education						Higher education received the lowest number of mentions as a primary target group (3) and received the lowest total mentions of any target group (11).	
<i>Academics</i>	10	3	6	1	22	Second most frequently cited target group.	High concentration of focus – ranked second highest of all target groups.
<i>Community colleges</i>	1	–	1	–	2	Not identified as primary target by any organization.	Lowest concentration of focus – ranked lowest of all target groups.

Figure 9: Summary analysis of target groups (continued)

Categories & Target Groups	Total no. of organizations targeting group	No. of organizations targeting group with given intensity level			Weighted score	Remarks	
		Primary	Secondary	Limited		Overall score	Weighted score
Media and the general public						Second most frequently mentioned primary target (7 mentions).	
<i>National media</i>	4	2	1	1	9		Low concentration of focus.
<i>Opinion leaders</i>	8	5	2	1	20		High concentration of focus.
<i>General public</i>	6	–	5	1	11	Not identified as primary target by any organization.	Low concentration of focus.
Government and policy makers						Category is primary target for ten organizations and ranks second as an overall target.	
<i>Local government</i>	8	4	4	–	20		High concentration of focus.
<i>Federal agencies</i>	8	3	3	2	17		
<i>National policy makers</i>	8	3	5	–	19		High concentration of focus.
Financial support organizations							
<i>Financial institutions</i>	2	1	1	–	5	Only one organization named this a primary target.	Low concentration of focus.
<i>Funders</i>	10	5	4	1	24	Most frequently cited target group. Second most frequently cited primary target.	Highest concentration of focus – ranked highest of all target groups.

time supporting community builders, increasing academic interests in community building and influencing opinion and policy makers.

On the other hand, the organizations are expending substantially less effort on the public and national media, which received among the four lowest weighted scores as target groups.

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY STRATEGIES AND PRIMARY TARGET GROUPS

Primary strategies and primary target groups: Key findings

1. By simultaneously examining the primary strategies and the primary target groups, we are able to see that the most frequently cited strategy, documentation and analysis, is being targeted heavily at local community building organizations and leaders and funders.
2. Knowledge dissemination, research and evaluation (three other frequently cited primary strategies) are being targeted to local community building organizations and leaders and funders.
3. The bulk of intensive technical assistance is focused on local community builders. Similarly, a focus of the training was local community builders, although several organizations targeted local government, federal agencies, and funders for training as well.

Primary strategies and primary target groups: Overview of responses

Figure 10 presents information focusing on the primary target groups and primary strategies of the responding organizations. As reflected in the figure, all of the strategies are listed in the first column, while all of the target groups are listed as column headings. For each cell in the table, we report the number of organizations that identified the particular strategy as primary and the specific target group as primary. For example in the first cell, the number “1” reflects that one organization identified training as a primary strategy *and* identified self-selected community builders as the primary target group.

Documentation and analysis, which received the highest weighted score among in the strategies is focused heavily on community builders with five organizations reporting community builders in selected cities and four organizations identifying selected community builders as the primary targets of their documentation and analysis. Funders were also a primary target with five organizations citing funders as a primary target and documentation and analysis as a primary strategy.

Knowledge dissemination followed a pattern similar to documentation and analysis and research with four organizations identifying community builders in selected cities and three organizations identifying selected community builders as the primary targets of their knowledge dissemination strategy. Funders were cited by four organizations as the primary target of their dissemination strategy. Three organizations identified national policy makers and three identified opinion leaders as the primary targets of their knowledge dissemination actions.

Research and evaluation emerged as frequently cited strategies with community builders and foundations again the primary target groups for these strategies. Three organizations identified community builders in selected cities and two organizations identified selected community builders as the primary targets of their research activities. Research and evaluation strategies targeted to funders were each cited by three organizations.

Figure 10. Number of organizations by primary strategies and primary target groups

	Local Community Building Organizations and Leaders					Intermediary Organizations				Higher Education			Media and the General Public				Government and Policy Makers				Financial Support Organizations		
	Self-Identified Community Builders	Selected Community Builders	Community Builders in Selected Cities	Grassroots or Local Leaders	TOTAL	CBI's Generally	Selected CBIs	CDCs	TOTAL	Academics	Community Colleges	TOTAL	National Media	Opinion Leaders	General Public	TOTAL	Local Government	Federal Agencies	National Policy Makers	TOTAL	Financial Institutions	Funders	TOTAL
Training	1	1	2	-	4	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	2	2	-	4	1	2	3
Intensive TA	-	2	1	3	6	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	1	1	2
Less Intensive TA	1	1	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	1	2
Documentation and Analysis	1	4	5	3	13	-	1	1	2	2	-	2	1	3	-	4	1	2	2	5	-	5	5
Research	1	3	2	1	7	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	2	2	2	6	-	3	3
Evaluation	1	2	1	-	4	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	2	-	2	1	1	1	3	-	3	3
Knowledge Dissemination	2	3	4	2	11	-	2	-	2	2	-	2	1	3	-	4	1	2	3	6	-	4	4
Networking	2	2	3	2	9	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	1	2	-	3	1	2	1	4	-	2	2
Clearinghouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communications and Media	-	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Promote Uses of Technology	-	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	3	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Impact Policy	-	1	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
TOTAL	9	21	22	14	66	2	6	1	9	13	-	13	6	18	-	24	10	13	12	35	3	21	24

Of those organizations that provide intensive TA as a primary strategy, three target grassroots and local leaders and two target selected community builders. No organization with intensive TA as a primary strategy listed CBIs generally, community colleges, or the public as a primary target.

While networking was noted less frequently than other strategies, it reflects an even distribution across all of the six categories of target groups. Clearinghouse, as noted earlier, was not cited as a primary strategy for any of the organizations.

Policy impacts and communications, advanced uses of technology and media followed a similar pattern: they were cited as primary strategies by only six or seven organizations. Only a single organization cited them as a primary strategy, and they are targeted at community builders, national media, opinion leaders, and national policy makers.

A few notable gaps in the matrix:

- No organization providing training as a primary strategy targets CBIs generally, the public, or grassroots and local leaders.
- No organization that lists any type of direct assistance as a primary strategy has as a primary target CBIs generally, community colleges, or the public.
- No organization with communications and media as a primary strategy has CBIs generally, academics, national policy makers, the public, local government, federal agencies, financial institutions, funders, or CDCs as a primary target.

Primary strategies and primary target groups: Analysis of responses

When we cross tabulated the primary strategies and the primary target groups to see the number of organizations who are focusing on the specific strategies and target groups, we found that documentation and analysis and knowledge dissemination targeted to community builders and funders is a central focal point of the work of the organizations. This reinforces the earlier finding that the responding organizations' activities reflect a strategy that places importance on documenting and analyzing community building activities, and disseminating this information to community builders and funders. A second leading area of concentrated effort is networking among community builders. This evidences some effort to build the field in a method consistent with community building tenets around mutual support and recognizing and using assets.

As one might expect, direct support tended to be concentrated on community builders. However, as noted previously, substantially less effort is concentrated on direct assistance than on knowledge development and dissemination strategies. The relatively smaller amount of effort should be cause for some concern since support leading to effective action at the community level is the context in which community building happens and will be judged.

CONCLUSION: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This preliminary scan of national organizations providing support to community building has left us with a number of observations about the utility of such an inquiry and suggestions for how a more comprehensive scan might be structured for an ongoing inventory of community building supports. In the following section, we offer some suggestions for improving similar surveys and how the results might be used to support community building.

1. Include a broader sample of support organizations

As noted throughout the report, one of the major limitations of this scan has been the selective nature of the organizations included in the study. This meant that we have had to be extremely cautious as we attempt to generalize the results beyond our limited sample. Another survey of this nature should seek to include a large number of organizations to give the analysis more freedom in categorizing the responses for analysis purposes.

2. Include representatives of organizing and funding entities

The preliminary scan also convinced us of the importance of including representatives from organizing and funding entities among the survey respondents. As discussed above, both of these areas form important elements of the core supports for community building. A scan of these entities will yield useful information about the strategies that these types of organizations bring to support of community builders.

3. Include a survey of recipients of support from responding organizations

Documenting the strategies and target audiences of the support organizations needs to be coupled with an effort to survey recipients of the supports. The “demand” or “need” side view from recipient groups will help support organizations understand the extent to which their supports are effective for community builders, as well as what community builders perceive as needs that are not being addressed by current support. This “gap analysis” is important for focusing support to areas of highest need and improving the type and quality of supports.

4. Include local and regional support organizations

While our initial scan focused on “national” organizations, we recognize that the support structure likely includes regional and local resources as well. A future scan should attempt to identify local and regional support organizations and the types of supports they provide to community builders.

APPENDIX A: THE EMERGING SUPPORT STRUCTURE FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING

In the course of our analysis of the strategies identified in the scan of community building support organizations, we organized the various strategies identified by the organizations into four categories that proved helpful for the analysis. However, as we worked with the categories we saw them as a useful beginning point to think about what supports are needed to expand and improve the practice of community building.

Initially for the analysis of the survey information, we constructed the twelve strategies into four categories of activities to support community building, including: 1) knowledge and information development; 2) knowledge and information transfer; 3) direct assistance to build capacity; and 4) policy development and advocacy. After reviewing the information from the survey, we concluded that at least two other components were critical to support for the field. They include 5) community organizing; and 6) financial resources. Below we discuss each of the categories and explain why we consider them as important components of a support structure for community building.

Knowledge and Information Development

Three strategies – research, documentation and analysis, and evaluation – are organized under the knowledge and information development component. Conducting research on community building initiatives and related community development activities is essential to building on the current state of knowledge, understanding how community building is developing, and identifying similarities and differences between community building and other approaches to community development. Documentation and evaluation provide the basis for both improving community-building practices in general and identifying common elements of successful efforts so that effective practices can be extracted.

Knowledge and Information Transfer

Development of knowledge and information about community building, documentation of practices, and evaluation of initiatives demand mechanisms for knowledge transfer. Transfer of best practices derived from research and experience is especially important for development of the field. The survey strategies related to knowledge and information transfer include knowledge dissemination, networking, clearinghouses and communications, and media. All are strategies for transferring knowledge and understanding of experience and best practices to those engaged in community building including practitioners, technical assistance providers, academics, policy makers and funders.

Direct Assistance

Direct assistance – technical assistance and training – comprises the third category of the support structure. Direct assistance transcends knowledge transfer to concentrate on application of the knowledge and information to the specific situations that practitioners encounter in their local efforts to effect change. The strategies of training and technical assistance provide means by which the accumulated knowledge of the field can be organized and transferred to stakeholders, especially staff of community-based organizations and residents, working at the neighborhood level to transform neighborhoods and improve conditions for children and families. Because of the importance of technology as both a tool for community building and a source of economic opportunity, we included the work of support organizations in promoting uses of technology for community building as a specific form of direct assistance.

Policy Development and Advocacy

A second important aspect of applying the accumulated wisdom of the community building field is to incorporate the knowledge gained from effective community building efforts into policies that support and facilitate community building. If community building is to be expanded and sustained, public policies need to reflect what those in the community-building field understand about how public policies obstruct or support effective practices. The development of policies reflecting that understanding and the effective advocacy for adoption of those policies are essential strategies for growing the community building field.

Two important categories of strategies to support community building — community organizing and financial resources — were not among the strategies included in the survey but are, nevertheless, crucial elements of the support structure.

Community Organizing

The extent to which residents, CBOs and other neighborhood stakeholders are able to come together, identify assets and aspirations, agree on a plan for their neighborhood, and execute it by connecting to resources beyond the neighborhood depends on the degree to which effective organizing occurs within and among these constituencies. Resident and organizations organizing represents the glue that brings people together and bonds them in relationships that support collective visioning and action. While community organizing to support community building is by its nature both personal and local, the development and transfer of strategies and skills for effective neighborhood organizing should be an integral component of a national support structure that brings information, strategies and skills to local efforts to develop organizing capacity.

Financial Resources

One of the critical supports that comprise a support structure for community building is financial resources. Financial resources are instrumental to both seed the work of community building and to carry out the plans and activities identified by a neighborhood to develop itself. Foundation and other private resources have played essential roles in community building. These resources have provided the basis for allowing community builders to attempt this innovative approach. They have also been instrumental in seeding community building, providing financial resources to help neighborhoods engage in organizing, analyzing conditions and assets, planning for their futures and implementing those plans. These private financial resources have also helped to leverage other public and private resources necessary to make neighborhood plans realities.

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF CORE STRATEGIES

Technical Assistance (Intensive): long-term (six months to two or more years), customized support focused on improving abilities of the recipient to conduct its work. Generally includes coaching, frequent (e.g. weekly) face-to-face and distance consultation and both structured and unstructured training opportunities.

Technical Assistance (Less Intensive): short term (six months or less) coaching and consultation with contact bi-weekly or monthly or less frequent. May also include access to workshops and other structured learning opportunities.

Training: structured opportunity designed to transfer one or more skills (classroom training – curriculum based and/or experiential – structured peer-based learning, etc.).

Networking: opportunities for peers or cross-sector groups to share lessons, best practices and “how-tos” of community building; build relationships; and affirm and expand participants’ commitment to their work.

Impact Local/State/Federal Policy: develop and advocate for policies to support the rebuilding of communities and neighborhoods.

Communications and Media: craft messages and stories about community building successes/lessons to influence opinion leaders, especially those not already identified with the field.

Research: conduct careful, systematic study and investigation using accepted science/social science methodology or innovative methods especially adapted to the study of community building activities.

Documentation and Analysis: capture, synthesize, analyze practice; generate stories, lessons, frameworks; discern best practices.

Knowledge Dissemination: make information, tools, research, accessible to a variety of audiences.

Evaluation: evaluate community building practice – assess community builders’ attainment of outcomes/goals/benchmarks. (Note: this category refers to the use of evaluation as a core strategy for supporting community building, and not to whether the national entity itself is evaluating its own work).

Clearinghouse: organize information for easy access and exchange in a defined and consistent way (can be on-line).

Promote Uses of Technology: support/facilitate the use of technology as a tool for community building (Note: this category refers to supporting community builders outside the national entity to use technology to further their community building goals, not to the own entity’s use of technology in the course of using other core strategies).

APPENDIX C: DEFINITIONS OF LEVELS OF INTENSITY

Primary: a strategy or target group was considered primary if identified by the respondent as being central to its mission and the focus of a significant portion of its staff and financial resources.

Secondary: a strategy or target group was considered secondary if identified by the respondent as being an important focus of their work and for which they devoted a substantial portion of staff and financial resources.

Limited: a strategy or target group was considered limited if identified by the respondent as being a recognized focus of their work, but not receiving an substantial portion of its staff and financial resources.

APPENDIX D: DESCRIPTIONS OF SPECIFIC CORE STRATEGIES

Core strategies: Descriptions of specific strategies

The following describes some of the specific approaches that the surveyed organizations reported using in applying the core strategies to their work.

Strategy: Knowledge and Information Development

- Three organizations identified their primary strategy focus as activities related to knowledge and information development for the community building field. All three listed “research,” “documentation and analysis” and “evaluation” as primary strategies.
 - **Aspen** focuses on development of community change, how it happens and concept development. The Aspen respondent described their work more as basic research and analysis, as opposed to documentation and analysis.
 - **Chapin Hall’s** research-related work has two primary foci: 1) documentation and evaluation of multi-site community change initiatives; and 2) research on crosscutting issues embedded in these initiatives (governance, capacity building, role of foundations, etc.).
 - **United Way** is involved in a variety of research-related activities through their National Community Building Center, which has its own research staff and produces articles for the academic and practice communities. The Center is linked to academic institutions and maintains relationships with Chapin Hall. United Way’s current documentation and analysis efforts focus on developing typologies of community building approaches.
- The **Program for Community Problem Solving** identified both documentation and analysis and research as primary strategies and identified best practices as the focus of their work in this area.
- Four organizations listed one of the three research and information development activities among their primary strategies. The **Urban Institute** cited its collection of social policy researchers in describing its ability to mobilize research and knowledge and channel it to community building.

Strategy: Knowledge and Information Transfer

- Seven organizations identified knowledge dissemination as a primary strategy in this category. Across the organizations, the most frequently cited method for information transfer was the development of publications. Aspen, Chapin Hall, PCPS, United Way, and the Urban Institute all identified publications as a major method of information transfer.
- Several organizations reported focusing on networking. Both the **EZ/EC Consortium** and the **National Community Building Network** define themselves primarily as networking entities for practitioners in the community building field.
 - EZ/EC not only networks Consortium members with each other, but also connects members to ongoing support structures. Concerns include rural communities, noting that while NCBN focuses on urban areas, one-third of EZ/EC constituents come from rural communities.
 - PCPS listed networking as a primary strategy and commented that the most effective networking is peer-to-peer. They also noted that community-building leaders need to convene for an extended period.
 - **Development Training Institute** fosters networking among people leading comprehensive community initiatives.

- The Urban Institute takes a slightly different approach to information dissemination. They noted their ability to convene seminars that are attractive to people so that they are able to disseminate information in a focused manner to organizations and individuals.
- United Way and DTI are both now developing clearinghouse mechanisms. DTI hopes to develop a Community Information Exchange while United Way is attempting to develop an active, rather than passive, clearinghouse.
- Communication and media strategies were the least frequently cited strategies.
 - United Way's marketing and communications division focuses on civic journalism.
 - **PolicyLink's** communications and media unit focuses on capturing and reporting successes of community building efforts in various locales and identifying community builders who make significant contributions to the work.
 - EZ/EC Consortium reported that while they had not initiated communications and media as a primary strategy, representatives from some cities had suggested that they become more directly involved.

Strategy: Direct Assistance

- Organizations engaged in training as a primary strategy had much to say about the work in this area and the challenges. Several noted that resources to do the needed level of both technical assistance and training were inadequate. They noted concerns about the developing practice around technical assistance and training and the need to concentrate more attention on both. One respondent noted that the level and kind of TA and training were largely dependent on the funders and felt that the foundations needed to better coordinate TA providers to avoid "turf issues." A number of respondents felt that there was a need for extended training and TA that were often not available due to funding constraints.
- Regarding TA, a number of respondents mentioned the need for intensive TA and their preference for "coaching" methods. One organization focuses on a training of trainers model, training facilitators as coaches and training field coaches. All cite these as methods of providing more intensive and long term support to their partners.
- Due to lack of resources, most of EZ/EC's direct assistance concentrates on brokering. Their staff consultants work with partners to identify and assess needs, and then EZ/EC staff identify and help to broker sources of needed services. DTI described the focus of their combined technical assistance and training approach as formal training and transformational experiences supplemented by coaching, as part of an extended support plan.
- Two organizations mentioned having established structures through which their training occurs.
 - United Way's strategy is to increase capacities of intermediaries, raising the prominence of their role as catalysts for community change. Their National Community Building Center is intended as a vehicle for training that focuses on leadership development to transform communities.
 - **MDC** similarly focuses on capacity building and leadership development to sustain change. Community Schools are a vehicle for them to help people think and act for community change. Most of their work targets demonstrations for intensive TA. They use a vision to action planning process, train trainers, and train and use field coaches.
- Two organizations mentioned focusing their training on technology.

- The Urban Institute does selective training to get people to become more informed about technology.
- DTI incorporates technology into one computer-based training program that provides participants with a laptop computer.

Strategy: Policy Development and Advocacy

- The responding organizations described this area of work primarily as policy development and analysis, as opposed to direct advocacy. Several organizations specifically noted that they do not engage in political action or direct advocacy, focusing instead on activities such as highlighting the connections between research and policy, as in the case of Chapin Hall.
- The EZ/EC Consortium described its work as not involving political activity, but influencing policy by bringing community building to scale and thereby impacting national policy and practice.
- MDC reported a similar strategy of policy analysis leading to demonstration programs in its use of policy frameworks and data to develop strategies to close the equity gap.
- The **Aspen Roundtable** takes an educational approach to influencing policy through educating leaders and encouraging them to apply what they learn at its convenings.
- The United Way described its policy impact work as using national and local boards to influence policy at both levels.
- DTI attempts to impact policy as both a convenor of and participant in a community development-focused consortia that has public policy as its focus.

APPENDIX E: DEFINITIONS OF TARGET GROUPS

Self-Identified Community Builders: individuals or organizations that identify themselves as community builders. For example, NCBN membership (target group) consists of people who identify themselves as community builders or express an interest in community building through voluntary membership in NCBN or other connections, like attendance at NCBN conferences.

Selected Community Builders: individuals or organizations engaged in community building work who are selected by the responding organization on the basis of some criteria, including those participating in a specific initiative or program.

Community Builders in Selected Cities: the respondents' target group is individuals or organizations engaged in community building work in selected cities, usually determined by funding initiatives. For example, the EZ/EC target group is community builders in cities with empowerment zone or enhanced enterprise community designations.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs): organizations specifically designed for and engaged in economic or other community development activities locally or nationally.

Grassroots or Local Leaders: leaders of formal or informal associations, alliances, organizations, or networks who are working toward change and improvement at the local level.

Community Building Intermediaries (CBIs): organizations, both local and national, that function as intermediaries between other organizations providing research, materials, technical assistance and other forms of support to those engaged in community building work.

CBIs generally: provide support generally to CBIs.

Selected CBIs: provide support to a selected group of CBIs, usually determined by funding or some other selection criteria.

Academics: scholars, staff and students at colleges and universities, especially research institutions.

Community Colleges: faculty, staff, and students at community and junior colleges.

National Media: print and broadcast media outlets and journalists with a scope that reaches significant portions of the nation.

Opinion Leaders: individuals and organizations of national stature and name recognition that have the ability to influence discussion and action on issues of social policy related to community building, including elected officials and heads of organizations.

General Public: the American people nationally or in a specific locale or geographic area.

Local Government: elected officials and agency personnel at the city, county, and state levels.

Federal Agencies: appointed officials and staff from agencies of the federal government.

National Policy Makers: elected and appointed officials engaged in the legislative, administrative or judicial process who have the authority and power to establish policy and/or allocate resources.

Funders: organizations or entities currently or potentially providing financial resources in support of community building including foundations, corporations and government agencies.

Financial Institutions: financial institutions who have either a past practice of, legal obligation to or potential for investing in community development.