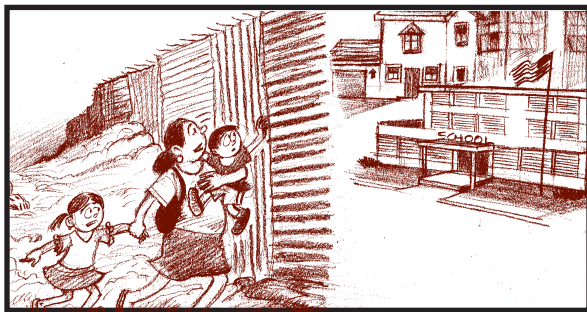


# CROSSING BORDERS



Building  
Relationships  
Across Lines  
of Difference



# Crossing Borders

Building Relationships Across Lines of Difference

August 2007

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- Rules for Relational Meetings
- How to Run a Good Meeting: Tips for New Leaders
- Reading/Resource List







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# Introduction

*Crossing Borders* is a joint product of CASA de Maryland, the Center for Community Change (the Center) and the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM). It's written for organizers and leaders, in particular those who want to build power and community among people who are different – people who don't look alike, talk alike and haven't lived alike. Its particular focus is the relationship between African Americans and immigrants.

The title -- *Crossing Borders* -- suggests that this publication is about immigration, but it's not. Instead, the publication views immigration as an entry point, not an end point, to deeper conversations about the demographic changes taking place within communities and how we disorganize or reorganize relationships and power in response: Do we build permanent or temporary coalitions out of existing organizations? Do we build new multi-racial, multi-ethnic organizations from scratch? Do we begin to diversify single-constituency organizations?

The argument we make in these pages is that those interested in power and community must be concerned about crossing borders. These borders aren't just geographic. They're about race, ethnicity, language, class, power, economics and all other lines of difference that prevent people from developing meaningful and healthy relationships with one another.

Sometimes we cross borders with permission from others – a smile, a hello or other words of welcome or invite. Most times, we take risks and cross borders without permission. We do so for the sake of building new power configurations that bring diverse people into relationship with one another in order to win on issues of common interest. At its core, this is what *Crossing Borders* is about.

*Crossing Borders* has four main modules or sections:

- 1) **Demographic Shifts Among African Americans and Immigrants** – argues that the country has changed and is changing because of shifting demographics; monolithic communities have become mixed-race and mixed-ethnic; question is will diverse communities compete or cooperate; immigration is an entry point for deeper conversations about how communities are changing and how we disorganize and reorganize power and relationships; section meant to provoke and guide conversations about how our communities are changing and how we respond.
- 2) **History of Domination and Pursuit of Work and Opportunity** – argues that when you examine history, you find two things that all people have in common and that help to explain the mixing and moving of people across the globe; the two things are domination and pursuit of work and opportunity; section meant to provoke and guide discussion about contemporary forms of domination and opportunity that we share; also meant to explore and deepen understanding regarding different types of power.
- 3) **Five Dimensions of the African American and Immigrant Tension** – argues that the tensions have nothing to do with immigration per se; you don't hear most African Americans debating the nuance of work permits and visa allocation quotas; instead, when you peel back the layers, there's a subtext that has to do with race, power, language, economics and bias and stereotypes; section meant to provoke and guide conversation that gets at the root of real and imagined tensions between African Americans and immigrants.

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4) **Jobs, Race and Immigration** – argues that the workplace is currently a place of tension but can be a place of opportunity; uses the concept of the job ladder and job niches to explain what’s happening in the labor market with respect to African Americans and immigrants; meant to provoke conversation about ways both constituencies can build power in order to climb the job ladder out of bad jobs and into good jobs.

Each module can be used as a stand-alone 90 to 120 minute workshop session. Or can be stitched together as part of a day-long series. Each can also be used within one organization or among the leaders and staff of multiple organizations.

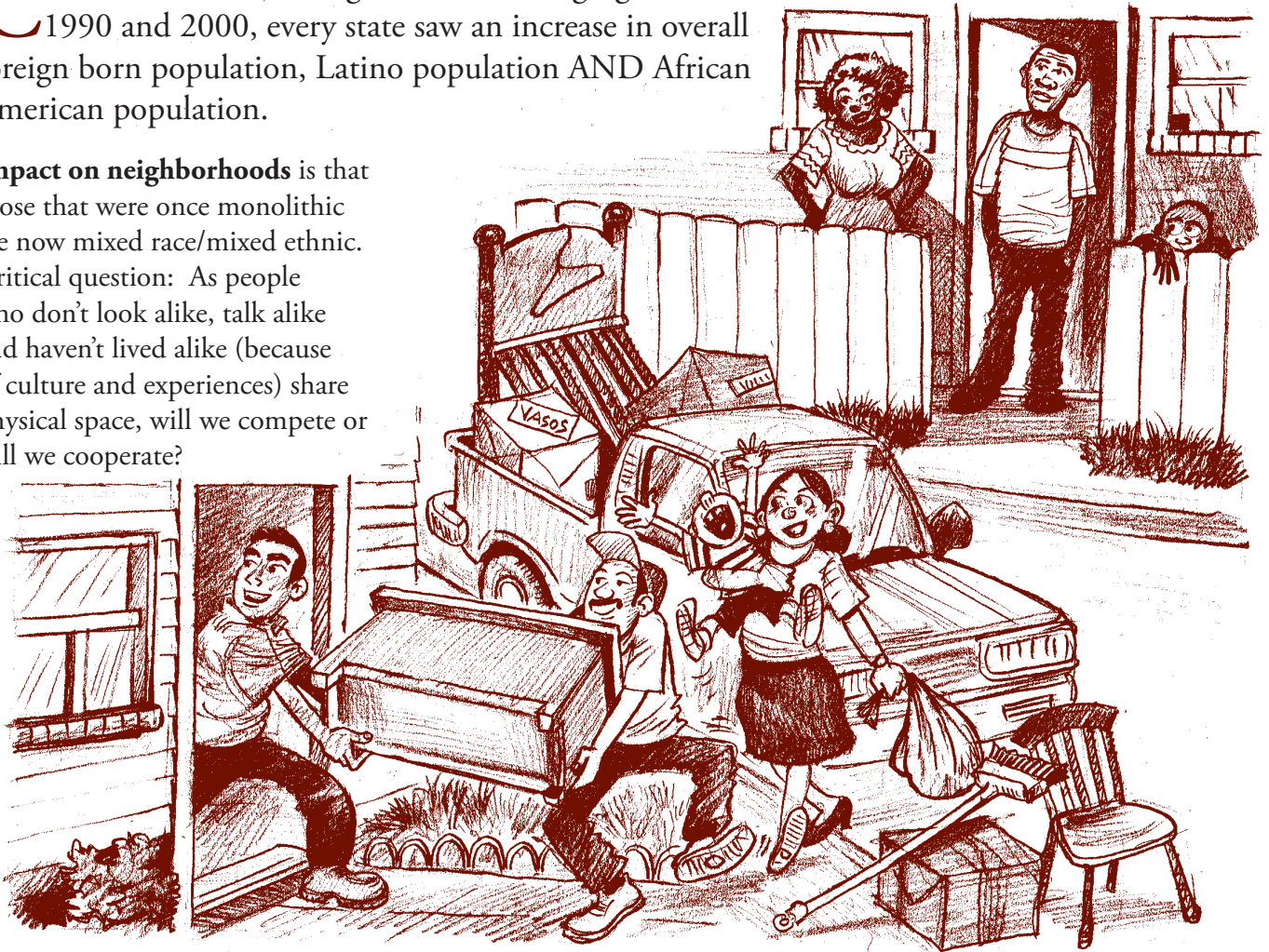
We hope the publication will make a difference in the work you do.

Onward!

# Demographic Shifts Among African Americans and Immigrants

Communities have changed and are changing. Between 1990 and 2000, every state saw an increase in overall foreign born population, Latino population AND African American population.

**Impact on neighborhoods** is that those that were once monolithic are now mixed race/mixed ethnic. Critical question: As people who don't look alike, talk alike and haven't lived alike (because of culture and experiences) share physical space, will we compete or will we cooperate?



## Demographic Shifts Among African Americans and Foreign Born Persons (particularly Hispanics) Between 1990 and 2000

Key Findings (based on research and analysis by FIRM staff):

- Every state in the U.S. experienced an increase in its foreign born population between 1990 and 2000.
- Every state experienced an increase in BOTH its African American and Hispanic populations during this same period.
- North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada, Arkansas and Utah ranked in the top five among states with the greatest percentage increase in foreign born persons between 1990 and 2000. Note that 3 of the 5 states – North Carolina, Georgia and Arkansas are in the South.



## Demographic Shifts Among African Americans and Immigrants



By region (and sorted from greatest to least), states with the greatest percentage increases in African American population:

1) Northeast:	Vermont, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, Maryland
2) Midwest:	Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska
3) West:	Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Washington
4) South:	Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina

By region (and sorted from greatest to least), states with the greatest percentage increases in Hispanic population:

1) Northeast:	Delaware, Rhode Island, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania
2) Midwest:	Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Indiana, South Dakota
3) West:	Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Idaho
4) South:	North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina

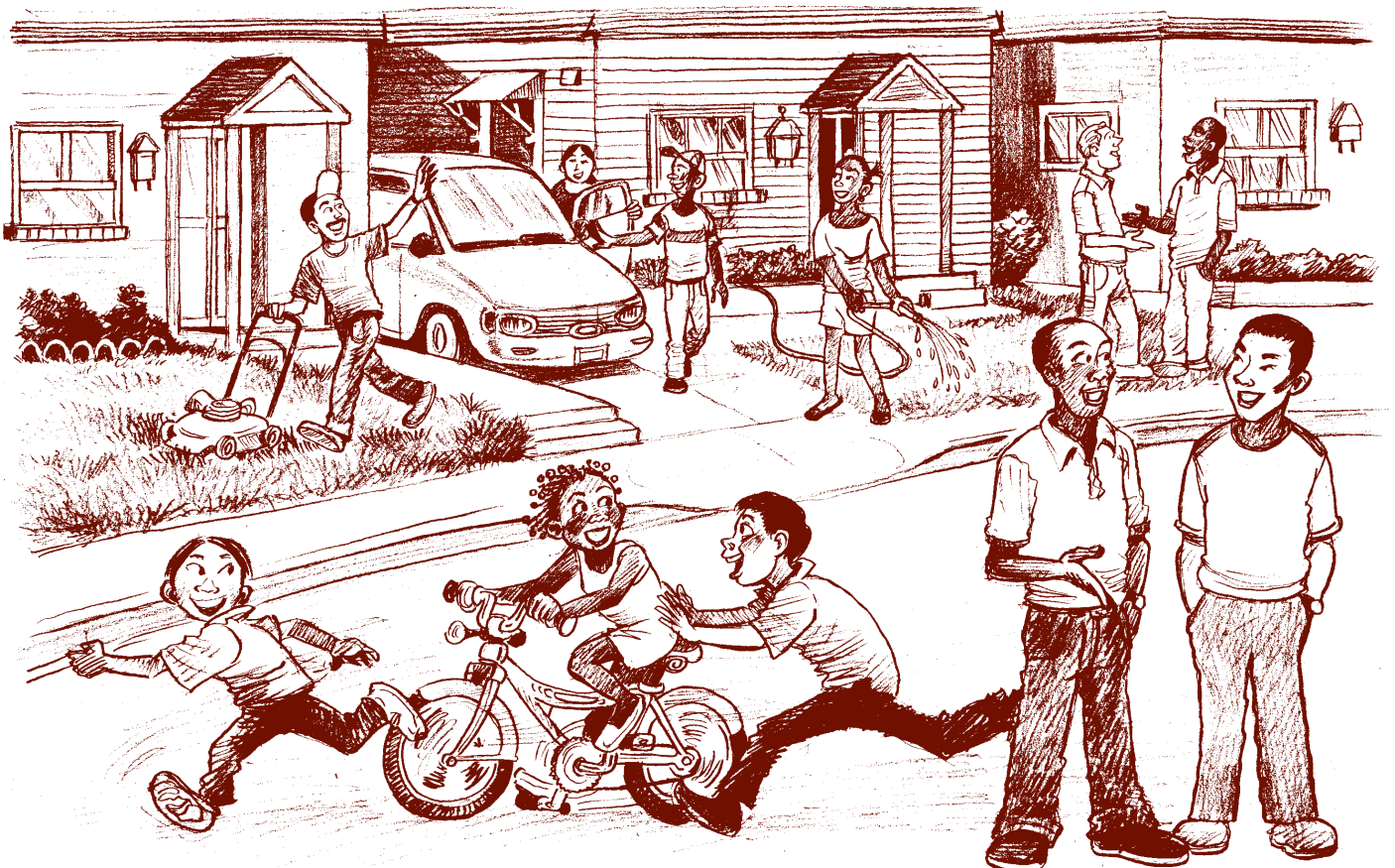
States with the greatest percentage increases in BOTH African American and Hispanic populations:

- 1) Delaware
- 2) Maryland
- 3) Minnesota
- 4) Nebraska
- 5) Nevada
- 6) Idaho
- 7) Utah
- 8) Washington
- 9) North Carolina
- 10) Georgia
- 11) Tennessee



**Findings by the Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy at The Brookings Institution.**

- Between 1990 and 2000, 9 of the 10 largest metro areas in the U.S. experienced an increase in mixed-race neighborhoods. In Boston, Chicago, and Detroit, neighborhoods with a mix of whites and Hispanics fueled this increase. In Dallas, Houston, New York, and Washington, D.C., neighborhoods with a mix of blacks and Hispanics or Asians were behind the increase.
- During this same period, the number of predominantly white neighborhoods fell by 30 percent. Neighborhoods with a mixed white and Hispanic or Asian population replaced predominantly white communities as the most common neighborhood type by 2000.
- Over the decade, whites and blacks became less likely, and Hispanics and Asians became more likely, to live in neighborhoods in which their group predominated.
- Fewer than half of the country's multiethnic and mixed white and black neighborhoods retained the same racial/ethnic mix in 2000 that they had in 1990.



## Reflection Activity: Changing Faces and Places



**Objective:** To reflect on African American - Immigrant demographic changes.



**Materials:** Discussion questions.



**Time:** 90 minutes

**Step 1:** Divide into small groups of 4 to 6 people each (depending on size of overall group). Select a facilitator. Facilitator's job is to keep people on track with respect to time and key steps. (5 minutes)

**Step 2:** Do structured go-around. Have each group member spend up to 2 minutes (without interruption) answering the two interview questions below. Answer the first question, and then do another go-around to answer the second: Feel free to use the "Questions for Further Discussion" in addition to or in place of the interview questions. (15 to 25 minutes)

**Step 3:** After each person answers both questions, the small group as a whole answers the following questions: What are the similarities in what was said? What are the differences? (20 minutes)

**Step 4:** Everyone comes back together as a full group. Each group reports on the points of discussion around which there was the most energy – whether positive or negative energy. (10 to 15 minutes)

**Step 5:** The group as a whole answers the question: How should our organization respond to these changes? Incorporate new constituencies (whether immigrant or African American) into existing organizations as members? Build coalitions or alliances with new constituencies? Help new constituencies build their own organizations where organization doesn't exist? (25 minutes)



### Interview Questions

- What is the racial/ethnic make-up of your neighborhood? Do you belong to the racial/ethnic majority or minority? How are members of your racial/ethnic group perceived in your neighborhood? How is your neighborhood changing with respect to race?
- What are some common problems in your neighborhood? Who is usually blamed or scapegoated for the problems in your neighborhood? Do you think different cultural/ethnic/racial groups in your neighborhood are working together to solve common problems? Why? Why not?

### Questions for Further Discussion

1. What's happening in our state, city or community? What patterns are we seeing with respect to racial and ethnic changes?
2. What's the extent of our relationship with other constituencies? Do we understand their culture? Do we know who the "players" or "leaders" are among the constituency (both individual and organizational)? How does leadership and power function within the constituency?



# The History of Domination and the Pursuit of Work and Opportunity

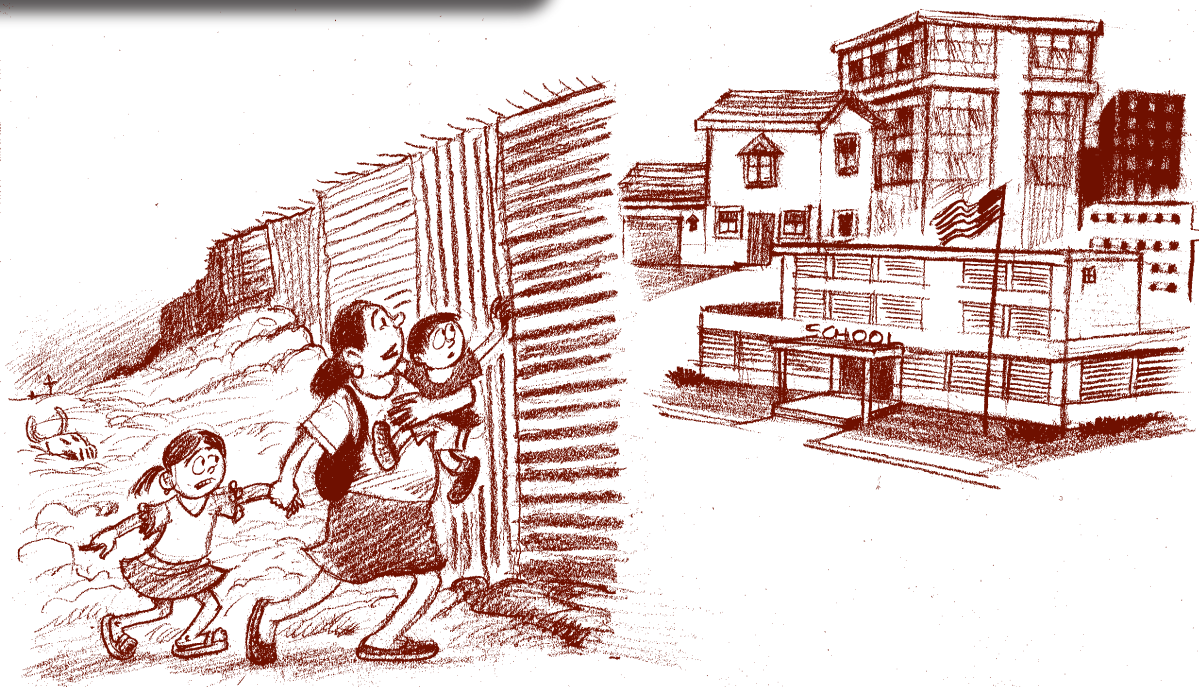
History can be a tool for multi-racial, multi-ethnic alliance building.

An examination of history reveals two themes that ALL people have in common and that help to explain the movement and mixing of people across the globe:

**1. Domination (racial, economic, etc.) and the desire to be free from it**



**2. Pursuit of work and opportunity**





# African American - Immigrant Historical Timeline

The below timeline highlights the history of domination and the pursuit of work and opportunity across races and nations.

**1600s – 1800s** – Middle Passage/African Slave Trade – Over 20 million Africans forcibly removed from the continent, shipped across the Atlantic and sold into slavery.



**1830** – Congress passes the Removal Act, forcing Native Americans to settle in Indian Territory to the West of the Mississippi River; eight years later, over 4000 Cherokees die during a forced thousand-mile march on the “Trail of Tears.”

**1845** – Potato crop fails in Ireland, sparking the Potato Famine; kills one million and prompts almost 500,000 to immigrate to America over five year period.



**1849** – California Gold Rush sparks first mass immigration from China.

**1857** – Supreme Court rules on Dred Scott case. The Court decided that an African-American could not be a citizen of the U.S., and thus had no rights of citizenship. The decision sharpened national debate over slavery.



**1860** – Poland’s religious and economic conditions prompt immigration of approximately two million Poles by 1914.

**1880** – Italy’s troubled economy, crop failures, and political climate begin the start of mass immigration with nearly four million Italian immigrants arriving in the United States.

**1881** – The assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 prompts civil unrest and economic instability throughout Russia. A year later, Russia’s May Laws severely restrict the ability of Jewish citizens to live and work in Russia. Both prompt more than three million Russians to immigrate to the United States over three decades.





**1882** – The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 suspends immigration of Chinese laborers under penalty of imprisonment and deportation.

**1898** – The Spanish-American War begins with a naval blockade of Cuba and attacks on the island. The four-month conflict ends with Cuba's independence and the U.S. acquisition of Puerto Rico and Guam.

**1911** – The Dillingham Commission identified Mexican laborers as the best solution to the Southwest labor shortage. Mexicans are exempted from immigrant "head taxes" set in 1903 and 1907.

**1918** – World War I ends. The northern migration of African-Americans began in earnest during the war. By 1930 there were 1,035,000 more Black Americans in the North, and 1,143,000 fewer Black Americans in the South than 1910.

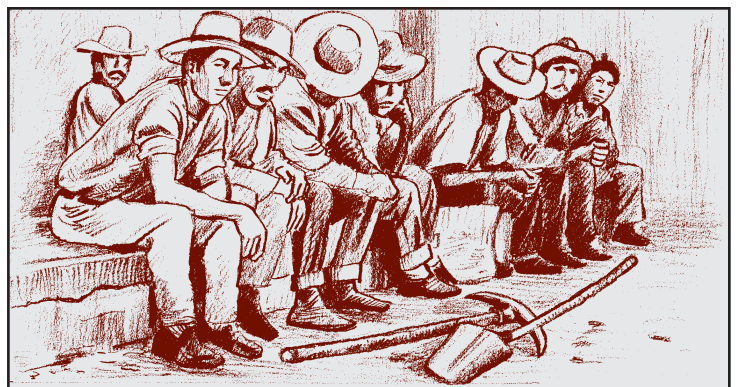
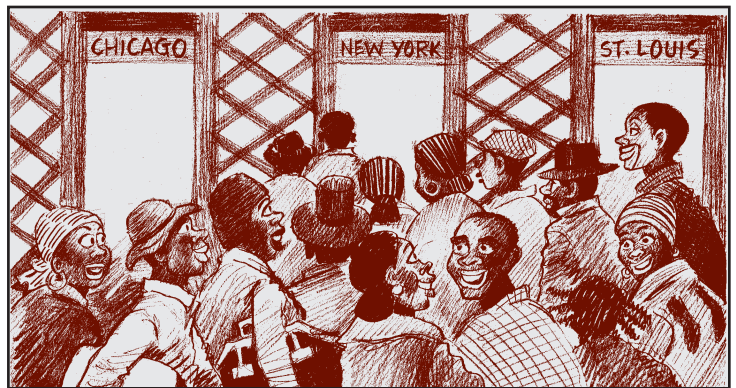
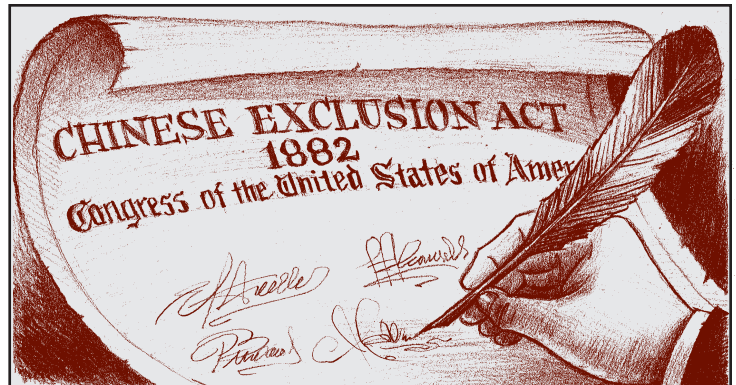
**1924** – Immigration Act of 1924 establishes fixed quotas of national origin and eliminates Far East immigration (Japanese).

**1941** – Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor galvanizes American's War effort. More than 1,000 Japanese-American community leaders are incarcerated because of national security.

**1959** – Fidel Castro's revolution prompts mass exodus of more than 200,000 people within three years (Cubans and Puerto Ricans).

**1961** – Cuban Refugee program takes in 300,000 immigrants during the next two decades.

**1965** – The Bracero Program ends after temporarily employing almost 4.5 million Mexican nationals.





## History of Alliance Building

### The Early Years:

From 1825 until the end of the Civil War in 1865, the Mexican government rejected the institution of slavery and even welcomed fugitive slaves fleeing Texas. In addition, Mexico/Mexicans: 1) was prepared to compensate North American owners of fugitive slaves; 2) supported uprisings of enslaved Africans;

and 3) played a major supporting role in the unacknowledged Texas to Mexico route of the “Underground Railroad”. During this time, it surfaced that the interest of some Mexican officials was not purely altruistic. Instead, fearing a U.S. military invasion, some officials began to see it as “wise to encourage the development of slave

colonies along the Northern border as a way to lessen the threat posed by the U.S.” It was reasoned that “fugitives, choosing between liberty under the Mexican government and bondage in the U.S., would fight to protect their Mexican freedom more vigorously than any mercenaries.”

*Ron Wilkins*

### The Movement Years:

The Young Lords, a radical Puerto Rican organization established in the late 1950s, was fashioned after the Black Panthers. Jose Cha-Cha Jimenez met Black Panther leader, Fred Hampton, while in jail. Their conversation coupled with Jimenez’ reading about Lenin, Mao, King and Malcolm gave birth to the Young Lords.

In addition to the Young Lords, the civil rights movement of the 1960s gave birth to the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act. These amendments promoted family reunification and removed caps placed on the number of visas each country received.

The civil rights movement of the 1960s also gave birth to Hispanic

organizations like the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and the National Council of La Raza

(NCLR). In fact, MALDEF was established in 1967 with the assistance of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.



## Post Civil Rights:

In 1983, Harold Washington was elected as Chicago's first African American Mayor. Overcoming a long pattern of electoral apathy and political repression, nearly three-fourths of all black voters turned out to deliver over 514,000 votes for Washington. He combined that total with votes from other key constituencies – 79% of the Puerto Rican vote, 68% of the Mexican American vote, and 38% of the Jewish vote – to defeat his Republican opponent. The major challenge facing Washington was to create a “broad-based, progressive, radical-reformist, multiethnic, multiclass coalition that would

embrace African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, low-income working people, and the unemployed.” Though Washington won re-election in 1987, the campaign revealed several lessons: 1) Washington and supporters underestimated the ambitions, talents and assets of his White opponent, E.R. “Fast Eddie” Vrdolyak, the boss of the Cook County Democratic Party machine. Vrdolyak ran a racialized campaign framed as “fighting to keep the city the way it is.” Though he led with a race supremacy argument, his true motive was patronage and power; 2) Each constituency seemed to

view Washington's reform agenda narrowly, through the prism of its own specific interests (i.e., black nationalists wanting Washington to support an African American for City Clerk instead of his preferred Latino candidate; 3) Persistent fiscal problems and an uncertain tax base frustrated a progressive agenda on housing, education, health care and employment; 4) Washington's charisma was no substitute for an effective political organization that functioned independently of the City Hall and which could have kept together the various class and ethnic forces.

*Manning Marable*





## Reflection Activity: History of Domination and Pursuit of Work and Opportunity.



**Objective:** To examine the history of domination in the U.S. and abroad; discuss our shared history and shared opportunity; to re-examine notions of power.



**Materials:** markers and butcher paper



**Time:**  
90 minutes

**Step 1:** Break into small groups of 4 to 6 people (depending on overall size of the group); select facilitator whose primary job is to keep

the group on task with respect to time and key steps. (5 min.)

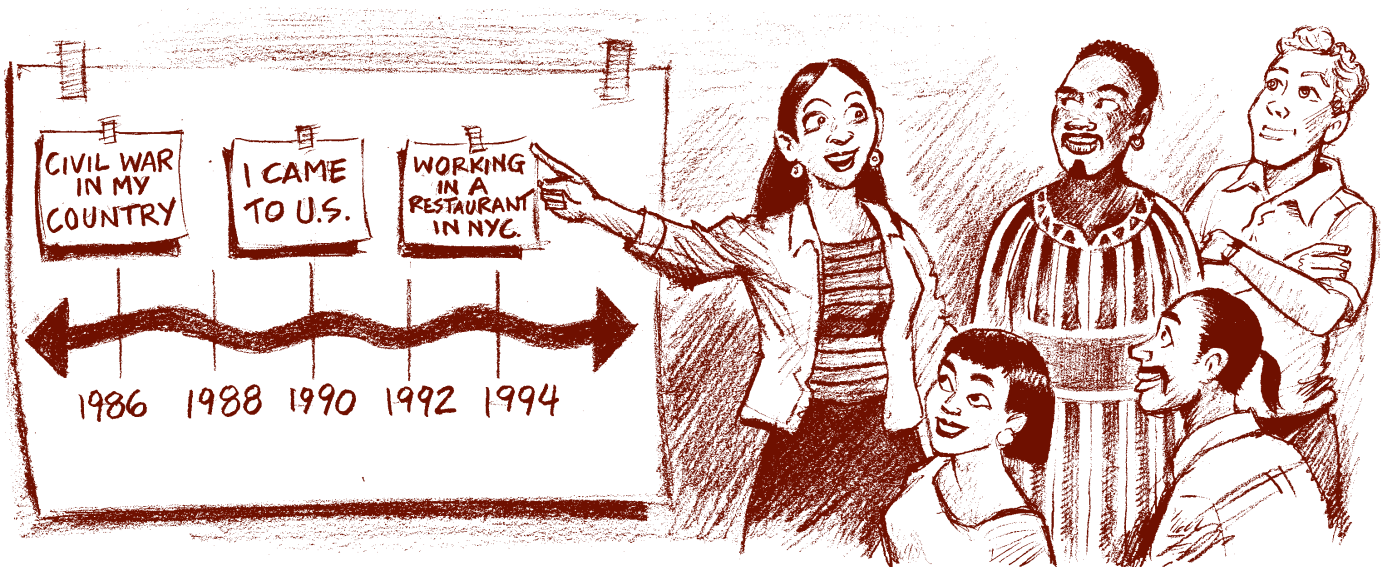
**Step 2:** In a structured go-around, each person spends up to 3 minutes answering the questions below. Answer the first question, and then do another go-around to answer the second: (40 min.)

When you reflect on your family history, can you connect it with any significant points on the timeline of domination and pursuit of work and opportunity? If yes, which one(s)?

What's your family's immigration or migration story? Did they migrate or immigrate because of domination (or oppression), the pursuit of work and opportunity or both? Explain.

**Step 3:** Each small group then discusses similarities and differences in their responses; (20 min.)

**Step 4:** Everyone comes back together as a full group. Each group reports on the points of discussion around which there was the most energy – positive or negative. (25 min.)



### Questions for Further Reflection

- 1) What's your definition of power? Describe a time in your public life that you've felt powerful? Why?
- 2) What are your thoughts about the following concepts?:
  - a) There are two kinds of power – *Power over* (someone or group of people) AND *power with* (someone or group of people). The tensions between African American and immigrant communities are largely about power over. These tensions exist because there are no healthy and meaningful mechanisms for us to build *power with*.
  - b) Power + Love = Justice. Love by itself = sentimental mush. Power by itself = domination.



# Five Dimensions of the African American - Immigrant Tension

The typical commentary reads: “African Americans and Immigrants – a natural coalition”. But this commentary doesn’t tell the full story.

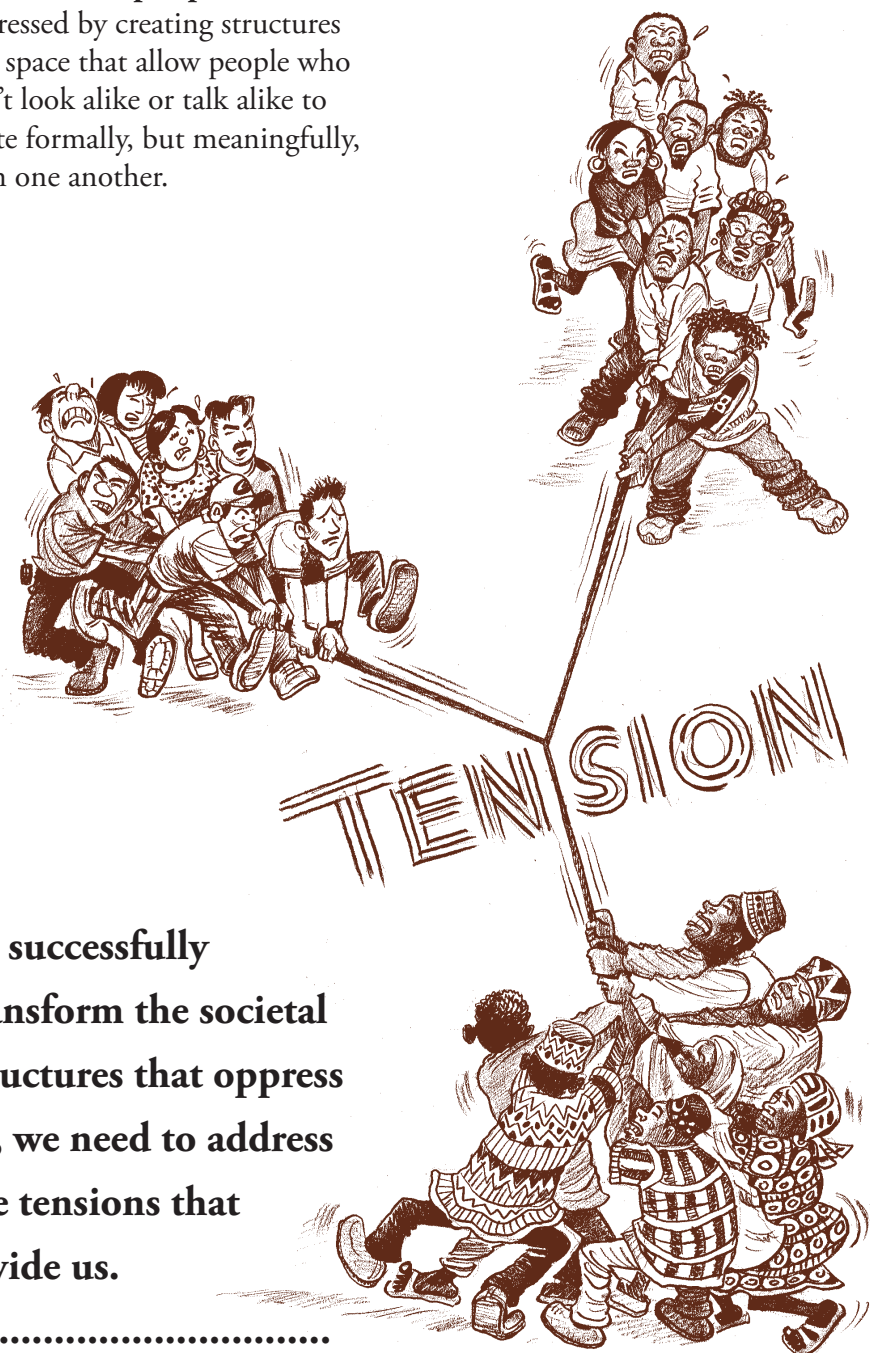
**If we’re to advance** true social justice and build multi-racial, multi-ethnic alliances in the process, we need to look deeper at the “tensions” that divide us. And don’t just acknowledge them. But talk about them. Sit with them. Work through them. **DO NOT** ignore them.

**Notice the “tensions”** over immigration have little to do with the technicalities of immigration – visa allocations, portability of work permits, etc. Sure, a few die hards and intellectuals approach immigration from this perspective, but not the vast majority.

**Instead, the majority speak** a subtext that has to do with issues of difference, fear and an inability to relate. This subtext is described below.

**In general,** people who see the African American - immigrant issue from a standpoint of “tension” check into the conversation from one or more of the below perspectives. These perspectives play out in four areas where African Americans and immigrants are converging but don’t have mechanisms for building healthy relationships: (1) schools; (2) prisons; (3) the workplace, and to some extent (4) communities.

**Most of these perspectives** can be addressed by creating structures and space that allow people who don’t look alike or talk alike to relate formally, but meaningfully, with one another.



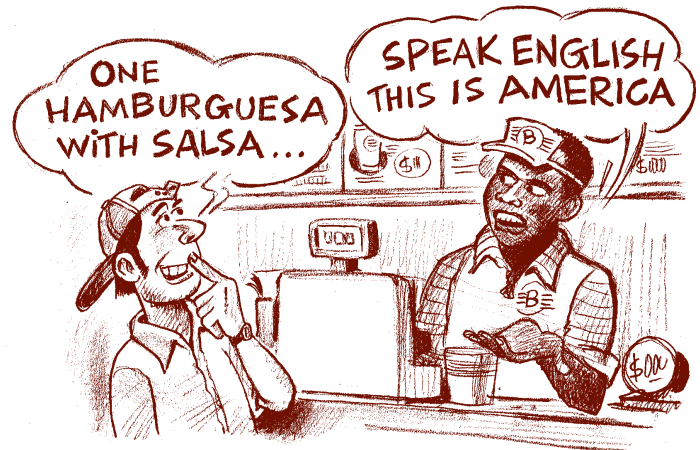
**To successfully transform the societal structures that oppress us, we need to address the tensions that divide us.**

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# Five Dimensions of the African American - Immigrant Tension

## 1 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE -- INABILITY TO RELATE

**“Speak English, dammit!”** One element of the African American-Immigrant “tension” is the inability to relate across lines of difference, including language and culture. But this challenge has little to do with immigration per se and more with diverse people sharing physical space - in cities and suburbs -- and not being able to relate.



## 2 STEREOTYPE AND BIAS

**“But they are lazy.”** You’ve heard the stereotypes: “Spanish people eat rice and beans, travel 8 in car, live 10 in a house.” “Blacks are lazy, talk loud, have attitudes and like to fight.”

## 3 ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

**“They’re draining our resources, taking our jobs.”** The latter part of this quote suggests conspiracy. It suggests an offensive move by the other team to win the game, to “steal” ALL the jobs. The reality is more nuanced. It has to do with a multitude of factors including labor market trends, the global economy and the function of informal networks in finding work.





## 4 POWER AND RECOGNITION

**“Why should they [immigrants] get theirs, we [African Americans] haven’t gotten ours?”**

To want power and recognition is to be human. Nothing wrong with it. We all want to be recognized as having something to contribute. We all want power -- the ability to act on our dreams. The discomfort with talking about power and recognition stems from the way society has perverted the words – If you want power, it’s because you want to dominate. If you want recognition, it’s because you want to be in the spotlight while others are in the shadows. However, there are two kinds of power – power over and power with. Those of us who believe in democratic justice believe in the latter. Power with demands that we not attempt to push other groups (i.e., African Americans or immigrants) away from the power table. But, instead, we create a big enough table at which ALL groups can sit. It’s about every group having the power to make their dreams and ambitions a reality.

## 5 RACE

**“They’re bad people.”** The old saying in the South was [and maybe still is] “If you’re white, you’re alright, if you’re brown, stick around, but if you’re black, get back”. Race IS a social construct but a political reality for people of a darker hue. It’s still the case that many people catch hell because of the complexion of their skin. The U.S. racial system (positively charged whiteness and negatively charged blackness) and how immigrants experience race in their home countries both feed this tension around race.





## Reflection Activity: Story Cards



### Objective:

To explore the real and imagined tensions between African Americans and immigrants, in particular tensions related to racial bias.



### Materials:

Pens or pencils; index cards or other small cards (ideally 5 x 8 in size); envelopes or small cardboard box; butcher paper and markers.



### Time:

90 minutes

### Step 1

On an index card, write 6 – 8 sentences that tell of an experience you've had either as: a) a VICTIM of a racial bias (What happened? Where? Who did it?) or;

b) a PERPETRATOR of a racial bias (What did you do/think? To whom? Why?); After you complete the card, put it in an envelope and hand it to the facilitator or place in the cardboard box. If you prefer, seal the envelope. (15 min.)

### Step 2

Break into small groups of 5-6. Facilitator then distributes the completed cards to the small groups (ideally, each person in the group getting one card). (5 min.)

### Step 3

In your small group, each person (if there are enough cards) reads out loud a story from a victim or perpetrator. Each group then picks ONE story for which they will figure out a healing process. (20 min.)

### Step 4

After picking one story or card, in a structured go-around, each person in the group has up to 3 minutes without interruption to answer the following question:

a) How would you heal the “tension” between the victim and perpetrator? How would you do it in a way that’s restorative, non-punitive; non-antagonistic; win-win for both parties? (25 min.)

### Step 5

After each person shares their perspective on a healing process, the small groups then agree on *one* healing process or some combination of ideas expressed at your table. (15 min.)

### Step 6

Report back. (10 min.)

a) What healing process did your group come up with?

b) What points of discussion had the most energy - positive or negative?



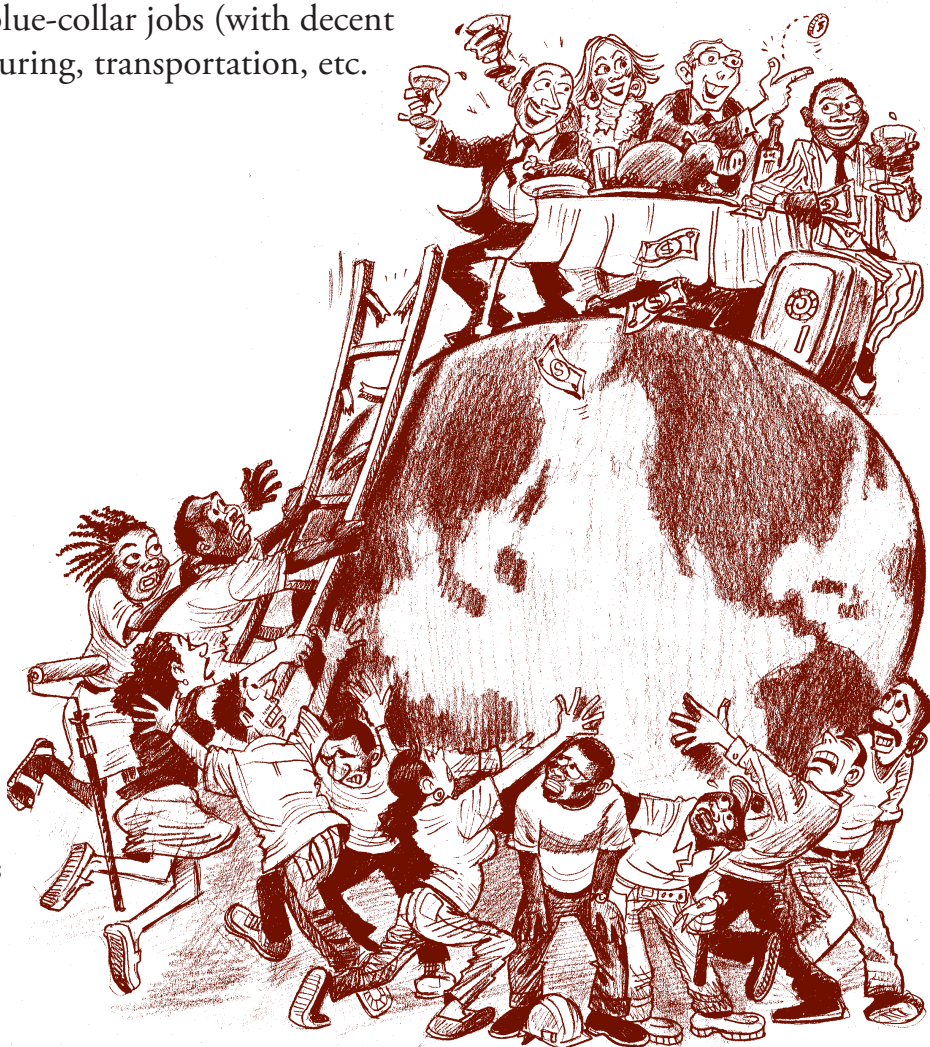
# Jobs, Race, and Immigration

The nature of employment in the U.S. has changed and is changing. Good blue-collar jobs (with decent pay and benefits) in manufacturing, transportation, etc. are gone or on the decline.

**High technology, service, professional and managerial jobs** are on the rise. Technological and international economic forces have driven these changes. Lowering labor costs, increasing profits and reducing worker power has been the motive.

**This shift has increased the demand for skilled workers** and those with at least *some* college; also increased demand for low-wage workers to service the “middle-class” – childcare workers, etc.

**On the supply side**, instead of producing more skilled and educated workers, poor quality schools and immigration have converged with other complicated factors (discussed below) to create an overabundance of low-income, unskilled workers.



## Effects of Trade Policies

This problem has been made worse by trade policies that have put native and foreign-born workers in the U.S. in competition with low-wage workers in other parts of the world. Competition is taking place in manufacturing, service and other occupations and sectors.

**The changing economy and the effects of globalization have lead to an increased strain in the tension between African Americans and immigrants.**

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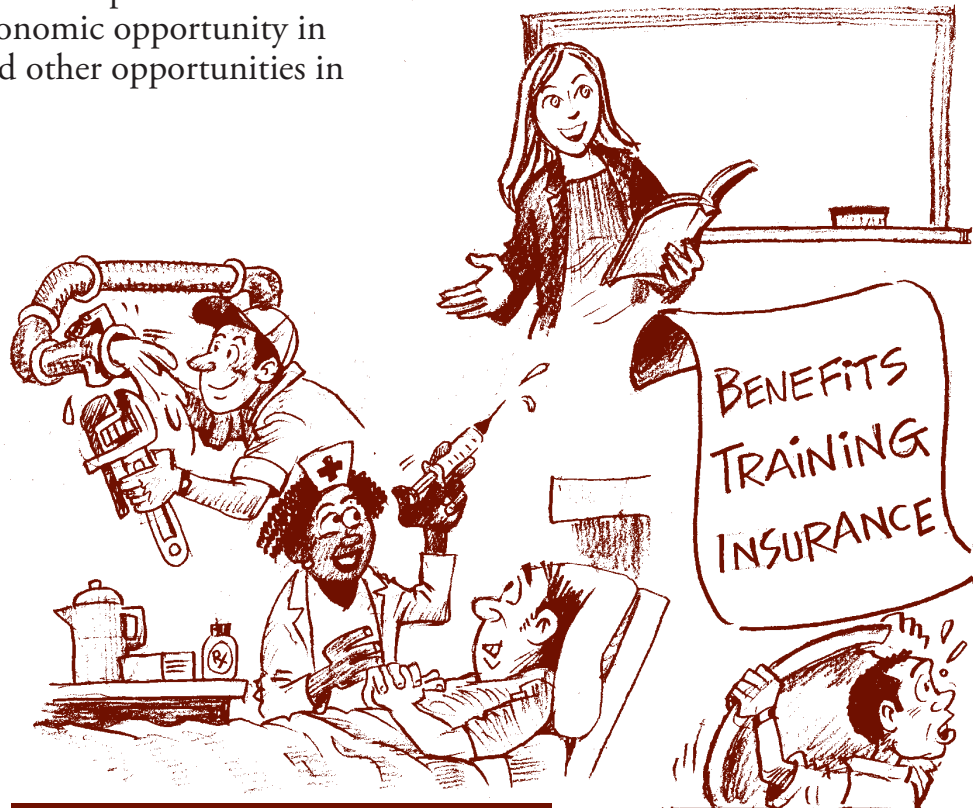
## The Connection between Jobs and Immigration

**P**ush-Pull factors drive immigration. The push is the lack of voice (mainly political) and economic opportunity in home countries. The pull is work and other opportunities in receiving countries.

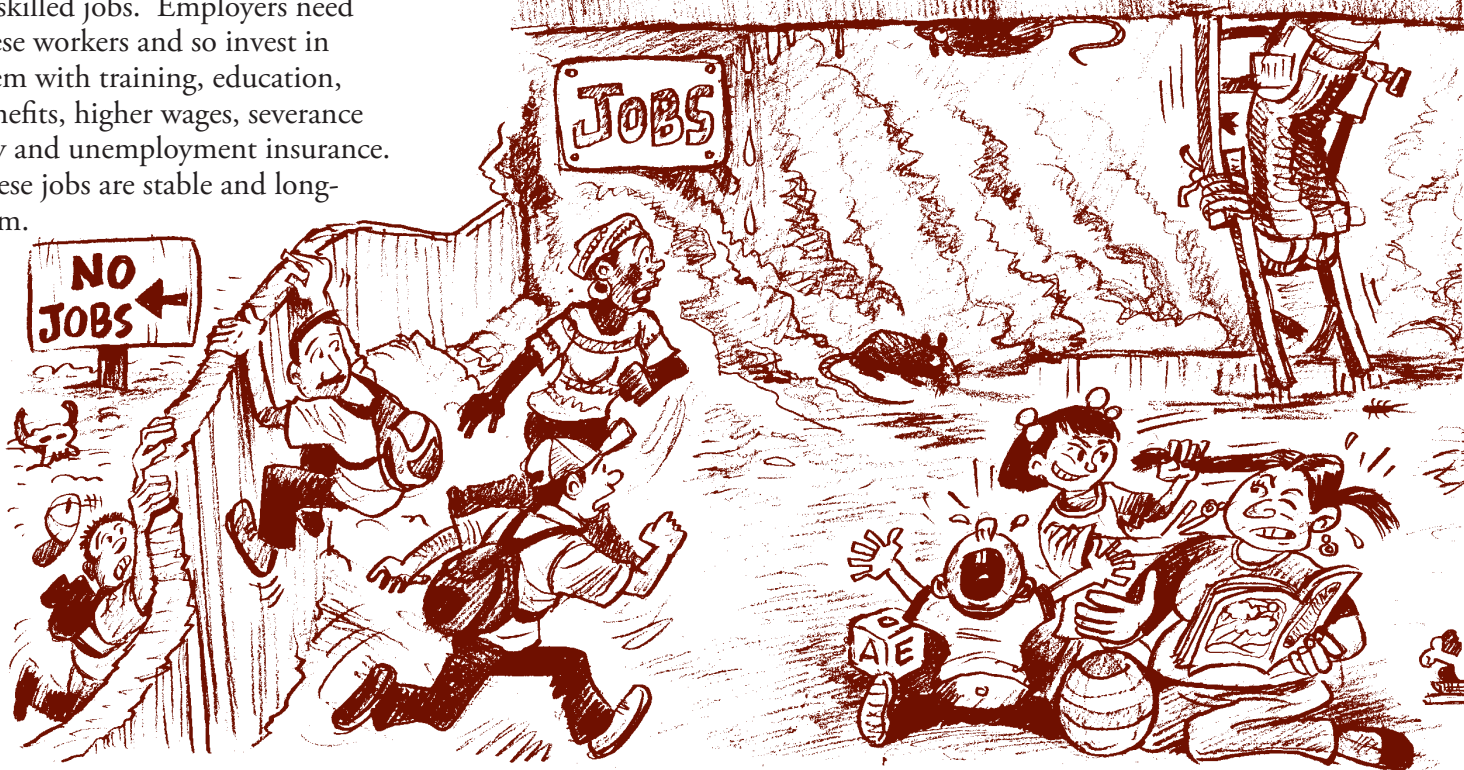
**But the pull factors** are perverted – advanced and post-industrial economies (including the U.S.) have a chronic need for cheap labor: workers who are willing to labor under unpleasant conditions at low wages and with little stability and chance for advancement.

**The function of labor markets:** There are two kinds of labor markets in advanced and post-industrial economies that, taken together, form a labor hierarchy: primary sector firms (“good jobs”) and secondary sector firms (“bad jobs”).

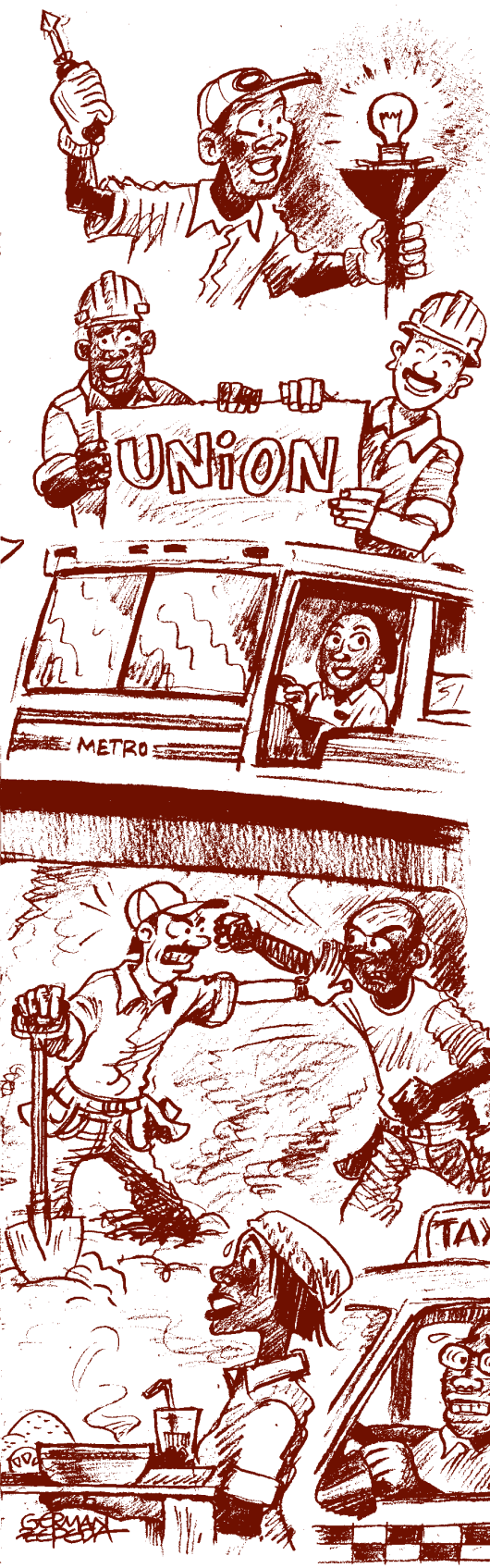
**Primary sector firms** “good jobs”, *for the most part*, consist of skilled jobs and a small number of unskilled jobs. Employers need these workers and so invest in them with training, education, benefits, higher wages, severance pay and unemployment insurance. These jobs are stable and long-term.



### The Good Job - Bad Job Divide







**Secondary sector firms** “bad jobs” usually consist of unskilled non-union jobs. These jobs have low wages and lack benefits, training and educational opportunities. They are characterized by unstable and short-term relationships with employers. When there’s a flux in economic activity and a firm loses money or wants to increase its profit, employers respond by cutting the payroll, entering into sub-contracting relationships or employing workers through independent contractor relationships; this practice is more dominant in the secondary sector than the primary.

**The need for cheap labor to accommodate changes in the U.S. labor market has caused an increase in immigration and in unstable, low-wage jobs.**

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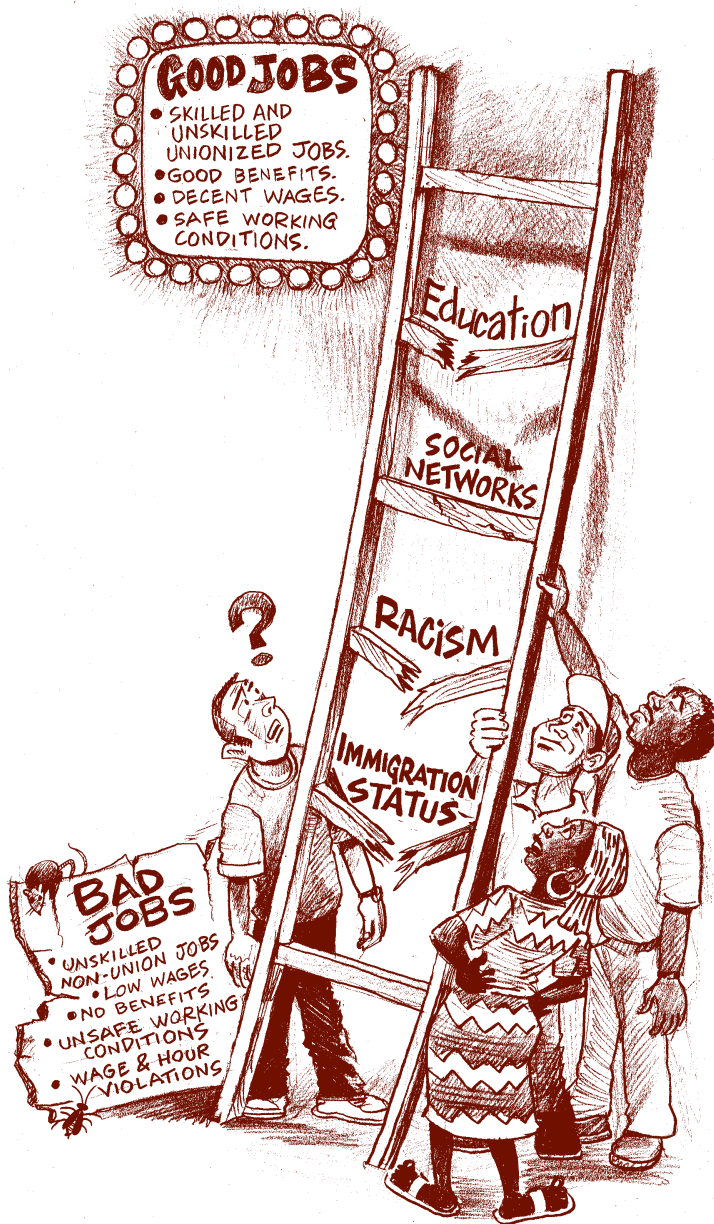
There’s also a shift now taking place in the economy. This shift has created a decline in primary sector jobs or “good jobs” (both in terms of their number and quality). It also has expanded the number of secondary firms or “bad jobs” and expanded secondary firm behavior into the primary sector.

**Historically, skills and union protection** (key fixtures in the primary sector) have shielded primary sector workers. And on top of this, companies can’t lay off equipment, machinery and other capital. This makes the secondary sector firms/jobs more vulnerable.

**Labor Hierarchy:** There will always be a labor hierarchy – the primary sector is at the top. Secondary sector is at the bottom. It’s assumed that every race and ethnic group enters at the bottom and climbs the “job ladder” to the top. European immigrants did this. But Blacks, Latinos and other new immigrants either haven’t or are challenged in doing so. Why?



## The Job Ladder



**Many African Americans can't and have not been able to climb the job ladder because:**

- ✓ Employer preference for Whites, Latinos or other immigrants over African Americans. With respect to the latter group, employers in the secondary sector want workers who accept the pay and who will do the work without social status. They want workers who don't exercise their rights and who are less inclined to say "no". Their answer: Immigrants.
- ✓ Lack of social and kinship networks to enter particular job niches;
- ✓ Mismatch between skills and desire: Some African Americans (particularly those with a High School education or less) don't want to enter the job ladder at the bottom – in the secondary sector -- due to history of oppression, etc. However, they lack the skills and education to enter at the top;
- ✓ Status and Motivation – African Americans, unlike many immigrants who are new arrivals, want both pay AND social status; lack of status leads to poor performance on the job and lack of motivation;
- ✓ Disconnect between job growth in suburbs and African American presence in cities (due to changes in the economy and demographics but also remnants of racialized federal and community housing policies after WWII).

**Some Latinos and other new immigrant groups haven't climbed the ladder or are facing challenges because:**

- ✓ Language and literacy issues (for both documented and undocumented);
- ✓ Decline of good-paying blue collar jobs and enormous increase in secondary sector jobs;
- ✓ Primary sector requires skills and training they don't have. Secondary sector consists of dead-end jobs with no training, education or opportunity for advancement;
- ✓ Race and ethnic bias (varies depending on country of origin and skin color);
- ✓ Lack of documentation.



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## How does the jobs and immigration relationship lead to “tensions” between African Americans and immigrants?:

**Discrimination and employment niches.** Employers’ preference for immigrants over African Americans AND immigrants’ domination of particular employment niches (i.e., garment, hotel and building trades industries) through strong social and kinship networks feed into perception and reality of Blacks being “locked out” of job opportunities;

**The broken ladder.** As long as the “ladder” that allows different race and ethnic groups to, over time, climb into better employment opportunities (through training, employment, etc.) is broken, multiple groups will get stuck at and compete along the same rung – for the low skill, low pay, and low stability jobs in the secondary sector;



So, the challenge is both horizontal and vertical. It’s horizontal because of the inability of some groups to move across particular job industries or niches. It’s vertical because of the inability of groups to climb from the secondary to primary sector.

## How does the jobs and immigration relationship create opportunities?:

**Jobs.** Immigration reform (including the prospect of undocumented immigrants gaining legal status) won’t resolve the structural problems related to employment (low wages, involuntary part-time work, no union, no training) in the secondary job market. Only ‘jobs reform’ – improving wages, benefits and working conditions in the secondary market -- can do this. This is an area around which there can be alliance building between African Americans and immigrants. In particular, groups should examine local, state or federal work around: a) minimum wage; b) overtime enforcement; c) pay and benefits for full-time and part-time workers and; d) income supplement programs (refundable tax credits, etc.); e) occupational safety and health and; f) unionization or labor-community partnerships.

**Education and Training.** Over the next few years, we will see an increase in job opportunities. Many will require a college education. Many WILL NOT (about 27 million through 2012), including those that pay a good salary (jobs such as medical and dental assistants, physical therapy aides, licensed practical nurses, construction, etc.). In addition, “Baby Boomers” (people born between 1946 and 1964) are getting older and will soon retire. This means there will be a need for people to do the work that “Boomers” used to do. So, instead of competing for low-paying jobs in the secondary sector, African Americans and immigrant groups should fight for training and education programs that give both groups the skills needed to climb the ladder into higher paying jobs in the primary sector. In addition, both groups should pursue strategies that hold employers accountable for job training and placement.

**African American Worker Centers.** Through worker centers, the immigrant community has built organizing muscle around jobs issues. Worker centers engage in service, organizing and policy work, some focusing on particular job sectors. The worker center model has yet to penetrate the African American community with any real breadth. Alliances can potentially be formed around incorporating African Americans into immigrant-driven worker centers OR working with African American groups to build their own centers.

## Reflection Activity: The Job Ladder



**Objective:** To reflect on the relationship between immigration, jobs and tensions between African Americans and immigrants.



**Materials:** job ladder drawing



**Time:** 90 minutes



### Step 1

Break into small groups of 4 to 6 people (depending on overall size of the group); select a facilitator whose primary job is to keep the group on task with respect to time and key steps; (5 min.)

### Step 2

Each person reviews the job ladder drawing on page 24, in particular the definitions of “good jobs” and “bad jobs”; facilitator asks for two volunteers to read out loud the definition of “good jobs” and “bad jobs”; do a structured go-around; each person spends up to two minutes talking (without interruption) about paid work they currently do or have done in the past and whether it fits the definition of a “good job” or a “bad job” and why; (20 min.)

**Step 3:** Each small

group then discusses similarities and differences in their responses; (10min.)

**Step 4:** Small groups continue to examine the “job ladder” drawing on page 24. They discuss the following questions. Depending on time, they prioritize one or two of the questions: (30 min.)

- 1) What do you see in the picture?
- 2) Why is the ladder broken?
- 3) What can we do to repair the ladder?
- 4) How can we transform jobs at the lower rungs of the ladder into “good” jobs?
- 5) Why do some groups dominate particular employment niches – building trades, etc. while other groups can’t even make entry into these occupations? How do we fix the problems with niches?

**Step 5:** Everyone comes back together as a full group. Each group reports on the points of discussion around which there was the most energy – whether positive or negative energy. Expand discussion using “Questions for Further Reflection”. (25 min.)

## Questions for Further Reflection

- 1) What’s happening in your local/state/regional labor market (with respect to wage and hour issues; working conditions; discrimination; training; etc.)? What patterns or trends are you seeing?
- 2) Who are the major firms/employers in your area? What’s your understanding of how these firms are structured – decision making; source of profits; etc.? What type AND scale of power do you need to influence the behavior of these firms/employers?



# Additional Resources

## 5 Step Process for Moving from Dialogue to Action

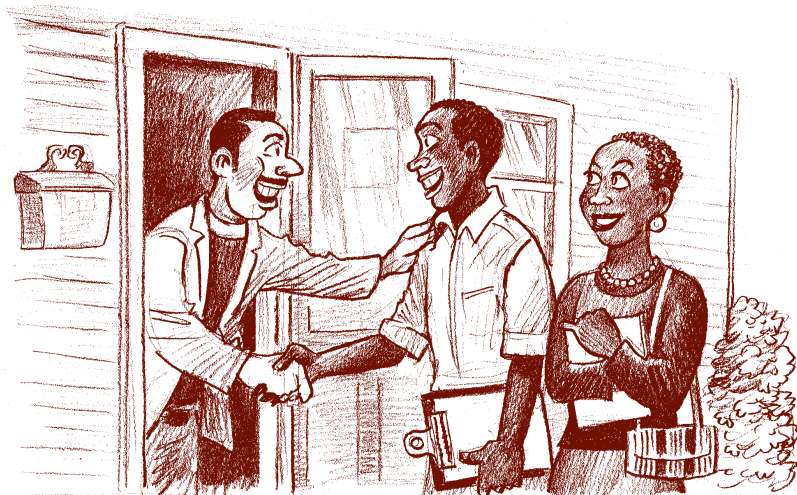
### Step 1 ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS TO IDENTIFY LEADERS.

Goal of first round of one-on-one meetings is to identify 10 or more leaders from each community - African American and immigrant - for a total of at least 20; looking for self-interest; looking for a mix of traditional (clergy, politicians) and non-traditional leaders (teachers, church club members); this group of 20 forms the core team or steering committee for the dialogue process or any coalition that emerges from the dialogue.



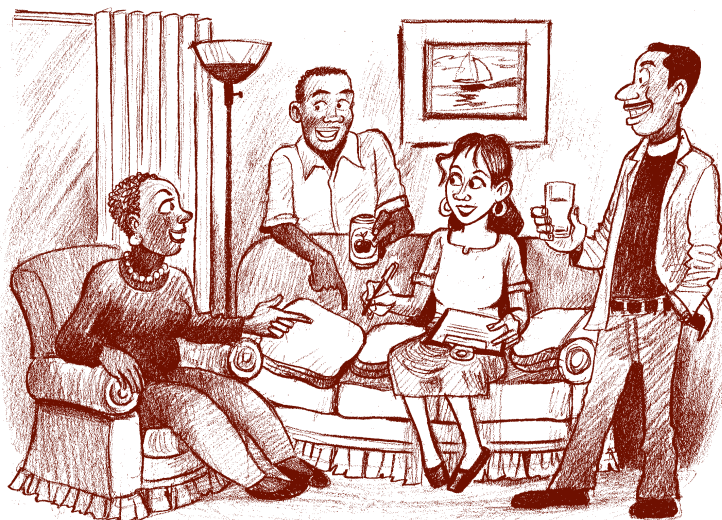
### Step 2 HOUSE MEETINGS

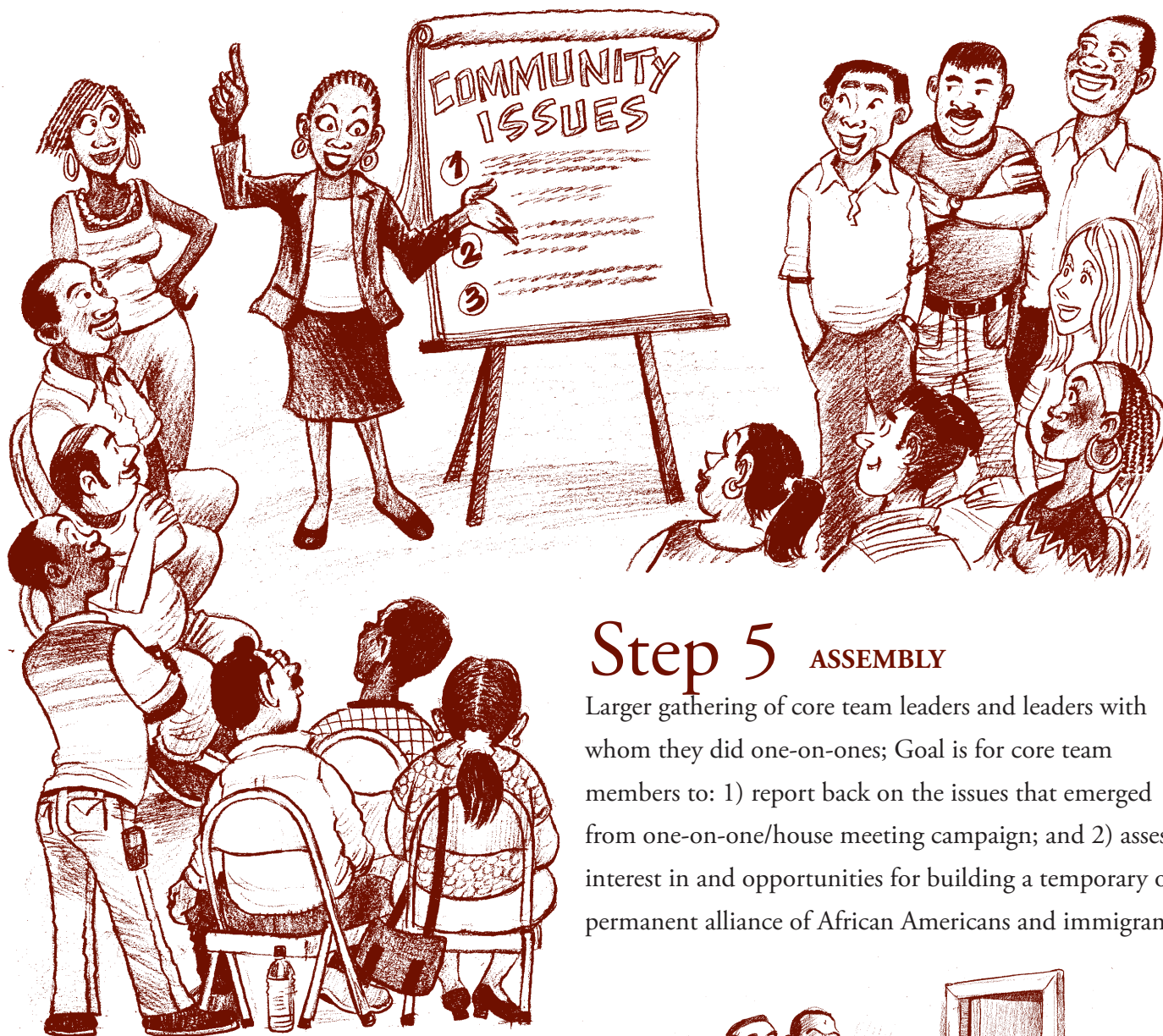
Do house meetings with African Americans and immigrants separately; the goal of house meetings is to deepen relationships among core team members and to discuss each member's vision for their community in the context of changing demographics.



### Step 3 JOINT HOUSE MEETINGS

Do joint house meeting(s) with African Americans and immigrants together; build relationships among core team members as a group; have members share vision for their community; discuss process and timeline for building an alliance or coalition of African Americans and immigrants; do training on how to do one-on-one meetings; do training on the history and opportunities that African Americans and immigrants share.





## Step 4 ONE-ON-ONE HOUSE MEETING CAMPAIGN.

Core Team engages in one-on-one/house meeting campaign to: 1) identify other leaders (and their self-interest) in the respective communities; and 2) understand the issues they most care about.

## Step 5 ASSEMBLY

Larger gathering of core team leaders and leaders with whom they did one-on-ones; Goal is for core team members to: 1) report back on the issues that emerged from one-on-one/house meeting campaign; and 2) assess interest in and opportunities for building a temporary or permanent alliance of African Americans and immigrants





## Rules for Doing One-on-Ones (also known as Relational Meetings)

**W**hat is a one-on-one?: It's a face-to-face conversation between two people (organizer and potential leader OR leader and potential leader) for the explicit purpose of exploring a relationship between a potential leader and a power organization; done well, it's a conversation grounded in passion, vision, stories and self-interest, NOT issues and programs; at the end of the day, the goal is to increase the power of the organization by getting the person – who presumably has something to offer (passion, a following, etc.) -- to join the collective.

**1) An effective organizer.** To be an effective organizer, you have to be “relational.” In all, three characteristics describe a good organizer: 1) Relational – the ability to develop formal but meaningful relationships with diverse people – black, white, poor, rich, liberal and conservative; 2) Has “pull” – by itself, being relational doesn't cut it. At the end of the day, an organizer has to have the “pull” to turn people out to meetings and actions ... to get people to act on their self interest; AND 3) Makes things happen – can translate hundreds of one-on-one meetings done over a period of time into a solid core team or action. \*Note -- This document applies to #s 1 and 2 above. In addition, although one can fake it, to perfect relational meetings as an art form requires that you have a genuine interest in people.

**2) Purpose of relational meetings.** In many organizing circles, relational meetings are used as a recruitment and teaching tool. But they also serve the purpose of making the organizer whole, replenishing energy, filling up the bucket. A veteran organizer once told a talented organizer on the verge of burnout to take a few months off. He asked her to make a list of 100 people she found interesting and to do relational meetings with them. These meetings (through the stories and energy exchanged) had the effect of reinvigorating the organizer. They made her whole, again.

**3) It's about selection.** Organizing in general, relational meetings in particular, is about selection. You don't just meet with anyone. You're looking for leaders – people with a following; people who can relate well to others; people who have passion rooted in anger (cold anger, not rage); people who will stand for the whole, not just their particular issue or their race or ethnic group.

**4) Probing vs. Prying.** You don't do relational meetings for chit-chat. Nor do you go into them with the goal of selling something – membership or affiliation with your organization. Instead, you're going after a person's core, their spirit. You want to know what makes them tick. You're looking for the personal stories behind their public persona. When probing, the most radical thing you can do is to ask the person



“Why?” “Why teach?” “Why do you do social justice work?” To reiterate, relational meetings are NOT an indiscriminate search for information. You’re looking for something very specific – talent, passion, vision and energy.

**5) Agitate vs. Irritate.** In a relational meeting, you’re agitating people to act on their own self-interest and to look at power differently. But there’s a fine line between agitating and irritating. In a relational meeting, the best way to agitate isn’t to lecture or to construct a win-lose argument. Instead, as explained above, the way to agitate is by asking the “Why?” question.

**6) Time is important.** When done well, two people doing a relational meeting find and mix each other’s energy. However, there’s only so much time that you can sustain this mixing. Thus, relational meetings should last no more than 30-45 minutes. If a conversation is really interesting, schedule another appointment. To avoid an abrupt end to the meeting, ask the person you’re meeting with, prior to the meeting, if they have 30 – 45 minutes. Tell them this gives you enough time to get to your next appointment.

**7) Cues and Clues.** Venue or place counts with relational meetings. People aren’t always comfortable inviting you to their home or office. If not, fine. Meet at the local Starbucks. But if they are, grab the opportunity. Going into a person’s home or office allows you to identify cues and clues that tell you something about the person and may provoke deeper probing questions – “That picture on the wall. Tell me about it? What significance does it have to you?” “All those trophies and awards in sports or science. Where does the interest and passion come from?”

**8) Use your whole self.** Relational meetings are not a cerebral exercise. You use your whole self – eye contact with the other person that doesn’t stray every time someone walks by; leaning forward or nodding the head to communicate particular interest in a story being told or point being made; physically standing or pounding a table while telling a story in order to paint a picture, provide imagery.

**9) It’s a dance.** When done well, there’s a dance between two people doing relational meetings. The meeting should not be about the organizer asking probing questions and the other person responding. Along the way, the organizer should have awakened enough curiosity in the other person that they, too, are probing and sharing stories. This is why selection is important. Chances are, if you meet with someone who’s a dud, this dance won’t happen.





## Key tools for the organizer in doing relational meetings are:

1) **Sleep** – to do a large number of relational meetings a week (each 30 – 45 minutes) and to listen attentively to another person's story and be able to probe those stories requires incredible focus. You can't do this on four hours of sleep.



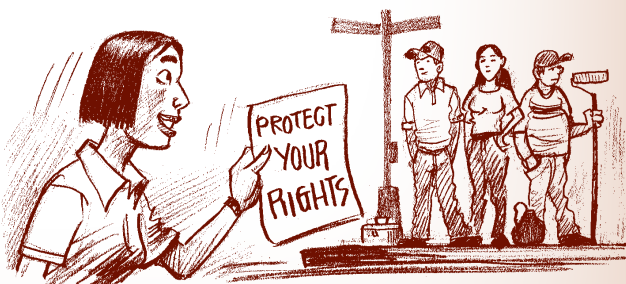
2) **Stories** – the organizer should have a repertoire of stories that help to explain who s/he is and why s/he does this work. Stories are the most effective way of communicating with people. Stories have the elements of plot, antagonist and climax. Stories transmit imagery and pictures. People will remember stories even if they forget your name or the name of your organization.



3) **Being “on”** – a veteran organizer once said that organizers should treat each relational meeting like a “job interview”. In other words, go into the meeting with my best self, with the type of focus and intensity that I would have if I was determined to get a job. You have to be “on”.



4) **Willingness to do violence to yourself (metaphorically speaking)** – organizer has to be willing to intentionally, and on a daily basis, put him or herself in the uncomfortable position of relating to diverse people ... purposely moving yourself outside of your comfort zone. For most people, this kind of risk taking isn't natural. It's a behavior that has to be learned and practiced.



5) **Develop the habit of relating** -- to perfect relational meetings, you have to make doing them a habit. 25 may be too much, but a few each week is definitely doable.



## How to Run a Good Meeting: A Guide for New Leaders

A Good Meeting is a wonderful, rare thing. Brief to the point, interesting, everyone has a chance to have his or her say and no one dominates. You leave it thinking, “I wish there were more meetings like THAT one in my life.” You know that you were important in that meeting and that meeting was important to you!

Why is a Good Meeting so rare? It is because, like anything, it takes work to make a good one and lots of practice and a little art to make a truly great one. But since all community groups are built on an endless stream of meetings, it's important to make them good. Whether we are talking about a Candidates' Night where 500 people are expected or a board meeting for 15, there are certain basic guidelines that should help improve your meetings.



**1. Understand that a meeting is the middle of a process of preparation and follow-up.** The worst meeting requires some kind of follow-up. Every minute of preparation and planning is well spent. In fact, in basic community organizer training, we say that each minute of meeting time should have an equal amount of time spent on preparation and debriefing. Preparation should include everyone who'll take a leading part in a meeting and should anticipate what might happen and plan for these “what-ifs.” Don't overplan. But if you can eliminate surprises in advance, you can deal with the business of the meeting more efficiently.

**2. Start on time.** This is a courtesy to those who bothered to get there at the advertised time and sets a tone from the start that your group means business. It also creates a good habit.

**3. Start with introductions,** which will help people--especially new people—know who is at the meeting. Even old members may not remember each other's names--use nametags if you can. If it is a big public meeting, introduce the group's speakers and leaders. Try group introductions--“Would all those from Building #1 please stand? Now Building 2.” The purpose is to get people to feel comfortable and involved.

If it's a small meeting, this might be the time to get a sense of the group on some important issue: “Please tell us who you are, what group you represent, and whether your group has a vacant building on your block.” This is also a good time to get people talking about the group. Start a board meeting by asking for names and for a sentence on what Citizens for Change means to you. It will put the argument over copier paper in a different context.

Certainly get a sign-up sheet with everyone's name, address and phone number clearly printed. Follow-up is easier if you know who was there. It can also help people feel that their presence is noted and important.

**4. Review the agenda.** Every meeting--even an impromptu meeting among a handful of people--should have an agenda. Everyone should have a copy or the agenda should be written on a chalkboard. An agenda keeps a



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meeting focused and allows the chair to stop an unrelated discussion. The key is making sure everyone has an opportunity to influence and approve the agenda before you start. Simply go through it step-by-step and ask if anyone has additions.

**5. Make sure each person has an opportunity to participate.** If you don't plan for this, folks will either break in and disrupt the proceedings, or will leave feeling that they were merely spectators. This will make them much less likely to come to the next meeting. Have a time when people can "testify" about the problem by talking about their experiences -and/or discussing possible solutions. However you accomplish it, plan for people to participate.

**6. Set an ending time, and stick to it.** A road seems longer if you don't know when it will end. If we've agreed to meet for 90 minutes. I know we're halfway done after 45. If, after an hour and 10 minutes we've still got two topics to cover, this is the time to ask the group what they want to do: add a specific amount of time to the meeting? Or take up one or both items at another time?

**7. Make some rules, and keep to them.** General Roberts, who "wrote the book" on the rules of order, explained that to make a meeting effective, "it is necessary to restrain the individual somewhat, as the right of an individual...to do what he pleases, is incompatible with the interests of the whole. Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty."

Understand that a rule which is not followed once loses its force. The best example of this is the quorum. A group with a specific number of members like a board sets a quorum to prevent a small, unrepresentative portion of its members from making the decisions. The exact number may vary, but it should be set and adhered to. If your group can't get a quorum, don't change the number, get better board members who will care enough to attend.

Another rule you could set would be letting folks who have-not yet spoken speak first. For a large group, you may need to insist that a person be recognized by the chair before speaking. Without this rule, a few assertive people may dominate the conversation.



**8. Chair the meeting.** When done right, this is work. It involves listening closely to those who are talking and being aware of those who are being silent. It requires the self-control to stay out of a discussion on the merits of the topic and the boldness to interrupt the speech-maker if his or her time is up. And it takes the ability to understand and summarize a discussion.

Use the tools of the chair--remind people of the agenda, bang the gavel when side conversation is distracting, watch the clock and most of all be active. It's a good idea to bang the gavel or interrupt a speaker at some point early in the meeting just to get everyone used to your doing it--it'll come in handy later. Chairs don't make de-

cisions--they just make sure decisions get made. Chairs do not control the outcome of the meeting, but they are responsible for ensuring that the meeting has an outcome that everyone understands clearly.

**9. Finish one thing, then move on to the next.** A meeting that jumps around makes people jumpy. The chair should summarize the outcome of item 3, then move the meeting on to item 4. It is certainly possible to decide not to decide yet, but that should be made clear as well.

There are only three possible actions you can take on any topic up for a decision: adopt the proposal, reject the proposal or decide at another time. If it is adopted, it should be made clear who is responsible for carrying it out and when. If the answer is no, this should be clearly understood. If there needs to be more work before a decision, the chair should get the group to define what is needed and decide who is going to do that work.



**10. Get a specific response if your meeting has a target--**an outsider who you're trying to get to do something. Give them a chance to say yes or no to your requests. Recently a group of tenants met with the Housing Authority director. Their group was very new and so was their organizer. They pressed hard, told their story, complained loudly--and then moved on to the next item. They never asked for, nor did they receive, a response. They left very frustrated and the officials got off the hook. The chairwoman should have stopped after each specific request and asked the director for an answer. The organizer should have made sure this happened.

**11. End with a review of the decisions reached and assignments made.** It's a good idea to keep track of tasks and decisions as you go along, listing the task, the person who will do it and the date for completion, then copy this and pass it out to those with assignments.

**12. Set up the next meeting before you leave.** This should be the last item on any agenda. It gives everyone a sense of continuity and makes deadlines easier to set. It's also infinitely easier to figure out a good meeting time when everybody's present instead of over the phone.

**13. Give people a parting shot.** One leader I worked with ended board meetings with "last call"-- she asked each person if they had "anything else?" She waited for each person to either speak or say "nothing tonight." Nobody left dissatisfied or feeling he/she hadn't had his say.

**14. Keep your sense of humor.** We're in a serious business and there's plenty to be serious about. But don't miss an opportunity to laugh together. A chair can put a small group at ease and get the support of a big group with a light touch. A truly great meeting leaves nobody wondering, "Was this meeting really necessary?" Everyone understands that there is strength in the group and wisdom in working together that could not be achieved by working in isolation. Like any work of art, great meetings are a combination of inspiration and perspiration.

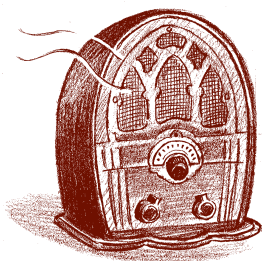


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## Reading/Resource List

Resource list on “African American-Immigrant” issues and multi-racial and multi-ethnic alliances. Thanks to Communications for gathering many of the news articles. For copies of any of the material listed below (or to add to the list), please contact Dushaw Hockett at 202-339-9306 or [dhockett@communitychange.org](mailto:dhockett@communitychange.org).

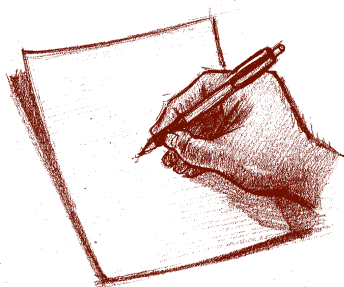
### Radio:



1. News & Notes with Ed Gordon. “**Blacks, Latinos and the Immigration Debate.**” Interview with Farai Chideya, Marcelo Suárez-Orozco and Earl Ofari Hutchinson. NPR. 31 March 2006. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5314594>

2. The Tavis Smiley Show. “**Immigration in America: Black and White Divisions.**” Interview with Marcus Rosenbaum. NPR 11 October 2004. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4080065>

### Articles:



1. Dunbar, Roxanne Ortiz. “**Stop Saying this is a Nation of Immigrants!**” Monthly Review 29 May 2006: 1-3 <http://www.counterpunch.org/ortiz05312006.html>

2. Fletcher, Bill Jr. “Let’s Discuss Immigration.”

3. Jackson, Jesse Sr. “**‘Si Se Puede’ Means ‘We Shall Overcome.’**” Political Affairs 1 May 2006. <http://www.politicalaffairs.net/article/view/3336/>

4. Klein, Robert Engler. “**Illegal Immigration and Black America.**”

ChronWatch 26 May 2004. <http://chronwatch.com/content/content/contentDisplay.asp?aid=7592>

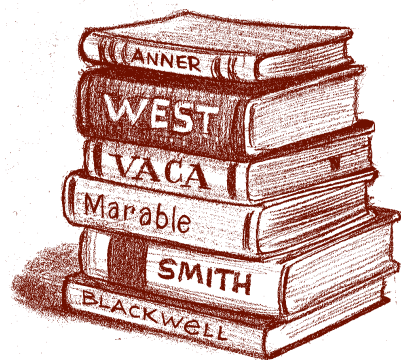
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6. Steinberg, Stephen. “**Immigration, African Americans, and Race Discourse.**” New Politics Journal Vol. X, No. 3, Summer 2005, Whole No. 39: 1-20. <http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol/issue39/Steinberg39.htm>

7. Themba, Makani Nixon. “**Borders and Bridges: African Americans, Immigration and Racial Justice.**” Race, Racism and the Law 1-6. <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/immigr06.htm>

8. Walters, Ron. “**A Respectful Black-Hispanic Coalition.**” Chicago Defender 24 May 2006. <http://www.chicagodefender.com/page/local.cfm?ArticleID=5490>

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2. Blackwell, Angela Glover, Stewart Kwoh, and Manuel Pastor. **Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions of Race in America.** The American Assembly: New York, 2002.

3. Marable, Manning. **"Beyond Racial Identity Politics: Toward a Liberation Theory for Multicultural Democracy."** *Beyond Black and White: Rethinking Race in American Politics and Society.* Verso: New York 1996. 185-202.

4. Smith, Robert Charles. **"Symbolic Politics at High Tide: Jessie Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition."** *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era.* SUNY Press: New York, 1996. 229-253.

5. Vaca, Nicolás C. **The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict Between Latinos and Blacks and What it Means for America.** Rayo: New York, 2004.

6. West, Cornel. **"On Black-Brown Relations."** *The Cornel West Reader.* Basic Civitas Books: New York, 1999. 499-513



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## Notes

1. In addition to other sources cited, the data for the “Demographic Shifts Among African Americans and Immigrants” section was taken from U.S. Census Bureau and Migration Information Source [www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/ranktable.4.html](http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/ranktable.4.html) sources.
2. The “History of Domination and the Pursuit of Work and Opportunity” timeline was constructed from a range of sources, but predominantly a Public Broadcasting System online resource.
3. The “Jobs, Race, and Immigration” section was constructed from some of the book sources above. In addition, Janice Fine, Assistant Professor of Labor Studies and Employment Relations at Rutgers University in New Jersey and a Center for Community Change ally, contributed greatly to this section.
4. The “Rules for Relational Meetings” resource was developed from Dushaw Hockett’s organizing and mentoring experience with an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation.