

**REPORT TO THE FORD FOUNDATION**  
**THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY**  
**IN THE U.S. IMMIGRANT RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

**Prepared by Louis Freedberg with assistance from Ted Wang**

**Preface**

**-- To Be Signed by Ford Foundation President or Senior Officer**

Immigration has been a powerful force throughout U.S. history, helping to shape the country's identity, values, and culture. For over two centuries, immigrants have come to the United States from every corner of the world, attracted by the promise of a better life, opportunity, and political and religious freedoms. They have contributed immeasurably to the country's economic prosperity and have enriched America with the arts and traditions of their native countries.

What makes current immigration flows different from the past is the presence of global forces that are likely to increase migration to United States and other receiving countries for the foreseeable future. Economic globalization, wars, political violence, and poverty have contributed to creating an international migrant population that currently exceeds 200 million people. For the Ford Foundation, these international trends have created strong imperatives to understand and where possible address the root causes of migration, while protecting the human rights and safety of those who leave their homeland.

For years, Ford has provided grants to organizations in immigrant-sending countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Central and Latin America to improve economic or political conditions so that residents do not have to turn to migration as the primary way for improving their lives or

escaping violence. The Foundation also has supported non-governmental organizations in Mexico and the United States to propose and advocate for transnational policies that reduce migration forces, as well as those that make migration between the two countries more safe and orderly. Similarly, Ford's support of refugee programs has had a central goal of allowing individuals to return to their homeland when conditions improve and is safe to do so.

In this changing global context, efforts to address migration at its source need to be matched by immigration policies in receiving countries that are responsive to both domestic and international forces, while taking into account the vulnerabilities of migrants. Much of Ford's grantmaking on migration issues has occurred in the United States, where an immigrant rights field has emerged in recent years to advocate for practical immigration reforms and policies to make the best use of immigrants' skills and talent.

The emergence of this movement marks an important milestone for the Foundation's grantmaking on U.S. immigration issues. Approximately a quarter of century ago, the Foundation's Board of Trustees approved an ambitious grantmaking plan to strengthen the capacity of key U.S. institutions and communities to cope with population flows over the long term, and to convince other foundations to increase their attention to, and funding for, immigrant-related issues.

At the time Ford's Board made this decision, international migration already was on the rise, and domestic immigration reforms had begun to change the racial and ethnic make-up of the foreign born population here. Many more newcomers were coming from Asia and Central and Latin American than from traditional sending countries in Europe. But few institutions were capable of analyzing, planning, and responding to these increasing and changing flows, and only a handful of foundations supported these activities, mostly through relatively small grants.

Looking back, it is hard to believe there were hardly any research groups that worked in this area in the early 1980s. There also were few organizations that could speak on behalf of immigrants or help them integrate into U.S. communities. Indeed, even as late as the mid-1980s, immigrants' voices were rarely heard in public debates that affected their fate.

Twenty-five years following the Ford Foundation's Board decision, the field has undergone dramatic changes. Growing numbers of national and regional organizations are bringing the voices of immigrants into the public policy arena. At the national level, numerous Washington D.C.-based organizations have emerged since the early 1980s to help shape policy debate on immigration issues. Their voices often are joined by allies – civil rights organizations, labor groups, research institutions, and businesses – who also support immigration policies that are responsive to domestic and global conditions. Immigrant rights organizations have emerged in almost every state to provide services to newcomers, to serve as bridges between immigrants and the broader community, and to engage the public about the importance of utilizing immigration to strengthen rather than to divide communities.

While the emerging movement has yet to achieve comprehensive immigration reform at the national level, it has made tremendous progress in articulating the need and building public support for reform. In the process, it has had to overcome numerous challenges. Changing demographics in regions with limited experience settling immigrants, for example, has led to misunderstandings that can lead to backlash. In recent years, some of these municipalities and states have passed laws excluding newcomers from government programs or services, or singling out immigrants for unfair treatment. But on the whole, the American public remains generally supportive for newcomers. Polls have shown that large majorities of the American public favor

reforms that allow millions of undocumented immigrants to legalize their status, and this support has remained strong even during the current economic downturn.

As the Ford Foundation marks 25 years of involvement on U.S. immigration issues, it is a good time to take stock of what has occurred and to examine more closely philanthropy's role in supporting the growth of a national immigrant rights movement. There are many reasons for the field's rapid growth, including extraordinary leadership by those who have headed the movement. But the support of numerous foundations and other donors has played a vital part in fueling the field's expansion. Contributions have come from all parts of the philanthropic community. Smaller foundations, for example, have played a significant role in strengthening the capacity of regional and local immigrant-serving organizations that are backbone of the movement.

To help tell the story of philanthropy's contribution to the development of an immigrant rights field in United States, the Ford Foundation commissioned journalist Louis Freedberg, with assistance from Ted Wang, to write this report. It describes how Ford initially entered the field, the challenges the Foundation and its grantees faced in the early years, how funders have worked together to support an emerging but vibrant movement, and the lessons learned to help inform future efforts to support the field. The authors' observations are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Ford Foundation. They point out that the power of philanthropic grantmaking in this area has come from a combination of factors: committed long-term funders who have supported this field for many years; a willingness to fund a wide range of organizations that provide complementary activities; flexibility to adjust grantmaking to changing conditions; and an openness among funders to collaborate with each other and as well as with grantees to achieve a shared vision.

We hope this report will not only help inform future philanthropic funding of immigration issues in the United States but also provide lessons that can be applied on an international scale. Migration will continue to be one of the most important global issues during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and migrant-receiving countries have few models to help inform their policy development. Lessons learned from the United States' experience highlight the benefits of protecting migrants' human rights, helping them integrate into receiving communities, and engaging them in developing policies that affect their lives. The long-term U.S. experience suggests that immigration can be a great source of national strength and vitality.

Signed:

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## INTRODUCTION

*The American dream is the immigrant's dream.*

Franklin Thomas, "The New Migration," Commencement Address.  
Cooper's Union, New York, May 23, 1984.

The last twenty-five years have seen a greater influx of immigrants into the United States than at any time in its history. Never before has any country experienced such a dramatic transfer of people -- an average of nearly one million a year -- into its fold.

On one level, this rapid population shift across oceans and national borders has been accomplished with a relatively low level of overt conflict, an affirmation of the United States' destiny as a country of immigrants.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the welcoming embrace extended to the strangers on our shores has at times been offset by fierce attempts to restrict immigration, to impose harsh measures on the millions who are here without valid documents, and to stereotype large numbers of immigrants because of their physical appearance or their countries of origin.

In particular, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have engendered images of immigrants as threats to our national security. In some cases, these fears have been reforced by legislation and policies that send the message that immigrants are not welcomed or not entitled to basic constitutional and human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> The United States, which accounts for five percent of the world's population, is now home to 20 percent of migrants who live outside their countries of origin. In 1980, there were About 14 million immigrants in the United States (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab13.html>). By 2006, there were nearly 389 million.

At the same time, immigrants have expressed themselves in a more visible and dramatic fashion than at any other time in U.S. history. In the spring of 2006, millions of immigrants and their supporters took to the streets in dozens of communities. Their immediate target was to protest proposed federal legislation which called for a 700-mile barrier on the U.S.-Mexico border, along with criminalization and possible deportation of 12 million undocumented immigrants. But the marches revealed long-buried resentments and repressed aspirations in a population that has been marginalized and relegated to society's shadows, despite their contributions to the cultural diversity and economic growth of the nation.

The marches represented the manifestation of an immigrant rights movement that has evolved over the past quarter century as a result of many different influences – including sustained grantmaking from the Ford Foundation in particular, along with other partners in the philanthropic community.

Remarkably, when the most recent surge of immigration to the United States began to accelerate in the early 1980s, there were no prominent national organizations advocating on immigrants' behalf. Similarly, there were few well-established organizations representing them on a state or local level. There was also a dearth of research and policy analysis to help fashion the best ways to manage immigration flows across our borders, and a lack of strategies for integrating immigrants as fully functioning participants in our society.

In 1983, the Ford Foundation initiated a greatly expanded immigration program, becoming the dominant funder in the field. Over the last quarter century, the number of foundations which have joined Ford in supporting immigration initiatives at a local, state and national level has grown substantially. The Foundation was instrumental in establishing the Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrant Rights and Refugees, or GCIR, in 1991. GCIR started

out with five participating members. By 2008, its membership had grown to over 100 foundations – a clear indication of the emergence of a well-defined field of immigrant philanthropy.

These philanthropic activities have helped build a vibrant network of organizations that advocate on behalf of immigrants, and are often run by immigrants themselves. They range from helping to influence and shape policy debates and defending the legal rights of immigrants to regional coalitions addressing state and local concerns. At its core, the network has been driven by an extraordinary group of leaders from backgrounds that reflect the new diversity of the American racial and ethnic landscape. Within philanthropy, a series of committed program officers and senior executives, many of whom came to the foundation world after working in immigrant advocacy or social service organizations, helped identify the emerging leadership, and have shaped effective philanthropic strategies for building a new field of immigrant rights.

The report that follows illustrate the potent ability of philanthropy to respond creatively to large scale social movements, as well as to engage with one of the most complex public policy challenges facing us in an age of global mobility and economic insecurity.



## PART ONE: 1981-1986

### EARLY BEGINNINGS: TOWARDS A MOVEMENT

On a cold winter's day in February 1981, a press conference on Capitol Hill announced the formation of a new organization, the National Forum on Immigration and Refugee Policy.

As laid out in its press release, the group had exceptionally modest goals for an organization that over the next two decades would evolve into a highly visible voice advocating on behalf of immigrant rights. "We the undersigned represent a diverse coalition of national, state and local groups," the statement read. "We are committed to pooling our expertise and resources to provide the U.S. Congress and the American people with information and arguments on which realistic and workable legislative initiatives may be built."

The press conference, and the formation of the new coalition, was timed to coincide with the release on the same day of the long-delayed report from the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, set up by Jimmy Carter under the leadership of Father Theodore Hesburgh, the president of Notre Dame University. The mandate of the Hesburgh Commission was nothing less than a review of the entire field of U.S. immigration policy. It fell to the newly formed Forum to challenge the commission on the most contentious of its proposals – to impose sanctions employers who hired undocumented workers. It would be the first time in U.S. history that employers would be subjected to such penalties.

Like many grassroots organizations, the Forum was long on dreams and short of money. The Forum's press event and its youthful organizers — most of them still in their late twenties or early thirties — attracted little attention. Its only income was a \$10,000 donation from Wells Klein, the long-time immigrant advocate who had taken over the nearly moribund American Council on Nationality Services, and turned it into a major resettlement agency for Indochinese

refugees. It would be another year before the Ford Foundation would later provide support for the Forum, initiating more than a quarter century of unbroken support.

But in the words of one of those who attended the Forum's kickoff, Muzaffar Chisti, an attorney who at the time directed the Immigration Project of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, its founding was a "milestone in the field of immigrant rights in the United States."<sup>2</sup>

"We realized we needed a broader umbrella, one that would be better organized, not to speak in a single voice, but to unify various ragtag groups that supported immigrant rights," said Antonia Hernandez, who also attended in her role as director of the Washington office of the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund.<sup>3</sup>

Latinos were barely a force in national politics at the time, she recalled 27 years later. "For Latinos, the new immigrants, Washington was a pretty lonely place." Puerto Ricans, who automatically qualified for U.S. citizenship, did not have to deal with national immigration policies, and Cubans received special treatment because of Cold War considerations. "We certainly didn't have the base of influence and power that we have today."

Rick Swartz, an attorney with the Washington Lawyers for Civil Rights, agreed to be the Forum's first executive director. Only 31-years-old, Swartz was already a veteran of the immigration wars. He had played a key role in mounting a successful legal response to the treatment of the flood of Haitian boat people who fled their troubled island home in the late

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the quotations attributed to individuals in this report were based on interviews conducted by the authors.

<sup>3</sup> Others in attendance included Ron Gibbs, head of legislative affairs for the National Association of County Organizers, Gary Rubin from the American Jewish Committee, Phyllis Eisen from Zero Population Growth, and Rick Swartz, from the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. Hernandez later became Executive Director of MALDEF and now is President of the California Community Foundation in Los Angeles.

1970s and early 1980s, and was one of the three lead attorneys to win the first successful federal class action suit on behalf of people seeking political asylum.<sup>4</sup>

For the first year of its existence, Swartz ran the new organization out of his one-bedroom apartment in sight of the U.S. Capitol.

It was at that crucial stage of the organization's development in 1982 that a \$50,000 grant from the Ford Foundation allowed the fledgling organization to rent an office -- above a rubber stamp store across the street from the Marine Barracks in South East Washington. "The most salient feature of the office was that it was infested by cockroaches," said Swartz, known for his sharp observations on almost anything in his range of vision, from office decor to the most acute complexities of immigration policies.

The Forum's founding came in response to a striking vacuum of leadership to address immigration policy. For the first time in decades, immigration was becoming a prominent political and social issue that Washington would attempt to control through major legislation. Polls showed public opinion running strongly against the admission of more than 100,000 Cuban and Haitian "boat people." The Hesburgh Commission noted that "one issue has emerged as most pressing — the problem of undocumented/illegal immigration ... The message is clear — most U.S. citizens believe that the half-open door of undocumented/illegal immigration should be closed."

In light of the pivotal place of immigrants in U.S. history, it would be reasonable to expect that established organizations advancing the immigrant cause would be prominent and permanent features of the political and social landscape. That was not the case in 1981 in part because the foreign-born portion of the population of the United States had dropped steadily since the early part of the century. "Immigration was not an issue in the 1940s, 1950s and

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<sup>4</sup> *Haitian Refugee Center v. Civiletti*, 503 F. Supp. 442 (S.D. Fla. 1980).

1960s,” said Demetrios Papademetriou, president of the Migration Policy Institute in Washington D.C. In fact, the proportion of the population that was foreign-born actually declined in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

For decades, the most powerful immigrant organizations were those representing Italian Americans and, to a lesser extent, other ethnic communities that traced their origins to the major migration flows into the United States in the early 20th century. By the 1970s, immigration wasn’t high on the agenda on Capitol Hill, where it was difficult to enlist even three senators to sit on the immigration subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee. “It was only in the mid-1970s that the immigration pot began being stirred again,” said Papademetriou.

The reason: the sweeping changes wrought by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 had significantly altered the racial and ethnic makeup of immigration flows to the United States by eliminating the "national origins quota system" which had been in place for 40 years.<sup>6</sup> When President Johnson signed the 1965 act abolishing the quota system, he called it "un-American in the highest sense, because it has been untrue to the faith that brought thousands to these shores even before we were a country."

But like most immigration legislation devised by Congress, as a result of often conflicting agendas and political viewpoints, the 1965 law had unintended consequences. One was that it opened the door to substantial migration from Asian countries. (Within a decade of its passage, the Asian immigrant population in the United States had increased by 663 percent.)

Another unexpected outcome was that the number of immigrants who came to the United States

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<sup>5</sup> In 1950, the foreign-born population made up 6.9 percent of the U.S. population; by 1970 it had declined to only 4.8 percent. It took until 1990 for the foreign-born population, when it comprised 7.9 percent of the U.S. population, to outstrip its 1950 level. Unless otherwise noted, all demographic data cited in this report comes from the various decennial censuses conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census, with data available at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<sup>6</sup> The quota barred almost all Asian immigration, and favored migrants from Northern Europe (primarily Germany and England), while restricting migration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

without valid documents also increased exponentially. Until 1965, there were no limits on immigration from Western Hemisphere countries, including Mexico. The 1965 law put a cap of 120,000 on the number of visas issued to immigrants from those countries. In 1976, Congress restricted the number of permanent resident visas issued to Mexicans to 20,000. That figure bore no relation to the migratory pressures from Mexico, or to the labor needs of U.S. employers – and further increasing the prospect of undocumented migration from across our Southern border.<sup>7</sup>

The 1970s also put migration on the map in other ways. In the post-Vietnam era, refugees from Indochina began coming to the United States in large numbers. Refugees from Haiti and Cuba added to the flows, as did those fleeing armed conflicts in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, unleashing controversies over whether immigrants from those countries had fled for economic reasons or deserved political asylum status.

Even at this early stage of the most recent era of migration to the United States, the influx of new immigrants started to elicit a backlash. Debates began in Congress about how to address the “problem” of illegal immigration. By the mid-1980s, the attacks on immigrants were openly xenophobic, and opposition to the influx of non-English-speaking immigrants began to emerge in the form of “English Only” initiatives.

Meanwhile, older pro-immigrant organizations such as the American Immigration and Citizenship Conference that had their roots in earlier immigration flows were largely a spent force. The Conference had been instrumental in negotiating the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. But its aging, mostly white leadership had little involvement with newer immigrant populations.

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America Through Immigration Policy*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2004, p. 98.

In a country built and shaped by immigrants, there was clearly a need for a stronger voice on behalf of immigrants — not only in Washington, but in communities across the nation.

### **A New Immigration Initiative**

The changing demographic landscape prompted the Ford Foundation in the early 1980s to significantly enhance its immigrant rights portfolio — and to make one of its first grants to the Forum.

Until that time, the Foundation had sporadically supported migration-related causes. In the 1950s, for example, it gave \$3.8 million in assistance to Eastern European refugees in the United States and Europe. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, it extended \$500,000 to Palestinians displaced by that conflict, and in the 1970s it made a series of grants addressing the needs of Indochinese refugees. For decades, it also had provided support for intellectuals and others forced to flee countries governed by repressive regimes.

But in a 1980 paper that shaped the Foundation's response to Indochinese refugees, Francis X. Sutton, then a Ford vice president, urged it to move away from a crisis response mentality, and to begin to address the long-term challenges of refugee flows and migration. The paper had a powerful impact on the decision by the Foundation to greatly increase its grantmaking on immigration.

To launch its new immigration agenda, the Foundation hired three new program officers, Diana Morris, Paul Balaran and Patricia Biggers. They mapped out their plan in an 80-page “discussion paper” blandly named "Refugees and Migrants: Problems and Program Responses," and presented to the Ford Foundation Board of Trustees in June 1983. The initiative reflected "the desire of Foundation staff to strengthen the capacity of key institutions and communities to cope with population flows over the long term," wrote Susan Berresford, then vice president for

U.S. and International Affairs Programs, and William Carmichael, the vice president for Developing Country Programs, in the preface to the paper.

“The need for a deeper involvement by the Foundation is based in large part on our belief that the scale and the severity of refugee and migration problems demands our attention,” the new program officers wrote in the body of the report.

They proposed an ambitious plan to spend \$7.6 million for refugee and migrant programs over the next two years. Of that amount, the largest share (\$2.8 million) would go to research and policy analysis because, they asserted, a “principal shortcoming of current activity in this field is its crisis orientation and the relative inattention to extracting and applying lessons from past experiences.” They also argued that more research was necessary to “lay the groundwork for the definitions of new rights and protections for refugees and migrants.”

Their report noted that the \$7.6 million the Foundation was planning to spend paled next to the \$600 million the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the Department of Health and Human Services spent in 1983. “It is reasonable to ask what approximately \$8 million over a two-year period can accomplish when measured against the magnitude of the need.”

The new program officers answered the question they posed as follows:

“While we cannot and do not provide direct relief, we can aim our limited resources toward strategic targets where modest sums can produce significant change,” they wrote in the report that was distributed more widely in 1986 as a Ford publication, and became known as the “red book” after the color of its cover. “Most importantly, careful use of our funds can influence the use of funds by international, national and local agencies. And because we are – despite those limited resources – the major funder in this field in the philanthropic community, our actions are

likely to influence the work of other grant makers and to result in increased attention to, and funding for refugee and migrant problems.”

The report noted that while other philanthropic organizations, including the New World Foundation, the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation, the Rockefeller Family Associates, the San Francisco Foundation, the Exxon Education Fund and the Norman Foundation had provided support for refugee and migrant programs, “their grants are likely to remain in the \$5,000 to \$20,000 range.” Of the two other major foundations addressing refugees and migration, the Rockefeller Foundation had put a cap of \$500,000 on its annual funding of the issue, and the German Marshall Fund’s expenditures did not exceed \$100,000 per year.

Even at this early stage of formulating its immigration program, the Ford Foundation articulated several key core principles that have guided its work since then. A central one was that long-term support was crucial to building a significant voice on behalf of immigrants across the nation. Another was that not one voice, but many, would be needed.

“This is something Ford has understood, that you have to stay with organizations for the long term,” reflected Diana Morris. “These are not easy problems. You can not have fragile infrastructures. You have to build up the infrastructure, help the organization mature, go past the founding director, weather ups and downs with boards and the staff and the field, and then really develop a whole field of work. And it is not going to happen with just one organization. It will have to happen with a range of organizations.”

Morris, who now directs the Baltimore office of the Open Society Instituted, had worked as a young attorney in the Office of the Legal Adviser in the State Department just before coming to Ford, working closely with the Refugee Bureau there. Her main assignment had been



clarifying key elements of the recently passed Refugee Act of 1980, which had significantly expanded the number of refugees that would be allowed into the United States.

In many ways, the Foundation's approach to the immigration rights field was a logical extension to its decades-long involvement in the civil rights movement, and its long-term support for key organizations that played a central role in it. It also was built on its ongoing support for prominent Latino organizations such as MALDEF and the National Council on La Raza, which did not have an exclusively immigration agenda, but took on a myriad of issues directly or indirectly related to this subject area.

Morris, who described herself as a "frustrated anthropologist," also initiated another prominent Ford project, which looked at the "culture of immigration" – what happens when newcomers and established Americans come into contact with each other in the workplace, schools, community organizations, places of worship and other settings in six communities – Philadelphia; Garden City, Kansas; Houston; Chicago; Miami; and Monterey Beach, California. The project anticipated the need to understand the complexity of racial, ethnic and cultural relations that the extraordinarily diverse influx of new immigrants would introduce, first to major "gateway" cities and states, and later to "new destination" communities across the United States.

The Changing Relations project enlisted a half dozen anthropologists "to find out how people were accommodating each other in different kinds of public spaces," Morris recalled. The project resulted in a 90-minute documentary, *America Becoming*, and a series of ethnographies, *Studying Diversity: Ethnographic Perspectives on New Immigration*. "We were trying to get away from assimilation models of immigration – the notion that immigrants inevitably blend seamlessly into American society — and to get a much better sense of what cultural pluralism meant," said Morris. Rather than assimilation, in which the immigrant group

adapts to the mainstream group, the series of studies articulated what it called accommodation — ways of adapting and adjusting to one another.

At the time, only a handful of smaller foundations were involved in immigration issues, mostly notably the Rosenberg Foundation in San Francisco, which had supported farmworker related projects since the 1970s. The foundation, was headed at that time by Kirke Wilson, had deep roots in the Central Valley. Wilson had also spent several summers in the early 1960s working for the American Friends Service Committee helping to organize farmworkers – supported by grants from the Ford Foundation.

Rosenberg's involvement in immigration crystallized after a tightly-orchestrated field trip that Wilson arranged for the Foundation's board in 1978 to Tulare County to visit rural health, farmworker housing and other projects the foundation had supported during the preceding years. The board immediately recognized that immigration could dramatically change the way services need to be delivered in the Valley. "We saw immigration not as a threat but as a new dimension of unresolved challenges around affordable housing, access to health care, and quality of education," recalled Wilson.

Rosenberg's focus on immigration was an exception within philanthropy. Cecilia Munoz, vice president of the National Council of La Raza observed that the lagging involvement of foundations in immigrant communities could be explained, at least in part, by a widespread belief at the time that immigrants should be able to succeed in American society without outside help, just as previous generations of immigrants had done. That perception, she said, did not gibe with the historical record.

"It is a myth that people pulled themselves up by their bootstraps," said Munoz. Earlier immigrants, she pointed out, also relied on outside institutions and organizations to reach their

full potential. Settlement houses, public libraries, and the public school system itself, all of which played a part in integrating immigrants into American society, benefited from substantial philanthropic support.

"Show me the man who speaks English, reads Shakespeare and Bobby Burns, and I'll show you a man who has absorbed the American principles," Andrew Carnegie often declared, as he extolled his contributions to building public libraries. "He will most likely also read the Declaration of Independence and Washington's Farewell Address."<sup>8</sup>

To this day, Munoz said, "We are nowhere close to making the kind of investment that was made a hundred years ago when philanthropy helped create an immigrant infrastructure to help immigrants become Americans."

Ford's investment in immigrant organizations was always in building their capacity rather than the physical structures to house them.

That was certainly the case with the National Immigration Forum. Diana Morris recalled why Ford decided to support the Forum in the early 1980s. "You needed an organization that was a clearinghouse for information, that understood how Washington policy worked, and could work within the system to try to push for changes," said Morris. "You also needed a place where a diverse set of players could debate issues, and then to develop different coalitions so you could be more powerful. It also allowed people to participate who were not solely focused on immigration."

The Forum soon found itself in the center of the divisive debate about legislation to crack down on the increasing number of undocumented immigrants. Senator Alan Simpson, a Republican from Wyoming, a state that barely had any recent immigrants, and Representative Roman Mazzoli, a Democrat from Kentucky, a state with similarly few immigrants, crafted what

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<sup>8</sup> Macleod, David I. (1968), *Carnegie Libraries in Wisconsin*, New York City, Arno Press, Inc., p. 17.

became known as the “Simpson-Mazzoli” legislation, which attempted to place into law the major provisions of the Hesburgh Commission.

Because of the inclusion of employer sanctions, MALDEF and other members of the Forum fiercely opposed the legislation, and the Forum helped to defeat two versions of the measure in 1982 and 1984.

As the battles around immigration in Congress intensified, the Ford Foundation increased its support for immigration rights, including a grant of \$300,000 to the Forum in 1984. Border apprehensions, almost non-existent in 1960, started picking up momentum in 1975, and reached a peak of 1.8 million in 1986.<sup>9</sup> Refugees from Central America were seeking asylum or sanctuary in the United States, having fled from one of the last conflicts of the Cold War. A proposal to the Ford Foundation written by the Forum’s Rick Swartz in 1985 laid out the myriad issues at the time – many of which are strikingly similar to those roiling contemporary immigration debates.

"Many issues debated over the last three years remain unresolved," the memo stated. "Do undocumented persons take jobs from Americans and abuse social services, as the public seems to believe? Or, as recent research indicates, do they help certain industries survive, save and even create jobs, and pay more in taxes than they receive in services? Many political leaders are reluctant to challenge widespread public perceptions, regardless of how erroneous they may be."

Support for immigrant rights remained limited to a handful of foundations, and immigration advocacy to a handful of institutions. The focus of their combined efforts remained on Washington. That would soon change with the passage of major legislation in 1986 that granted amnesty to millions of undocumented immigrants in an act. Much of the work on immigration moved from the nation's capitol to cities and states where immigrants who had long

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Le May, *Guarding the Gates: Immigration and National Security*, Westport, Praeger p. 169

contributed their labor but yet languished outside society's mainstream suddenly gained the opportunity to become full citizens of their adopted country. Philanthropy, which had played a relatively minor role in shaping immigration policies until then, suddenly would become a major force.

PART TWO: 1986 -- 1996

## BUILDING A MOVEMENT FROM THE GROUND UP

After five years of tortuous legislative battles, President Ronald Reagan signed the Immigration and Reform and Control Act on November 6, 1986.

"This landmark legislation," Reagan declared, "provides an excellent example of a truly successful bipartisan effort to control illegal immigration," Reagan declared. "Future generations of Americans will be thankful."

The typically Reaganesque rhetoric did not match the ambivalence that those closest to the debate felt about the "grand compromise" forged in backroom meetings around the Capitol. Nor did it anticipate the backlash against immigrants, legal and illegal, that the legislation would spawn within a few years in California and elsewhere.

The legislation legalized 1.7 million undocumented immigrants, and another 1.2 million under the related Special Agricultural Workers program. But for the first time in U.S. history, IRCA also imposed sanctions on employers who hired undocumented immigrants. The National Immigration Forum supported IRCA, but the employer sanctions provisions were so controversial that MALDEF and the American Friends Service Committee resigned from the organization because of their opposition to it.

Regardless of its flaws, the 1986 law was "a crucial milestone" in shaping the direction and depth of the still-nascent immigrant rights movement, said Muzzafar Chisti, who now directs the Migration Policy Institute's office at the NYU Law School. "It suddenly galvanized the field, in terms of advocacy, in terms of new people entering the field, in terms of philanthropy's role. It changed the field completely." The major shift was to move the locus of activity, Chisti said, "not away from Washington, but in addition to Washington."

Until IRCA, most immigrant advocacy had taken place on a national level. Now, for the first time, there was need for local and regional action — both to make sure that those eligible for legalization took advantage of the law and to prevent the threat of employer sanctions from causing employers to discriminate against prospective or even current employees. Adding to the pressures was that Congress had set May 5, 1987 as the beginning date for implementation of the bill – a mere six months after its passage.

The Ford Foundation immediately recognized field needed a quick infusion of resources. "Because of its broad scope and impact, the law presents several important opportunities for extending the Foundation's grantmaking to refugees and migrants," wrote Pat Biggers in a memo to Susan Berresford in February 1987. Ford's involvement was especially needed because, she noted, "only a few foundations have indicated an interest in supporting activities relating to the implementation of the bill."

Another reason was that preparation by government agencies for implementation of the law was vastly inadequate for the task it faced. "As planning of public education activities has just begun, and no funds yet exist to initiate them, the government is unlikely to support any public education activities in advance of the beginning of the legalization program on May 5, 1987," Biggers noted in her February memo.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees quickly agreed to spend \$2.1 million on IRCA implementation. But the mammoth undertaking that lay ahead – the legalization of millions of immigrants – spurred also others to participate, and marked a major turning point in promoting major philanthropic involvement in the field of immigrant rights.

For the Rosenberg Foundation, IRCA provided a vehicle to achieve gains that had eluded it for years, including improving working conditions for the largely undocumented

workforce in the California fields. “We saw IRCA as a great opportunity,” recalled Kirke Wilson, Rosenberg's long time president who retired in 2005.

In the year following IRCA's enactment, Rosenberg set aside \$750,000 for implementation, a huge grant for a foundation of its modest size. Rosenberg made 130 grants, mostly on the West Coast, to church groups, unions, civil rights organizations, and others. “We funded everyone,” Wilson said. “We were very concerned with the map – there were big parts of California where you couldn’t get any services.” Most of the grants were small — in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range. Some were to help organizations legalize workers, others were for training, and yet others to support litigation to clarify several aspects of the law.

Immigrant-serving organizations faced significant pressures to enroll applicants within the law's tight deadlines. Advocates also anticipated there being a shortage of citizenship and civics classes for amnesty applicants once they had received their temporary residence visas and wanted to apply for citizenship during the prescribed time period.

It seemed clear that government could not be relied on to effectively implement the law. What was needed was a network of immigrant-serving organizations in the states and cities where immigrants were concentrated – a network that simply did not exist at that time.

The Ford Foundation consciously set out to help create one by proceeding on two parallel tracks. One track was to leverage Ford's grants by encouraging the formation of "funding collaboratives" to support programs in the states where immigrants were most heavily concentrated. The other was to establish regional or citywide coalitions that could help coordinate activities in their communities.

Establishing the funding collaboratives began almost immediately. One of the most prominent was the Fund for New Citizens, initiated by the New York Community Trust and



overseen by Jane Stern, currently the Trust's program director for arts, education and humanities. "In order to address the most important local immigration questions at a substantial scale, the Trust developed the idea of creating a pool of funding from foundations and corporations in the New York area," Pat Biggers wrote in a June 1987 memo. "It has been created to enable grantmakers — both foundations and corporations — to respond collectively to both the problems and opportunities raised by IRCA."

On May 15, 1987, barely a week after IRCA went into effect, the Ford Foundation hosted a "Funders' Briefing Session" on IRCA at its New York headquarters to mobilize support for the Fund for New Citizens. Ford contributed \$150,000. The New York Community Trust contributed a similar amount. Other donors included the New York Foundation, the Booth-Ferris Foundation, Trinity Church and Morgan Guaranty Bank. The fund was originally set up to support IRCA implementation, but it still operates today, providing over a million dollars in grants annually to immigrant-serving organizations.<sup>10</sup>

Ford also contributed to a comparable fund in California, the Fund for New Americans established by the Northern California Grantmakers, which received \$600,000 in grants from several other foundations including The James Irvine Foundation and California Community Foundation.

As its response to IRCA got underway, the Foundation hired Mary McClymont in 1988 as its lead program officer on immigrant rights in the Foundation's Rights and Social Justice Program. Like most other program officers who have guided Ford's work in the immigration

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<sup>10</sup> Over the past 20 years the Fund for New Citizens has awarded \$12 million in grants on immigrant-related issues. It has underwritten programs that provide legal assistance to immigrants, as well as "capacity building" grants to small organizations that are often overlooked by most foundations. It recent grantees include the Arab Association of New York; El Centro De Humanidad, a worker center for undocumented immigrants in the Port Richmond section of Staten Island; Nah We Yone, a grassroots organizations supporting refugees and asylum seekers from Sierra Leone; and the Sikh Coalition, established after 9/11 "to counter violence, bigotry and discrimination" against New York City's Sikh population.

field, McClymont came to the Foundation already deeply knowledgeable about the issues she would tackle in her new post. Immediately before coming to Ford, she was National Director for Legalization of the Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Catholic Conference, the largest legalization program in the country.

Ford committed an additional \$1 million for IRCA activities in 1988. McClymont's initial focus was supporting the emergence of new coalitions to lead local and state responses to IRCA. "It seems most prudent, in light of necessarily limited resources, to focus funding efforts on much needed local institutions, in the 5 or 6 states most affected by IRCA," she wrote in a May 1988 memo, noting the common refrain among immigrant advocates that "the action with IRCA will take place in the neighborhoods. Most of the immigrant coalitions were brand new organizations, and Ford's grants to them had to be funneled through established non-profit organizations such as MALDEF or the United Way.

The main coalitions that emerged from the initial funding were the New York Immigration Coalition, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), the Chicago Committee for Immigrant Protection, the Campaign for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles (CHIRLA), and the Northern California Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in San Francisco. Several other coalitions also received support, such as the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees in South Florida and the San Diego Immigration Law Coalition.

The creation of these organizations was a central element in the evolution of what McClymont called an "infrastructure of organizations" that operated on the international, national, state and local level to advance immigrant rights.

"You have to have a network of organizations that is capable of taking on different functions," said McClymont, reflecting later on her work at the Foundation. "No one

organization can do all the work -- the litigation, the research, the policy advocacy, and the direct service. So to have an impact you have to fund the network." <sup>11</sup>

Even as Ford greatly accelerated its support for this emerging network, it continued to invest significantly in policy research. In a major project initiated by Ford's William Diaz, the Rand Corporation and the Urban Institute conducted a series of joint studies to examine the impact of IRCA on government institutions and on immigrants themselves. With a series of grants totaling \$3.2 million between 1988 and 1994, researchers produced nine major studies under the direction of Paul Hill at Rand and Michael Fix at the Urban Institute. They were published as a series of monographs with titles like "Opening and Closing Doors," "The Cautious Welcome," and "The Impact of IRCA on the Immigration and Naturalization Service."

The most prominent was a monograph edited by Fix, "The Paper Curtain: Employer Sanctions' Implementation, Impact, and Reform." The title referred to the report's central finding that employer sanctions existed only on paper, and were essentially unenforceable. It anticipated what would be one of IRCA's greatest failings: the failure of the employer sanctions provisions of IRCA to control unauthorized migration into the United States.

In another major Ford research initiative, Paul Balaran approached Doris Meissner at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to create what he described (in a 1989 memo) as "a forum for discussion of research findings, and to help ensure that balanced analyses are brought to the attention of those who make and influence policy." The Endowment's International Migration Policy Program eventually became the Migration Policy Institute, the only free-standing policy institute in the United States dedicated solely to migration and immigrant integration issues.

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<sup>11</sup> By 2008, there were numerous immigrant rights coalitions across the nation. They have played a pivotal role in linking local organizations with national advocacy efforts, as well as providing services in their regions and states.

In keeping with Ford's intent to nurture a national network of services and organizations, McClymont also oversaw grants to programs that assisted local groups with the legal and technical aspects of enrolling amnesty applicants. For example, the Immigrant Legal Resource Center produced a manual that helped local groups interpret the complex provisions of IRCA. The National Immigration Law Center conducted all-day training workshops, mostly in California, which were attended by "everyone from legal aid lawyers, nurses, local Hispanic activists — anyone who was working with the immigration community," according to Susan Drake, then a staff attorney and who later became the organization's executive director.

Ford continued to support organizations such as the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the Haitian Refugee Center and MALDEF to "assist newcomers in safeguarding access to their rights and entitlements under the law through advocacy and litigation." The ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project brought a range of lawsuits challenging the way the legalization process was implemented and enforced. "In almost every single case, the lawsuits were successful in terms of the courts overturning the government's interpretation of the law," said Lucas Guttentag, the director of the Immigrants' Rights Project since its inception.

### **Broadening Philanthropy's Role**

Even as Ford was increasing its investment in immigration, it continued to involve other funders in the field. That was partly driven by the awareness that regardless of how much Ford expended in grants, those investments would only go a small way toward meeting the enormous need. As McClymont noted in her May 1988 memo, "The Foundation's recognition of and commitment to the challenge created by IRCA encouraged the subsequent involvement by many other foundations, and helped fill the 'major gap' which the public sector was unfortunately not equipped to handle."

The passage of IRCA prompted the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, a foundation with Quaker roots which had previously supported migration and refugee organizations internationally, to begin to fund immigrant advocacy in the United States. Mertz-Gilmore emerged as a major immigration funder in the late 1980s with annual grants of approximately \$1 million. Robert Crane, Mertz-Gilmore's president at the time, said the foundation's interest was driven in part by the changing patterns of migration to the United States, including the arrival of large numbers of refugees from Central America. "Immigrants were both ignored by a large part of the population – and under attack by others," said Crane. "We decided that the measure of a society's commitment to provide rights to people could best be measured by how it treats those who are not welcome."

Another of the early foundations to join with Ford was the Carnegie Corporation of New York, spurred by the arrival of Geraldine Mannion as a program officer there in 1988. In 1990, a trip to the Imperial Valley in California to observe the work of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials moved her to address immigration issues in a more systemic manner. Driving through the small town of Blythe near the –California-Arizona border, she saw migrant workers standing in line in the harsh desert sun waiting to go through the process to file their naturalization papers. Mannion, who came to the United States with her Irish immigrant parents, recalled how difficult it was for her parents to go through the naturalization process decades before. "I remember my parents being totally freaked about taking the test," said Mannion.

Following her California visit, Carnegie made a \$300,000 grant to NALEO to widely implement its "one stop" approach to naturalization. By making it easier for them to complete the application process, NALEO hoped to turn around the historically extremely low naturalization rates among Latinos, and especially those of Mexican descent. The organization

had devised a process of setting up workshops in churches and community centers, arranging for volunteer lawyers to interview amnesty applicants, helping them fill out the necessary forms, and taking their photographs and fingerprints, among other things. Although Carnegie had not previously made significant grants in the immigration field, Mannion's interest was consistent with Carnegie's history of support for voting rights and other social justice issues. Mannion said she was convinced that without large-scale programs to promote citizenship, immigrant integration into American society would be long delayed.

To provide encouragement to the emerging field of immigration and philanthropy, representatives of the small band of foundations interested in migration issues met in 1990 to start an affinity group called Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, or GCIR. In addition to McClymont and Crane, other principal participants were Luz Vega, then at The James Irvine Foundation in San Francisco, Kirke Wilson at the Rosenberg Foundation, also in San Francisco, and Jane Stern at the New York Community Trust.<sup>12</sup>

For several years after its founding, GCIR operated as a mostly informal network of about 40 funders, with McClymont coordinating its activities from New York. Overseen by a steering committee of 14 volunteers, the group held a national meeting every two years, and issued two early reports, *Newcomers in America: A Grantmaker's Look at Immigrant and Refugee Issues* in 1994 and *Reweaving our Social Fabric: Challenges to the Grantmaking Community after Proposition 187* in 1995. Despite its low profile, the founding of GCIR sent an important message that a charitable field focused on immigration was emerging. Since its

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<sup>12</sup> Crane is now President of the JEHT Foundation, Vega is President of the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Wilson has retired as President of the Rosenberg Foundation.

founding, GCIR has nearly tripled its membership, and has played an important role in convening conversations within philanthropy to promote immigrant integration policies.<sup>13</sup>

## **Backlash**

On the face of it, IRCA appeared to be a great victory for immigrant rights groups. It resulted in the legalization of nearly 3 million undocumented immigrants, a remarkable accomplishment especially when viewed through the lens of today's stalled debate on comprehensive immigration reform.

But, as with many “solutions” emanating from Washington that are based more on political considerations than carefully considered policy options, IRCA planted the seeds for a hostile backlash against immigrants, whose impact continues to be felt today.

One of the main reasons for the backlash was that despite IRCA's intent to control unauthorized migration, undocumented immigrants continued to come into the United States in ever-larger numbers. As Fix and his colleagues at the Urban Institute had accurately assessed, the employer sanction provisions in IRCA proved to be difficult to enforce, which may have been the intent of those who wrote the legislation in the first place. To charge an employer under the statute, the state had to show that employers *knowingly* hired undocumented workers, which in most cases was very hard to prove.

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<sup>13</sup>It was only in 1998 that GCIR opened an office (in Chicago) and hired Daranee Petsod to be its full time director. When Petsod moved to Sebastopol, California in 1999, the organization moved with her, and now has five staff members working in an office overlooking an apple orchard, populated with wild turkeys and deer. Today, GCIR has over 100 members, and 661 funders on its e-newsletter lists. Its geographic representation has also grown. During its early years, its members were primarily from the large immigrant "gateway" cities such as New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Minneapolis St. Paul. Now its members come from 26 states, including Arkansas, Kentucky, and Nebraska. It has emerged as a major advocate promoting philanthropic involvement in immigration issues, with a primary focus on advancing immigrant integration. Among other activities, it published a widely-used "tool kit" for Grantmakers in 2005 titled *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration*. The purpose of the toolkit, its authors wrote, was "to catalyze inquiry, exploration and action to promote effective integration policies across the United States and beyond."

The continuing influx of undocumented immigrants was a flash point of tension especially in California. Within three to four years of IRCA's passage, restrictionist forces began to organize a campaign to deny taxpayer-funded benefits to undocumented immigrants in the state. By 1994, immigration had become the major political issue in California, with a voter initiative called "Save Our State" by its proponents placed on the state ballot as Proposition 187. The initiative called for denying undocumented immigrants all social services and other benefits other than emergency health care " required by federal law." Undocumented children would be barred from attending public schools, and any state or local official would be required to report illegal immigrants to federal immigration authorities.

Adding to the potent mix was that Governor Pete Wilson was running for reelection. Far behind in the polls, he ran television advertisements of shadowy figures crossing the border, and made immigration a major theme of his campaign. His attacks on immigrants turned his campaign around. Voters approved Proposition 187 by an overwhelming 59 to 41 percent margin, and Wilson was easily re-elected.

Shortly afterwards Wilson announced that he would run for president in 1996 and demanded the federal government do more to control illegal border crossings. President Bill Clinton, who faced the prospect of facing Wilson in the presidential contest, responded by instituting Operation Gatekeeper on the California border, based on a new approach to border control developed by then Border Patrol chief Sylvestre Reyes in the El Paso sector. The federal government began erecting a triple fence made out of steel landing mats used in the Vietnam War along the U.S.-Mexico border, placed Border Patrol agents at regular intervals along the border, and increased the use of high-tech and other surveillance techniques to manage the migration flow into California.



The tide had now fully turned from the mood in 1986 when Congress had voted to extend amnesty to millions of undocumented immigrants. Negative attitudes were at least in part fueled by the economic recession of the early 1990s. "We are up against something we have never been up against before — a combination of bigotry, economic insecurity, post-Cold War isolationism and politicians who have decided to stake their future on the backs of immigrants," said Frank Sharry, who had taken over the directorship of the National Immigration Forum from Rick Swartz in 1990.<sup>14</sup>

The immigration advocacy network, which had grown enormously in response to IRCA, nonetheless found itself outmatched by the media and communications strategies of the immigrant restrictionist lobby.

Frank Sharry knew that the Forum and other immigrant organizations would need to vastly upgrade their communications capabilities if they were to win any of the pending battles they would have to wage at the state and federal levels. He asked Ford to help. "I told Mary McClymont we needed a thorough public opinion campaign, and we needed to build strong messages and a capacity to get out to the press," Sharry recalled. Ford agreed on the need for the campaign Sharry had in mind, and McClymont put him in touch with the Communication Consortium Media Center, a public relations firm in Washington D.C. With the help of the Consortium, the Forum conducted public opinion research on immigration, and developed more sophisticated messages and organized its staff to communicate more effectively with the press. It was, said Sharry, "a completely new approach in the field." The Communications Consortium also worked directly with organizations outside of Washington to help them devise more effective media and outreach strategies in their local communities.

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<sup>14</sup> Quoted in "How a sleeping giant — Latino voters — awakened," by Louis Freedberg, San Francisco Chronicle, June 6, 2001.

At its core, Sharry said, the new communications strategy had to include an acknowledgment of the concerns of those a tough approach against immigrants. "You had to acknowledge that illegal immigration was a problem, but that you don't solve it by throwing children out of the schools. Yes, you need border enforcement, but it should be professional and accountable. And we should protect legal immigration even as we reduce illegal immigration, but there is a right and a wrong way to reduce it."

Research supported by Ford addressed one of the central points of dispute in the controversy over unauthorized migration: whether the costs of immigration exceeded its benefits. In a much-anticipated May 1994 Urban Institute report, *Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight*, Fix and Passel concluded that immigrants are a net economic benefit to the United States. "Overall, annual taxes paid by immigrants to all levels of government more than offset the costs of services received, generating a net annual surplus of \$25 billion to \$30 billion." The report was enormously influential in introducing objective research into the increasingly emotional debates on immigrant use of benefits. The National Federation of State High School Associations was so impressed with the report's even-handed tone, it distributed 3,000 copies of the report to debate teams across the nation.

In California, the hostility to undocumented immigrants that inspired Proposition 187 had an unexpected outcome: hundreds of thousand of legal permanent residents, including many who had become naturalized as a result of IRCA, decided to become citizen themselves. Within four years of IRCA's passage, Gov. Wilson had been replaced by a Democrat, Gov. Gray Davis, who chose not to appeal court rulings challenging its constitutionality. The end result was that Proposition 187 never went into effect – a remarkable outcome in light of the passions, and fears, that the initiative initially inspired. But while it was defeated in California, the spirit of

Proposition 187 spread out from California to Washington D.C. where it infused welfare and immigrant legislation that, like IRCA a decade earlier, demanded a new and creative response from Ford and other foundations.

By the time Mary McClymont left her post in 1996 to assume a senior position in the newly organized Peace and Social Justice division of the Foundation, she could point to the significant growth of the Foundation's work since it expanded its immigration portfolio in 1983.

"Over the last 12 years we have been able to create and develop and sustain an infrastructure of organizations concerned with immigration policy analysis/research, public education, and advocacy and litigation, and coalition building which effectively did not exist over a decade ago in the United States," she wrote in an internal memo.

She summarized the five areas that had emerged as the focus of Ford's work:

- Policy research and analysis to understand and improve the institutional response to the causes and economic, social and legal consequences of migration;
- Public education, dissemination of information and improved media communication to raise the awareness of the public and policy makers about the needs, contributions, and rights and responsibilities of immigrants;
- Strengthening the capacity and expanding the infrastructure of immigrant organizations, as well as those that serve the legal, social and educational needs of newcomers;
- Litigation and advocacy to safeguard international and domestic laws and constitutional guarantees protecting immigrants and refugees;
- Encouraging multiracial understanding and promoting collaboration among newcomers and established residents.

But even as Ford could point to significant successes over the previous decade, it would soon be called upon to respond to federal legislation that would target not only unauthorized migrants, but legal immigrants as well.

## PART THREE: 1996-2001

### RESPONDING TO THE BACKLASH

Every decade or so, undercurrents of tension or conflict on the migration landscape coalesce to pressure Congress to approve major legislation to resolve a perceived problem, or set of problems, generated by new flows of immigrants across our borders.

More often than not, the legislation has consequences its proponents did not anticipate — sometimes provoking a backlash against immigrants, at other times eliciting a response that shifts the debate in positive directions. Unexpected events, economic downturns, or national crises also have affected radical transformations in the immigration landscape. These historical shifts trace the jagged, non-linear arc of a movement, marked by steps forward and steps back, with advances and retreats, growth and retraction.

That was certainly the case with the passage of three major pieces of legislation – on welfare, immigration and terrorism – that were approved by Congress in 1996. All contained provisions that limited benefits, or removed protections that legal and undocumented immigrants had previously enjoyed. Yet these federal laws triggered a decisive response from philanthropy and the organizations they supported, so that by the end of the decade the emerging immigrant rights movement was in a stronger position than it was at the beginning.

Few people remember the welfare reform legislation of 1996 – the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act – as an immigration bill. Yet almost half the savings in the welfare legislation, totaling some \$23 billion, came from cutbacks in benefits to immigrants,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Most dramatically, most low-income legal immigrants were barred from receiving Supplemental Security Income payments and food stamps until they became citizens. In addition, almost all future legal immigrants who came in after 1996 would be ineligible to receive a range of federal benefits. States could also deny payments to

Immigrant advocates were incensed. "Never in the history of the United States, except perhaps after Reconstruction, has such an egregious and Draconian piece of legislation been considered by denying full rights to tax-paying, law-abiding legal residents and citizens," said Raul Yzaguirre, then president of the National Council of La Raza.<sup>16</sup>

Shaping Ford's response was Taryn Higashi, the new program officer who replaced Mary McClymont in May 1997 to oversee the refugee and migrants rights and opportunities portfolio at Ford. "The responses to welfare reform required local and national organizations working together," recalled Higashi. "From the beginning, a major theme of my work at Ford was how we could facilitate this cooperation and coordination."

Like many others who had worked on immigration issues at Ford, Higashi brought direct experience working "on the ground" with immigrant groups. She had worked as a staff attorney for Safe Horizons (then called Victims Services), a large social service agency in New York City targeting sexual abuse and domestic violence, and then at the New York Community Trust which was heavily involved in immigrant grantmaking.

A focus of Higashi's work at the Foundation was to engage those most affected by policies devised in Washington and elsewhere: immigrants themselves. "It is very hard to bridge directly the affected communities and the people who are working on advocacy," she said. "Those connections are challenging to make, but they are vital to achieving effective and lasting success."

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legal residents from Medicaid and welfare and social service block grants. Michael LeMay, *Guarding the Gates: Immigration and National Security*, Praeger, 2006

<sup>16</sup> "Immigrant Groups Assail Welfare Bill," by Louis Freedberg, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 27, 1995.

The anti-immigration provisions of the welfare bill had caught immigrant advocates off-guard because most of their attention had been focused on immigration legislation that was working its way through Congress. The immigration bill, sponsored by Rep. Lamar Smith, R-TX, who became chair of the House Subcommittee on Immigration after the Republican takeover of the House in 1994, represented a frontal assault on both legal and illegal immigration. The legislation was based on the recommendations issued a year earlier of the U.S. Commission on Immigration, chaired by former Rep. Barbara Jordan, D-TX. Among the Jordan Commission's controversial proposals was one calling for a national ID card, and another to reduce by one-third the number of *legal* immigrants admitted to the United States.<sup>17</sup>

Not for the first time, there was a major split within member organizations of the National Immigration Forum. The Forum's leadership took the position that legal and illegal immigration should be considered separately, as the best way to ensure that legal immigration was not drastically reduced.

In a major victory for the Forum and its allies, Congress in the end voted not to restrict legal immigration – but it did pass a tough immigration law, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. Among its 60 provisions were ones calling for massive new controls on the U.S.-Mexico border and making it easier to deny asylum claims. The law had an immediate effect: the number of asylum claims filed plummeted by two thirds over a five-year period.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The recommendations were completely unexpected, coming as they did from Jordan, a revered liberal Democrat. Many advocates believed that Jordan and her fellow commissioners had succumbed to the prevailing anti-immigrant sentiments in the newly- elected Republican controlled House of Representatives. Jordan did not entirely reject those perceptions. "We were created by Congress; we were not created by divine intervention," she said at the time. "I cannot say we stand majestically above politics." (Quote in "President Backs Plan to Cut Legal Immigration," San Francisco Chronicle, June 8, 1995.)

<sup>18</sup> From 147,430 asylum claims in 1995 to 46,776 claims in 1999. Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America*, p. 252.

Immigrants also found themselves caught up in anti-terrorism legislation that foreshadowed the much harsher response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (known as AEDPA) signed by President Clinton in April 1996 on the first anniversary of the Oklahoma City included provisions that were intended to make it easier for authorities to deport immigrants suspected of terrorism.<sup>19</sup> But it also expanded the number of offenses requiring mandatory detention of legal immigrants that were unrelated to terrorism. As a result, hundreds of long-term legal immigrants found themselves facing deportation orders without recourse to a hearing, based upon offenses that were not grounds for deportation at the time they were committed.

Once again, attention shifted back to Washington as advocates tried to restore some of the protections denied to them in the legislation, as well as benefits legal immigrants were barred from receiving. But action was also needed at a state level to persuade state legislatures who were not hostile to immigrants to offset benefits denied to them by the federal government.

Philanthropy, like the movement itself, found itself in a defensive posture. The Ford Foundation provided grants to the National Immigration Forum, the National Council on La Raza, and the National Immigration Law Center, among others, who embarked on a unified campaign to undo some of the most punitive restrictions embedded in the welfare, immigration and anti-terrorism legislation. They were partially successful, persuading Congress to restore \$11.4 billion of the estimated \$23 billion of its original cuts in benefits and services to immigrants.<sup>20</sup> Another major victory was defeating an amendment in the House of Representatives by Rep. Elton Gallegly, a Southern California Republican, that would have

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<sup>19</sup> The official purpose of AEDPA was “to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, provide for an effective death penalty, and for other purposes.

<sup>20</sup> Fix, Michael and Karen Tumlin, *Welfare Reform and the Devolution of Immigrant Policy*, Urban Institute, October 1, 1997, available at [www.urban.org/uploadedPDF/anf15.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedPDF/anf15.pdf).



allowed states to keep undocumented immigrants out of public schools in apparent violation of the 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* U.S. Supreme Court ruling.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the attempts to discourage immigration by restricting benefits had just the opposite effect they were intended to have. They triggered a stampede of immigrants seeking to become citizens. Once naturalized, they became eligible for an even wider range of benefits they were previously eligible for.<sup>22</sup> “We’re inducing people to become citizens in order to get benefits,” said Michael Fix, then Director of Immigration Studies at the Urban Institute. With virtually no discussion, he said, the welfare bill had provoked “one of the most profound reconsiderations of the meaning of citizenship in U.S. history.”<sup>23</sup>

### **The Emma Lazarus Fund**

The welfare reform legislation also elicited one of the most dramatic philanthropic responses to date on behalf of immigrants. In a widely publicized gesture, Hungarian immigrant and multi-billionaire George Soros announced that he was setting up the Emma Lazarus Fund, a \$50 million, three-year fund named after the poet who wrote the words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty. The fund, administered by Soros' Open Society Institute, was intended to help immigrants naturalize as a way to blunt the effects of the legislation restricting their eligibility for benefits.

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<sup>21</sup> 457 U.S. 202 (1982).

<sup>22</sup> In California alone, some 440,000 legal immigrants faced losing welfare benefits after the federal welfare reform act passed. In response, there was a surge in immigrants who naturalized in 1996. In the year between October 1995 and September 1996, 310,000 immigrants in California became citizens, one third of the nationwide total, and double the number who had naturalized the previous year. “Immigrants Rushing to Citizenship,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept, 17, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in “Immigrants Rushing to Citizenship,” by Louis Freedberg, *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 1996.

"As an immigrant to the United States and a naturalized American citizen, I have deep sympathy for those who come to this country in search of a new life," he said at press conference in Washington D.C. in September 1996. "I am appalled by Congress' recent actions to deny vital public assistance to non-citizens who are lawfully residents in this country."

The symbolic importance of Soros' initiative was clear, at least to some editorial writers. "With one swift gesture, this immigrant philanthropist has done more to uphold the nation's tradition of compassion toward newcomers yearning to breathe free than any single act of Congress or the White House could do - or undo," a Seattle Times editorial exclaimed. "If only such compassion had dominated the political debate over aid to legal immigrants in the first place, Soros' generous act would have never been necessary."<sup>24</sup>

Soros recruited Antonio Maciel, an attorney who was in charge of the immigration portfolio at the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation. Before that, he had worked for the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project. Maciel convinced Soros that focusing too narrowly on naturalization would limit the effectiveness of the program, and that 10 percent of the fund, or \$5 million, should go to advocacy organizations like the National Council of La Raza, the National Immigration Forum and Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC). Other "support grants," as they grants were called by the Fund's staff, went to the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project, the National Immigration Law Center and the Immigrant Legal Resources Center, which all had played central roles in IRCA's legalization program a decade earlier.

Soros also specified that the Fund should not have a top-heavy administration, and throughout the three years it was in existence, it never had more than a staff of five in its New York office. Instead, it relied on intermediary organizations – mostly those that Ford and other

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<sup>24</sup> *Seattle Times*, Editorial, October 6, 1996.

foundations had helped build over the previous decade – to administer the naturalization grants. Throughout the process, the small staff of the Emma Lazarus Fund consulted closely with foundations with experience in the immigration field.

The program achieved its goal of assisting tens of thousands of immigrants to naturalize. It also helped leverage support from local foundations in several cities, including Boston, Washington D.C., Miami, Chicago and, most notably in San Francisco, where the Northern California Grantmakers was able to match a \$5 million grant from Soros' fund.

The immediate benefits of Soros' initiative were clear. But there remained a larger question as to which strategy was the most effective: a rapid, time-limited infusion of funds along the lines of the Emma Lazarus Fund, or spending funds more slowly over time while simultaneously helping to strengthen grantee organizations, along the lines of Ford's approach. "Overall the money was well spent," Maciel reflected in an interview a decade later. "It helped a lot of people during this emergency period." But he said he now believes that if the money had been spent over a long period of time, it might have been even more effective. "Sustained funding in the field ultimately does more good," said Maciel.

Lucas Guttentag, director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project noted the philanthropic support his organization and others had received earlier was crucial for the success of the Soros initiative. "The reason we were able to meet the challenge, and to respond and accept that new level of funding, was because we already existed," he said. "So it was a matter of growing an institution, and not starting from scratch, and the reason we existed was in significant

part because of what Ford and other foundations had done in the previous ten years and that was true of a lot of organizations." <sup>25</sup>

The collective response to the 1996 laws eventually moved the country to a more pro-immigrant stance, helped in part by the economic boom of the late 1990s. Some of the most severe restrictions on benefits contained in the 1996 legislation were restored by Congress. Others were reinstated by state governments who came under pressure from regional collaboratives like the New York Immigration Coalition and CHIRLA. "The tone of the immigration debate has changed in remarkable and welcome ways," a *Washington Post* editorial on August 23, 2001 proclaimed. <sup>26</sup>

The restoration of benefits represented "a major victory for immigrant advocates," an Urban Institute study concluded. But it was not an unqualified victory. "The new policy fragments what had previously been uniform national rules set by Congress and the courts regarding non-citizens' eligibility for public benefits," authors Michael Fix and Karen Tumlin wrote in 1997. "And because states are granted far greater power than before to deny public benefits to non-citizens, welfare reform deepens the differences between how citizens and non-citizens are treated and redefines non-citizens' membership in society."

A later Urban Institute study, supported by Ford and 15 other foundations, also pointed to the mixed outcomes of the 1996 legislation. "Despite significant federal benefit restorations and considerable assistance provided by states, the social safety net for immigrants remain

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<sup>25</sup> Underscoring the importance of litigation, ACLU won several significant legal victories. In *INS v. St. Cyr*, 533 U.S. 289 (2001), the Supreme Court ruled that immigrants awaiting deportation under provisions of the 1996 immigration legislation could not be denied their habeas corpus rights to seek release from detention in a court of law before being summarily deported. In *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678 (2001), the Court ruled that immigrants awaiting deportation could not be detained indefinitely if their country of origin refused to admit them.

<sup>26</sup> "A Chance and a Challenge," Editorial, *Washington Post*, August 23, 2001

weaker than before welfare reform," the study found. "Although many states stepped in to help immigrants, few fully replaced lost federal benefits and state variation in available safety net services has increased."<sup>27</sup>

What did become clear was that efforts to restrict undocumented immigration through the harsh provisions of the welfare, immigration and anti-terrorism legislation of the mid-1990s, along with the increased border patrols had failed completely. In fact, border policies had the unintended impact of *increasing* the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States, mainly because as the heightened border controls made it more difficult to cross the border, many migrants decided, once they managed to cross the border, to stay permanently. A consensus began to emerge that major immigration reform was needed.

Calls for legalization of undocumented workers grew more insistent. With support from the Ford Foundation, the International Migration Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment was the catalyst in bringing together major players in the immigration debate in both Mexico and the United States. Together with the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), it convened the U.S.-Mexico Migration Panel in 2000, co-chaired by former White House chief of staff Thomas "Mack" McLarty III and former Mexican deputy foreign minister Andrés Rozental. The binational panel issued a set of recommendations just ahead of the first meeting on February 16, 2001 of Mexican President Vicente Fox and President Bush, who had been inaugurated less

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<sup>27</sup> Zimmerman, Wendy and Karen Tumlin, *Patchwork Policies: State Assistance for Immigrants Under Welfare Reform*, Urban Institute, April 1, 1999, available at [www.urban.org/publications/309007.html](http://www.urban.org/publications/309007.html). The study was part of a major Urban Institute project entitled, *Assessing the New Federalism*, which looked at the devolution of federal powers to the states. In addition to Ford, participating foundations were the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, the Stuart Foundation, the Weingart Foundation, The Fund for New Jersey, The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and The Rockefeller Foundation.

than a month earlier. In a memo to Bush and Fox, the panel's co-chairs called on the two presidents to "begin discussions recasting our bilateral migration policy" and outlined a series of core principles that should guide "comprehensive immigration reform" in Washington.<sup>28</sup>

The panel urged the presidents to forge a "grand bargain" between Mexico and the United States, which would include "making legal visas and legal status" for Mexican migrants more widely available, reducing unauthorized migration by jointly cracking down on human smuggling operations, and targeting development initiatives to areas of Mexico with high rates of out-migration to the United States.

"Migration between our countries is increasingly viewed as an opportunity rather than a problem," the panel chairs told the two presidents. "Record employment and worker shortages, coupled with U.S. labor needs as its baby boom generation moves into retirement over the next 15 years, make clear the need for a new approach to migration. All sectors recognize the limitations of current enforcement procedures and the tragic results of driving migrants into the hands of a migration black market."

Other organizations supported by the Foundation, including the National Immigration Forum, the National Council on La Raza, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and the National Asian Pacific Legal Consortium<sup>29</sup> aggressively took up the cause of comprehensive reform on Capitol Hill.

At about the same time, the Mexico-U.S. Advocates Network, founded by Susan Gsezh, was emphasizing the need for advocates on both sides of the border to work more closely together, and to integrate a deeper understanding of the structural causes of Mexican migration to

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<sup>28</sup> Mexico-U.S. Migration: A Shared Responsibility, Feb. 2001, Report of U.S. Mexico Migration Panel.

<sup>29</sup> Renamed The Asian American Justice Center in 2005.

the United States into policy making. In addition to Ford, the network was supported by the General Services Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Tinker Foundation and the Hewlett Foundation – an indication of the broader range of foundations entering the field. There was a great deal of overlap between those involved with the Network and the Carnegie Endowment's Migration Panel. Frank Sharry, who participated in both, said the combined work helped to ensure that "immigration was no longer viewed through a unilateral lens ... A comprehensive approach was finally on the table, one that combines development, cooperation on border enforcement, and expanded legality for new migration flows and for flows which have already occurred."<sup>30</sup>

With support from Ford, the Open Society Institute, Carnegie, Hagedorn and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, over 200 local, grassroots organizations called for comprehensive immigration reform under several national networks. A key coalition was the Fair Immigration Reform Movement. (FIRM). This coalition was organized by the Center for Community Change, which started out as an anti-poverty program in Washington D.C. 40 years ago. "We saw that it was increasingly impossible to deal with economic issues without dealing with immigrants," said Deepak Bhargava, the group's executive director. "Immigrants are a growing share of who is poor – and their immigration status is a major factor in keeping them poor."

By September 2001, a legalization program of some kind seemed within reach. President Fox visited Washington on September 6 for an official state visit. In an emotional appeal to a joint session of Congress, he requested that the estimated 3 million undocumented Mexicans in the United States be granted permanent residence. President Bush responded by saying, "I fully

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in draft article for GCIR newsletter by Taryn Higashi and Jessica Schultz, October 22, 2001.

understand President Fox's desire for us to come up with a solution quickly, to expedite the process. And we're going to do that." <sup>31</sup>

In the past, Bush had repeatedly ruled out an "amnesty" like the one granted by IRCA 15 years earlier. Instead, he had argued for guest worker programs. But while Fox was still in Washington, he raised the possibility for the first time that guest workers would be eligible for permanent residency. "One of the things I have told President Fox is I am willing to consider ways for a guest worker to earn green card status," he said.<sup>32</sup>

The date was September 6, 2001.

Immigration advocates embraced Bush's statement as a major breakthrough. "I remember standing on the steps of the Capitol with leaders of a number of immigrant groups," recalled Bhargava. "We all thought Presidents Bush and Fox would start the process of legalizing millions of people."

Days later, the September 11 attacks occurred, scrambling the national immigration agenda — and setting back the prospects for significant immigration reform for years to come. The philanthropic community was faced with formulating a response to the fallout from the most devastating terrorist attack on the United States in its history.

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<sup>31</sup> "Bush to Weigh Residency for Illegal Mexican Immigrants," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> "Bush To Weigh Residency for Illegal Mexican Immigrants," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 2001



## PART FOUR

### AFTER SEPTEMBER 11: A MOVEMENT EMERGES

Taryn Higashi was in her New York office during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Almost from the moment it occurred, she realized that the catastrophic attack could have a devastating impact on the cause of immigrant rights in the United States — and Ford and other foundations would be called on to respond.

"One of the first things I thought about, along with everything else that was going through my mind, was what if the people who did this are not U.S. citizens and what will happen to foreign nationals in the United States?"

Higashi grew up in Los Angeles in a closely-knit extended family that she described as “culturally very Japanese.” But there was one subject that her grandparents never talked about: their displacement and internment during World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor, which until Sept. 11 had represented the most devastating outside attack on U.S. territory.

Her mother, however, made a point of telling her about how she and other family members had been forcibly sent to internment camps in California and Arkansas, even though they were American citizens. "It all came back to me after September 11," Higashi recalled, "the rounding up and holding people of Arab or Muslim descent who were not U.S. citizens, the secret and arbitrary detentions, the suspicions that were cast on a whole group of people because of their ethnicity."

Immigrant advocates across the United States had similar concerns, including the realization that the goal of enacting comprehensive immigration reform, so tantalizingly within the realm of possibility just days before, could be indefinitely delayed.

Shortly after the September 11 attacks, the Migration Policy Institute convened a meeting to discuss the impact on immigrants and immigration policy. Several of Ford's grantees attended, including Lucas Guttentag, director of the ACLU's Immigrant's Rights Project, and Frank Sharry from the National Immigration Forum. The consensus at the meeting was that advocates could not reject out of hand new security proposals, but should work collaboratively to generate alternative proposals to those that unduly infringed on the civil liberties and rights of targeted groups.

In a memo to her colleagues at the Ford Foundation a week after the attack, Higashi outlined her view of the dramatically changed landscape for immigration policy reform — and the need to mobilize a response to deflect the possibility of a fierce anti-immigrant backlash.

"Events of the past week mean that our grantees and others who have been working for more realistic immigration policies and legal protections for immigrants in the United States must, at least for now, move in a different direction," she wrote. "On September 10, 2001, the immigrant rights field was optimistic that it could achieve a change in policy that would significantly increase opportunities for immigrants here, and for those who would like to make America their home. At some point they will return to this agenda.

"The immediate priority for virtually all of our domestic grantees," she wrote, "is to do all they can, as quickly as they can, to support those communities that are now coming under attack."

There were numerous incidents of overt hostility and prejudice. In San Diego, a man wielding a knife attacked a Sikh woman, shouting, "This is what you get for what you've done to us." In Huntington, New York, a man tried to run over a Pakistani shopper in the parking lot of a shopping mall, and followed her into the mall saying he would kill her for destroying his

country.<sup>33</sup> A report by another long-time Ford grantee, the National Pacific American Legal Consortium, documented 250 racially motivated incidents and attacks on Asian Pacific Americans, including 2 murders, following the September 11 attacks.<sup>34</sup> Disturbingly, many of these incidents took place in schools or workplaces, and targeted mostly Sikh Americans, because, as the report stated, "they looked like the September 11 terrorists." But as shocking as these incidents were, unlike during World War II, nothing like the gross displacement and detention of an entire community based on their ethnicity or immigrant background occurred after September 11.

### **Attacks on Civil Liberties**

There were, however, serious, and ongoing, violations of civil liberties and constitutional rights that demanded a response. These included the detention of over 1200 mostly Arab American immigrants in the weeks after the September 11 attacks, and the Justice Department's decision to have the FBI interview at least 5,000 18 to 33 year old men of Middle Eastern descent who were in the United States on non-immigrant visas. The criteria used to target these individuals appeared to be based primarily on ethnicity and national origin.

Another vast program was the Special Registration Program (officially the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, or NSEERS) for all non-immigrant foreigners temporarily on U.S. soil, including students, tourists, and business people. The program, which began in November 2002, was limited to visitors from 25 predominantly Muslim countries. They were required to notify the Department of Homeland Security of any change in address, employment or school within ten days of the change, and each year on the anniversary of their

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<sup>33</sup> Reported in Bill Ong Hing, *Defining America*, p. 258.

<sup>34</sup> *Backlash: Final Report: 2001 Audit of Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans*, National Asian Pacific American Consortium, available at [www.advancingequality.org/files/2001\\_Audit.pdf](http://www.advancingequality.org/files/2001_Audit.pdf)

arrival in the country. Any deviation from the complex rules of the program could result in arrest, detention or deportation.<sup>35</sup>

The Ford Foundation made several grants that allowed a range of groups to respond to the civil liberties issues raised by these and other domestic counter-terrorism initiatives. Foremost among them were grants to the ACLU to widely inform the public about the impact of these initiatives, and to file lawsuits challenging what it believed to be their unconstitutional provisions. With support from Ford, the National Immigration Project at the National Lawyers Guild set up a network of individuals and organizations to represent detainees, and to monitor the government's detention of non-citizens. Guided by a 17-member advisory panel, the Migration Policy Institute carried out a detailed review of 400 individuals detained in the post-9/11 period, and analyzed the effectiveness of the government's most publicized immigration measures. The panel's conclusions were stated in the Institute's typically direct style. "The U.S. government's harsh measures against immigrants since September 11 have failed to make us safer, have violated our fundamental civil liberties, and have undermined national unity," the report stated in its opening paragraph.

Another grant was to Georgetown University Law Center Professor David Cole to review the treatment of immigrants and foreign visitors in the United States after September 11. His writing resulted in a prescient book, *Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism* (New York: The New Press, 2003). "Cole's indictment of the way we have handled foreign captives is accurate and sears the conscience," a reviewer in the New York Times wrote.

The National Immigration Forum and its allies – which by then encompassed some 1000 organizations around the nation – mounted a campaign against the Special Registration Program

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<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.ice.gov/pi/specialregistration/>

known as NSEERS. In the face of widespread criticism the Department of Homeland Security suspended the program in December 2003, a year after it started. During the life of the program, 83,519 people registered, and 2,870 were detained.<sup>36</sup> Some 500 were eventually deported, but almost all on immigration violations such as visa overstays. Not a single registrant was charged with planning or carrying out terrorist activities.<sup>37</sup>

The Foundation also awarded a grant to ACCESS, a 35-year-old Arab American organization originally established to serve the Arab community in Dearborn, Michigan. The grant was to enable it to respond to multiple post 9/11 challenges, including setting up a national network of Arab and Muslim-serving organizations. Other foundations, including the Carnegie Corporation, the Kellogg Foundation, the CS Mott Foundation, and the Open Society Institute, all provided support for some aspect of ACCESS work.

To demystify stereotypes, ACCESS opened the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn in 2005. In addition to providing exhibits, the museum offers workshops for a range of groups, including teachers, law enforcement officers, and social service agencies, to challenge negative stereotypes, and to put forward more accurate images of Arab Americans and immigrants of Arab and Middle Eastern descent. ACCESS has also formed the National Network for Arab American Communities, consisting of representatives of 16 Arab American organizations in 10 states to develop a collective response to common issues they all face.

"It was really a heroic decision," said Hassan Jaber, the executive director of ACCESS, referring to the willingness of foundations to support the organization at a time of national crisis

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<sup>36</sup> See Department of Homeland Security Fact Sheet, Dec. 1, 2003, [www.dhs.gov/xnews/release\\_/press\\_release\\_0305.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/release_/press_release_0305.shtm)

<sup>37</sup> David Cole and Jules Lebel, "Are We Safer? A Report Card on the War on Terror," Los Angeles Times, Nov. 18, 2007.

when Arabs and Muslims were scapegoated in response to terrorist attacks they had nothing to do with.

The September 11 attacks turned the immigration landscape into a treacherous policy minefield. Estimates in 2002 by Jeff Passel at the Urban Institute that there were an estimated 9 million undocumented immigrants on U.S. soil reinforced the view among advocates that reform was essential – and fueled the passions of immigration restrictionists. The recession of 2002 and 2003 also fed anxieties that immigrants were taking jobs from Americans, or taking advantage of scarce benefits that should be going to U.S. citizens. Adding another layer of complexity was the dismantling of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the integration of its activities into the new Department of Homeland Security. In effect, the new arrangement meant that immigration had been officially – and perhaps permanently – defined as a national security concern.

But in a historical echo of its response to the passage of IRCA in 1996, and welfare and immigration legislation in 1996, philanthropy once again responded affirmatively to the new demands of the post-9/11 world. Several new foundations entered the field, demonstrating that philanthropy could play a role in helping immigrants assert their rights even at a time of national crisis.

### **The Four Freedoms Fund**

Recognizing that the September 11 attacks had significantly changed public attitudes towards immigrants, several foundations began developing a new and aggressive funding strategy to protect immigrant rights through local organizing and advocacy. Key program officers from the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Joyce Foundation, the James L. Knight Foundation and the Open Society Institute met numerous times to map out this

strategy. They were joined by several consultants, including Daranee Petsod, Dorothy Thomas and Monona Yin. In July 2003, a creative funding “collaborative,” called the Four Freedoms Fund, was established with initial grants of \$2.8 million from several foundations, including \$700,000 from Ford and \$1 million from Carnegie.

Named after the Four Freedoms articulated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his speech on January 6, 1941, the Fund was managed by the Public Interest Projects, a 501(c) (3) organization which had extensive experience overseeing large-scale collaborative grantmaking. Program officers representing Ford and other participating foundations acted as "advisors" to the Fund and made recommendations on how the funds should be spent. Initially, the intention was to focus grantmaking in four regions where Arabs and Muslims were heavily concentrated. But the Fund soon expanded in scope, both in the number of participating funders (which grew to include the Horace Hagedorn Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, the Gates Foundation and others) and in the range of communities it served.

By 2007, the Fund had evolved to the point of supporting 65 organizations in 28 geographically diverse communities around the nation. Ford alone has contributed \$10 million since the Fund’s inception.<sup>38</sup> A major focus has been to support regional immigration coalitions which could act as a bridge between national advocacy organizations and smaller local organizations. In addition to supporting the key state immigrant coalitions that were formed during the implementation of IRCA, the Fund also provided grants to newer organizations. These included the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium, a consortium of Korean community-based organizations in Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago; the Tennessee Immigrant Rights and Refugee Coalition; CAUSA Oregon, a statewide coalition that

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<sup>38</sup> Cited by Susan Berresford, Testimony to House Committee on Ways and Means, September 25, 2007.

worked in both urban and rural regions; and the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, which coordinated an immigrant rights coalition in Nebraska and Iowa.<sup>39</sup>

As a report by the Carnegie Corporation explained, "given the limited staffing of most national foundations, an intermediary such as the Four Freedoms Fund simplifies the process of making a large number of grants directly to grassroots groups, while encouraging funder collaboration for strategic grantmaking."<sup>40</sup>

### **Reviving Immigration Reform**

The most immediate impact of the 9/11 attacks on immigration policy was to sabotage the emerging consensus on the need for comprehensive immigration reform. Each fresh estimate of the undocumented population underscored how broken the current immigration system was. To help reignite the debate, the Ford Foundation supported the Immigrant Workers Freedom Rides of 2003, in which hundreds of "freedom riders" — immigrants and their supporters — traveled across the country in buses to focus attention on the undocumented, ending up in Washington D.C.

Prodded by these and other activities, the issue of legalization of undocumented workers was raised again in Congress in 2003, for the first time since the September 11 attacks. At about the same time, Atlantic Philanthropies, a foundation with \$3 billion in assets established by Chuck Feeney, the founder of Duty Free Shops, embarked on an aggressive campaign to promote comprehensive immigration reform, and quickly established itself as the most substantial supporter of the reform agenda. Between 2004 and 2007 it awarded grants totaling \$13.2 million to groups working for what Gara LaMarche, president of Atlantic Philanthropies, called "a fairer

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<sup>39</sup> For profile of TIRRC's "Welcoming America" campaign, see page xx of this report.

<sup>40</sup> For a profile of the Four Freedom Fund's Capacity Building Initiative, see page xx of this report.

Also see "Four Freedoms Fund: A Pioneering Foundation Partnership Advocates for Immigrants, *Carnegie Results*, Winter 2008.



immigration policy." The largest beneficiary was the newly formed Coalition for Comprehensive Reform, a 501 (c)(4) organization established in 2003 to mobilize support for immigration reform on Capitol Hill.

In a sign that the immigration policy debate was emerging from the gloom cast by the 9/11 attacks, President Bush took up the issue again in January 2004 when in a major speech at the White House he proposed a guest worker program that would match "willing foreign workers with willing employers." The president's proposal didn't come close to resembling "comprehensive reform," but it did open the door slightly to providing a pathway to citizenship to at least some temporary workers. "Those willing to take the path of citizenship — the path of work and patience, and assimilation — should be welcome in America, like generations of immigrants before them," he said to the applause of the East Room audience.<sup>41</sup>

As promising as the president's speech was, it did not break the legislative logjam. Some advocates hoped that President Bush would support a version of the "Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act," authored by Senators John McCain, R-AZ and Edward Kennedy, D-MA. Despite its flaws, the McCain-Kennedy legislation, which the Senate approved in July 2005, offered many undocumented immigrants the chance to legalize their status and to eventually become U.S. citizens if they met the legislation's numerous requirements.

But the array of forces opposed to any form of legalization made compromise impossible. Instead of sweeping reform, on December 16, 2005 the House of Representatives passed the "Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Act," authored by Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wisconsin (HR4437). with little debate or media attention, Among its many

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<sup>41</sup> "President Bush Proposes New Temporary Worker Program, White House Press Releases and Documents, Jan. 7, 2004.

provisions, the legislation would have made it a criminal offense to be in the United States without a valid visa and called for erecting a 700-mile "fence" along the U.S. border.

In a massive public rejection of the Sensenbrenner bill, an estimated 4 million immigrants and their supporters took to the streets in 120 cities in a series of pro-immigrant marches never before seen in the United States. "It's a whole new surge of activism," said an elated Eliseo Medina, then vice president of the Service Employees International Union. Medina came to the United States with his farm-worker parents from Mexico when he was 10. "What makes it unique is that you have businesses, churches, unions and community groups that have never come together on anything before and are working together on this issue."<sup>42</sup>

Above all, the marches seemed to represent the emergence of a fully fledged movement on behalf of immigrant rights that would have been unimaginable when the Ford Foundation initiated its enhanced immigration program a quarter of a century earlier.

Hoping to harness the extraordinary momentum generated by the public demonstrations in 2006, a broad coalition of national, state, and local immigrant organizations pushed for an agreement on immigration reform on Capitol Hill.

In the Senate, a bipartisan group of 12 senators led by Senator Kennedy and Jon Kyl, R-AZ worked closely with the White House over a three-month period to come up with a "compromise" bill. The proposed legislation included a provision that would have provided a pathway to citizenship for up to 12 million undocumented immigrants. It also included a controversial temporary worker program, and an equally controversial "points system" that

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<sup>42</sup> The massive protests were the result of a number of forces that coalesced that spring. The marches gave people who for decades had been fearful of expressing themselves an opportunity to engage in a collective demand for recognition. The ethnic media played a key role, especially Spanish radio deejays in Los Angeles. And the network of pro-immigrant organizations that had evolved over the preceding quarter century also played a part. In particular, regional and local organizations that had previously convened broad coalitions to support comprehensive immigration reform, helped shape public messages generated by the demonstrations and coordinated activities across the country.

would have significantly altered the family-based immigration system for awarding permanent visas.

The bill presented immigrant advocates with numerous dilemmas. It contained provisions that advocates would never have agreed to had they been more centrally involved in the negotiations. Yet, it also held out the prospect of legalizing millions of immigrants, even as time for enacting reform prior to the 2008 presidential election appeared to be running out. The legislation carved deep divisions in the pro-immigrant coalition -- even as those opposed to any form of legalization also declared war on the legislation. It was a fatal combination of cross-cutting interests. During a climactic session on June 28, 2007, the legislation was easily rejected in the U.S. Senate.<sup>43</sup> The defeat, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "crushed the chance of settling the contentious matter in the next few years."<sup>44</sup>

As Washington floundered, a new and widening threat emerged. State and local municipalities introduced a torrent of laws and ordinances aimed at restricting immigrants' access to government programs or employment, and creating state- and local-level enforcement programs. In 2007 alone, more than 1500 immigration-related bills were introduced in state legislatures, the vast majority targeting undocumented immigrants. Some 244 bills actually became law, three times as many as in the previous year.<sup>45</sup> The legislative assault was especially acute, not in traditional "gateway" communities like New York, Los Angeles or Chicago, but in communities like Nashville, which were experiencing a major influx of immigrant, often for the first time.

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<sup>43</sup> Only 12 out of 49 Republicans — and 33 Democrats — were willing to support the bill. One third of Senate Democrats voted against it, as did two thirds of Republican lawmakers.

<sup>44</sup> "Bill Fails in Senate," *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Border Dispute, Arizona Seizes Spotlight in U.S. Immigration Debate, *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 1, 2008.

## **Next Steps:**

However, the political climate for immigrants was not entirely bleak. Organizations receiving support from Ford and other foundations scored notable victories in recent years. Coalitions in Illinois, New York and California persuaded city and state governments to set aside millions of dollars to support naturalization and other immigrant integration programs. A growing number of states – including Illinois, Washington, Maryland, and New Jersey -- adopted statewide immigrant integration initiatives to help newcomers learn English, access important public services and become economically productive. The Four Freedoms Fund provided funding to help launch "Welcoming America," a national campaign to highlight the contributions of immigrants and to respond to attacks and misperceptions. The initiative brought together organizations from nine states that have rapidly growing immigrant populations but limited communications infrastructure.<sup>46</sup> The project provided immigrant organizations with access to public opinion research and media consultants, helped them coordinate their messages, and shared promising media and community education strategies, including new messaging techniques to ensure that their views were more effectively aired in both the traditional and Web 2.0 media.

The range and depth of these activities provide a vivid contrast to the organizational vacuum immigrant advocates encountered on February 1981 when they attempt to influence the debate on the Hesburgh Commission. The field of immigration advocacy has grown steadily since then, as has philanthropic support for it. There are some stunning examples of ongoing support. The Ford Foundation has continuously funded some organizations – including the National Immigration Forum, the National Council of La Raza, MALDEF, and the National

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<sup>46</sup> "Welcoming America" is active in Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, New York (Long Island), South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington State.

Immigration Law Center – for many years. The Carnegie Corporation has been tenacious in underwriting a field of immigrant integration, as have smaller foundations like the Rosenberg Foundation which continue to be influential on rural and farmworker justice issues.

Civic participation – as basic an American value as one can imagine – has emerged at the core of the next step in the immigrant rights agenda. The target: some 25 million immigrants and family members who are not fully exercising their voting power.<sup>47</sup> Recognizing this potential, Ford planned to spend \$2.3 million in 2008 to increase voter and civic participation, not only among immigrants, but their U.S.-born family members as well.

A myriad ambitious alliances focusing on civic participation have emerged. After the immigration marches of 2006, for example, leading immigrant rights organizations, in collaboration with the SEIU, formed the "We Are America Alliance" to increase civic participation on the part of the newly-mobilized immigrants. Another new organization, Mi Familia Vota, along with organizations like National Association of Latino Elected Officials and National Council of La Raza, teamed up with Univision to launch a naturalization campaign called "Ya Es Ahora." In the first year of the program, some 1.3 million immigrants submitted their naturalization papers as a result of this effort, said Eliseo Medina, SEIU's executive vice president who has been integrally involved in this program.

The naturalization campaign would be followed by a voter registration drive targeted at newly-minted citizens, and then a "get out the vote" initiative for the November 2008 elections. Medina said that what he and other partners in the We Are America Alliance are trying to create

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<sup>47</sup> In 2008, there were an estimated 5 million naturalized U.S. citizens who were not registered, and another 6 million who rarely voted. Another 10 million legal permanent residents were eligible to become citizens, and another 3 million would soon become eligible to do so. See in part "Spotlight on Naturalization Trends in Advance of the 2008 Elections," by Claire Bergeron and Jeanne Batalova, Migration Policy Institute, January 2008. (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?id=670>)

is a "culture of participation" among immigrants. "We want people to know that an election is not the end of the process, but the beginning of the process," he said.

As for comprehensive immigration reform, its 2007 defeat in the Senate was more of a setback rather than a failure, argued Frank Sharry. "While the current situation is rather bleak, I suspect within three to five to five years Congress will pass comprehensive reform that will legalize most undocumented immigrants," said Sharry, who left the National Immigration Forum in 2008 to direct America's Voice, a new organization he described as a "communications war room to plan a comeback campaign for immigration reform."

Sharry said it was significant that philanthropic support helped create a network of national and local policy advocates "that almost pulled off one of the greatest breakthroughs for people of color in modern American history."

"We fell short, but we have changed the debate forever, " he said. "It is now recognized by more than two thirds of the American people that you can't solve the problem of illegal immigration without putting 12 million undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship."

## EPILOGUE

*Both charitable and strategic philanthropy have been present in U.S. philanthropy for many decades, and both will always be needed. Most of Ford's work is in the category of strategic philanthropy. We see our role as a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide, providing risk capital for pilot programs, research, institution building and developmental activity. Strategic philanthropy recognizes that bringing innovations to scale requires partners such as government, business and civil society which have capacity and reach far beyond the abilities of any single philanthropic endeavor.*

-- Susan Berresford, Testimony to House Ways and Means Committee,  
September 25, 2007

Twenty five years of support for immigrant rights and advocacy have demonstrated the potent impact philanthropy can have in shaping and building a social movement involving millions of people on our shores. In many ways, it represents Berresford's vision of strategic philanthropy at its most compelling.

"It is hard to imagine an immigrant rights movement today without the investment in organizations and leaders that Ford and its colleagues in philanthropy have made," said Deepak Bhargava, executive director of the Center for Community Change. "They have been in it in the good times and the bad times, and have supported many organizations in the beginning. They've been close allies as well as partners in the work. They've contributed ideas and strategies, and brought other donors to the table."

Philanthropy has made crucial contributions to the significant U.S. social justice movements of this century, including those that have advanced civil rights, women's rights and more recently, protection of the environment. But philanthropic support has, for a range of reasons, been especially important to the emergence of an immigrant rights movement. Immigrants cannot count on a critical mass of elected officials to advocate on their behalf. Nor do they benefit from entrenched political machines that helped earlier generations of immigrants,

established churches that provide a base of material and moral support, or government institutions specifically set up to ease their pathway into American society. Many of the leading immigrant advocacy organizations began as struggling non-profit organizations that relied on philanthropic support to evolve into established institutions.

"The immigrant rights field is vastly different from what it was two decades ago," said Bhargava. "Then the field was limited to pretty narrow group of organizations in Washington D.C. Today, hundreds of immigrant rights groups are working with immigrants to speak in their own voice."

The burgeoning movement faces continual threats. Immigrants have only recently begun to find their voice, and to be willing to take the chance of speaking out on their own behalf. But as recent events have shown, they can be easily silenced by government action that pushes them back into the shadows. Immigrants, especially those who are not yet full citizens, are uniquely susceptible to laws enacted in response to the winds of political change. In recent years, legal immigrants have been deprived of benefits they had previously received. Asylum laws have been changed by the whims of Congress, as have deportation and border policies. Refugee policies have been shaped by politics rather than the needs of migrants who are trying to escape persecution or violence. Workers who for decades worked without the intrusion of federal law enforcement find themselves the object of raids, roadblocks and, increasingly, arrest and deportation. Comprehensive immigration reform remains an elusive goal that may take years to achieve.

In the face of these setbacks, it would be tempting, perhaps understandable, if foundations which had invested in the field would be tempted to scale back their involvement or



at the very least to take time for reflection and reassessment. Yet some philanthropic organizations seem even more determined continue to advance the cause of immigrant rights.

An indication of that resolve can be found in The Ford Foundation's commitment to spend \$8 million in 2008-2009 beyond its already allocated expenditures "to turn the tide of public debate and policy on immigration in a forward-looking direction." As outlined in a March 2008 Ford memo, the goals for this fresh investment of funds were ambitious: "to build the environment in which the next campaign for immigration reform can be won, to defend fundamental human rights of immigrants, and foster immigrant integration into the broader society."

Other foundations also have expressed a similar resolve. The Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund of San Francisco, for example, undertook a major strategic planning process in 2008 and reaffirmed its commitment to support efforts to achieve comprehensive immigration reform and programs to integrate immigrants into our national fabric. The Rosenberg Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, which had been among the early funders of the immigrant rights movements, have maintained their support. Similarly, the Open Society Institute, which had provided \$50 million through the Emma Lazarus Fund, formally established an Immigrant Rights Portfolio in 2006.

## **Lessons Learned**

Several lessons can be drawn from philanthropy's involvement in the emerging immigrant rights field over the past quarter century.

*1. Long-term, sustained support for key institutions is crucial to building an effective immigrant rights movement.* In the years ahead, migration is likely to become an even more dominant force in shaping the demographic landscape in the United States and around the globe.

In fact, few countries will be immune from the accelerating movements of people – including those displaced within their countries or those who move across borders.<sup>48</sup> The extent to which migrants will be embraced or rejected will depend on the economic and political conditions in both the sending and receiving countries. For this reason, organizations that conduct research and analysis of migration and those that use the information to advocate for and empower immigrants need ongoing, long term support so they can survive the cyclical nature of the immigration phenomenon.

Philanthropy's success in cultivating a social movement in the United States to address immigrant issues illustrates the importance of providing continuous funding to expand the capacity of key institutions over time. Sustained funding, however, does not mean that foundations provide unconditional support. A long-term funding perspective requires that foundations continuously assess the quality of their grantees' work and provide feedback on strategies and program effectiveness. Sustained funding makes sense if organizations are able to respond to changing conditions or continue to provide important leadership to the movement. New organizations that reflect the makeup of new immigration flows or those which develop new and creative ways to address challenges faced by immigrant communities.

2. *Grantmaking that expands the capacity of key immigrant-serving organizations has been essential to building an immigrant rights movement.* In addition to providing sustained funding, another grantmaking characteristic that has been critical to the success of the immigrant rights movements has been funders' willingness to make either general support or capacity building grants that transcend the political battles or policy challenges of the moment. When

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<sup>48</sup> Wars, natural disasters, and the forces of globalization – including new technologies, transportation systems that allow for easier movement of people across borders, and global economic integration – are likely to increase the number of international migration for the foreseeable future. As of 2005, there were more than 200 million international migrants, and this number is expected to climb. See Global Commission on International Migration, *Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action* (2005).

foundation support is provided to carry out specific projects with very specific outcomes, an organization is often not able to build its capacity or respond to changing conditions. Providing grantees with funding that is flexible and helps build their organizational capacity over time is critical to sustaining a broad-based movement.

3. *A successful movement requires many different types of organizations that provide complementary programs and serve different functions.* Many components make up the field of immigrant rights -- including direct services in immigrant communities, litigation to challenge unfair laws, research and advocacy to inform policy and legislative debates, and civic engagement programs to promote immigrant integration and empowerment. Not many foundations are in a position to support multiple dimensions of immigrant rights work – but an awareness of how the components they are supporting affect the larger whole can maximize the impact of whatever investment they are able to make.

Equally important is the need for those who make up the emerging network of immigrant advocacy organizations to operate collaboratively and synergistically at the national, state, local, and international levels. In particular, city, state and regional coalitions have been extremely important to carrying out work in immigrant communities themselves, while linking these communities with national advocacy efforts through networks and coalitions. To be most effective, these organizations need to coordinate their work, so that each level of the movement is informed, and strengthened, by the work others are doing. It also is helpful for these networks to include organizations that are not exclusively focused on immigration, but help establish alliances with other key constituencies, such as African Americans, faith and business communities, the labor movement and youth.

4. *People who are directly affected by immigration policies – immigrants themselves – must have the opportunity play a leadership role in seeking and shaping solutions.* One of the most challenging aspects of immigrant advocacy work is how to involve those directly affected by immigration policies. Their unfamiliarity with their new communities, lack of experience with democratic practices, their vulnerability to immigration enforcement policies, and their very busy lives are only some of the challenges immigrants face in trying to become more civically engaged in their new homeland. However, in recent years, many immigrant organizations have developed successful programs to increase participation even among those who are most marginalized. Examples of successful civic engagement programs include efforts to promote and help eligible immigrants become citizens and informed voters; to protect the rights of immigrant workers; to help immigrants engage on issues affecting their daily lives such as education for their children or neighborhood safety; and to offer trainings and opportunities for newcomers to play a leadership role in working with other communities to enact policies at the local, state, and national levels that promote integration and further their collective interests.

Foundation support for programs that increase immigrant civic engagement and leadership is crucial to building a fully-fledged immigrant rights movement that encourages immigrants to emerge from the shadows of American life and is also capable of convincing policymakers to support programs and policies that address these needs.

5. *Collaboration among funders is critical to supporting a broad movement.* Building an effective immigrant rights movement requires not only collaboration among immigrant organizations but also among their funders. The experience of immigrant funders suggests that there are a number of benefits to both formal and informal funder collaborations:

- *Greater impact.* Coordinated grantmaking can raise the visibility of key issues within the philanthropic community and provide more effective grantmaking by directing collective resources toward achieving common goals. Coordination also can ensure that different elements of and organizations within the emerging movement are properly funded.
- *Expanded reach and effectiveness.* Forming collaborative funds, such as the Four Freedoms Fund and the Fund for New Citizens described in this report, allows national and regional foundations to support smaller but important emerging organizations regardless of their geographic location or size. Expanding the capacity of smaller, immigrant-led organizations is especially important to increasing newcomer civic engagement and ensuring that policy advocacy at the state and national levels is responsive to conditions “on the ground.”
- *Movement-building.* Collaboration among funders has been essential to building immigrant networks capable of changing public attitudes and providing input into policies on a national scale. The Four Freedoms Fund, for example, has allowed national and regional foundations to help with the critical task of movement-building by supporting local and state organizations that are the backbone of the emerging immigrant rights field. Because vast resources are needed to support and sustain national networks, this type of activity is virtually impossible for any individual foundation to undertake on its own.
- *Learning opportunities.* When funders work together, they can learn from each other’s grantmaking to refine their own strategies and to coordinate with those who share similar goals. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees

has played a critical role in providing space for funders to engage in strategic thinking, coordination, and to learn from the experience of other immigrant grantmakers.

### **The Long View**

It would be easy for immigrant advocates, and their supporters in the philanthropic community, to be discouraged by the backlash that has occurred against some immigrants in the wake of the September 11 attacks. However, the successful integration of other immigrant groups into American society makes it reasonable to expect a similar process will occur with the latest immigration flows. Immigrant groups from Eastern and Southern Europe a century ago were viewed as racially inferior, and were the targets of pervasive prejudice and even racial attacks. But by the 1950s and 1960s the membership of these once-scorned immigrant groups in American society was no longer an issue.

"I do believe that the immigrants of color today will be assimilated in much the same way," said Gary Gerstle, a historian at Vanderbilt University, and author of *The American Crucible, Race and Nation in the 20th Century* (Princeton University Press, 2001). . "But if your expectation is that they will be assimilated in five years, you will be disappointed. A more realistic time frame for integrating and incorporating racial outsiders, for turning them into racial insiders, is a two generation process that occurs over a 40 to 50 year period. We have a rich history of doing this successfully."

Gerstle, however, cautioned that the incorporation of immigrants has "never happened automatically, it has never happened without effort." Previous immigrant groups have benefited from religious institutions, ethnic associations, and ethnic newspapers. They established mutual aid societies, churches, synagogues, mosques, and businesses that helped immigrants adjust to

their new communities. Unions have been especially important institutions of Americanization because a key to successful integration is economic opportunity and security. The diminished reach of unions today suggests that there is a need for other organizations to do some of the work of economic integration that unions were able to do during their heyday. The recent emergence of unions committed to organizing immigrants, including undocumented ones, marks an important affirmation of labor's historic role in promoting immigrant integration.

Partnerships between unions and leading immigrant organizations are particularly significant. "These kinds of immigrant advocacy groups by and large did not exist or have nearly the legitimacy a hundred years ago as they do now," said Gerstle. "So they are positioned to play an important political role."

There is no reason why the process of incorporating today's immigrants as full participating members of American society should take several more decades. The United States has surely made progress since the 1920s in its ability to incorporate immigrants from other countries and cultures. With the vastly expanded network of organizations nurtured by Ford and other philanthropies over the past two decades the process could be accelerated.

"I believe that the new migration will in the long run be a positive force," Franklin Thomas said in his commencement address to Cooper's Union in 1984, which coincided with Ford's new commitment to enhance immigrant rights. "America, formed by immigrants, has continually been transformed by immigrants. Each wave has been a source of national renewal."

By continuing to underwrite the great American task of integrating successive generations of immigrants, from diverse regions of the world, philanthropy has an opportunity to contribute to that renewal.

## PROFILE I:

### THE POWER OF POLICY: THE MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE

**Washington D.C.** -- Each word in the less-than-flamboyant name of the Migration Policy Institute was chosen only after much discussion and deliberation, explained co-founder Demetri Papademetriou.

*Migration* "implies movements of people in and out of countries and regions around the world, not narrowly into the United States."

*Policy* — "indicates that policy research and good governance are the definitive elements that distinguish this think tank from every other place."

*Institute* — "sends the message that we are independent."

Since it was founded in 2001, with a \$2.5 million grant from the Ford Foundation, MPI has emerged as the nation's leading policy institute on a kaleidoscope of migration issues, ranging from analyzing the U.S. naturalization backlog to strategizing on the crisis of what to do about 4.5 million internally and externally displaced Iraqi refugees. Papademetriou and his staff, according to a *Washington Post* article, have made it their business "to translate the wordy world of academic papers into options in that unique Washington space between knowledge and policy."

In that space, Papademetriou, an ebullient immigrant who grew up in the Greek coastal city of Patras, readily admitted that he and his colleagues have not always pleased partisans on either side of the political spectrum. "We do analysis first and foremost," he said. Whether or not they agree with the Institute, he said, "we are creating a library of technical and analytical knowledge that are being used by an awful lot of people."



In that sense, MPI has been consistent with the impulse that led to its founding. In 1988, Paul Balaran, one of the three program officers hired by Ford to shape and manage its new immigration initiative in 1982, approached Doris Meissner, then at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to convene a series of meetings and discussions in Washington D.C. that would bridge political divides and inject rationality into the post-IRCA immigration debate. "It was very important to have the capacity to look at migration policy issues full-time, not just when there were crises over boat people, or people panicking about Mexico," recalled Balaran, who later went to work at the Carnegie Endowment as its executive vice president and secretary.

Meissner established the International Migration Policy Program, and convinced Papademetriou, who was then working on issues related to implementation of the Immigration Reform and Control Act at the Department of Labor as its director of Immigration Policy Research and chair of the Secretary of Labor's Immigration Task Force, to join her in 1992.

Presciently, Balaran wrote in his original recommendation to the Ford Foundation's board of trustees that the Migration Policy Program should eventually become a free-standing institution. It would be more than a decade before that would happen.

When Meissner was selected by President Clinton to become Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the summer of 1993, Papademetriou took over the Carnegie program — at a time when immigration issues had begun to move to the center of the Washington policy agenda. "The importance of immigration was rising geometrically, both domestically and internationally," Papademetriou recalled. Among many projects, the Carnegie program brought together political and policy leaders on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border to try to break the logjam over what to do about border and migration policies that clearly needed reform.

By the end of the 1990s, the Migration Policy Program had outgrown the space available to it at the Carnegie Endowment. Papademetriou also believed that immigration had moved from being an "issue area" to a discrete field of study and analysis that justified establishing "a self-sustaining institution that could pay exclusive attention to the field."

Papademetriou, with his two long time colleagues Alexander Aleinikoff and Kathleen Newland, travelled to New York to outline ambitious plans for a new migration institute to Taryn Higashi and Mary McClymont at Ford Foundation. Higashi and McClymont pressed Papademetriou about the implications of giving up the institutional support of the Carnegie Endowment. But they were eventually persuaded of the need. The Migration Policy Center opened its doors in the summer of 2001, in offices directly next door to the Carnegie Endowment's headquarters on 16th Street in Washington D.C.

Since then, MPI has evolved at a dizzying pace, taking on an ever-growing number of policy challenges, at precisely a period when migration challenges have become more complex and more controversial in the United States and abroad. "Despite the ebullience of our presentation to Ford, we completely underestimated how big the issue (of immigration) would become," Papademetriou said. "The faster we ran, the more we produced, the greater the demand and expectations of us grew. We also completely misunderstood how nasty the discussion would become in the United States -- and how centrist this institution would become, and would be perceived to be."

Among its notable activities was its July 2003 report, "America's Challenge: Domestic Security, Civil Liberties and National Unity After September 11." The 400-page document (supplemented by appendices of 600 pages) included a comprehensive compilation and analysis of 400 individuals detained in the wake of the September 11 attacks, along with an analysis of the effectiveness of the U.S. government's post-September 11 immigration measures.

Another major MPI initiative was the Independent Task Force on Immigration and America's Future, co-chaired by former Republican Senator Spencer Abraham, the former Secretary of Energy in the Bush administration and chair of the Senate subcommittee on immigration, and Lee Hamilton, president of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a former Democratic representative. A major contribution of the commission's 2006 report, *Immigration and America's Future: A New Chapter*, was to show how the current system of *legal* immigration in the United States was completely unaligned with the economic needs of the nation. The Task Force proposed increasing the number of permanent visas from 980,000 each year to 1.5 million, half of which would be allocated for employment purposes. Another proposal

was for Congress and the president to appoint a Standing Commission on Immigration and Labor Markets to regularly adjust U.S. immigration policies so they were more in line with what was happening in the economy -- and the world.<sup>49</sup>

The Institute also set up an Immigration Data Hub, a compilation of easily accessible immigration data (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/>), and the *Migration Information Source*, a weekly online journal on migration that has attracted world-wide attention ([migrationinformation.org](http://migrationinformation.org)). "Every moment has its magazine, and for the age of migration it is the *Migration Information Source*," according to an article in the *New York Times*.<sup>50</sup>

More recently, MPI established the National Center for Immigrant Integration Policy, designing policies on how to better integrate immigrants into U.S. classrooms, workplaces and civic life. It is directed by Michael Fix, whom Papademetriou recruited from the Urban Institute, and Margie McHugh, the former executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition. As Fix and McHugh they provocatively remarked in their April 2008 report on immigrants in Los Angeles, "the integration of immigrants remains an afterthought in policy discussions and could be considered one of the most overlooked issues in American governance."

By 2008, MPI occupied twice as much space as it did when it first opened. With a core staff of fewer than 20 people, it is still a small think tank by Washington standards. MPI has no academic affiliation to provide it with financial or other support, no endowment to cushion it from the vagaries of philanthropic funding. But MPI has yielded results far exceeding its size and budget – and continues to stress its core aims of promoting good governance informed by a sensitivity to individual rights in U.S. immigration policies. "For us, we have to test ourselves in a true marketplace of ideas every year," Papademetriou said.

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<sup>49</sup> The Task Force report can be found at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/ITFIAF/index.php>

<sup>50</sup> A tiny staff, tracking people across the globe," Jason DeParle, *The New York Times*, February 4, 2008.

## PROFILE II

### FAR FROM WASHINGTON — BORDER NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**El Paso, Texas** — On the stage of the auditorium of Bowie High, a modern but struggling school situated within sight of the fence separating the United States from Mexico, the ten candidates for sheriff of El Paso County sat stiffly behind a table, fielding tough questions about whether they would use the power of their office to track down undocumented immigrants.

They had been summoned to appear at the annual “general assembly” of the Border Network for Human Rights, a non-profit organization that for nearly a decade has been working to organize communities that are among the most marginalized, and most vulnerable, of any immigrant group. These are communities which find themselves caught in a complex web of immigration enforcement which often runs against the grain of historic, familial and economic ties that for generations have bound the two sides of the border together.

The session's moderator was 38-year-old Fernando Garcia, the Border Network's founder and executive director.

“Do you support sheriffs acting as immigration agents, and setting up traffic stops?” Garcia asked the candidates.

Each had a minute to respond. Their answers to a range of questions had a common theme: all the candidates insisted that that they had no desire to round up illegal immigrants.

“The sheriff’s department has no business enforcing immigration law,” said Carlos Leon, who was El Paso’s police chief until December 2007. “We don’t care whether you come here legally or illegally.” Richard Wiles, another former police chief running for the sheriff’s position, added

"We already have a policy that sheriffs can't act like immigration agents. The most important thing is that you come forward to tell us if the policy is not working." <sup>51</sup>

The candidates for sheriff were followed by a panel of top officials in the El Paso County sheriff's department. "We are not here to violate your civil rights, I can't emphasize that enough," Jimmy Apodaca, the acting sheriff, said. "We work for you. You must hold us accountable for our actions. Don't be afraid, we're not going to ask you about your legal status. That's not our job."

Next up were senior representatives of the El Paso sector of the Border Patrol. "We are part of this community, we want to find a common ground with you," said Oscar Benavidez, an assistant chief of the El Paso sector of the Border Patrol.

"We've been fighting to replace a culture of fear with a culture of rights," Garcia explained at the end of the day. The session had demonstrated that. Many in the audience were themselves undocumented, and yet were not only willing to be in the same room as the authorities who had the power to deport them, but were also eager to assert rights many of them did not know they had.

"When we started this process in 1999, people dismissed the possibility of organizing immigrants on the border, because they said they would be too afraid," Garcia recalled. The Network set about recruiting *promotores de derechos humanos* — human rights promoters — in a string of impoverished border towns known as *colonias*, the unincorporated areas with few basic services along the border in West Texas and New Mexico. "These were people who had never participated in anything, but they knew something was wrong."

The volunteers participated in a 40-to-50-hour training program emphasizing their basic rights — including the right to deny entry to their homes by law enforcement officials who did not have a search warrant, or to decline to answer when sheriff's deputies asked what their legal status was.

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<sup>51</sup> In the March 2008 Democratic primary, Wiles emerged the winner, and is expected to be elected Sheriff in the November 2008 general election.

Volunteers then gave "Know Your Rights" presentations in their communities, with the goal of establishing "human rights committees." The committees usually began with a handful of residents, but in many cases now have memberships of a hundred or more.

Each year, a delegation organized by the Border Network goes to Washington to inform lawmakers about conditions here in the hope that border concerns will be integrated into whatever immigration reform legislation Congress may pass. "Unfortunately, policies are shaped without taking in consideration the communities who are most affected by them," said Garcia.

Involving border residents has been "a long and difficult process," Garcia said. "Little by little, they realized that if they stuck together, and they learned their rights, nothing would happen, that they wouldn't be picked up by the authorities."

One of the first to get involved was Irma Castaneda, who lives in Chaparral, a town of 25,000 people on the New Mexico border and became a "human rights promoter" for the Border Network six years ago. She said people in Chaparral were afraid to contest traffic citations because it meant traveling to the county seat, and running the risk of going through Border Patrol road blocks. "It's like we're in a prison, we can't go to Mexico, we can't go to California, we can't go anywhere," she said. Her 10-year-old son couldn't understand why his family can't visit White Sands National Monument, one of the world's great natural wonders only an hour's drive away.

Born in Mexico City, Garcia has been the driving force behind the evolution of the Border Network. As a child, he would travel frequently to the United States because he had relatives living in Los Angeles, including eventually his mother. At age 18, he began working as a reporter for a newspaper in Ciudad Juarez, across the border from El Paso. It was there that he became interested in immigration issues. With a green card in hand, he began working as an organizer for the Border Rights Coalition in 1998, and later transformed it into the Border Network for Human Rights, with the help of a Ford Foundation grant in 2002.

"We felt that immigrants organizing themselves was the right approach, and that Fernando had the power to get it done," said Taryn Higashi, Ford's program officer at the time. It represented a leap of faith, she said, for one of the largest foundations in the United States to provide support to nurture a tiny organization literally on the fringes of U.S. society, working with some of its most marginalized residents. The Ford grant spurred additional support from the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, the U.S. Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Open Society Institute, the Carnegie Corporation, the U.S. Human Rights Fund, and the Shaler Adams Foundation.

The Network's membership has now grown to some 500 families along the border, with 800 to 900 members in 20 border communities. It is also helping other organizations do similar work as far afield as Arizona, Northern California and New Jersey.

"The nation as a whole has stigmatized and villainized the border," said Josiah Heymann, an anthropologist at the University of Texas in El Paso who recently joined the board of the Border Network. "There is a sense that this is the outer edge of the nation, and these outer edges are increasingly at risk, that there are terrible things that come from outside, and might threaten us as a nation. The notion is that if we could erect a perfect border, a perfect wall, we would be eternally contained and safe."

Groups like the Border Network, he said, are an essential element in the larger immigrant rights movement. "There is a role for lawyers, for lobbyists in Washington, for immigrant rights leaders at national levels, and in larger metropolitan areas. But it is also important that we have people working on the front lines of the massive enforcement happening here at the border."

PROFILE:

## WELCOMING AMERICA COMES TO TENNESSEE

**Shelbyville, Tennessee** -- A meeting like this had never before taken place in the 200-year history of Shelbyville, a town of 17,000 people an hour's drive from Nashville.

In the cramped office of Eugene Ray, the recently elected mayor of Bedford County, sat Haji Yousef, the imam and leader of the growing Somali population in Shelbyville, the county seat and world center for Tennessee's renowned "walking horses." Also in attendance were Bo Wilson, a county supervisor for the last 20 years and former bank president, and Lucy Taylor, a Latina who teaches English at Shelbyville's adult school and helped establish the *Centro Latino* for the area's Latino population.

A large charcoal drawing of Martin Luther King Jr. hanging above Ray's desk helped set the tone for the gathering.

The meeting epitomized the tensions that had emerged in Tennessee, where for the first time since slavery an influx of outsiders was transforming the centuries-old makeup of the community— and highlighted promising strategies to help overcome them.

Until less than two decades ago, the population of Shelbyville, like the rest of Tennessee, consisted almost entirely of American-born whites and blacks. Now it has been transformed into a multi-ethnic tapestry shaped by immigrants and refugees from dozens of countries ranging from Somalia to Kurdistan.

The meeting in Ray's office had been requested by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), a 6-year-old organization representing some 50 pro-immigrant groups that had been working to reduce tensions in Tennessee – and combat anti-immigrant legislation flowing from the Legislature. Just weeks earlier in the adjoining town of Columbia the new



Islamic center and mosque – actually a storefront in a strip mall – had been desecrated with swastikas and then burned to the ground.

TIRRC had launched its Welcoming Tennessee campaign, in Shelbyville, as part of a 20-state “Welcoming America” campaign supported by the Four Freedoms Fund. The meeting in the mayor’s office coincided with two “Welcoming Tennessee” billboards which had gone up on the outskirts of Shelbyville. “Like you, we work hard, we pay taxes, and we are people of faith,” the billboards read, alongside large color photos of Somalian and Latino families. “We love America and we are proud to call Shelbyville home.”

Despite the easy banter, the mayor's office bristled with tension.

As much as he wanted to be supportive of the new immigrant population, Ray explained, the influx of children meant more schools would have to be built – and to do so taxes would have to be raised. The local public hospital had been losing \$1 million a year, and had to be sold. “People spend money when they come into the community, but it also costs money when you bring people in,” he said.

County supervisor Bo Wilson complained that the newcomers, especially the Somalis, weren’t fitting in, and acted in ways that antagonized the local population. “They just push into line in the post office,” he complained.

The imam, dressed in robes and a traditional prayer cap, explained that Somalia as a country was only 50 years old, and 20 of those years had been spent fighting a civil war. So traditions and customs were not nearly as established as in the United States.

“If we make mistakes on our side, we’d like to correct them,” he said in Somali, as Ahmed Dahir, a "multi-cultural organizer" for TIRRC, who is a Somali refugee himself, translated. “You can’t compare the way of life here with the way of life where we came from. We are willing to learn the ways of your community, but we need your help to learn what is acceptable and what is not.”

But, he said, it must be a two-way street. “We also need your help in dealing with problems in our community,” he said, referring to tensions at Tyson’s Foods poultry plant, one of the largest employers in the area, and the Davis apartment complex where many Somali families live.” Just days before, 18 tenants, most of them Somali refugees, had been given eviction notices at the apartment complex – because, they tenants believed, they had complained about conditions there.

Wilson, the county supervisor, admitted that he was baffled by some of the cultural differences. He explained how his son, a fireman, would trigger intense hostility from some residents when he would go to the Davis apartments on an emergency call and accidentally step on a prayer rug. “My son tells me, ‘I think I’m helping this guy, but he ends up running me out of the building.’ We’re Christians, but we don’t have prayer rugs. We’re being eaten up by ignorance here.”

Then Wilson articulated what lies at the core of much of the friction between newcomers and established residents, not only here in Shelbyville, but arguably in any community in the United States which is coming to terms with a recent influx of immigrants. “I’ll be honest with you,” Wilson said. “Until I know you, I don’t trust you. The hardest thing to get over is the fear of the unknown. And the biggest thing we are dealing with here is fear of the unknown.”

It is perceptions like these that the Welcoming Tennessee campaign was intended to address. “We realized that if we didn’t acknowledge the fears that people have, unless we take a much more aggressive approach, the number of anti-immigrant bills are just going to increase,” said David Lubell, the 33-year-old director of TIRRC, who founded the organization in 2002. Soon after the meeting, TIRRC moved forward with its “air campaign” by erecting additional billboards, and running radio, television and newspaper ads to bolster its "welcoming" message. Its “ground campaign” consist of setting up a ”Welcoming Tennessee” committee, training “ambassadors” to give talks in schools and churches, and sponsoring regular meetings with community leaders and others. To measure progress, TIRRC contracted with a professional pollster to measure attitudes towards immigrants before the campaign got underway, and planned to do so again several month later to measure its effectiveness.

The Shelbyville campaign followed on the heels of a successful “Welcoming Tennessee” initiative in Nashville, launched in July 2006. Lubell said as the number of anti-immigrant bills proliferated in the Legislature -- 5 in 2005, 20 in 2006, and 44 in 2007 -- he realized a different approach would be needed. "Legislators were telling us that they wanted to do the right thing, but the climate against immigrants in their districts was so bad that their constituents wanted them to do vote for the legislation" he said. "We realized that if we wanted to stop playing defense, we would actually have to address the climate of fear itself.

The campaigns represented a distinctly different approach for immigrant advocates, he said. “Instead of just having immigrants being involved in organizing around policy issues or voter registration,” he said. “We're trying to get immigrants talking with their neighbors, breaking down barriers in communities that are not communicating, and in the process gaining thousands of new allies.”

In 2007, TIRRC and its allies in the business and religious communities in Tennessee, were able to beat back all but 2 of the 44 anti-immigrant legislations. One of the two that did get through was the most controversial -- repealing a law allowing illegal immigrants to get driver's licenses.

As the meeting came to an end up in Mayor Ray's office in Shelbyville, all the participants agreed that they should have more gatherings like this, that they should keep talking to each other. “One day when we learn how the system works, I’ll be mayor of Shelbyville,” the imam joked -- in Somali.

Dahir translated, and everyone laughed. The meeting had ended on an upbeat note. It had been a good start to Shelbyville’s “Welcoming Tennessee” campaign.

## PROFILE IV

### PROFILES IN HONESTY: FOUR FREEDOMS FUND CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

A rule of thumb in most non-profit organizations: never let donors know that your key staff may be on the verge of burn-out, that you may not have the organizational capacity to deliver on what you promised, that you are excessively dependent on a single source of funding, or that your organization continues to lurch from crisis to crisis.

Monona Yin is trying to convince grantees to shed these and other conventional rules of the fundraising game.

"The normal thing to do is to project your strengths," said Yin, Director of the Capacity Building Initiative at the Four Freedoms Fund. "We wanted people to be honest about their weaknesses. We would assure them that they had already been selected based on their prior work, so there was no danger that honesty would jeopardize their funding."

She and her colleagues at the Four Freedoms Fund encouraged this new dose of honesty because of their concern about what they saw as "a lot of administrative thinness" among state and regional organizations they believe are essential to the entire field of immigrant advocacy. "These are the legs of the movement, but they are very, very tiny in terms of capacity," she said.

Yin had first hand experience with the demands of running a nonprofit organization with ambitious goals and limited resources. In 1987 she founded, and then for a decade directed, CAAV: Organizing Asian Communities (originally the Committee Against Anti Asian Violence), a nonprofit organization run out of a storefront on New York's Lower East Side.

It is not unusual for foundations to give smaller grants — in the \$10,000 to \$25,000 range — to help a stretched organization hire a consultant to advise on how to expand its funding, for staff to attend workshops, and similar piecemeal measures. But a more ambitious approach was

needed in order to make a real difference. What the organizations needed, she and Ford's Taryn Higashi believed, was a more significant infusion of funds — say \$100,000 a year for up to three years for each organization — to help them launch an intensive capacity building program.

A series of conversations resulted in Ford contributing \$3.3 million in 2005 to the Four Freedoms Fund to establish its Capacity Building Initiative. "We decided we needed to give the organizations enough money over a long enough period of time to really make a difference," Yin said. Another key feature was emphasizing "peer learning" by bringing the organizations' leaders together so they could learn from each other's experiences and share advice on what worked, and what didn't.

The first grants were made in March 2006 — at exactly the time that the mass pro-immigration marches in their communities made huge and unexpected demands on their time and resources. "Just as the field was stretched much more than it had been, that was when the money (from the initiative) hit," recalled Yin. "We got feedback that this was truly a godsend."

A central focus was to improve the financial security of the organizations — by decreasing dependence on foundation support, and increasing the amount they receive from individual donors, events, and other sources. To that end, each participant received detailed help from the Nonprofit Finance Fund, which has a track record of strengthening the financial health of a range of nonprofit organizations. "We are saying the quality of the work is directly tied to how the enterprise is financed," said Yin. "We are trying to apply a business logic in a non-profit setting."

Pramila Jayapal, the executive director of Hate Free Zone in Washington State, a grassroots organization she founded in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks, had no doubt that her organization could benefit from the Capacity Building Initiative, despite its many successes.

In a state with the tenth largest immigrant population in the nation, and the fourth largest refugee resettlement program, Hate Free Zone had persuaded the State Legislature to allocate funds to help immigrants become citizens in March 2008. A few months earlier it had convinced Governor Chris Gregoire to sign an executive order setting up a Washington New Americans

Policy Council to come up with better ways to integrate immigrants more fully into their communities.

But moving her organization to the next step of effectiveness has been challenging, said Jayapal. "We laid out a vision for the future, but we realized we didn't have the capacity to get there," she said.

The Four Freedoms initiative, she said, helped her organization in very specific ways. It helped her launch a more intensive strategic planning process than she had originally thought possible. She was able to upgrade the organization's computer capabilities which now allow it to track the 23,000 new immigrant voters that the Hate Free Zone has registered in the state. The organization has hired a "development associate" to draw up donor lists, and plan an individual membership program.

In the past the organization operated with only "one to three months (of revenue) in the bank." Jayapal's goal was to raise \$4 million up-front "to allow us to be more creative about allocating resources." With the help of the Four Freedoms grant, she was able to raise \$2.5 million, giving her a three-month operating reserve which she hoped would grow in the succeeding months. "We are supporting a critical layer (of immigrant advocacy) consisting of local and regional groups that connect up to national organizations, and connect down to grassroots, often ethnic-specific groups in a single town or community," Yin said.

Twice a year, leaders of the eleven organizations involved in the Capacity Building Initiative initiative assemble for a two-day retreat to share common problems — and solutions. Each month, Monona Yin convenes a conference call with the executive directors and other top staff of all the participating organizations. Each is required to report regularly on their progress, providing specific information such as how many board member are participating in fundraising efforts. The idea is to create an online database that participating organizations can use after the initiative ends.

Conversations focused on difficult issues, such as how fast to expand an organization — how to have "smart growth," as Yin put it. "As opposed to always thinking about to get to the next level, we are having a more nuanced conversation about what the right size is for an advocacy organization. It means having a conversation that bigger is not always better."

Yin also hoped to build an on-line library with materials on how to best run a regional or statewide organization, so that "if anyone wants to start one of these organizations tomorrow in Colorado, or wherever, it will all be on line. Most importantly, said Yin, in a short period of time the initiative showed results — especially in diversifying the funding base of the participating organizations. "All the ratios are going in the right direction," she said.