Building Community Capacity in the Rebuilding of New Orleans:
The Role of Philanthropic Funders Post-Katrina

by

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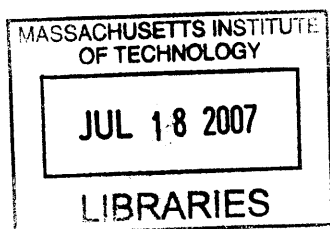
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ABSTRACT

How can funders strengthen community capacity in post-Katrina New Orleans? Residents of low-income, minority neighborhoods have historically faced government neglect, and consequently distrust decisionmakers, in a city of extreme race and class segregation. These communities are now being overlooked in a market-driven rebuilding process. Based on a tradition of self-determination, groups across the city are fighting to meet new needs. With massive institutional failure at all levels, philanthropy could support these groups. The purpose of this thesis is to help the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity, a consortium committed to more equitable redevelopment, think strategically about how to allocate resources to strengthen these groups, some of which form, struggle, and evaporate before funders can reach them. I use a mixed-method case study approach: in-depth interviews with key informants; review of media coverage and documentary sources; and a secondary review of comparable approaches.

First, to sharpen the rationale for community capacity building, I examine the pre- and post-storm roles and contributions of informal groups in New Orleans. These groups serve as nodes of trust, support and enthusiasm in overlooked communities. Second, I review lessons learned from foundation-sponsored capacity building initiatives in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the civil unrest in Los Angeles in 1992. These cases highlight the importance of *intermediary organizations* to reach and support community groups, the *variety of roles* that a collaborative structure enables funders to play, and the importance of *technical assistance* for sustained community change. Third, having interviewed the grantor and prospective grantee (community group) insiders in this picture, I find a genuine interest in partnering on both sides. Among the community groups, I also find: significant information and capacity gaps; a desperate need for core operating support as much as program funds; a frustration that promising collaborations-in-progress are overlooked by funders; and concerns about the downsides of becoming grant-driven organizations. Among the funders, on the other hand, I find: confusion about what kinds of community groups to target; concerns about raising expectations through outreach without following through with funds; limited or missing capacity—including cultural competence—to do this kind of work; and variable willingness to take risks.

I recommend that funders: create local staff presence to do effective outreach and learn the landscape; provide appropriate technical assistance that does not compel groups to formalize; focus on brokering "bridging" relationships between community groups and local decisionmakers; emphasize sustained engagement; and develop the funder collaborative by choosing best options for joint action, defining roles and supporting continuous learning.

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Thesis Reader: Karl Seidman, Senior Lecturer in Economic Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina brought devastating impacts to vast sections of the city of New Orleans. However, the storm and consequent flood disproportionately affected low-income and minority, predominantly African American, communities. Now, twenty months after the storm, the oldest, wealthiest sections of the city, neighborhoods located by the Mississippi River on higher ground, are rebounding, while the future of many poorer, minority neighborhoods, both those that suffered from flooding and those that did not, remain uncertain.

The residents of New Orleans' low-income, minority neighborhoods have historically faced government neglect, and consequently distrust decision-makers, in a city that has experienced extreme race and class segregation in recent decades. Now, once again, these communities are being overlooked in a market-driven, laissez faire rebuilding process. Based on a tradition of community self-determination, resident-led groups across the city are fighting to meet new needs in their communities, many of which have been historically marginalized or have become vulnerable in the current post-Katrina context (such as neighborhoods with large renter populations). With massive institutional failure at all levels, philanthropy could support and strengthen these groups with resources and technical assistance in order to promote equitable development. There are a host of lessons from practice and intellectual frameworks to draw from about how to make low-income communities of color healthier and more productive, as community building has captured the interest of practitioners and scholars, alike, for the last two decades.

In this thesis, I will explore how philanthropy could strategically support and strengthen community capacity in New Orleans. Community capacity, in this context, is defined as "the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community" (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh & Vidal, 2001, p. 7). This thesis is meant to inform the decisions of the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity (GCFE), a consortium committed to more equitable rebuilding. The GCFE is in the process of investigating how to best support the work and build the capacity of "emerging" and "informal" community groups in New Orleans, who are, in turn, working to improve and strengthen overlooked communities. Strategically, this means that the GCFE will have to identify and work with groups they would not traditionally fund due to concerns about financial accountability associated with the lack of formal nonprofit status and management capacity. Reaching out to these groups and building effective partnerships requires a host of mechanisms, practices, and skills that pose challenges and risks, not just up-side benefits if all goes well. There are examples of comparable philanthropic approaches to build community capacity from which lessons and best practices can be gleaned. The purpose of my thesis is to help the GCFE think strategically about how to allocate resources to strengthen these informal, resident-led, community-based groups in order to amplify their positive impact; the hope of GCFE is that allocating resources towards these groups will help them to eventually have "a seat at the table" in decision-making that affects them.

In this chapter, I describe the need to support community-based groups in the Gulf Coast, citing calls, both by philanthropic experts and local potential grantees, for philanthropy to change their practices post-Katrina in order to promote equitable rebuilding. Next, I explain my intent. Then,

I elaborate on my research question and summarize my research methodology. Finally, I provide a preview of my findings and recommendations and provide a roadmap for the rest of the chapters.

1.1 Addressing Inequities through Community-Based Groups

Since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August, 2005 and as recently as December, 2006, sixteen months after the storm, both philanthropic experts and leaders of community-based groups have urged philanthropists to be self-critical and open-minded to changing their traditional ways during the recovery and rebuilding phases post-Katrina. The first of these calls came shortly after the storm from George D. Penick (2005), then President of the Foundation for the Mid South, who wrote in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*:

> Philanthropy has the opportunity to make a huge difference in the lives of
> hundreds of thousands of people as it responds to the devastation wrought by
> Hurricane Katrina. But the risk is great that large sums will be spent unwisely,
> and that a major opportunity to change the way that society includes and cares for
> all of its people will be lost. In the coming months and years, more philanthropic
> dollars will flow into the Gulf Coast states than has ever been imagined. The big
> question is whether that money will be used to rebuild shattered communities in
> ways that are equitable and just or whether it will be largely invested in ways that
> simply re-establish the racial and social inequities that have been so starkly
> captured by television news cameras from around the world (p. 1).

Penick advised philanthropists to look beyond immediate relief needs in order to understand how they could support actual rebuilding with a specific focus on local organizations that "may not be well-established, but that know how to help the poorest of the poor rebuild their lives with dignity and respect" (p. 19). These groups would provide valuable local insight into the current and historical context. Additionally, Penick saw a role for funders to deploy their flexible funds to serve those who the government would not and play a strong role in advocacy to help strengthen the voices of those who are overlooked by the public and private sectors.

Four months later, in January, 2006, Pablo Eisenberg, Senior Fellow at the Georgetown Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership and frequent contributor to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, publicly echoed Penick's concerns. Eisenberg expressed disappointment towards the volume of philanthropic dollars that had been dedicated to post-hurricane relief and recovery in the Gulf Coast and criticized the choices that foundations had made about where the money should go. He explained that the hurricanes exposed philanthropy's long-term neglect of the poor communities of color in the Gulf Coast evidenced by regional nonprofits' inability to serve these populations well. Eisenberg (2006) emphasized that foundations should play a significant role in strengthening organizations representing underserved and vulnerable populations, stating:

> Most important will be the development of strong advocacy, policy, organizing
> and watchdog groups that can reflect the needs, demands, and voices of people
> who are not affluent and powerful, voices that can challenge misguided policies
> and practices of federal, state and local government agencies, and voices that can
> halt activities of unscrupulous developers or corporate polluters (p. 2).

He referred to this strategy as an "affirmative action" approach to philanthropy, which would serve as "an important cornerstone not only in the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast but also in the elimination of two centuries of racial and financial inequities" in the region (p. 5).

Almost one year after Eisenberg's statement about philanthropy's role in consciously supporting more equitable rebuilding, the "Letter from the People of New Orleans to Our Friends and Allies" (2006) which appeared in *Left Turn* magazine, a volunteer publication "written by activists for activists" attested that the need for philanthropic support especially "from the perspective of the poorest and least powerful" had gone largely unfulfilled (p. 1).[1] The letter explained that money that had been allocated to the rebuilding had for the most part remained out of reach of local groups:

> Instead of prioritizing efforts led by people who are from the communities most affected, we have seen millions of dollars that was advertised as dedicated towards Gulf Coast residents either remain unspent, or shuttled to well-placed outsiders with at best a cursory knowledge of the realities faced by the people here. Instead of reflecting local needs and priorities, many projects funded reflect outside perception of what our priorities should be. We have seen attempts to dictate to us what we should do, instead of a real desire to listen and struggle together. We have heard offers of strategic advice, but there have been very few resources offered to help us carry it out (p. 2).

From the signatories' perspectives, the earlier calls to philanthropy to act urgently, strategically, and innovatively in order to support local groups representing marginalized and vulnerable communities had gone largely unfulfilled. Additionally, the letter served as a reminder that the recovery and rebuilding processes were still ongoing, even sixteen months after the storm; funders could still play a critical role in bringing equity and inclusion into the focus of decision-making and planning around rebuilding.

While the hurricane exposed the societal inequities that existed in the region before the storm, the rebuilding process has reinforced the notion that certain segments of the population, separated by race and class, are being overlooked by decision-makers. While government leaders in New Orleans struggle to generate plans and piece together the funding to implement them, the City's official approach to rebuilding has been market-driven. This means that communities who have the resources, political connections and ability to return home are working to rebuild their neighborhoods, while communities who lack such assets are left with uncertainty about their future.

1.2. Intent
I went to New Orleans for the first time in January 2006, four months after Hurricane Katrina made landfall, to work on a community organizing survey project sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association-Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUA-UUSC). The project involved interviewing community organizers from neighborhoods across the city and focusing on a range of issues, to find out what they were doing and what kinds of resources they needed to continue to be effective. The objective was to communicate the information that was collected

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[1] Left Turn, www.leftturn.org.

through these interviews to national foundations through periodic reporting.[2] The work required me to be based in New Orleans from January to June 2006, during which time I met many resident leaders, who with few resources, if any at all, were updating their displaced neighbors with news regarding plans for rebuilding and fighting for their communities' right to return. These community leaders demonstrated incredible courage, resiliency and determination. We had hoped that through our project, we would be able to stimulate funders to channel money towards these groups' work; however, in the time that we were there, for the most part, that was not happening.

Towards the end of my time in New Orleans, a new network of funders who shared a set of progressive principles and a common interest in equitable rebuilding began to meet in the hurricane-affected region. This was the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity. In their first meetings, participants in the GCFE began to share information and explore strategies for collaboration. At the time, I was still a consultant for the UUA-UUSC and had the opportunity to attend GCFE's meetings and in order to bring to the table the perspectives that I was gathering from community groups "in the trenches." As discussions evolved, the GCFE expressed a specific interest in developing strategies to support otherwise overlooked, resident-led, community-based groups. These conversations presented an opportunity to find a solution to the funding problem facing community groups; therefore, I decided to take it up as the topic of my thesis, with the hope of shaping the decisions of the GCFE.

1.3 The Research Questions
As stated above, the purpose of my thesis is to investigate how philanthropy can support and strengthen community capacity in New Orleans. More specifically, this thesis investigates three specific areas:

- Targeting: Who are the groups that should be supported through such an initiative? Why should they be targeted?

- Models: What can the GCFE learn from other foundation-sponsored community capacity building initiatives, specifically "small grants" programs after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and a funder collaborative-driven comprehensive community initiative after the 1992 Los Angeles urban riots?

- Strategy: Given targeting priorities and lessons from past practices, what pitfalls and opportunities should the New Orleans capacity building strategy address?

1.4. Methodology
This research presents the opportunity to shape strategy in real time but also the challenge that there is no operating model for post-disaster capacity building that can be applied to this unique situation. The "case" is an emergent one that my work will help to shape. Therefore, answering my research questions effectively has demanded several kinds of data, both primary and secondary. My primary data draw mostly from interviews with grantors, in this case funders involved with the GCFE, and leaders of community groups based in New Orleans. A few interviews were also conducted with key informants who have experience in foundation-

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[2] The reports from the UUA-UUSC sponsored "New Orleans Community Organizing Landscape" project are available online at the time of this writing at www.uusc.org/katrina/index.html.

sponsored community capacity building initiatives elsewhere or are positioned to speak to the opportunity and challenge to build community capacity in post-Katrina New Orleans. My secondary data draw from a literature review of the New Orleans social landscape, social change philanthropy, foundations' role post-disasters, and community capacity building, a review of post-Katrina media coverage and documentary sources, and a review of two analogous cases.

This methodology was appropriate for my research context for several reasons. First, the literature on philanthropic initiatives to build community capacity is limited in its usefulness. Most of it comes from the philanthropic industry, itself, and, therefore, it is often self-promoting, casting mistakes and challenges in the more favorable form of lessons learned. Unfortunately, this tendency causes some of the learning that would come from a more critical perspective to be squandered. Secondly, post-Katrina New Orleans is a unique context with immense challenges. There is no precedent for how recovery and rebuilding should happen, equitably or otherwise, and the situation is constantly dynamic and continues to unfold in real time. Therefore, any research relating to post-Katrina New Orleans must rely on firsthand knowledge from the people who are living and working in that context. Third, the objective of this research is to help shape an initiative that could be implemented in the future. Therefore, it is important to gauge the perspectives of the actual actors so that my recommendations are in line with real instead of perceived interests and concerns.

My findings are based on interviews with nine members of the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity, fifteen leaders of New Orleans community organizations, and eight informants who have experience in other philanthropic community capacity building initiatives or can address the opportunity and challenge to build community capacity in the New Orleans context. All interviews were conducted between January and April 2007. The interviews with funders focused on their views of philanthropy's role in the recovery and rebuilding, potential and challenges of collaborative funding, organizational and personal motivations, past experience with funding nontraditional grantees, perspectives on project strategy to support nontraditional grantees, and potential limitations and challenges to such partnering. Interviewees from this group included: Annie Ducmanis (Coordinator of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health), Lynn McGee (Senior Program Officer at the Foundation for the Mid South), Gus Newport (Consultant for the Vanguard Foundation and the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation), Bernadette Orr (Manager of Oxfam America's Gulf Coast Recovery Program), Tony Pipa (Senior Consultant for the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation), Martha Thompson (Program Officer on Rights and Humanitarian Affairs at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee), John Vaughn (Program Director at the Twenty-First Century Foundation), and Sherece West (Chief Executive Officer of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation).

The interviews with potential grantees focused on their history in their community before the storm, their role there after the storm, their perceptions on the need for resources, plans for how to use resources, and experience in managing resources and working with resource providers (of any kind). I also gathered information about grantees' perspectives from talking to national organizations' staff working "on the ground" with community-based organizations, including Kimmi McMinn (Manager of Community Development at MercyCorps), Kate Barron (Louisiana

Community Development Specialist for Oxfam America), and James Bui (Gulf Coast Regional Director of the National Alliance of Vietnamese American Service Agencies).

I also conducted interviews with a small sample of key resource people who have experience in philanthropic initiatives to build community capacity elsewhere. This group of interviews shed light on best practices and lessons learned from similar efforts.

My findings draw from a review of literature on sociological and ethnographic characterizations of New Orleans, community capacity building and social change philanthropy. Research on New Orleans society provided a background on the race and class segregation in the city and also revealed a culture of self-determination within marginalized New Orleans communities. Lastly, it provided information about the disproportionate impacts of Hurricane Katrina on low-income and minority populations due to the settlement of the lowest-lying land by lower- and middle-class, mostly black communities. A review of literature on "social change philanthropy," foundations' role post-disasters, and concept of community capacity offered best practices and lessons learned from efforts with motives like those of the GCFE.

It is also important to acknowledge that my opinions and impressions have been shaped by six months (January to June 2006) of living in New Orleans and working closely with community leaders. Not only did this experience provide me with intimate knowledge of the barriers to obtaining support in order to create community change but it also familiarized me with the enormity of the planning and policy challenges that Katrina has presented. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to witness the evolution of and participate in the GCFE, as an "insider/outsider." In the many months during which I have worked with members on both "sides," I have developed positive working relationships with them, allowing me to have more candid and honest conversations to inform this research.

1.5. Preview of Findings, Recommendations and Following Chapters
My findings are partially based on a review of lessons learned from foundation-sponsored capacity building initiatives in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the civil unrest in Los Angeles in 1992. These cases highlighted the importance of *intermediary organizations* to reach and support community groups, the *variety of roles* that a collaborative structure enables funders to play, and the importance of *technical assistance* for sustained community change. Also, having interviewed the grantor and prospective grantee (community group) insiders in this picture, I find a genuine interest in partnering on both sides. Among the community groups, I also find: significant information and capacity gaps; a desperate need for core operating support as much as program funds; a frustration that promising collaborations-in-progress are overlooked by funders; and concerns about the downsides of becoming grant-driven organizations. Among the funders, on the other hand, I find: confusion about what kinds of community groups to target; concerns about raising expectations through outreach without following through with funds; limited or missing capacity—including cultural competence—to do this kind of work; and variable willingness to take risks.

I recommend that funders: create local staff presence to do effective outreach and learn the landscape; provide appropriate technical assistance that does not compel groups to formalize; focus on brokering "bridging" relationships between community groups and local

decisionmakers; emphasize sustained engagement; and develop the funder collaborative by choosing best options for joint action, defining roles and supporting continuous learning.

In Chapter 2, I focus on the research context, including a description of New Orleans social and economic status before and after Hurricane Katrina, an overview of the evolution of the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity, a summary of post-hurricane philanthropic activity and funders' perspectives of philanthropy's role in the recovery and rebuilding process. In Chapter 3, I provide a literature review on social change philanthropy, community capacity building, and foundations' role post-disasters, specifically focusing on two foundation-sponsored community capacity building initiatives: small grants programs in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and a comprehensive community initiative prompted by the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest. In Chapter 4, I discuss the concerns and interests about partnering voiced by both grantors and grantees. Finally, in Chapter 5, I present a recommended strategy and my concluding remarks.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the context in which this emerging case of philanthropic strategy-making is situated. First, I provide an overview of the social and economic situation in New Orleans prior to Katrina, the impact of the storm and consequent flood, and the current state of recovery. Then, I describe the evolution of the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity (GCFE) and the post-hurricane philanthropic landscape. Finally, I discuss GCFE's members' views of philanthropy's role in recovery and rebuilding.

2.2 New Orleans and Katrina

In the early morning hours of August 29, 2005, the city of New Orleans braced itself for what forecasters were calling "the perfect storm." The day before, Hurricane Katrina, still in the Gulf of Mexico, had reached Category 5 strength on the Saffir-Simpson scale, bringing winds over 156 miles per hour and storm surges over 19 feet high; the storm was headed directly towards New Orleans.[3] A city built mostly below sea level and protected by a system of levees, New Orleans had always been vulnerable to the threat of a major hurricane bringing devastating impacts.[4] Despite all the knowledge and warnings about the potential devastation that a major hurricane could bring, the city's other issues, a declining economy, high crime rates, a faltering school system, among other problems, took immediate priority and prevented local officials from focusing on impending threats. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a Category 3 storm, with winds up to 130 miles per hour and a storm surge up to 12 feet high, with its path shifting slightly east of the city of New Orleans. Although the city was spared a dreaded direct hit, breaches in the levee system resulted in the flooding of eighty percent of the city.

As the storm approached, an unprecedented mandatory evacuation was announced; however, it was not enforceable because the announcement came less than twenty-four hours before the hurricane's landfall. An official pre-storm, self-help evacuation system, favoring those who had the means to leave, left tens of thousands behind waiting in grim conditions. New Orleanians' decisions to evacuate or not were strongly influenced by "their income-level, age, access to information, access to transportation, their physical mobility and health, their occupations, and their social networks outside of the city" (Fussell, 2006, p. 1).

On the morning of August 29, after the storm had passed, those who had stayed behind in the city began to celebrate their escape of "the big one;" however, celebration turned to horror within hours as major levee breaches essentially began to pour Lake Pontchartrain into the city. The floodwaters kept rising until their levels were even to the lake water. Images of mostly African American survivors waiting on their rooftops as water engulfed their neighborhoods were broadcasted across the country. Appalling stories of the inadequate conditions of the pre-

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[3] The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale is a 1-5 rating based on the hurricane's present intensity. This is used to give an estimate of the potential property damage and flooding expected along the coast from a hurricane landfall.

[4] New Orleans was originally founded in 1718 and was strategically located at the crossroads of three navigable bodies of water, Lake Pontchartrain, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Mississippi River. The original settlement was on the highest ground in the region; however, as the settlement grew, and New Orleans became a major American port city, levees were required to reduce the natural risk of flooding from the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain. With many areas of the city below sea level, heavy rainfall also became a problem as it filled the city with water just like a bowl. To keep the city dry during heavy rains, an elaborate pumping system was built.

designated "shelter of last resort," the Louisiana Superdome or the makeshift shelter of the Morial Convention Center made the headlines. Thousands of modest homes in low-lying neighborhoods were inundated by the flood waters.

Buses to evacuate survivors out of the flooded city finally came four to five days after the storm. Survivors were taken to temporary shelters in the region, and from there, they dispersed all over the country. According to FEMA, New Orleans residents ended up in 18,700 postal zones in all 50 states (Quigley, 2005, p. 2).[5]

Although the effects of the storm and subsequent flood impacted vast parts of the city, the consequences were disproportionately felt by low-income, minority, predominantly African American communities. Their communities were located in the lowest-lying, most flood prone sections of the city; hydrology and topography intersected with race, class, and social structure in New Orleans (Brookings, Institution, 2005, p. 13; Colten, 2006).[6] Figure 1 shows racial composition and damaged areas in New Orleans neighborhoods. Figure 2 shows poverty and flooded areas in New Orleans census tracts. The location of the city's oldest, wealthiest sections along the Mississippi River, a section commonly referred to as "the sliver by the river," including the French Quarter, the Central Business District, the Garden District and Uptown, escaped the worst flooding. In contrast, neighborhoods located in the "shallow bowl" of New Orleans on the lakeside of the city and the wide strip of marshland east of the city were seriously affected. Additionally, the people that were the least likely to leave without assistance came from the areas that were hardest hit by the flood since those neighborhoods were also where poverty was most concentrated. Neighborhoods damaged by the storm were 75 percent black versus undamaged neighborhoods, which were only 46 percent black (Logan, 2006, p. 7). Renters made up 47 percent of the flood-zone population in the New Orleans metropolitan area compared to 31 percent in the dry-zone population; in the flooded areas, the average household income was only $38,300 versus $55,300 in the unflooded area (The Brookings Institution, 2005, p. 16-17).

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[5] For more information on the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the first five days after the storm until complete evacuation of New Orleans was accomplished, see Brinkley, D. (2006). *The Great Deluge*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

[6] For more information on the settlement of the city and attempts to control the city's physical and environmental vulnerability, see Colten, C. (2005). *An Unnatural Metropolis*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Figure 1: New Orleans Neighborhoods, Showing Racial Composition and Damaged Areas
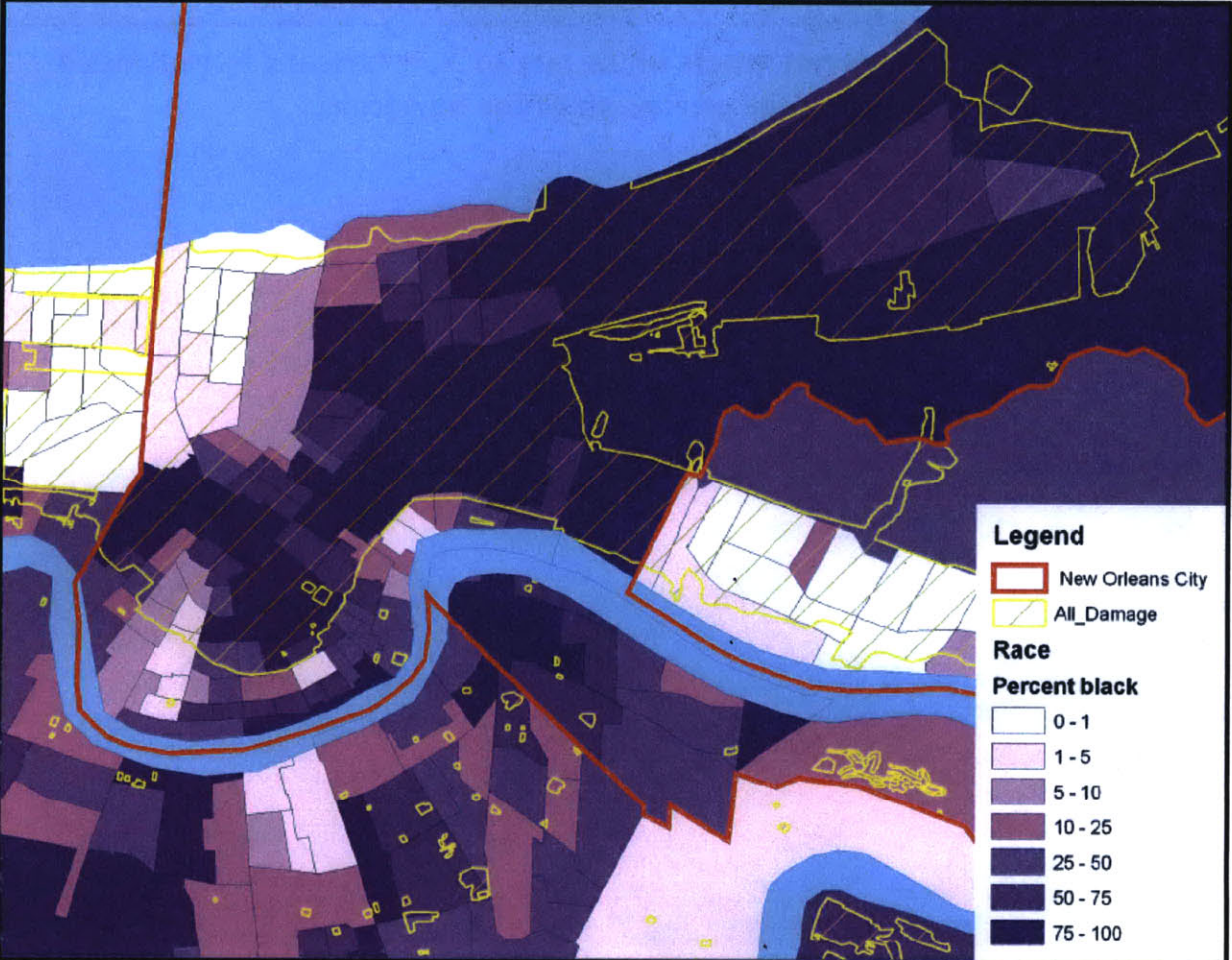
Source: Logan, J. (2006, January). The Impact of Katrina: Race and Class in Storm-Damaged Neighborhoods. Providence, RI: Brown University, p, 9.

Figure 2: New Orleans Census Tracts, Showing Poverty and Flooded Areas

Most of the high-poverty tracts in the city of New Orleans were flooded during the aftermath of the hurricane

Lake Pontchartrain

Pontchartrain Park

New Orleans East

Lakeview

Gentilly

Jefferson Parish

Seventh Ward

Lower Ninth Ward

Mid-City

French Quarter

B.W. Cooper

Algiers

St. Bernard Parish

Audubon

Garden District

Uptown

Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census and FEMA data

Concentrated Poverty by Census Tract

Census Tracts with Concentrated Poverty (Greater than 40 Percent)
Census Tract Boundary
Flooded Area

Source: The Brookings Institution. (2005, October). New Orleans After the Storm: Lessons from the Past, a Plan for the Future, p. 19.

Referring to the inequities exposed by Katrina, Strolovitch, Warren and Frymer (2006) write, "Katrina did not create these inequities, it simply added an important reminder that they were deeply embedded and constitutive of American political, economic and social life" (p. 1).

However, racial inequality, concentrated poverty, decentralization and a slowing economy had only recently become features of the city due to modern suburbanization. In the antebellum and post-Civil War period, New Orleans was home to slaves, former slaves, free blacks, Creoles of color, Cajuns and other whites in culturally rich, integrated neighborhoods (Dyson, 2006, p. 7). It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that New Orleans and other Southern cities began to experience hypersegregation and concentrated poverty (The Brookings Institution, 2005, p. 5). In 1970, 26 percent of New Orleans' population lived in poverty, with 28 census tracts characterized as having extreme poverty rates of 40 percent or higher; by 2000, the city's poverty rate had risen slightly to 28 percent but the number of high poverty tracts had risen to 47 (The Brookings Institution, 2005, p. 6). Though New Orleans' population was two-thirds African American, blacks comprised 84 percent of individuals living below the poverty line (Berube and Katz, 2005, p. 2). New Orleans had the second highest rate of concentrated urban poverty in America with 43 percent of black New Orleanians living in extreme poverty (Berube and Katz, 2005, p. 3). "What resulted was a patchwork social landscape of black and white, richer and poorer" (The Brookings Institution, 2005, p. 6).

Historically, New Orleanians that come from low-income or minority neighborhoods have tended to organize themselves to fill gaps in government or private sector services needed by their communities. This tradition dates back to the post-emancipation period of the late 19th century when freed slaves formed benevolent societies, known as *social aid and pleasure clubs*. Since it was close to impossible at the time for African Americans to be served by insurance companies, these organizations served to provide funeral insurance to their members, so that they would have proper burials upon death. They also defrayed health care costs and financial hardships and fostered a sense of unity in community, by performing charitable works and hosting social events (Kunian, 2007). Social aid and pleasure clubs have endured and still exist now. Pre-Katrina, there were about 100 clubs in the city; now there are about 70 (Kunian, 2007). They still perform benevolent works to their members by offering small loans in times of financial crisis or support during sickness or death. In addition, they spend much time and energy planning annual parades, which unify neighborhoods and serve as a significant source of cultural pride, especially among African Americans.

The spirit of self-determination has come alive in post-Katrina New Orleans. In the first six months after Katrina, while city officials contemplated "shrinking the city's footprint," a concept that would essentially ban rebuilding in certain New Orleans neighborhoods and return those areas to wetlands, residents in affected areas began to occupy their neighborhoods and rebuild, before any official decisions had been made. An independent, online news source, describes this phenomenon as "do-it-yourself disaster relief," explaining, "In flood-worn communities, natural calamity has yielded to a maelstrom of political tensions and uncertainty. As some displaced residents grow increasingly disillusioned with the official channels of assistance, returnees are relying instead on spontaneity and community solidarity to build neighborhoods from the ground up" (Chen, 2006, p. 1). New Orleanians, especially those most-affected by the flood and often in the most marginalized communities, are demonstrating resiliency. Whether it is a Lower Ninth Ward resident's memories of rebuilding after Hurricane Betsy in 1965 or a Vietnamese-American resident from New Orleans East's familiarity with displacement, having been

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subjected to forced migration from his or her war-torn community, post-Katrina, a New Orleanian must draw from past experiences to drive him. [7]

Residents who are able to be back in the city and have access to resources to rebuild are already seeing the results from their efforts to reclaim their neighborhoods. The Broadmoor neighborhood is a case in point. Broadmoor is a racially diverse area of lower- and middle-income residents that suffered from heavy flooding, from eight to ten feet, and is home to political leaders, such as United States Senator, Mary Landrieu, Louisiana Lieutenant Governor, Mitch Landrieu, and New Orleans City Council member, Oliver Thomas (Shevory, 2007). The neighborhood was initially slated to be turned into green space according to January 2006 recommendations from a mayor-appointed rebuilding commission. [8] The resident-led neighborhood association, the Broadmoor Improvement Association, took action, rallying displaced citizens together, distributing crucial information and forming partnerships with companies, universities and nonprofit organizations in order to begin to clean out and renovate homes. LaToya Cantrell, president of the Broadmoor Improvement Association, stayed in a downtown hotel for months, while her own home was being rebuilt (Shevory, 2007). Attracting multi-million dollar investments from Shell Oil and the Clinton Global Initiative, the neighborhood has been infused with resources to spark redevelopment, even though these investments fall far short of the total amount needed to fully carry out the neighborhood's plans (Shevory, 2007, p. 2). Two-thirds of the neighborhood's 2,900 homes have already been restored; that number is expected to rise to 80 percent by the end of the summer of 2007 (Shevory, 2007, p. 1).

Stories like Broadmoor's are few and far between however, as most neighborhoods are still struggling to grapple with uncertainty about their future and without resources, are limited in their capacity to carry out self-determined efforts to rebuild. Still, the "2006 Louisiana Health and Population Survey," published in January 2007, reports that the pre-storm population of 444,515 in the city of New Orleans has rebounded only to 191,139 (p. 3). Of those who are back, only 47% are African American compared to 68% of the pre-storm population (2006 Louisiana Health and Population Survey, 2007, p. 3). New Orleans' population post-Katrina is much "smaller, older, whiter and more affluent" than it was prior to the storm (Quigley, 2007, p. 3).

There have been four competing planning processes since the storm. [9] Each process has involved mechanisms to gain resident input about neighborhood plans. Out of the four planning processes, one never received funding and therefore was never executed. Three out of four of the planning processes resulted in plans; out of those, one plan was largely ignored, perhaps for political reasons, and the second plan was developed through a process that was significantly flawed from a legal and statutory standpoint and was not useful as a standalone plan. The most recent plan, the Unified New Orleans Plan, integrated other plans, made through official

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[7] Hurricane Betsy, which struck New Orleans in 1965, caused breaches on both sides of the Industrial Canal levee, flooding parts of the Upper Ninth Ward, Gentilly, and most significantly, the Lower Ninth Ward. Thousands of Vietnamese immigrants settled in New Orleans East in the 1970s and 1980s.
[8] The Bring New Orleans Back Commission's land use committee released its final report on January 11, 2006.
[9] See NOLAplans: New Orleans Plans Database, www.nolaplans.com, for more information on various planning processes in the aftermath of Katrina.

processes and independently by neighborhoods, and was informed by intensive community participation. This plan was sponsored by nongovernmental entities, the Greater New Orleans Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, and therefore was free from the politics that led to the failure of the other plans. The planning process is now complete, but the final plan has not yet been approved for funding. With many of these planning processes overlapping with New Orleans' 2006 mayoral race, Mayor Ray Nagin avoided controversial issues such as "shrinking the city's footprint" and instead advocated "a market-driven recovery effort, market-based recovery effort," which in his opinion, "would permit all citizens of New Orleans to have the right, the opportunity, to return home" (Tidmore, 2006, p. 1). The success and fairness of this strategy have been greatly debated.

Throughout these processes, residents have invested their volunteer time, energy and resources not only to mobilize their own neighborhoods to quickly become acquainted with the practices and policies of planning in order to prove their neighborhood's viability but also have spent countless hours engaged in charettes and community meetings to take part in the City's various planning processes. Still, now that the processes are complete, it remains to be seen how any of the plans will be accepted or implemented. With complete uncertainty about how the major elements of the city's redevelopment, such as infrastructure and housing development, will be funded, it is unlikely that the neighborhood-based community initiatives that have been a product of a tremendous amount of time and energy will receive significant attention or support.

Currently, the city is facing a severe housing shortage, driving rents up almost 45% since the year of the storm, making it almost impossible for lower income people to return home (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, 2007, p. 24). Even now, while the most targeted strategy to bring the very poor back to the city is to reopen public housing, more than 80% of the 5,100 New Orleans-occupied public housing units remain closed by order of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), even after experts declared the buildings structurally sound (Quigley, 2007, p. 2). In a city without rent control, renters who live in neighborhoods that were spared by the flood, now fear displacement by private developers who are looking to profit by the current housing crunch. The Road Home program provides no assistance for renters leaving the majority of New Orleans' pre-storm population without enough financial support to come home.[10] These threats and challenges, compounded by inadequate infrastructure repairs, a makeshift public education system, the complete absence of public healthcare and lack of attention towards the constantly growing need to mental health care, make returning home to participate in conversations about rebuilding unfeasible for many residents.

It is clear that the city will be rebuilt, but the question remains, for whom? The city's laissez-faire, market-driven approach to rebuilding clearly perpetuates the legacy of neglect. While "shrinking the city's footprint" is no longer the imminent threat that it was perceived to be in the year after the storm, it may still happen at a gradual pace as residents are forced to relocate, because the discussions that would facilitate their return are stalled.

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[10] The Road Home program is the largest single housing recovery program in United States history, aimed to helping Louisiana's residents returning home or apartment after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It was created by Governor Blanco, the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Louisiana Office of Community Development and is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

2.3 Gulf Coast Funders for Equity

Philanthropy is playing a role in supporting the equitable rebuilding of New Orleans and other impacted areas of the Gulf Coast.[11] The Gulf Coast Funders for Equity (GCFE) is a consortium of more than a dozen community, public and private foundations and networks of individual donors whose mission is "to promote just, equitable and sustainable rebuilding in the wakes of Hurricane Katrina and Rita" (GCFE 2007 Strategic Plan Working Draft, 2007).[12] The goal of the GCFE is to integrate all residents of the hurricane-affected areas, especially those with the least access to resources, into the decision-making processes guiding rebuilding. In order to achieve this goal, GCFE works to share information, identify opportunities for cooperative funding across issues and strategies and encourage other funders to also prioritize support for systemic change efforts in the affected regions (GCFE 2007 Strategic Plan Working Draft, 2007).[13]

The GCFE originated in June 2006 and evolved out of regular conference calls among funders interested in supporting organizing and advocacy work after the landfall of Hurricane Katrina. Reverend John Vaughn, Program Director at the Twenty First Century Foundation, states that his foundation realized from the start that given the gravity of the situation, in order to have impact, it could not work in isolation; his foundation's "effectiveness was intimately tied to the effectiveness of other colleagues" after Katrina. He began to reach out to his colleagues in philanthropy to share information and figure out next steps; he recalls experiencing the same kind of outreach from others. Recognizing the shared need to communicate with representatives of other foundations, he pulled together a conference call to check in with colleagues in philanthropy and share information. He hoped to create a space to explore how to collaborate with each other. The network was "progressive in nature" from the start, committed to principles of equity and inclusion and motivated by a desire to hold the public and private sectors accountable. Vaughn reports that between thirty and forty people participated per conference call, which occurred weekly in September 2005 and monthly from October 2005 to July 2006. Periodically, Vaughn asked the participants if they thought the calls should continue; each time, he received positive feedback as the calls provided an important mechanism to share information.

Finally, in June, 2006, on the heels of another important meeting drawing philanthropists to the Gulf Coast, Vaughn and Bernadette Orr, Manager of Oxfam America's Gulf Coast Recovery Program, called a meeting of philanthropists to "see who would come." About fifteen to twenty people representing public and private foundations, both large and small, came to the first

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[11] Hurricane Katrina also brought widespread devastation to Southwestern Louisiana, Mississippi Gulf Coast, and parts of Alabama, but the Katrina-induced levee breaches in New Orleans and consequent flooding of the city and long-term displacement of residents makes the hurricane's impact in New Orleans unique.

[12] Hurricane Rita made landfall on the Texas – Louisiana border on September 24, 2005, reflooding parts of New Orleans, and bringing devastation to parts of southwestern Louisiana.

[13] Most of the individual foundations that comprise the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity can be characterized as engaged in "social change philanthropy." Social change philanthropy, also known as social justice philanthropy or community based philanthropy, is the term used to describe grantmaking that aims to address root causes of social and economic inequalities rather than the symptoms. Core principles of social change philanthropy include: a focus on marginalized, disenfranchised communities, the targeting of root causes of social and economic problems, an aim to be accountable to communities and the establishment of inclusive processes. For more information on social change philanthropy, see National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, (2003, April), "Understanding Social Justice Philanthropy."

meeting. "That's when it actually transformed into what is now known as the Gulf Coast Funders," Vaughn stated.[14]

Between the initial June 2006 meeting and the time of this writing, the GCFE has met five more times in the hurricane-affected region.[15] Until recently, the GCFE faced capacity constraints as there was no one to further plans that were generated during meetings between meetings. This issue was recently addressed through the hiring of an Interim Coordinator in April 2007. Additionally, because there is no formal membership in the GCFE and outreach is conducted to encourage a broad base of philanthropists to attend meetings, whether they have previously participated or not, often there are new parties attending each meeting. Without any mechanism to brief new participants about the activities and history of the GCFE prior to the meetings, much of the meeting time has been spent providing overviews and background information to first-time participants. These limitations have hindered the GCFE's ability to act on many ideas for collaboration in both grantmaking and policy advocacy generated at meetings. However, due to the relationships created via the GCFE, funders have been able to share information, resources and contacts, thereby taking a step towards collaborative grantmaking.

Central to the objectives of the GCFE is directing resources to the most marginalized or vulnerable populations in the hurricane-affected regions in order to strengthen their voice in decision-making that affects their neighborhoods and communities. The issue of how funders can most effectively work to reach and support resident-led, community-based organizations that have been described at meetings as "small," "emerging," "nontraditional," or "invisible" has been on the GCFE's agenda since September 2006. In general, there was initially some consensus these are the groups represent marginalized or vulnerable communities, sometimes located in rural areas, that are inexperienced in applying for grants and developing resources and therefore are often overlooked by grantmakers; however they are nodes of support and trust within their communities and have the potential to make large positive impacts in the rebuilding process. Recognizing the consortium's lack of capacity to investigate this topic, I decided to take it up as the focus of my thesis. The GCFE's interest is regional, inclusive of the whole hurricane-affected region, not just New Orleans. It was outside of the scope of this thesis to cover the entire region, which is why I chose New Orleans as the focus; however, as I will show, there are lessons from this study that can be applied towards the region as a whole.

2.4 Overview of Post-Hurricane Philanthropic Activity

The GCFE represents an extremely small fraction of philanthropists that have responded to the Gulf Coast disaster.[16] In the aftermath of the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes, the Foundation Center, a national information, research and education center on philanthropy, began a multi-year effort

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[14] The Gulf Coast Funders changed its name to the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity at the February 28, 2007 meeting in order to more clearly brand the group as committed to equitable rebuilding.

[15] The Gulf Coast Funders for Equity meetings have taken place on June 16, 2006 in New Orleans, LA, July 14, 2006 in New Orleans, LA, September 14, 2006 in New Orleans, LA, December 1, 2007 in Jackson, MS, February 28, 2007 in Lafayette, LA and April 11, 2007 in New Orleans, LA. I have been a participant in all six meetings.

[16] In general, there are not many social change foundations in the world of philanthropy. According to the National Network of Grantmakers, less than 3 percent of grantmaking by domestic, private, institutional donors is dedicated to social change causes.

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to track the total philanthropic response to the disaster.[17] The most recent report of this effort at the time of this writing, entitled, "Giving in the Aftermath of the Gulf Coast Hurricanes," was published in August 2006, around the one year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, using data compiled up to June 2006. The Foundation Center identified 435 corporations, foundations and other institutional donors that gave $577.1 million for post-hurricane relief and recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 17). In tracking general tendencies in the philanthropic response, the study reported that more than half of foundations making commitments in response to the Gulf Coast hurricanes supported organizations for the first time rather than only providing resources to existing grantees (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 5). The study also found that "well over 90 percent of grantmakers that made commitments in response to the Gulf Coast hurricanes had completed their giving within the first year of the disaster" (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 28). Although, some of these commitments were earmarked for multi-year initiatives supporting long-term recovery and rebuilding, the majority were designated for immediate relief efforts.

The study tracked leading recipients of donor aid, as well as recipient location. The report cited the American Red Cross as by far the largest named recipient of contributions from both foundation and corporate donors in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, receiving $188.4 million or 32.7 percent of designated support (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 23). The American Red Cross and other recipients based in the District of Columbia received 24.5 percent of the total Gulf Coast response funding; much of this funding was to be redistributed to the affected regions (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 24). Louisiana recipients placed a distant second based on the amount of Gulf Coast philanthropic support received, which was 8.9 percent, and Mississippi recipients ranked seventh, with 3.7 percent (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 24). The Foundation Center report notes, "Nonetheless, the vast majority of institutional giving in response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita was intended for the benefit of affected individuals in [Louisiana and Mississippi] and Alabama" (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 24).

In terms of recipient type, according to the Foundation Center study, over half of the recipients of Gulf Coast funding supported human service agencies. The majority of funding in the first year after the storm was intended to provide immediate relief and recovery services. The report acknowledges, "As the focus of donors shifts from immediate relief and recovery to rebuilding, it is likely that the share of Gulf Coast response funding targeting general human services will decrease" (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 25). Other organizations that received Gulf Coast response philanthropic dollars were educational institutions, philanthropy organizations, federated funds, health organizations, community improvement organizations, international organizations working on domestic response, religious organizations, and environmental and wildlife organizations (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 25). A modest 2.2 percent of philanthropic

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[17] The Foundation Center's August, 2006 report, "Giving in the Aftermath of the Gulf Coast Hurricanes," consists of two parts. The first is based on a survey of more than 3,500 large private, including corporate, and community foundations. A total of 906 respondents, roughly one-fourth, provided usable responses. The purpose was "to measure the breadth of hurricane response giving among larger grantmakers nationwide and explore grantmaker practices and attitudes related to disaster funding" (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 4). The second part is an analysis of actual commitments announced up to June 2006 by institutional donors, including corporations and corporate foundations, independent and family foundations, community foundations and other public foundations, and various businesses and professional associations, in response to the Gulf Coast hurricanes. The overview provided here is mainly based on the second part of this study.

dollars went to economic and community development, prioritized after immediate relief and recovery, education and health (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 26).

It is unclear from the Foundation Center study what percentage of philanthropic dollars is being allocated to "social change" activities such as community capacity building, community organizing, social activism, or political advocacy; however, some of the study's findings are particularly relevant to this thesis, such as the share of money that was dedicated to community foundations.[18] In the Foundation Center's general taxonomy for classifying grants, most of the Gulf Coast response social change funding, that is money that was committed to local organizations representing low-income, marginalized, or disenfranchised communities to address root causes of inequity, would be classified under one of only two categories: "Civil Rights, Social Action, Advocacy" and "Community Improvement/Capacity Building," neglecting the variety of activities that such funding could support.[19] Additionally, many funders participating in the GCFE felt that they were not properly surveyed by the Foundation Center, in that the Foundation Center's listing of individual grants did not include the totality of grants their foundations made. Nevertheless, as the only known effort to track Gulf Coast hurricane response philanthropic dollars, the Foundation Center study serves to provide a general overview of the post-hurricane philanthropic activity.

One specific finding by the Foundation Center that is more closely connected to this thesis is the share of Gulf Coast response money that was channeled to community foundations. The largest share of Foundation Center survey respondents supported disaster relief agencies (including the American Red Cross), making up 67.8 percent of total philanthropic dollars; this was followed in terms of the amount of philanthropic support received by community foundations and other regranting organizations, which received almost 40 percent of post-hurricane funding (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 4). The study relates that community foundations reported the most diverse funding purposes, including nonprofit aid, housing and economic development, aid to vulnerable populations, and mental health care, and "were by far the most likely to fund organizations for the first time" (Foundation Center, 2006, p. 11-12).

2.5 Funders' Perspectives on Post-Disaster Philanthropy

Because respondents to the Foundation Center's survey regarding philanthropists' attitudes about post-disaster funding include a range of institutional donors, some that are not relevant to the scope of this study, I asked funders involved in the GCFE about their perspectives about philanthropy's role in the recovery and rebuilding process in the Gulf Coast, specifically what they thought was impressive versus problematic in philanthropy's role after the Gulf Coast hurricanes. In terms of what they have found impressive, funders cited the volume of philanthropic dollars committed to the recovery and the leadership roles taken on by some foundations. In explaining what has been problematic, funders mentioned foundations' slow,

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[18] In fact, I was asked to conduct a separate scan of philanthropic activity within the network of funders that are affiliated with the Gulf Coast Funders for Equity in order to categorize dollars committed to community organizing and advocacy activities among other systemic change activities in order to identify areas where there are gaps and areas of momentum. Unfortunately, due to uneven reporting by each foundation, it was not possible to analyze any of the information provided. Instead, it was simply compiled and distributed.

[19] Foundation Center Grants Classification System, http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/grantsclass/.

risk-averse behavior, difficulty in responding within an uncertain and dynamic environment, challenges in reaching local groups, and lack of collaboration among funders.

Impressive About Philanthropy's Role:
Volume of philanthropic dollars: In stating what has been impressive about philanthropy's role, Orlando Watkins, Vice President of Programs at the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF), the community foundation in New Orleans, mentioned the "initial and to some degree the sustained" volume of post-Katrina philanthropic activity; the number of grants that have been processed through GNOF has increased more than 100 percent since the hurricanes. Sherece West, Chief Executive Officer of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (LDRF), reiterated this sentiment explaining that she found philanthropy's "generosity" to be most impressive.

Foundation leadership: Orlando Watkins also stated that foundations, including GNOF, have stepped up to play unprecedented leadership roles in an extremely political landscape in order to fulfill government voids. Watkins cited GNOF's role in sponsoring the process to create Unified New Orleans Plan as an example.[20] Another example of this type of philanthropic leadership includes the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation and Gates Foundation's joint funding initiative to create and sustain the New Orleans Office of Recovery Management. Tony Pipa supported Watkins's notion explaining, "Smart philanthropies have realized that it is not going to be their money that rebuilds the Gulf Coast. They have to make sure that public and private actors will act in a way that will benefit residents."

Within networks of progressive funders, Bernadette Orr, Manager of Oxfam America's Gulf Coast Recovery Program, and Reverend John Vaughn, Program Director at the Twenty First Century Foundation, both have been impressed with the interest in and understanding of the need for long-term transformative change that addresses systemic inequity in the region. Annie Ducmanis, Coordinator of the Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health, referred to a few creative and progressive approaches to funding communities that she had found impressive, namely the funding initiative that she is involved with which empowers community residents to distribute funds using a community advisory group. She also mentioned that the creation of Gulf Coast Funders for Equity was impressive due to its facilitation of collaboration among funders. Tony Pipa stated that donors with international development experience have set examples by putting people "on the ground" to respond to real instead of perceived needs and actually build the capacity of local partners.

Problematic About Philanthropy's Role
Slow, risk-averse behavior: In terms of what has been problematic about philanthropy's role in the recovery and rebuilding process, many funders discussed both the lack of creativity and slowness to respond to the Gulf Coast hurricanes. Martha Thompson, Program Manager for Rights and Humanitarian Crisis at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, noted that

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[20] The Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) is the fourth planning process that has occurred in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The UNOP process has attempted to be inclusive of all neighborhoods, bringing together separate neighborhood plans into one document. The Rockefeller Foundation and the Greater New Orleans Foundation have been two major funders of UNOP. It is the only planning process that has been sponsored by non-governmental entities.

many funders did not know Louisiana or Mississippi very well and were getting to know organizations in the region for the first time. According to Thompson, due to the lack of institutional, official response at all levels, federal, state, and municipal, compounded by the paucity of powerful community organizations in the area, philanthropists have found it "hard to figure out strategies to respond." She noticed that most philanthropists have not been willing to take risks.

Difficulty in responding within an uncertain & dynamic environment: Orlando Watkins explained how challenging it is to make strategic long-term investments, especially given the dynamic political context of recovery and rebuilding and the "uncertainty of which communities are going to be rebuilt and how." Watkins stated, "Finding the balance of supporting emergency needs but also making long-term strategic investments has been really difficult." Tony Pipa explained that "philanthropy is paralyzed" in the constantly changing context of Gulf Coast recovery; as an industry, it is not effective if it operates in traditional ways. He stated, "Foundations try to get a sense of where things are, go back to find out where they are helpful, and then when they are ready to act things have changed dramatically."

Sherece West added that while many national foundations are "waiting and seeing" where they can be helpful, as a representative of a local foundation, she is challenged "to let folks know what those opportunities are and how they can invest."

Challenges in reaching local groups: John Vaughn, Program Director at the Twenty First Century Foundation, noticed that the problems with the philanthropic response to the hurricanes in the Gulf Coast have represented "a microcosm of the challenges in philanthropy overall," with inadequate attention being paid to organizing, advocacy, civic engagement and leadership development. Martha Thompson, echoed this sentiment, noticing that "most funding was not focused towards organizations working with people at the ground level." Tony Pipa explained that this is especially problematic in the Gulf Coast because the "infrastructure was community-based in the Gulf Coast; organizing happened at the local level." He added, "Philanthropy hasn't been able to find inroads to identify local leaders and organizations."

Lack of collaboration: Lynn McGee, Senior Program Officer at the Foundation for the Mid South, stated that collaboration was lacking in the philanthropic response. She explained that foundations needed to partner strategically and not just provide a "hodge podge" of funding. Martha Thompson also mentioned that although there has been a great deal of information sharing among funders, there has not been enough collaborative action. Sherece West and Tony Pipa added that although there has been some coordination and collaboration among foundations, it has not been enough to amplify their impact.

2.6 Conclusion
This chapter has provided a description of both the historic and current contexts of New Orleans, highlighting government's continual neglect of poor communities of color, the consequent traditional of self-determination within marginalized communities, and the struggle for poor, minority, mostly black, New Orleanians to rebuild after Katrina in a market-driven rebuilding process that only serves people with resources. Understanding this context is critical to comprehend the opportunity to support informal groups in New Orleans' communities.

This chapter also offered a description of the evolution of the GCFE. Although genuine in its intent to promote equitable rebuilding, GCFE has faced major developmental challenges, including severe capacity constraints, the absence of decision-making that leads to action, and lack of continuity in participants attending meetings. Moving forward, any recommendations for collaboration will have to consider how to address these challenges so that they do not hamper the GCFE from realizing its potential effectiveness.

In this chapter, I also provided a background of post-Katrina philanthropic giving, highlighting the small percentage of funds that were actually directed towards local organizations based in the affected states and towards long-term community change activities. The proportion of dollars that went to community foundations offers some encouragement, but in Chapter 4, I will show that community foundations in the region do not reach informal groups and are not engaged in capacity building initiatives. A survey of GCFE funders' perspectives demonstrate that funders cited the following characteristics of philanthropy's role in the recovery and rebuilding process to be impressive: volume of philanthropic dollars allocated towards the Gulf Coast and the leadership roles taken on by some foundations "to think outside of the box" and fill the gaps of the government and private sector. What they have found to be problematic included: slow, risk-averse behavior that prevents foundations from responding to urgent needs effectively; difficulty in responding in an uncertain and dynamic environment; challenges related to reaching local groups; and lack of effective, action-oriented collaboration.

In the next chapter, I will review foundations' role in community capacity building in order to explore lessons from past practices that served similar objectives to the GCFE's goal to build community capacity in post-Katrina New Orleans.

3. FOUNDATIONS' ROLES IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores foundations' roles in building community capacity. I start by describing the evolution, objectives and challenges of social change philanthropy, broadly. I then turn to foundations' role in post-disaster situations, specifically identifying the value that foundations bring to disaster response and gaps between current practices and observed needs. I discuss one specific gap in detail, "community capacity building," defining it and reviewing strategies that are used to build it. Next, I explore the challenges in foundation-sponsored community capacity building efforts in post-disaster situations, focusing on two specific cases: (a) grantmaking by six Grantmakers Without Borders' member foundations in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and (b) a comprehensive community initiative that was prompted by the 1992 Los Angeles Riots by a funders' collaborative called the Los Angeles Urban Funders.

3.2 Social Change Philanthropy

Social change philanthropy, also known as social justice philanthropy, social movement philanthropy, community-based philanthropy, or progressive or alternative philanthropy, can be distinguished from traditional philanthropy by its unique objective, to address the root causes of social and economic inequalities rather than its symptoms (Shaw, 2002, p. 3-6; Goldberg, 2002, p. 1). The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (2005), a watchdog group for the philanthropic sector, makes the distinction between traditional and social change philanthropy as "the offering of services versus empowering or helping a group of people to organize and influence change that has a positive and long lasting impact for themselves and society as a whole" (p. 3). This does not mean that social justice funders should not or cannot fund direct service provision, but rather "supporting service provision alone does not meet enough of the standards to constitute social justice philanthropy" (NCRP, 2005, p. 3).

Social change philanthropy originated in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s when foundation funding of social movements, primarily the Civil Rights, the Women's Movement, and peace movements, began to gain popularity (Shaw, 2002, p. 5-6; Rabinowitz, 1989, p. 44-46). During this time, the federal government was also addressing root causes of social inequities through its War on Poverty. Foundations' role in social movements of the era is described in Rabinowitz (1989):

> It was as if virtually every conceivable social cause became the center of intense political concern. This tumultuous period served as a critical stimulus for foundations by identifying new social problems, creating an impending sense of crisis and generating a host of new political advocacy organizations that bid for foundation support...Social movements themselves frequently fail to bring about the social change they intend, but the political pressures they set off may well force through reforms anyway. The foundations do not initiate the reforms, but their funding determines which movement concerns and actors become permanent fixtures (qtd. on p. 46).

The field has evolved considerably since then; however, social change foundations have not yet come to a consensus about how they can make the most impact and often struggle with living up to the ideals that they espouse due to practical limitations. Generally, social change philanthropy

targets "community-controlled projects or local, grassroots, community-based groups," that represent disenfranchised or underrepresented communities, mostly low-income and minority communities (Shaw, 2002, p. 14). The underlying logic to such targeting is that with resources, these groups could develop the tools to challenge existing wealth and power structures and have a voice in decisions that affect their circumstances. Examples of specific activities that social change philanthropy would support include: "researching root causes of social justice problems, communicating and disseminating this information to the public, with an emphasis on reaching those who are directly disadvantaged by social problems, and strengthening new and/or existing social movements that work for social, political and economic equity" (NCRP, 2005, p. 3). Additionally, Shaw (2002) notes, "For some foundations a key strategy for alleviating poverty is to focus on strengthening foundations and stimulating philanthropy. Developing an understanding of local philanthropy and working with partners to create new community-level funds and strengthen philanthropic practice may be a priority area of focus" (p. 16)

Progressive funders are often just as concerned about how grants are dispersed as they are about who receives them in order to model the values they are trying to promote by creating inclusive and democratic processes; this is another factor that distinguishes social change philanthropy from traditional philanthropy. For example, there is an emphasis placed on building relationships based on mutual respect and partnership between grantor and grantee. Grantees are able to set priorities, so that foundations are not acting in a prescriptive role, but rather enabling a bottom-up approach. Many social change foundations also create mechanisms to garner community input in foundation decision-making.

Based on the principles and grantmaking criteria described above, the practice of social change philanthropy involves several unique features. Social change philanthropists are more likely to focus on funding operations rather than programs and projects, allowing organizations to focus on their real priorities and development needs, rather than grantmakers' perceived needs. Ideally, they provide long-term support, so that organizations do not have to work toward short-term results, and they try to promote self-sufficiency. They also invest in grantee capacity building, which will be explored further later in this chapter. Additionally, they encourage partnering between other organizations that are doing similar work and across sectors.

Although the field of social change philanthropy has shown a great deal of potential, there are many significant obstacles to overcome in order for it to have a more effective role. The primary challenge, as described by one anonymous interviewee in an NCRP study (2005), has to do with "how to employ meager resources to battle gigantic societal ills" (qtd. on p. 5). Related to that is the challenge of how to educate and engage mainstream funders about the social change approach. According to the National Network of Grantmakers, less than three percent of all domestic, private, institutional grantmaking is dedicated to social change causes, revealing a great need to strategize about how to grow the field (Goldberg, 2002, p. 1). Many within the field believe that labeling this strand of grantmaking as "social change" or "social justice" could scare off conservative or even mainstream funders. There is also a lack of agreement within the industry about what the term means often preventing collaboration among social change funders and hence decreasing effectiveness and efficiency.

Additionally, many foundations who have already adopted the social change philosophy are struggling to realize the adjustments from traditional foundation practices that are needed to practice it effectively. For example, social change outcomes are difficult to measure and often occur over long periods of time; these features of social change grantmaking are divergent from foundations' tried and true ways of operating, specifically their emphasis on producing measurable outcomes within definite time periods. Other internal challenges that social change foundations face include high turnover in foundation staff preventing the advancement of social change agendas and the ability to maintain strong relationships with grantees, fickleness of issue-specific grantmaking priorities, and lack of diversity among board and staff of foundations (NCRP, 2005).

Despite the challenges, social change philanthropy brings a unique contribution to the field of philanthropy. In post-Katrina New Orleans, social change foundations have tried to keep equity and inclusion at the center of discussions about rebuilding. The next section will focus on foundations' role post-disasters from the perspective of equitable development.

3.3 Foundations' Role Post-Disasters

In an increasingly complex world in all dimensions – socially, politically, economically, and environmentally – disasters, both natural and humanitarian, are growing in both number and seriousness. These disasters disproportionately affect the world's poor countries and communities (DfID, 2005). An exploration of the role that foundations can play in post-disaster situations has only just begun, as the interest took hold recently after the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001. A recent report jointly published by the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and the Council on Foundations (COF), entitled "Disaster Grantmaking: A Practical Guide for Foundations and Corporations" (2005), summarizes the strengths that grantmakers bring to a disaster response:

- A mission to serve the public good in diverse ways.
- Ongoing relationships with local organizations.
- A long-term perspective, often five to ten years or more.
- An ability to convene key actors across sectors and to serve as a catalyst for cross-sector collaboration.
- A capacity to call attention to political, economic and social policies that exacerbate the vulnerability of populations to hazards.
- Experience supporting research and disseminating results to interested parties
- Programmatic flexibility that permits creative and strategic response.
- Administrative flexibility that permits timely action (EFC & COF, 2-5, p. 6-7).

There is wide agreement, however, that the potential value that foundations bring to a post-disaster situation is not totally being realized. In other words, there are gaps between current practices and observable needs. The particular gaps that are relevant to this thesis are summarized here:

Identifying new grantees: Foundations often rely on existing relationships in choosing grantees after a disaster. This strategy is only useful if it does not preclude potential grantees that are unknown at the time of the disaster. For example, foundations channeled major funding to the

Red Cross after Hurricane Katrina, but its performance did not justify the large amounts of support it received. The Red Cross, with very few chapters on the Gulf Coast, did not necessarily even have the capacity to respond effectively to the disaster. A study by the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University (2006), entitled "Philanthropic Grantmaking for Disaster Management: Trend Analysis and Recommended Improvements" recommends using pre-existing grantees with whom foundations already have relationships to facilitate connections with potential new grantees, especially if the pre-existing grantees have a presence in the disaster-affected region. This strategy has demonstrated effectiveness in reaching groups representing marginalized populations in international post-disaster situations as illustrated later in this chapter in the discussion about post-Indian Ocean Tsunami grantmaking.

Strengthening organizations: Disaster responses must recognize local and community-based organizations, but foundations must also acknowledge their limitations and constraints and work to support and strengthen them. The EFC and COF (2005) report states:

> When a disaster strikes, local people, working through their community structures and organizations, are the first to respond. They save lives. They know which members of the community are hardest hit, and they know what assistance is appropriate. What these local organizations may lack, however, are financial resources, organizational capacity, advanced equipment, and training in disaster prevention, preparation and planning (p. 6).

The Department for International Development (DfID) (2005) explains that donor presence without an emphasis on capacity building may actually do more harm than good, because it has the potential to "sideline local leadership, governance, and technical capabilities which are needed for long-term resilience" (p. 4). The Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University (2006) advances this notion one step further explaining that capacity building is not only important for disaster recovery but is a critical key step for future emergency planning and preparedness.

Long-term support beyond relief: While foundation grants offer support for a longer duration than government funding in post-disaster work, grantees often experience difficulty in raising money, including foundation funds, after a disaster is no longer perceived as a "crisis" (Martin, Fagen, Poole & Karim, 2006). Donors' tendency to assume that the effects of a disaster are temporary often exacerbates the negative long-term impacts of a disaster, according to the study by the DfID (2005). Donors tend to infuse aid into disaster-affected areas in the short-term but do little to provide assistance needed for sustaining both lives and livelihoods in the long-term.

Comprehensive approach: As explained above, foundations' responses to disasters have generally been both generous and quick and focused on immediate relief activities; however foundations can also play an important role in disaster prevention and mitigation activities in order to reduce the vulnerability of communities. In the Gulf Coast, for example, future hurricanes are inevitable. Given the rush to rebuild and the scarcity of resources, individuals and communities that are able to rebuild are often neglecting to take safety from future disasters into consideration. Foundations can help to reduce the risk of future disasters by including preparedness and prevention into their recovery and reconstruction initiatives.

Collaboration among foundations: The Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University's (2006) report states, "The need for more comprehensive approaches to disaster grantmaking suggests the need for collective thinking, planning and communication among donors that continue throughout the process" (Martin, et al, p. 36). Foundations traditionally work in isolation. Collaboration not only spurs new ideas and encourages risk-taking, but it can also make grantmaking more efficient, effective, and supportive of grantees, and bring more "political muscle" to gain political support or attract government funding (Skloot, 2001; Hopkins, 2005).

Continual research: There is also a need to bring together donors and grantees, actors involved in different phases of disaster management in order to review and evaluate current policies and practices. Because disasters produce urgent needs, donors are often reluctant to fund research; however, dedicating money towards research activities, especially evaluation, will help to ensure that future responses are increasingly effective, building on past successes and avoiding previous failures.

To summarize, foundations are able to bring unique value to post-disaster responses due to their flexibility, capacity, and political power; however, there are still some gaps that foundations could help to fill in post-disaster situations. Many of these gaps are related to foundations' struggle to build community capacity in post-disaster regions so that individuals, organizations and networks in the affected communities are able to serve their communities effectively and prepare for and protect their communities from future disasters. The next section defines the concept of community capacity building and explores various approaches to build it, focusing on one particular strategy that is relevant to this thesis, organizational development.

3.4 Community Capacity Building

One area of particular interest in social change philanthropy and equitable development in general has been in strengthening communities. A resurgence of interest in communities began during the Reagan administration and continued throughout the 1990s during which time there was a constant and dramatic decline in federal revenue sharing with local governments. Burns and Downs (2007) explain:

> With the devolution of financial responsibility for human services and economic development to local governments, decision-making shifted to the local levels about how best to allocate declining federal block grant dollars across an array of programs addressing social needs and maintaining the health and quality of cities and regions. These new burdens on local governments were significant, especially for the older industrial regions in the east and northeast, many of whom were continuing to see their economic strength and populations decline as jobs and people shifted to the Sun Belt. As federal government funding decreased, philanthropy and the private sector were increasingly looked to for help in filling the gap (p. 2).

Philanthropy responded with particular attention to building capacity at the neighborhood level.

Also during this time, many groundbreaking ideas about how to build communities were being generated. In 1993, Jody Kretzmann and John McKnight from Northwestern University introduced the idea of asset-based community development rather than focusing on the deficits and needs in low-income communities and proposed a method for mapping assets, entitled "Mapping Community Assets." Many national foundations launched "comprehensive community initiatives" (CCIs) across the country in an effort to broadly improve neighborhood conditions in low-income communities across sectors. Other national foundations, like the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, became interested in the potential of community foundations, philanthropic institutions that are committed to and based in particular geographic areas; the Mott Foundation launched a "grassroots grantmaking" program that involved providing small grants and technical assistance to community-controlled groups in 1984. The Aspen Institute started a forum on CCIs in order to evaluate the effort; the Roundtable on Community Change, as it is now called, still exists today. Later, Robert Putnam wrote the influential book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), which increased the recognition of social capital, defined as, "Social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trust that arise from them," as an important contributor to community health and vitality (p. 19).

In 2001, Robert Chaskin and his colleagues wrote *Building Community Capacity*, drawing from developments in community building from the last decade. They noted that strengthening capacity within communities was a consistent feature throughout community building initiatives but was poorly, if ever, defined. In it, they offered a framework to understand community capacity, defining it as:

> ...the interaction of human capital, organizational resources and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part (Chaskin et al, 2001, p. 1).

Through this framework, which is represented through a diagram in Figure 3, Chaskin and his colleagues remind us that community capacity is not a singular concept but rather "has component characteristics, operates through individuals, organizations and networks within the community and between it and other systems, and performs varied functions towards various ends" (p. 179). Strategic interventions can occur to build community capacity, but they will be conditioned by both micro- and macro- level contextual influences, as will the existence of baseline capacity. These influences can include the state of the regional economy or the quality of local race relations. The effect of community capacity building can lead to both increased community capacity overall and other tangible community outcomes, such as better services, greater influence on policy, increased economic well-being, and so forth.

Figure 3: Community Capacity and Capacity Building: A Relational Framework
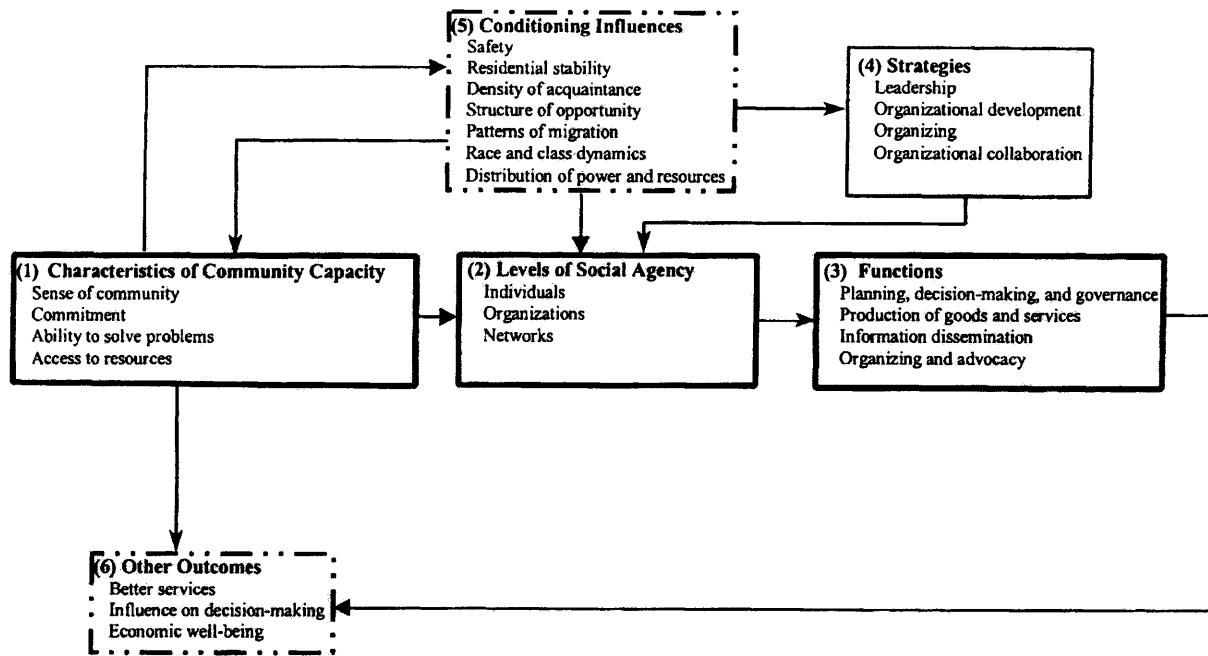
Source: Chaskin, R., Brown, P., Venkatesh, S., & Vidal, A. (2001). *Building Community Capacity*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc., p. 12.

Because community capacity building can focus on different possible combinations of multiple elements, it can take on multiple forms. Four specific strategies that Chaskin et al. identified as being common to a broad range of community capacity building initiatives are: leadership development, organizational development, community organizing and organizational collaboration. The authors note that linking these strategies is potentially important; however, there has been little critical thinking done to assess the pros and cons of various combinations of strategies. The authors also remind us that an additional capacity building strategy, which is not specifically explored in the book but is nevertheless critical, involves connecting community members, organizations and networks to institutions outside of the neighborhood; this strategy is important because "important macrolevel structural issues are not susceptible to microlevel change strategies" (Chaskin, et al, 2001, p. 180). Community capacity building Jody Kretzmann refers to this process as "demarginalizing the marginalized" (Kretzmann, 2005, p. 3).

The strategy that is most relevant to this thesis is organizational development. Although the impact of organizational development is maximized when it is connected to other strategies to build community capacity, it is useful to focus on it alone as it would be the primary way for funders to support and strengthen informal resident-led, community based groups in New Orleans. Chaskin et al (2001) state, "The connection between strengthening community-based organizations and building community capacity provides the rationale for a number of foundation investments in organizations as the vehicles through which residents can identify and act on their concerns to improve neighborhood conditions" (p. 91). The assumption underlyinh foundation investments in organizations is that community groups can work to both improve

community conditions and help people to gain a stronger voice that they would not be able to if they acted individually.

There are many different types of organizations in a given community; organizations can play one or multiple roles in a given community. Figure 4 in Chapter 5 outlines some of the activities in which community groups in New Orleans are participating. Through these activities, the groups can advance the well-being of the community. It is important that these organizations have strong accountability mechanisms to community members. Trust and support of community members can actually be an indicator of organizational effectiveness; a strong community base can also help the organization make a case for outside support to have a voice in policy discussions.

Organizational development strategies include but are not limited to strengthening existing organizations (as opposed to creating new ones) and helping organizations take on new roles and functions. Organizations are strengthened primarily through the provision of technical assistance, other forms of support such as small project-related grants, peer learning networks, operating funds, and assistance in gaining access to other resources and relationships. Technical assistance has traditionally focused on areas such as fundraising, strategic planning, and financial management, but these types of assistance are not always appropriate in the community capacity building context. Organizations sometimes take on new roles to address unmet community needs. For example, in post-Katrina New Orleans, neighborhood associations that were primarily concerned with safety and other quality of life issues before the hurricane are not involve with neighborhood planning and issue-based advocacy efforts after the storm. This strategy assumes that the organizations have a strong enough base from which they can expand its functions effectively; however sometimes there are organizational barriers to taking on new roles.

Foundations face a host of challenges in efforts to build community capacity through organizational development. Lessons learned from two particular cases of post-disaster philanthropic community capacity building initiatives: (a) small grants programs responding to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and (b) a comprehensive community initiative prompted by the 1992 Los Angeles urban riots, are used to describe these challenges in the next section.

3.5 Challenges in Post-Disaster Organizational Development
Using two specific post-disaster philanthropic responses, I explore the lessons from post-disaster foundation-sponsored community capacity building initiatives, specifically focusing on organizational development. In both cases, foundations aimed to build community capacity and were guided by the values of social change philanthropy. The first case, based on a Grantmakers Without Borders study of six grantmakers' responses to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, involves the disbursement of small grants to community-based groups.[21] The second case entails a comprehensive community initiative in three low-income communities by a collaborative of funders, called the Los Angeles Urban Funders (LAUF), prompted by the 1992 Los Angeles urban riots.

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[21] Grantmakers Without Borders is "a unique funders network committed to increasing strategic and compassionate funding for international social change" through peer-to-peer support, information sharing, education, and advocacy (www.internationaldonors.org).

A Grantmakers Without Borders (GWOB) study by Laura Roper (2006) documented and analyzed the responses of six grantmakers to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.[22] The six organizations included were the American Jewish World Service, Global Fund for Children, Global Greengrants Fund, Global Fund for Women, Oxfam America, and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights. The organizations differed in terms of size, focus and approach but were guided by a similar set of values and commitments, including a recognition of local organizations as trusted knowledgeable members of their communities whose capacities should be developed to act as "primary agents of their recovery" and a commitment to reaching the most vulnerable communities as part of a larger concern for human rights and social justice (Roper, 2006, p. 2-3). The scope of this disaster posed many challenges for grantmakers who were trying to allocate resources effectively to make valuable impact. These challenges were especially pertinent for those foundations that had modest means. Most of these granting organizations responded to the disaster by making small grants of a few thousand to $20,000 dollars. The report is based on findings from the first twelve to fourteen months after the disaster struck. Most of the organizations observed did not have prior disaster response experience, and only one organization, Oxfam America, put staff on the ground.

The Los Angeles Urban Funders (LAUF) was a collaborative comprehensive community-building initiative that began in 1996 as a direct result of the 1992 Los Angeles urban riots, which dramatically revealed the seriousness of conditions in low-income urban communities and the inadequacy of the philanthropic response.[23] LAUF began as a five-year collaborative funding initiative, later extended another five years, which supported economic development in three Los Angeles County communities. It was originally envisioned one year after the civil unrest by the Southern California Association for Philanthropy. LAUF was based on the assumptions that collaborative funding would make philanthropy in low-income communities more effective and promote understanding on both individual and collective levels. LAUF's founders also believed that collaboration would allow foundations to support work that was "too experimental or formative" to be funded by a single foundation (Year Five Report, 2000, p. 10). LAUF brought together funders, corporate leaders and public policymakers with community leaders to contribute to neighborhood problem-solving and share their knowledge and experience with three low-income communities, Pacoima, Vermont/Manchester, and Hyde Park.

It is important to keep in mind here that the two disasters discussed here were vastly different in terms of their scope and nature. Additionally, there is a difference in the amount of time that has passed since each disaster, two and a half years in the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami versus fifteen years in the case of the Los Angeles Urban Riots, defining the windows of opportunity within which the response could take place.

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[22] The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami was triggered by an earthquake in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004 that killed approximately 300,000 people, making it the deadliest tsunami as well as one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history.

[23] The 1992 Los Angeles riots, were sparked on April 29, 1992 when a predominately white jury acquitted four police officers accused in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King, after he fled from police. Thousands of people in Los Angeles joined in what has often been characterized as a race riot, or a mini-civil war, involving acts of looting, assault, arson and murder compounded by existing racial tensions. The riots lasted for six days, fifty-three people died.

Also, the literature available to inform these case write-ups is not very critical. The first case was informed mostly by a study written by a foundation affinity group, to which all the observed foundations belong, and the second by annual reports of the funders' collaborative that sponsored the initiative. In general, literature about foundation initiatives that comes from the philanthropic industry is self-promoting and does not offer information on mistakes made or critical challenges faced but recasts these issues in the more favorable form of lessons learned. Unfortunately, much of the learning that could come out of more analytical evaluations is lost through this process. Additionally, literature on these and most other foundation-sponsored community capacity building initiatives only present assessments from the viewpoint of the funder, excluding the perspectives that grantees' have about success or failure of the initiative. Nevertheless, taken together, these cases provide useful insight into strategies that are adopted by funders to build community capacity in both the relief and rebuilding phases of post-disaster situations.

The common challenges to building community capacity in these two cases are presented here. Broadly, they include: understanding the local context, identifying legitimate local groups, developing "partnerships," providing technical assistance, and measurement of outcomes.

Understanding local social, political, and economic context: Community capacity building efforts must begin with an understanding of the local context by all participants in the community change effort. Chaskin et al (2001) state:

> Community capacity-building efforts commonly target communities of color and attach positive value to the principle and practice of diversity and inclusion. Local cultures differ in how they treat and talk (or avoid talking) about social divisions: race, class, gender, power, experience, technical skills, and the like – but especially race. How issues concerning these divisions arise and how they can be best addressed will be shaped, at the margins, by the local context (p. 167).

To illustrate this with an extreme example that deals with political divisions unrelated to race, the Grantmakers Without Borders (GWOB) organizations that were responding to the Indian Ocean Tsunami were working in precarious political situations, including civil wars and other armed conflicts. Local organizations in Aceh, Indonesia were greatly concerned that international donors would support a distrusted government or military instead of working to ensure that communities were receiving sufficient information and were able to participate in decision-making processes. While many international humanitarian workers were oblivious to the complex situation, the GWOB organizations targeted funding to local organizations that operated from a human rights, gender-sensitive perspective and supported a range of civil society issues. Similarly, the Los Angeles Urban Funders (LAUF) in starting their comprehensive community initiative in three neighborhoods explained that they became immersed in the "political economy and social geography of communities" in which they worked (Year Two Report, 1997, p. 1). Additionally, it developed specific programs based on the local context of each neighborhood, informed by consultations with local leaders and with sensitivity to turf issues and factionalism within the neighborhood.

Political divisions are manifested not only within the community but also between the community and the sponsors of the capacity building initiative, especially in marginalized communities that are used to dealing with broken promises by government and other resource providers. One common strategy to deal with these issues is building trust, a process which requires time, energy, respect and careful action. In the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the GWOB organizations heavily relied on nonprofits in the affected areas to reach the most marginalized populations. Because many of the donor organizations were not able to send staff to the affected areas, an effective strategy to reach the most marginalized populations quickly was to work through local intermediaries that already had established relationships and the trust of these groups.

Identifying legitimate local groups: Often community capacity building efforts only manage to engage a small number of community residents, who are already active in their community.[24] Whether these residents actually represent the community's interests is sometimes questionable, "but it is often enough for local organizations to present reasonable evidence of community connection to be treated by funders and local government as a (or even, for a given time or issue, *the)* legitimate neighborhood agent" (Chaskin et al, 2001, p. 168). In the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, it was important for grantmakers to realize that "official" community leaders did not necessarily represent the entire interests of communities, especially those groups that are the most marginalized and are not represented in local power structures. Once again, the grantmakers' strategy to address this challenge was to rely on local nonprofits that had a sound knowledge of the local context and established relationships with groups in communities at the margins to reach the most marginalized groups in the short term and to take their needs into account for the longer term recovery. In Los Angeles, LAUF looked beyond institutionalized nonprofits with 501(c)3 status and dedicated time and resources to strengthening voluntary associations, with the belief that such a strategy would ground "a comprehensive strategy in daily realities and ensure sustainability" (Year Two Report, 1997, p. 1-6). LAUF learned, however, that "neighborhood leaders are neither abundant, nor easy to find" (Year Three Report, 1998, p. 8). One of the central challenges of the work became to develop and continually renew a neighborhood leadership base.

Developing "partnerships": Sponsors of community capacity building initiatives look to create "partnerships" with communities whose capacity they hope to build, so that they can support a locally driven, bottom-up development process. Chaskin et al (2001) remind us:

> Defining the nature of these partnerships has often been problematic, however because of assumptions at the community level about sponsors' motives and proclivities and because of the way the principle of grassroots action has interacted with the reality of top-down administration. Often, sponsors are seen as outsiders with power and resources, but without grounded knowledge of or legitimacy in the communities they seek to support (p. 171).

To address this issue, in the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, all six GWOB organizations saw civic participation as a right, not simply as a mechanism for achieving "buy-in" as it often is by

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[24] For more information on the challenges of participatory development, see B.Cooke & U. Kothari (2004). *Participation: The New Tyranny?.* London: Zed Books.

governments and other institutions. Promoting civic participation was seen as critical for both launching and sustaining successful efforts. Participatory mechanisms and creating authentic partnerships avoided costly mistakes, like creating fishing boats that were not based on traditional design and therefore not considered seaworthy as was done by other international agency. It also provided "a sense of agency among survivors, thereby fortifying the resiliency of disaster-affected communities" (Roper, 2006, p. 13). Chaskin et al. reinforce this kind of attitude; they state, "Community capacity is more likely to develop when sponsors think of themselves as investing in capacity and invite local participants to exercise that capacity in a variety of ways valued by the community" (p. 171). With this approach, they believe that sponsors will use "the production of capacity and strengthening of the mechanisms through which it works – individuals, organizations, and networks – to define and assess the success of their effort" rather than simply using program outcomes (Chaskin et. al., 2001, p. 179). This approach is what led LAUF to create an asset map of the communities in which they worked in order to identify existing social capital and capacities off of which to build. This was a more respectful way to start a relationship with the community than starting fresh. Additionally, LAUF also espoused the principle that both the provider and recipient of technical assistance, which will be discussed next, be compensated, "in order for there to be mutual commitment to the exchange," recognizing that both provider and recipient were putting time, energy and effort into achieving a common goal (Year Two Report, 1997, p. 2)

Providing technical assistance: Finding and structuring appropriate technical assistance as a component of any community capacity building strategy can be a challenge. Many areas in the United States have generic nonprofit technical assistance centers that focus on traditional organizational development issues such as fundraising, strategic planning, and financial management. The technical assistance must be aimed at both transferring skills and building long-term capacity. Chaskin et al (2001) explain, "The provider [of the technical assistance] must understand the difference between providing expert knowledge and building an organization's capacity to apply new knowledge effectively, between performing a particular service or activity ('doing it') and helping an organization learn how to provide that service or activity itself ('teaching the client to do it')" (p. 67). The latter type of technical assistance is the most appropriate for community capacity building, but it can require patience especially when recipients of technical assistance have different levels of experience and skill.

Three typical models of providing technical assistance are: 1) foundation staff providing technical assistance directly to grantees, 2) foundation staff making grants to community-based organizations to provide technical assistance to other organizations and 3) foundation and/or a funding consortium create and support a technical assistance center (Burns and Downs, 2007, p. 28). Substantive technical assistance needs, beyond basic management assistance, are not always clear at the beginning of a community-capacity building initiative; therefore, the option of creating a technical assistance center is often considered after foundations have made an assessment of what exists and what is needed "to continuously support existing community leaders and replenish the new pool of leaders" (Burns and Downs, 2007, p. 32).

In Los Angeles, capacity building activities were "built on existing competencies," a strategy that "leads from strength" (Year Two Report, 1997, p. 5-7). Meeting organizations "where they were at," LAUF provided intensive management assistance training, which included monthly

classroom sessions and one-on-one technical assistance from a coaching team that included pro bono accountants, lawyers, and personnel directors. The training was conducted by a firm called Community Impact Consulting, Inc. which is dedicated to the organizational development of nonprofits. The technical assistance produced a measurable positive impact on the management of local organizations and productivity of neighborhood agencies. Additionally, technical assistance "created a more hospitable environment in which grantmaking could take place," as it assured funders outside of the LAUF that grantees had the capacity necessary to carry out programs and meet goals, creating opportunities for new funders to plug in with minimized risks (Year Four Report, 1999, p. 2). In order to make technical assistance a permanent feature of the neighborhoods, LAUF worked to foster relationships between agencies and existing technical assistance providers and considered the creation of assistance centers.

Measurement: Measuring community capacity and measuring the progress of efforts to build community capacity, just as in social change philanthropy in general, are both difficult for methodological reasons. Operational and financial constraints to evaluation also limit the possibility of measuring and monitoring progress. In the case of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, while there were many examples towards material steps towards rebuilding, Roper (2006) also presents some less tangible outcomes from the six grantmakers' involvement, including: "communities organizing to plan for their own recovery and build their capacity to negotiate with international NGOs and government agencies," "grantees increased ability to work with and leverage resources from other NGO and government sources," "the strengthening of existing organizations or fostering of new coalitions between and among grantees," and "long-term and new grantees approaching relief and recovery from a social justice, right-based and/or environmental perspective, enhancing their own capacities to be more effective development actors in tsunami affected and other communities" (p. 17). These are the kinds of outcomes that are often difficult to measure and evaluate. Chaskin, et al (2001) note that financial, temporal and political constraints need to be relaxed in order to experiment with methods for measurement (p. 178). Furthermore, without more critical evaluation and measurement, understanding the effectiveness and value of various community capacity building strategies is not always obvious; measurement is important in order to make a case for why capacity building strategies are effective for future decisions.

3.6 Conclusion
This chapter has provided an analysis of the opportunities and challenges of foundations' role in post-disaster community capacity building. First, I described the field of social change philanthropy, as having a vision address the roots of social and economic issues by investing in community change activities, but currently not realizing its potential because of constraints and limitations. I then provided a review of the emerging literature on foundations' role in post-disaster situations, highlighting that foundations can bring unique value in recovery and rebuilding after a disaster because of their flexibility, capacity and political power; I also explained the observed gaps between current practices and needs, including: the tendency of foundations to fund pre-existing rather than new grantees; the inattention paid to capacity building of local groups; the need for long-term support beyond immediate relief; the importance of a comprehensive approach that includes disaster preparedness and prevention; the lack of foundation collaboration, which could foster innovative thinking and complex problem-solving;

and the importance of continual research in the field to identify best and worst strategies to guide future post-disaster foundation involvement.

I also explored the definition of community capacity building and strategies that could be used to build it, specifically organizational development. I reviewed lessons learned from foundation-sponsored capacity building initiatives in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the civil unrest in Los Angeles in 1992. These cases highlight the importance of *intermediary organizations* to reach and support community groups, the *variety of roles* that a collaborative structure enables funders to play, and the importance of *technical assistance* for sustained community change.

In the next chapter, I will turn back to the case of post-Katrina New Orleans and discuss the interests and concerns of both grantors and community group leaders.

4. BALANCING BOTTOM-UP & TOP-DOWN INTERESTS & CONCERNS

4.1 Introduction
In this chapter, I will present perspectives from community leaders and funders in order to understand the interests and concerns of both sides. First, I will describe the organizational landscape in New Orleans, specifically the role of informal community groups. Then, I will present the constraints and concerns of community leaders related to developing relationships with foundations. Next, I will present the interests of grantors, explaining why they believe an initiative to support these groups would be valuable. Finally, I will present grantors' concerns about and anticipated challenges of engaging in an effort to support and strengthen informal community groups.

4.2 New Orleans' Community Organizational Landscape
Since Katrina, the capacity of Gulf Coast community building nonprofits to serve and represent low-income, communities of color has come into question. Orlando Watkins of the Greater New Orleans Foundation explained, "Some folks would say that before Katrina we had a very dysfunctional nonprofit community, we had a lot of organizations that were doing important work but in some cases weren't effective or were struggling to stay alive." The paucity of funding directed towards the region was one major reason that nonprofits were not able to have a greater impact in communities of need, but lack of funding does not paint the whole picture. It is questionable whether traditional nonprofits even had a presence in low-income, communities of color. Tony Pipa of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation remarked that the nonprofit sector in the region before the storm was social service oriented not advocacy oriented. Hal Roark of the Broadmoor Development Corporation explained that neighborhood associations are the most representative organizations of community interests now, as they were before the storm, especially in the areas that were most affected.

Many community groups remained voluntary or informal pre-Katrina, most likely because there was no reason to grow or evolve. They were often based in the most marginalized neighborhoods and never attracted the attention of foundations. Lynn McGee of the Foundation for the Mid South explained that although her foundation is focused on capacity building of nonprofits, she recognizes that the "nonprofit infrastructure did not serve the poorest communities before the storm. [Funders] do not even know that these groups exist." Watkins echoed this sentiment, saying, "There was no way to distinguish small groups that didn't have enough resources but had the potential to be stars in their community. We didn't really go deep and help those organizations be better. I didn't get a sense that sort of system existed."

It would be a mischaracterization to describe the poorer, minority neighborhoods as having no nonprofit infrastructure at all, however. Three major national community organizing groups have chapters in New Orleans, ACORN, PICO, and the Industrial Areas Foundation. All three of these groups are member-based and use strategies that are often controversial. Additionally, a few community development corporations (CDCs) existed in New Orleans before the storm, including Neighborhood Housing Services, located in the Freret neighborhood. All of these organizations came to the forefront after the storm, leveraging their pre-existing relationships with funders and launching right into action to serve unique post-storm needs; they received support and recognition from foundations for their work and leadership. There are many

informal organizations that do not fall into either one of these categories; they're not politically charged community organizing groups and they are also not established CDCs that take on the "bricks-and-mortar" approach to rebuilding. While nonprofits continued to do good work and make impact to meet extremely intensified needs in the post-Katrina context, pre-existing informal community groups began to take on new roles and other organizations emerged to meet increased needs. For example, the House of Dance and Feathers, a cultural museum in the Lower Ninth Ward before the storm, has been able to rebuild and now has taken on the additional function of being one of the only places in the neighborhood that can provide a sense of what the neighborhood was like before the storm. Resident leaders have become the "pioneers" trying to recover their communities.

Additionally, given the lack of direction and planning from the government after the storm, community groups have to serve their communities to fill the gaps that government has left. Charles Allen, Vice President of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association states, "Since government structures have crumbled in the wake of the storm and still have not gotten their act together, we have to take matters into our own hands." Hal Roark adds, "We don't want anyone representing our needs. We represent us," He explained, "That attitude is pretty rampant throughout the wet zone," referring to the flooded parts of the city.

Some of these community-based groups that were informally organized before the storm are now taking on more form and structure in order to bring in the resources they need to serve their communities for the long term. Broadmoor, Holy Cross, and the mostly Vietnamese-American Versailles neighborhood of New Orleans East are all neighborhoods that have mobilized to form CDCs since Katrina. Other groups are staying informal; they have decided that to take on new roles without changing their organizational structure.

Another piece of the New Orleans organizational landscape that existed before the storm and endures now is the social aid and pleasure clubs. As mentioned in Chapter 2, these groups serve as important social networks for New Orleans communities, especially for African American communities. Post-Katrina, with so many New Orleanians still displaced, information is often communicated through tight social networks like the ones created by social aid and pleasure clubs.

These informal community groups and networks are often hard for funders to reach. As Watkins and McGee attested, community foundations were not able to reach these groups before the storm. Given that they are taking on new roles and have the trust and support of their community members and serve as points of connections among displaced residents, they have the potential to create a large positive impact if supported with resources. The next section discusses constraints and concerns expressed by resident leaders regarding working with foundations.

4.3 Community Leaders' Constraints and Concerns
The community leaders that I interviewed represented organizations that both existed pre-Katrina and emerged after Katrina, that have decided to formalize and that have decided to remain informal, and that have received some grant money and that have received no grants. Their

programmatic missions are varied. All the interviewees represent community-based organizations that started out as informal or voluntary.

All the interviewees expressed an interest in receiving foundation support to continue their work and to strengthen their impact; however they expressed both constraints and concerns about working with foundations. Their perspectives are discussed below.

Constraints:
Finding support: Most of the community groups interviewed had no prior experience of working with foundations. The learning curve to start creating such relationships is steep. Charles Allen plays the role of a development director for the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, a position that he fills as a volunteer. He has had mixed success in trying to attract resources to his neighborhood. He stated, "This is nothing that I went to school for or studied. It's just something that I am learning along the way." Ronald Lewis, a retired streetcar repairman and the owner and curator of the House of Dance and Feathers in the Lower Ninth Ward, expressed an interest in applying for grants as long as someone can fill out the application for him. "I don't know too much about filling out these various forms for grants," he stated.

Managing money: If community leaders are able to successfully obtain grants, it is difficult for them to find the capacity to manage them. Dan Etheridge, a volunteer for the Porch organization in the Seventh Ward of New Orleans, states, "It's great to have the money to run these programs, but there's also a lot of extra work involved." Having taken the lead role in applying for a grant, he has since been burdened with the management of it. "Since I got the grant, I feel responsible for ethical and responsible management of money, it's been more time for me," Etheridge stated. The Porch has been able to find a fiscal sponsor in Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS). Etheridge ends up spending a lot of time working with NHS's accountant to file for reimbursements, make sure that the budget is being managed properly, and also puts time into communicating with the funder. Another community organizer who wished to remain anonymous added that funders should be willing to fund the often extensive reporting work that comes along with grant money.

Rebuilding lives while rebuilding communities: Community leaders wanted funders to understand that they were in the process of rebuilding their own lives while rebuilding their communities. Many of them have experienced a great deal of personal loss but have put their own needs aside to respond to the needs of their communities. One community organizer explained that because people are struggling to deal with their own losses and tragedy, "the pace of work is different and expectations should be different."

Concerns:
Unmet needs: Some potential grantees were afraid that even if they were to form relationships with foundations, they would not get the kind of support that they need. Community leaders expressed a need for general support for operations. One community organizer, Corlita Mahr, mentioned that foundations could be creative about the kind of operating support they offer. For example, funders could get together and create a community group operations center, for photocopies, printing, and internet use.

Along with the need for a general operating budget, community leaders are looking for flexible funds. Dan Etheridge's organization has received a flexible, start-up grant that allows up to 10 percent change on each line item in the budget without permission. He stated, "Flexibility allows us a margin of error, not in terms of wasting money or anything but just in terms of learning what it takes."

In terms of resources needed other than grant money, some community leaders expressed an interest in technical assistance. Community leaders cited specific needs from technical assistance, including legal assistance, fundraising support, business plan development, technical support, volunteer coordination, and policy development. They also cautioned funders from imposing the same kinds of technical assistance on all their grantees. While some resident leaders welcomed assistance from funders directly, others asked for additional financial support to allow their organizations to hire consultants who could offer technical assistance, in order to ensure that the priorities for assistance are being set by the community organization rather than the funder. Some community leaders also asked for more substantive, issue-based technical assistance, including advice on urban planning or more specifically, energy-efficient, green building. Other non-monetary resources that community leaders expressed interest in are volunteers, interns and in-kind donations. These kinds of donations can be leveraged to create greater value. In the case of the House of Dance and Feathers, due to volunteer labor and in-kind donations, a project that would have cost $170,000 ended up being completed with $50,000 of grant money.

Collaboration with other groups: Community leaders noted that funders often try to encourage collaboration among local groups, but they neglect to recognize the collaboration that happens on its own. Etheridge agreed with the urge to collaborate and share information and knowledge but noted that there's often pushback to collaboration from local groups because it "can come off as a little patronizing sometimes because people [funders] don't credit the networking that's already going on." For example, the Porch is partnering with the main second line social aid and pleasure club in its community. Etheridge commented on this collaboration:

> Some people see second lines as parades and wonderful cultural things but don't recognize it as community organizing, and I think that it's the most powerful community organizing mechanism in New Orleans and the most successful. They are based totally on social networks and word of mouth. Post storm, second lines number one venue for people to see each other again and get contact information and hear other people's stories about their experiences with insurance and road home and contractors, HANO and other things.

Level of formalization: Representatives of community organizations that had never received grants feared that working with foundations would mean that they would have to become a formalized nonprofit organization. Most organizations that exist in the landscape of nontraditional community-based groups are ones that do not have 501(c)3 status and do not at this time plan to become formalized nonprofits. Some community leaders reported that they had tried to obtain grant money but complained that there was not much support available for groups that do not want to become nonprofits.

One important note about the perspectives presented here is that they represent a wide range of interests and concerns. One community leader's desire for a relationship with a funder that mirrors a hands-on consultant-client relationship may contradict another resident leader's wish for flexible grant money to individually hire appropriate technical assistance providers (Bavishi & Wilch, 2006). With this in mind, any strategy that funders adopt to support these groups would have to involve some accounting of their individual situations. The next section discusses grantors' perspectives on why they are interested in pursuing a strategy to build the capacity of informal community groups.

4.4 Grantors' Interests

I conducted interviews with nine funders in order to discern their interests and concerns around supporting and strengthening community capacity in the Gulf Coast. All of the funders interviewed are associated with the GCFE; therefore, in line with the consortium's philosophy, the main interest of each funder is to maintain a focus on equity and inclusion in their own grantmaking and furthermore in the rebuilding process. This translates into supporting activities such as community organizing and policy advocacy work, especially serving low-income communities of color. Sherece West of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (LDRF) stated, "Government is not going to pay for advocacy. Government is not going to pay for organizing. Government is not going to pay for inclusion or equity. That is a role for philanthropy. It's something that philanthropy has done and has a history of doing. Same with systems reform and systems change." A large focus of the funders is to fill the gaps and to serve the populations that are not being served by other institutions or to use their resources to make sure that government and the private sector are responding to the needs of underserved populations.

With regards to building community capacity, many of the funders interviewed emphasized the need to reach the informal community groups that were historically and continue to be overlooked by funders. West explained that she could point to several grantees that are being funded for the first time by LDRF. "And we just started two years ago," she added. She also stated that these groups "absolutely must have voice in order to influence policy and how resources are spent for their community…We must build their capacity so that equity is achieved in the sense that they can participate in the process." They recognized that the support of these groups is a gap in philanthropy's role in the rebuilding process. Even the most flexible funds do not reach some of these community groups. Annie Ducmanis, Coordinator of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health described many features of her organization's model that she felt fit the urgent and dynamic needs of community based organizations on the Gulf Coast, including a multi-issue focus, a community advisory board that identified priorities, a simplified grant application, a focus on funding small, emerging groups, and an effective and efficient grantmaking process that could make decisions regarding eighty grant applications in four weeks. The Fund does not employ any local staff, although the Fund's community advisory board serves as "ambassadors" that help to spread the word. Bernadette Orr of Oxfam America explained that her field staff often has to help grantees apply for the RPA grants. Community leaders with the least experience in working with foundations need assistance in developing proposals for even the most simplified application.

Programmatically, GCFE is considering a small grants and technical assistance program to support nontraditional, community-based groups. Some funders spoke about what allocating this type of support to community-based groups could accomplish, including building the capacity of organizations to serve community needs, strengthening community voice through organizational development, and encouraging community innovation. Orlando Watkins stated that the needs of communities can best be met through community organizations if they have the capacity to serve that role. Additionally, he stated, "Funders should be willing to support continual civic participation. Neighborhood groups and community organizations are largely responsible for the level of engagement that we have seen in this city." Supporting overlooked groups would allow them to have a voice, according to Sherece West. She stated, "Having voice is defined as inclusion, and it is vitally important for the recovery and betterment of Louisiana, not just for the moment but for as long as possible, in order to influence policy and how resources are spent for their community." Bernadette Orr explained the importance of vulnerable communities' ability to articulate their needs. "The only way to do that," she explained, "is through being organized and being able to work through organizational structures to help advance opportunities to influence the agenda and to be heard and to be seen and be recognized as members of the community." John Vaughn of the Twenty-First Century Foundation added that in a situation "where leadership was challenged before the storm and is even more challenged after the storm, what you get out of smaller, nontraditional organizations is leaders who think out of the box and who do not respond to new challenges with old solutions." Additionally, Vaughn added that by supporting community groups, "you increase the number of people who are advocating for low- and moderate-income people and for marginalized people of color in a more unified way than before the storm."

Although funders expressed an interest and belief in the potential of supporting nontraditional community based groups, they also revealed concerns and anticipated challenges. The next section discusses these perspectives.

4.5 Grantors' Concerns About Clarity and Capacity
Funders expressed concerns and anticipated challenges related to the need for clarity around which groups would be targeted and the groups' needs and their capacity to support informal, nontraditional groups.

Clarity
Targeting: One major concern was determining who is included in a target group of potential grantees. Martha Thompson of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee noted that the evidence of these groups has been very anecdotal, and there was no analysis to help her understand what the common characteristics of these groups are. Local staff of Oxfam America and Mercy Corps, donor organizations that had put staff in the region after the hurricanes, explained that they were approached by "fledgling" community-based groups on a regular basis at community meetings and other public forums. They did not have the capacity to do the "handholding" required to help these groups be more effective; they noted that once these kinds of organizations went through critical organizational development periods without attracting resources, they are likely to disband. Sherece West noted that potential grantees would probably be "a mix of groups that existed before the storm that were marginalized and not invested in and some that are emerging."

Thompson suggested that a mapping project of the nontraditional, community-based groups be undertaken first before a strategy about how to best support them is conceived. Lynn McGee agreed that finding out how many of these informal organizations there are would help to "prompt foundations to understand the need." She added, "These groups reach populations that groups that are sophisticated enough to have gotten 501(c)3 status don't reach. They are underserved or not served at all." Bernadette Orr noted that "it may not make sense for them to pursue a permanent status as a 501(c)3, but yet for the purpose of moving through a particular period of time, they're organized." Orlando Watkins agreed that there are emerging community-based groups that are serving new realities in their communities. With regards to 501(c)3 status, Orr recognized that "there were groups also that are nonprofits in structure but lacked all of the real components that make them an organization." She also noted that many faith based groups, including churches, and coalitions that are not legally formed organizations would be considered nontraditional grantees.

Thompson also mentioned that just because a group is community-based and is resident-led does not mean that they should receive funding. It would be important to agree on criteria on which to base decisions about whether or not groups should be funded.

Understanding the needs and context: Funders also expressed a concern about educating themselves about the needs and local context. Bernadette Orr of Oxfam America explained that it is difficult "to ask local groups to educate you…without delivering back resources." She asked, "how can we educate other funders or how can we become more educated when we have to rely on local groups to do that?" acknowledging that "it takes people's time and if it doesn't result in resources, I'm sure that's very frustrating." Orr emphasized the significance of this issue given the tremendous need for local support. One strategy that Oxfam America has taken to address this issue is hiring staff to be based in the region; the investment of human capital has been a tremendous asset in many respects, especially in relaying information to the donor agency. Thompson also proposed that investing in local staff to inform funders about the needs would allow funding to be more focused and effective.

Capacity:
Sources of technical assistance: Funders unanimously agreed that capacity building, through technical assistance, was also needed to support these groups, not grantmaking alone. Sherece West noted, "In this work, people a lot of heart, but don't have capacity, have a lot of passion, but don't have capacity." Orlando Watkins added that "dropping $10,000 in the hands of an organization that is doing important work but doesn't have the capacity to think about sustaining the work is potentially dangerous" and urged funders to think about how to balance grant dollars for operation and grant dollars to build capacity of organizations." However, he was not sure if foundations had figured out the best way to build capacity of community groups. Lynn McGee echoed that "technical assistance is key" and added that it is a long-term investment. She explained that it would be "important to find out how to best meet needs of groups where they are at" but was not sure if that would happen through putting foundation staffing or through national technical assistance providers. She suggested that it would be helpful to catalog technical assistance providers in order to connect local organizations to them. She also emphasized the need to push state nonprofit agencies to serve informal community groups.

Bernadette Orr suggested that if the appropriate providers do not exist in the region, funders should come together "to figure out how to get [a technical assistance intermediary] started." Most funders did not consider the idea of using foundation staff to provide technical assistance.

Grantors' cultural competence: Grantors also brought up the issue of lack of cultural competence on the part of funders and how that might impact their ability to create partnerships with community-based groups. Tony Pipa explained, "This work is built on trust and relationships." The traditional challenges of reaching these groups are compounded in a post-disaster situation, especially in New Orleans where so many people are displaced. Orlando Watkins explained that the staff at his community foundation, the Greater New Orleans Foundation was undergoing cultural competency training at the time of our interview. "Foundations can't impose their thoughts about how to work with a community," he stated. "If the philanthropic community is going to work effectively with organizations beyond grants, they have to be willing to build their cultural capacity. This is about building funders' competence and capacity to work with those organizations."

Raising additional funds: The biggest challenge facing an initiative to support community-based groups that do not often receive foundation grants is stretching other foundations to be responsive to the need. Although the GCFE could champion an initiative to support these groups, they would also need to fundraise from their colleagues in philanthropy. Sherece West recognized that the challenges associated with this kind of effort are the same challenges traditionally faced in philanthropy, including "being conservative, not being risk takers, measuring outcomes, not being able to identify true leadership, needing a track record." John Vaughn acknowledged the risk involved in supporting groups that otherwise would not receive support. He stated, "It's like venture capital. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't." It is difficult to challenge foundations to engage in risky grantmaking.

4.6 Conclusion
In this chapter, I provided a description of the landscape of community organizations in New Orleans pre- and post-Katrina. In the next chapter, I will more specifically describe the roles and contributions of informal community groups.

Also, having interviewed the grantor and community group insiders in this picture, I found a genuine interest in partnering on both sides. Among the community groups, I also found: significant information and capacity gaps; a desperate need for core operating support as much as program funds; a frustration that promising collaborations-in-progress are overlooked by funders; and concerns about the downsides of becoming grant-driven organizations. Among the funders, on the other hand, I found: confusion about what kinds of community groups to target; concerns about raising expectations through outreach without following through with funds; limited or missing capacity—including cultural competence—to do this kind of work; and variable willingness to take risks.

In the next chapter, I will present my recommendations.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction
In this chapter, I describe the roles of informal groups in the rebuilding of New Orleans in order to sharpen the rationale for community capacity building. I present recommendations to funders about how to strategically support and strengthen community capacity and about how the GCFE can develop their collaborative to increase their impact.

5.2 Roles and Contributions of Informal Organizations in Rebuilding New Orleans
As explained in Chapter 4 through the analysis of grantor interviews, clearly defining the target of any initiative to build community capacity through the support and development of informal organizations is tricky. It is actually easier to explain which groups do not belong in the target category – service agencies, established CDCs, national community organizing groups, or any other kind of established nonprofit – rather than establishing which groups do belong. Below I describe the roles and contributions of informal organizations in rebuilding New Orleans in order to identify the target group and explain why it is important that they receive foundation support.

Work in communities that are "left out": The official market-based, laissez faire approach to rebuilding New Orleans risks neglecting the communities with the least resources, which often are also communities of color and areas that were the hardest hit by Katrina. The GCFE's goal from the outset has been to reach the groups that are otherwise being overlooked by funders and government, alike. These communities in New Orleans also follow a tradition of self-determination, having historically filled the gaps of both government and private sector services. Informal groups that existed before the storm are taking on new roles in these communities to meet intensified post-storm needs while other groups are emerging as residents take on leadership roles to also meet new needs in their communities.

The Charles Stewart Mott's mid-1980s "Neighborhood Small Grants Program," which aimed to support informal organizations through community foundations described their target as citizens' organizations, defined as "resident-led, democratically-controlled, mostly volunteer-powered neighborhood groups;" the guiding strategy of the program was "to support low-income people in working on their own behalf to address problems that affect them and their communities" (Scheie, 1997, p. 5). Such a designation of the target group can be applied to this emerging case.

Serve as nodes of trust, support, & enthusiasm: The trait that is common among the targeted informal community groups is that they serve as nodes of trust, support and enthusiasm in their communities and in the rebuilding process. While funders should allow groups to set their own priorities and agendas and experiment with their own program designs, they should look for community organizations that are well-connected and deeply rooted and demonstrate that they have a vision, passion and a healthy culture of accountability to the community.

As explained in Chapter 3, Chaskin et al (2001) support the idea that community capacity can be effectively built through organizations that have a broad community base, a feature that on its own can be an indicator of organizational effectiveness. In the long term, a strong community base can help the organizations make a case for outside support to have a voice in policy decisions.

Engage in a spectrum of activities: Informal organizations in New Orleans are involved in both *rebuilding* and *reclaiming* their neighborhoods and communities. The focus of these groups is not confined to any particular issue or activity; rather, it is based on the particular needs of their communities. In the Seventh Ward, a neighborhood with a large renter population that stayed dry during the storm, the Porch organization, which formed after Katrina, is creating a community garden, hosting neighborhood festivals, and organizing a street theater program for youth; additionally, the organization is bringing in homeownership counseling services. The goal of the organization is to establish a community presence in a neighborhood that is now ripe for private development since it was spared by the flood and to mitigate the consequences of possible gentrification. These activities are vastly different from another informal organization, the House of Dance and Feathers in the Lower Ninth Ward, an area that endured some of Katrina's worst flooding. A cultural museum before the storm, the House of Dance and Feathers currently serves as an education center and gathering place for visitors and residents alike. It is one of the only places that provide a sense of what life in the Lower Ninth Ward used to be like before Katrina.

Some informal organizations that existed before Katrina have evolved and have become formalized since the storm. For example, the Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation (MQVCDC) in the mostly Vietnamese-American neighborhood of Versailles in New Orleans East started out as a tight social network based in the Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church. When the City tried to open a landfill near the community, residents rallied and protested to reverse the City's decision. Their efforts were supported and strengthened by external assistance provided by the National Association of Vietnamese American Service Agencies (NAVASA), a technical assistance and leadership training provider for Vietnamese-American community-based organizations. NAVASA has since helped members of the Church leverage the momentum and visibility that came out of the landfill protest to raise money, form a CDC and serve other unmet needs in the rebuilding of the neighborhood. For MQVCDC, the social network of the Church is still critical for distributing information to residents. The decisions to become formalized and take on leadership roles in both bricks-and-mortar rebuilding and political advocacy, with the protest of the landfill, were appropriate for MQVCDC; such steps may not be right for all community organizations. Figure 4 links grantmaking approaches, examples of projects of informal groups, and possible outcomes that funders care about.

Figure 4: Matching Approaches, Projects and Outcomes

Grantmaking Approach	Examples of Projects	Possible Outcomes
Supporting neighborhood self-help activities: *Local staff working with grantees; small grants for neighborhood projects; general technical assistance provided by staff*	Neighborhood beautification/improvement Neighborhood festivals Public safety activities	*Improved quality of life* *Reinforced community identity & commitment*
Strengthening grassroots groups and leaders: *All components of previous approach plus:* *Extra funds for individualized technical assistance; creating networks of grantees enabling peer learning*	Youth empowerment activities Community organizing	*Leadership development* *Strengthened social networks* *Improved community resiliency*
Fostering a broader change agenda: *All components of previous two approaches plus:* *Stable, long-term funding; fostering relationships between groups and key local institutions; connection to techncial assistance intermediary to build the organizational infrastructure of group*	Political advocacy Community & economic development Neighborhood planning	*Strengthened community infrastructure* *Strengthened community voice* *Greater investment by public & private sectors into community*

5.3 Recommendations to Funders About Building Capacity of Informal Organizations

How can funders effectively support and strengthen community capacity through a small grants and technical assistance program? This section provides strategic recommendations to funders.

Get "on the ground" to conduct outreach and stay informed: Establish a local presence by hiring staff based in the region to reach out to potential grantees and understand the local context in which they operate. Funders clearly articulated confusion about which groups belong to the target category of informal community groups. It seemed clear to them that these groups existed, but there were hardly any unifying characteristics that they could speak of in order to categorize them. On the other hand, organizations that have local field staff can more confidently identify the need to support these groups, explaining that because of their presence on the ground as flexible funders with an interest in "bottom-up" development, they are often approached by emerging or informal groups that want to obtain more information about how to qualify for support. Unfortunately, the work of this field staff is not aimed at working with these kinds of groups; they do not have the time to do the "handholding" that is required in order to help them have a greater impact. In my own experience in New Orleans, I found that finding these groups

required going to city meetings and hearings, protests and rallies, and neighborhood festivals and second line parades. No matter what strategy is employed to actually direct resources to these groups, it is important that a local presence is established through local staff that is able to navigate and feel comfortable in both the foundation and community organization worlds in order to find groups for capacity building.

The need to establish a local presence is especially pertinent in this case because of the absence of local intermediaries that can serve as connectors between funders and informal groups from underserved communities. Orlando Watkins from the Greater New Orleans Foundation and Lynn McGee from the Foundation for the Mid South, both representatives of regionally based community foundations, acknowledged that their organizations do not reach the target group and are not focused on capacity building of such organizations. The case of the grantmaking post-Indian Ocean Tsunami demonstrated the importance of local intermediaries (established nonprofit organizations in this case) as connectors between funders and legitimate, local groups that would otherwise be overlooked. Without the presence of such an intermediary in New Orleans, it is important that funders hire local staff to play this connector role as a first step to building community capacity.

Being "embedded" in the communities where funders hope to have an impact will also address concerns about how to stay educated on the changing local context and specific local needs from afar. Embedded philanthropy involves an intimate and long-term engagement with the communities in which funders work. One advantage of this approach is that, "You get the best information you can based on what people tell you and what you see" (qtd. in Karlstrom, et. al., 2007, p. 1). This approach allows funders to respond to real rather than perceived needs. Local staff would also be responsible for communicating with funders to keep them updated with new information about local needs and priorities.

Align expectations with those of community groups and amount of resources invested: Many funders expressed that supporting informal community groups would allow those groups to influence the allocation of other resources and policies affecting their communities. They also thought that foundation support would lead to increased visibility and therefore "a seat at the table" in decision-making that affects the future of their communities. Most of the community leaders that were interviewed did not indicate plans to become political advocates, but as discussed above, they are working to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods and solving problems as they arise. Funders may encounter barriers or resistance to change by the organizations they are trying to support. It is important to ensure that funders and potential grantees' expectations are aligned. Meaningful and transparent discussions about objectives and expectations at the start of a relationship and maintaining open channels of communication during the relationship will strengthen the partnership between funders and local groups and create more opportunity for effective change.

Additionally, the magnitude of the changes sought by funders is huge compared to the resources that many of the funders will bring to this effort. Janis Foster, Executive Director, of Grassroots Grantmakers, explained that one of the biggest mistakes that foundations often make when launching a small grants and technical assistance program for community-based groups is that they have "romantic notions" about what will happen with limited resources and time; they

assume that funding community-based groups will lead to a shift in the local power balance. Responding to local problems and influencing policy are certainly possible outcomes that can come from supporting informal community groups but it is important to be realistic about how much time such change will take and what kinds of resources, both grants and technical assistance, it will require. Foster also explained that not all groups will carry out a larger social change agenda; beyond resources, such capacity requires "a clear cause and a champion." However, supporting these groups will more likely lead to stronger, healthier, more resilient communities, whether they have a voice in policy discussions or not. According to the literature on post-disaster community capacity funding, this is a valuable investment and one that is often overlooked by funders. Figure 4 above provides a useful reference linking different grantmaking approaches to possible outcomes.

Develop and update a "map" of local institutions--their roles, capacity and objectives: Some funders suggested mapping or cataloging the informal community groups that are being overlooked by most foundations as a first step to better understanding the scope of the need. A map or assessment of community's assets, capacities and abilities is an important way to start any development process in order to identify "new structures of opportunity, new sources of income and control, and new possibilities for production" (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996, p. 3). Martha Thompson of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) identified her organization's support of mapping New Orleans' community organizing landscape as the best investment it had made post-Katrina; the "map" allowed her to identify important and focused granting opportunities that she would have otherwise missed. Additionally, the Los Angeles Urban Funders (LAUF) case highlighted that creating an asset map to identify existing social capital and capacities off of which to build provided a more respectful point to start a relationship with a community rather than starting with no knowledge of existing assets.

Mapping, however, cannot be a one-time, static activity. The post-Katrina landscape is dynamic and constantly changes as the institutional landscape changes. Still lacking a rebuilding plan that can be implemented, New Orleans is experiencing a great deal of uncertainty about the future, and community groups are constantly shifting in order to fill the gaps, which change with time and government actions or inactions. Having been involved in the UUA-UUSC mapping effort last year, I know that many of the informal community groups that we identified through that process no longer exist or have taken on different roles. Some of these groups form, struggle and evaporate before funders can reach them. A mapping effort should coincide with other initiatives to support the groups that are being mapped and should continuously be updated in order to remain useful and relevant; otherwise, the value in the mapping process for both funders and potential grantees, alike, would be lost.

Creating a valid institutional map and keeping it updated, legitimate and useful is also another reason to have a local presence. Additionally, it is a precondition for doing capacity building well.

Provide appropriate technical assistance that does not compel groups to formalize: In reflecting on resources needed to make an impact, funders emphasized the need to provide technical assistance and expressed concern about the absence of technical assistance providers in the region. Foster of Grassroots Grantmaking explained that it is common to use foundation staff to

provide "generalist technical assistance" at first until there is a clear idea of what specific kinds of expertise and assistance are needed. Then, creative partnerships can be formed with consultants or trainers to meet particular needs in the long term, or the creation of a technical assistance center, an intermediary organization, can be considered. The point is that groups' need for technical assistance will be nuanced; funders should not provide rote organizational development assistance broadly to all grantee groups, which leads them on a path to becoming formalized nonprofits, without considering individual organizational circumstances, objectives and needs. As Chaskin et al (2001) explain, in order for technical assistance for the purpose of community capacity building to be useful, it should be individualized and aim to help an organization apply new knowledge effectively, whether it is general organizational management skills or more substantive areas of expertise, for example community gardening or green building. Such assistance will help not only to build the capacity of the group but will also help to make the group's efforts more sustainable; the LAUF case demonstrated that the benefits of technical assistance include minimizing risks for other funders, making it easier for them to provide support to informal groups.

Technical assistance should be geared towards not only helping organizations become more effective in a way that is appropriate for them, but also renewing a leadership base in communities. As LAUF found in its work in Los Angeles, "neighborhood leaders are neither abundant nor easy to find" (Year Three Report, 1998, p. 8). As their engagement in communities develops, funders must assess what type of assistance program will contribute to replenishing the pool of community leaders.
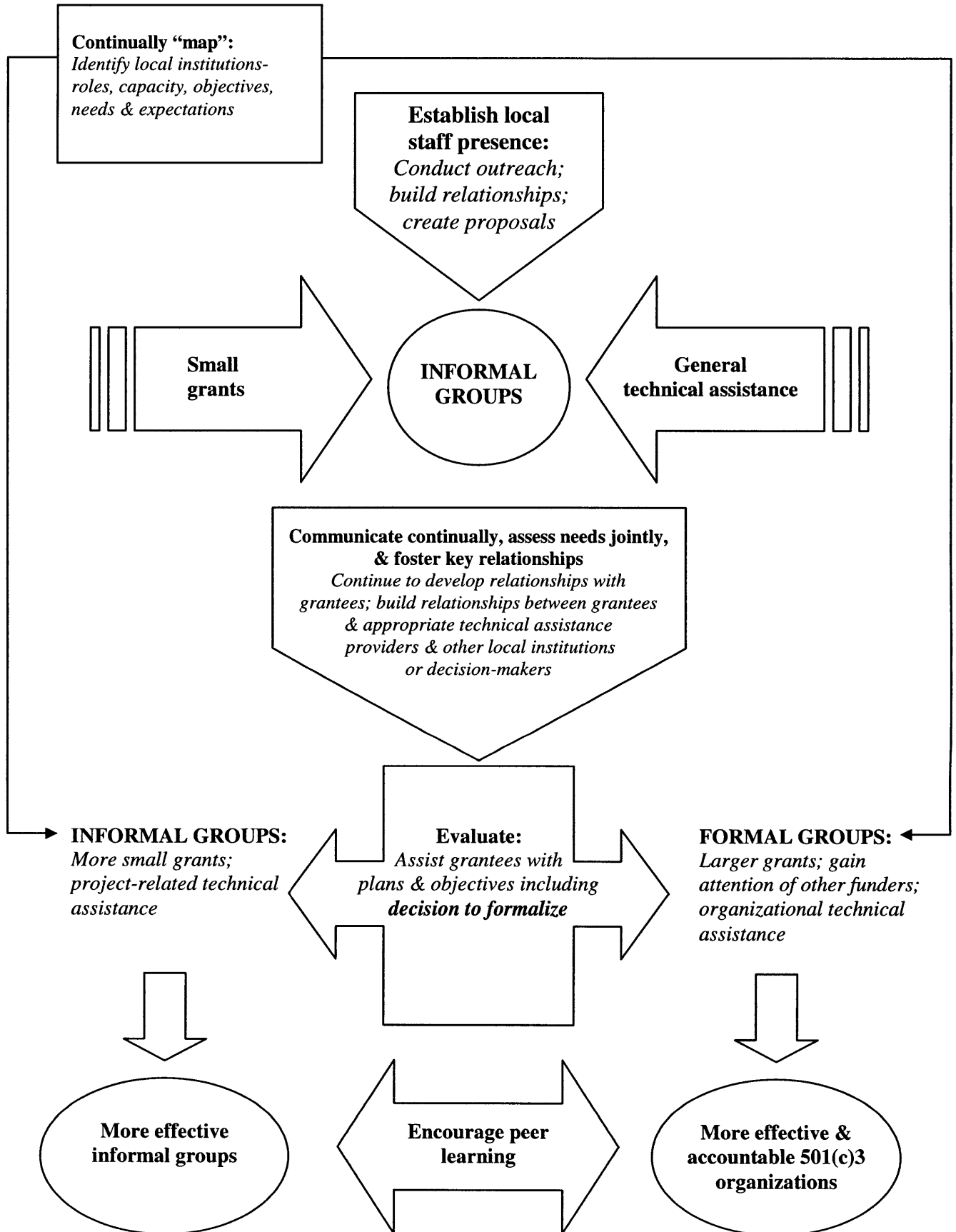
Help community groups build "bridging" relationships, beyond their neighborhoods or constituencies, to key public and private institutions, other community groups: Chaskin et al (2001) remind us that communities exist within complex economic, social and political systems, and building community capacity can also involve building ties between community organizations to institutions, such as corporations, local government, and nonprofit organizations, outside of the community. Community building efforts sometimes only focus on creating "horizontal" ties, relationships between community members, but "vertical" ties are also important and involve connecting residents to local institutions and decision-makers from whom they are otherwise isolated (Briggs, 2007, p. 9). Foundations have a unique opportunity to encourage bridging relationships in New Orleans because it is philanthropy that is not only trying to build community capacity, but also government capacity (i.e. the Rockefeller, Ford and Gates Foundations have invested $1.5 million into the City of New Orleans Office of Recovery Management; the Rockefeller Foundation also made a $3 million plus grant to fund the process which created the Unified New Orleans Plan). Funders supporting community groups should collaborate and coordinate with their colleagues in philanthropy who are have made investments in local government in order to explore opportunities for connection.

Additionally, effective organizational development strategies to build community capacity often involve the creation peer learning networks, through which community groups can share experiences and jointly problem-solve. These kinds of networks are only effective if they are created in a thoughtful way bringing together grantees whose objectives or circumstances are complementary and do not duplicate "homegrown" networks among groups working together without external stimulus.

Support groups for the long term: Long-term support is crucial for several reasons. First, an assessment of specific capacity building needs, especially related to technical assistance, can take some time because funders and community groups are learning together and exploring possibilities for the first time. Given the history of broken promises from resources providers that many community groups are likely to have faced, a relationship of trust and productivity must first be established before core needs are revealed and can be addressed. Second, the dynamic nature of New Orleans' policy and planning landscape means that groups are constantly shifting to meet changing needs. A capacity building program should consider the long-term nature of the rebuilding process and offer support accordingly; additionally, it should address the issue of how to be effective in a constantly changing context. Third, in order for some groups to evolve into political advocates as many funders hope, stable, long-term support combined with appropriate technical assistance and linking to local institutions and key decision-makers will be critical.

Figure 5 synthesizes the above recommendations to funders in a "strategy map," outlining the various elements and steps to an effective approach.

Figure 5: Capacity Building Through Small Grants and Technical Assistance: Strategy Map

Continually "map":
*Identify local institutions-
roles, capacity, objectives,
needs & expectations*

**Establish local
staff presence:**
*Conduct outreach;
build relationships;
create proposals*

**Small
grants**

**INFORMAL
GROUPS**

**General
technical assistance**

**Communicate continually, assess needs jointly,
& foster key relationships**
*Continue to develop relationships with
grantees; build relationships between grantees
& appropriate technical assistance
providers & other local institutions
or decision-makers*

INFORMAL GROUPS:
*More small grants;
project-related technical
assistance*

Evaluate:
*Assist grantees with
plans & objectives including
decision to formalize*

FORMAL GROUPS:
*Larger grants; gain
attention of other funders;
organizational technical
assistance*

**More effective
informal groups**

**Encourage peer
learning**

**More effective &
accountable 501(c)3
organizations**

5.4 Funders' Collaborative Role in Strengthening Informal Organizations

As with the decision to direct support towards informal groups, the move to work collaboratively also presents important opportunities and critical challenges for funders. This section provides recommendations to the GCFE to develop its collaborative structure in order to increase impact.
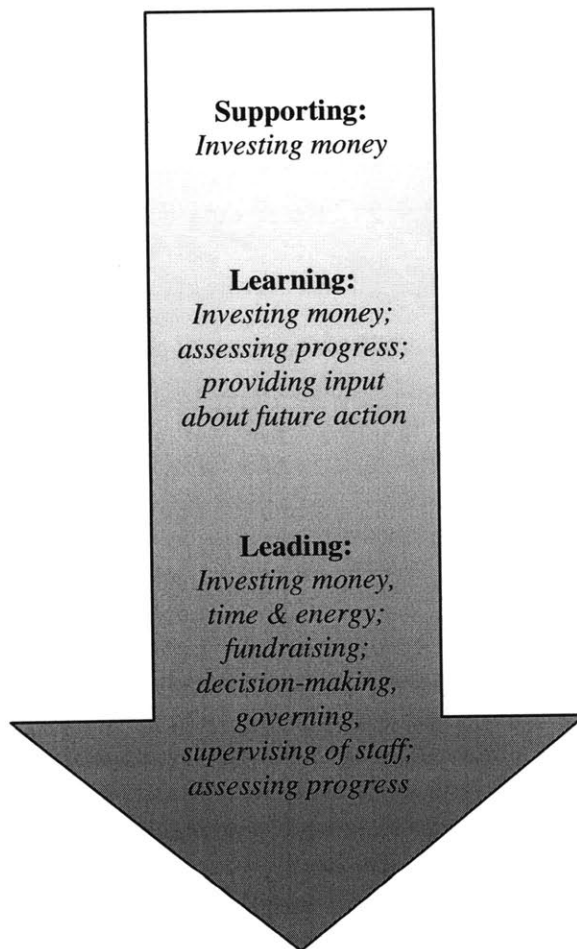
Choose options for joint action to increase efficiency: With collaboration, funders can act more efficiently than they would in isolation; collaboration helps funders achieve economies of scale, share knowledge across foundations, and pool risks. Elwood Hopkins, Executive Director of LAUF, explains that funders often inaccurately cite "inefficiency" as the reason for not joining collaboratives, questioning the need for the creation of an extra bureaucratic structure between funds and the grantees who receive them (Hopkins, 2005, p. 31). In reality, collaboration allows funders to have opportunities for joint actions, including sharing program expenses, such as staff, which as mentioned above would be an important component of a strategy to build community capacity in New Orleans. A funders collaborative is also more likely to act quickly to respond to urgent needs that foundations acting alone because funds that are pooled together often do not have as many restrictions placed on them, an asset in the dynamic context of post-Katrina New Orleans. Additionally, in the long term, collaboratives provide stability that is not common in grantmaking; a diversified funding stream allows continuity to be established even when individual funders come and go.

In my interviews with funders, many interviewees expressed concern about the risk involved with investing in community capacity. In a key informant interview, one funder engaged in a community capacity building initiative elsewhere reminds his colleagues that, "Every grant we make is a risk." Few foundation representatives believe that there are no negative consequences to foundations' risk-taking behavior, so why not take risks? These attitudes represent outliers however, and most foundations are risk-averse. Challenging traditional philanthropy by having intimate relationships with grantees can also be considered risky since such behavior sacrifices the professional distance that foundations usually experience. Working collaboratively on an initiative to build the capacity of informal organizations would disperse the risk and consequently the cost of failures, making it easier for individual collaborative members to make institutional commitments.

Define roles, distinguish depth of engagement: It is important to distinguish between different types of funder roles in a philanthropic collaborative. One potential option is to differentiate between the "leading" group, the "learning" group, and the "supporting" group. In order for the collaborative to move forward and operate consistently and effectively, it will need "champions," or leaders. Aside from investing money, the "leading" group would invest significant time and energy to the collaborative. This group would oversee day to day operations, including governing, supervising of staff, problem solving, decision-making and assessing progress. The "learning" group would be composed of funders who are interested in engaging in the collaborative in a deeper way than by just investing money but cannot invest the time and energy required to take a leadership role. This group would invest money and be involved with assessing and reflecting on progress and planning for the future. The "leading" and "learning" groups would therefore work together on evaluation and strategic planning. The "supporting" group's role would be to invest money into the collaborative. This group may become involved at later stages in the collaborative's life cycle. The LAUF case demonstrated that the initial risk

taking by a funders' collaborative can create "a more hospitable environment in which grantmaking could take place" for other funders (Year Four Report, 1999, p. 2). Once "leading" and "learning" funders recognize informal groups and take the initial steps (and risks) in building their capacity, "supporting" funders who do not want to bear the risk or invest in the overhead may become interested in channeling funds through the collaborative infrastructure in order to reach the target groups. Figure 6 demonstrates the tiered engagement that funders can have in a philanthropic collaborative.

Figure 6: Potential Roles in Philanthropic Collaborative: By Depth of Engagement

Supporting:
Investing money

Learning:
*Investing money;
assessing progress;
providing input
about future action*

Leading:
*Investing money,
time & energy;
fundraising;
decision-making,
governing,
supervising of staff;
assessing progress*

Support continuous learning: Without effective precedents to follow and given the uniqueness of the post-Katrina situation, its magnitude and uncertainty characterized by massive institutional failure and a market-driven approach to rebuilding, there is no way surefire "recipe for success" for how to build capacity in this context. The effectiveness of any community capacity building initiative will depend on willingness of funders to engage in learning and build on program experience. Collaboration often enables learning that could not happen when funders act in isolation:

> Collaborations frequently increase the speed and quality of information, data, and ideas exchanged. They introduce new perspectives and expose participants to important intellectual resources. Moreover, they can expand the analytic capacity

brought to bear on a problem and lead to the development of new concepts, knowledge, tools, and approaches (Hamilton, et. al., 2005, p. 44).

Intentional efforts to learn and apply learning will enable the community capacity building initiative to grow broader and more nuanced in order to meet the specific, changing needs.

Additionally, the literature on post-disaster philanthropy is still growing, and that on community capacity building initiatives has significant gaps. Literature that comes from within the field is often not critical, but rather self-promoting, compromising much of the learning that comes from innovative practice. Additionally, there are demands for literature on both process and outcomes, from inside and outside of the philanthropic field, respectively. Consciously documenting both successes as well as failures will serve as a tool for reflection and additionally will guide foundations in the future so that they can be more effective in future post-disaster situations.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

The recommendations presented in this chapter are meant to guide the GCFE initiate an effort to build community capacity in the post-Katrina context. One issue that was not addressed in the recommendations is the issue of measuring outcomes, a challenge that has been confronted by social change philanthropy for decades and will surely be dealt with in this capacity building effort. Measures of effectiveness will be shaped not only by grantors' definitions of success but also by the length of engagement. Following the initial phases of this initiative, actions should be guided by learning from practical program experience.

It is important to note here that the GCFE is interested in engaging in an initiative that reaches informal organizations across the hurricane-affected Gulf Coast region, not only New Orleans. As mentioned previously, it was outside the scope of this thesis to make recommendations for the entire region. The need for community capacity building certainly exists regionally, as the issues of disinvestment and race and class segregation that are present in New Orleans also exist in the region as a whole. A regional view on capacity building brings up some interesting challenges as it would include three different states, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and encompass both rural and urban contexts. Specific challenges may include: groups are likely to be more dispersed in rural areas, and therefore harder to find; covering such a large geographic area may require additional human resources; and the degree of "handholding" that is required in areas that have no nearby established nonprofit presence may be greater. One option for GCFE to mature into the role of "community capacity builder" for the region is to launch a pilot project – one that is geographically constrained, perhaps within boundaries that include both urban and rural areas – to "test" some of the components of the strategy and to begin the learning process. In order for the pilot to be meaningful, however, different options about ongoing commitment and scope of the project at the end of the pilot phase should be considered at the outset.

A community capacity building initiative by the GFCE shows a lot of potential; the funders involved strongly believe that such an initiative would be in line with their organizations' missions and goals ensuring institutional commitment. This will translate into a more stable and durable programmatic commitment to informal community groups. Before engaging in a launch,

however, the members of the GCFE should both individually and collectively reflect on what it is that they hope to achieve through community capacity building and evaluate their own capacity for involvement. The GCFE has an opportunity to make transformative change happen over time in a situation where there is tremendous need for support to low-income communities of color; a community capacity building initiative has the potential to start a meaningful engagement between funders and these communities but it must be executed with a sound awareness of the resources, time and energy that such work will require.

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