



SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES



Building Momentum to Sustain Social Change: Evaluation of the of Katrina Women's Response Fund

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Executive Summary

In the time that has passed since powerful hurricanes decimated the Gulf Coast region in 2005, the recovery and rebuilding process continues to expose the deep vulnerabilities of a society that has not effectively addressed the legacy of racism. In response to the injustices, human suffering, destruction, and massive displacement caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Ms. Foundation for Women, WFN and its partner funds, with the \$1.3 million support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, continued to strengthen the Katrina Women's Response Fund (KWRF). The goals of KWRF were to apply a clear gender, racial, class, intersectional analysis to:

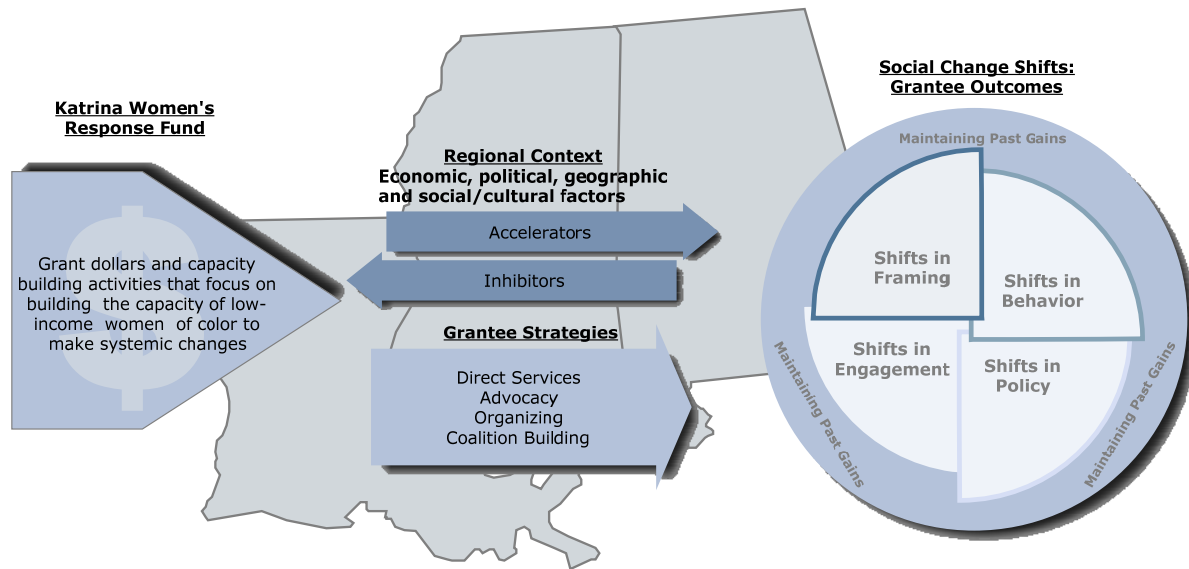
1. Ensure that local women's and other organizations have the capacity and resources to meet the immediate needs of low-income women evacuees.
2. Invest in rebuilding by strengthening the infrastructure of women's and other progressive organizations in affected regions.
3. Ensure that the perspectives of low-income women of color are central to policy decisions about relief, recovery and rebuilding and maintain a strong focus on the strength and leadership of women.
4. Expose the depth of inequality due to race, economic means and gender, and the intersection of these inequalities.

At the end of the Phase 2 funding of KWRF, the Ms. Foundation (MFW) awarded a total of \$811,000 to 35 grantees primarily located in Louisiana and Mississippi. In addition, the Ms. Foundation awarded \$460,000 to the Women's Funding Network, which in turn re-granted \$280,000 to three women's funds. These three funds—The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, and the Women's Fund of Greater Jackson—collectively awarded \$150,000 to their grantees.

This report details the results of Social Policy Research Associates' (SPR) external evaluation of the Katrina Women's Response Fund. The evaluation employed primarily a qualitative approach to capture the women's funds' unique approach and role and grantee-level outcomes. Core evaluation activities included intensive, semi-structured interviews with (1) staff and consultants of MFW, WFN, and the three partner funds, (2) 31 grantees, and (3) a policy maker. In addition, SPR conducted four site visits to profiles grantees' work and observe major convenings, reviewed numerous research reports and analyzed grantee reports and other literature on the Gulf Coast recovery process.

In presenting this report, SPR used key elements from the WFN Making the Case (MTC) social change evaluation tool as an organizing structure. Specifically, these elements include identifying accelerators and inhibitors to grantee progress (Chapters 2) and measuring outcomes in terms of the major social change shifts, or indicators that social change has occurred (Chapter 3).

Framework for the Report



Inhibitors and Accelerators to Rebuilding

Chapter 2 of the report details the accelerators and inhibitors faced by the grantees in their work. Accelerators and inhibitors are defined as factors that are internal or external to an organization's environment that help or hinder the organization reach its intended project goal. In this chapter, the inhibitors are broken down by those related to immediate needs and those that are structural in nature. The accelerators are analyzed according to those that are internal and external. The key inhibitors and accelerators identified by the grantees are the following:

- Inhibitors Related to Immediate Needs:** A key finding in this chapter is that the grantees still face considerable challenges in meeting the immediate needs of community members. Thus, it becomes difficult to focus exclusively on policy advocacy. The most common immediate needs are: (1) Housing, (2) Displaced Communities, (3) Mental Health, (4) Education, (5) Employment, (6) Childcare, (7) Physical Health, and (8) Racial Harassment.
- Structural Inhibitors:** Structural inhibitors refer to the larger contextual factors that the grantees find themselves in—factors that influence and oftentimes determine what the grantees can accomplish programmatically or politically. These most common structural inhibitors—as identified by the grantees—are: (1) Lack of accountability for federal funds, (2) Lack of community involvement in government decision making, (3) Limited capacity of community-based groups, (4) “Katrina Fatigue” and (5) Conservative Political Climate
- External Accelerators:** External accelerators are factors within the greater community context that facilitate the ability of grantees to reach their intended goals. The most consistent external factors mentioned by the grantees are: (1) Support from the Ms. Foundation and the Women's Funding Network, which includes assistance with networking, capacity building trainings, and flexible funding, and (2) Growing civic participation.

- **Internal Accelerators:** Internal Accelerators are defined as organizational characteristics and practices that accelerate the work that grantees are doing. The key internal accelerators identified in this report are: (1) Alliance building, (2) Tailoring their strategies to fit community needs, (3) Developing relationships with policymakers, (4) Using a human rights framework, and (5) Understanding and honing in on winnable policy changes.

Outcomes of the Katrina Women’s Response Fund

In Chapter 3, we present the outcomes that grantees of the Katrina Women’s Response Fund have achieved in the past two years. In other words, what progress have grantees made in creating social change that better the lives of low-income women and girls both in the rebuilding process in the Gulf Coast in general? Our analysis uses four social change shifts from the WFN Making the Case framework to answer this question: shifts in framing, shifts in behavior, shifts in engagement, and shifts in policy.

Shifts in Framing

Grantees have used a number of strategies to ensure that the voices of low-income women of color are incorporated into conversations about rebuilding in the Gulf Coast and infuse an analysis that examines how issues of gender, race, class, and immigration status play out in the rebuilding process and the Gulf Coast in general:

- **Building public awareness** through public speaking engagements and media coverage;
- **Being “at the table”** by holding seats on boards and commissions that influence the rebuilding process; and
- **Providing evidence to “make the case”** as to why an intersectional analysis is key by providing testimony and generating research.

Grantees have begun to see these efforts pay off in terms of success in reframing the problems, and even more critically, initial success in reframing solutions.

- **Reframing the problems.** Grantees have been able to achieve results in reframing the way the public viewed survivors and evacuees, raising the visibility of neglected communities, framing injustices as human rights abuse, and highlighting systemic injustices that continue to plague the region.
- **Reframing the solutions.** Grantees have also seen initial success in shifting thinking from the need for short-term to long-term services; raising the visibility for comprehensive childcare as a right of low-income women and their families, shifting thinking around solutions in justice system, and particularly the juvenile justice system; and reframing women’s roles in the recovery process from passive to active.

Without the efforts of these organizations, the voices of low-income women of color would continue to be ignored as they historically have been in the region. Infusing the perspective of low-income women of color has forced both the public and policymakers to *at least* consider a

gender, race, and class analysis when thinking about the region and rebuilding. However, critical to ensuring long-term equity is the extent to which grantees have been able to reframe *solutions* using the perspective of low-income women of color, and although they have made inroads in this arena, more work still needs to be done.

Shifts in Behavior

It was a challenge for many grantees to focus their work primarily on ensuring that the perspectives of low-income women of color were central to policy decisions when such glaring needs as housing, employment, childcare, and health services remained in the community. By providing direct services to meet these individual concerns, grantees contributed to the rebuilding of collective hope in the region. This work brought about shifts in behavior among many residents and displaced survivors, including the restoration of normalcy and stability, the rebuilding of confidence and hope, and an end to social isolation. Grantees' work in this area included:

- **Job training and employment assistance.** More than 280 people, mostly low-income of color, were provided job training and employment assistance that ranged from interview attire to training programs in childcare and construction.
- **Case management and direct relief.** Grantees reported that they provided more than 153,500 survivors and evacuees with clothing, food, furniture, transportation, and childcare support in the years following Katrina. Although most of these efforts peaked in the months immediately after the storm, several continue to this day, as government is slow to meet the needs of those affected.
- **Housing assistance.** By all accounts, housing remains a major issue and inhibitor to Gulf Coast recovery. Grantees provided immediate housing assistance to more than 480 residents and displaced survivors in the form of housing referrals, shelter, or support with federal eligibility forms.
- **Legal assistance.** Pro-bono legal assistance and representation provided by grantees have been invaluable to helping families and individuals recover from the storm. In all, grantees helped more than 3,040 individuals apply for federal assistance, tackle unexpected legal issues, and obtain replacement vital records and documents.
- **Health and mental health services.** One of the most devastating outcomes of Katrina has been its impact on the physical and mental health of residents and displaced survivors, particularly the economically disadvantaged and elderly. Grantees helped to address some of these issues by providing over 2,990 individuals with health services and programs focused on addressing social isolation.
- **Youth services.** An often overlooked impact of Katrina has been its effect on youth and school-age children. In the years following the storm, grantees provided after school services, youth development activities, and cultural enrichment to more than 3,630 children to alleviate emerging mental health issues and support their healthy development.

Range and Extent of Direct Services

	# of Grantees	Estimated # of People Served
Job training and employment assistance	14	280
Case management and direct relief (clothing, food, furniture, transportation, childcare, etc.)	12	153,500
Housing assistance	8	470
Legal assistance	6	3,040
Health and mental health services or counseling	6	2,990
Youth services	6	3,630

Going forward, direct services will remain an important piece of grantees' work given the many needs and concerns of residents and displaced survivors. However, maintaining and expanding the outcomes described above across the Gulf Coast will be a major challenge given the country's current economic context.

Shifts in Engagement

The rush of relief and recovery resources into the Gulf Coast after Katrina galvanized nonprofits and community-based organizations not simply to provide direct relief, but also to engage everyday people to have a voice in the rebuilding process. Prior to Katrina, this tradition of organizing and activism was not prevalent among residents of the Gulf Coast. Grantees' work helped to bring about several shifts in engagement among survivors and evacuees, including:

- **Increased civic participation and community organizing.** In the years following Katrina, grantees provided numerous opportunities for residents and displaced survivors to voice their concerns and play a role in shaping their communities. This work helped to highlight the needs of underserved populations and infuse a level of community accountability into the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast.
- **Development of new leaders.** Although many new leaders developed organically through their experiences responding to community needs on the ground, several were products of the intentional efforts of nonprofits and community-based organizations to cultivate the skills of residents and displaced survivors. Grantees developed several programs, ranging from simple opportunities for individuals to voice their concerns to efforts to build specific skills and capacities, to help build more than 235 women leaders in the years following Katrina.
- **Shifts in organizational goals and capacity.** General operating support from MFW and the three women's funds has enabled grantees to start work on new issues and engage more community members around the rebuilding process. Nearly all grantees reported that they were able to hire new staff, purchase needed materials and resources, leverage additional funds, or develop skills and capacities in new areas.

- **Increased collaborations and coalition building.** Given the complex context of rebuilding in the Gulf Coast and resident's multiple needs and concerns, collaborating and building coalitions with local organizations was necessary for many grantees to expand their impact and address issues from several angles. Collaborations that grantees maintained ranged from partnerships for program referrals and coordinated services to broad coalitions aimed at tackling policy issues and organizing a critical mass to support an equitable recovery.

Overall, grantees have helped to develop the foundation for a stronger tradition of organizing and civic participation in the Gulf Coast. However, much work remains ahead. A critical mass of supporters is only beginning to emerge to infuse more accountability into the recovery and rebuilding process.

Shifts in Policy

Grantee success in shifting policy came in one of two forms: concrete wins and increased accountability from policymakers and government agencies.

- **Concrete wins** came in the form of organizational policy change at the government agency level, including (1) over \$13 million in resources allocated to address the needs of the most disadvantaged hurricane survivors, and (2) legislative victories that created more equitable outcomes.
- Evidence for **increased accountability from policymakers and government agencies** includes government agencies engaging grantees to represent their constituents; increased communication with elected officials, often at the request of elected officials; and winning increased monitoring or serving as the monitor themselves for legislation implementation.

However, much of these successes still very much represent isolated incidences, rather than a strong pattern of achievement. Additionally, while more established organizations have had more success in changing policy and holding policymakers and government agencies accountable, the newer, less developed organizations still struggle to build their infrastructure and create a network that can achieve the same results. Two major public policy losses – the destruction of public housing in New Orleans and the diversion of \$600 million from rebuilding houses to expanding a port in Gulfport, Mississippi – highlight the fact much progress is yet to be made in holding elected officials accountable.

Key Themes and Recommendations

Chapter 4 highlights key major themes and recommendations for continued work that emerge from these themes.

Key Themes

Following are some of the major themes that arose from our analysis:

- Considerable uncertainty exists concerning the long-term funding outlook to support social change work in the Gulf Coast region.

- While acknowledging the importance of the Ms. Foundation’s and WFN’s relief and rebuilding focus, partners are urged to continue to connect their work with a broader vision for transformative change in the region.
- To create transformative change in the region, funders like the Ms. Foundation and women’s funds needed to move capacity building beyond individual organizations and focus at multiple levels.

Recommendations

Given these emerging themes, SPR’s key recommendations include the following:

1. *Further engage national and regional philanthropy by creating an expanded vision of social change in the South.*
2. *Leverage Katrina expertise with major funders’ interest in place-based grant making in the Gulf Coast region.*
3. *Provide more leadership and nonprofit capacity building for alignment of organizational systems with larger advocacy and social change work.*
4. *Support emerging leaders, particularly women of color.*
5. *Support the increase of women of color in elected office and in policy advocacy.*
6. *Focus on rebuilding social networks and social capital by ensuring the culturally competent local organizations are supported by private funders and contracted by the government.*
7. *Focus on ensuring that mental health services are readily available.*
8. *Focus on building the economic self-sufficiency of low-income women of color.*
9. *Continue to fund organizations that focus on a cross-section of issues.*
10. *Continue to focus on the specific needs of the displaced population.*
11. *Support the effective development of multiracial coalitions once they are established.*
12. *Create sustainable political empowerment to advance a community-driven vision for change.*
13. *Focus on building political community “watch-dog” committees to provide oversight for state spending of federal funds.*
14. *Support the Women’s Economic Security Collaborative.*
15. *Focus on building the capacity of local philanthropy in the South to support social change work.*

Conclusion

Ms. Foundation and WFN have remained steadfast in their support of a just and equitable recovery in the Gulf Coast. It is apparent from the accelerators and major shifts described in this report that the Katrina Women's Response Fund embodies a sophisticated, multi-layered and holistic approach to community rebuilding and policy advocacy. Building upon this work, the Ms. Foundation has already crafted a broader strategy to focus on the Southern region to create a deeper and longer lasting economic, social, and policy impact. Based on our recommendations above, we strongly believe that it is a logical strategy to focus on one of the poorest regions of the United States.

The leaders and residents of the Gulf Coast have demonstrated tremendous inner strength and faith in their communities despite overwhelming adversity. Their hope for meaningful change has been kept alive by funders like the Ms. Foundation for Women, WFN, the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, the Women's Fund of Greater Jackson, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. With a new President who promises to heed the call to get people home, ensure decent jobs, and get it right *this* time, the prospects for an equitable, long-term recovery look brighter and still within sight.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the three years since [Hurricane Katrina and Rita], another tragedy has unfolded. Although the force of the storms was an act of nature, their initial impact and what the American people have since witnessed—an uneven and often incompetent recovery effort—are the results of deliberate human acts. If we refuse to address this as a nation, it will go down in history not only as a failure of leadership, but also as a failure to hold our government accountable....The situation grows increasingly critical, but despite challenges, there is a way forward.¹

When Hurricane Katrina and other storms struck the Gulf Coast region in August 2005, the Ms. Foundation for Women and the Women's Funding Network (WFN) instantly recognized the historic significance of the destruction that was as much a product of nature as it was a product of man. By the numbers, the statistics and stories are beyond comprehension. The nation's most costly natural disaster, Katrina killed more than 1,800 people, destroyed 275,000 Gulf Coast homes, and displaced about 1 million people.² News reports place insured property damage at \$25.3 billion in 1.7 million insurance claims—975,000 of them in Louisiana. Hurricane Katrina put 80% of New Orleans under water and bashed the Mississippi coast like matchsticks. More than three years after Katrina, life in New Orleans is far from normal: basic services such as hospitals, schools, libraries, and public transportation all remain limited. Rebuilding continues to be spotty despite \$110 billion in federal monies, and since 2006, no additional federal investments have been allocated.

This tragedy called for an unprecedented national response—largely due to the magnitude of suffering and the injustices and indignities that the evacuees had to endure. The horrific media images and stories of Hurricane Katrina reminded Americans that the road to equality remains arduous for many. Responding to the unfolding tragedy, The Ms. Foundation and WFN also saw

¹ Source: *Mirror on America: How the State of the Gulf Coast Recovery Reflects on Us All*. (2008). Oxfam America. http://www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications/publications/research_reports/mirror-on-america/Mirror-on-America.pdf

the need to bring a **deep structural analysis** to this situation. The goals of the Katrina Women's Response Fund (KWRF) reflect the desire to think about change on a **longer-term basis** and at a **systemic level** so that the same mistakes would not be repeated.

According to Seidenberg (2006),³ the federal government was aware of the extensive social science and legal challenges of a Category 3 hurricane such as Katrina. We know from the mistreatment of marginalized populations in previous disasters that they are likely to experience the worst consequences and slowest recovery from natural disasters. For example, Chinese residents of the San Francisco great earthquake and fire of 1906 found themselves “shunted to a far corner of the city, denied relief assistance afforded to the white population, and arrested for attempting to re-renter their homes in Chinatown.” In the wake of Hurricane Andrew, the Red Cross placed ethnic minority populations within ghettoized districts of tent cities where Latino victims “encountered taunting and hostility from other ethnic groups.”⁴

However, there was hope that a disaster like Hurricane Katrina could present a unique opportunity to respond affirmatively and decisively to the plight of marginalized populations to transform their condition within our social safety net and economic hierarchy. Within this mind frame, the goals of KWRF were to apply a clear gender, racial, class, intersectional analysis in order to:

1. Ensure that local women's and other organizations have the capacity and resources to meet the immediate needs of low-income women evacuees.
2. Invest in rebuilding by strengthening the infrastructure of women's and other progressive organizations in affected regions.
3. Ensure that the perspectives of low-income women of color are central to policy decisions about relief, recovery and rebuilding and maintain a strong focus on the strength and leadership of women.
4. Expose the depth of inequality due to race, economic means and gender, and the intersection of these inequalities.

From September 2005 to November 2006, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation gave its first grant to the Ms. Foundation for Women for \$1,184,039 to provide support to people affected by the

² Source: US Politics Hurricane Katrina Livability Statistics, Third Year Anniversary:
http://uspolitics.about.com/od/katrina/1/bl_katrina_stats.htm

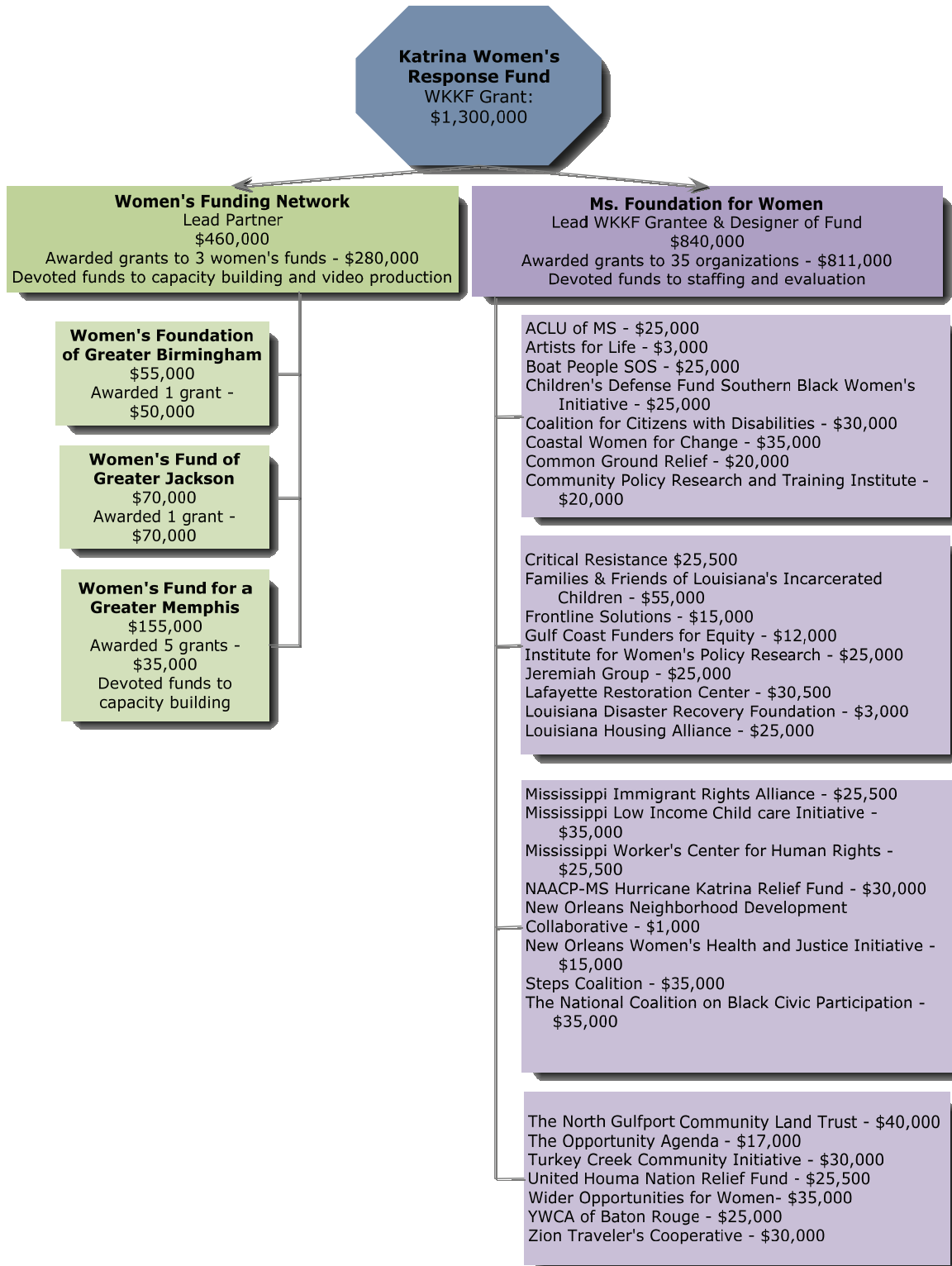
³ Jennifer Seidenberg (2006). *Cultural Competence in Disaster Recovery: Lessons Learned from the Hurricane Katrina Experience for Better Serving Marginalized Communities*.
<http://www.law.berkeley.edu/library/disasters/Seidenberg.pdf>

devastation of Hurricane Katrina by ensuring that the priorities of low-income women, women of color, and their families are central to the relief, recovery, and rebuilding process. The Kellogg Foundation provided a second follow-up grant from March 2007 to February 2009 for \$1,300,000, with the similar goal of helping low-income women of color and their families.

With these funds, the Ms. Foundation awarded a total of \$811,000 to 35 grantees primarily located in Louisiana and Mississippi. In addition, the Ms. Foundation awarded \$460,000 to the Women's Funding Network, which in turn re-granted \$280,000 to three women's funds. These three funds—The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, and Women's Fund of Greater Jackson—collectively awarded \$150,000 to their grantees.

⁴ Kevin Yelvington, "Coping in a Temporary Way: The Tent Cities," in *Hurricane Andrew: Ethnicity, Gender and the Sociology of Disasters*. 103-05 (Peacock, Morrow & Gladwin Ed, 1997)

Exhibit I-1: Summary of Grants Made for the Katrina Women's Response Fund.



As seen below, the Katrina Women's Response Fund represented a substantial portion of the Ms. Foundation's commitment as a percentage of MFW's total grantmaking as well as in absolute numbers.

**Exhibit I-2:
Commitments to the Katrina Women's Response Fund by the Ms. Foundation**

2006			2007			2008		
Total Grants	Katrina	%	Total Grants	Katrina	%	Total Grants	Katrina	%
\$3,599,885	\$1,336,469	37%	\$3,184,510	\$778,000	24%	\$4,636,656	\$810,000	17%

Understanding KWRF within the Larger Funding Context

According to the 2007 update from the Foundation Center,⁵ the vast majority of foundations that responded to the hurricanes went outside of their usual grantmaking guidelines to provide support to the areas affected by the disaster. Most of these foundations had not expected to continue to allocate funding for recovery and rebuilding activities outside of their programmatic and/or geographic focus areas. Given the two decades required to recover from Hurricane Andrew by Floridians, an underlying question has been—*how committed is private philanthropy to the long-term recovery of the Gulf Coast region?* The available data showed that a few foundations are still actively engaged in relief and recovery efforts beyond what they had originally anticipated. Following are some key trends two years after the storm:

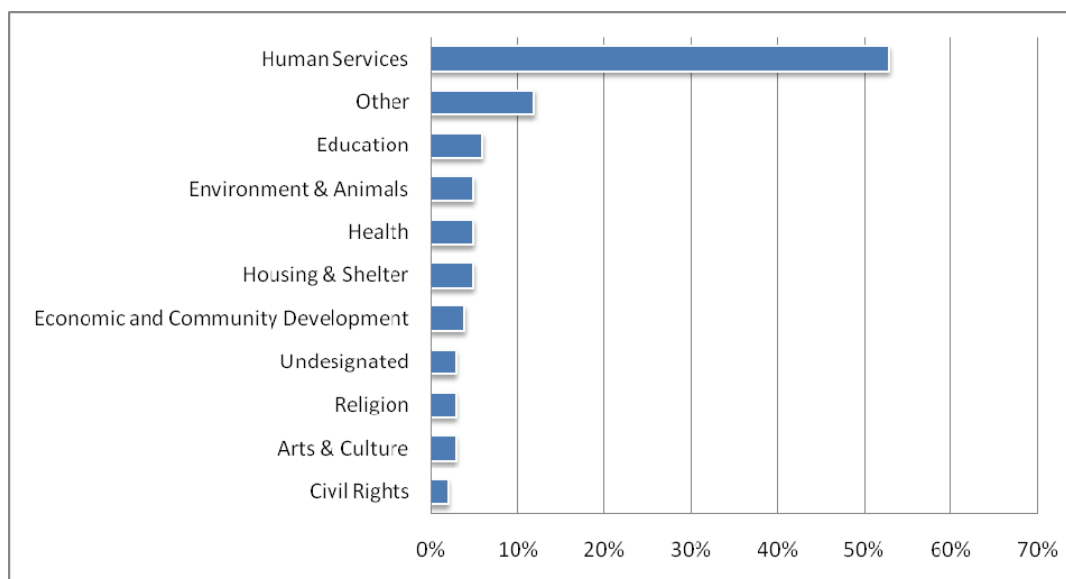
- **Private sector had contributed an estimated \$6.5 billion to the relief effort** through June 2007, of which **institutional donors had provided more than \$900 million in documented cash donations alone.** (*Giving USA*, 2007)
- **Corporate giving accounted for the majority of institutional giving.** Cash contributions by corporate giving programs and corporate foundations amounted to \$519 million, or 57% of all documented cash donations by institutional donors.
- **Corporate giving focused more on general relief efforts and the provision of human services**, while independent foundations were more likely to provide funds for education, health, and economic and community development, suggesting a greater focus on recovery and rebuilding activities.
- **Most giving went to intermediary organizations outside of Louisiana and Mississippi.** Most (83%) of the Gulf Coast response giving by foundations and corporations targeted intermediary organizations headquartered outside the Gulf

⁵ *Giving in the Aftermath of the Gulf Coast Hurricanes: Update on the Foundation and Corporate Response.* Foundation Center, August 2007.
http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/katrina_report_2007.pdf

Coast region, led by the Washington DC-based American Red Cross, which received 22% of all institutional Gulf Coast response-related giving.

- **Giving was dominated by support to relief efforts of human service agencies.** Over 53% of the number of gifts supported general relief and recovery efforts by human services agencies. Education for academic intervention to displaced students and displaced higher education faculty members was the next higher category at 6%. Providing for the rebuilding of the decimated housing stock and housing displaced persons in other regions was a major focus for a number of Gulf Coast response donors (5%). The smallest percentages went to economic and community development (3%), arts and culture, and civil rights and public affairs (2% each). See Exhibit II-3 below.

Exhibit I-3:
Gulf Coast Hurricanes Response: Foundation and Corporate Funding by Area



However, as we will discuss later in this report, more than three years after the storm, “Katrina fatigue” has visibly set in. Nonprofits have reported a noticeable decline in funding support for their recovery and rebuilding work.

In addition, Exhibit I-4 below provides an index of the state of Katrina recovery by numbers.

**Exhibit I-4:
Katrina Index: Statistics on Recovery⁶**

Rebuilding and Recovery

- Amount the Bush administration says has been spent on Gulf Coast recovery since 2005 hurricanes: **\$116 billion**
- Estimated percent of those funds that are for long-term recovery projects: **30**
- Of \$16.7 billion in Community Development Block Grants earmarked for long-term Gulf Coast rebuilding, percent that had been spent as of August 2007: **20**
- Of \$8.4 billion allocated to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for levee repair in Louisiana, percent that had been spent as of July 2007: **20**
- Percent of rebuilding costs that Gulf Coast local governments were required to pay up front to receive matching federal funds, due to a Stafford Act provision that Congress has since waived for the region: **25, later reduced by President Bush to 10**
- Percent that New York had to pay after 9/11 and Florida after Hurricane Andrew, because the federal government waived the Stafford Act's matching requirement: **0**
- As of August 2006, value of Gulf Coast contracts that a Congressional study found were "plagued by waste, fraud, abuse or mismanagement": **\$8.75 billion**
- Of the 200,000 homes in Louisiana that suffered major or severe damage from hurricanes Katrina and Rita, number that were rental units: **82,000**
- Number of Louisiana's storm-damaged rental units on track for rebuilding under state-administered restoration programs: **33,000**
- Of the 5,100 New Orleans public housing units occupied before Katrina, number that are now occupied: **about 1,500**
- Number of livable public housing units in the city that HUD has slated for demolition: **3,000**
- Number of planned replacement units that would be affordable to previous residents for which there's rebuilding money: **1,000**
- Number of families that have asked to be moved out of their FEMA trailers over concerns that they are toxic: **1,461**
- Estimated shortfall in Louisiana's Road Home rebuilding program for homeowners if everyone eligible applied: **\$5 billion**

Affordable Housing

- Scope of post-Katrina rent increases in Louisiana's and Mississippi's most storm-damaged parishes: **200 percent**
- Number of rental units available below fair market rents as of August 2007 in Mississippi's Hancock County, Katrina's Ground Zero: **0**

Economy and Jobs

- Number of jobs lost in the New Orleans area since Hurricane Katrina: **118,000**
- Percent of stores, malls and restaurants that remain closed in New Orleans: **25**
- Value of Gulf Opportunity Zone projects approved to date in Louisiana to stimulate business recovery: **\$4.5 billion**
- Number of GO Zone projects located in New Orleans: **1**
- Number of luxury condos a developer plans to build with GO Zone tax breaks near the University of Alabama, four hours from the coast: **10**
- Months after Katrina struck that the Small Business Administration finished processing loan applications submitted for the storms: **21**

⁶ See *Blueprint for Gulf Renewal: The Katrina Crisis and a Community Agenda for Action*. A Special Report by Gulf Coast Reconstruction Watch. A Project of the Institute for Southern Studies/Southern Exposure. (August/September 2007). <http://southernstudies.org/2007/08/full-report-two-years-after-katrina.html>

About the Evaluation

One of MFW and WFN's grant objectives from the beginning of the KWRF was to evaluate the impact of the Katrina Fund grants that were funded by the W.K. Kellogg grant and document and disseminate the lessons learned from this effort. MFW engaged Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) as the evaluator for the Phase 2 round of funding of KWRF. For this round of funding, SPR's goal was to critically examine the ongoing challenge of responding to the Gulf Coast storms, particularly as the distance of time has dissipated short-term private and public interest in recovery funding. Further, we were also interested in factors that *enabled* grantees to continue to focus on their on-the-ground work. Our ability to continue with the evaluation also allowed us to document some of the intermediate and longer-term outcomes of the KWRF.

Data Sources

SPR used primarily a qualitative approach to capture (1) the grantee level outcomes, and (2) the unique role of MFW, WFN, and women's funds in brokering relationships and information to ensure that the priorities of low-income women, women of color and their families are central to the Hurricane Katrina relief, recovery, and rebuilding process. We also used the WFN evaluation online tool and database, Making the Case, and spreadsheets to track outcomes reported by grantees. SPR implemented several core evaluation activities:

- ***Site Visits.*** We conducted site visits to two grantee organizations (Common Ground and Critical Resistance) funded by MFW and the Women's Fund of Greater Jackson. We also attended the Mississippi Low-Income Childcare Initiative's Summit on Child Care Subsidies. The resulting write-ups focused on community and regional needs, organizational capacity, role of grant in infrastructure development, the response to the disaster, and strategies to support grassroots efforts to empower and elevate the voices of low-income women of color.
- ***Phone Interviews of MFW and WFN Staff and consultants.*** We conducted multiple rounds of interviews with MFW and WFN staff to document MFW's strategies, activities and involvements in events in the region, outcomes, and lessons learned. Additionally, we participated in a meeting organized by WFN and provided information from the evaluation for the Katrina first anniversary report.
- ***Observations of Activities or Events.*** In order to understand the role of MFW in providing leadership and other capacity building training and connecting regional and local organizations, SPR observed in person, (1) the second anniversary community and policy forum in August 2007 that the Ms. Foundation helped to execute, and (2) the media justice training by the People's Production House organized by Mia White, consultant to the Ms. Foundation. In addition, we attended the *WFN Social Justice*

Training—Restoring Strong Communities: Strengthening Women’s Leadership for Social Justice in Memphis in November 2008.

- **Phone Interviews of Women’s Funds.** We interviewed leaders of each of the three women’s funds to document their assessment of major accomplishments and lessons learned in the areas addressed by the evaluation questions.
- **Interviews of Grantees.** In the Fall of 2007 and Winter of 2009, SPR conducted 31 interviews with grantees to document their progress, challenges, and outcomes in addressing evacuees’ needs and in elevating the voices of low-income women of color and other affected populations. In addition, we interviewed an additional 17 other community groups and funders on a related evaluation project for the 21st Century Foundation.
- **Interviews with other Nonprofits.** As part of another project, SPR conducted interviews with 10 grantees of another foundation, the 21st Century Foundation, which invested heavily in the Gulf Coast in the Fall of 2007. Although these other interviews did not speak directly to the work of the Ms. Foundation, they did give insights into the context, accelerators, and inhibitors to creating progressive social change in the Gulf Coast region.
- **Interviews of Policy Makers.** Also in attempt to capture the perspective of how the work of grantees and women’s funds have permeated policy makers’ agenda and approach to rebuilding, we attempted to schedule interviews with policy makers who have worked closely with the grantees. We were successful in scheduling one interview with Senator Cheryl Gray (State Senator, District 5 of New Orleans, Louisiana).
- **Document Review.** In order to broaden our understanding of the grant’s impact, we also reviewed grant documents, research and status reports, and grantees’ Making the Case evaluation reports.⁷

These data became the basis of the data analysis provided in this report of the work of the Katrina Women’s Response Fund.

Overview of Report

With the understanding that it may take ten years or more to recover and rebuild from the Gulf Coast storms of 2005, this report presents results three years after the storm. The work begun by MFW, WFN, women’s funds, and grantees are still ongoing. Based on the description of the goals and objectives of the Katrina Fund and the grants summarized in this chapter, we address the goals of the evaluation. As the rebuilding constitutes difficult, ongoing work, in Chapter 2,

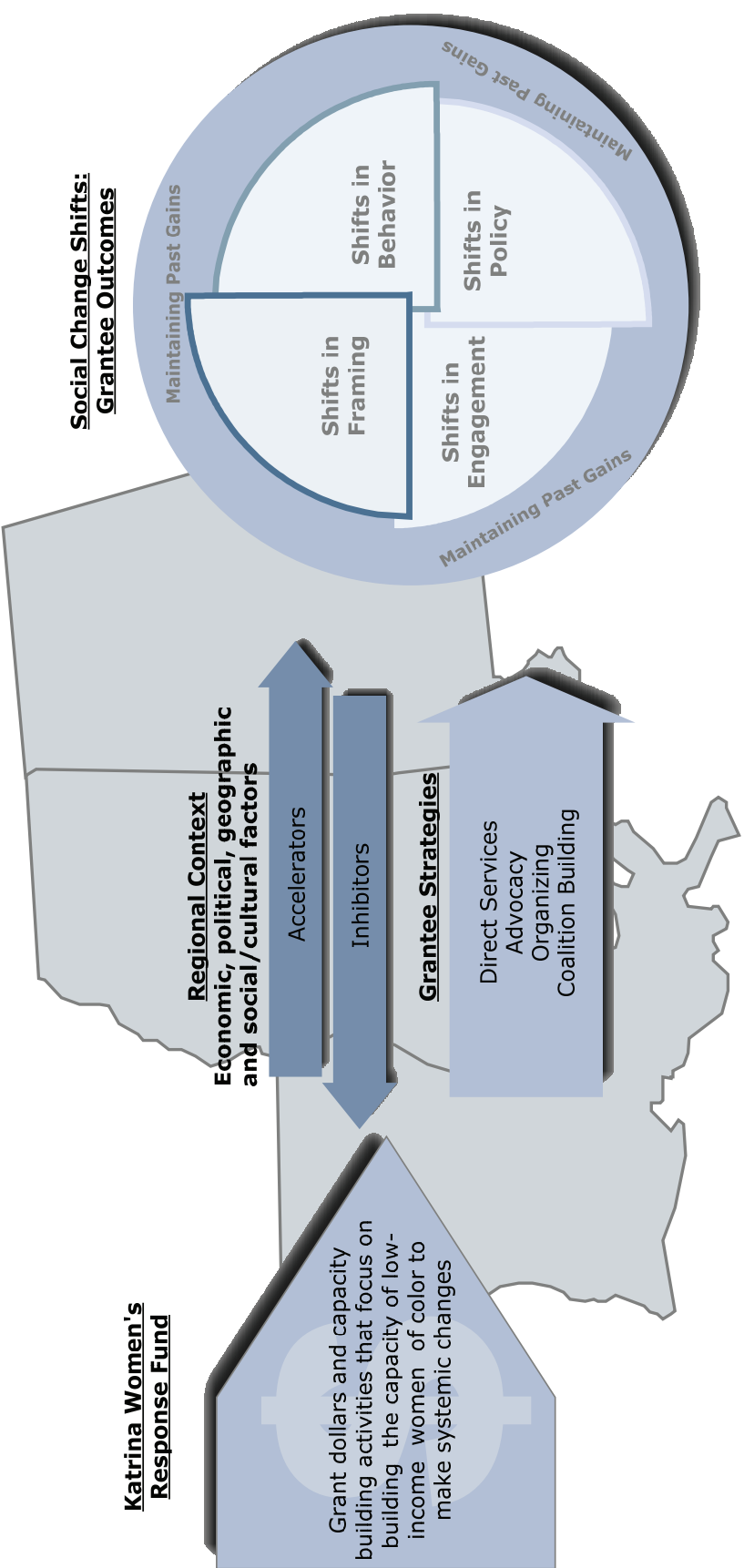
⁷ Making the Case: A Learning and Measurement Tool for Social Change (MTC) is a tool developed by WFN to record grantmaking goals, strategies, and outcomes in a centralized database. MTC is an evaluation tool that

we discuss the inhibitors or challenges and accelerators of rebuilding work. A close examination of both sets of factors within the landscape of social change in the South helps to glean lessons on how to become more strategic in the long run. In Chapter 3, we examine and summarize the outcomes based on the Katrina Fund’s focus on promoting nonprofits’ capacities, infrastructure, and outcomes for low-income women, women of color and other populations affected by the storms. In the final chapter, we assess major lessons learned and offer recommendations to MFW, WFN and women’s funds in their efforts to effectively invest and respond to disaster relief, recovery, and rebuilding.

Exhibit I-5 presents a framework for the report, and as shown, SPR used key elements from the Women’s Funding Network’s Making the Case (MTC) social change evaluation tool as an organizing structure. Specifically, these elements include identifying accelerators and inhibitors to grantee progress (Chapters 2) and measuring outcomes in terms of social change shifts, or indicators that social change has occurred (Chapter 3). Although MTC identifies five shifts, grantee outcomes are organized into four shifts in this report. The outcomes in “maintaining past gains,”—a shift that measures the degree to which grantees have been able to sustain past progress in the face of opposition—often overlapped with the other categories, especially given that much of the work in the region has been focused on *rebuilding* what was lost.

enables funds, foundations, and their grantees to record stories, measure and document social change impact. WFN and all five women’s funds trained their grantees to enter information on outcomes in this database.

**Exhibit I-5:
Framework for the Report**



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II. ACCELERATORS AND INHIBITORS TO LONG-TERM REBUILDING

There is a fork in the road. If we can continue to build strong organizations on the coast, then I see groups really developing plans for fair, equitable housing on the Gulf Coast, which leads to other benefits like a fair education program, a more accountable government. But if these groups don't get the necessary resources to survive, I see a very different picture: where you have very big business, very flashy casinos and then very poor communities.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU of Mississippi

Throughout the rebuilding process, grantees have had to contend with a number of push and pull factors in their work. As the above quote illustrates, these opposing factors often leave grantees on tenuous ground. On the one hand, recent developments such as the formation of strong community-based coalitions help to keep issues of equity on the forefront of rebuilding. On the other hand, limited funding and big business development interests can substantially weaken these efforts, and threaten to undermine the hard work of grantees as well as their sustainability as organizations. Thus, the progress of grantees is significantly influenced by various accelerators and inhibitors.

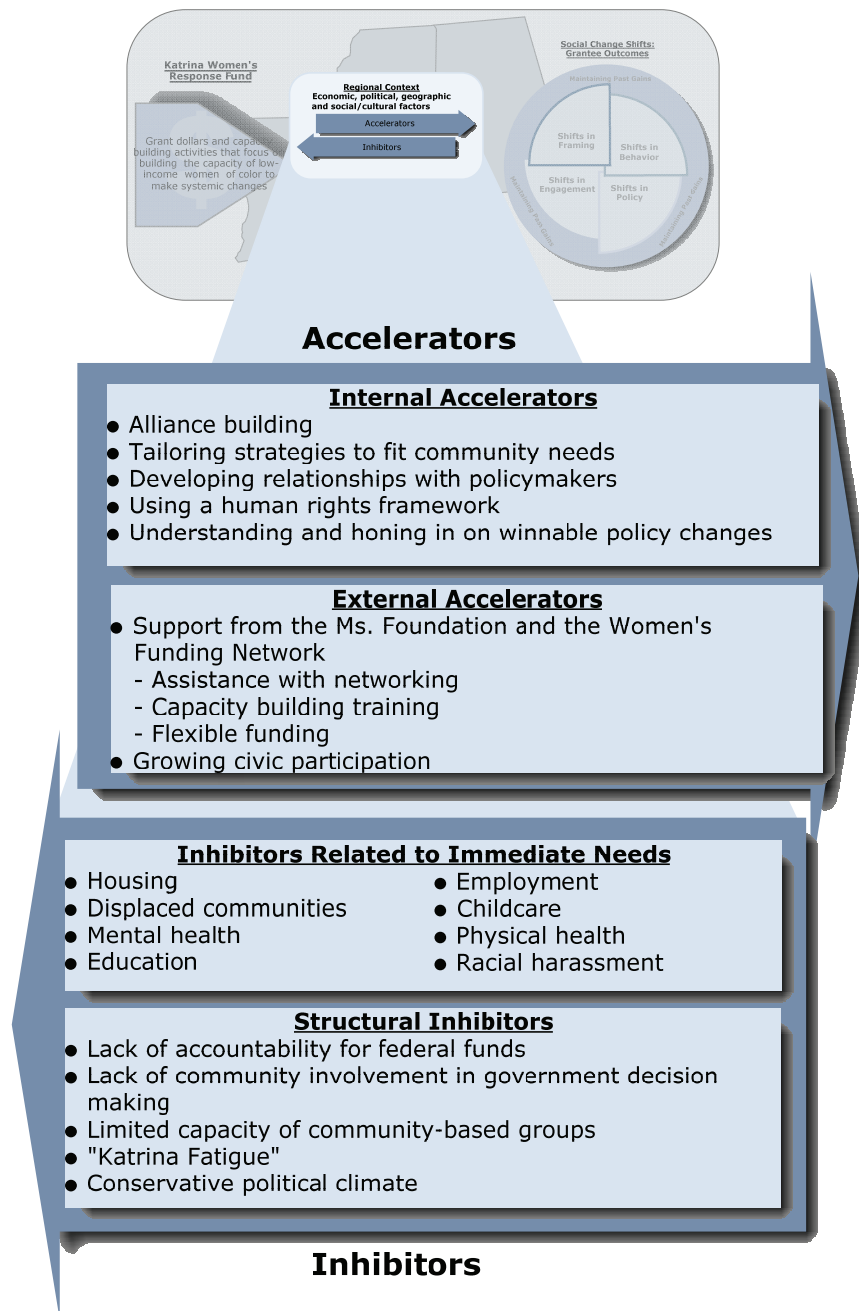
Accelerators and inhibitors can be defined as factors that are internal or external to an organization's environment that **help or hinder the organization reach its intended project goal**. It is critical for MFW, WFN, and other women's funds to identify and examine accelerators and inhibitors so that lessons learned can be gleaned from the multi-year work begun within the Katrina Women's Response Fund (KWRF). Moreover, a thorough analysis of the major ongoing accelerators and inhibitors – discussed in this chapter – will help women's funds to determine strategic next steps in their continuing work in KWRF, regional work in the South, and/or in future responses to other disasters affecting vulnerable and marginalized women as well as other affected populations.

Inhibitors are traditionally viewed in terms of those that are internal and external to an organization. However, in the case of Katrina, considering the tremendous immediate needs that still exist for the impacted communities, it is more helpful to separate inhibitors into the

categories of those that are related to immediate needs, and those that are structural in nature. In the discussion of accelerators, they will be examined in terms of the internal and external accelerators that have helped to advance the work of the grantees.

The diagram below summarizes the most commonly cited inhibitors and accelerators, which are expanded upon in the rest of the chapter.

Exhibit II-1: Accelerators and Inhibitors Overview



Inhibitors Related to Immediate Needs

Although a large focus of the Ms. Foundation grants is to ensure that the perspectives of low-income women of color are central to policy decisions about relief, recovery, and rebuilding, it has become impossible for many grantees to shift their focus primarily on policy work when immediate needs of communities have still been unmet. While significant time has passed since Katrina, people in the Gulf Coast continue to face the same struggles around basic needs that they did directly after the storm. Many of the grantees are indeed advocating for policy change, but grantees consistently emphasized that the immediate needs of communities are of primary importance. In this section, we delineate these most commonly cited inhibitors related to immediate needs.

**Exhibit II-2:
Inhibitors Related to Immediate Needs**

Inhibitors	Number of Grantees
Housing	28
Displaced communities	14
Mental health	11
Education	9
Employment	9
Childcare	8
Physical Health	8
Racial harassment	5

Housing

Availability of Housing

Three and a half years after the storm, housing continues to be the largest issue affecting low-income people throughout the Gulf Coast area. Indeed, this was cited as a critical issue by all 28 of the grantees interviewed, 13 of which saw it as their number one challenge. According to the American Red Cross, an estimated 275,000 homes were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, the majority of which were owned by middle and lower class families.¹ Approximately 71% of the housing rendered uninhabitable by the storm was affordable, low-income units,² leaving

¹ Source: <http://www.buildingonline.com/news/viewnews.pl?id=4469>

² OxfamAmerica, US Gulf Coast Recover Program Fact Sheet (2005)
http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/emergencies/hurricane_katrina

hundreds of thousands of people homeless, many of whom lacked insurance or found that their insurance did not fully cover the damages of the storm.

Thus, those who remain in the area or who seek to return face a dearth of affordable housing options. This scarcity is compounded by the fact that rents have increased exponentially since the storm. Along the Mississippi Gulf coast, rents have gone up over 30% since pre-Katrina.³ Worse still, in the city of New Orleans, fair market rental units have increased a whopping 52%.⁴ Even for those who receive federal assistance, through housing vouchers or subsidies, the value of these vouchers has not increased in proportion to the costs of living. And as many people are unemployed, or unable to find jobs that pay living wages, these rental options are simply unattainable.

For too many Gulf Coast residents, the response of the federal government has been insufficient. While programs designed to help people rebuild their homes do exist, bureaucratic challenges have impeded the rapid distribution of these services. For example, Louisiana's 'Road Home' program was designed to provide compensation for homeowners whose homes were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Yet only half of eligible applicants who applied for compensation in December 2006 had received grants one year later.⁵ Housing advocates have also pointed out that the recovery allocations distributed by the 'Road Home' program have been disproportionately skewed towards homeowners, and away from programs to rebuild affordable rental options.

With the scarcity of affordable housing, thousands of families are still living in FEMA trailers and cottages. Set up as a stopgap measure after the storm, these trailers continue to remain the only attainable housing option for over 31,000 families nationwide.⁶ This is soon to change, however, as a looming May 1 2009 deadline quickly approaches, whereby these trailers and cottages must be evacuated. Many of the families in these trailers have not been able to rebuild their homes, nor have the sufficient funds to rent. Unless new measures are put into place, these families will soon be facing homelessness. Darrell London, the manager of the Gumbo project,

³ The STEPS Coalition, *Is Mississippi Building Back Better than Before? : Problems and Solutions Regarding Mississippi's Use of CDBG Disaster Recovery Funds*. August 29, 2008.
http://www.stepscoalition.org/news/article/steps_coalition_3rd_anniversary_report_card

⁴ Brookings Institute, *The New Orleans Index, January 2009*.
http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/01_new_orleans_index.aspx

⁵ RAND Corporation, *Timely Assistance: Evaluating the Speed of Road Home Grantmaking*. (2008)
http://www.rand.org/pubs/documented_briefings/DB557/

⁶ Brookings Institute, *The New Orleans Index, January 2009*.
http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/01_new_orleans_index.aspx

an organization in Memphis set up to help Katrina's displaced population, aptly describes this problem:

The housing stock in New Orleans has been destroyed, and there's nowhere for these people to return to, and they are permanently displaced from their homes. And they're in communities that are going through recessions. So they don't have jobs, they're already displaced, and then you're talking about ending the housing program that's assisting them. Once again they become the people that care forgot.

Thus, the issue of available housing remains one of the most salient inhibitors to grantees striving to address the immediate needs of Gulf Coast community members.

Quality of Housing

*We think sometimes that the legislatures have a block and a blind spot around issues concerning conditions that people live under – it's not just the lack of availability of housing, it's the **unacceptability of housing that is available.***

- Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

Besides the scarcity of affordable housing, residents who are currently living in federally assisted housing units face their own share of problems. Many of the HUD and FEMA housing units are reported to be substandard, and landlords often refuse to make repairs to the units. Many landlords are reportedly trying to force the low-income tenants out, so that they can then raise the rent to reflect the rising market values. In other cases, the housing referrals given to displaced Katrina survivors are simply inadequate. Several of the grantees expressed the struggles that Gulf Coast residents and displaced survivors are facing regarding housing conditions:

I had been homeless, and I asked for a list of available apartments in the Memphis area. I was given a list of apartments that weren't conventional apartments, they were like crack hotels, places that were totally uninhabitable. And I was like, 'These are referrals that you're giving from places like Catholic Charities, community services agencies at the job centers?'

- Darrell London, Gumbo Project

In Jackson we're having problems with our assisted housing that is absolutely crumbling. HUD will do yearly inspections – these affordable housing units fail – but they do not do any work on them...In these government assisted housing...tenants have never had tenants' associations. They are scared to death of raising any issues...We are trying to help them...setup rental tenant associations to teach them what their rights are.

- Mary Troupe, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

Those who have been able to return to their apartment dwellings have found that the living is much more substandard than it was. The landlord doesn't want to cooperate because he wants to push people out but he knows that legally he has to honor the leases. Many times...these landlords...won't make any repairs in an effort to push people out and force them to move...We've seen a lot of that. We've also seen some of the most horrendous conditions that you can imagine.

- Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

As articulated in the above quotes, the availability and quality of housing as a major inhibitor is more complex than just a lack of affordable housing. Without ensuring sufficient and adequate housing for the survivors of Katrina, these residents will not be able to return to normalcy or rebuild their communities and move forward to demand that other policy issues that deal with equity are brought to the fore.

Disparities in Disaster Relief: The East Biloxi Story

According to many of the grantees working on the Gulf Coast, the disparities in federal assistance for those affected by Katrina began immediately after the storm. Several human rights advocates have documented the lack of disaster relief assistance provided to East Biloxi, Mississippi – a predominately low-income, African-American community. While other communities immediately received comprehensive relief services, the residents of East Biloxi were provided with only minimal assistance. Sharon Hanshaw, an East Biloxi resident who founded the Coastal Women for Change organization, described this situation:

When Hurricane Katrina hit, Salvation Army and Red Cross was on the other side of the tracks. They did not even come to the area! ...People were on the ground, just falling around, it seemed like a war camp. And just across the tracks – you had to see it to believe it! And that almost gave me a nervous breakdown. Because I didn't believe what I was seeing and I was feeling.

Among those working to rebuild the communities along the Gulf Coast, there is a sense of outrage concerning this lack of assistance. Groups like the Mississippi Workers for Human Rights have been documenting these kinds of racial disparities throughout the recovery assistance process, in order to alert policy makers and the public of human rights abuses, lest they be repeated in the future.

We show the difference between what happened in D'Iberville, where there was a full scale Red Cross unit, complete with a mobile health clinic on site, in comparison with the Red Cross center in East Biloxi, which had nothing and finally even suspended giving out the three hot meals a day. So we have been tracking those disparities.

- Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

Displaced Communities

Families remain scattered across a number of states. The families that we work with, many of them are living multiple families to one household, sometimes in one apartment. Many of them have not found employment and do not have access to any more transportation than they did when they were evacuated. Many of them want to go home, but going home means a job, housing, transportation and childcare.

- Oleta Fitzgerald, Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative

While Hurricane Katrina adversely affected most everyone living in the Gulf Coast region, those who are still internally displaced continue to face special challenges. This issue was identified as a major inhibitor by 14 of the grantees. According to the National Census Bureau, over 400,000 residents were originally displaced by Katrina, and large numbers of people continue to live outside of the Gulf Coast region, many of them residing in Metropolitan areas such as Jackson, Memphis, Birmingham, Chicago and Atlanta.⁷ Creating life in a new city is never easy, but it becomes increasingly difficult when you are without housing, employment, childcare and a social safety net.

For many of these displaced people, accessing federal assistance and relief funds has been difficult. In fact, some of the promised assistance was never granted, such as the American Red Cross's 'Means to Recovery Program,' which was supposed to give relocation funding for displaced Katrina survivors. While thousands of Katrina survivors applied for this program, few actually received the promised benefits. Darrell London of the Gumbo project described his experience:

I receive a disability income, and I was told that I was not eligible to receive furniture or any assistance through the 'Means to Recovery' program through the Red Cross because I didn't work. But that program was supposed to provide \$10,000 for a vehicle, \$7,500 and for furniture, and \$2,500 for household items. Which is a pretty good recovery if you actually get it. They didn't give it to the elderly, the disabled and the economically disadvantaged. They helped people who were already helping themselves, so that just allowed people who were sinking to sink deeper. Deeper into debt, deeper into depression, deeper into disgust.

- Darrell London, Gumbo Project

⁷ Washington Post. Katrina Displaced 400,000, Study Says. (June 7, 2006). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/06/AR2006060601729.html>

Not surprisingly, the people who were already marginalized before Katrina are having the hardest time getting stable again. This is particularly true for those who were displaced. The most vulnerable populations – the elderly, people with physical and mental disabilities, and people with low-literacy levels – have traditionally had a difficult time navigating the social service system, and now find themselves competing with other marginalized communities in poverty-stricken cities. Especially in the non-Gulf Coast areas, social service organizations no longer want to focus exclusively on Katrina survivors. As Darrell London explains, *“It’s been three years, and they have a lot of poverty in their communities so they think that the money that’s going to the displaced community should go into their community that is suffering problems.”* Thus, many of the marginalized displaced survivors find themselves without services, without jobs, and without support networks.

Mental Health

Perhaps one of the most devastating outcomes of Katrina has been the profound mental health effects on survivors. Eleven of the grantees identified mental health as a pressing concern. Alarming high rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other forms of trauma have been found among Katrina survivors throughout the Gulf Coast region. According to a study done by Harvard researchers, estimated rates of mental health disorders among survivors close to doubled after Katrina.⁸ In the New Orleans Metropolitan area alone, over 35% of people developed mental health disorders after the hurricane.⁹ A survey conducted by the International Medical Corps of over 400 people living in FEMA trailers in Louisiana and Mississippi found that 50% of the respondents met criteria for Major Depressive Disorder, and the reported rates of suicide among this sample was 15 times the rate in the rest of Louisiana.¹⁰ As Bishop Williams of the Lafayette Restoration Center in New Orleans aptly explains, *“I’ve never seen such post-traumatic stress. We really have a mental health crisis on our hands. Everything that we do requires having a social worker or counselor.”*

Unfortunately, the issue of mental health has not yet been effectively addressed. There is a severe shortage of mental health programs in the Gulf Coast region, especially those which serve

⁸ Ronald C. Kessler et al. Hurricane Katrina Advisory Group. Mental Illness and Suicidality after hurricane Katrina. (August, 2006). <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/50719.php>

⁹ Philip S. Wang, Michael J. Gruber, Richard E. Powers, Michael Schoenbaum, Anthony H. Speier, Kenneth B. Wells, and Ronald C. Kessler *Disruption of Existing Mental Health Treatments and Failure to Initiate New Treatment After Hurricane Katrina* Am J Psychiatry 2008 165: 34-41
<http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/content/vol165/issue1/index.dtl>

¹⁰ International Medical Corps. Displaced in America: Health Status Among Internally Displaced Persons in Louisiana and Mississippi Travel Trailer Parks: A Global Perspective. (August 2006).
http://www.imcworldwide.org/section/work/north_america/usa

low-income or uninsured residents. Many of the pre-existing mental health services shut down after the storm, and have not reopened since. As of January 2008 in New Orleans, an estimated 30% of people receiving mental health treatment pre-Katrina have been unable to resume their treatment.¹¹ This lack of services has had a profound effect on the region's young people, many of whom act out in school and in turn, receive punishment instead of the long-term counseling and mental health services that they require. Gina Womack, of Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC), describes this problem among school-aged youth:

After the hurricane we lost a lot of our mental health professionals and a lot of our mental health beds. And that still continues to be a problem. You find that kids are still suffering from post-Katrina stresses. You still have households with multiple families living together. You still have some families that are homeless, can't find their own places to live. There are still a lot of stresses that are around post-Katrina. You find that kids are on waiting lists to be evaluated and receive services.

The mental health effects of Katrina extend to those working in social service organizations as well. Many of the women in non-profit organizations that strive to rebuild the Gulf Coast face their own mental health issues, and without access to services, this can potentially impede the progress of these organizations. FFLIC, acknowledged this impediment in a grant report:

Probably the most important lesson we have learned is how to work as a team when many staff and members are dealing with PTSD, depression and other mental health issues, as well as confronting challenging personal life crises. Crisis can befall us all, but we know that crisis and mental health concerns are far more prevalent in poor communities, communities of color, women, and primary care takers of children (women). And for us, there is the very real and lasting effects on those who survived Hurricane Katrina.

Thus, a failure to acknowledge and address these deep and widespread mental health needs will seriously inhibit the progress of grantees as they strive to advocate for policy changes.

Consistent feedback has demonstrated that this not only applies to the residents that the grantees serve, but that the grantees themselves are in need of support services in order to continue the long struggle towards equitable rebuilding.

¹¹ Philip S. Wang, Michael J. Gruber, Richard E. Powers, Michael Schoenbaum, Anthony H. Speier, Kenneth B. Wells, and Ronald C. Kessler *Disruption of Existing Mental Health Treatments and Failure to Initiate New Treatment After Hurricane Katrina* Am J Psychiatry 2008 165: 34-41
<http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/content/vol165/issue1/index.dtl>

Education

Nine of the grantee recipients have reported glaring problems in the education system, many of which have disproportionately affected Katrina survivors. As described in the mental health section, many of the youth that survived Katrina suffer from PTSD and other mental health disorders, yet are not receiving services for these issues. Instead, schools have responded by cracking down with punitive disciplinary measures, such as increasing the number of guards, police and metal detectors, in spite of the growing shortage of basic educational supplies in the schools. Gina Womack passionately articulates this dilemma:

After Katrina, things have gotten a lot worse. One of FFLIC's biggest issues around the school system is the inadequate use of the money to fund private companies to guard the kids. Last year there has been an upward of \$20 million to put guards in the school, which is ridiculous...The funds could have been better utilized, especially after Katrina where there were sometimes 30 guards in a school [and] not enough teachers, not enough books, definitely no computers.

These punitive measures fall into the phenomenon that FFLIC terms the “schoolhouse to jailhouse” pipeline, in which youth of color are “unfairly pushed out of school,” and tracked into juvenile detention centers. Gina Womack explains that youth of color in the New Orleans school districts receive suspensions and expulsions at rates much higher than the national averages. In addition to reactionary measures against youth who act out, she argues that many students are expelled for “ridiculous reasons,” such as uniform violations, selling candy at school, or carrying cell phones. The students who are expelled do not receive adequate representation at school disciplinary hearings, and too often are funneled into the juvenile justice system.

The Katrina-affected youth who were displaced to different cities face troubles of their own. In Jackson, Mississippi, the displaced New Orleans youth were immediately targeted by school district administrators, and assumed to be gang members. Nsombi Lambright of the ACLU in Mississippi describes this situation:

As soon as those New Orleans kids hit the schools, it was just drama all over the place. Schools didn't know what to do with them, and they immediately just started labeling them: 'These black kids - gangs. You're from New Orleans? Oh, you must be in a gang.' And they started throwing them out of school left and right.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU of Mississippi

Education represents a significant agent for change; it is a societal mechanism to ensure that younger generations receive the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing members of their communities. During this critical rebuilding process, a further disintegration of already troubled schools throughout the Gulf Coast will prove to be a major inhibitor in helping communities move towards stability. Increasing the numbers of youth who are expelled from

schools and funneled into the juvenile justice system will only create fissures in families and communities, and will ensure that those who are already marginalized – low income people of color – will continue to remain excluded as the Gulf Coast rebuilds around them.

Lack of Employment Opportunities

According to nine of the grantees, a lack of employment opportunities has further stymied the rebuilding of Katrina survivors' lives. This is especially true with regard to jobs that pay a living wage. While rental costs throughout the Gulf Coast have uniformly risen, wages have not. Women who were displaced and can no longer afford the exorbitant housing prices face the brunt of this, as many women in the Gulf Coast are single heads of household, and lack job skills and work experience. Carol Burnett of the Moore Community House in Biloxi, Mississippi, describes this dilemma:

A lot of men can't find jobs around here too, and they have quite a bit of experience. So getting somebody who hasn't typically had a job from 8 to 5 in a few years because they've had children, and not a developed resume, trying to get them in is hard. Competitively, most of these women have five children, so they haven't worked in several years, because they've been raising their children.

Women in the Gulf Coast who do possess competitive job skills face challenges as well. This is especially true concerning the “non-traditional” jobs for women, such as those in the construction sector, which is one of the few sectors offering above living-wage jobs. Carol Burnett explains, “*There's a log of resistance on the part of construction companies to hiring women. That's been a big challenge.*” And for those women who are able to obtain these jobs, there is still discrimination post-hire. Many women are not receiving equal wages as men for the same positions, and others are experiencing sexual harassment on the job from their co-workers and supervisors.

Childcare

An issue that's particularly critical that serves really as a barrier for many women to be able to return the workforce is this issue of a lack of available childcare, particularly in the city of New Orleans. We have about two-thirds of the facilities that have remained unopened two years after the storm. So that makes it particularly difficult for women to be able to reenter the workforce with any sort of consistency and regularity, particularly since often times they're less formal, familiar networks have not been restructured. Many of their communities have not been totally reformed, so as a result people seem to be more reliant on formalized systems of childcare, but those systems really have not been rebuilt in any meaningful way.

- Avis Jones-DeWeever, Institute for Women's Policy Research

An often overlooked challenge for women affected or displaced by Katrina is the lack of subsidized childcare. Eight of the grantees identified this immediate need as a significant inhibitor to their work. This is a major barrier for single, head of household women who are seeking employment. Without assistance for childcare expenses, the majority of low-income women in the Gulf Coast are unable to assume full-time work, and thus pay for their housing. This is especially true for displaced survivors, who previously relied on extended family networks to serve as informal childcare providers:

One of the ways in which [poor women of color] were able to survive is that... [they] had intergenerational networks that they were able to rely on one another when times got tough. They lived often times within close proximity of each other, particularly within the city of New Orleans, so they were able to support each other when somebody needed somebody to watch a child or someone was a little bit low on the pantry. You could...depend on someone else's support to help you when times are lean. But, because of the displacement, the spotty redevelopment, it's been nearly impossible for those networks to come back.

- Avis Jones-DeWeever, Institute for Women's Policy Research

The problem of affordable childcare services was exacerbated by the constant movement of the displaced survivors as they sought to find assisted housing. Angie Wright of the Leading Edge Institute describes this struggle:

FEMA bounced people around so often, as did HUD, so that even if they found a childcare center that had an opening that they could afford, that was near to where they worked or lived, they could get moved. And suddenly the childcare center was across town and they would have to start from scratch. It was just really insane.

As evidenced through these quotes, childcare remains a critical lynchpin in providing comprehensive services to address the immediate needs of Katrina survivors. Because this service is often forgotten – or is the first to be eliminated during budget cuts – it remains a significant inhibitor for grantees serving low-income women of the Gulf Coast.

Physical Health

In addition to mental health, Katrina took a toll on healthcare in general. For communities that were predominately low-income prior to the storm, this toll was devastating. Eight of the grantees identified the lack of healthcare services as a significant inhibitor. Louisiana's Charity Hospital – one of the major public hospitals and primary source of trauma treatment for the poor – closed after the storm. According to the National Association of Community Health Centers,

an estimated 100 health centers along the Gulf Coast were damaged by Katrina, with at least seven of those centers completely destroyed.¹² Due to this damage, records washed away and hundreds of patients lost their medication prescriptions. This was particularly damaging for the Gulf Coast's low-income elderly population, many of whom cannot remember which medications they were taking and no longer have ready access to health care services. As Avis Jones-DeWeever of the Institute for Women's Policy Research explains:

It's...sad to see...the elders of those communities...dying off in such alarming proportions since Katrina...[It's] the stress, [but] also a lot has to do with the breakdown in communications in terms of their healthcare history...A lot of them didn't know, for example, the names of the medications they were taking. A lot of those records were simply washed away. Trying to reconstruct that information became almost impossible for a lot of people.

This example underscores the fact that Katrina disproportionately affected –and continues to affect – people who were already marginalized before the storm. Therefore addressing the immediate needs of marginalized people becomes critical if they are to be included in the rebuilding process.

Racial Harassment

The criminal justice system sort of went into this state of emergency deal. So you had people being arrested for being out past curfew, and it just became a police state. And in some ways that kind of culture is still going on down there. Since Katrina, we've seen an increase in complaints in our office about police brutality and racial profiling on the Gulf Coast.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU, Mississippi

According to five of the grantees, racial harassment continues to be a problem affecting the Gulf Coast. There have been numerous reports of people of color being harassed, beaten or tasered in their communities and homes.¹³ This becomes a threat to the rebuilding efforts of the community-based organizations, many of whom are rooted in low-income communities of color. As Mayaba Liebenthal from Critical Resistance in New Orleans explains, this policing approach runs counter to the re-establishment of public safety:

¹² The Children's Health Fund and Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health. Meeting the Challenge of the Post-Katrina Health Care Crisis: A Medical Marshall Plan. (December 2, 2005) <http://www.childrenshealthfund.org/CWPFinalX.pdf>

¹³ American Civil Liberties Union, Broken Promises: 2 Years After Katrina (August 2007). <http://www.aclu.org/prison/conditions/31370pub20070820.html>

It's just constant demonization. We have constant police harassment. People don't even find it strange that the cops ride with their lights on. And we still have the military police here and nobody knows what their rights are with the military police...This isn't creating safety, it's just creating fear.

As all of the inhibitors related to immediate needs described thus far demonstrate, there is much work to be done in order to help people gain normalcy and reconstruct their lives after the storm. Darrell London of the Gumbo Project described the situation aptly, when he said, “*We’ve been in survival mode for the last three years.*” Indeed, many of the grantees are still scrambling just to ensure that community members are granted the basic human rights of housing, education and healthcare. An understanding of these inhibitors is helpful for women’s funds in order to identify existing gaps in services, and to help them strategize about where to put resources in the future. In the case of Katrina, it is imperative for funders and philanthropists to recognize these immediate needs, as they must be addressed if larger policy changes are to be tackled.

Structural Inhibitors

In addition to the inhibitors related to the basic needs of Gulf Coast residents, there have also been larger structural inhibitors that have posed challenges for the grantees. Structural inhibitors refer to the larger contextual factors that the grantees find themselves in – factors that influence and oftentimes determine what the grantees can accomplish programmatically or politically. These most common structural inhibitors – as identified by the grantees – are outlined below.

**Exhibit II-3:
Structural Inhibitors**

Inhibitors	Number of Grantees
Lack of accountability for federal funds	11
Lack of community involvement in government decision making	10
Limited capacity of community-based groups	10
“Katrina Fatigue”	7
Conservative Political Climate	7

Lack of Accountability for Federal Funds

[Legislators] have told us, ‘We don’t have any means of seeing that they do this or do that with federal money.’ The main thing that we’re wanting is to get this Oversight Bill passed...because it brings to the forefront how much is coming in and where it’s actually going and why it is not being used in the purposes it was meant to be used for.

- Mary Troupe, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

Although federal funding was specifically earmarked to rebuild low-income housing in the Gulf Coast, not all state governments have been accountable for this funding. Eleven of the grantees identified this as a significant problem. In Mississippi, for example, the governor approved a state plan to divert \$600 million from the HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in order to expand and rebuild a port, including a large resort and casino. The CDBG grants were originally allocated to replace and repair public housing, help small landlords fix their units, and encourage the construction of low- to moderate- housing. Yet because of this diversion, the money will instead be used to rebuild a port that reputedly only suffered \$15 million dollars worth of damage. The Mississippi state government is clearly favoring the interests of big business development over those of low-income communities. Melinda Harthcock of the Steps Coalition aptly summarizes this situation:

We haven't spent any money on public housing...we've spent virtually no money on...affordable rental units. Little by little the casinos are inching in...and destroying long-term, richly diverse communities...Now basically the corporations have this great opportunity to move in and just move everybody out and take over the whole coast for tourism, and our governments are supporting them.

The Mississippi governor was able to do this because of the absence of a legislature oversight committee for Katrina-related federal funding. The State legislature, with the backing of dozens of community-based organizations, attempted to create such an oversight committee, but the governor vetoed it. Thus, with little restrictions placed on his spending, he has been giving preference to casinos and land developers over community rebuilding. This has been incredibly dispiriting to community organizers, who see this as a complete lack of government accountability. While many community groups have been working tirelessly to reconstruct their neighborhoods, they are slowly seeing the landscape of the Gulf Coast change:

One year after Katrina we demonstrated on Beau Rivage Hotel (a local casino) because it was one of the only places that was up and running after Katrina. Can you believe that? It was one of the only places that had been brought up to speed. Everywhere else, houses were still down, people were still living in trailers, everywhere else was a nightmare, but here they are glitz and glamour again even though people are living in hell.

- Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

This inhibitor highlights the importance of leadership development training among community-based organizations. Without effective ways of affecting the political infrastructure of state governments, smaller groups will continue to feel disempowered.

Lack of Community Involvement in Government Decision Making

At the root of all of these issues is the lack of community involvement in the decision-making process in local state and national government. So people are still not involved – or still don't have impact in the decisions that are made about them. Over the last three years that has slowly changed as groups have become more empowered to participate in this decision making process, but we still have a long way to go.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU of Mississippi

According to ten of the grantees, in addition to the lack of accountability on the part of the government, another structural inhibitor to progressive rebuilding is the lack of civic participation in governmental decision-making. In the Gulf Coast, community members do not have a strong history of political advocacy or participation in local councils or legislative boards, and many individuals are unaware of the channels for doing so. Because of this lack of experience, community groups must learn as they go, and many have not yet become savvy in the political advocacy process. As Melissa Harthcock of the Steps coalition explains:

The people on the coast...they have never really been active nor involved in the legislative end, the advocacy end. I think that's truly hurt them after Katrina. They've been having to catch up and they don't know really how to do it. But we've got to have the voices of the people who are truly being affected...You've got to put the face on the issue, and it's got to be in their words.

Although this phenomenon is slowly changing, as described in the accelerators section, community groups still have a long way to go in terms of participation in local and state political processes. On the other hand, as described in Chapter 3, this participation has been encouraged and supported by the women's funds with resources and capacity building training in order to affect structural change.

Newly Formed Community Groups Lack Capacity

There were so many groups that emerged after the storm. They were just groups that formed responding to an emergency. They had no long-term strategy, they really didn't know if they were going to survive after the storm.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU of Mississippi

Due to the widespread devastation caused by Katrina coupled with the failure of federal assistance to meet community recovery needs, many local organizations formed in order to advocate for their respective rights. While this was a tremendous development, many of these organizations lacked capacity, funding or experience in community organizing or policy advocacy. Many of these organizations were well aware of injustices inflicted on their communities, yet had no clear agenda for equitable rebuilding. For example, many organizations

recognized that affordable housing was a dire issue, yet lacked clarity about the mechanisms for creating housing opportunities. Others lacked the resources, such as funding for computers or full-time staff, to maximize their effectiveness. Ten of the grantees identified this as a major inhibitor. For example, Sharon Hanshaw, of the newly formed organization Coastal Women for Change in East Biloxi, Mississippi, described how arduous a process it was just to get their own office space. Thus, while these organizations may speak for the community, they may not yet have the capabilities to translate those voices into the creation of effective change.

A major contributor to the limited capacity for community-based groups is the lack of multi-year financial support dedicated to post-Katrina rebuilding. As many of these organizations are new, long term funding is imperative in order for them to get off the ground and create sustainable long-term strategies. Unfortunately, this type of funding is rare, and it is waning. The available funding is already stretched thin, and according to many of the Ms. grantees, it is difficult to leverage their funding to support newly formed NGO's. They describe these new NGO's as very community based, extremely innovative, but severely underfunded. And without the funding, their capacity will inevitably be limited.

Katrina Fatigue

Now is the time for people to recognize that a certain amount of Katrina fatigue has set in and that Katrina fatigue leaves the resources in shambles for work that has to continue, and can no longer be seen as "Katrina work" but has to be seen as organizing, as infrastructure, as economic development, as social justice work. It can't be seen as Katrina work because if it's seen as Katrina work, many people think that Katrina is over with now and that now that Katrina is over, people should be able to move on and get their lives together.

- Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

Over three years have passed since Katrina, yet much remains to be done in terms of rebuilding. Thousands of people are still living in FEMA trailers and will soon face eviction. Thousands have yet to rebuild their homes or receive any federal compensation. Thousands are still displaced from their communities and have not been able to return. Yet in the public eye, Katrina has ceased to be an ongoing concern. Whereby volunteer groups were quick to form in the months following the storm, those sentiments have slowly dried up as people have shifted their focus onto more recent disasters. Katrina-related issues have received less press, and therefore, the general public is not aware of the continuing struggles facing the Gulf Coast residents.

This creates a challenge for community groups who need continued funding. Funders and the public alike are ready to move on, even though the problem is far from being adequately

addressed. Thus, this ‘Katrina Fatigue’ was identified by seven grantees as a major inhibitor to future rebuilding. Nsombi Lambright describes the lack of public awareness of the continued struggles in the Gulf Coast:

The further we get from Katrina, just keeping it on the radar as a human rights issue has been a struggle. When we had the housing hearing the other week, people were like ‘God – you’re still in FEMA trailers?’ They didn’t have a clue! If they’re not from the coast, they just don’t know, they think everything’s ok. Because the people that are suffering the most on the coast, they’re the biggest advocates, they’re fighting for everybody else

This is a significant inhibitor, as the dwindling funding has a direct effect on the capacity of community-based groups. Therefore, it is important for grant makers to remember that the post-Katrina issues are critical if rebuilding of the Gulf Coast – and overall socioeconomic improvement – is to happen.

Conservative Political Climate

One of the things that’s been a real struggle is trying to get women to be more engaged in their political world, really at every level, because the leadership here locally and at the state level is so male. The efforts to make that different are really hard because the cultural environment here is so patriarchal – very religious, very socially conservative. But I think that continuing to create women’s leadership is really important to do and part of a long term solution to address issues of equity.

- Carol Burnett, Moore Community House

Another factor inhibiting the progress of post-Katrina rebuilding is the overwhelmingly conservative political climate in the region. Seven of the grantees emphasized the challenges that this dynamic creates for them. Especially in the states of Alabama and Mississippi, organizations attempting to promote progressive policy changes are often met with fierce resistance. As Virginia Sweet of the Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham explains, until more women are represented in the state legislature and in corporate boards, she does not foresee any possible in-roads for legislation designed to improve the lives of women or low-income communities. In fact, she argues that Alabama is too conservative to even propose policies such as equal wages for women, as the current administration would never even consider them:

In the State of Alabama, with our legislature -- many of whom have charges against them -- and a very dysfunctional 1901 constitution written by five white men to preserve their wealth, it is fruitless to go directly, so you must come up with something that is very, very out of the box in order to make progress in this state.

In Mississippi, progressive organizations have faced similar struggles with a state legislature that has consistently vetoed policy recommendations with the aim of creating equitable social and economic conditions. Below, two committed activists share their experiences:

There was after Katrina a great deal of effort on the part of advocacy groups and non-profits to come together to press for a more equitable recovery. And we went to public hearings and we participated in city and state level reports that were including recommendations for how the recovery ought to go.... And time and time again, even if we could get recommendations included in the report – if they were recommendations that were trying to do anything with: (a) people with low to moderate income, or (b) people who needed some kind of public service – those recommendations were consistently ignored

- Carol Burnett, Moore Community House

It's kind of a continuous fight even to keep our head above water because it seems like every step we take requires an incredible amount of resources from our social and environmental justice community. Just a huge infusion of our time and our energy and our resources. And the governor can derail it with just the flick of his finger.

- Melinda Harthcock, Steps Coalition

As detailed in this section, it is clear that the grantees face fierce challenges in their work. They do not work in a vacuum, and therefore must contend with unsavory governmental policies and actions. This is even more challenging for the newer grantees that lack experience or capacity. Therefore, it remains important for grant makers to recognize these challenges and continue to fund programs that address needs while simultaneously investing in capacity building, leadership training, and infrastructure development.

Accelerators to Rebuilding

Although grantees face a number of inhibitors in their work, they were also able to identify a number of external and internal factors that facilitate the successful achievement of their goals.

External Accelerators

External accelerators are factors within the greater community context that facilitate the ability of grantees to reach their intended goals. Throughout the grantees interviews and reports, the two most consistent external factors mentioned are illustrated in the following chart:

**Exhibit II-4:
External Accelerators**

Inhibitors	Number of Grantees
Support from the Ms. Foundation and WFN	
Assistance with networking	15
Capacity building trainings	8
Flexible funding	7
Growing civic participation	9

Support from the Ms Foundation and WFN

Without exception, every grantee attributed the support from the Ms. Foundation or the WFN and its women's fund grantees as a critical accelerator in helping them to become more effective.

Assistance with networking

It's opened a lot of doors for us. We've met a lot of wonderful people and organizations...the networking has just been phenomenal.

- Mary Troupe, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

Fifteen of the grantees described the Ms. Foundation's assistance with networking as an extremely valuable accelerator to their work. Through the Ms. Foundation, grantees were able to network with both organizations doing similar work as well as with other funders. This has been instrumental in building the alliances necessary to create a larger movement dedicated to equitable rebuilding in the Gulf Coast. Following are three examples of different types of networking assistance:

Convenings

The Ms. Foundation has financially supported several convenings throughout the Gulf Coast, which have allowed activists and staff members from various organizations to come together, network, and receive information and training in key areas. For example, the Ms. Foundation support enabled the NAACP of Mississippi to implement monthly 'Women of Color Convenings.' Derrick Johnson of NAACP describes the convenings:

Our first year with Ms. Foundation, we did women of color convenings where women from different backgrounds...met and gathered in different parts of the state. That has created a really good network that still exists. They have monthly conference calls...where they talk about their agenda and what focus they want to have.

According to Derrick Johnson, these convenings have enabled the NAACP to hone in on the specific issues affecting women across the state, and to broaden their approach to be more inclusive of diverse communities. These convenings have also given women across the state more access to people in power, as local legislators frequently attend.

The Women's Funding Network also hosted a successful convening in November 2008, in which 50 representatives of women's funds and their grantees throughout the region gathered to receive capacity-building training in fundraising and organizational development. A highlight of this convening was a panel discussion that exhibited women-led solutions within various advocacy efforts. Participant said of this convening, *"This experience was more beneficial and empowering than I could've ever imagined. I am eager to get back to work and apply what I have learned."* The Women's Funding network followed this convening with the creation of an online discussion group, so that the participants could continue to network with each other and share best practices.

Informal Introductions

In addition to organized convenings, grantees have also credited Ms. Foundation and WFN staff for making frequent introductions to other organizations and funders. These introductions have often led to formal collaborations among organizations or the procurement of additional funding. One grantee shares the pivotal role played by a staff member of Ms. Foundation in helping them to secure contact with other people.

Mia [White] and people at Ms. were very helpful in connecting us to other women's groups that could provide resources and counsel and connections to the women's funding circle that connects primarily white women of means with women of color in the rural south. I think their championing of our work was critical to us getting funding from other sources

- Oleta Fitzgerald, Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative

Thus, these introductions often lead to increased funding sources, which is a profound external accelerator for grantees.

Showcasing Grantees

Being on the Ms. Foundation website when we haven't been able to financially put together [our own web site] has really helped to tell our story and who we are after losing my church in New Orleans. The networking has just really been invaluable.

- Bishop Williams, Lafayette Restoration Center

Grantees have also described a benefit from the publicity gained by simply being a grantee of the Ms. Foundation. For example, the grantee profile stories on the Ms. Foundation's website have

helped some of the smaller organizations to publicize their work. In addition, when grantee staff members received special awards or honors from the Ms. Foundation such as the Gloria Steinem, this public recognition helps to spotlight their organization and promote their work to a national audience.

Capacity building trainings

Eight of the grantees mentioned that they received significant benefit from the capacity building trainings offered through the Ms. Foundation. Several examples of these trainings follow:

- **Organizational Development Training:** The ACLU of Mississippi described a regional ‘organizational development training’ in New Orleans that focused on strengthening their skills in fundraising, human resources, and financial management. They found this training extremely useful to the organization. In turn, the ACLU has been able to provide organizational development trainings to several newly formed NGO’s throughout the Gulf Coast.
- **Media training:** Ms. sponsored the People’s Production House to give media trainings to several of their grantees. For example, they taught staff of the North Gulfport Community Land Trust (NGCLT) the media skills necessary to develop their own radio station, which they then use for fundraising purposes and to keep the community informed about recovery efforts. Says Jason Mackenzie, Executive Director of NGCLT, *“It’s been wonderful. They really inspired a lot of us on the ground. We’re in the process of trying to start our own radio station right now based on our work with them. We put together a great little audio piece.”*
- **Digital Oral History Training:** Sharon Hanshaw of Coastal Women for Change in East Biloxi, credits the Ms. Foundation for providing the training necessary to create digital oral histories in her community. Coastal Women for Change are using these oral histories to document the richness of their community’s history, the disparities experienced post- Katrina, and the stories of East Biloxi residents as they strive to rebuild their lives.

In addition to strengthening the skills of the grantees, these capacity-building trainings have also served as valuable opportunities for staff members to take time out from the daily struggles of their work and focus on supporting themselves. As Alisha Johnson of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance describes, this professional development process is not only educational, but also grounding for the participants:

After having been in that work and in the trenches for weeks and months...you start to feel disconnected and consumed by it. To be able to come out...into a technical assistance, a training, a supportive environment, reconnecting to other people...across the country who are doing the same thing is very reinvigorating.

Based on this feedback, it is clear that capacity building trainings are a much-appreciated service for grantees, and it is critical that they be continued, as many of the small organizations still lack technical expertise and organizational development.

Flexible Funding

At least seven of the grantees described the Ms. Foundation's and the Women's Funding Network's funding as flexible, in that their grants did not focus on specific projects, but instead allowed rebuilding to be viewed within a broader context. Unlike other funders, they allowed their grants to be used towards 'non-traditional' activities, such as policy advocacy, research, and capacity building – all of which are critical in order to build the necessary infrastructure for social change. The grantees also appreciated the trust that Ms. and WFN bestowed upon them to identify their own needs and come up with the best strategies to address them, instead of projecting a "top-down" agenda for the grantees to follow. Below, grantees share their views on this funding:

The Ms. Foundation funding is what I would classify as broader funding. Most of your funders, for instance, the Mid-South Foundation and so forth, want a project. Although projects are good, there is not a lot of funding to do the advocacy work, the research, to fund you to be able to go and sit and talk and have hands on with the people who are being affected.

- Mary Troupe, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

There's less of a fear of funding organizations that will actually do some policy work...It really is a relief when organizations like the Ms. Foundation step up and understand that this is bigger than a servicing organization; the policy factor is a major part of doing the work that we do, otherwise we continue to put band-aids on the problem and never change the actual source of the pain.

- Bill Chandler, Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance

The openness and willingness to allow a grantee to be able to evaluate where they are and if there are changes that need to be made, not being penalized – 'Oh they didn't do what they said they were going to do.' That openness and trust of our judgment here on the ground that we're doing the work that's needed in these communities.

- Jackie Jones, Jeremiah Group

Clearly, this flexibility is a major accelerator for the grantees, as it allows them to focus on addressing community needs as they feel fit, without being restricted by guidelines that may not be appropriate.

More Consistent MFW Support Sought

While in general the grantees have viewed support from the Ms. Foundation as a strong accelerator, it is important to note that several grantees felt that their presence and support was inconsistent throughout the two grant cycles. This was especially true for grantees after the first round of funding, when some staff turnover occurred at the Ms. Foundation, and grantees were confused about who the appropriate point people were. Some grantees have reported that since the changes in staff occurred, they have had serious difficulties in establishing contact with the Ms. Foundation. This has been extremely frustrating to the grantees, especially because it contrasted sharply with the prior support that they received and the substantive engagement of staff that occurred in the first round of KWRF funding. Currently, however, a Southern Strategy Coordinator is permanently located in New Orleans. This will create a more consistent MFW presence and level of engagement in the Southern region.

Growing Civic Participation

I've seen people growing stronger and become more involved in the city council meetings. Now you see more and more people attending city council meetings regularly, and keeping up with the process. ...Now people are building strategic relationships with their local representatives and their representatives at the state level, and they're becoming more involved, and they're impacting decisions that are being made.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU of Mississippi

Another major accelerator to the grantees work has been a growing movement across the Gulf Coast Region of civic participation in local politics. While in general, communities do not have a significant influence in government decision-making (as described in the inhibitors section), there has nevertheless been an increase of “normal, everyday folk” who have been seeking out mechanisms to get involved. This is partially due to the community-based organizations that have been tirelessly organizing and promoting human rights advocacy throughout the region. This may also be spurred by the fact that communities are simply tired of being left out of the rebuilding process, and have suffered too many hardships to remain silent. Whatever the case, civic participation has blossomed in the region in a way that was not present before Katrina. This is a major accelerator to the work of the grantees, as they are having an easier time involving community members in their work. Sharon Hanshaw of the Coastal Women for Change, describes the extraordinary community organizing that occurred when the school board threatened to close a school in East Biloxi:

The first thing I did was got a petition. These people[from the community] got the petition, went enrolling with the petition [got signatures,] went to the school board meeting, and went on with it! In the past – NEVER, ever would they have reached out and done that!”

This action by the community members resulted in the school remaining open. Thus, this change in civic involvement has greatly accelerated the work of the grantees.

Internal Accelerators

In addition to the contextual factors, a number of organizational characteristics and practices also accelerate the work that grantees are doing. The internal accelerators below were highlighted by several grantees as being critical to their work.

**Exhibit II-5:
Internal Accelerators**

Inhibitors	Number of Grantees
Alliance building	25
Tailoring their strategies to fit community needs	9
Developing relationships with policymakers	5
Using a human rights framework	4
Understanding and honing in on winnable policy changes	1

Alliance Building

One of the most successful strategies listed by many of the grantees has been alliance building. Indeed, 25 of the grantees acknowledged this as a critical accelerator. Grantees have found that through partnering with other organizations – many of which are working to address similar issues in complementary ways – they can make a greater impact in terms of community organizing or policy advocacy. Many grantees have realized that due to the complexity of rebuilding, it makes sense to join forces so that an issue such as poverty can be tackled from various angles. One grantee explains how these conversations and alliances have helped to win policy gains:

Now people are linking up a child's home and social environment with their quality of education. That's a real discussion which builds bridges and allows people to talk across issue lines in ways in which we can strategize and look at how we can impact policy in those areas...Some of the key actors in the state senate and house lost their election bid because of the information we're putting out and the education that was provided to the community. Those are all really positive achievements.

- Derrick Johnson, NAACP, Mississippi

Alliance building has been one of the most powerful accelerators of the grantees, and one that has created the beginnings of a strong – and growing – community-based movement in the Gulf

Coast. This movement is critical in order to affect larger structural change, and is one of the major outcomes of the grantees, which is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Tailoring Strategies to Fit Community Needs

Another internal accelerator cited by grantees has been the ability to be flexible and to adapt programs in ways that best fit the identified community needs. Nine of the grantees cited specific examples of how this has been a useful strategy in achieving their goals. One example of this has been the altered tactic of the ACLU of Mississippi regarding its community trainings. While they originally wanted to provide “Access to Government” trainings in the Gulf Coast so that they could educate community members about the political process, they found that even years after Katrina, community members were still mired in problems related to the lack of affordable housing. Therefore, the ACLU made a strategic decision to tailor their trainings towards organizational development workshops, in order to provide community based groups with the necessary skills to advocate for affordable housing. This was a change in strategy for the ACLU, but one that proved to be effective:

We never saw ourselves as an organizational development type group, but in order to facilitate a strong rebuilding of the Gulf Coast we recognized that the building of local organizations is critical. We have to play a role in making sure that there are strong local groups on the Gulf Coast to address some of these issues.

- Nsombi Lambright, ACLU of Mississippi

While grantees have proven willingness to be flexible with their strategies, they are not always equipped with the tools or resources to adequately respond to the changing community needs. Therefore, it is important for grant makers to recognize that in order to support flexibility, it is necessary to invest in capacity building for the grantees.

Developing Relationships with Policymakers

An accelerator for five of the grantees is developing relationships with local policymakers. Even some of the smaller community-based organizations have recognized this strategy as an effective accelerator in achieving policy and programmatic gains. For example, the Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative has worked to create a strong relationship with the school superintendent in New Orleans. This relationship has resulted in the ability to place their own staff within eight New Orleans charter schools, thus creating a link between the schools and more comprehensive community services. Another organization that has successfully undertaken this strategy is the Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children (FFLIC). By developing a relationship with the Lieutenant Governor, they have been able to educate him about critical juvenile justice issues. According to FFLIC, this relationship is already showing substantial pay-offs:

We just had a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, and he was just basically parroting a lot of the things that we were talking about... that I know he only knows because we brought it to that table. And he knows that we're holding him accountable. And you could tell that he obviously has some political things that he's going to be working towards, and he knows he can't do that without us.

- Gina Womack, *Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children*

This accelerator has proven effective for many grantees, and has led to significant policy wins, which are further discussed in Chapter 3.

Using a Human Rights Framework

There's something greatly wrong in our society that makes one group of people have to constantly suffer. Human rights are being violated across the United States and we have to continue to build our movement to make that known and make a change.

- Gina Womack, *Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children*

An interesting accelerator for several of the grantees has been to position the post-Katrina rebuilding issues in a human rights framework. Although policy makers and the popular press often “pigeon-hole” the problems in the Gulf Coast as “Katrina specific,” many grantees argue that the injustices faced by Gulf Coast residents are indeed human rights abuses, and must be viewed as such in order to be given the gravity and attention that they deserve. The ACLU of Mississippi is one such grantee that has adopted this framework, and in doing so is documenting incidents of racial discrimination in the region, which they used in the 2008 Human Rights United Nations Convention to End Racial Discrimination hearings. The Mississippi Center for Workers Rights has been applying a similar strategy, through organizing ‘Witness Delegation Tours’ of lawyers and human rights activists to document injustices throughout the Gulf Coast. This shift in framing is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Understanding and Honing in on Winnable Policy Changes

Although it has not been difficult for grantees to identify which policy changes they would like to see realized, many of them are realistic about the required contexts for such changes. Therefore, a strategic accelerator for one grantee has been to identify the policy issues that seem ‘winnable,’ and to avoid those that are too monumental at the present. One example of this is the policy advocacy work done by the Leading Edge Institute together with the Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham. Given the overwhelmingly conservative political climate, they have chosen not to advocate for policy changes such as equal wages for women, which would undoubtedly be defeated. Instead, they are opting for smaller, incremental policy changes that

they believe they can win, while simultaneously building up the infrastructure necessary to address more progressive policy changes down the road. This strategy was effective in passing a policy for Universal pre-Kindergarten in Alabama, discussed further in Chapter 3. Virginia Sweet explains the reasoning behind this strategy:

We would never take on equal pay in this state directly, at least not in my lifetime. We had a major corporate sponsor who saw something on our website that seemed to indicate that we may want equal pay for women – and [they] told our board liaison that they wouldn't fund us if we were going to start a campaign for equal pay. So it's that blatant. So what we have looked at, is that it's an easier pill for corporations to swallow about paid sick leave.....so that's the way you have to do it. Until we get 2/5 of the legislature of women and until we get women on corporate boards.

From a human rights perspective, this may seem like backing down, however these women in fact have their eyes on larger structural changes. By establishing “Women’s Community Councils” throughout the state, they hope to development female leadership so that eventually two-fifths of the legislature in Alabama consists of women. This represents an excellent combination of political strategy and infrastructure development, and in doing so, they are working towards addressing both immediate needs and larger structural issues. Outcomes such as these are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

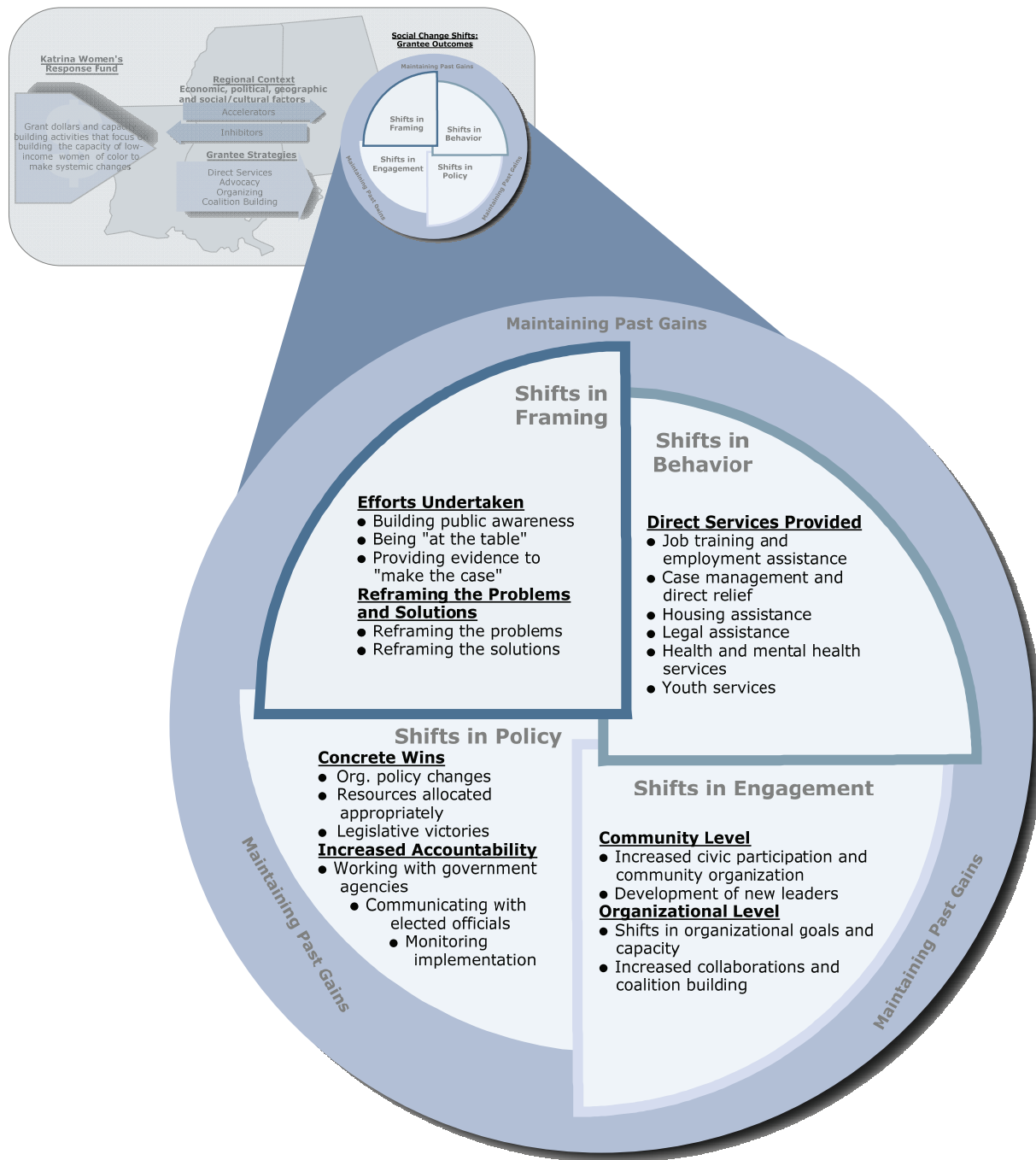
While the grantees have faced considerable inhibitors to their work, they have also experienced diverse accelerators, as detailed in this chapter. Despite the overwhelming challenges, the grantees have succeeded in making significant impacts in the lives of Gulf Coast residents. Hardships remain, but grantees are beginning to address them, and have already achieved numerous positive outcomes. These outcomes and their implications are discussed in the next chapter.

III. OUTCOMES OF THE KATRINA WOMEN’S RESPONSE FUND

Despite the overwhelming number of inhibitors that grantees faced, they have been able to capitalize on the accelerators and achieve some visible progress with the support of the Ms. Foundation for Women and the Women’s Funding Network. In this chapter, we present the outcomes that grantees of the Katrina Women’s Response Fund have achieved. In other words, we are interested in the progress that grantees have made in creating social change that better the lives of low-income women and girls both in the rebuilding process in the Gulf Coast and the general welfare of Gulf Coast inhabitants living in poverty before the storms. As identified in *Making the Case*, outcomes are categorized into one of four indicators of social change: shifts in framing, shifts in behavior, shifts in engagement, and shifts in policy. Although *Making the Case* includes a fifth shift, maintaining past gains, outcomes in this shift tended to overlap with the other shifts, and thus are included in the other sections where appropriate. Exhibit III-1 details the social change shifts achieved in the context of the larger framework for the report.

The chapter begins with a discussion of how grantees have been able to “reframe” problems and solutions in the region to incorporate the voices of low-income women of color before moving into a discussion of how the direct services provided address the needs identified in Chapter 2 and create “shifts in behavior.” The section on “shifts in engagement” details how grantees have been able to increasingly work in collaboration and engage more people in support of their efforts, and the chapter concludes with a discussion on how grantees have been able to create “shifts in policy” and their progress in holding policymakers and government agencies accountable.

Exhibit III-1: Outcomes of the Katrina Women's Response Fund



Shifts in Framing

The reframing has to come from the sufferers. I've been to many, many media-type workshops where the spin people are talking about framing and Lakoff is talking about framing, but what happens is the message, grassroots people, people of color get lost. What has to be focused on now is how to help people retrieve their voices, use their own voices to ask for what they need, and to demand from the government entities what they need. That has to come about, that's got to be what happens next.

- Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights

Conversations around rebuilding in the Gulf Coast post-Katrina and Rita have typically been dominated by those with the political and financial power to make their voices heard. Given the history of marginalization that low-income people of color – and particularly women – have faced in the Gulf Coast, these conversations have typically not included low-income women of color. To address the inequities that emerged because of this exclusion, grantees of the Katrina Women's Response Fund worked to reframe how both the public and policymakers understand the needs and priorities in the Gulf Coast. By undertaking efforts to raise the perspective of women of color to the forefront of public conversations and debates, grantees were able to make progress in infusing an intersectional analysis that examines how issues of gender, race, class, and immigration status play out in the rebuilding process and in the Gulf Coast in general.

Efforts Undertaken

Grantees successfully used a variety of strategies to ensure that the perspectives of low-income women of color were heard in the rebuilding process, both by the general public and policymakers. These strategies include building public awareness, being “at the table,” providing evidence to “make the case,” and focusing on leadership development and civic engagement.

Building Public Awareness

Public speaking engagements and media coverage were two ways that grantees attempted to reach the general public to raise awareness about the unique challenges that low-income women of color face post-Katrina and Rita and the role they can play in the rebuilding process. By using this “bottom-up” approach, grantees were able to build public sympathy for the plight of low-income women of color, ensure that potential clients were aware of options available to them, and/or build a base of public support for their work.

Examples of Building Public Awareness

- As part of a month long media blitz, **Dress for Success Memphis** partnered with the local Fox television station to promote their “Gallery of Faces” campaign which presents stories of their clients and their road toward self-sufficiency. Ultimately, over 100,000 people watched coverage of Dress for Success and their clients.
- The **Moore Community House** created an advertising campaign for social service offices that serve low-income women of color, encouraging women to consider construction as a career by using language such as “high wage earning potential, advancement opportunities, and job satisfaction.” Additionally, their work was featured on National Public Radio
- The **Institute for Women’s Policy Research** undertook an aggressive public relations campaign that included coverage by magazines and major newspapers, presentations at college campuses and professional conferences, and press conferences. According to their 2007 grant report, they “have become known as a leading voice on how women, and especially women of color, have been impacted by the storms.”

Being “At the Table”

Another way grantees have worked to infuse the perspective of low-income women of color in conversations around the Gulf Coast is by seeking out and maintaining positions on various boards and commissions and participating in forums related to the rebuilding process. Even more progress is shown by grantees that were *invited* to hold positions on boards and commissions, as this demonstrates that they are being recognized as key voice. By having an active role in the community, grantees increased the likelihood that their voices and the voices of their constituents would be considered during decision-making.

Examples of Being “At the Table”

- **Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children** was invited by the Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission to sit at the table with other stakeholders to help design a reform plan, selected to serve on the Caddo Parish Children and Youth Services Planning Board, invited to be part of the MacArthur Foundation Models for Change Stakeholder Committee, and asked to help Bunkie, Louisiana in their strategic plan to combat police injustice. In regards to the Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission, *Even when we just sit in the room, when we go to the Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission, you have a room full of stakeholders. And you just can’t anything that you want to say about our communities anymore, because we’re there representing our communities and we’re just not allowing that to happen.*
- **The United Houma Nation** actively worked with numerous boards, committees, and organizations to ensure representation when policy decisions were made. As of 2007, they were active members of the following groups: UHN Grant Committee, Bayou Area Readiness & Recovery, Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizers, Neighbor Works America, Greater New Orleans Disaster Recovery Partnership, Gulf Coast Fund – Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Statewide Independent Living Council, South Central Planning and Development Commission, Terrebonne Parish Children and Youth Planning Board, Lafourche Parish Mayor’s Committee on Disability Issues, Lafourche and Terrebonne Parish Transition Core Team, and Louisiana Rehabilitation Council.

Providing Evidence to “Make the Case”

Through providing testimony and generating research, grantees saw progress in “making the case” to policymakers and other stakeholders as to why using a gender, race, and class analysis is key for ensuring equitable recovery in the Gulf Coast by highlighting the injustices faced by marginalized groups.

Examples of Providing Evidence to “Make the Case”

- In 2007, **Wider Opportunities for Women** participated in two congressional briefings, including *The Women of the Gulf Coast: Struggle and Resilience Two Years after the Hurricanes*, which “clearly articulated to national policymakers the impact of a disaster such as Katrina on low-income women and their specific needs following such an event.”
- **The Mississippi Worker’s Center for Human Rights** presented research on environmental injustices to a public hearing called by state and county officials, resulting in the abandonment of a well construction project that would have been a health risk for residents of a predominantly African American neighborhood.

In addition to the efforts described above, another key way for grantees to increase the efficacy of infusing the voices of women of color in conversations around rebuilding was by focusing on

leadership development and building civic engagement. Outcomes in this category will be discussed in the “Shifts in Engagement” section.

The three strategies that grantees used to make a space for the voices of women of color in the rebuilding process – increasing public awareness, being “at the table,” and providing evidence to “make the case” – were key because grantees created opportunities to infuse a gender, race, and class analysis into conversations about rebuilding. Many grantees have made considerable progress in becoming key players in the rebuilding process, and several grantees reported that as a result of their efforts, they are now seen as community leaders in their sector whose voices are taken seriously. However, as will be elaborated on in the “Shifts in Policy” section, grantees still have progress to make in terms of sitting at the table with and demanding accountability from key policymakers in the region.

Reframing the Problems and Solutions to Rebuilding

Whereas the efforts described above delineate *how* grantees were able to integrate a gender, race, and class analysis, this section will describe the *implications* of integrating this analysis into the rebuilding effort. Grantees worked to reframe how the public and policymakers thought about the problems in the Gulf Coast by highlighting injustices in the region and the disproportionately negative impact that the storms and rebuilding process has had on marginalized groups.

However, reframing how the public and policymakers think about the problems is only an initial victory, while infusing the perspectives of low-income women of color into solution generation has the potential to create more sustainable, lasting change in the region.

Reframing the Problems

As a result of grantee’s work, increased public awareness was brought to the plight and needs of Katrina and Rita survivors and evacuees, with a particular focus on the struggles of low-income women of color and their families. Grantees worked to **reframe the way the public viewed survivors and evacuees**, from a perspective that overlooked the disproportional negative impact of the disaster and recovery process on certain groups – particularly low-income women of color, immigrants, and children – to recognition that the disaster and recovery process did not and continues to not affect everyone equally.

Examples of Shifting Perceptions of Women

- The **Institute for Women's Policy Research's** report, *Women in the Wake of the Storm*, concluded that "overall women have been affected more negatively than men in the post-Katrina years, but that low income women of color have experienced compounded and even entirely new difficulties as social and political systems continue to take advantage of the destruction to make radical changes." Copies of the report were released at the Women's Economic Justice Summit and the V-Day 10th Anniversary Performance in New Orleans, accompanied by extensive press announcements and radio and print interviews.
- **The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation** reported that their efforts have been successful in "focus[ing] national attention on critical Gulf Coast rebuilding issues from a Black woman's perspective – one that is too often invisible within the policy arena."

Example of Shifting Perceptions of Immigrants

- At the end of October 2007, the **Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance**, held a press conference in front of the Democratic Headquarters "to confront the local chapter leader and local politicians for using racist radio, print and TV advertisements to whip voters into hysteria over nonexistent illegal immigrant voters and [for] phony reports produced to suggest that immigrants are draining our economy in Mississippi."

Example of Shifting Perceptions of Children

- **The Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative** reported that having people witness the distress and trauma children and families in the Gulf Coast faced post-Katrina and Rita was core to their advocacy strategy. Accordingly, as of 2008, they organized at least 12 Child Watch © activities that targeted media, elected officials, public celebrities, the faith community, concerned citizens, and/or advocates "so that people inside and outside the region could witness the distress of women and their children."

Interconnected with grantee's work to reframe how the public and policymakers think about the survivors and evacuees of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are their efforts to **raise the visibility of communities that have been neglected in the rebuilding process**. While some communities received an influx of rebuilding dollars, media attention, and support from non-profits, other communities – particularly low-income communities of color – were overlooked. Several grantees have been successful in their efforts to bring public attention to the plight of specific communities of color.

Examples of Raising Visibility of Communities that Need Support

- After receiving training from the **People's Production House** (PPH), youth from the **United Houma Nation** were able to compensate for the lack of media attention their community was receiving after Hurricanes Ike and Gustav by creating radio spots that aired nationally on community radio stations. PPH also helped tribal leaders secure spots on programs nationwide to talk about their community's plight.
- The **Steps Coalition** met with city officials and local organizations and garnered media attention for Soria City, a low-income predominantly African American community whose infrastructure rebuilding needs had been ignored by local government. As a result of their work "Soria City was finally being recognized and was finally receiving the long awaited help."

Grantees have also worked to reframe the way the public thinks about the injustices faced by marginalized populations. **Framing these injustices as human rights abuses** reiterates the gravity of the situation that marginalized populations face in the Gulf Coast and **highlights the systemic injustices that continue to plague the region**. By infusing the perspectives of low-income women of color into conversations around funding, reproductive rights, projects that will impact the environment, and the criminal justice system, grantees made progress in creating more equitable outcomes.

Example of Raising Visibility for Funding Discrepancies

- The **Steps Coalition** addressed the absence of centralized data for measuring recovery needs, progress, and accountability by producing two reports: Steps CDBG Report Card and Housing Alliance Recovery Recommendations. The Report Card report found that as of 2007, only 23% of funds principally benefitted low and moderate income families, as opposed to the 50% required by the act.

Example of Raising Visibility for Housing Injustices

- As part of the "Housing as a Human Right" campaign, the **Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights** led a Witness Delegation across the Gulf Coast and talked to "residents in Latino and African American communities to gain a deeper insight into the housing problems and unscrupulous practices of Gulf Coast landlords."

Example of Raising Visibility for Reproductive Justice Issues

- The **New Orleans Women's Health Clinic** framed Representative John LaBruzzo's proposal to pay poor women to get sterilized as "eugenic and racist." As a result of their coordinated response with the New Orleans Women's Health and Justice Initiative, he was removed from his position as vice chairman of the House Health and Welfare Committee.

Examples of Raising Visibility for Environmental Justice Issues

- In 2008, the **North Gulfport Community Land Trust** launched an environmental awareness and protection campaign aimed at the proposed construction of the Inland Port. Community members spoke in front of City Council and the Mississippi State Port Authority, and the project was eventually relocated.

Examples of Raising Visibility for Injustices in the Justice System

- In February 2008, a representative from **Critical Resistance** traveled to Geneva to speak to the United Nation Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to testify about human rights abuses in the prison-industrial complex after Hurricane Katrina. According to their grant report, they “were successful in putting forward [their] ideas about thinking through Katrina and the [prison-industrial complex] in the U.S. as a human rights violation.” They reported that *“it’s been a key victory of [theirs] to lead a conversation of the prison industrial complex being used as a disaster response tool.”*

Reframing the Solutions

Given the acute needs of the region immediately post Katrina and Rita, grantees initially took a reactive approach to highlighting and addressing problems in the region. However, as time progresses, grantees are increasingly able to move from being reactive to proactive, and the solutions that they are beginning to generate have the potential to reshape the Gulf Coast region for the long-term. In many ways, driving solutions that incorporate the perspectives of low-income women of color is even more critical than reframing the problems.

Grantees worked to invigorate public awareness that a need for services still exists, particularly for those that were disproportionately affected by the disaster. Specifically, grantees undertook efforts to **reframe perceptions that short-term services would adequately address the needs of survivors** to the idea that providing long-term services is critical to ensuring an equitable recovery for the long-term. Reframing this issue was especially critical in communities that experienced an influx of survivors post-Katrina in which the community may not fully comprehend the level of devastation and trauma that Katrina caused.

Examples of Increased Visibility for Continued Need for Services

- Through communicating with vendors and community organizations, coverage in the media, and outreach to evacuees, **Memphis and Shelby County Community Services Agency** helped ensure that the community is more aware of the continued need for services and their programs. Additionally, by providing case management to evacuees, they helped their clients realize that their current life conditions do not represent a personal failure, but rather are part of the recovery process.
- Through coverage in Memphis publications and the New York Times as well as public speaking engagements, **Memphis Area Legal Services** increased visibility for their clients and their problems with FEMA.

Grantees also undertook efforts to **raise the visibility for comprehensive childcare as right for low-income women and their families**. Given that low-income women of color in the Gulf Coast often relied on their social and familial networks as sources of low-priced or free childcare, grantees worked to build awareness that a market-based approach is not a viable solution to these families' childcare needs. Rather, they advocated for a system in which childcare is a community responsibility and the government bears a large part of the financial responsibility.

Examples of Reframing Solutions to Childcare Needs

- In addition to researching challenges that women faced during and after Katrina, the **Leading Edge Institute** made key policy recommendations that address the problems they identified. These recommendations include
 - Funding for temporary childcare vouchers;
 - Portability of childcare vouchers so they can transfer from state to state; and
 - Including childcare in disaster planning response.
- **Wider Opportunities for Women's Agenda for Children** used the self-sufficiency standard in the latest Kids Count report "to make the case for more funding for child care assistance in the state and expanded eligibility."
- In response to the Department of Human Services claim that child care certificate program is adequate and fairly administered, the **Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative** surveyed 503 childcare centers and shared the results "with policymakers to promote reforms and expanded investment in the childcare subsidy program."

The justice system was also the target of grantee's work, and many proposed reforms that would result in a more equitable system. Specifically, **grantee driven solutions were based on perspectives of those who are involved or who have loved ones involved as defendants in the criminal justice system**.

Examples of Reframing Solutions in the Justice System

- After Jesse Lee Williams was killed by the hands of deputies in a detention center, the **ACLU of Mississippi** hosted a town hall meeting in Gulfport to discuss this case and document other cases of police brutality, racial profiling, and school to prison pipeline issues. As a result of this meeting, the ACLU has helped groups in Gulfport and Moss Point organize to form Civilian Police Review Boards and Cop Watch programs.
- **Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)** secured an agreement from the Recovery School District in New Orleans to require that all school personnel receive training on the school to prison pipeline as part of their professional development. As of 2008, FFLIC has provided over 50 trainings.

Finally, grantees worked **to reshape perceptions around the role of low-income women of color in the rebuilding process**. Although as mentioned before, efforts to engage low-income women of color more actively in the political process will be discussed in a later section, other grantees worked to reframe their role from a passive “victim” to an active player in the rebuilding process.

Example of Reframing Women's Roles from Passive to Active

- **Moore Community House's** Women in Construction Program reported that because of their work with women and construction companies and their advertising campaign, “public attitudes towards women in construction [are] adjusting as more and more individuals graduate from the program and get involved in construction careers. With Women in Construction's presence on the coast, people in the community are becoming more aware of the need for construction trainings for females.”

Overall, grantee's efforts to reframe how the public and policymakers think about the Gulf Coast and its residents post-Katrina and Rita have been met with success. Without the efforts of these organizations, the voices of low-income women of color would continue to be ignored as they historically have been in the region. Infusing the perspective of low-income women of color has forced both the public and policymakers to *at least* consider a gender, race, and class analysis when thinking about the region and rebuilding. However, critical to ensuring long-term equity is the extent to which grantees have been able to reframe *solutions* using the perspective of low-income women of color, and although they have made inroads in this arena, more work still needs to be done. The extent to which policymakers have truly integrated this perspective into their work will be elaborated on in the “Shifts in Policy” section.

Shifts in Behavior

Another major piece of grantees' work in the three years following Katrina has been to address the immediate needs of residents and displaced survivors. As discussed in Chapter 2, it has become impossible for grantees to focus primarily on ensuring that the perspectives of low-income women of color are central to policy decisions when such glaring needs as housing, employment, childcare, and health services remain unmet in the community. Immediately after the storm, non-profit and community-based organizations took on the major task of filling gaps in government relief and providing short-term recovery and direct services to communities, especially under-resourced populations such as the economically disadvantaged, women, people of color, immigrants, the disabled, and the elderly. Exhibit III-2 illustrates the range and extent of direct services that grantees provided.

**Exhibit III-2:
Range and Extent of Direct Services¹**

	# of Grantees	Estimated # of People Served
Job training and employment assistance	14	280
Case management and direct relief (clothing, food, furniture, transportation, childcare, etc.)	12	153,500
Housing assistance	8	470
Legal assistance	6	3,040
Health and mental health services or counseling	6	2,990
Youth services	6	3,630

The investment of MFW and WFN's three grantees—The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, and Women's Fund of Greater Jackson—in these efforts has not only helped to address the immediate needs of Gulf Coast families and individuals, but also contributed to the rebuilding of collective hope in the region, and resulted in long-term shifts in behavior among residents and survivors. In this section, we discuss the major types of supports that grantees provided which enabled those affected by Katrina to **restore a sense of stability, rebuild confidence, and end isolation**. Ultimately, these efforts made it possible for many survivors to return home or rebuild their lives.

¹ Data on direct services only includes grantees that submitted grant reports or were interviewed from 2006 to 2009. Estimated number of people served is derived from estimates that grantees provided in their grant reports. Not all grantees provided this information.

Job Training and Employment Assistance

As discussed in Chapter 2, a lack of employment opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage has been a major inhibitor to Gulf Coast recovery. After Katrina, several thousand Gulf Coast residents, many of whom were already poor or economically disadvantaged, lost their jobs and were forced to cope with unemployment as well as their loss of social support networks, housing, and personal belongings. Low-income women of color bore the brunt of this pain, as many in the Gulf Coast lacked job skills and work experience. In order to address these immediate needs, increase women's economic self-sufficiency, and combat feelings of hopelessness, several MFW and WFN grantees developed job training and career development programs to assist residents and displaced survivors. Overall, 14 grantees provided support in this area, from resume and interviewing workshops to childcare and construction training programs. These efforts not only helped to **instill a sense of self-confidence** among survivors in desperate circumstances, but also encouraged many to discover new skills and think creatively about their roles and opportunities in their families and communities. In all, more than 280 individuals received job training and employment assistance.

Examples of Job Training and Employment Assistance

- Encouraged by **Wider Opportunities for Women** to increase the number of women attaining economic self-sufficiency and pursuing nontraditional occupations, **Moore Community House** developed the Women in Construction job training program, an eight-week course offering free construction training and follow-up support to low-income women of color. Since January 2008, the program has graduated four classes and provided 50 women the skills to earn a living wage and support their families. Of the ten individuals that most recently graduated the program, six are currently employed. At present, there are over 200 women on the program's waiting list.
- As part of its People Empowering People Katrina Project, **Choice, Inc.** provided computer training, professional imaging, GED preparation, motivational workshops, entrepreneur development, and placement assistance to over 80 female survivors in Memphis, TN. Through this project, women have gained increased self-esteem, developed new skills, and learned how to leverage their existing talents to obtain new jobs, livable wages, and self-sufficiency.
- Seeking to facilitate the transition of displaced women survivors to Memphis, TN, **Dress for Success** provided 20 women attire for work and interviews, monthly training opportunities related to employment retention and development, and a network of professional support. The organization's "Gallery of Faces" public awareness campaign was featured on local television and highlighted survivors' journeys toward self-sufficiency.

Case Management and Direct Relief

Our thing is to get people stabilized while they recover and rebuild. Because the most important thing is to get them stable – they need housing, food, and shelter to be stable. And that’s one of the things that didn’t happen.

- Darrell London, the Gumbo Project, Survivors of the Storm, Inc.

By displacing people from their homes and communities, Katrina wreaked havoc on the everyday lives of Gulf Coast residents. Clothing, food, and transportation became major issues for many, especially the economically disadvantaged and elderly as government agencies failed to provide needed relief and assistance. In the years following the storm, 12 grantees helped families and individuals in the Gulf Coast regain a sense of stability in their lives by providing direct assistance and case management to resolve these issues and immediate needs. Although the bulk of their efforts peaked immediately after the storm, many continue to this day, as government agencies are slow to meet or remain unresponsive to continuing community needs and concerns. This relief not only helped thousands of families and individuals **restore a sense of normalcy in their lives**, but also enabled them to meet the challenges they faced in rebuilding their lives and communities.

Examples of Case Management and Direct Relief

- Founded days after Katrina swept through the Gulf Coast in August 2005, **Common Ground Relief** organized a base of volunteers to rebuild the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans and meet the immediate needs of residents. Since the storm, Common Ground has served 150,000 residents through its fifteen distinct program areas and volunteer base of 12,000. Among its many services aimed at providing direct relief, the organization has worked to gut houses; provide food, clothing, and medical assistance to displaced survivors; and establish a women’s shelter aimed at meeting the needs of women rendered homeless by domestic violence issues.
- Darrell London, Director of the **Gumbo Project, Survivors of the Storm, Inc.**, provided case management and referrals to 60 displaced families and individuals in Memphis, TN. Working through telephone and e-mail networks, he connected those in the displaced community that “fell through the cracks” – the economically disadvantaged, elderly, or disabled – to available services for food, shelter, clothing, and housing assistance. A displaced survivor who faced similar challenges in accessing services and stints of homelessness after Katrina to those he serves today, London organized the project to provide referrals and inform families and individuals of available resources for support.
- From 2006 to 2007, **Memphis and Shelby County Community Services Agency** served displaced survivors in Tennessee, providing bus passes to 46 families, gas cards to five families, clothing to four families, furniture and appliances to five families, and moving assistance to ten families.

Housing Assistance

By all accounts, housing remains a major issue and inhibitor to Gulf Coast recovery. Low-income populations that have been displaced from their homes face a dearth of affordable options, increased rents, landlord-tenant disputes, and issues with the poor quality of federally assisted housing units. Although several grantees are working to address these issues by engaging in policy advocacy work, in the short-term, many Gulf Coast families and individuals confront immediate housing needs as bureaucratic red tape hampers recovery and relief. In the three years following Katrina, eight grantees provided immediate housing assistance to more than 480 residents and displaced survivors in the form of housing referrals, shelter, or support with federal eligibility forms. This direct assistance has enabled many of those served to obtain needed support, overcome homelessness, and **regain a sense of stability in their lives**.

Examples of Housing Assistance

- With MFW support, the **United Houma Nation** hired a Relief Assistant to provide individual home repair grants, down payment assistance, and other direct relief to tribal members. From 2006 to 2007, 130 housing material grants were awarded and 11 members received down payment assistance.
- The **North Gulfport Community Land Trust** used grant funds to acquire land parcels and renovate homes in the North Gulfport community for sale or rent to low-income families. The Trust recently finished the restoration of the first community land trust home to be sold in the state of Mississippi and has acquired and cleared title to enough land to be able to build 20 affordable, single-family homes throughout the neighborhood.
- Darrell London, Director of the **Gumbo Project, Survivors of the Storm, Inc.**, assisted numerous displaced families and individuals in Memphis, TN by providing referrals to resources for housing assistance. Information on available funding and resources is not well disseminated among the displaced community, and people often have trouble obtaining support. For example, London recently wrote letters to FEMA on behalf of a 56-year-old woman who had been taking care of her wheelchair-bound mother and had not received any benefits in over two years. Through this advocacy, she was ultimately able to obtain the rental assistance for which she and her mother were eligible.

Legal Assistance

Pro-bono legal assistance and representation provided by attorneys and paralegals at nonprofit organizations have been invaluable to helping families and individuals recover from the storm. MFW and the three women's funds funded six grantees that offered legal assistance to residents and displaced survivors. These services have helped more than 3,040 individuals apply for federal assistance, tackle unexpected legal issues, and obtain replacement vital records and documents. Grantees have also helped to protect the rights of residents and immigrants from abuses and mistreatment amid a period of restructuring and redevelopment. This support has enabled many to **rebuild their lives and communities**.

Examples of Legal Assistance

- In collaboration with Safe Streets/Strong Communities and the Office of the Public Defender, **Critical Resistance** hosted a public clinic in March 2008 to help residents of New Orleans with conviction histories clear their records and improve their chances of finding work, housing, and credit. “Expungement Day” drew over 400 attendees, and helped 25 individuals clear their records.
- The **Community Legal Center** helped 40 displaced families and individuals regain stability by providing advice, representation, and other legal services, including replacement of birth certificates and vital records.
- Organizers and attorneys at the **Mississippi Immigrants’ Rights Alliance** held weekly intake clinics to address the legal, translation, interpretation, and emergency needs of ten immigrant clients per week from 2007 to 2008. In addition to providing naturalization and immigrant rights workshops, the Alliance helped immigrant workers remedy employment issues and recover nearly \$1.5 million in owed wages from Mississippi employers.

Health and Mental Health Services

In addition to affecting homes and personal belongings, as detailed in Chapter 2, one of the most devastating outcomes of Katrina has been its impact on the physical and mental health of residents and displaced survivors, particularly the economically disadvantaged and elderly. The storm damaged hospitals and health centers, and displaced neighborhoods and communities across the South, dismantling existing health safety nets and community support systems. This has resulted in the inability of residents to address their health needs as well as increased isolation and detachment among survivors as neighborhood networks and support systems that once existed are now dispersed across the South. Although more support is needed to address issues of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues, support from MFW and the three women’s funds in the years following Katrina helped to address some of these issues by funding six grantees that served over 2,990 individuals. These organizations provided health services and **created opportunities for survivors to network, share, and process their experiences.**

Examples of Health and Mental Health Services

- The **New Orleans Women's Health Clinic** provided safe and affordable sexual and reproductive healthcare services, preventative education, and counseling to 2,840 low-income or underserved women throughout Greater New Orleans.
- During the second anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation** convened 150 women survivors, advocates, and supporters in New Orleans for a health and wellness weekend dubbed the "Black Women's Roundtable Celebrate Our Sisters of the Gulf Coast Wellness Journey." This convening and celebration helped to address mental health and wellness issues among advocates and survivors, and provided a space where participants could share and process their traumatic experiences. Participants engaged in health and wellness briefings, physical exercise sessions, individualized stress-relieving body treatments, spiritual fellowship, community service opportunities, civic engagement leadership briefings, and discussions around challenges and successes in the rebuilding process.
- The **YWCA Greater Baton Rouge** offered an ENCOREplus breast and cervical health program in collaboration with the Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center. Program staff educated underserved and uninsured women on health and connected them to resources for screenings and mammograms.

Youth Services

An often overlooked impact of Katrina has been its effect on youth and school-age children. Thousands of youth were displaced, lost family and friends, or forced to change schools as a result of the storms. These experiences have resulted in PTSD and other mental health disorders among children, many of which have gone unaddressed. MFW and WFN's three women's fund grantees funded six organizations that included youth services as part of their key recovery and rebuilding strategies. These grantees provided after school services, youth development activities, and cultural enrichment to more than 3,630 children to **alleviate their mental health issues and support their healthy development.**

Examples of Youth Services

- The **Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative** (CDF) leveraged additional resources to expand the CDF Freedom Schools model to over 40 sites serving 2,000 children in the Gulf Coast region. The *CDF Freedom Schools* program provides summer and after-school enrichment that helps children fall in love with reading, increases their self-esteem, and generates more positive attitudes toward learning.
- The **Lafayette Restoration Center** sponsored two camps for children affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita during their spring and winter breaks from 2006 to 2007. Over 120 children were provided with academic enrichment, self-esteem building, PTSD counseling, recreation, and three meals per day. Parents were provided with parent education skills, tips for identifying PTSD in children, and stress management training.
- The **North Gulfport Community Land Trust** established a Youth Council in November 2007. A dozen youth participate on the Council and meet once a week to discuss and address environmental degradation, police-community relations, intergenerational gaps, and afro-centric studies. In the future, the Council plans to offer tutoring and community arts programs to local youth at the North Gulfport Community Education Center.

In summary, support for direct services from grantees has helped to fill gaps in government relief and restore stability, hope, and social participation among survivors. Going forward, these efforts will remain an important piece of grantees' work. However, maintaining and expanding these outcomes across the Gulf Coast will be a major challenge. As "Katrina fatigue" sets in among foundations and the economic recession takes a toll on endowments, it will be difficult for many of these organizations to sustain their services. In addition, shifts in populations across displaced communities suggest that grantees' work will become less relevant in some regions. For example, one grantee reported that it was no longer serving Katrina survivors because displaced families had returned home or moved out of its service area. These issues indicate that grantees will need to consider their rebuilding work in a broader context. As will be discussed in the following sections, several have already begun to refocus their efforts towards affecting shifts in engagement and policy to sustain their work and create movement towards broader social change.

Shifts in Engagement

*On the Gulf Coast, there was never really a history or culture of activism.
That has grown out of this process.*

- Derrick Johnson, NAACP, Mississippi

One of the major outcomes of funding from MFW and the three grantees of WFN has been increased civic participation and organizing by individuals, nonprofits, and community-based organizations. Prior to Katrina, the Gulf Coast did not have a strong tradition of community engagement or participation. As Derrick Johnson states above, that tradition is growing out of

the rebuilding process. The rush of relief and recovery resources into the region after Katrina galvanized nonprofits and community-based organizations not simply to provide direct relief, but also to engage everyday people to have a voice in the rebuilding process. Due in part to the support of MFW and the three women's funds, major shifts in engagement have emerged both at the community and organizational levels with a specific focus on low-income women of color. These include (1) an increase in civic participation and community organizing, (2) the development of new leaders, especially women, (3) shifts in organizational goals and capacity to address recovery issues, and (4) an increase in collaborations and coalition building among nonprofits and community-based organizations.

Increased Civic Participation and Community Organizing

The thing I love the most about FFLIC is that we believe we are experts on our communities, so it doesn't require that you have a degree or special training, because we believe that our special training comes from the love of our children and the love of our communities. FFLIC gives us a vehicle and an opportunity to tell the powers that be, "We know what our community needs, and you're not going to keep being the people at the table that make all the decisions. We get to bring our family members to the table to have our voices heard."

- Gina Womack, FFLIC

The growing participation of everyday people in the recovery and rebuilding process is one major shift that has emerged as a result of support from MFW and the three women's funds. Although their influence on the process is somewhat limited, the fact that everyday people are beginning to **understand their rights and discover channels to voice their concerns** is significant, especially in a place such as the Gulf Coast. Grantees provided opportunities for residents and displaced survivors to participate in local politics and understand their roles in reshaping their communities. Many of their efforts focused around listening to community needs and educating residents and displaced survivors about their rights and issues salient to the rebuilding process. With the support of everyday people, grantees were able to highlight the needs of underserved populations and infuse a level of community accountability into the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast.

Examples of Increased Civic Participation and Community Organizing

- During the one-year anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2006, the **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation** hosted a seven-day, seven-city bus tour entitled “Hear Me NOW! Reflections One Year After Katrina-Rita.” Engaging 500 women from rural and urban communities directly impacted by the storms, the tour surfaced salient issues among a diverse range of women from Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and provided a national platform for them to clearly articulate and advance their issues.
- The **American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi** (ACLU-MS) conducted several “Know Your Rights” trainings in Jackson and the Gulf Coast, and distributed materials on “Your Rights To Public Records and Public Meetings,” “What To Do If You’re Stopped By the Police,” and “Access To Government” to inform community members about their rights and protect them from possible mistreatments. The ACLU-MS also hosted town hall meetings in Gulfport and Moss Point, and helped to establish a civil review board and Cop Watch program to monitor abusive law enforcement practices.
- As part of their Gulf Coast Renewal and Advocacy Project, from 2007 to 2008, organizers at the **Mississippi Immigrants’ Rights Alliance** (MIRA) spent 15 hours a week making contact with immigrant communities and distributing pamphlets and flyers with detailed information about their rights. MIRA also sponsored meetings and presentations on labor violations, detention matters, and language barriers in courts, hospitals, schools, and encounters with law enforcement. According to MIRA, these activities have resulted in “*an educated constituency who is mobilized and ready to push back racist and discriminatory practices that crush the spirits and smother the wellness of our community.*”
- In 2007, the **Steps Coalition** launched its “People Before Ports” Campaign to put national spotlight on Governor Haley Barbour’s plan to divert \$600 million from housing recovery funds to expand the Port of Gulfport. Although unsuccessful, part of this campaign involved a significant community organizing component. Steps gathered 1,067 petition signatures and developed a sign-on letter that received support from three Bishops and 21 other clergy. As a result of this work, Steps was able present a set of program recommendations to the Mississippi Development Authority and HUD.

Development of New Leaders

Simultaneous to the growth of community engagement and participation in the Gulf Coast was the emergence of new leaders, many of them women, to address community concerns and organize residents around recovery efforts. Although many of these leaders—such as Sharon Hanshaw from Coastal Women for Change—developed through their experiences responding to the needs of those affected on the ground, a number were **products of the intentional efforts of nonprofits and community-based organizations to cultivate the organic skills of residents and displaced survivors**. Several grantees of MFW and the three women’s funds developed programs to support the development of a new generation of leaders for the Gulf Coast. With a particular focus on women of color and underserved populations, these programs, which ranged from opportunities for individuals to voice their concerns to efforts to build specific skills and capacities, contributed to development of more than 235 women leaders from the Gulf Coast.

Examples of the Development of New Leaders

- The **Leading Edge Institute**, which provides social change leadership development and training programs for young women attending college in Alabama, engaged 165 women from across the state that have not typically been engaged in advocacy to participate in five Women's Community Councils and plan strategy for influencing policy. Focused on addressing issues related to the shortage of childcare resources, the Councils are part of a larger network aimed at fostering social change and building the commitment and capacity of women to address issues affecting low-income women and children in Alabama.
- In June 2008, **Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)** held a Regional Leadership Summit that convened leaders from five Southeast States to discuss the impact of the storms on women's economic well-being and develop strategies to increase economic security. The Summit paired women who were relatively inexperienced in advocacy for policy change with peers from WOW and guest speakers at the state and national levels. This pairing helped to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and foster regional network building among emerging and established women leaders.
- As part of its Black Women's Roundtable Civic Engagement Project, in 2008, the **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation** held its "Inaugural Operation Big Vote Training Academy," and provided technical assistance and civic engagement training to over 100 leaders, including 20 women Katrina/Rita survivors and advocates from Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Participants were trained on "Integrating New Technology," "Best Practices in Getting Your Message Out," and "Tools to Protect Our Voting Power."

Shifts in Organizational Goals and Capacity

An easily overlooked but important outcome of support from MFW and the three women's funds has been the increase in capacity of organizations to address the needs of residents and displaced survivors. This support has enabled nonprofits and community-based organizations to **start work on new projects and issues and build community engagement around the rebuilding process**. The fact that many of funds that MFW and the three women's funds provided supported the general operations of organizations and had few strings attached has helped many organizations hire new staff, purchase needed materials and resources, leverage additional funds, or develop skills and capacities in new areas. As a result, several organizations have expanded their activities or started work on new goals.

Examples of Shifts in Organizational Goals and Capacity

- MFW was instrumental in getting **Coastal Women for Change**, a grassroots community-based organization in East Biloxi, MS, off the ground. Formed by Sharon Hanshaw, a former cosmetologist with little experience in community organizing, program management, or grant writing, with seed funding from MFW, Coastal Women for Change has made great strides in keeping Biloxi residents informed about recovery issues and increasing community participation in rebuilding efforts.
- As a result of general operating support from MFW, in 2006, the **Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights** was able to open a second office in Jackson, MS. This has helped the Center increase its visibility and expand organizing campaigns to other parts of the state.
- Following up on a training that the organization provided in July 2007, **People's Production House** provided technical assistance to six MFW grantees to help them learn the basics of radio reporting and incorporate radio and audio into their campaigns. This technical assistance included an organizational assessment to gauge media needs, strategic planning support, and additional in-person and telephone trainings.
- Prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, **Memphis Area Legal Services** had little experience resolving the legal problems of persons affected by disasters. As a result of the storms and influx of displaced survivors into Memphis, the organization developed training manuals and incorporated a much more significant emphasis on disaster preparedness.
- With MFW support, the **Institute for Women's Policy Research** was able to leverage additional funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the Social Science Research Council Katrina Task Force to conduct an in-depth longitudinal study on New Orleans women displaced from public housing. The study builds on the Institute's prior work examining the impact of Katrina on low-income women of color.

Increased Collaborations and Coalition Building

One last shift in engagement that has surfaced in the years following Katrina due in part to the support of MFW and WFN's partner funds has been an increase in collaborations and coalition building among nonprofits and community-based organizations. As discussed in Chapter 2, alliance building was acknowledged by nearly all grantees as an accelerator to the recovery of the Gulf Coast. **Partnering with other organizations has enabled grantees to expand their impact and address issues from several angles.** This was necessary given the complex context of rebuilding in the Gulf Coast and residents' multiple needs and concerns. Collaborations that grantees maintained ranged from partnerships for program referrals and coordinated services to broad coalitions aimed at tackling policy issues and organizing a critical mass to support an equitable recovery.

Examples of Increase in Collaborations and Coalition Building

- With MFW support, the **Steps Coalition**, a broad group of organizations from the Mississippi Gulf Coast aimed at building a more healthy, just, and equitable community, was able to attract new members and expand its coalition network. The Coalition held a strategic visioning and planning retreat with partners in June 2008 to revisit the coalition's policies, procedures, and mission statement. In December 2008, 35 total allies renewed their membership and affirmed their commitment to the coalition's strategic mission and vision.
- **Moore Community House** relied heavily on partnerships with local organizations to implement its Women in Construction training program. Partners included: Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, East Biloxi Hope Coordination Center, Visions of Hope, the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, the Center for Community Resiliency, and the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Non-violence. Among several major supports and activities, these organizations provided hands-on construction training, physical fitness classes, financial planning classes, blueprint reading classes, and information on how to address sexual harassment in the workplace. Moore Community House has also developed relationships with the U.S. Department of Labor, which has led to referrals to the program for companies needing to hire women to meet federal compliance standards.
- Among its numerous partnerships and collaborations with local agencies and community organizations, in 2007, **Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children** (FFLIC) helped launch Safe Streets/Strong Communities, a post-storm coalition committed to transforming the juvenile and criminal justice system of New Orleans to ensure a just reconstruction. FFLIC is also part of several other broad campaigns, coalitions, and initiatives, including the Pew Partnership for Civic Engagement's Alliance for Education and Learning to Finish Campaign and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

In this section, we discussed the major shifts in engagement that have emerged due in part to the support of MFW and WFN's three grantee women's funds. Although much progress has been made and the foundation for a stronger tradition of organizing and civic participation is beginning to emerge, there is much work ahead. Structural inhibitors, such as a lack of government accountability, hamper the development of an equitable recovery process. For example, despite community organizing and advocacy efforts spearheaded by the Steps Coalition and several other community-based organizations in Mississippi, Governor Haley Barbour still diverted \$600 million in housing recovery funds to the rebuilding of the Port of Gulfport. However, although critical mass around equitable recovery policies has not yet been reached, as will be discussed in the next section, increased community support has led to several policy gains.

Shifts in Policy

A shift in policy can occur at one of many levels, including changing organizational policies and practices and changing legislative budgets and policies, whether it be local, state, or federal level.

Grantees of the Katrina Women’s Response Fund have targeted a range of these levels in order to ensure equitable outcomes women of color in the Gulf Coast. Specifically, these shifts manifest themselves as changes in policies and practices of government agencies, changes in resource distribution/budgeting, and changes in public policy. In addition to these concrete changes, examining how grantees are working to hold policymakers and government agencies accountable to them is also a key outcome of shifts in policy.

Concrete Wins

As outlined below, grantees have been successful in creating many concrete policy wins in the form of changes to government agencies’ organizational policies, appropriate allocation of governmental resources, and public policy wins.

Organizational Policy Changes

Several grantees have had critical successes in changing the organizational policies of local and state government agencies. Although these successes do not represent public policy wins per se, they do represent key ways that grantees have been able to influence the work of government agencies by infusing the perspective of low-income women of color.

Examples of Organizational Policy Changes

- Due in part to the efforts of the **Memphis Area Legal Services**, MALS has ensured that Shelby County and Tennessee Emergency Management Agencies have included legal assistance as a step in their service delivery plans.
- At the urging of **Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children**, the Recovery School District 1) included School to Prison Pipeline training as part of their professional development requirements, 2) agreed to hire a Climate and Safety Executive, and 3) decreased the number of security guards in schools by 50%.
- With assistance from **Wider Opportunities for Women**, “the Human Services Coalition of Florida updated the Florida Self-Sufficiency Standard and issued a report on the difficulties of low-income, single-parent families to meet child care, housing and other family needs even at the living wage level for the county.”
- **The Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative** was successful in petitioning the Louisiana HUD to open an office in New Orleans that offered similar services to the Houston Disaster Housing Assistance Office to help families secure transitional housing.
- The **Mississippi Low-Income Childcare Initiative** obtained an opinion from the State Attorney General that required the state Department of Human Services to setup fair hearings procedure to handle grievances that come up when parents or providers are wrongfully treated.

Resources Allocated Appropriately

Through a combination of advocacy and legal services, grantees have also exercised their influence to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately. Key strategies include advocating for expanded budgets for certain programs, helping to defeat proposed budget cuts to others, and ensuring that Katrina and Rita survivors get the benefits to which they are entitled. In the examples below, grantees successfully advocated for over \$10 million in increased allocations for programs and helped Gulf Coast residents claim over \$2 million in federal benefits and wages owed to them. They also contributed to efforts to save much needed programs from \$325 million in budget cuts or diversions and helped survivors receive \$1.68 million in benefits and wages to which they were entitled.

Examples of Increases in Allocations

- **Leading Edge** was part of a statewide campaign that was successful in advocating for doubling the funding for universal prekindergarten from \$10 million to \$20 million, creating an additional 3,000 spots.
- After a successful collaboration between **Critical Resistance**, Safe Streets/Strong Communities, and the Office of Public Defender to help those with conviction histories to clear their records, and the Office of the Public Defender included funds to underwrite the expungement process in its budget.
- As part of their school reform efforts, the **Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative** worked with legislators to achieve full funding of Mississippi's Adequate Education program.

Examples of Preventions of Budget Cuts or Diversions

- In 2007, the **Jeremiah Group** responded to proposed cuts to the state's Small Rental Assistance Program's budget, resulting in the \$300 million in proposed cuts being abandoned, saving 7400 units of affordable rental housing.
- Mississippi legislature vetoed a proposal from the Governor to divert \$25 million in Hurricane Katrina Disaster Mitigation Funds to pave a road to a new Toyota plant, in part a result of the **Steps Coalition's** work to raise awareness of unmet housing needs.

Examples of Survivors Getting Benefits and Wages They are Entitled To

- By filing administrative appeals and referring clients to class action lawsuits, **Memphis Area Legal Services** was able to ensure \$680,000 in federal benefits were paid to eligible evacuees.
- **Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance** helped nearly 600 mostly Latino hospitality and construction workers recover more than \$1.5 million in back wages.

Legislative Victories

Another way to ascertain the progress that grantees have made in the policy arena is by examining the concrete public policy wins that they have had. Grantees have had a number of wins in the form of both helping to get progressive legislation passed and contributing to efforts to defeat legislation that would exacerbate problems in the region. In fact, several grantees were successful in halting proposals before they even got to the legislative level. Although not all of the grantee's legislative efforts were met with success, the changes they *have* been able to achieve represent key ways in which the perspective of low-income women of color are being integrated into public policy.

Examples of Legislation Passed

- In partnership with Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, **Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children** was successful in pushing for the passing of the Youth Justice Act of 2008, resulting in the planned closure of the Jetson Center for Youth (a "brutal" juvenile facility) before the end of 2009.
- The **Jeremiah Group** won an amendment to the State of Louisiana's Road Home contract that required the private company administering the program to adhere to performance benchmarks and penalties for non-performance. This change "has resulted in the Road Home program dramatically improving the speed of its delivery of grants."
- The **Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative** was part of efforts in Louisiana to pass legislation that expanded the eligibility requirement for the state child health program to 300% of the federal poverty level, although federal officials later cut the ceiling to 250% of the federal poverty level.

Examples of Legislation Defeated

- As a result of the **New Orleans Women's Health Clinic's** coordinated response with the New Orleans Women's Health and Justice Initiative to Representative John LaBruzzo's proposal to pay poor women to get sterilized, he was removed from his position as vice chairman of the House Health and Welfare Committee.
- In 2007, the **Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance** organized delegations of immigrants and workers rights advocates to address legislators, resulting in the defeat of all 21 anti-immigrant bills that had been introduced in the legislator.
- The **North Gulfport Community Land Trust** was successful in coordinating efforts to halt the construction of a port that would have required that 70 acres of wetlands be filled.

Increased Accountability from Policymakers and Government Agencies

In addition to the concrete policy wins described above, grantee's work to hold policymakers and government agencies in the region accountable to them and their constituents is key to ensuring the sustainability of the use of a gender, race, and class lens. This section aims to discern how successful grantees have been in this endeavor. In other words, are grantee voices valued and taken seriously by policymakers and governmental bodies? Are grantees really sitting at the table with these entities in a substantive way or are they merely "spinning their wheels?" Are their voices truly being used to help shape the rebuilding process and the region in general? Although this section is closely linked to grantees' work to "shift framing," it specifically focuses on policymakers and government agencies.

Working with Government Agencies

In addition to the organizational policy changes mentioned above, grantees have more generally been engaged by a number of government agencies to infuse the voices of their constituents in helping to shape the agencies' work. Our analysis suggests that grantees are beginning to emerge as key stakeholders in the community to which government agencies recognize that they must answer.

Examples of Working with Government Agencies

- **Boat People SOS** worked with national disaster relief agencies, including FEMA, to "assist and support their efforts to review and revise their procedures to ensure equal services for linguistic minorities." They also worked with the Houston City Council "to ensure that evacuee housing was located within immigrant communities."
- **Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children** was invited to sit at the table as a stakeholder for the Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission, a statewide commission created to implement recommendations from the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2003. As they explain,
- The **Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative** was appointed to a state level steering committee to assist in the formulation of policy on improved access for mental health services because of their advocacy work around the killing of two mental ill persons in post-Katrina New Orleans.
- The **Steps Coalition** presented program recommendations from their People Before Ports campaign to the Mississippi Development Authority and HUD.

Communicating with Elected Officials

A key way to assess the depth of relationships between grantees and policymakers is by examining the ways in which grantees have been in communication with policymakers and the value to which policymakers give grantee voices.

The additional examples the text box below, show that grantees have begun to make inroads in their communications with local, state, and federal policymakers, many times at the invitation of policymakers. By engaging in dialogue with the grantees, policymakers are recognizing that these grantees represent important community voices.

Examples of Communicating with Elected Officials

- The governor's office sent a representative to the **Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative's** Child Care Summit, and "her participation has created an entrée into the governor's office, and [they] have had several productive follow-up meetings with members of the governor's staff.
- **Wider Opportunities for Women** arranged for the project director from **Moore Community House's** Women in Construction Program to meet with various members of Congress and the Mississippi congressional delegation. "One of these meetings led to the possibility of substantial federal support for the project." **Wider Opportunities for Women** also participated in two congressional briefings.
- The **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation's** Louisiana Affiliate leader, Vincent Sylvain prepared written testimony for the Louisiana Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee. NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund used this testimony "to urge courts to provide continued support for displaced Katrina Survivors."
- In 2006, the **Jeremiah Group** won commitments from both Houston mayoral candidates to address the crisis of displaced citizens facing eviction.
- The **National Coalition on Black Civic Participation** hosted the *Power of the Sister Vote Briefing and Luncheon*. Seven presidential candidates sent senior surrogates to present their platforms around healthcare and economic opportunity.
- Members of **Coastal Women for Change** held 5 seats on the Reviving the Renaissance Committee, a planning commission formed by the Biloxi mayor to plan for the city's recovery.
- As **Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children** explain, *We just had a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, and he was just basically parroting a lot of the things that we were talking about, a lot of things that we said, and a lot of things that I know he only knows because we brought it to that table. And he knows that we're holding him accountable. And you could tell that he obviously has some political things that he's going to be working towards, and he knows he can't do that without us.*

Monitoring Legislation Implementation

Finally, the ways in which grantees are engaged in monitoring the implementation of public policies speaks to the degree to which policymakers and government agencies view them as organizations to which they must be accountable. While in some cases, grantees themselves became involved with the monitoring, other times their work spurred increased monitoring by others. Either way, grantee involvement in monitoring legislation serves as a reminder for

government agencies and policymakers that these groups are serving as “watchdogs” in the community.

Examples of Monitoring Legislation Implementation

- The **Steps Coalition’s** advocacy work around unmet housing needs provoked a congressional hearing on CDBG expenditures in May 2008.
- The **Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative** was named in state legislation as a monitor of the implementation of legislation that expanded eligibility requirements for the state’s child health program.
- **Moore Community House’s** Women in Construction Program worked with the Department of Labor’s Office of Contract Compliance to enforce existing policies regarding gender equality on the job site.
- The **Mississippi Low-Income Childcare Initiative** used commissioned research to work with state legislators to pass a bill that required an external audit of how the Department of Human Services was utilizing federal funds for their childcare delivery system.

As evidenced above, our analysis shows that grantees working around shifts in policy have begun to make progress in creating policy shifts and holding elected officials and government agencies accountable to the voices of low-income women of color. However, much of these successes still very much represent isolated incidences, rather than a strong pattern of achievement. Additionally, while more well developed organizations – such as the Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative and the National Coalition of Black Civic Participation – have had more success in changing policy and holding policymakers and government agencies accountable, the newer, less developed organizations still struggle to build their infrastructure and create a network that can achieve the same results. Two major public policy losses – the destruction of public housing in New Orleans and the diversion of \$600 million from rebuilding houses to expanding a port in Gulfport, Mississippi – highlight the fact much progress is yet to be made in holding elected officials accountable, especially given the conservative political environment discussed in Chapter 2. As Nsombi Lambright explained in the Fall of 2007, “I see a little shift in the level of accountability, even though we have a lot of work to do in the area with our government.” The Steps Coalition’s struggles with the Phase II Homeowner’s Grant Plan represents an example of this lack of accountability.

The Steps Coalition worked with the governor to get...the Phase II homeowners’ grant plan...We felt really good after that work when the governor announced the program...It was estimated that program would help 10,000 people...But then, the governor says, ‘Oh, by the way, we’re not going to do the outreach for that, so all these families that might be eligible aren’t going to know cause we’re not going to tell them.’

As also discussed in Chapter 2, many of these organizations are still burgeoning, have had to devote much of their time to addressing the immediate needs of their constituents, and are working in a region with a strong history of marginalizing low-income women of color. Given these realities, the successes that they have been able to achieve are evidence that the capacity of these grassroots organizations to engage in policy advocacy and hold the government accountable -- although not fully developed -- are part of an upward trajectory.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed the major social change outcomes that grantees of the Katrina Women's Response Fund achieved in the years following the storms. The nature and complexity of Katrina and Rita required grantees to work on several fronts, and to not only meet the immediate needs of residents and displaced survivors, but also to reframe the recovery debate, engage community supporters, and work towards broader policy change. Despite encountering numerous challenges, grantees were able made great strides on each of these fronts. Although not all of the above outcomes can be directly attributed to the general funding support of MFW and WFN's three grantees, the investment in the region provided emerging and established organizations the critical, yet flexible, support they needed to affect change. In the next and final chapter, we will discuss lessons learned and recommendations that stem from this work.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FOWARD

The disaster brought a lot of resources very quickly to the region. There is a greater impact with a larger investment. [This experience helps us to] think about the South in a new way—not what can we teach them but what can we learn....Katrina highlighted the issues that are most pressing there—the perfect storm of key issues, [the need for] capacity building of advocacy. We have to do systems change work and we have to invest in the groups that are doing that work down there. Cross-race, multi-sector collaborating has begun to happen. How do you support advocacy work over the long haul? The commitment you need is to invest in communities as you try to make social change—that is how you go about picking working in PLACE. Philanthropy has an opportunity to move to the next step.

-- Jocelyn Sargent, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation

In the time that has passed since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita decimated the Gulf Coast region, the recovery and rebuilding process continues to expose the deep vulnerabilities of a society that has not effectively addressed the legacy of oppressing vulnerable populations. In response to the injustices, human suffering, destruction, and massive displacement caused by the Gulf Coast storms, the Ms. Foundation for Women, WFN, women's funds, and their grantees, have used the \$1.3 million support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to address numerous inhibitors related to immediate needs and structural inequalities. As described in Chapter 3, despite numerous inhibitors, women's funds and community-based groups have worked tirelessly to achieve noticeable shifts in framing, behavior, engagement, and policies. Yet, the rebuilding struggles continue. In this final chapter, we lay out our recommendations for moving forward, as the Ms. Foundation, WFN and partner funds continue to remain deeply committed and invested in this region.

Recommendations

Based upon our analysis and reflections of the findings and ongoing needs in the Gulf Coast region, following are our major recommendations to MFW and WFN's strategic approach going forward.

Need for a Sustainable Funding Base in the South

Considerable uncertainty exists concerning the long-term funding outlook to support social change work in the Gulf Coast region. We heard that grantees had strong uncertainty and worries about the sustainability of funding initially flowing into the region in the first two years after the storms. One major challenge is that these community groups reported that they are able to collaborate less because of limited resources to support staff's time. Secondly, some organizations forecasted shutting down their operations within a few months to a year due to lack of funding. One of MFW's grantees, a statewide advocacy coalition, reported that they were struggling financially. Their absence would weaken the advocacy infrastructure that MFW and WFN has helped to build thus far. A third challenge of working with diminished resources is turnover in leadership and loss of valuable knowledge, skills, sets of relationships, and political capital. One leader admitted, "The work is so intense here and it never quits. I work through every week and rarely, rarely even take weekends off, and people are burning to a crisp because of the work." Several respondents saw the pressing challenge at this point is to effectively engage funders in greater numbers to sustain the ongoing work by MFW, WFN, and partner funds. The dramatic decrease in resources for rebuilding from private philanthropy generated a set of recommendations for MFW and WFN to consider:

- **Recommendation #1: *Further engage national and regional philanthropy by creating an expanded vision of social change in the South.*** While the Ms. Foundation is a widely recognized leader in organizing and connecting progressive funders and donors to each other and to potential grantees, some interview respondents encouraged MFW to consider expanding its role in reaching out to mainstream, national funders to bring them into the dialogue. Based on their experiences, a few funders saw great potential to not only infuse and reinforce an equity agenda within the Gulf Coast work, but also infuse this in other place-based initiatives around the country. One funder asked:

How we can we cast a wide enough net and a wide enough vision for a progressive future for the South that would capture Gates, and Carnegie, and Ford?...I think some of it is bringing intellectual capital to the table and putting in some time to develop some social capital with some larger funders could result in longer term collaborations that have a more clear social justice orientation.

It is critical to communicate the message that what happens in the South is emblematic of the issues that confront the entire nation. This should be relevant to all funders interested in community/urban revitalization. This kind of framing and messaging needs further development so that funder colleagues and donors can build upon and translate these kinds of messages, ideas, and directions into their own philanthropic priorities and giving.

Need for Creation of a Vision of Transformative Change in the South

Given the Katrina fatigue that has set in and the pervasive need of residents throughout the Gulf Coast and Southern region, the **Katrina Women's Response Fund could benefit from being strategically connected to a broader vision for transformative change in the Southern region.**¹ In talking with different funders and grantee partners, it was clear that many are spearheading a range of strategies focused on achieving long-term and meaningful systems change, including issues of relief, housing, leadership development, community organizing, economic development, etc. Although many of KWRF grantees have engaged in advocacy to affect longer-term systems change, MFW and WFN funding strategies may benefit from a tighter coupling of ongoing advocacy with longer term systems change and community development work. To move the MFW and WFN and its potential partners further in its thinking about transformational change, following are some key recommendations.

- **Recommendation #2: *Leverage Katrina expertise with major funders' interest in place-based grantmaking in the Gulf Coast region.*** Through MFW's gender/intersectional analysis of root causes of inequalities, many years of experience in grantmaking economic empowerment, grassroots mobilization, involvement of women of color in policy advocacy, and more recent focus on movement building around social justice feminism principles, the Ms. Foundation has much knowledge and experience to share with other funders. To be able to see longer-term impact, the Foundation can engage funders (e.g., at Kellogg, Ford, Gates) who are interested in a place-based approach to improving the well-being of residents of the Gulf Coast region. MFW's deep analysis, combined with learnings from groups on the ground can inform philanthropic colleagues' thinking on experimenting with strategies that are outside of convention.

Need for Greater Capacity Building at Multiple Levels

One of the MFW and WFN's major contributions has been investing in building the capacity of emerging and fragile Gulf Coast organizations. At the same time, there is an opportunity for MFW and WFN to focus grantee organizational capacity building efforts beyond the basics of (re)building staffing and organizational infrastructure, and moving towards creating more sophisticated planning, financial, and evaluation capacities of grantees. We also heard that to create transformative change in the region, funders like MFW and WFN needed to move capacity building beyond individual organizations and focus at multiple levels. One funder stated:

¹ In fact, the Ms. Foundation has already begun this connecting work by issuing an RFP for Southern Strategy for Building Movements (Building Movement for a "Just Recovery" in the Gulf Coast) and creating the position of Southern Region Coordinator.

People recognize the need to develop the capacity of non-profit organizations in the region but they also recognize the need to build the capacity of the foundations in the region and the leadership in the region, the volunteer [base] in the region, specifically among people of color. I think to help the forward growth of the community by helping capacity building in all those areas, not just non-profit organizations but helping the local folks of the community develop and helping leadership develop within the communities as well would be enormously beneficial.

Based on this encouragement, following is our final set of recommendations for capacity building at the nonprofit, coalition, and funder, and MFW and WFN levels.

Grantee-Level Organizational Capacity Building

- **Recommendation #3: *Provide more leadership and nonprofit capacity building for alignment of organizational systems with larger advocacy and social change work.***

Community leaders' commitment to equitable rebuilding in itself is not enough to achieve results. Grantees' discussions of challenges that they are facing suggest that some of MFW and WFN's grantee partners may not be cognizant of the specific knowledge, skills, and relationships that leadership and staff need to accomplish their goals. Grantees need to take time away from their daily grind to do strategic planning, and creating stronger fundraising and evaluation systems to leverage more resources for their organizational sustainability. In addition, many grantees recommended that MFW and WFN play an ongoing role in connecting them to other funders, suggesting that they need help in the basics of how to bring resources to the table. This involves writing effective proposals to national and local funders and being able to make the case for continued funding with good evaluation data on their organization's effectiveness and longer-term impact. Capacity building in other areas such as media and communications, database management, and monitoring and evaluation skills would also be invaluable in helping organizations to become more influential.

Capacity building trainings could also serve the dual role of helping newly formed CBOs feel "worthy" and capable of affecting political and social change. Several grantees reported feeling apprehensive about "sitting at the table" with powerful leaders, due to their socioeconomic status. One grantee eloquently described this insecurity:

Although our members are being put in these positions of power, we have to feel worthy of them. And a lot of times that doesn't come very easily. It took me forever. And I'm still working on the process of really feeling worthy to sit at the table with decision makers who make decisions about our community all the time.....So a large part of our work is a transformative process so that we can collectively empower each other to feel worthy ourselves.

Although some grantees are already working towards self-empowerment, capacity building trainings and organizational support from women's funds could precipitate this transformative process and help foster a "sense of self-worth" among newer organizers.

- **Recommendation #4: *Support emerging leaders, particularly women of color.*** Although one of MFW's strategic focuses is leadership development, there is still a gap in leadership in the region, particularly among young, emerging leaders and women leaders of color. One funder spoke to the importance of this:

It's critical that the leadership of people of color and women be elevated in this region. This whole process of an equitable recovery relies on that.

Our interviews with grantees and scan of the research of post-Katrina nonprofit and leadership capacities resonated with this funder's observation. Given this, MFW and other funders may want to further invest in supporting intermediaries that can provide training, technical assistance, and resource support to help emerging leaders with networking, organizational and board management. The Women's Funding Network's Women of Color International Development Incubator (WOCIDI) is an effective example of building both the nonprofit leadership and fundraising skills of women of color for positions of power. With these kinds of capacity building supports, these emerging leaders can better fill key positions in organizations and community coalitions.

- **Recommendation #5: *Support the increase of women of color in elected office and in policy advocacy.*** Several of the grantees working in policy advocacy expressed the frustration of having to work within conservative political systems, where the needs of women of color were rarely on the agenda of elected officials or policymakers. One strategic way to change this situation would be to help women of color get elected into policymaker positions. Emerging women of color leaders need policy training in order to level the playing field and help them to run competitive campaigns. Towards this end, a 'Southern Women's Policy Institute,' could make great strides by providing intensive public policy training to women of color who are already involved in community-based organizations.

Grantee's Programmatic Focus

- **Recommendation #6: *Focus on rebuilding social networks and social capital by ensuring the culturally competent local organizations are supported by private funders and contracted by the government.*** We know that social networks played a key role in disaster recovery. Katrina survivors have relied upon neighborhood, workplace and kinship ties for temporary housing, emotional support and access to other practical resources such as transportation and communication. While middle class communities with private resources, stable social networks, and a firm hold on property rights have recovered more quickly, indigent victims have had a difficult time staying connected with those potentially critical social networks due to lack of communication resources, and the population's wide dispersal across the U.S. through evacuation efforts. In continuing work for the KWRF, the Ms. Foundation and women's funds should continue to support and ensure **structural reforms** through (1) governmental contracting with local, culturally competent, nonprofit organizations; (2) drawing from internal community strength, (3) pre-planning with community leaders before disasters occur, and (4) supporting local advocates to help survivors navigate the bureaucracy of accessing federal benefits.

- **Recommendation #7: Focus on ensuring that mental health services are readily available.** Grantees consistently cited mental health as a critical immediate need, but unlike other immediate needs such as housing and job training, it has rarely been included in federal recovery programs. In order to provide truly “comprehensive services” to survivors of Katrina, mental health must be considered an indispensable component of programming. The trauma of the hurricane itself and its devastating aftermath continues to affect hundreds of thousands of people in the Gulf Coast, who without treatment will have increased difficulty in reaching self-sufficiency.

It is also of critical importance to incorporate activities that support the mental health of people working on rebuilding issues, such as service providers and CBO staff members. One grantee explained:

There’s a lot of women, including myself, that are just overwhelmed, who can’t say no, who are just tired, and who will probably burn out, in another four or five years if we keep running the way that we do. So, I would love to see Ms. Foundation maybe look into another separate pot of money for retreats or sabbaticals for women of color.

In addition to providing mental health services to service providers, funding “nontraditional” mental health programs, such as retreats, sabbaticals, or professional development seminars could be instrumental in helping staff to avoid burnout and alleviate trauma.

- **Recommendation #8: Focus on building the economic self-sufficiency of low-income women of color.** In order to truly empower low-income women of color and ensure that their voices are integrated in the rebuilding process, economic self-sufficiency is critical. Therefore, future funders are encouraged to expand job-training programs, especially those that have proven to be effective in helping women gain employment in above-minimum wage positions. Programs such as the “Women in Construction” program at Moore Community House and the health-care assistant training program at Jeremiah’s Hope are excellent examples of job training programs that could be scaled-up to serve greater numbers of women. A key element of these two programs—which should be replicated in future programming—is the provision of wrap-around services, including case management and assistance with transportation and child-care. These wrap-around services reduce the opportunity costs for low-income women and thereby encourage participation in the trainings. Advocacy work is also necessary to enforce anti-discrimination policies around sexual harassment, equal wages, and hiring practices, which would improve women’s work conditions.
- **Recommendation #9: Continue to fund organizations that focus on a cross-section of issues:** As funders deepen their rebuilding efforts and focus on broader issues such as poverty and equity, it is essential to fund organizations that are addressing these issues from multiple angles. In viewing a complex phenomenon such as poverty, a holistic approach should be applied that takes into consideration issues such as criminal justice, immigrant rights, domestic violence reduction and reproductive health, in addition to the more commonly recognized

issues, such as housing, job training, and education. It is also essential for funders to continue to forge increased collaborations between organizations, especially smaller groups who may not have branched out to work with groups focused on other issue areas.

- **Recommendation #10: *Continue to focus on the specific needs of the displaced population.*** Although nearly everyone in the Gulf Coast was affected by Hurricane Katrina, those who are still displaced face unique challenges. As the focus of funders shifts towards the promotion of economic justice throughout the Southern Region at large, the unrequited needs of displaced Katrina survivors should not be forgotten. Many displaced people still need assistance finding housing, returning home and/or assimilating to their new locations. Programs that specifically cater to these needs have all but ended. Therefore, it is of continued importance that these services become integrated into larger poverty alleviation programs.

Movement Building -- Network & Collaboration Capacity Building

- **Recommendation #11: *Support the effective development of multiracial coalitions once they are established.*** While the South consists of 54% of the nation's Black population, the influx of Latino and Asian immigrants that the Gulf Coast has experienced pre- and post-Katrina has stirred up racial tensions as well as changed the social and political context of grantees' work, forcing them to look beyond just black/white issues and to build new partnerships. One grantee emphasized the difficulty of developing a multiracial coalition and the need to find common purpose to do joint work:

We're working across so many boundaries. There's race, gender, religion, language, culture, geography, age . . . Part of learning down here ...has been how to look beyond the kinds of things that divided us in the past and to realize we have to stand together to get this work done.

MFW and WFN play a critical role in building the power of newer organizations as they enter multi-racial coalitions, and this continues to be a critical focus for the Foundation. In addition, as a supporter of the Steps Coalition that is struggling with multi-racial issues and a trusted, neutral, and national leader, MFW and WFN can provide resources to support "training of trainers" to help groups work out tensions of race and class. A number of groups have developed important methodologies and models for addressing these issues, including the People's Organizing Committee, Worker Center for Racial Justice, and the Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance.

- **Recommendation #12: *Create sustainable political empowerment to advance a community-driven vision for change.*** Several respondents described the huge hurdles that the region continues to face in terms of creating the kind of political empowerment that can move meaningful systems-level change. One respondent shared that her sense was that various communities have successfully organized to *prevent* a score of negative outcomes for individuals and families. However, they have yet to *positively frame and organize for a community-driven vision for change.*

She explained, “I think it’s been a lot easier to say, they stopped this ruling, they stopped that ruling, they stopped this nightmare of a planning process, than it’s possible to say they created this positive thing.” Multiple respondents noted that there is still a long way to go in this regard, with one stating:

There is a disconnect between local and national politics and what is actually going on in the region. There is no way for local people to influence government, so another area to focus on would be helping local people to get their voices heard in the policy arena.

The Center for Social Inclusion also concluded from its post-Katrina study that capacity building for local civic engagement groups is critical for national policy development.² It is critical that MFW and WFN supports local advocates to be more savvy in connecting and translating knowledge gained from community organizing to state and national advocacy efforts. These efforts (e.g., housing, economic development) must be more coordinated for generating public will and creating accountability for governmental follow through.

- **Recommendation #13: Focus on building political community “watch-dog” committees to provide oversight for state spending of federal funds.** If state government chooses to favor corporate or development interests over community rebuilding, as witnessed in Mississippi, then citizen groups must respond by creating oversight committees. Committees such as these would establish a system of “checks and balance” to ensure that civilian needs are not overlooked in the rebuilding process.
- **Recommendation #14: Support the Women’s Economic Security Collaborative.** A new initiative currently underway –spearheaded by several women’s funds across the country -- is the development of a “Women’s Economic Security Collaborative,” with the aim of creating, protecting, and strengthening policies and practices that help to alleviate poverty among women. This Collaborative is currently working on the development of a “Poverty Impact Statement,” which would provide policy makers with a set of guidelines to help improve social and economic conditions for low-income women. As this could have profound influence on policy makers, it is essential to ensure that local community members—especially low-income women of color—are involved in the writing of this “Policy Impact Statement.”

Local Philanthropy Capacity Building

- **Recommendation #15: Focus on building the capacity of local philanthropy in the South to support social change work.** A number of respondents felt that much more needed to be done to engage local philanthropic partners and donors

² *Triumph over Tragedy: Leadership, Capacity and Needs in Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.* Center for Social Inclusion. (August, 2007, p. 32). <http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/PDF/Triumph%20Over%20Tragedy-%20Leadership%20Capacity%20and%20Needs.pdf>

in the Deep South. By partnering with and connecting donors with local funders, MFW and WFN could facilitate great sustainability of resources in the region. The potential is great for leveraging local philanthropy. According to the Foundation Center (Foundation Center Yearbook, 2007), the South is home to 19,570 foundations with \$121 billion in assets and \$8 billion dollars in giving. This constitutes over one-fifth of the nation's total giving. Although MFW and WFN have become important philanthropic leaders in the South, without partnering with other national funders to build local philanthropic capacity, there will always be a sense of dependency on progressive funders from outside of the region.

Conclusion

Ms. Foundation and WFN have remained steadfast in their support of a just and equitable recovery in the Gulf Coast. It is apparent from the accelerators and major shifts described in this report that the Katrina Women's Response Fund embodies a sophisticated, multi-layered and holistic approach to community rebuilding and policy advocacy. Building upon this work, the Ms. Foundation has already crafted a broader strategy to focus on the Southern region to create a deeper and longer lasting economic, social, and policy impact. Based on our recommendations above, we strongly believe that it is a logical strategy to focus on one of the poorest regions of the United States.

According to Sharon Hanshaw of Coastal Women for Change, "This is our community. You take care of where you live." The community leaders and residents of the South have demonstrated tremendous inner strength and faith despite overwhelming adversity. Their hope for meaningful change has been kept alive by funders like the Ms. Foundation, WFN, the Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, the Women's Fund of Greater Jackson, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. With a new President who promises to heed the call to get people home, ensure decent jobs, and get it right *this* time, the prospects for an equitable, long-term recovery look brighter and still within sight.

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Appendix A: Grantees

Appendix A: Grantees

Ms. Foundation Grantees

Organization	Grant Amount	
	FY 07	FY 08
American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi	\$30,000	
Artists for Life	\$3,000	
Ashé Cultural Arts Center	\$2,500	
Boat People SOS	\$25,000	
Children's Defense Fund Southern Black Women's Initiative	\$25,000	
Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities	\$30,000	
Coastal Women for Change (CWC)	\$15,000	\$20,000
Common Ground Relief	\$10,000	\$10,000
Community Policy Research and Training Institute	\$20,000	
Critical Resistance	\$500	\$25,000
Families & Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)	\$30,000	\$25,000
Frontline Solutions	\$15,000	
Gulf Coast Funders for Equity	\$12,000	
Helping Everyone Receive Ongoing Effective Support (HEROES)		
Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)	\$25,000	
Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies (IWES)	\$5,000	
Jeremiah Group	\$25,000	
Lafayette Restoration Center	\$30,500	
Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (LDRF)	\$3,000	
Louisiana Housing Alliance	\$25,000	
Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA)	\$25,500	
Mississippi Low Income Childcare Initiative	\$10,000	\$25,000
Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights	\$2,500	
NAACP- Mississippi Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund	\$30,000	
New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NONDC)	\$1,000	
New Orleans Women's Health and Justice Initiative		\$15,000
STEPS Coalition	\$15,000	\$20,000
The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation	\$25,000	\$10,000
The North Gulfport Community Land Trust	\$15,000	\$25,000
The Opportunity Agenda	\$17,000	

Turkey Creek Community Initiative	\$30,000	
United Houma Nation Relief Fund	\$25,500	
Wider Opportunities For Women (WOW)	\$10,000	\$25,000
Women's Funding Network (WFN)	\$201,000	
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)	\$25,000	
Zion Traveler's Cooperative	\$10,000	\$20,000

WFN Grantees

Organization	Grant Amount	
	2006	2007/2008
Women's Fund for a Greater Memphis		
Choice, Inc.	\$10,000	\$5,000
DeNeuville Learning Center (House of the Good Shepherd)	\$10,000	\$5,000
Survivors of the Storm		\$10,000
Community Legal Center	\$10,000	\$10,000
Dress for Success Memphis		\$5,000
Memphis and Shelby County Community Services Agency	\$10,000	
Memphis Area Legal Services	\$10,000	
UCP of the Mid South/Memphis Works	\$12,000	
Women's Fund of Greater Jackson		
Moore Community House		\$70,000
Women's Foundation of Greater Birmingham		
Leading Edge Institute		\$50,000
Jeremiah's Hope Skills Center	\$100,000	

Appendix B:
List of Interviewees

Appendix B: List of Interviewees

Interviewee	Organization	Fall 2007	Winter 2009
Ms. Foundation			
Sarah Covert, Southern Strategy Coordinator	Ms. Foundation		X
Nsombi Lambright, Executive Director	American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi	X	X
Mary Troupe, Executive Director	Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities	X	
Sharon Hanshaw, Executive Director	Coastal Women for Change (CWC)	X	X
Marina Drummer, Community Futures Collective	Common Ground Relief	X	
Mayaba Liebenthal, Organizer	Critical Resistance	X	X
Gina Womack, Executive Director	Families & Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)	X	X
Marcus Littles, Principal Consultant	Frontline Solutions	X	
Ron White, Interim Coordinator	Gulf Coast Funders for Equity	X	
Dr. Heidi Hartmann, President; Dr. Barbara Gault, Vice President & Director of Research; and Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, Affiliated Scholar	Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)	X	
Jackie Jones, Lead Organizer	Jeremiah Group	X	
Bishop D. Taara Williams, CEO	Lafayette Restoration Center	X	
Ashley Shelton, Director of Policy Initiatives	Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (LDRF)	X	
Bill Chandler, Executive Director	Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance	X	
Carol Burnett, Executive Director	Mississippi Low Income Childcare Initiative	X	
Jaribu Hill, Executive Director	Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights	X	X
Derrick Johnson, Executive Director	NAACP- Mississippi	X	
Shana Griffin, Interim Executive Director	New Orleans Women's Health and Justice Initiative	X	
Oleta Fitzgerald, Southern Regional Director	Southern Black Women's Initiative	X	
Melinda Harthcock, Executive Director	Steps Coalition	X	
Melanie Campbell, Executive Director and CEO	The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation	X	
Jason Mackenzie, Executive Director	The North Gulfport Community Land Trust	X	

Joan A. Kuriansky, Executive Director
and Kate Farrar, Director of the Family
Economic Self-Sufficiency Project

Wider Opportunities For Women
(WOW)

X

Women's Funding Network

Carol Penick, Executive Director of the
Women's Fund

Community Foundation of Greater
Jackson

X

Ruby Bright, Executive Director

Women's Foundation for a Greater
Memphis

X

Virginia Sweet, Executive Director

Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham

X

Angie Wright, Executive Director

Leading Edge Institute

X

Deloris Clayborne, Employment
Specialist

Memphis HOPE Project, Women's
Foundation for a Greater Memphis

X

Carol Burnett, Executive Director and
Julie Kuklinski, Program Director of
Women in Construction

Moore Community House

X

Darrel London, Director of the Gumbo
Project

Survivors of the Storm, Inc.

X

Appendix C: Interview Protocols

Appendix C: Grantee Interview Guide

Assessment of the Current Situation

1. What are the 3 most critical issue areas that need the most attention?
2. How is your organization addressing these issue areas?
3. What are the major outcomes that your organization has achieved??
 - a. Impacts on public infrastructure and social service systems.
 - b. Impacts on population, neighborhoods and communities
 - c. Impact on culture
4. Do you see the multiple of effects of race, gender, and class influence the process of rebuilding in your work? How do you address it? What difference result from this approach?
5. What is your role in policy advocacy? Has MFW helped you in that effort? If so, how?
 - a. What role of women of color played in your policy advocacy work? What kinds of input did they provide? How was it received? What impact or influence did it have on the outcome?

Role and Support of Women's Fund

6. What kinds of support has the women's fund provided to your organization? [*grant support, consultation (relationships), media justice training, policy forum*] What effect has that support had on your organization?
7. As you know, **WFN** is dedicated to ensuring that the perspectives of low-income women of color are central to policy decisions about relief, recovery, and rebuilding. **What has the focus on the leadership of women of color meant to your organization?** Has it changed:
8. Has **your focus** on the strength and leadership of women made a difference in short and intermediate outcomes? If so, how?
9. How does **the women's fund' role** to date differ from other national or local funders?

Recommendations

10. Do you have any recommendations for the women fund's continuing role to deepen or accelerate rebuilding efforts?

Funder Interview Guide

1. **How has your foundation been involved in Hurricane Katrina recovery and rebuilding?** (Is this funding consistent with your foundation's mission, values, and priorities or is this funding a short-term gap funding strategy?)
2. **What grantmaking activities has your foundation been engaged in?**
 - **Funding strategies adopted?** (e.g., direct service, leadership development, **community organizing, advocacy**)
 - **Types of grantees?** (local/grassroots, national, regional, intermediaries/consultants, other foundations for regranting such as LA Disaster Recovery Foundation)
3. **How did you choose your focus and strategies?**
4. What were **key resources** in your education, research, decision making about the issues in the affected area in the Gulf Coast? (individuals, funders, organizations)
5. **How has your strategies shifted over time, if at all?** (e.g., moving from ST focus (disaster relief) to LT rebuilding (advocacy))
6. **In this case, have your grantmaking process and grantee reporting requirements differed from your foundation's normal policies and procedures? If yes, how?** (e.g., accommodations for reduced grantee capacity, limited staffing, site visit process, turn around time for grant award)
7. **What additional role have you played beyond grantmaking?**
 - Collaborating with other funders
 - Organizing/educating other funders
 - Promoting collaboration among local/state groups
8. **What were major challenges in doing this work?**
9. **What have been key lessons learned? What has worked well? What has not worked?**
10. **How do you know if your funding has made a difference in the rebuilding efforts? What outcomes would you be looking for?**
11. We're interested in the role of your foundation. **Can you describe your foundation's contributions to rebuilding communities after Katrina?**
 - Leadership role?
 - Their niche (focus on women of color, leadership development of WoC or African-Americans, gender lens, using an intersectional analysis, human right framework, focus on organizing/advocacy)
 - Collegiality

12. Are interested in developing a long-term strategic funding plan in the Gulf Coast.
What might be potential a focus, role, and some funding strategies for your foundation?