Individual and Organizational Capacity Building for Environmental Justice

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Take Away

- Invest in building relationships and partnerships
- Individual development/leadership and organizational development are building blocks of sustainable organizations that will work for environmental justice (EJ)
- High Passion and High Power = 2HP
Take Away

- Attending training is NOT enough to develop leadership for environmental justice.
- Making environmental justice (EJ) a way of life is a task that must be done if we want to be effective!
- Leverage relationships and partnerships.
Environmental Injustice

- Place
- Corporate Polluters - Permit and Enforcement
- Race
- Class
- ???
Priority Environmental Risk in NPU-V: Air Pollution
The Mission: **Promoting a safe and healthy environment by helping Georgia communities organize to confront environmental health challenges**

ECO-Action facilitates the Grassroots Environmental Network & provides training in community organizing, capacity building, and leadership development, which helps ensure sustainability.

The work is based on the intersection of three things:
- Threats to human health
- Environmental degradation
- Social injustice
ECO-Action is 23 years old and works in grassroots organizing in GA
A Different Kind of Group

ECO-Action is a group with values, and a vision for social justice.

A group working with different Georgia communities to make a difference.
ECO-Action facilitates change through:

- On-site Assistance with Community Organizing
- Political Education
- Leadership Development through *Young Leaders and Training the Trainer Series*
- Action Education programs: *Need to Know Initiative -- Precautionary Principle*
A Group Dedicated to Information-Sharing, Learning and Skills-Building

- MASK – Motivation, Attitude, Skills and Knowledge
- Learning
- Building a learning organization
A Group that Supports Public Action

- Taylor County Voting Rights
- Consent Order Process
A Group that Helps People Help Themselves

• We don’t do for people what we believe they can do for themselves
A group that gets results

DUMPING (BEFORE)

CLEAN UP (AFTER)

CELEBRATING SUCCESS
in the Whitesville Community!
RESULTS Cont.

McDaniel Street Oil Pit, Atlanta GA

Before

After
RESULTS Cont.

Glenn Street Bridge, Atlanta GA

Before

After
RESULTS
Capacity Building Chart

- Individual Development
- Environmental Injustice
- Organizational Development

Capacity Building

Leveraging Relationships and Partnership

Environmental Justice
Step One: Engaging (Initiating Relationships)

Where:
- Meeting places, gatherings, one-on-one contact

How:
- Prepare (i.e. have an “elevator speech”)
- Listen to concerns
- Make a connection
  - *Use current relationships to invite other relationships
  - *Share your passion and vision for the well-being of the community
Engaging Business (Like Pulling Teeth)

- Finding What Works – Changing Perception
- From *One Source Consulting Group* to other businesses
  - Use who/what you have to get who/what you want
  - Business Team
  - Environmental Clean Up
  - Recycling Business Network lead by Sonoco recycling
  - Sonoco Supporting 4R (Reuse, Renew, Recycle, Rethink) in Community Schools
Step Two: Building Partnerships for a Healthy Community

- MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
  - Indicates an agreement
  - Common intent

- CARE Sustainability Checklist

- Work together – how?
We work together with an understanding of *mutual respect* and *trust* that embodies:

- Engaging relationships, building and sustaining partnerships
  - Applying the elements of our MOU (i.e., mission, lessons from the geese) to our working relationships and decision making
  - Using CARE Project Sustainability Checklist
  - Establishing teams that encourage participation and ownership of SAFE
  - Accountability to self, NPU-V leadership, community, and funder (EPA)
- Memorandum of Understanding serves to establish and set forth the guiding principles, responsibilities and procedures of the SAFE Coalition.
3-Ways of Sustaining CARE Work post Grant Cycle

- Brownfield (With City of Atlanta)
- Air Pollution (With GSU)
Sustainability: In the context of EPA CARE project, sustainability means CARE projects whose community-based partnerships continue to improve the local environment after CARE funding ends.

- **Ensure Accountability**: Simply by doing what you say you are going to do
- **Trust your partners** and assist them to become empowered
- **Make the Relationship an Information-Sharing Venture**

- SAFE does not promise to deliver the people of NPU-V from environmental problems.
- SAFE believes in individual residents and our partners to empower themselves to address environmental hazards/risks in NPU-V community and its surroundings.
- We all must demonstrate our passion and power to create pathway for environmental health protection in NPU-V community and its surroundings.
- Apply the CARE sustainability checklist appropriately (5 key elements)
- Facilitate transfer of learning by all but most especially among graduates of the ECO-Action’s Capacity Building and Leadership Training Institute (CBLTI)
- Participants of CBLTI will be required to develop a personalized support system.
Purpose: To prepare change agents that will work in partnerships to improve environmental health of the NPU-V community and its surroundings after CARE funding ends

- Discover your motivation, attitude, skills and knowledge (MASK) in order to build capacity for social change in your community
- Deepen your understanding of the community building process in communities of color
- Learn how you can serve as an agent for change in helping other people discover their motivation, attitude, skills and knowledge for making a difference
CBLTI Continued

**Purpose (Cont.):**
- Expand your knowledge of the relationship between environmental impact and human health
- Increase your understanding of how to transfer what you have learned to others in an effort to make a difference in their communities
- Create a support system to sustain your motivation for making a difference
- Become part of a network of diverse individuals with a social change perspective

**Methods:** Use of variety of methods
What is MASK?

- Motivation
- Attitude
- Skills
- Knowledge
- MASK functions to
  - Build support systems
  - Unmask individuals as community citizens who CAN make a positive difference in their environmental health
...Serve as change agents for preventing and reducing environmental hazards through organizing/collective action
Working Together Is Fun
& Hard Work
Final Thoughts

- ECO-Action/SAFE is becoming a **learning organization** where everybody at every level is committed to learning to make a difference for social and environmental justice.

- Investment in building and sustaining relationship is sine qua non to growing and leveraging partnerships for EJ.

- Building and sustaining partnerships demand that we fix our eyes on the prize- an empowered healthy community!

- Capacity building must focus on altering the relations of power in order to make a difference for EJ.
Sowing the Seeds of Hope and the Power of Collaboration for Environmental Justice