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PRACTITIONER'S ESSAY

An Agenda for AAPI Community Economic Development

Kil Huh and Lisa Hasegawa

Introduction

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community-based organizations (CBOs) have played an integral role in the provision of culturally and linguistically competent health, mental health and social services, job training programs, refugee resettlement, youth services, English-language instruction and civic education. They often act as intermediaries between other non-profit organizations, philanthropic and government initiatives attempting to include AAPI communities, particularly in the role of advocates for and designers of culturally and linguistically appropriate program models. More importantly, these groups have organized AAPI communities and built relationships of trust with people in neighborhoods across the country.

This essay outlines a framework for improving AAPI community economic development (CED) practice by incorporating a social capital and networks approach. This approach can leverage existing underutilized community resources to have a greater national impact through the strengthening of existing relationships and creating linkages with well established CED institutions. Finally, we recommend methods by which AAPI community organizations can incorporate market-based principles and reach scale, while maintaining local control over the process. This can create a CED framework that is self-sustaining and can be useful for future governmental and philanthropic efforts.

Background

Over the last forty years, the community development field has become increasingly technical and professionalized as an industry, focusing primarily on production and preservation of affordable housing and economic development. Community devel-

opment corporations (CDCs) and financial intermediaries benefited the most from investments by foundations, corporations, financial institutions and financial intermediaries. A number of CDCs were located in predominantly AAPI communities and were active participants in this community development movement.

Over the last two decades, the number of CBOs has increased to meet the needs of the rapidly growing AAPI communities across the country. Today, AAPI CBOs as a group are very heterogeneous—some are pan-Asian or pan-AAPI, and others are ethnic specific. Some are focused on youth, others on older adults. Some provide a wide range of social services, while others specialize in specific areas such as health, mental health, education, substance abuse prevention, referral services, refugee resettlement or job training. However, the existence and capacity of CBOs that serve as vital anchors in many low-income AAPI neighborhoods is uneven across the country. Many AAPI communities are still relatively new due to the restrictive immigration policies that were in place until the mid-1970s. Formal organizations addressing the needs of these communities did not exist to take advantage of the influx of resources to build capacity for community development that occurred as part of the War on Poverty. There were, however, several CDCs focusing on AAPI communities founded during this time that continue to evolve and develop innovative strategies to meet the changing demographics of the “Asian American” population. They are now recognized as some of the strongest CBOs in the field for their multilingual models and their work in diverse neighborhoods. They have played critical roles as “bridging institutions” between the traditional community development industry and newer AAPI communities.

The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD) was created in 1994 to enhance the capacity of CBOs and CDCs and to serve as a unified voice for AAPIs on community development issues. The membership includes established CDCs as well as newer CDCs and CBOs serving low-income immigrant, refugee, and native communities. At its inception, its founders recognized the value of their collective experiences as assets to increase the effectiveness of the community development industry. The lessons learned and the models of the established CDCs have inspired CBOs and CDCs working in other AAPI communities to leverage traditional com-

munity development tools, strategies and resources to organize, build capacity, and strengthen neighborhoods and ethnic networks. For example, the Chinatown Community Development Center, a founding member of National CAPACD, played a central role in working with the Pilipino community in the historic fight for the International Hotel in San Francisco. Another founding member organization, the Little Tokyo Service Center in Los Angeles, is working with the Pacific Islander Community Council on a senior housing project for Samoan, Chamorro, and Tongan elders in Carson.

As a national coalition of Asian, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian community groups, National CAPACD generates value to the community development field by forging new networks, alliances, and opportunities. More importantly, National CAPACD is a vehicle for communities to self-define a national advocacy and research agenda and provides an infrastructure to collectively address the persisting problems of lower-income AAPI populations.

One of National CAPACD's major tasks is to formulate a coherent agenda by building on a small but important set of works. The 1993 book, *Beyond Asian American Poverty*, outlines policy and action strategies to address the economic and social needs of low-income Asian communities in Los Angeles (Ong 1993). The framework for *Beyond Asian American Poverty* emphasizes that development should be a means for social and political change and not an economic end in itself. It also stressed that while the practice of CED could be a useful strategy for addressing poverty, a unique adaptive approach for AAPI communities would be needed to ensure that the strategies are maximally effective.¹ A more recent Urban Institute study commissioned by National CAPACD showed that many of the findings for Los Angeles were true on a national scale, and provided a more in-depth analysis of the role of AAPI-serving CDCs and CBOs in the community development system (Urban Institute 2000). One of the key findings was that the national community development support system created to meet the needs of CDCs has not adequately responded to the needs of AAPI communities. A recent report co-sponsored by National CAPACD, *Economic Needs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Distressed Areas*, provided updated information using 2000 census data on the multiple economic problems in seventeen low-income AAPI neighborhoods and on the challenges facing

CBOs serving these communities (Ong and Miller 2002). In particular, the report identified a severe lack of funding and resources as major barriers to community development in AAPI neighborhoods. In this essay, we expand upon the core issues identified in the three studies, including organizational capacity, linkages, and the diversity of the population itself.

Advocating for capacity building in AAPI communities will be a challenge in the current political and economic environment. Funding for CDCs, CBOs and CED work has continued to decrease steadily, while competition for limited resources has increased and more emphasis has been placed on concrete deliverables and readily quantifiable results-driven programs. The simultaneous economic downturn is increasing joblessness, and the majority of AAPIs are in regions where housing prices are steadily rising. As the responsibility to address the needs of low-income groups further devolves from the state apparatus to community organizations and intermediary service providers, explicitly identifying the opportunities and barriers to attend to the issues of low-income AAPIs are increasingly important.

A Social Networks Approach

In *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy* (1998), Gittell and Vidal examine how social capital and network theories could be combined with community development to create a broad conceptual and analytical framework establishing an appropriate set of community development interventions. Gittell and Vidal focus on the emerging literature that begins with Robert Putnam “as the central motivation as well as the intellectual departure point” (Gittell and Vidal 1998). We will do the same by using Gittell and Vidal’s framework to illuminate why a unique approach is needed to include AAPI communities in future CED strategies.

The recent history of CED practice has included two approaches to community and economic revitalization: the social action approach (community organizing and empowerment) and a community or local development emphasis (programs and services). If community and economic development strategies are to be effective in the long run, they cannot singularly have either a social action or a local development emphasis. They must incorporate and combine *both* traditions to promote a process that influ-

ences political, social, and economic institutions to invest in the development of local economies and neighborhoods while finding ways for people to benefit from and control aspects of that growth.

A meaningful development strategy is a “people-centered” process more responsive to the needs and input of those whom it primarily affects. Community development must be more than a strategy for revitalizing low-income neighborhoods from within local borders. Any course of action must involve an effort to view the neighborhood and its people in a broader context, including citywide, regional, and network perspectives. CED is a much more powerful concept when regarded in the context of metropolitan or regional development. This broader perspective allows the needs of AAPI-specific groups to gain attention.

Traditional community development organizations and intermediaries, policymakers, and funders often frame the challenge of working in AAPI communities as needing to “prioritize” one AAPI community’s needs over another due to limited resources. This is counter-productive to building a strong mechanism to address diversity in the AAPI community. Programs should have components that provide opportunities for local and ethnic-specific bonding *and* national/regional and pan-AAPI bridging.

The challenge for AAPI CBOs and CDCs is to ensure that everyone’s needs are met, while advocating for adequate resources and remaining cognizant of the broader context of shrinking resources. The historical neglect of low-income, minority communities has led to disparities that existed long before the large influx of immigrants and growth of AAPI communities. The community development system should include all AAPI communities—even those without a “critical mass”—in order to avoid continuation of the cycle of marginalization and exclusion and to avoid “zero sum game” thinking.

Social Capital and Community Development

Social capital is a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of community development in addressing AAPI challenges. The term refers to the social ties or networks among a group of people and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that are embedded in these relationships. It is precisely these social ties and networks that are important to community well-being. It also

refers to the extent which members of a community are able to maintain effective control and realize their common goals. The idea is that a community will be more socially and economically productive if more people feel a real stake in it (Putnam 2000). Social capital is not a single thing but “comes in many different shapes and sizes with many different uses.”² Thus, it is not always easy to study the phenomenon of social capital or its production. Social capital is a slippery but important concept: slippery because it has been poorly defined, important because it refers to the basic raw material of civil society.

Researchers such as Robert Putnam make an important distinction between bridging (or inclusive) capital and bonding (or exclusive) capital. Xavier de Souza Briggs describes bonding social capital as good for “getting by” and for bolstering “our narrower selves” (Putnam 2000). On the other hand, bridging social capital is crucial for “getting ahead” and generating broader identities and reciprocity. Putnam summarizes the distinction as such:

Bonding social capital is good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity. Dense networks in ethnic enclaves, for example, provide crucial social and psychological support for less fortunate members of the community, while furnishing start-up financing, markets, and reliable labor for local entrepreneurs. Bridging networks, by contrast, are better for linkages to external assets and for information diffusion.

While distinct, these two types of human capital are linked. Putnam presupposes “bonding” in maximizing “bridging.” Moreover, William Julius Wilson observes the feedback between the two (Wilson 1997). We assert that one needs bonding social capital in order to build and optimize the utilization of the bridging variety. This nexus has practical implications. Community development institutions that want to “bridge” with AAPI communities should also support the development of bonding social capital within these communities.

Today, with the “gradual withdrawal of other entities working on behalf of poor communities,” CDCs have been left as the “gap fillers.” CDCs are a strong starting point for utilizing the framework outlined by Gittel and Vidal (1998). CDCs have been integral vehicles for collective community action and the main conduit for external funding and partnerships to implement commu-

nity intervention strategies.³ Gittell and Vidal found that CDCs built trust and cooperation among residents, partnerships and external linkages outside the community, resident and neighborhood control of the process and outcomes, and community capacity to sustain and realize the benefits from the progress made.

However, one primary challenge in adopting Gittell and Vidal's framework to the AAPI community is that there are fewer institutions and organizations, many of which are relatively new. While there are many sophisticated and experienced CDCs that serve specific AAPI communities, particularly on the West coast, the level of capacity to serve AAPIs in the community development system as a whole is very uneven across the U.S. Some AAPIs live in ethnic enclaves, while many others are quite dispersed, making them unlikely to be the dominant racial group in any neighborhood. This dispersion is partially due to U.S. immigration policy that historically resettled refugees to geographic locations where few AAPIs previously resided. Large numbers of AAPIs are now living in areas with little to no capacity to serve the needs of these linguistically and culturally isolated communities.

There is a growing recognition that CBOs play an important part in helping native-born low-income AAPI populations, as well as facilitating the integration of newer immigrants to larger society. Therefore CDCs serving AAPI populations can play an effective role in developing and implementing national and local community development strategies and programs that will ensure that low-income AAPIs are included in community-development efforts.

Social Capital and the AAPI Panethnic Community

One of the conceptual challenges to implementing the social-capital approach is to develop an operational definition of "community," a concept that means disparate things to different people. Ong (1993) defined community as a geographic area smaller than most cities but larger than a neighborhood block or census tract. The factors distinguishing a community are common social characteristics such as ethnicity, language or the existence of commonly shared cultural and religious institutions. Concentrations of ethnic small businesses and economic characteristics provide another identifier of a community. Ong (1993) looked at two discrete geographic areas as their units of analysis, but their findings resonate on a larger scale.

AAPI communities are very diverse. Many times Chinatowns, Koreatowns, or South Asian or Southeast Asian neighborhoods are much more nuanced as communities than the straightforward designation would suggest. Indeed, Ong and Miller found only four out of the seventeen AAPI neighborhoods that they studied were ethnically homogenous (Ong and Miller 2002). The study confirmed what CBOs already know from their daily work: “AAPIs in the inner-city live alongside low-income Latinos, African Americans, and whites—a factor that needs to be considered in organizing and advocacy work” (Ong 1993).

These interethnic factors are useful in exploring the levels and types of social capital in AAPI communities and formulating a strategy that reflects a bridge-building social capital or networks approach to community economic development that yields greater internal capacity. Yen Le Espiritu’s concept of Asian American panethnicity and her documentation of “bridging institutions and identities” among AAPI CBOs is also instructive (Espiritu 1992). She explores the power and limitations of external, structural factors to bridge diverse communities and documents the development of bridging organizations and solidarities among several ethnic and immigrant groups of Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry.

In the past decade, a number of local, regional, state and national pan-AAPI organizations have emerged. They have taken on the task of acting as “bridging” institutions that connect ethnic-specific organizations and facilitate the involvement of issue-oriented organizations to engage diverse AAPI communities. However, the most central challenge is dealing with internal diversity in an inclusive manner. Espiritu’s research suggests that pan-AAPI organizations must play the dual role of encouraging and facilitating both bonding and bridging if they are to be successful.

Espiritu also suggests that the organizations most effective in meeting the diverse needs of AAPI communities are those that explicitly focus on panethnicity and provide thorough and equal representation for all constituent members.

When this is not the case, members can threaten to secede and would-be members can refuse to join, thereby reducing [an organization’s] legitimacy and thus its effectiveness. To make themselves accessible to the broadest constituency, panethnic organizations often lobby simultaneously for both panethnic and ethnic specific causes—thereby emphasizing both a com-

monality of interest and the preservation of the rights and existence of subgroups. (Espiritu 1992)

Espiritu observes that while “outsiders” may have constructed the AAPI-boundary, AAPIs must control the process of how they then interact with society at large and that the community must design the content within that boundary. Espiritu cautions that if AAPIs are to build solidarity, they need to take seriously the heterogeneities among their ranks and overcome the narrow dominance of one class or that of just Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, the two most well established groups. This task of “bridging” reminds us that ethnicization—the process of boundary construction—is not only reactive, a response to pressures from the external environment, but also creative, a product of internally generated dynamics (Espiritu 1992). AAPI-serving CBOs and CDCs are an integral part of how the pan-Asian identity is creatively constructed and communicated.⁴

External linkages are as important as internal linkages for community economic development. While the practice of CED is decidedly locally oriented, it has always stressed the importance and need to build relationships with larger economic, political and social institutions that have an influence on larger social and economic dynamics. Espiritu describes the common phenomenon that AAPI communities face when dealing with government agencies:

Unwilling or unable to listen to listen to myriad voices, government bureaucracies (and the larger society) often lump diverse racial and ethnic minority groups into the four umbrella categories—blacks, Asian Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans—and treat them as single units in the allocation of economic and political resources. (Espiritu 1992)

She describes how “Asian Americans did not merely accept the pan-Asian concept imposed by outsiders, but also used it to advance their political demands—including the demand that government bureaucracies treat them as separate groups within a larger category.” For example, unity among Pacific Islanders, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians is necessary if AAPIs “are to contest systems of racism and inequality in American society—systems that seek to exclude, marginalize and homogenize them” (Espiritu 1992).

Research on social capital and AAPI panethnicity highlights the challenge facing AAPI-serving organizations. The geographically based nature of community development funding makes it difficult for the community development system to meet the needs of AAPI populations. Existing community development organizations are not equipped to meet the language and cultural needs of this diverse and dispersed population. As a result, AAPI organizations have no choice but to divide scarce resources across several geographic areas. If there is a critical mass or an existing AAPI CBO in an area, the programs that AAPI organizations develop often end up serving non-AAPI residents as well in order to meet minimum program requirements. At the same time, AAPI organizations are also establishing outreach programs or satellite offices to meet the needs of AAPIs who live outside their service area. This phenomenon is not unique to AAPI communities, but it may be more pronounced due to the correlation between linguistic capabilities to basic program access for much of this population. This pattern is also commonly experienced by AAPI health and social service organizations.

A decade ago, a five-year strategic plan was laid out in the publication *Beyond Asian American Poverty* (Ong 1993). The goals of encouraging organizational capacity building, promoting internal and external linkages; and generating innovative projects that have a broad impact on economic development policy are still relevant. Today, organizations like National CAPACD are developing a stronger national infrastructure to encourage partnerships with a broader collection of stakeholders through a social networks approach, to compressively serve the needs of AAPIs and systematically implement the principles of *Beyond Asian American Poverty's* strategic plan.

Outlining an Action Agenda

The more established AAPI CDCs recognized the potential power of bringing these AAPI community groups together in a more formal way. They understood the need to build a strong voice for change in the community development environment and for national coordination of research, policy analysis, and action by funders, policymakers, the media and corporate and nonprofit partners. Organizations like National CAPACD, Hmong National Development and the South East Asia Resource Action Center create bonding social capital on a national level by facilitating self-em-

powerment and self-determination of local CBOs who serve and who are from AAPI communities. Stakeholder organizations embrace community organizing and advocacy as the agent of change and bring local AAPI issues to a national forum. Organizations such as these create bridging social capital on a national level by providing a space to impart the wisdom and expertise of member organizations to broader audiences. These national entities also illuminate the way that local organizations create bridges for participation of AAPIs communities in a multiracial social justice movement. National CAPACD takes as a starting point organizing and building capacity to address housing, community, and economic development needs.

National CAPACD has outlined four core strategies in its most recent strategic plan to simultaneously build both bonding and bridging social capital. They are:

- 1) Increase Access to Comprehensive Capacity Building Tools and Resources for Member Organizations;
- 2) Convene AAPI Communities for Community Development and Social Change;
- 3) Forge an AAPI Community Action Research and Policy Agenda; and
- 4) Build Collective Leadership and Create Opportunities for AAPI Community Leaders and Change Agents.

This strategic plan advances forward a blueprint for the community development industry, foundations, government agencies, and policymakers to engage in formal partnerships with AAPI community organizations across the country.

The integration of a social capital and networks approach with community economic development is an approach that fits well with existing local development practices. As Gittel and Vidal (1998) observe, it “reinforces the long-standing preference of practitioners and prominent national foundations for framing their community development activities in asset-based terms, that is, in terms of ‘the capacity of communities to act’ rather than of ‘need.’” This framework explicitly places the power to change in the hands of the local actors. However, the power to change is largely dependent on the level of resources available to affect any type of transformation.

Capacity Building Tools and Resources

While public resources and specialized funding will continue to play an important, albeit limited, role in urban revitalization efforts, private sources of funding must and can be greatly increased for AAPI communities. AAPI communities, even in low-income neighborhoods, are rich in a variety of physical, cultural, and social assets and have real potential as investment opportunities. Prior to National CAPACD, the diversity and dispersed nature of the AAPI community was a barrier to leveraging funding at the national level. A national network of community organizations interested in community development issues can create a mechanism to leverage new access to untapped national resources. It can also allow for coordination of national initiatives both independently and in partnership with allies to ensure that the full diversity of AAPI communities is included in national community development initiatives. The network of member CBOs could also create partnerships with government agencies, technical assistance providers, and community development intermediary organizations to maximize access to and utilization of existing community development resources and tools.

CBOs serving AAPI communities will be able to access information and resources to support organizational development, community organizing and advocacy, housing, and community and economic development in one place. Similarly, such a network could be a resource for research and information, providing a network to access organizations serving AAPI communities and highlighting best practices in the diverse AAPI communities.

Two initiatives would strengthen the community development field's ability to meet the community and economic development needs of AAPI populations: 1) the creation of an AAPI-specific capacity building fund and a technical assistance system and resource center; and 2) the development and maintenance of regional and national networks.

First, a capacity building fund designed to meet the specific needs of AAPI communities is needed to complement existing sources of funding. There are existing vehicles, such as the Hope Fund of the National Council of La Raza, which could serve as models. National CAPACD, in partnership with other national AAPI organizations and foundations, could create a national infrastructure to offer Community Development and Capacity sources for

organizational capacity building, community organizing and planning, training and technical assistance, and program implementation to support comprehensive community and economic development strategies. Such a fund would function to leverage access to national resources that have not systematically reached local AAPI communities.

CED, in the diverse communities of today, requires a new approach to funding the development process that is more sustainable and less restrictive. Research in this area will be essential to the continuation of CED work in the long-term. As Gittell and Vidal (1998) aptly observe, "funding is arguably one of the most critical attributes of community development efforts. By its very nature, community development requires the infusion of funds (to geographic areas or population groups lacking resources) from outside the target area." One method of garnering outside funds is to build upon the present asset-based view of community development; communities should be able to leverage their current assets (physical, financial, human and social) to spur market-based development in a manner that ensures local control and input into the process.

Exploring a market-based mechanism for financing community development has emerged as a model for urban revitalization efforts. Although we do not dispute the importance of existing public funding sources such as Community Development Block Grants, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and tax increment financing, these tools alone are increasingly inadequate to meet the needs of distressed communities. Government programs cannot substitute for the scale and liquidity of the private capital market. Government programs are also limited by their tendency to lump diverse ethnic communities together, thereby requiring AAPI panethnic organizations to pick one community over another, or promoting intense competition among AAPI ethnic groups for scarce resources. National CAPACD could also play a role in advocating for the development of tailored, culturally and linguistically appropriate programs, initiatives, resource guides and toolkits to address unmet needs of AAPI communities.

Enhancing local capacity must be complemented with the development of regional and national networks. National CAPACD was founded through the convening of individuals representing organizations serving AAPI communities and key allies in the national arena of community development. A small group of people

had a simple concept of building a network of AAPI community development organizations. A national infrastructure can bring together people who have a common mission and who have faced similar challenges to generate innovative problem-solving and policy alternatives to meet the diverse needs of AAPI communities. For example, convening by region, ethnic group, or issue will each bear unique experiences, energy, and insight. It would institutionalize a mechanism to continually generate active participation and ownership from underrepresented communities and geographic regions in an inclusive and ongoing national AAPI community development dialogue.

Convene AAPI Communities

Regional and national meetings could also bring together local organizations to promote the coordination of community economic development initiatives. Regional meetings could also be used as a forum to document effective local efforts and challenges. These meetings would also facilitate linkages between national intermediaries and government agencies who organize services on a state and regional basis. Issue-based task forces would allow in-depth dialogue that will facilitate problem-solving on community development issues. For example, a task force on financial literacy in AAPI communities could provide a forum to discuss the most effective messages for educating different ethnic populations about credit and working with financial institutions. Another task force might want to better understand the linkages between homelessness among AAPIs and statistics on overcrowding. These networks and task forces would ultimately shape a national agenda and advise National CAPACD on programmatic and legislative initiatives.

Some of the most powerful capacity building tools and programs could be developed from the expertise of AAPI-serving community organizations. Information from various convenings and the maintenance of regional and national networks will also provide a constant flow of information about the needs of local organizations and compliment quantitative research analysis through the development of case studies and identification of best practices. By providing communication mechanisms, facilitating regular networking opportunities and coordinating technical assistance resources, the latent wisdom of their diverse members can be documented and disseminated.

Action Research

AAPI communities, particularly linguistically isolated and economically distressed neighborhoods that require community and economic development support, are overlooked because data are lacking or are only available in the aggregate form. This masks the needs of AAPI subpopulations. Without the data showing disparities, community development programs and activities are not directed toward assisting AAPI communities, nor are they monitored for language and cultural competence. The fact that the community development field does not collect good data on AAPI populations and subpopulations places additional burdens on AAPI CBOs. They must conduct their own needs assessments and produce their own data to justify funding from government agencies, foundations, and corporations (President's Advisory Commission 2001).

Traditional research methods and academic institutions have not generated sufficient research about AAPI communities and subpopulations or analyses that are grounded in the experience of AAPI CBOs. AAPI community development research should prioritize the *practical* application of information gathered for *both* the organizations and the individuals providing the data. Support for CBOs to "know what they know" and the documentation of this expertise both qualitatively and quantitatively can be harnessed to transform communities and to drive advocacy efforts at local and national levels. CBOs are frequently a primary source of critical information in research projects with either academic institutions or larger research policy institutes, but they are less often the primary beneficiaries.

A promising area of potential collaboration is for foundations and federal agencies to provide resources to CBOs and academic institutions to conduct community-based "action research" to illuminate AAPI community development needs and effective practices addressing this need. Central to this effort are the concepts of empowerment, self-determination, and self-sufficiency. Consistent with these ideas, National CAPACD embraces a model of research that involves their member organizations in methods that are community-based, participatory, and action-oriented.

Government agencies and other entities involved in community and economic development programs can do much to support the inclusion of underserved AAPIs in community development strategies. They can conduct internal assessments of the

adequacy of agency data collection requirements to identify gaps in reporting on AAPI program utilization and planning efforts. A systematic review of data collection instruments and all sampling and analytical methods can be done to maximize the recognition of AAPI sub-populations. They can also require the collection of data disaggregated by respective AAPI ethnic groups to assist in evaluating whether federal programs are appropriately reaching AAPI communities. By collecting data on AAPI communities, particularly disaggregated data, local governments and CDCs will be better prepared to provide linguistic and culturally competent services to the AAPI ethnic groups living in the region.

Future research will also need to explore new approaches for “seeing” and valuing assets in emerging neighborhoods⁵ and market-based approaches to community development. Researchers can integrate and build upon the existing body of research on market-driven methods of community revitalization to identify marketing techniques and financial innovations and tools that help the larger economy grow and can explore how these methods can work in emerging neighborhoods. Incorporating a social capital and networks approach in CED research will maintain community control of the research process and create mechanisms that redirect market-generated funds in a revitalizing community to benefit existing residents.⁶ One critique of market-based approaches to community development has been its inability to tackle the issue of gentrification. There is a real concern that, when market forces are unleashed in a neighborhood, original low-income residents will be priced out of the area. Value recapture refers to methods that link existing residents to rising real estate values.

There is a need to increase capacity of CBOs working in AAPI communities to utilize community-based action research methods as a tool for community and policy change. A national entity or collaboration between community organizations, national organizations and research institutions should create a mechanism to produce regular policy-oriented research in the form of policy briefs and special reports that highlight current CED legislation and policies and their impact on AAPI communities and subpopulations. The UCLA Asian American Studies Center and National CAPACD have created an Asian Pacific American Community Development Data Center (APACDDC) to generate detailed reports and analyses, and to provide training and technical assistance for

members on accessing Census data. The APACDDC could be expanded to fill this role.

Further, as the needs of AAPI communities continue to grow around the country and the products of the action research are distributed to national audiences, there will be a need for increased leadership from AAPI practitioners in the community development field. National CAPACD can facilitate a human capital development strategy that will cultivate a pool of future talent and stronger organizational and programmatic capacity at local, state, regional and national levels. Simultaneously, it will promote collective national leadership, relationships, and agenda setting to have national policy impact.

Through National CAPACD's efforts to create a resource center and develop and maintain regional and national networks, staff in CBOs and CDCs can teach, learn, reflect upon and inspire one another through sharing of practical experiences with staff at similar organizations. The philosophy of this approach acknowledges the depth of experience that CBOs and CDCs have and the range of community empowerment strategies that they are already implementing.

Areas that need to be addressed include data collection, the impact of immigration policies on eligibility for housing and community development programs, structural barriers to building AAPI capacity in CED, and language access issues. Individuals who have experience at the local level are the future agents of transformation of national community development policies to be inclusive of and competent on issues that impact AAPI communities.

A national program to bring local AAPI community leaders' voices and expertise to Washington, DC to testify on Capitol Hill regarding community economic development issues would serve a twofold purpose: to educate national community development organizations about AAPI communities and issues, and to build stronger working relationships. Such a program would also familiarize AAPI service providers with national AAPI organizations, national community development advocacy groups, federal agencies that fund community development programs, and congressional representatives. This would simultaneously build the capacity of AAPI community organizations to be more effective players in the policy-making process, and build the capacity of community development advocates and funders to ensure that their

programs and efforts are effective in including all underserved communities.

These broader public education and human capital development initiatives can be supported by the creation of a national “Community Peer-to-Peer Training Program” that would formalize and facilitate access to the experts in community economic development and other community-experienced leaders who contribute to AAPI community empowerment and development. Information from these experts can be shared with other members through such a Peer-to-Peer Program. Scholarships for staff of AAPI-serving CBOs to existing training programs can also enhance the technical community development skills and knowledge of proven and emerging practices.

Conclusion

AAPI organizations play a critical role in meeting the community and economic development needs of an underserved and diverse community. Yet they lack the broader, system-wide support necessary to carry out their work. Because federal, state, and local governments do not collect or analyze data on AAPIs, particularly disaggregated data on ethnic groups, AAPI organizations have little to no data to make needs assessments to justify sufficient allocation of funding. There is often a mismatch between the existing community development resources, systems, and programs with the urgent needs of AAPI communities. Consequently, AAPI organizations must also innovate and grow to serve the diverse needs of the AAPI community, most often with limited resources and support from the existing community and economic development system.

There are a growing number of AAPI organizations that are small, committed, and have emerged to work with rapidly growing segments of the AAPI population. These organizations require more support to effectively address the needs of emerging and underserved populations. For example, there are only a handful of CBOs that receive funding to serve the South Asian community, despite the fact that it is the second largest AAPI population. Very few Pacific Islander-serving CBOs exist, and Pacific Islander communities are often overlooked even by CBOs that are set up to serve an AAPI community. There are over two hundred mutual assistance associations that were developed specifically for resettled Southeast Asian communities; however, they have not been systemati-

cally linked to the community development system. These newer organizations lack the political, human, and financial capital, size, and track record of well established and larger CBOs to advocate for resources within the system. The challenge is to build a housing and community development infrastructure that ensures the inclusion of AAPI CBOs to support the development of strong, vibrant AAPI communities and families as an integral part of any broader strategy to revitalize our country's neighborhoods.

Notes

1. Some of the unique characteristics of AAPI low-income communities that Ong (1993) observes are the large numbers of newer immigrants and refugees, the cultural and linguistic diversity in this racial group, the sizeable ethnic economies that exist, and that AAPIs do not live in racially homogenous communities.
2. Family represents a distinct type of social capital, as do relations with neighbors, a membership in a professional organization or athletic facility, or your colleagues at work. It is a broad theme meant to capture a wide range of ideas.
3. While CDCs have been seen as representative of the community, Gittel and Vidal (1998, pp. 28, 38) also caution that some critics have raised questions about how adequately CDCs are representative and accountable to their communities. However, while this discussion is important, this paper focuses on CDCs as the primary vehicle for integrating social capital and networks into community development practice.
4. AAPI-serving CDCs have a dual role in communicating pan-Asian identity. First, they must effectively convey to a diverse constituency of AAPIs the notion of a pan-Asian identity and facilitate the necessary discussions to arrive at a consensus of what this means. Second, they must communicate to the larger society the interplay of this pan-Asian identity to traditional economic, social and political structures.
5. Emerging neighborhoods refers to inner-city communities or distressed neighborhoods. This paper uses the term emerging neighborhoods as an attempt to amend the received lexicon of community development, thus, shifting the existing conceptions of inner-city communities and broadening the possibilities for action.
6. One critique of market-based approaches to community-development has been its inability to tackle the issue of gentrification. There is a real concern that, when market forces are unleashed in a neighborhood, original low-income residents will be priced out of the area. Value recapture refers to methods that link existing residents to rising real estate values.

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