



Data Center UPDATES

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Unlocking the power of knowledge for social change

Real Experts: workers document experiences to inform solutions

by miho kim | Executive Director

One day, you and I will look back in wonder at this time, when “expert” had only one meaning: a person with a PhD in a suit. Even today you can see other experts emerging. Low-wage workers -- whose voices were once silenced completely -- are articulating their unique body of knowledge with their eyes locked on the prize - rights, dignity and justice for all.

Thanks to your support, DataCenter joins these workers with a whole survival pack of research methods, tools, and resources, adaptable for complex organizing needs on the ground. We walk (and run) the journey with our partners, including in that survival pack regular helpings of relevant strategic research support and a spicy dash of encouragement and solidarity.



Industry Power: “Food Chain” workers join forces

by miho kim | Executive Director

Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) is a broad-based national body of community organizations, low-wage worker centers and labor unions committed to winning justice for all food workers.

2009: Let's Unite!

In FCWA's early formation, DataCenter developed a visual presentation of the enormous, complex power structure of the food industry. These groups said, “YES, it makes sense to team up!” to achieve their shared vision.

2010-2011: Let's Learn!

The food workers begin to organize and understand their own community knowledge -- a key foundation of bottom-up leadership and power. DataCenter is aiding this process in several ways including conducting a survey training in Immokalee, Florida in March 2011.

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Domestic Workers: Research moves Bill of Rights in CA legislature

by Christina Fletes | Research Fellow

Breaking News!

While it has been guessed at for years, we now know: there are 218,185 domestic workers in California. Now, no one can refute that domestic workers are a significant part of the population and workforce in this state.

With your support, DataCenter was able to analyze a three-year sample of the American Community Survey, in consultation with the San Francisco Health Department and others to determine this number. Thank you for sup-

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Dear Friend in Justice,

Renowned activist-poet Audre Lorde had it right when she said, *"In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower."*

In the first few months of 2011, we saw a conquered community in Egypt demand a voice in their own society. This movement empowered communities across the globe to demand a new definition, a new democracy for a better way of life.

This is the heart of research justice at DataCenter: it sparks empowerment.

The source of that spark has been and will always be you. This past year, your individual gifts amounted to the single largest contribution in DataCenter's 33 year history! Your generosity has empowered us and it is empowering the marginalized communities that we work with to make their voices heard. Like never before, communities and allies are coming together across geography, generations, and industries to make a powerful and empowered web of justice.

In this web of justice, DataCenter is connecting modern technology to indigenous communities to save their ancestral lands. Farmworkers are joining restaurant workers, demanding justice for every person who has a hand in moving food from a farm to your fork. Research and other organizing support groups are weaving together in the Bay

Area and Los Angeles, to ensure communities have the resources they need to triumph in their campaigns. And three passionate, accomplished individuals have joined DataCenter's web of staff!

This web is just beginning. Communities once invisible are making themselves visible on the streets and in government chambers -- on their own terms. These terms reflect their realities. These terms celebrate their expertise and experience. These terms honor their dignity as leaders for a brighter future for us all.



Photo credit: Christina Fletes

Thank you for weaving this web of justice with me.

In hope,

miho kim
Executive Director

DataCenter Welcomes....

New Board Members

Marla Cornelius,
Compasspoint Nonprofit Services

Aspen Branch-Moore, POWER

Sujata Srivastava, Strategic Economics

New Staff Members

Leslie Parra, Development Director

Jay Donahue, Program Manager

Michael James, Training Director

DataCenter Thanks....

As we bid them farewell, we would like to thank Andrea Christina Mercado of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* and Jessica Tovar of *Communities for a Better Environment* for their generous and enthusiastic service on DataCenter's Board of Directors.

Food Chain: working conditions of food laborers

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Surveying will allow food workers to capture first-ever data on the realities and experiences of their working conditions--essential facts needed to advocate for their rights in the media and policy chambers.

2012: Let's Advocate!

This historic, national, grassroots-led study will be published in early 2012. It will hit Capitol Hill, where it will be used to develop policies that improve working conditions for all food workers on local and national levels. Thanks to your support of DataCenter, this advocacy will help pry open the floodgates to dignity and respect for all food workers in the United States!



Photo Credit: Food Chain Workers Alliance

Children of farmworkers at a rally in Immokalee, FL. FCWA members gathered to insist that large grocery stores like Trader Joe's do their part to ensure tomato pickers are paid a decent wage.

DataCenter Launches Training Department: Popular Education 2.0 in the House!

Michael James to Develop DataCenter Training Department

Michael has been developing a pedagogy for critical consciousness for people of color in the US for nearly 35 years. This teaching method builds capacity for authentic political participation and moral leadership.

He began this work after Paulo Freire's *Pedgogy of the Oppressed* hit the United States. Deeply moved by Freire's affirmation of the depth and ingenuity of poor and working class people, Michael and some of his counterparts developed grassroots popular education projects across North America.

Now at DataCenter, Michael is committed to transforming how we think about and use knowledge. As this transformation occurs, knowledge becomes central to making positive change and builds the capacity of organizations to make change.



Bill of Rights: DataCenter is "go-to" source for key information

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porting worker justice!

This is not the only thing we know. Organizers, academics and politicians contact DataCenter on a regular basis to get data about domestic workers. As we continue our domestic worker national survey, DataCenter will remain their "go-to place" for this kind of information.

This unique knowledge, gathered with and for domestic workers, is powerful and impactful. As maids and nannies courageously approach decision-makers demanding their rights, this data will carry them through. As decision-makers realize that they must understand this largely isolated work

-force, DataCenter's information will be their guide. It has already begun: we recently submitted information in a California Assembly Labor Committee hearing for the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights (AB 899), which passed the committee in April 2011!

In addition to keeping you in the loop about this project, we know you too want to see unique information on domestic workers as it unravels! That's why we're developing a section on DataCenter's website dedicated solely to information about the national domestic workers movement.

Experts recognize that working women of all kinds are leading our economy forward, and coin terms like "She-conomy". Our economy, which depends on countless women labor must be made a respectful, equitable system for them and their families.



Photo credit: Christina Fletes

Sacramento, April 13, 2011: Domestic Workers speak at press conference after Bill of Rights passes Labor Committee

Introducing...You're One Stop Shop for Grassroots Resources!

Over the years, many of you have said that a streamlined system of support for grassroots communities—from campaign planning to community documentation, mapping and strategic communications—would greatly improve the impact of campaign efforts and capacity. We heard you and we agree with you!

This year, DataCenter is taking an active role in the movement to build such a system. With other organizations, we are convening a community of resource allies to strengthen grassroots community organizing. *Resource Allies for Social Justice* (ReAl SJ) launched formally in Los Angeles in April. ReAl SJ will conduct a fieldscan of the L.A. social justice community to assess resource needs for grassroots organizing. Similarly, in the Bay Area, Youth in Focus (now defunct), Pacific Institute, and DataCenter are convening a community of grassroots research practitioners.

Resource Allies for Social Justice (ReAl SJ) Partners

- *Advancement Project*
- *SCOPE-AGENDA*
- *Southern California Library*
- *California Fund for Youth Organizing*
- *Healthy City to Advancement Project (HC of AP)*
- *VozMob*
- *DataCenter (Los Angeles satellite office)*

There are many benefits to these convenings. Resources are in high demand as communities seek strategies to achieve maximum policy impact on issues that affect them. These formal convenings will create a one-stop shop for resources: community groups will not only receive immediate aid for their unique needs, but can also count on having these resources with them for the long haul, supporting the movement for decades to come.



Photo Credit: Sasha Vozmob
Participants of ReAl SJ map resources in the Los Angeles grassroots community.

In Their Own Words: DataCenter helps communities articulate their needs

by Anne Ryan | Communications Associate

Incarcerated Youth

A mother watches as her teenage son is handcuffed in a courtroom to be sent to a juvenile detention center. She wonders, "When will I see him again?"

Communities of color have withstood the worst of de-funding social services and increased funding of the prison system. While navigating the complex criminal justice system, incarcerated youth must also struggle to find a path to a sustainable educational and professional future. In response to these struggles, DataCenter is collaborating with Justice for Families (J4) to conduct the first-ever national research of at-risk and incarcerated youth led by their families.

Incarcerated youth of color and their families face a mountain of struggles, from discrimination and language barriers to bureaucracy and court fees. This research and its subsequent report will allow J4 to learn the needs of and develop support systems for the youths' families. It will also be a key organizing tool to call for new federal policies that reduce juvenile detention.

Imagine a world where a majority of youth of color live in safe communities, overflowing with opportunities. This report will lead us one step closer to that world.



Photo Credit: Center for Constitutional Rights

Trans* Community

"I stared far back into my past and remembered the child who couldn't be catalogued by Sears. I saw her standing in front of her own mirror, in her father's suit, asking me if I was the person she would grow up and become. Yes, I answered her. And I thought how brave she was to have begun this journey, to have withstood the towering judgments."

-- Jess, main character of *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg



Photo Credit: Antonin Kratochvil
www.arcusfoundation.org

Jess' journey may be removed from your realm of experience, or it may be very close to your heart. Either way, the voices of individuals navigating the world of gender identity can and will be heard!

DataCenter has joined with Arcus Foundation to map organizations across the country whose work in some way supports transgender, transsexual, cross-dressing, gender non-conforming, gender variant and other individuals who chose not to conform to a binary expression of gender. Arcus Foundation, a global foundation that seeks LGBT equality, will use this map to determine priority needs and issues among organizations in the Trans/Two-Spirit/Intersex community. As this work moves forward, individuals like Jess, who may feel marginalized by their experiences, will be empowered to share their stories and walk this journey with the support and resources they need.

Lailan Sandra Huen

Oakland native Lailan Sandra Huen cares deeply about youth of color and that is why she is a passionate advocate for DataCenter's work to build research capacity for youth of color organizing for educational reform, juvenile justice, and health.



Lailan was the lead coordinator for the Da Town Researchers (DTR), which organizes high school students from Oakland's public schools to assess priority issues affecting their peers and develop policy reform recommendations to the School

Board, using surveys and other youth-led participatory action research tools.

In 2010, the Oakland School Board praised the project for providing unique student perspectives on improving schools, while cultivating exceptional young leaders with a powerful, authentic voice. Many policy recommendations made by the DTR team

were adopted by Oakland Unified School District, leading to victorious student campaigns (in collaboration with the Meaningful Student Engagement Collaborative) demanding programs that support student empowerment and access to college.

"I believe in DataCenter's work because it helps youth find their own voice for change," says Lailan. "The youth movement deserves and needs its own autonomous, independent research infrastructure to ensure that youth are effectively heard in shaping their own realities and future." As a board member of Youth Together and advocate for the National Student Bill of Rights campaign, Lailan now serves DataCenter as a youth research advisor.

Lailan works with California Assemblymember Sandre Swanson as Senior Field Representative on education, housing and community development in Oakland, Alameda and Piedmont. She also co-coordinated her mother Jean Quan's successful mayoral campaign in Oakland in 2010. She is completing a Masters in Media Studies to develop media-based, place-based, action research curriculum for classrooms.

Urban Planning

Communities demand change in the face of daily injustice

by Anne Ryan | Communications Associate

Your average morning: wake up, get dressed, eat breakfast, and head to work or school. But what can slow you down? Minor things: you sleep through your alarm, your hair looks goofy.

Major things: An overcrowded apartment, where you share a bathroom with six other people. A two-hour wait in oppressive heat for the bus. A rising bus fare you can barely afford.

Urban planning--a topic that may seem to some as interesting as staring at the wall--has a huge effect on our basic rights to livelihood. Urban planning determines the ease or inconveniences of our daily lives. In 2011, DataCenter is partnering with two organizations to illuminate issues in urban communities and demonstrate that equity in urban planning is priority #1.

SOUTH ASIAN RESIDENTS VOICE NEEDS IN NEW YORK

DataCenter has joined *Chhaya Community Development Corporation (Chhaya CDC)* in New York to develop a survey to assess the needs of a South Asian residential community in Queens that faces overcrowding, landlord/tenant tensions, predatory lending and foreclosures. DataCenter will then compile a report, which will document the most pressing needs of this community, so that Chhaya CDC can adapt their programs, increase public awareness about these issues and design strategic urban planning advocacy campaigns. Stay tuned as we continue to update you on this study!



Photo Credit: POWER, People Organized to Win Employment Rights

TRANSPORTATION INJUSTICE IN COACHELLA VALLEY, CA

DataCenter, in conjunction with students from the University of California, Berkeley, provided an assessment of transportation issues for *Lideres Campesinas*, a grassroots group of farmworker women in the Coachella Valley, a southern coastal region in California. This assessment was crucial to Lideres' community-based study of low-income and farmworker communities, many of whom rely on public transit as their sole mode of transportation. The final report detailed the egregiously inefficient transit system that led to economic injustices and abuses. Want to learn more? Contact us for the full study!



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YOUR CELL PHONE: GREAT FOR CHATTING...AND DEFENDING YOUR LAND!

California indigenous tribe uses smart phone to protect ancestral lands

by Anne Ryan | Communications Associate



You know that technology is making it increasingly easy to connect to friends and find information. We here at DataCenter know it too! By harnessing widely available cell phone technology, DataCenter is helping communities capture information in their own words, through their own eyes.

Developers and policy makers often see a geographic location as an individual place that can be useful in some way. But an indigenous tribal community sees that same location as a piece of a whole; indeed, a sacred space they call home. In 2011, DataCenter is helping the Winnemem Wintu Tribe document their sacred land with a new tool: the smart phone.

Here's how it works: youth tribal members will walk the sacred trails with their elders. As their feet follow the same paths that their ancestors have walked for centuries, their fingers will push one button and a smart phone will record the Global Positioning System (GPS) data. These GPS points will then become a full map of traditional trails. In addition to collecting key data, this is a powerful opportunity for young Wintu members to learn stories and sacred traditions from their elders.

A tribe's sacred land is like a human body. If you pave over a few miles to build houses, it's like paving over someone's heart. And what is the body without the heart?

This project is a partnership between DataCenter and Pacific Institute. In addition to generating a map of Winnemem Wintu sacred lands, this process of democratizing mapping will be featured in an upcoming documentary by

the Sacred Lands Film Project. In the words of its award-winning director, Toby McLeod, "[t]his methodology that honors the authentic knowledge of the tribe offers a potential model to help indigenous communities around the world advocate more effectively for their sacred sites from Siberia to Papua New Guinea."

Undeniably, technology has the power to affect individuals and communities in many ways. DataCenter, with this project and others to come, is committed to ensuring that technology is harnessed so communities can broadcast their voices and usher in positive social change.