# DataCenter UPDATES

## VICTORY!

## LABOR PROTECTIONS WON

On July 2nd, 2014, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed the Massachusetts Domestic Workers Bill of Rights! The Massachusetts Domestic Workers Bill of Rights is the most comprehensive and forward-thinking bill of rights to date and it paves the way for even more comprehensive victories across the country.

The victory is due to the powerful combination of research and organizing. In 2012, National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) and DataCenter released *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work*, the first report to document the working conditions faced by domestic workers across the US. The report is a product of 2,000+ surveys that were created, administered, and analyzed by domestic workers with DataCenter support.

DataCenter trained domestic workers in all stages of the research process. Participatory research methods combined with a focus on organizing created a stronger, more robust domestic worker community which has been a key factor in all the great successes we've had across the country: New York; California; Hawaii; and



Boston City Council unanimously votes on resolution to support Massachusetts Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights.
*Photo: groundreport.com*

now Massachusetts. Together, we've gotten one step closer to nationwide dignity for a historically forgotten workforce!

*PS: Congratulations to NDWA's director Ai-jen Poo for winning the 2014 MacArthur grant award!*

## REFLECT… PIVOT… THRIVE

*"Our politics are our deepest form of expression: they mirror our past experiences and reflect our dreams and aspirations for the future."* — Paul Wellstone



We are living in times of rapid change; it is an important moment for organizations to ask themselves hard questions about who they are, what they do, how they do their work, and with whom. DataCenter's board and staff have been taking advantage of the transition in the Executive Director role to ask ourselves these very questions to ensure that our work fulfills our core commitment to social justice and is intentionally linked to the development of a broad movement for social change.

The updates in this newsletter on current and recent work, including the ongoing impact of the research we did in partnership with Justice for Families, are affirmations of the value of our work. DataCenter's programmatic talents are proven; organizations offer rave reviews of the work we have done for and with them, and our reputation is impeccable. DataCenter has been at

the forefront of lifting up the profound contribution of research for social change. The role of research in movement building has gained widespread recognition, as the observations below illustrate:

> "Honest and careful research can either affirm a movement's instincts or challenge its beliefs and can either confirm current direction or force the rethinking of old approaches. In either case, informed communities will be more strategic and better able to build a compelling case based on current facts. What really distinguishes movements is the capacity to go beyond thinking of research in a utilitarian fashion (i.e. acquiring just enough facts to make the case).
>
> Some of the best-researched reports are being produced by movement organizations and increasingly theory is emerging, like organizing, from the grassroots.
>
> …research triggers changes in the organizations themselves, particularly in their base building activities."
>
> — *Transactions Transformations Translations: Metrics that Matter for Building, Scaling and Funding Social Movements*, by Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, and Rachel Rosner

At DataCenter we know that research doesn't merely support organizing – it's a core component to organizing; and all around us is evidence that the landscape and nature of community organizing and movement building is shifting. Organizations, networks and movements are making a pivot from transactional to transformative partnerships, with the goal of building durable power in traditionally marginalized communities including poor communities and communities of color.

This is a time of transition for social justice movements; it is also a time of transition for DataCenter. We have been effective throughout our history because our work has evolved with the times. As we look to the future with fresh eyes, we are excited at our opportunity to pivot to building more transformative partnerships. Simultaneously, we continue to maintain our core commitment to the power of clear, accurate information that embodies the self-determination of marginalized communities. We hope you, our supporters, will join us as we look for ways to thrive by leveraging our work to create the greatest possible change. It is an opportunity to pivot to building more transformative partnerships.

Susan Mooney
Interim Executive Director

# RESEARCH JUSTICE TOOLS

For years, we've worked to reposition research as an essential tool for ground-up organizing for social change. Now, we're taking the workshops and training materials we've developed along the way and turning them into free and accessible toolkits. With these tools, many low- and no-budget organizing efforts will be stronger, more strategic, and better poised to make the change *they* want to see. We're all experts, and with the right tools we can leverage our expertise to create lasting social change.

## PUTTING OUR STORIES ON THE MAP TOOLKIT
*Scheduled release: December 2014*

*Putting Our Stories on the Map* (working title) is a toolkit that assists native and tribal communities in using storytelling and mapping for cultural preservation. Many native and tribal communities across the US constantly struggle to protect their land, cultural resources, and sacred sites against development and resource extraction. *Putting Our Stories on the Map* provides detailed guides on how to gather stories and combine them with digitally mapped locations of community assets. It details research planning processes, how to conduct interviews, and how to create maps using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS).

## CAMPAIGN RESEARCH TOOLKIT
*Scheduled release: Winter 2015*

The *Campaign Research Toolkit* will help grassroots organizations understand the nuts and bolts of strategic campaign research. We're developing and refining user-friendly tools — handout guides, online tools, exercises, case-study discussions, etc. — that make the process of corporate and individual target research more accessible to grassroots organizations and their membership.

## SURVEY 101 TOOLKIT
*Scheduled release: Spring 2015*

The *Survey 101 Toolkit* will help organizers and community leaders create, administer, and analyze a survey that supports their campaign. The survey is one of the most powerful tools of a participatory research project. The methods and exercises featured in this toolkit are the same ones we used in the highly successful participatory research project we did with the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Through discussion, hands-on exercises, and instruction, toolkit users will be able to conduct a robust survey research project.

**For more about these toolkits and their release, join us online:**
- **datacenter.com/subscribe**
- **facebook.com/researchjustice**

*These toolkits are made possible by your support. Thank you for helping us make our training materials more widely accessible to the folks on the ground who need them the most!*

## LGBTQ YOUTH, RESEARCH JUSTICE, AND A YOUTH-LED SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

At our recent Nonprofit Research Institute, community members, youth leaders, and organizers learned the ins and outs of Research Justice. Participants often take what they learn from our trainings and apply it to their own work, and the Institute was no different.

Hilary Burdge, Research Manager from the Gay—Straight Alliance (GSA) Network, participated in the Institute hoping to learn ways to bring youth voice to the center of GSA Network's research.

The Institute references *An Introduction to Research Justice—* our flagship toolkit released late 2013. After the Institute, **Hilary took the toolkit, adapted it, and then hosted her own Research Justice workshop at GSA Network's national gathering**. She used the toolkit to help participants think critically about the dominant perception of LGBTQ youth. She asked the questions: What would it mean if youth voices were actually listened to? How can we organize our community so that we can create the greatest impact?

> " *I have a personal vision that young people will be able to use research to ask their own questions and tell their own stories. They really are the experts of their lives.* "
>
> — **Hilary Burdge**, Research Manager, Gay—Straight Alliance Network

Hilary understands that research in the hands of the people most affected is a powerful tool to create change. When LGBTQ youth (and marginalized communities in general) harness the power of research to tell the stories of their experience, it leads to genuine solutions and lasting change.

Check out gsanetwork.org for more on GSA Network's important work. If you're interested in bringing Research Justice to your organization, contact us – jay@datacenter.org.

Hilary Burdge, Research Manager at the Gay—Straight Alliance Network, hopes to use Research Justice to bring youth voice to the center of her organization.

**ABOUT GAY—STRAIGHT ALLIANCE NETWORK:**
The Gay—Straight Alliance (GSA) Network empowers youth activists to fight homophobia, transphobia, and racism in schools. They work on a national level to connect school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources through peer support, leadership development, and training.

## JUST RELEASED! DATACENTER'S KNOWLEDGE FACTORY VIDEO

DataCenter's signature tool – the Knowledge Factory – is now available in video format! **Check it out on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/researchjustice**.

Previously, community members and organizers could only see the tool explained by attending a Research Justice workshop. Now, community members and organizers everywhere can watch the tool in action demonstrated by our trainer-extraordinaire, Reem Assil. The video is a supplement to the complete Knowledge Factory module presented in our recent *Introduction to Research Justice toolkit* (datacenter.org/rjtoolkit). Together, the Knowledge Factory video and the step-by-step tutorial in the toolkit, will allow low- and no-budget organizations host their own Knowledge Factory workshop.

The Knowledge Factory is an interactive tool that demonstrates how organizers and community members can think strategically about information. It's been a signature tool in our Research Justice workshops – one that we've been developing and refining for over five years. It's helped countless community members and organizers think critically about
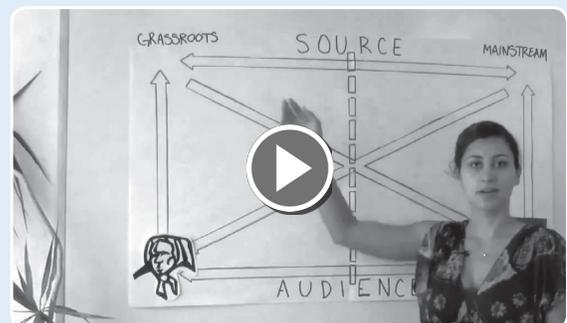
The Knowledge Factory Workshop video is a tool for organizers who want to facilitate their own Knowledge Factory workshop, and community members who want to learn how to think critically about information flow in our society.

information flow and how knowledge is valued differently based on the source of information. The Knowledge Factory video is a tool that we think all social justice advocates will find useful, so be sure to check it out along with all the other great videos on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/researchjustice.

## YOUTUBE.COM/RESEARCHJUSTICE

## Donor Profile: Katie Todd



Katie Todd is a DataCenter intern alumnus and donor. She now works at East End House, a community center that uses a holistic approach to promote the well-being, academic achievement, and successful transition to adulthood of children and youth from under-resourced families in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Why did Katie intern at DataCenter? As an undergrad at Carnegie Mellon, Katie enjoyed learning quantitative analysis and the social sciences. She then pursued a master's in theology from Harvard, all the while developing her passion for social justice and empowerment of marginalized communities. Upon completing her master's, Katie wanted to find a way to combine her passion for quantitative analysis and social justice – and that's when she found DataCenter.

*DataCenter is the perfect place for values and skills to come together.*
— **Katie Todd**

*It's always so exciting to read about DataCenter's projects. I think DataCenter's work is really special and I hope that it keeps growing. There's a great need for it.*
— **Katie Todd**

While at DataCenter, Katie used her skills to analyze Census data for POWER's Free Bus Passes for Youth campaign – a campaign that was successful in winning free transit passes for low and moderate-income youth in San Francisco.

Since her internship, Katie has become a dedicated DataCenter donor and Research Justice advocate. We greatly appreciate Katie for all the ways she supported and continues to support Research Justice! **Thank you, Katie!** People like you make this important work possible.

### FUN FACTS: WHO IS KATIE TODD?

Favorite Author: Michael Quinn Patton

Favorite Color: Blue

If Katie could be any animal, she'd be a giraffe.

For fun, Katie trains her herding dogs to compete in dog agility competitions.

## Organizing + Research = Lasting Impacts

Almost two years after the release of the groundbreaking report *Families Unlocking Futures: Solutions to the Crisis in Juvenile Justice,* we see the lasting impacts of research combined with organizing. **Families of system-involved youth are now helping shape juvenile justice system policy**. But, how did they do it?

DataCenter partnered with Justice for Families (J4F) from 2011 through 2012 to conduct a community-driven research project that supported both the leadership development and the expansion of J4F's nationwide network. In fall 2012, we released *Families Unlocking Futures: Solutions to the Crisis in Juvenile Justice* – a report that offers unique analysis of the juvenile justice system from the perspectives of those who are most impacted: the system-involved youth and their families. The report details how the juvenile justice system actually does more to feed the nation's vast prison system than to deter young people from system involvement.

*DataCenter's research support has worked to dismantle the disconnect between community knowledge and 'authoritative research' by helping communities learn and apply social science tools so they share expert status with policymakers and academic institutions.*
— **Zachary Norris**, Former Coordinator, Justice for Families

**Now, for the first time ever, families of affected youth are recognized as experts**. In New York, a family member has been brought in to help redesign the juvenile justice system. In Washington DC, a woman involved in the J4F project has been brought in as the family engagement coordinator to help re-envision the DC system.

J4F is also being sought to help jurisdictions reshape their practice around the country. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OFJJDP) is coming out with nation-wide recommendations on how to treat families of incarcerated youth and they're working with a consultant identified by J4F.

These victories are testament to the power of research integrated with organizing. When research is driven by the community, it becomes a mobilizing vehicle that strengthens organizing efforts. It offers a way to work together, to build camaraderie and leadership while also providing hard-hitting stats to backup community knowledge.

For more on DataCenter's partnership with Justice for Families, visit datacenter.org/j4f.





More than two years after its release, *Families Unlocking Futures* continues to affect change.

# CAMPAIGN RESEARCH COUNTDOWN GAME
### *ORGANIZE , RESEARCH, WIN!*

Understanding research in the context of an organizing agenda can seem like an overwhelming task. The *Campaign Research Countdown Game: Organize, Research, Win!* is a game designed to offer a glimpse into the processes, from start to finish, in a community-driven research project. At the beginning of the game, your organization only has a few members. You're tasked with growing your membership, planning, and then implementing your own research project. Your goal is to release your findings before a crucial upcoming city council vote. Can you do it?

The *Campaign Research Countdown Game: Organize, Research, Win!* is the first of its kind and unique to the field of Research Justice. The game makes use of popular education techniques to illustrate ways in which research and organizing are integrally linked, and how that linkage is effective in generating significant impacts. The game is modeled after choose-your-own adventure stories where players are offered a few choices and asked to make the best decision they can. Do you start with background 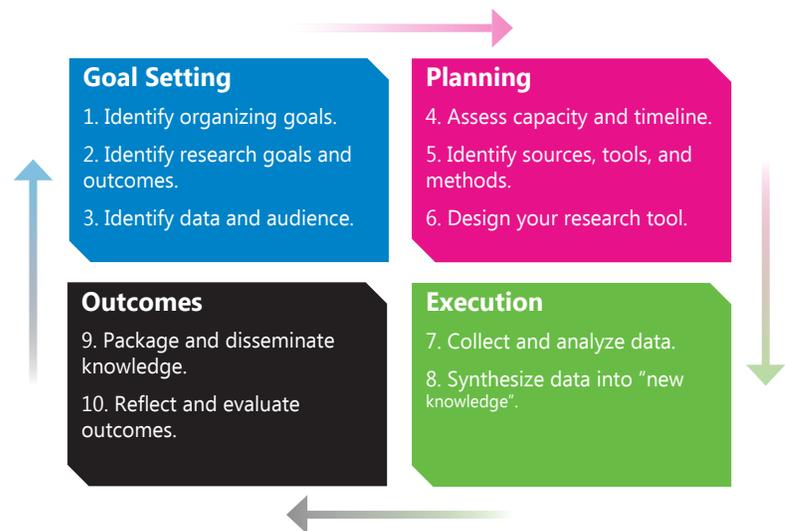research on your issue, or by building your support base? Will you write a report aimed at policy makers, or will you write something for your community? The choices you make in the game will shape your project and determine what you and your organization are able to achieve.

Why use a game to present research planning concepts? Studies show that material presented in a game format is more accessible. It enhances interest, sparks motivation, and improves learning retention. Based on the research planning material in our recent *Introduction to Research Justice toolkit*, the game gives users practice creating a research plan. It presents opportunities and challenges that may come up during an actual research project.

Spend 15 minutes, play the game, and get a glimpse of what it's like to be a member in an organization planning and executing a community-driven research project!

**datacenter.org/research-countdown**

**Goal Setting**
1. Identify organizing goals.
2. Identify research goals and outcomes.
3. Identify data and audience.

**Planning**
4. Assess capacity and timeline.
5. Identify sources, tools, and methods.
6. Design your research tool.

**Outcomes**
9. Package and disseminate knowledge.
10. Reflect and evaluate outcomes.

**Execution**
7. Collect and analyze data.
8. Synthesize data into "new knowledge".

Based on our research planning curricula, the *Campaign Research Countdown Game* allows organizers and community members to get a glimpse of the decisions required of a community-driven research project.

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DataCenter unlocks the power of knowledge for social change. We support grassroots organizing for justice and sustainability through strategic research, training and collaborations. We use research to help move the knowledge and solutions of communities of color and the poor from the margins to the center of decision-making.

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