



DataCenter *UPDATES*

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www.datacenter.org

Unlocking the power of knowledge for social change

RESEARCH UNLOCKS THE POWER OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

On August 31, 2010, the first ever Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights in the country was signed into law in New York. This bill amends labor law to protect and enforce the rights of domestic workers, requiring workers to receive holidays, sick days, vacation days and overtime wages, regardless of immigration status. In partnership with DataCenter, Domestic Workers United published *Home is Where the Work Is: Inside New York's Domestic Work Industry* which contributed to the passage of the bill.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS?

By Christina Fletes | *Research Fellow*

In 2007, domestic workers from around the country founded the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA).



In October, NDWA, DataCenter, and the University of Illinois – Chicago gathered to develop survey questions.

Drawing on the powerful lesson from the New York experience, the alliance partnered with DataCenter on a two-year long domestic worker-led national survey project—the first-ever of its kind—and University of Illinois-Chicago, with the support of the Ford Foundation. This survey of over 2,000 workers will establish the case for national **legal workplace protection for this workforce**. The survey will be administered starting March 8th, 2011, International Women's Day—so stay tuned!

This survey project will provide an informational foundation for domestic workers to effectively push for legislation of the California Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, the CARE Act to establish a career ladder by training and certifying these workers as direct care workers, and the POWER Act to expand their rights to organize—and finally, to help raise the federal minimum wage.

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TO ALL OUR RELATIONS

“We envision a world where community knowledge and experiences are recognized, are valued, and shape social systems. We believe our future will emerge from community that has control over, access to, and capacity for production and application of knowledge to make lasting positive change.”

This has been DataCenter’s vision statement for as long as I have been with the DataCenter. As you read on, I hope you will agree, we are undoubtedly moving closer to this vision—where community voices that accurately reflect and represent community realities are shaping the world in which we live—one community at a time. How do we do that? Simply put, by unlocking the power of community knowledge for change.

DataCenter has seen time and again, the power of facts and histories in illuminating the profound humanity underlying every injustice. Those who know about it firsthand are ones whose voices and experiences have been silenced, if not rendered irrelevant. Invisibility is a quiet friend to oppression, and our research model

helps people break from it. Our research process is nothing short of transformative; it helps them reclaim the power of their own expertise to move policy solutions forward. We hope you will be inspired as we are, as you read on.

“The older I get,” reminisces Fred Goff, DataCenter co-founder, “the more evanescent the concept of ‘victory’ becomes. What matters is to live and act according to your values in the process of achieving every victory... the real victory is in creating our realities among us...”

As we enter into our fourth decade serving the information needs of the social justice movement, in the spirit of honoring our truths and realities, we honor the stories of DataCenter and research for justice. Each of us will look back one day and say with great pride, “this is my history” because it is with your support, solidarity and friendship, that our partners are weaving this story every day.

In community,

miho kim
Executive Director

WELCOME VEENA DUBAL!



Veena B. Dubal joined DataCenter’s Board of Directors in December 2009. She is a Staff Attorney at the Asian Law Caucus. Veena joined the Caucus as a Berkeley Law Foundation Fellow in 2008 when she began a taxi project to help address and remediate the labor conditions in San Francisco’s largely immigrant taxi driver community. Currently, she also focuses on issues of civil rights in the context of national security, including racial profiling at the border, local law enforcement profiling, and FBI surveillance. Veena received the Northern California South Asian Bar Association Public Interest Attorney of the Year Award in 2009, and she currently serves as the Co-Chair of Civil Rights for the South Asian Bar Association of Northern California.

REGENERATION:

RESEARCH LEGACIES MOVING FORWARD

NOVEMBER 10, 2010

For 33 years, DataCenter has delivered the power of information and knowledge into the hands of people working to make a more equitable world. On November 10th, we honored librarian and Right-to-Know champion **Zoia Horn**, grassroots fundraising expert **Kim Klein**, and DataCenter co-founder **Fred Goff** for their lifelong commitment and contribution to democratizing research, building grassroots power, and making change possible! We also celebrated the new multicultural leadership, with **miho kim** as Executive Director, to carry this work forward.



DATACENTER ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE RESEARCH TRAINING ACADEMY 2010

By Omonigho Oiyemhonlan | *Stanford University, DataCenter Summer Intern*

On September 11th & 12th, DataCenter hosted its third annual research training academy, and first research academy focused on environmental justice. Participants included members from local organizations such as: Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Youth United for Community Action, Greenaction, Pacific Institute, and the Winnemem Wintu tribe.

Participants came to the academy with enthusiasm and dedication. DataCenter staff met with gregarious community organizers, interns, and staff who brought serious questions about how to strategically improve their research framework and realize campaign goals.

They identified with DataCenter's concept of "research as an organizing tool." Workshops helped them learn how a community's expertise can be transformed into political ammunition that would hold up in mainstream knowledge.

DataCenter co-founder Jon Frappier and private investigator Amie Fishman covered corporate and individual profiling; an activity, while at first overwhelming, soon became "kind of fun." Max Weintraub, facilitated a discussion about



the Environmental Protection Agency and laid out the different pathways participants could follow to acquire necessary government resources to build their research issue. Catalina Garzon and Eli Moore of Pacific Institute demonstrated tools that can transform a community's reality into the empirical evidence widely accepted in mainstream media.

Overall our intensive training academy was nothing short of amazing. Many participants left inspired and ready to develop more innovative perspectives to environmental justice issues in their communities.

DATACENTER PRODUCTS & SERVICES

A NEW RESEARCH TOOL FROM DATACENTER!

POWER TO THE PEOPLE TOOLKIT: Recording Interviews

By Saba Waheed | *Research Director*

Community members conducting interviews can be a powerful method to obtain relevant information about a community. This toolkit focuses on participatory research: research done for and by individuals in the community. Community members are able to express issues that are important in their own lives, instead of outsiders determining issues on their behalf. Interviews allow us to document what is going on in our community, learn more about ourselves through sharing and listening, deepening shared consciousness and building unity, and finally, give a voice to individuals who are often made invisible in our society. **Download the toolkit online:** www.datacenter.org

SERVICES

CONTRACT RESEARCH & TRAINING SERVICES:

We conduct and train on literature reviews, power analysis research, profiling, surveys, focus groups and interviews; and consult around research strategies, including research planning, budgeting and staffing.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: DataCenter approaches research as a political process to inform effective strategies and agenda, as well as a powerful human experience that develops leadership and strategic capacity. Going beyond 'generating data,' we strategize packaging and deployment of information to achieve change. Partners emerge from the process with solid confidence as strategic leaders and experts on issues they seek to address, poised to lead the social justice movement.

DONOR PROFILE

Paul Kivel



In my years of experience as an educator and activist, I have found that before people are able to look at systems of oppression like racism and sexism that divide us, they need to understand... the common ground that we share.

—Paul Kivel, October 2010

This statement resonates powerfully with DataCenter’s work with community constituents such as domestic workers who are systematically silenced in society. Says Beatriz Herrera, organizer with POWER’s Women Worker Project, “the space DataCenter creates in the research process is precisely the safe space for women to share their stories...that then breaks down their long-standing sense of isolation.” Paul affirms that an

experience of injustice can be seen as a personal manifestation of powerlessness or as a window to see the “common ground that we share” connected to systemic root causes of exploitation and violence. He says DataCenter is “one of the few non-base-building organizations my partner Micki and I support because participatory research process is such a critical organizing tool for building effective campaign strategies and a broad-based social justice movement.” As a social justice educator and activist, he can personally appreciate why bringing one’s own experiences to the table, in the course of developing group consciousness, leads to the critical analysis that must inform our collective action.

Paul Kivel is the author of numerous books and curricula, including *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, (a revised edition is due out in 2011) and most recently, *You Call This a Democracy?: Who Benefits, Who Pays, and Who Really Decides*. Check out his work at www.paulkivel.com

NEW REPORTS

SUSTAINING ORGANIZING SURVEY



DataCenter, with the National Organizers Alliance, presented our study, *Sustaining Organizing: A Survey of Organizations During the Economic Downturn* at the US Social Forum to an audience of over 150 funders, community members and organizers. The survey of 203 community-organizing and movement-building organiza-

tions on the impact of the recession showed that organizations sustained, not grew, their work in communities to weather the economic crises while capacity and resources decreased. We hope that these findings stimulate conversation on how to create a more sustainable infrastructure for organizing groups—both for the short- and long-term. Check out the SOS blog:

<http://sustainingorganizing.tumblr.com/>

CHECK, PLEASE!



Chinese Progressive Association(CPA), with support from DataCenter, released the groundbreaking report that documents the working and health conditions of San Francisco Chinatown’s restaurant workers. Based on 433 surveys of restaurant workers by their peers and other data, the report exposes a prevalence of low-road industry practices, such as wage viola-

tions, lack of benefits, poor working conditions, and stressful and hazardous workplaces. Workers are left insecure in their jobs and vulnerable to injury and illness, reflecting a national epidemic of wage theft and lowered labor standards. With this study, CPA has effectively garnered much publicity and support to push for enforceable policy solutions based on the report’s recommendations.

Available on DataCenter website or contact us for a copy (510-835-4692 x305).

**BREAKING NEWS:
VICTORY!**

WEST OAKLAND YOUTH WIN \$5M FROM THE CITY TO BUILD MULTI-RACIAL TEEN CENTER

By Anne Ryan | *Communications Intern*



In November 2010, the City of Oakland accepted the survey results and informational report submitted by the West Oakland's Teen Center youth interns, and awarded \$5 million to build the West Oakland Teen Center.

"Truth is, we may not have made it, had it not been for DataCenter!" says Liz Derias, then-organizer with Leadership Excellence (LE). Back in 2008, LE turned to DataCenter to propose the Center. DataCenter supported youth in design, implementation and analysis of the survey, and helped develop the proposal for the Oakland City Council and the Community and Economic Development Agency in September 2009. Contrary to dominant assumptions that "they don't care," the survey documented local Black teens wanting support and counseling

in leadership development, college preparation, homework, career and entrepreneurship—and it also exposed the inadequacy of existing services. Diana Alonzo, Teen Center intern states, "West Oakland is a beautiful place that deserves an innovative outlet for the youth. The struggle for the teen center began in 2003 and I am happy that we are one step closer to finally having one. As one of the youth representatives for the WOTC I know that every step we took to research the needs of the youth counted. **The DataCenter prepared us to ask the right questions, so that we could get accurate data that represented the needs of our youth.**" Tiara Mc-Gee-Powell, another intern states, "Surveys we collected from the community was the icing on the cake showing how a teen center was and still is needed

and how it could really help West Oakland."

With the authoritative report in hand, Councilwoman Nancy Nadel fortified her case in the City Council, with youth themselves testifying alongside her. In fact, youth continue to be involved in the design and construction of the Teen Center. "The study included data no one could refute," says Liz, "and this experience has equipped youth with confidence and leadership they can use for the rest of their lives."

Congratulate Nancy Nadel for championing this campaign for a better future for youth of color in West Oakland, at (510) 238-7003 and encourage her to ensure ongoing youth involvement in shaping the Teen Center!

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.

 **DataCenter**
RESEARCH FOR JUSTICE

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