

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT'S

RESEARCH & POLICY INITIATIVE ANNUAL REVIEW, 2017



WHAT OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS SAY ABOUT OUR WORK

“Partnering with the Community Development Project was an incredible experience for CFR and our members. As a member-driven organization, we were excited to learn about the participatory research model, and the project provided a novel opportunity for our retail worker members to engage with and lead our work in new ways. The project and the report produced have been great organizing tools for bringing new members into our organization and promoting the leadership development of retail workers, and we are excited to work with our members to call for our proposed solutions in the upcoming year.”

Nina Terhune, Director of Operations, Center for Frontline Retail

“The best thing that happened to Flanbwayan this year is to meet the Community Development Project’s (CDP) team. The CDP team has brought fresh eyes, new ideas and a new urgency to our issue, immigrant education access. We are excited to work with such a committed group of people. The CDP team has helped Flanbwayan to have a bigger vision for our campaign on high school enrollment for immigrant students.”

Darnell Benoit, Executive Director, Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project

“2017 was an amazing year for the Right to Counsel Coalition, as we watched the Right to Counsel Bill get passed after years of organizing and hard work. The Community Development Project has been a huge part of this process: CASA’s 2013 participatory action research report with CDP, [Tipping the Scales: A Report of Tenant Experiences in Bronx Housing Court](#), included a recommendation to establish the right to counsel for all tenants. This report and CASA’s work helped galvanized the formation of the RTCNYC Coalition, organizing around the bill, and pushing it into law, and we are grateful for CDP’s continued support as we embark on the RTC implementation phase.”

Susanna Blankley, Coalition Coordinator, Right to Counsel Coalition

RECENT RESEARCH & POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This has been another exciting and productive year for the Research and Policy Initiative at the Community Development Project. This year, we released various publications in partnership with community groups and are currently providing support for a variety of emerging research projects. We have expanded our [Research for Organizing Toolkit](#) and have deepened our commitment to building power in traditionally excluded communities.

As a result of our research support, our community partners have been able to further their campaigns for social and economic justice and strengthen tenant safety, language access, and housing affordability in communities across New York City. Particularly in this challenging political moment, CDP's research has allowed our partner groups to build up their organizational capacities and magnify their calls for justice in New York City and beyond.

In this update, you will find information about our recently published reports as well as information about some of our current and upcoming projects and initiatives. You will also hear from some of our community partners about their experiences working with CDP.

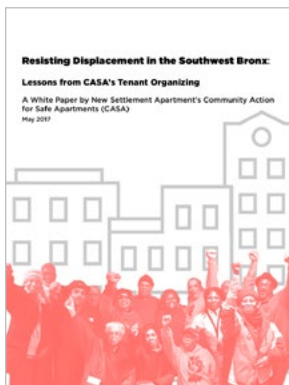
For more information about our reports and current projects, feel free to contact Alexa Kasdan, Director of Research & Policy, at akasdan@urbanjustice.org.

Thank you for your continued support of the Community Development Project and the Research & Policy team!

Alexa Kasdan
Director of Research & Policy

NEW PUBLICATIONS

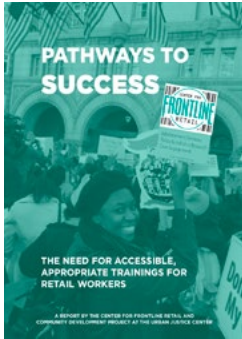
RESISTING DISPLACEMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST BRONX: LESSONS FROM CASA'S TENANT ORGANIZING



On May 18th, Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) – with support from CDP--released a new white paper, “Resisting Displacement in the Southwest Bronx” at a community briefing. The white paper presents a clear and accurate definition of displacement to counter the false assertion that most tenants leave neighborhoods by choice. It also exposes tactics landlords use to displace tenants, including denial of basic services and repairs, charging non-rent fees, exploiting the Major Capital Improvements (MCI) and preferential rent loopholes and emphasizes the risk of increased displacement posed by rezoning. In addition to highlighting problems, the white paper offers policy proposals to address the challenges of displacement and landlord harassment in the Bronx and citywide including a “real affordable subsidy program” and guidelines for legislation to address landlord harassment, non-rent fees and other displacement tactics.

Read the white paper [here](#) and on our website.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS: THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE, APPROPRIATE TRAININGS FOR RETAIL WORKERS

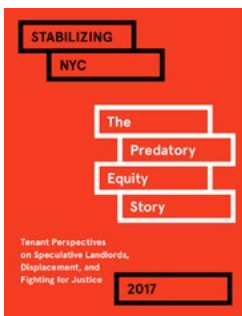


This report, released in partnership with the Center for Frontline Retail, finds that retail workers face many barriers such as discrimination and a lack of training and education opportunities as they attempt to advance in their retail careers. In order to supplement this gap, workers go to the Center for Frontline Retail to find training that is accessible, inclusive, tailored, and effective.

The report details recommendations to expand CFR's education and training model, including initiatives to allocate funds from the city to training and to link training requirements to local hire requirements for new development projects funded by the City. These initiatives will help to create pathways for retail workers to advance and make retail workplaces more equitable.

Read the report [here](#) and on our website.

THE PREDATORY EQUITY STORY: TENANT PERSPECTIVES ON SPECULATIVE LANDLORDS, DISPLACEMENT, AND FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE



This report, released in partnership with the Stabilizing NYC Coalition, tells the story of predatory equity on the ground, where landlords are using various aggressive tactics to push out long-term rent-regulated tenants and to maximize the number of market rate tenants in buildings. Landlords are purposefully neglecting the repair needs of long-term tenants, and if they eventually do the repairs, they are poor quality, creating unsafe conditions for tenants. Landlords are also manipulating rents, while employing emotional harassment tactics to drive tenants away. Tenants combat the harassment by organizing with each other and with community organizations, even though landlords attempt to disrupt and intimidate organizing efforts.

The report details the Stabilizing NYC Coalition's three City Council bills that would combat predatory equity practices. The report also contains a platform of recommendations compiled from previous housing reports that seek to protect rent-regulated tenants and preserve affordable housing.

Read the report [here](#) and on our website.

NEW POLITICAL SCIENCE ARTICLE: PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH



This article, published in the New Political Science journal explores the methods used by CDP to monitor and evaluate the participatory budgeting process in New York City over the past five years. Participatory budgeting (PB) is a unique civic engagement process which allows community members—instead of elected officials alone—to determine how public funds should be spent, from start to finish. Since it began in 2011, the PB process in New York City expanded significantly, and last year, more than 100,000 New Yorkers turn out to vote to determine the allocation of more than \$40 million of City Council funds. For the past five years, CDP has worked with community-based researchers, academics, and PB participants to design and coordinate the research on how PB has been implemented, analyze and share data with PB participants and practitioners, and issue reports to the wider public. Like PB, the research design is rooted in the communities where PB is operating. The research is not intended to sit on a shelf but is actively used by participants and practitioners to help reflect on the process, improve deliberation in decision-making, and strengthen the process and outcomes of PB.

Read the article [here](#) and on our website.

MEMO: OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING OF REZONING COMMITMENTS

CDP, in partnership with Community Voices Heard (CVH), Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC), Pratt Center for Community Development, Association for Neighborhood Housing Development (ANHD), Hester Street Collaborative (HSC), and the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) developed this proposal calling for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to documenting, monitoring, overseeing and enforcing all public and private commitments made to communities during the rezoning processes. This includes developing a new mayoral office to provide overall agency coordination, oversight and accountability that would work in conjunction with neighborhood monitoring committees in each rezoned neighborhood.

Read the memo [here](#) and on our website.

SPOTLIGHT: TURNING RESEARCH PROJECTS INTO POLICY CAMPAIGNS

EMPOWERING TENANTS WITH THE RIGHT TO COUNSEL



In February of 2017, Mayor Bill de Blasio, City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Member Mark Levine announced a \$93 million program and commitment to pass legislation to guarantee legal services for tenants facing eviction in New York City Housing Court. In 2013, CDP and Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) released [Tipping the Scales: a Report of Tenant Experiences in Bronx Housing Court](#). This participatory action research report highlighted the daunting challenges facing tenants as they navigate housing court without legal representation and documented the severe disadvantages facing unrepresented tenants. Our policy

recommendations, crafted by CASA members, called for an increase in resources for tenant representation including legislation giving all tenants the right to a court-appointed attorney. The release of the report was followed up by powerful organizing and advocacy by CASA and the Right to Counsel Coalition, leading to this monumental victory for tenants.

WINNING JUSTICE FOR JOB SEEKERS



In December of 2016, Governor Cuomo signed the Justice for Job Seekers Bill into law, after years of advocacy work by the Justice 4 Jobseekers campaign, led by New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE). The bill seeks to prevent fraud in employment agencies by providing stricter licensing and practice procedures, and avenues for enforcement. In 2012, CDP and NICE released a participatory action research report, [Dreams and Schemes in Queens, NY: Immigrant Struggles to Find Work and Get Status in the Face of Consumer Fraud](#), documenting the negative experiences of NICE members with employment agencies and immigration service providers in Queens, NY. The memo that accompanies the Justice for Jobseekers bill cites this research as justification for the bill.

CELEBRATING HISTORIC STAND FOR TENANT SAFETY WIN



In August of 2017, New York City passed and signed into law a legislative package of 12 bills spearheaded by the Stand for Tenant Safety (STS) Coalition. The legislation significantly increases protections for tenants against landlord harassment by increasing tenants' ability to take abusive landlords to court, as well as measures that will curb dangerous and unsafe construction. In 2015, CDP and STS released [Stand for Tenant Safety \(STS\): Summary of Data to Document Construction as Harassment in Rent Stabilized Buildings & the STS Legislative Solution](#). This report is the result of a comprehensive participatory action project and documents aggressive construction in occupied buildings and how it is used as a tool to displace rent-regulated New York City tenants. The report was released as part of a legislative briefing for the New York City Council and used as a launching pad for the coalition's legislative advocacy.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE RESEARCH FOR ORGANIZING TOOLKIT

EXPANSION OF RESEARCH FOR ORGANIZING TOOLKIT AND WEBINAR SERIES



In 2016, the Research and Policy Initiative developed a comprehensive Research for Organizing (RFO) webinar series based on our RFO toolkit. We held 7 webinars with over 400 registrants from across the country, on topics such as research design and designing and implementing data collection tools. In addition to the webinar series, we added 10 new tools to our Research for Organizing Toolkit that expand on research design, survey development and implementation, doing observations, and efficient data entry practices.

View the webinar series [here](#) and on our Research for Organizing Website. See our new tools [here](#) and on our Research for Organizing Website.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LAUNDRY WORKERS CENTER



CDP worked with Laundry Workers Center (LWC) to train members and organizers to conduct observations at laundromats. Posing as consumers, and using a collaboratively developed observation guide, these trained observers completed observations at 100 laundromats, evaluating factors like the physical layout, observable health and safety issues, and consumer postings. Following the observations, LWC and CDP worked to develop a worker survey. LWC organizers and volunteers administered this survey to 99 workers at 78 unique laundromats. Surveys were conducted in English and Spanish. CDP worked with LWC to develop findings from the primary research as well as conducting background research on the industry. This work will be used to inform and support LWCs campaign development and organizing moving forward.

CURRENT PROJECTS

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES TOGETHER



African Communities Together is an organization of African immigrants fighting for civil rights, opportunity, and a better life for families here in the U.S. and back in Africa. In 2015, ACT surveyed over 300 hair braiders on issues that ranged from work conditions to childcare. The key findings of the survey were that language access and literacy were significant barriers for the women and played a significant role in terms of their ability to access information about the state's natural hair styling license. CDP is working with ACT to conduct participatory research in order to build on these findings and identify the barriers to licensure for African hair braiders and the working conditions for African workers in this industry. The goal of this work is to inform a policy campaign to reduce barriers to licensure for African hair braiders, educate hair braiders and the public about issues facing workers in this industry, and build a base of members and leaders to support the campaign.

LINDEN PLAZA TENANT ASSOCIATION



The mission of Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) is to build a strong, sustainable Cypress Hills and East New York, where youth and adults achieve educational and economic success, secure healthy and affordable housing and develop leadership skills to transform their lives and community. Several years ago, tenants from Linden Plaza, a Mitchell-Lama complex in East New York, Brooklyn, came to CHLDC facing evictions or grappling with complicated Section 8 issues. Organizers began working with the active Tenant Association at Linden Plaza, which had identified significant systemic issues facing tenants in the complex, which has more than 1,500 units. Through the stories of tenants, and through existing research, we know that displacement pressures, as well as evictions, take a significant toll on tenants financially and emotionally, break up communities, and jeopardize the long-term affordability of housing. CDP is working with Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation and the Linden Plaza Tenant Association to conduct participatory research to concretely document the issues at Linden Plaza and elevate tenant voices in evaluating the impact of these issues on tenants.

FLANBWAYAN HAITIAN LITERACY PROJECT



The Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project (Flanbwayan) is a youth membership based organization serving newcomer and young adult Haitian immigrant students in New York City. CDP is working with Flanbwayan to conduct participatory research to document systemic challenges faced by newcomer immigrant students entering high school in New York City. The project will have a particular focus on the high school placement process for these young people, and will center on the experiences of Haitian newcomer youth.

SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT



The Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine their gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination, or violence. In 2007, SRLP published "Its War in Here," a groundbreaking report on the experiences of transgender and intersex people in New York State's men's prisons. Now, 10 years later, SRLP will conduct new research to build on the findings of "Its War in Here," evaluating how the landscape has (or has not) changed, making new recommendations, and centering the voices and experiences of transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGNCI) people in prison. CDP is working with the Sylvia Rivera Law Project to conduct participatory research to document the experiences of and issues faced by transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex people in prisons in New York. This research will help educate the legal community about these issues, provide documentation for SRLP to use in their advocacy work, give incarcerated TGNCI people a tool to fight for their rights, support organizing campaigns for systemic reforms, and inform the larger landscape of LGBTQI and abolitionist organizing in the U.S.

RESEARCH & POLICY IN THE NEWS



[“City Hall Must do More to Make Sure Rezoning Promises Become Reality”](#)

(Op-Ed by Alexa Kasdan and Al Scott)

City Limits, April 25, 2017



[“City Must Address the Reality of Tenant Displacement”](#)

(Op-Ed by Erin Markman and Carmen Vega-Rivera)

City Limits, May 31, 2017



[“City Will Guarantee Legal Counsel to Low-Income Tenants in Housing Court”](#)

Gothamist, February 12, 2017

[“De Blasio Signs into Law Sweeping Protections against Tenant Harassment”](#)

Curbed New York, August 31, 2017



[“Retail Workers Feel Disruption from Shifting Shopper Habits”](#)

Associated Press, January 8, 2018

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT'S RESEARCH AND POLICY INITIATIVE

CDP's Research and Policy Initiative partners with and provides strategic support to grassroots community organizations to build the power of their organizing and advocacy work. We utilize a "participatory action research" model in which low-income and excluded communities are central to the design and development of research and policy. Our work consists of the following:

Participatory Action Research Reports: From start to finish, we work with our community partners to design, administer, analyze and write participatory action research reports. These reports are used by our partners to educate community members, engage elected officials, garner media attention and advocate for socially just policies.

Grassroots Policymaking: With community organizations, we research and develop ground-up policy solutions to problems they identify and document.

Popular-Education Curriculum Design and Research Training: Our trainings and tools assist communities in designing and conducting their own research. We also conduct trainings on a variety of research topics to build the capacity of our partner organizations.

Strategic Campaign Research: We conduct background research and develop fact sheets to provide strategic data in support of organizing campaigns. Our partners use these materials in leadership development and base-building and to educate elected and government officials about specific issues and campaigns.

For more information, please contact

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Read all of our reports on our website:

<https://cdp.urbanjustice.org/cdp-reports>

View the Research for Organizing Website:

<http://www.researchfororganizing.org/>

