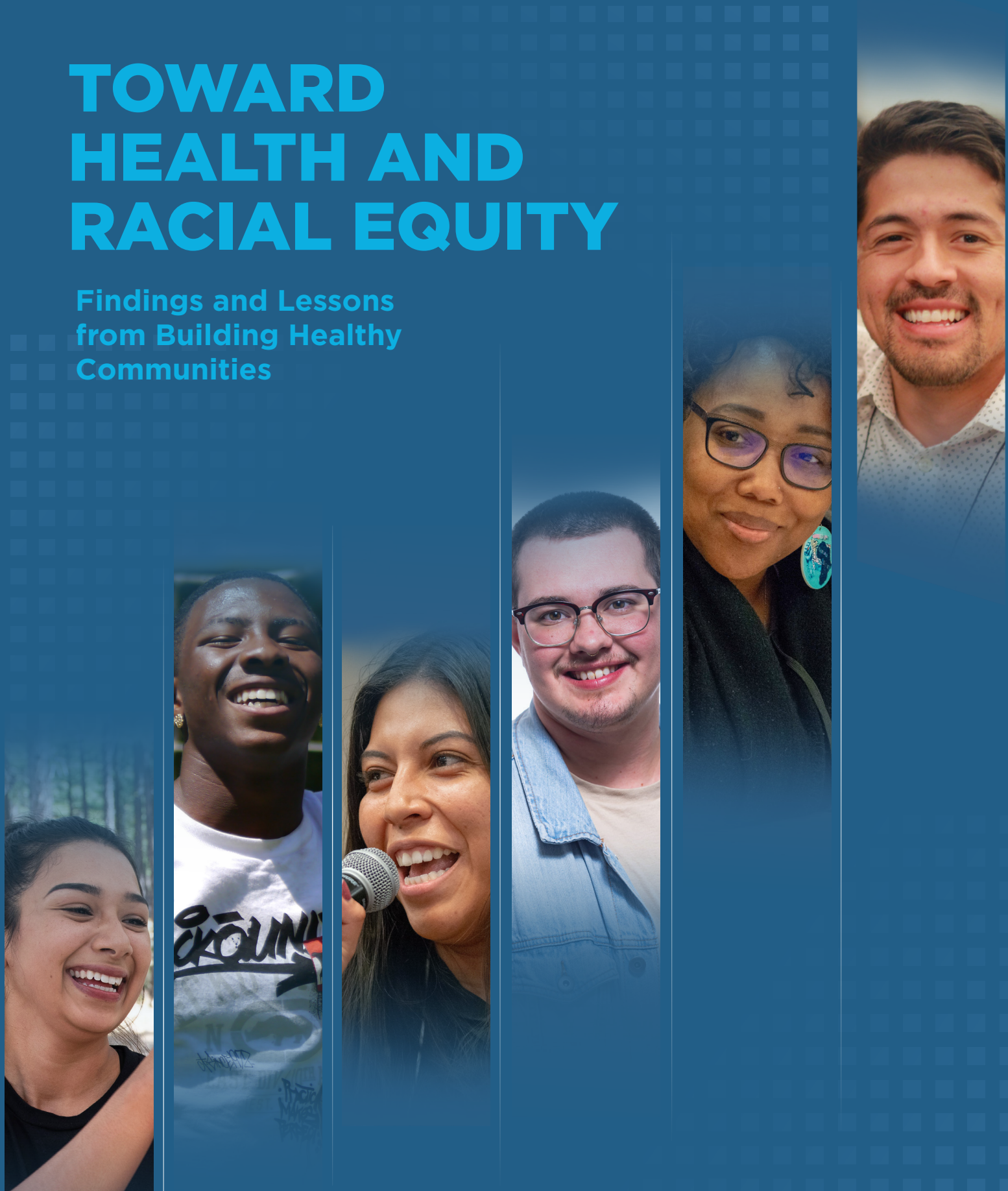
TOWARD HEALTH AND RACIAL EQUITY

Findings and Lessons from Building Healthy Communities



A REPORT FOR THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

By Frank Farrow, Cheryl Rogers, and Jennifer Henderson-Frakes | December 2020

Center *for the* Study *of* Social Policy
Ideas into Action

The California Endowment

CONTENTS

05 Introduction

07 BHC's Contributions to Advancing Health Equity in California

- 07 Contribution #1: A New Health Equity Dialogue In California
- 10 Contribution #2: A Richer Approach to Power-Building
  - 12 Community Voice and Priorities
  - 13 The Forces that Shaped BHC's Approach to Power-Building
  - 14 Youth Power & Boys and Men of Color
  - 18 Narrative Change
  - 21 Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE)
- 22 Contribution #3: Game-Changing Policies and Cumulative Capacity for Change
- 27 Contribution #4: An Ecosystem Approach to Power-Building

30 BHC's Lessons as a Platform for Future Learning

33 TCE's Leadership in This Moment

35 Sources

36 Appendices

- 36 Appendix A: Methods
- 38 Appendix B: Report Respondents
- 39 Appendix C: Essential Resources to Obtain More Information About Building Healthy Communities

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The authors acknowledge and thank the many people who contributed to this report. We have drawn on prior and current research studies, analyses, and evaluative reports about BHC. Many thanks to the authors of those works.

Special appreciation to the 40 people who were interviewed for this report. They include leaders, participants in, and observers of BHC from the public and non-profit sectors in California, from other California foundations, and from The California Endowment. Many are equity champions who have fought for health equity and racial justice in California for decades. We are grateful for their reflections.

ABOUT US

The Center for the Study of Social Policy works to achieve a racially, economically, and socially just society in which all children and families thrive. To do this, we translate ideas into action, promote public policies grounded in equity, support strong and inclusive communities, and advocate with and for all children and families marginalized by public policies and institutional practices.

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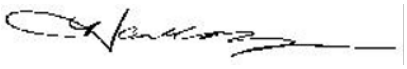
WELCOME

Ten years ago, The California Endowment took a fairly conventional approach when we created a strategic plan and a framework of 10 outcomes and Big 4 results for a decade-long, $1 billion, place-based initiative to build healthy communities. Early on, we stumbled. Like most large foundations, we prescribed from within the foundation the outcomes that we thought California's communities needed in order to be healthy and thriving. In response, our community partners pushed back. To be good collaborators, they told us, we needed to listen with humility. We needed to support community priorities, not try to set them. Together, we began to "learn strategy." Rather than sticking to a preordained theory of change throughout the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative, we needed a more emergent approach. As Henry Mintzberg describes, this means "laying out initial ideas, learning what's possible, observing which strategies succeed and which don't with our partners, keeping some of the ideas, while adapting or abandoning others, and coming up with entirely unexpected ways of working along the way."

This was how we learned to pivot, to adapt, and to assess "people power" as both a means and an end to achieving health equity and racial justice. In this report, our partners from the Center for the Study of Social Policy capture what and how hundreds of local and statewide organizations and thousands of committed leaders have contributed to this work through BHC. In addition, the report highlights major lessons from BHC that contribute knowledge to philanthropy and to the on-going racial justice and health equity movement in California and the nation.

Thanks to our community partners who had the courage to speak truth to power and to our staff who listened attentively, we have learned many lessons that we would like to share with community partners, state leaders, and other funders. We invite you to read this summary, reflect, and join us in conversations. We look forward to continuing to learn from and with you as we work together to advance racial justice and health equity at a time when doing business as usual is not enough.

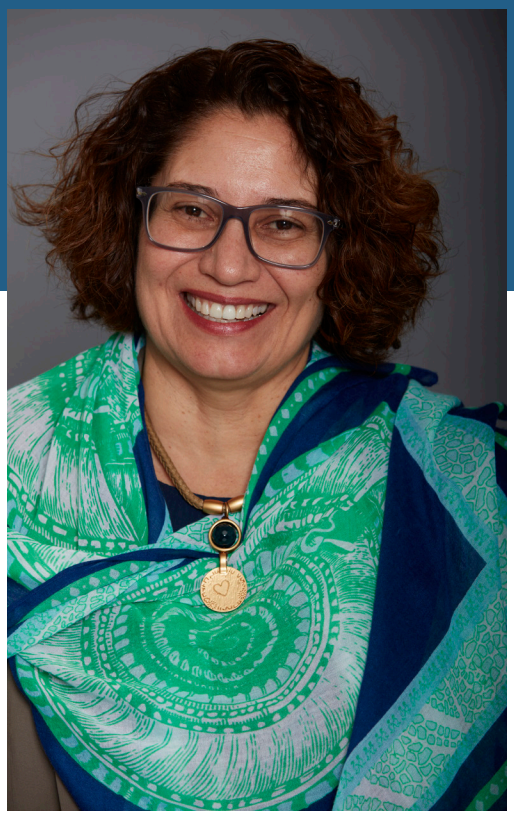


Hanh Cao Yu, Ph.D.
Chief Learning Officer
The California Endowment

DEDICATION

"What we need are co-conspirators even more than funders. And Bea Solis was a co-conspirator."

— Karla Zombro, Field Director, California Calls



This report is dedicated to Bea Solis, a leader at The California Endowment for many years who passed away in March 2020. Bea was a friend, colleague, and inspiration. For many people we interviewed in preparing this report, Bea embodied everything BHC stood for: community power, the fight for justice, and the close connections among people that bring joy as well as courage into our lives.

Bea's work lives on through the thousands of people involved in BHC whose efforts to build healthy communities will continue.

INTRODUCTION

"With Building Healthy Communities, the whole conversation around health equity changed over time. Initially, it was primarily around access to health insurance and our access to a responsive health care system. Now, in California, we're saying health equity is beyond that. Health equity is about how we're impacted every day in our neighborhoods. If we're undocumented, for example, or how being a young person of color in criminalized communities impacts our health. We're getting killed in the street by the police and by violence in the community. So, health equity has become a broader framework that is about life and death."

— Abraham Medina, Director, California Alliance for Youth and Justice

When launched in 2010, Building Healthy Communities (BHC) was the largest of a series of community change initiatives sponsored by national, state, and local foundations. As it closes in 2020, BHC ends not as an initiative but as a way of work for The California Endowment (TCE) and as a major driving force for health equity and racial justice in California.

Over 10 years, beginning in 2010, The California Endowment (TCE) invested $1.75 billion and partnered with 14 communities and many state-level organizations and alliances in California on Building Healthy Communities (BHC), an innovative initiative to achieve health equity. BHC's scope and theory of change were broad and ambitious: improve health status by building "people power," transforming policy and public systems, and expanding opportunities in communities that have been historically marginalized.

The initiative's contributions are comparably weighty and significant:

- A new health equity dialogue in California,
- A richer understanding of power-building that starts with community organizing and builds connections to other sources of influence,
- Policy "game changers" that affected millions of lives, often achieved through a cumulative capacity-building approach to systems change, and
- The beginning of a new ecosystem approach to realizing health equity.

BHC also provides a wealth of learning opportunities. The BHC story is full of tensions, failed efforts, missed opportunities, and hard-won lessons that can inform other foundations and public policymakers committed to advancing health equity and racial justice, as well as community partners continuing critical work on the ground.

Over 10 years, beginning in 2010, The California Endowment (TCE) invested $1.75 billion and partnered with 14 communities to advance health equity.

Lessons are particularly rich in the area of how "people power" became a means to advance racial and health equity, as well as an end in itself in terms of community voice, agency, and self-efficacy. BHC's power-building concepts and practices, which simmered and evolved over 10 years, will be the basis for yet further development as TCE and community- and state-level partners embark on the next decade of their work.

A companion report, *Ten Years of Building Power to Achieve Health Equity: A Retrospective,* comprehensively details BHC's accomplishments in terms of local and state policy and systems impact.[1] In contrast, the present report focuses squarely on *primary contributions* and *lessons*, addressing two questions:

- What has BHC contributed to the movement to advance health and racial equity in California?
- What can be learned from BHC that contributes knowledge to philanthropy generally and to ongoing racial justice and health equity efforts in California specifically?

The report lifts up BHC's contributions while recognizing that California's evolving health equity landscape during this 10-year period resulted from the work of hundreds of local and statewide organizations and thousands of committed leaders. BHC's contributions were integral to, but only part of, these larger efforts.

BHC's contributions and lessons are also inextricably intertwined with the weight of the present moment. It is impossible to reflect on the BHC experience and groundwork laid—and to assess the path forward—apart from the COVID-19 pandemic and the national reckoning with racial injustice that unfolded while the report was being written. The report attempts to capture both the challenges and the opportunities people see in using BHC's lessons to help forge a new future that is more successful in achieving health equity and racial justice.

Lessons are particularly rich in the area of how "people power" became a means to advance racial and health equity, as well as an end in itself in terms of community voice, agency, and self-efficacy.

BHC'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY IN CALIFORNIA

Through Building Healthy Communities, TCE contributed significantly to advancing health equity in California over the past decade. The contributions range from directly impacting the lives of millions of Californians, to helping change the way that the public and policymakers understand health equity and act to achieve it, to building power among people and places that are among the state's most marginalized.

Along the way, not everything was a success. The work was tough and often fraught with tension. TCE made mistakes in its early relationships with communities. The foundation often had to "feel its way" as it became a more active and visible presence in the fight for health equity. An understanding of how to center racial equity within BHC came late. Systematic feedback from partners as part of a learning agenda took shape primarily in BHC's second half. And TCE had to rethink the best way to partner with communities, colleague organizations, other funders, and grantees. However, the false starts as well as the achievements generated learning that can be used to work more effectively in the future.

CONTRIBUTION #1: A NEW HEALTH EQUITY DIALOGUE IN CALIFORNIA

BHC changed the understanding and dialogue about health equity in California, gave it new urgency, and spurred significant action.

Over the past decade, BHC helped broaden the definition of health and raised public awareness about unequal access to health care in California, creating public will for expanding coverage to all residents. Taking this on required knowledge of how extensive the disparities in health care coverage are for communities of color,

Not everything was a success; however, even the false starts and missteps generated important learning.

families with low incomes, immigrant families, and others. It also required advancing a central premise: that health is not determined primarily by access to health care or the quality of health care, but by historical, structural, and systemic community conditions and the policies that shape them.

Such conditions include educational and other opportunities available to residents; the stress and trauma they face daily and cumulatively, often in simply making ends meet or from neighborhood environments; and the impact of the public systems with which residents interact. BHC became known for advancing this concept through widespread dissemination of materials with a message: "Your zip code shouldn't predict how long you'll live, but it does."[i]

BHC brought a broadened understanding of health equity into the mainstream of policy debate and public consciousness. A striking example of this shift can be seen in the evolution of California's public policy providing health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act, or ACA.

When the federal legislation passed in 2010, TCE focused on ensuring that all Californians had health coverage. The foundation launched statewide efforts supported by a special board-authorized fund, and the 14 BHC communities prioritized this work. While universal coverage seemed an impossible goal when TCE first launched its "Health4All" campaign, public sentiment and policymakers' commitment moved in the same direction in a remarkably short time.

Intensive enrollment efforts were followed by state policy campaigns to broaden eligibility for coverage, with a successful focus on undocumented immigrant children (2016), immigrant young adults (2019), and the elderly (2020) until the COVID-19 pandemic derailed funding for this latter group.[2] Each step brought universal coverage closer to reality. TCE, the 14 BHC communities, and statewide partners are credited with unrelenting persistence in moving toward this goal.

"In ACA implementation, The Endowment was unapologetic about what they wanted to accomplish—universal coverage—and they put real resources behind 'Health4All,' which made all the difference. TCE's work to maximize the number of people with health coverage and utilize subsidies for folks and families unable to afford coverage, and to target diverse communities with historical disparities in health care—that's the epitome of health equity work. And that's what TCE was all about."

— Ricardo Lara, State Health Commissioner

The changes stemmed not just from new state policies but also from broad adoption of a different narrative: that health care in California is unequally distributed and that this injustice is associated with race and place, i.e., zip code. TCE communicated this message constantly and creatively, and the public as well as policymakers began to understand it.

"I give the Endowment a lot of credit for changing the narrative, talking about 'health in all places' and showing how zip codes lead to different outcomes. That penetrated the understanding of decision-makers at state and local levels."

— Kiran Savage-Sangwan, Executive Director, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

"I can tell you there are many more conversations in Sacramento about equity than there were before BHC. TCE's message about zip codes was especially powerful in Sacramento; policymakers and advocates talk more frequently about the fact that where you live shouldn't determine your health status and how long you live."

— Marisol Aviña, Prevention Program Manager, TCE

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[i] This message was promoted through billboards, social media, and even a multi-year exhibit at the California Museum, described here www.californiamuseum.org/museum-news/museum-exhibit-projects-life-expectancy-based-zip-code.

To some observers, the change in narrative goes even deeper. The past decade's progress in coverage begins to define health care in California as a right, not a privilege. Observers see this shift as increasingly supported by the broader public.

"With the Endowment's help, we in California fundamentally changed the notion about whether health care access is a governmental responsibility, whether this is something that we owe one another. At least now, the discussion is more like, 'Okay, how do we do this—not whether.' That was a sea change, not just in policy, but in people's hearts and minds."

— Anthony Wright, Executive Director, Health Access California

As understanding of health equity grew, the social determinants of health became a more routine part of policy discourse, paired increasingly with racial equity. With BHC communities putting a broader definition of health equity into practice by focusing on school discipline, criminal justice reform, and environmental justice—and with TCE's statewide investments reinforcing those agendas—the social determinants of health became more broadly understood, certainly within the philanthropic and public policy worlds.

"BHC helped make mainstream the notion of the social determinants of health. In 2010, people would ask me, 'Who knows what that is?' Nobody knew. That's not true anymore. The idea that health foundations should think about the 85 percent of those activities that are in our daily lives and that generate health—and are as important and powerful as our ability to access healthcare, or more important—well, that was a new concept that BHC helped solidify. Now, it's as much a part of public policy discourse as anything else that we talk about."

— Chet Hewitt, President and CEO, Sierra Health Foundation

TCE's emphasis on social determinants built on principles that California's public health sector had advocated for some

time—principles reinforced by strong messages from other state and national foundations, including the California Wellness Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and others. An important consequence of this was that California policy makers began to view social determinants as within the purview of what they were responsible for tackling, and to incorporate them into policy. This shift is illuminated with an example from the California Department of Public Health.

"We've seen a significant shift over the past 10 years in our Department's acceptance of the social determinants of health. In our initial report of California's health assessment and improvement plan in 2012, there's language that says, in effect, 'While we acknowledge that social determinants have an impact on health, this is outside the scope of what we can take on directly as the health sector.' Fast forward five years later, to when we asked community and government stakeholders, 'What do you think needs to be front and center in the plan?' They said social determinants, hands down. That evolution, from the periphery to the core, has been historic."

— Julie Nagasako, Deputy Director, CA Department of Public Health

Governor Gavin Newsom's election in 2018 was another step forward in explicitly addressing the social determinants of health and racial injustice. For years, advocates had been pointing out that racial and ethnic groups had very different health outcomes; now, state and county leaders also began acting on this new

To some observers, the change in narrative goes even deeper to define health care as a right, not a privilege.

understanding.[3] The Governor's early adoption of a health policy framework that stressed health equity and racial disparities—and called for change in areas far beyond traditional health care—mirrored the position taken by many community and statewide organizations, including those supported through BHC.

"We now have a governor who on his very first day in office issued an Executive Order in which he talked explicitly about health equity and racial injustice. That was a huge change in the openness to opportunities for health equity. We don't have to convince people anymore that there are social and environmental factors that influence your ability to be healthy."

— Kiran Savage-Sangwan, Executive Direction, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

The result is a different policy dialogue about health in California—one more attuned to the impact of place-based and racial disparities borne of historical and systemic disadvantages. This in turn creates a policy climate in which larger-scale solutions can be proposed and root causes of inequities addressed. This is an essential legacy of BHC and the many allies who contributed to this change.

CONTRIBUTION #2: A RICHER APPROACH TO POWER-BUILDING

Over the course of BHC, building power to advance racial and health equity evolved from being one piece of the initiative's Theory of Change to being its centerpiece.

In BHC's early years, power-building was positioned primarily as a means to an end, one force among several others to secure policy victories and improve public services and systems. Now, in 2020, TCE's commitment runs considerably deeper. Power-building is seen as both means and ends.

Its *ends* include individuals and communities with a collective sense of agency to exert control over the conditions shaping their lives—a critical measure of health and well-being and especially crucial for populations and communities who have long lacked power.

Power-building as both means and ends is defined in documents that chart the foundation's future course. There, power-building is described as centered in a deep investment in community organizing that builds the capacity of people in communities that have been historically marginalized to influence and make decisions, set the agenda and create policy shifts, and shape public narrative, cultural beliefs, and values.[ii]

Going forward, TCE's leaders have confirmed power-building as the cornerstone of the foundation's values and strategies, the leading edge of future investments, and the means to reimagine and transform public systems.

California health equity leaders recognize that BHC successfully spotlighted power-building and helped people see its importance as a vehicle for change. They cite several ways in which BHC's focus made a difference. Power-building is growing in areas of the state where community power was too rarely recognized—for example in the Central Valley and in northwestern

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TCE's leaders have confirmed power-building as the cornerstone of the foundation's values and strategies

[ii] This description is drawn from the Goal Paper on Power-building, prepared by TCE's Power-building Workgroup, Internal document, July 2019.

California (Del Norte County and Tribal Lands). Simultaneously, power-building has become a more validated target for philanthropic investment. TCE was not the first or only California foundation investing in power-building. Sierra Health Foundation, the Irvine Foundation, the California Wellness Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, Liberty Hill Foundation, and others supported community organizing, often on a geographically targeted or regional scale. However, the extent of BHC's investment, its linkage to policy and systems innovation, and its contribution to positive results are leading other foundations and organizations to consider power-building as an essential change strategy for advancing health equity and racial justice in California.

"There's been a sea change in the power-building landscape over the last 10 years, and TCE was behind much of it. They were doing this without a playbook, so, sure, they had missteps. But by the end of BHC, power-building had really taken off, not just on the coast where it was strengthened, but inland where it had been almost non-existent."

— John Kim, Executive Director, The Advancement Project

How BHC shaped its approach to power-building or "People Power." Power-building's emergence as BHC's centerpiece happened gradually. It was forged through partnerships with communities, shaped by close ties to other organizations advancing equity in California, and influenced by experience from a variety of TCE investments. Over time, these factors coalesced into a power-building approach larger than the sum of its parts and a rich source of learning for others.

Figure 1 shows how power-building came to be central to BHC, revealing a path whereby a rather traditional focus on community engagement in place-based work morphed into a commitment to building community power through investments in organizing and other base-building strategies.

Milestones along the path were: Drivers of Change that prioritized resident power and youth leadership; a revised BHC Theory of Change that afforded prominence to "people power" by incorporating the Drivers of Change; and the publication of BHC's midpoint report which explained why the commitment to power-building was essential:

"For all of the attention heaped upon the roles that 'good data,' 'research effectiveness,' and 'innovative approaches' have in driving public policy, the building of healthier communities is fundamentally a game of power, voice and advocacy. Plugging the voice of community into the right kind of political power grid will do more to create health and wellness than any other single intervention."

— Executive Summary, *A New Power Grid: Building Healthy Communities at Year 5*

FIGURE 1. Milestones in the Emergence of People Power as the Central BHC Strategy

2010: BHC is launched in 14 California communities, guided by 10 Outcomes that define a healthy community and with a commitment to strong community engagement.

2011: The Drivers of Change identify Resident Power and Youth Leadership as two of five "drivers" that define BHC's approach.

2014: BHC's Theory of Change incorporates the Drivers of Change as the main elements to advance policy and systems change.

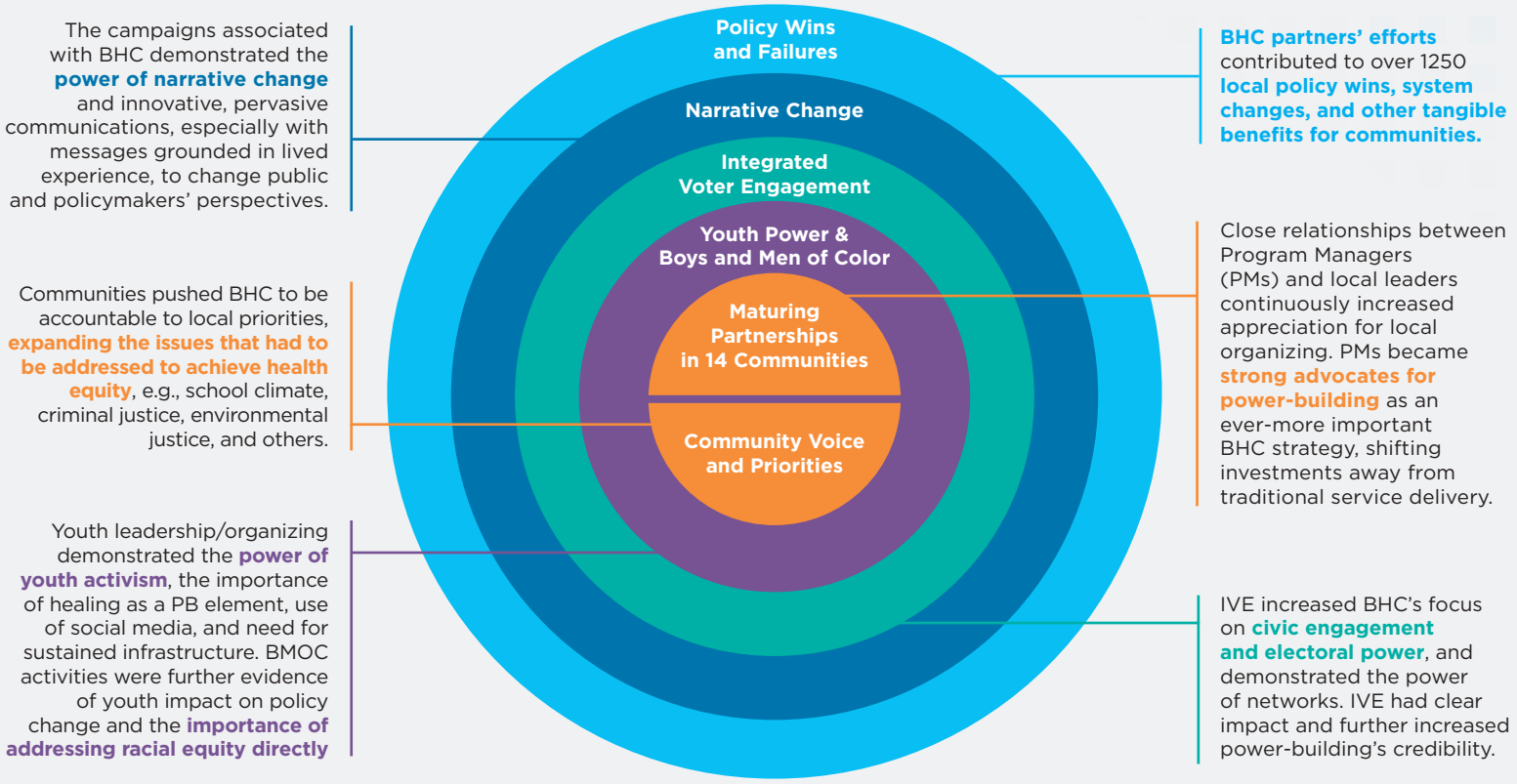
2016: TCE's report on BHC at midpoint, "A New Power Grid: Building Healthy Communities at Year 5," confirms power-building as the most important strategy to achieve health equity.

2016-17: "People Power" is identified as Goal #1 of the North Star Goals and Indicators, a revised BHC results framework.

2018: The Equity Research Institute at USC defines the capacities of a power ecosystem.

2019: TCE's board specifies "People Power" as the first of Three Bold Ideas to guide TCE's investments for the next decade.

FIGURE 2. The Forces that Shaped BHC's Approach to Power-Building



What this milestone summary cannot capture are the years of community effort, state policy advocacy, and growth in power-building theory and practice that are the BHC partners' fuller contribution. These contributions grew from early BHC "community engagement" efforts in 2010, to deeper power-building investments that accounted for roughly 77 percent of TCE's total BHC $1.75 billion expenditures by 2020.[4]

The forces that shaped BHC's power-building approach are shown more fully in **Figure 2,** which depicts factors that—individually and together—led to BHC's richer understanding and approach to power-building. The strongest factors were the close, embedded relationships TCE shared with 14 BHC communities, and the way community organizing in local sites demonstrated the effectiveness of power-building to TCE leaders. From these local roots, youth activism, voice, and leadership also grew to be a central aspect of BHC. As BHC continued to evolve, investments in narrative change and Integrated Voter Engagement contributed to deeper knowledge of power-building and a broader conception of what it entailed. Finally, community leaders' and state advocates' experience of securing policy wins, falling short, and trying again with lessons learned, shaped BHC's approach, particularly when local and state-level approaches were well-aligned with one another.

The following is a discussion of the factors shown in Figure 2 and how they collectively contributed to BHC's understanding of "people power" and its value in advancing health equity.

Community Voice and Priorities
The heart of BHC's approach was defined by the 14 BHC communities and local

The forces that shaped BHC's power-building approach are shown more fully in Figure 2, which depicts factors that—individually and together—led to BHC's richer understanding and approach to power-building.

leaders who demonstrated why power-building was essential to realizing community-defined aspirations. This was a direct consequence of BHC's premise that change had to be rooted in specific places, with the change agenda guided by local priorities, as well as TCE's.

As BHC began, the frame for community involvement was community engagement, rather than power-building. With hindsight, participants see these early efforts as limited in that they were more concerned with "input" and less concerned with resident power and agency.

"The language of power-building was not central in the beginning of BHC. Instead, we used the language of community engagement which was very much what our public systems use to get community sign-off on where systems are headed anyway or where there's a mandate for some kind of community input. That's not power-building."

— Sandra Davis, Program Manager, East Oakland, TCE

Very soon, however, community power did become an issue, particularly in relation to guiding and directing BHC. In all sites, it was necessary to negotiate the power relationships between the foundation and local communities, and in some places, the discussions became quite contentious. Local priorities were often broader than the "Four Big Results" that TCE defined early-on for the initiative. These focused on providing a health home for all children, reversing childhood obesity, increasing school attendance, and reducing school violence. Many local leaders felt that, while important, these results did not represent community priorities. In BHC's initial years, local leaders pushed TCE to keep its promise for BHC's work to be community-driven rather than guided by foundation-prescribed goals.

These early disputes were formative—and a major contributor to BHC's eventual power-building approach. Local partners' persistence in expressing their priorities ensured that BHC's focus remained aligned with community leaders' perspectives on the social determinants of health. School culture (not just attendance), justice reform, gentrification and displacement, affordable housing, environmental justice—these were communities' frontline issues for health equity. They became BHC's signature issues because local leaders, especially young people, pushed hard for them. Further, when local leaders and organizations chose strategies to address these issues, they focused on community organizing and youth leadership development as the leverage points for system reform.

"[BHC's focus on power-building] came from a number of different directions. But mostly it was from our community partners pushing back on us around what issues we were willing to take on. On issues such as school disciplinary reform, gentrification and anti-displacement efforts, Prop 47, and justice reform—those were issues coming from within our communities."

— Steve Eldred, Senior Program Manager, City Heights, TCE

The Forces that Shaped BHC's Approach to Power-Building

The force with which local leaders made their cases for organizing around local priorities had other long-term impacts. For many Program Managers, who were deeply engaged with communities and sometimes resided within them, the experience of partnering with the 14 BHC sites was transformative. They felt a strong sense of accountability to community partners. Over time, their proximity to community led Program Managers to be strong advocates for power-building as a central BHC strategy, and to shift their local investments to community organizing and base-building.

"The move to centering power came from the Program Managers who were closest to communities. The resistance to it came from people who were furthest away from communities. I think there's something about this notion of proximity to communities: it changes how you relate to communities and what your posture is *vis á vis* communities. I'm talking about proximity to residents and their concerns, not about organizations or politicians. I mean proximity to people who are deciding to participate in an effort because they see a hopeful future for themselves or their children in the work of whatever the initiative is."

— Tony Iton, Executive Vice-President, Healthy Communities, TCE

In BHC's initial years, local leaders pushed TCE to keep its promise for BHC's work to be community-driven rather than guided by foundation-prescribed goals.

"Having Program Managers work in proximity to people in places naturally changes you. It does. And that sense of community identity that Program Managers had was that they were accountable to a group of people and to organizations in the community."

— Tara Westman, Senior Program Manager, TCE

As Program Managers brought communities' lived experience to foundation strategy discussions—and ensured that community leaders themselves were speaking to TCE leaders—a more reciprocal relationship emerged between the 14 BHC communities and the foundation. Tensions would continue and relationships could still be rocky at times, but maturing partnerships with communities, based on physical proximity as well as closeness to varied community cultures and identities, began to change TCE as an organization and provide it a different perspective.

"Power-building moved from the margins to the center in BHC, at least in part, because we as a foundation were much closer to the realities of the folks most impacted. Having Program Managers 'on the ground' created a different vantage point that has strengthened over the years. We as a foundation have changed because of our proximity to community. We still have a way to go to translate how we've been transformed as staff into institutional transformation."

— Sandra Witt, Director, Healthy Communities, North Region, TCE

With this perspective, TCE's investments through BHC shifted to strengthening the capacity of grassroots leaders and organizations who mobilized for change, building on existing power infrastructures whenever possible. The years 2012 – 2013 saw a sharp rise in BHC's investments in grants devoted in whole or in part to "People Power," increasing to roughly 84 percent of grants in 2013, a level that was then maintained or increased in successive years.[5] Concurrently, investments were reduced in organizations that could not move beyond traditional programmatic strategies. The centrality of to BHC began to take shape.

"Yes, I think we got power-building right. And, nobody taught us about power-building but community—not RAND, not Harvard, not McKinsey. We listened to community and got the answer right."

— Robert Ross, President and CEO, TCE

Youth Power & Boys and Men of Color

Focusing on the power and agency of young people was not a specific part of the initial BHC initiative. During the very earliest years, youth were more likely to be one-among-many voices in community meetings rather than featured speakers who articulated their own concerns and devised their own solutions. But very soon this would change in exciting ways that would become one of BHC's key contributions to a richer power-building understanding. The change began as local BHC leaders started talking to young people about their priorities.

The years 2012 – 2013 saw a sharp rise in BHC's investments in grants devoted in whole or in part to "People Power,"

Concurrently, investments were reduced in organizations that could not move beyond traditional programmatic strategies.

"When we started talking to young people at the beginning of BHC, The Endowment thought they were going to hear, 'We want school-based health centers.' But young people said, 'We want police officers out of our schools. We want you to stop punishing us. We want you to invest in us and give us the supports we need to succeed.' They were already there long before BHC, and we had to play catch up."

— Albert Maldonado, Senior Program Manager, Enterprise, Youth Development, TCE

For youth, the most common areas of focus and achievement were creating a school climate conducive to learning, banning inappropriate and harmful school discipline policies, implementing restorative justice programs, and reforming juvenile justice policies.[6]

These issues—which young people had been pushing for years—became part of local BHC agendas in large measure because of youth advocacy. Young people, some not even old enough to vote, successfully took action that contributed to significant change in their communities and at the state capitol.

Sixteen-year-olds were leading successful campaigns to create a transformative School Climate Bill of Rights in the Los Angeles Unified School District, a significant victory that united young people across three BHC communities and had significant impact in Los Angeles (see **Figure 3**). Young people in the Central Valley stepped up to demand clean water, while in Oakland and Santa Ana they made considerable inroads to reduce the school-to-prison pipeline.

"Around the midpoint, BHC really began to embrace the full power of young people. For example, we had designed a fist as our logo to represent youth power in 2012, but TCE wasn't ready for that, saying it was a bit too aggressive. But then fast forward to 2015 and that ends up becoming their symbol not just for The Endowment's youth work, but for their broader power-building strategy. By its midpoint, BHC clearly and deliberately centered young people as the leaders of real change in California."

— Luis Sanchez, Executive Director, Power California

As youth leadership and organizing grew to be a more prominent activity in almost all 14 partner communities, it contributed exponentially to BHC's approach to power-building and, in turn, to California's health equity landscape.

- **Youth helped BHC recognize how trauma and healing are integral to youth organizing.** The youth leadership development opportunities that accompanied organizing in many sites provided young people with opportunities to exert agency and

For youth, the most common areas of focus and achievement were creating a school climate conducive to learning...

FIGURE 3. Youth Organizing Victory in Los Angeles

In 2013-14, a group of 13 youth organizations came together with young people in 3 BHC sites (Boyle Heights, Long Beach, and South LA) to create a new School Climate Bill of Rights for the Los Angeles Unified School District. Young people mobilized thousands of their peers to call for decreased suspensions, less confrontational relationships with police in schools, and restorative justice programs. Suspensions in the district dropped dramatically: from nearly 75,000 per year in 2008 to 6,400 in 2018.

Further, students successfully mobilized and convinced the California State Department of Education to evaluate schools not only based on academic outcomes, but also on social-emotional indicators such as absenteeism, suspensions, mental health resources, and restorative justice solutions, arguing that these are essential to good academic outcomes. Now, all California school districts devote resources to these factors and regularly report on them as well.

Source: LA Unified School District, 8/2012: www.home.lausd.net/apps/news/article/262220 and EdSource 12/2019: www.edsource.org/2019/ how-l-a-unifieds-ban-on-willful-defiance-suspensions-turned-out-six-years-later/620949

FIGURE 4. An Early Insight into the Power of Healing

BHC learned the importance of healing early on, from young people involved in leadership development programs. One such instance arose unexpectedly at BHC's inaugural Sons and Brothers' youth leadership camp, held in Portola, CA in 2011. One hundred boys and young men of color from the 14 BHC sites came together for leadership development, outdoor activities, and to learn to work with one another. On the third day, a few young men became confrontational, trying to intimidate each other, and this escalated into a fight. Tensions grew, word spread on social media, and the incident was sensationalized as a "riot," unsettling campers and parents alike.

Fortunately, two staff people had experience with resolving conflict through healing circles, and they conducted an impromptu Restorative Healing Circle that helped the young men realize the connection between the underlying stresses in their own lives and their reactions to others. This was the first of many instances of making healing integral to youth organizing and youth leadership development. As TCE's Albert Maldonado states, "After that week, healing became a critical staple of BHC youth gatherings."

begin the healing that comes from self-knowledge and self-efficacy.[iii, 7, 8, 9] An early experience with the need for healing practices is described in **Figure 4**. As recognition of the importance of healing grew, BHC invested in leadership development and healing work as essential components of youth organizing.[iv] Through organizing and activism, young people could also directly address the causes of their trauma, as with protesting discriminatory school expulsion practices.

- **Youth helped make social media essential to effective organizing.** It was natural for young people to use social media and other digital tools for organizing efforts locally and eventually for statewide campaigns. In addition, a majority of BHC-supported youth organizations offered digital media training to youth along with other key activities.[10] Through social media, young people and the issues they cared about became visible in a way that exceeded the reach of traditional door-to-door organizing.

- **Youth organizing identified the need for supportive infrastructure and spurred early discussions on a power-building ecosystem.** To strengthen and spread the early victories young people were leading, BHC invested in building the youth organizing infrastructure at multiple levels.[11] By connecting youth groups across issues and across BHC communities as well as into statewide alliances and networks, BHC recognized that additional capacity was needed to support a pipeline of individual leaders and grow the cross-organizational connections to sustain the work.

"Young people forced the question: What are all the pieces of power-building that need to be in play? The youth organizing work was the first piece of organizing activity to prompt the recognition, 'Oh, wow, you need this whole ecosystem to support what's happening on the ground.'"

— Marion Standish, Executive Vice President, Enterprise Programs, TCE

To strengthen and spread the early victories young people were leading, BHC invested in building the youth organizing infrastructure at multiple levels.

[iii] Survey data showed that 33 percent of organizational respondents and 44 percent of youth survey respondents reported offering or participating in healing and/or emotional well-being activities.

[iv] BHC also drew on the rich history of healing-centered engagement as rooted in the work of such organizations as the National Compadres Network and ROCA in Massachusetts, as well as in a host of California nonprofits, such as Barrios Unidos in Santa Cruz, the Youth Leadership Institute, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and Leadership Excellence.

- **BHC helped grow the youth organizing field in California.** TCE helped create three new organizations to round out the youth organizing ecosystem: YO! Cali, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, and Power California. As more and more local organizations were established to work with young people, these three organizations formed to build on the momentum that was stirring. At the same time, TCE's Learning and Evaluation activities helped boost research about the essential elements of successful youth organizing work and gave the field greater credibility.[v]

- **BHC's youth organizing efforts stimulated the creation of a new generation of social justice leaders of color.** One of BHC's greatest legacies has been the positioning of new young leaders, many of them youth of color, taking the helm at youth-serving organizations. Thanks partly to BHC, California now has a cadre of young people who are energized and activated, serving on commissions, and running for office.

"I never saw myself as a youth organizer. In fact, I didn't think that I was going to graduate from high school, let alone make it through college. I was selling peanuts from my cart in downtown Santa Ana because, as undocumented, I couldn't get a real job. But this woman kept stopping to buy lots of bags of my peanuts before her meetings, and she kept saying to me, 'Why don't you come to our community meetings, get involved and help other young people too?' Turns out, she was the Santa Ana BHC Program Manager in 2010, and eventually I did. Now I'm the statewide Director for the California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice, and, with my partners, we've helped create transformative pathways for young people who'd been pushed out, excluded, just like me."

— Abraham Medina, Director, California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice

TCE's investments in Boys and Men of Color (BMoC) helped bring an equity and integrated youth development framework to the forefront of BHC's power-building approach. As a separate strand of youth-related work, BMoC was one of the first foundation activities fully centered on an equity framework, with a core mission "to advance racial equity and gender justice by transforming policies that are failing boys and men of color and their families."[12]

"The Boys and Men of Color work was TCE's first foray into taking racial equity and social justice head on through a place-based and population-specific focus. They created the opportunity to highlight race and gender in a way that challenged the status quo and spoke to the lived experience of boys and men of color in California. This means their issues and leadership are no longer ignored and the organizations working on their issues are building real power locally and in Sacramento, creating a more just California."

— Marc Philpart, Managing Director, PolicyLink, and Principal Coordinator of the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

One of BHC's greatest legacies has been the positioning of new young leaders, many of them youth of color, taking the helm at youth-serving organizations.

[v] The work of Veronica Terriquez, Associate Professor at the University of California Santa Cruz, and her team was particularly important in this regard. A sustained body of research and evaluation on youth leadership and activism helped guide the work of the overall BHC initiative as well as of local and state partners.

The local work that focused on boys and men of color, as well as the eventual statewide BMoC Alliance coordinated by PolicyLink, furthered TCE's understanding that advocating for greater equity and healing from past traumas are not separate activities, but rather are part of a unified developmental process. BMoC also helped young men of color understand their rites of passage and develop leadership skills. BMoC invested in healing circles and summer youth camps, giving young people the opportunity to have a transformational life experience.

The influence and success of BMoC investments, and specifically of the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, further reinforced the "a ha" understanding among TCE leaders that youth organizing and leadership development were major drivers to advance racial and health equity and that youth power at the local level had potential to scale up to regional and statewide levels.

Narrative Change

BHC's narrative change activities contributed greatly to major policy victories in California. BHC's innovative communications strategies changed how policymakers and the public thought about critical issues of health equity and racial justice. When well-coordinated with on-the-ground organizing activities, narrative change became a particularly forceful addition to BHC's power-building approach.

Narrative change strategies came to the fore for TCE and in BHC largely because of new leadership of the foundation's state policy work. This team rethought how TCE could use its influence and stature to have greater impact on the policy issues central to BHC.

FIGURE 5. #Health4All: The Evolution and Impact of One Narrative Change Campaign

Narrative change played a key role in several of BHC's most significant policy change efforts. The first took shape around BHC's zip code concept. Out of that grew the powerful phrase "Health Happens Here" and the visual image of a pin drop. TCE used this to expand the concept that health happens where people live their lives—in neighborhoods, in schools, wherever they spend time. This concept also helped explain what BHC was about in a simple, compelling way.

Shortly after Congress passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, TCE used a communications campaign strategy to help ensure that people signed up in California. Given BHC's focus on health equity for the most marginalized populations, changing the way people thought about undocumented immigrants was crucial. Communications using the branding #Health4All focused on how essential immigrants are to California's future. TCE engaged a wide range of partners, who in turn reached into their neighborhoods, knocking on thousands of doors to talk to Spanish-speaking and low-income residents about the importance of healthcare enrollment.

The **#Health4All** campaign is widely perceived to have had enormous impact. California's ACA enrollment numbers and percentages rapidly became the highest in the nation. Four million individuals became newly insured in California, many of them undocumented. In 2016, California's legislature voted to cover undocumented children up to age 19, and this was extended to young adults up to age 26 in 2019.

"We realized we could be more effective if we paired our grantmaking with using the institution's power and brand to weigh in publicly in support of what we were all trying to achieve together."

– Mary Lou Fulton, former Program Director, Communications and Media Grants, TCE

Initially, the term *narrative change* was not associated with this approach. However, as TCE leaders observed the impact of expanded media campaigns, *narrative change* was clearly the appropriate term. Policymakers'—and to some extent the public's—understanding of issues were being shaped, in turn affecting how people described the "story" and made decisions.

BHC's narrative change activities contributed greatly to major policy victories in California.

In a rapidly changing field where there was still no standard definition of narrative change, TCE continued to refine its approach. For TCE, narrative change came to include activities to "...disrupt the underlying beliefs that perpetuate health and racial inequity and advance new narratives that make the case for an inclusive society where everyone belongs."[vi] In addition to communications strategies, TCE's approach includes activities that use the arts as a tool for change and integrate narrative change with power-building.[13]

Outside observers see BHC's narrative change work as among the strongest and most distinctive of BHC's contributions, establishing a different frame for state and local policy discussions. They point to the impact of the linked "Health4All" and ACA implementation campaign (see **Figure 5**), as well as statewide campaigns on school discipline and criminal justice—as three "sea change" policy wins to which BHC contributed.[vii] For example, on ACA:

"There is no doubt the Endowment has been critical at changing our paradigm when it comes to accessing healthcare for immigrants. They changed the conversation and took it outside of the halls of Sacramento and to the mainstream public—and this policy is now supported by the majority of Californians, who see this as a human rights issue. The 'Health4All' campaign elevated the discussion and put a face to it. That campaign created a consciousness that did not exist beyond immigrant rights advocates and a few legislators who understood this at a personal level. We had never seen this discourse taken to mainstream California."

— Ricardo Lara, State Insurance Commissioner

The success and legitimacy of narrative change strategies demonstrated a new philanthropic approach to influencing critical public policy debates in California. It showed that foundations could inform and educate the public through widespread use of media and stay well within the boundaries of the philanthropic role.

"When 'Health4All' started, I was enthusiastic about doing the research and marshaling the data, but I thought there's no way in the world we're going to win this. This is health insurance paid for by taxpayers for undocumented people in California. But within a year, it became

Outside observers see BHC's narrative change work as among the strongest and most distinctive of BHC's contributions...

[vi] Inclusive Narratives, TCE internal memo, 2018.

[vii] While there are no definitive data proving the impact of BHC's narrative change work because of the near impossibility of attributing particular changes to a shift in narrative, there are some promising data about attitudinal shifts. A California Field Poll in September 2016 showed that 86 percent of voters agreed that school suspensions should only be a last resort. This was after the #SchoolsNotPrisons campaign that sought to change the narrative around how punitive school environments are only derailing the futures of young people, especially those of color. More recent polls, as reported in "Key Findings from a Survey of California Voters on Criminal Justice and Policing Issues," published by FM3 Research in July 2020, show that public attitudes are continuing to shift in favor of educational and community solutions, rather than relying so heavily on criminal justice strategies. Similarly, during the course of #Health4All, the percentage of Californians expressing an appreciation of the contributions of immigrants increased by a remarkable 15 percent.

feasible, and I would attribute this to TCE's successful framing and narrative work. TCE made it a politically palatable idea, for which the only question was, 'How much would it cost?' People were like, 'Wow, can you do that?' And I think TCE has demonstrated you can do this narrative work, you're still a foundation, and you're not going to get in trouble."

— Manuel Pastor, Director, Equity Research Institute, University of Southern California

Several elements characterized BHC's narrative change strategies at their best, as shown in **Figure 6**. Two are particularly worth noting. First, the most effective messaging used simple, compelling language that came directly from people most affected by racial and health inequities. The campaign for health coverage for undocumented California youth provides a powerful example of this: a picture of an immigrant youth with the tag line, "I wasn't born in California, but California was born in me."

Second, state-level narrative change strategies were often most effective when they were well-coordinated with local community organizing efforts. This allowed for local action and follow-up to amplify public awareness campaign messages.

"TCE's power-building work, combined with its public messaging, has been the most powerful combination. Pairing community voice and youth organizing with having big billboards about zip codes determining your lifespan—that made a difference because people are hearing it from their own community."

— Kiran Savage-Sangwan, Executive Director, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

Unfortunately, the pairing of state-level narrative change campaigns with local mobilization was often shaky or worse, especially in BHC's early years. To some local leaders, TCE's investments in large public relations firms to create statewide messaging would have been better spent on disseminating local messages in partnership with local firms. Another major complaint was insufficient resources devoted to building the communications capacity of local organizations.

Additionally, coordination was often lacking between TCE's state level staff (Healthy California, or HCAL), who managed the large communications campaigns, and the Healthy Communities (HCOM) staff who supported BHC's work in 14 communities, resulting in tensions and mixed messages.

Despite difficulties, when alignment existed between community power-building and narrative change strategies their combined force left an indelible impression—one that advocates remember and feel is vital for the future.

FIGURE 6. What Made BHC's Narrative Change Work So Successful?

- **Statewide campaigns paired with community organizing.** With well-coordinated state-local efforts, messages were amplified in powerful ways.
- **Simple compelling language that came directly from people most affected.** "The best messages (like #SchoolsNotPrisons) came from listening carefully for unfiltered voices and simple truths. The words are few and familiar; their meaning clear and strong." – Daniel Zingale, former Senior Vice President, TCE
- **Messages accompanied by powerful visuals created by youth.** "Young leaders designed some of the most compelling visuals, wrote the best scripts for radio ads, and created the best hashtags." – Daniel Zingale, former Senior Vice President, TCE. Campaigns also collaborated with local artists and designers to further enrich messages and expand their reach.
- **Multiple media to reinforce messages.** By combining videos, billboards, op-eds, social media, and events that offered "swag" for participants, the "stickiness" of messages was enhanced.
- **Partnerships to ensure resonant messages.** Partnerships with grantees, community leaders, residents, and funders helped ensure messages were on point for the public.

FIGURE 7. Defining Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE)

IVE is a strategy to increase the civic participation and power of residents in defined geographic areas by integrating efforts to increase the voting participation of under-represented constituencies with ongoing community organizing, issue campaigns, and public policy advocacy.

Source: California Calls

Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE)
BHC's investments in Integrated Voter Engagement broadened the range and impact of power-building strategies, increasing BHC's focus on civic engagement and electoral power while further underscoring the combined power of local activism with statewide coordination.

The premise underlying IVE was straightforward, as described in **Figure 7**. Electoral participation by underrepresented groups would be critical to move public systems toward equity. This, in turn, required issue awareness within communities, voter education and policy advocacy not limited to the timing of election cycles, and coordinated local and statewide actions beyond what most individual BHC sites could orchestrate. In short, a comprehensive IVE approach required long-term and statewide support from TCE and other foundations.

TCE was not the first foundation in California to invest in Integrated Voter Engagement. The foundation's interest grew gradually from the advocacy of local BHC partners and TCE Healthy Communities (HCOM) staff who saw IVE's impact across the state.

Leaders within TCE's Healthy California team (HCAL) simultaneously advocated for using IVE as a powerful component of statewide efforts, starting with the campaign for Proposition 30 in 2012 (to ward off large-scale budget cuts for California schools).

Leading state nonprofits committed to equity—including PICO California, California Calls, and the USC Equity Research Institute—further advocated for TCE support for IVE and for power-building in general. A series of meetings between these groups and TCE leadership, bolstered by growing support from BHC communities, served as a turning point in TCE's commitment to IVE. One statewide equity leader remembers the days when IVE was just gaining ground within TCE:

"There were meetings that Bea Solis helped set up with Dr. Ross and TCE leaders and Joseph Tomás McKellar, Manuel Pastor, Anthony Thigpenn, and me. We talked power-building and IVE, and we said 'Look, if you're serious, then this is what it takes.' I remember one meeting where Anthony said, 'We're going in the right direction, but your investment in IVE is not commensurate with what it takes.' He really put it out there, that if we're serious about doing this at scale, then the Endowment has to make some hard decisions about where it focuses resources."

— Karla Zombro, Field Director, California Calls

TCE's investments in these partners and others, such as the Million Voters Project, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders for Civic Empowerment, the Native Vote Project, and Power California, expanded rapidly in the second half of BHC, after the 2016 election. A special Board-authorized Fight Fund for All aimed to increase voter education and civic engagement in underserved communities to protect their interests. The expanded funding allowed IVE organizations, through local affiliates, many in BHC sites, to expand their operations and achieve far greater increases in voter registration than in the past, especially in communities historically underrepresented in elective office. IVE strategies also continued expansion in BHC communities. One such successful effort is highlighted in **Figure 8**. Similar expansion was supported by three BHC communities in the Central Valley, reflecting not only a growing regional approach to power-building, but also IVE's aim of growing "trans-local" power.

FIGURE 8. Integrated Voter Engagement in City Heights

In 2016, several small multi-ethnic youth organizing groups came together to mount an IVE action aimed at increasing voter turnout among young people. Rather than using big established social justice organizations, BHC used tiny grassroots groups representing East African immigrants, refugees from Myanmar, and young Vietnamese leaders. It was more successful than anyone expected. City Heights had the highest increase in young voter participation of any zip code in the state.

FIGURE 9. The IVE Work of Key California Organizations and Alliances

Partner	Description	Results
California Calls	An alliance of 31 grassroots organizations across the state, operating in rural, suburban, and urban environments.	■ Registered 12,000+ voters, ■ Built a base of ~138,000 supporters, ■ Engaged ~33,000 Black voters for 2018 election.
Million Voters Project	An alliance of 7 community-based networks that seek to strengthen democratic participation.	Created a voter base of ~525,000 people.
Power California	Emerged from the union of Mobilize the Immigrant Vote and YVote, two community-based organizations that organized immigrants, refugees, and youth of color.	Contributed to record turnout among 18-24-year-olds between 2014 and 2018 elections: 3x increase from previous year and registered more than 40,000 young voters.

Source: Tom Pyun, Ten Years of Building Community Power to Achieve Health Equity: A Retrospective (April 2020)

The activities of statewide organizations supporting IVE and many local affiliates are believed to have contributed to record turnout among young voters in the 2018 elections and the engagement of thousands of supporters who can potentially be mobilized in the future. Likewise, networks that were so well-developed in IVE work illustrated the potential of an ecosystem approach on future racial justice and health equity efforts. (See **Figure 9** for examples of IVE outcomes among key grantees.)

IVE's combination of grassroots change and statewide impact was persuasive even to "power-building skeptics." IVE's integration of issue education, community organizing, and policy advocacy; the presence of strong, experienced leadership networks; and its impact on electoral power all added dimensions to BHC's power-building approach. Because IVE's impact could be measured through increases in voter registration and voting, it also helped convince people that power-building had concrete benefits and communicable outcomes. As a result, IVE activities were expanded or adopted by base-building organizations in almost all 14 sites by the final years of BHC.

"The benefit of IVE is that it is incredibly data driven. I describe it as the 'money ball' of organizing. As opposed to just talking about a movement in abstract terms, IVE maximizes the efficiency of the resources at our disposal and then mobilizes communities based on hard data. IVE had traction because it offered a tangible way to show results."

— Jonathan Tran, Senior Program Manager, TCE

CONTRIBUTION #3: GAME-CHANGING POLICIES AND CUMULATIVE CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

From BHC's early days, building power was linked to changing policies, systems, and conditions that create or perpetuate health inequities. After 10 years, the many partners involved in BHC, within communities and in statewide alliances and networks, have made progress toward these goals.

As a result of expanded health coverage in California, over 4 million people now have coverage who didn't in 2010.[14] By altering state education policy related to school suspensions and expulsions, 400,000 plus young people are not suspended/expelled from schools. A million Californians are eligible for reclassification or release from prison as the result of sustained advocacy for changes in the justice system.

Just as importantly, BHC partners' efforts contributed to over 1250 local policy wins, system changes, and other tangible benefits for communities.[viii] A sampling of these are shown in **Figure 10**, illustrating

Integrated Voter Engagement's combination of grassroots change and statewide impact was persuasive even to "power-building skeptics."

[viii] BHC Policy Inventory Tool, 2020

the breadth of policy arenas affected by BHC over time. These wins, too, changed residents' lives and opportunities.

Securing local and statewide changes involved partnerships among BHC communities' adult and youth residents, base-building and organizing groups, other advocates, and a variety of statewide coalitions and alliances. While BHC's contributions to these collective efforts can't be determined precisely, most observers feel that these policy victories would not have happened without BHC.

Not all efforts ended in success, and BHC partners experienced failures and stalled efforts on the way to eventual wins.

FIGURE 10. Select Local Policy Wins and System Changes to Which BHC Contributed

2014: Orange County Sheriff's and Probations Department changed their detainment policy on referring undocumented immigrants to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after Santa Ana BHC pushed them.

2014: Merced implemented victim-offender reconciliation & mediation services for first-time youth felony offenders and allowed their records to be sealed after community service.

2014: Boyle Heights' City Planning Department adopted several BHC recommendations for Transit-Oriented Development, construction of affordable housing, environmental buffer zones, and economic development.

2014: With BHC activism, Salinas voters passed funding for youth development and youth leadership opportunities as a public health approach to reducing violence and promoting peace.

2015: Oakland BHC partners developed a health equity tool to evaluate development projects. All projects have to consider impacts to the environment, safety, economic opportunity, culture, transport, housing, and open space.

2013: South Los Angeles BHC advocacy resulted in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigation, a fine and a city lawsuit against an oil extraction site for failing to prevent the release of toxic chemicals in a residential community. The facility was forced to close until updates were completed to bring the site up to code.

2015: Del Norte County and Tribal Lands enrolled 2,968 new Medi-Cal recipients, bringing the total number to over 10,500—40 percent of the county population.

2015: South Kern BHC and its partners established an enrollment process in Lerdo Jail which resulted in 1,635 soon-to-be and newly-recently released individuals enrolled in Medi-Cal.

2015-2018: Sacramento County voted to provide health care to 4000 undocumented residents of all ages.

2018: Fresno BHC partners filed a lawsuit against the City for unlawfully fast-tracking a two-million square foot industrial development project without completing any environmental review. In 2019, the Fresno City Council pulled the plug on the project and initiated a full environmental review.

2018: Richmond voters overwhelmingly approved establishment of a dedicated funding source to expand services for children and families and create a first city-operated Department of Children and Youth.

2018: San Diego County approved $1 million for youth bus passes and $300,000 for restorative justice and restorative practice training for school police officers—both goals of City Heights BHC advocacy campaigns.

2018: Alianza Coachella Valley entered into a partnership with the California Air Resource Board to ensure that the problems of poor air quality were addressed and mitigated given alarmingly high rates of asthma.

2018: Long Beach Unified School District agreed to invest approximately $7 million in social, emotional, and academic supports for high-need students as a result of a complaint filed by BHC parents and organizations.

Source: Tom Pyun, **Ten Years of Building Community Power to Achieve Health Equity: A Retrospective, April 2020.** *https://auut.studio/client/calendow/draft11/*
Note: The policy achievements shown here resulted from efforts of many groups and multiple sources of funding. TCE funding provided through BHC for public policy purposes informs and educates the public, news media, and policymakers on key health issues and concerns. All TCE grants are made in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.

In other instances, there were no victories at all. From all efforts, however, partners gained experience and learned lessons useful in the next push for change.

In fact, looking back, the specific wins credited to BHC are only a part of BHC's legacy. Power-building allowed BHC to go beyond specific policy wins and accumulate the capacity needed to advocate for further change and be ready when windows of opportunity opened.

When local and state TCE Program Managers, or people leading the coalitions they funded, talk about BHC's biggest accomplishments, they speak about the capacities they have acquired to push for deeper and lasting change as frequently as they do about the specific wins.

"In 2018, we asked 110 of our local folks: 'How has City Heights changed since the start of BHC?' About half noted tangible wins, like changes to a school district policy, or a new skate part for the kids. The other half mentioned more intangible things, like a stronger sense of identity and a greater sense of community networks and coalitions built across racial ethnic groups. I think the policy wins led to these power-building outcomes, and vice versa."

— Steve Eldred, Senior Program Manager, City Heights, TCE

Building capacity and power for sustained policy and systems change happened at a different pace in each BHC community. Typically, it began with building relationships and seeding organizing activities, then built over time to acquiring capacity to influence systems and create inside-outside partnerships.

"Systems change comes from power-building; the sequence is you should start with power-building, and that gets you to systems change. When we started, literally I had to sit in a room with the board of directors, all these white men, who said, 'Stop with this organizing. That's not how change happens in Long Beach.' Now, we're at the point where BHC is the first group the mayor or city council calls to say, 'Hey, we're thinking of doing this thing; can we partner with you, or can we give you some money to do some community listening sessions?' It's night and day in terms of the city trying to be more responsive to the voice of community, partly because there's real power that's been built. In Long Beach, it wasn't just about policy wins."

— Jenny Chheang, Senior Program Manager, TCE

The pattern in Long Beach and other sites suggests one possible sequence for change: starting with community organizing and power-building; tackling 'win-able' issues while looking

Power-building allowed BHC to go beyond specific policy wins and accumulate the capacity needed to advocate for further change and be ready when windows of opportunity opened.

at the full scale of systems change needed; determining how to influence decision-makers over time; and all the while developing the local and state-level capacity to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and sustain change-making efforts for the long haul.

BHC Merced provides another illustration of this sequence:

"Merced's biggest 'arc example' is when we got marijuana tax revenues directed to youth programming. That was a huge cumulative win. First, we made youth matter, as they were not even on the screen when we started. Then after years of work, fast-forward to 2019 and the City Manager calls BHC for its partnership in educating the public about the urgent need for youth programming. With heightened public interest, Measure T passed, providing permanent funds for young people. That in turn led to other leaders viewing BHC advocates with respect. So, we have shifted the power and the process of how government officials now engage the community and listen."

— Brian Mimura, Program Manager, TCE

Another example is summarized in **Figure 11**, which shows the sequence of policy and programmatic actions that led to securing resources for cleaner water in the San Joaquin and Eastern Coachella Valleys and eventually statewide.

These milestones are noteworthy "wins," but equally important is the steady increase of capacity, power, and credibility among a coalition of water justice organizations and engaged citizens that led to the cumulative successes, despite setbacks along the way. The growing influence of these partners, along with a strong inside-outside partnership with key legislative leaders, ultimately resulted in the allocation of $1.3 billion in state funding for clean water in California communities over the next decade.

Several BHC sites invested strategically in the organizational capacity required for coalition building for water justice, thus supporting the "arc of change" shown in **Figure 11**, along with other funders.[ix]

FIGURE 11. Milestones in Securing State Authority and Funding for Clean Water in the San Joaquin and Eastern Coachella Valleys

2012: Water justice advocates win lawsuit recognizing dairies' role in polluting drinking water as well as Regional Water Board's regulatory program's failures to protect drinking water.

2012: California's "Human Right to Water" bill (AB-685) passes, declaring every person has the "right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water." No funding is provided.

2014: State Drinking Water Programs are officially transferred to the State Water Board from the Department of Public Health, after DPH failed to spend funds allocated for the program.

2015: Senate Bill 88 (SB-88) allows the State Water Board to order consolidation of a public water system, that does not adequately supply clean drinking water to a "disadvantaged community," with another water system.

2015/16: The Agua 4 All pilot campaign is launched by TCE and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation in the San Joaquin Valley, increasing access to safe drinking water by installing water bottle refilling stations and point-of-use water filters in schools and other locations in rural areas.

2017/18: SB-623, which aims to create a Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund through a new tax on water bills fails in the State Senate, despite strong advocacy.

2019: SB-200 is passed, establishing the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund and finally honoring in part the state commitment that "water is a human right" by designating $1.3 billion over 10 years to be spent on operations, maintenance, and consolidation processes to create safe drinking water for California communities.

Note: The work summarized here involved many organizations and funders. TCE funding provided through BHC for public policy purposes informs and educates the public, news media, and policymakers on key health issues and concerns. All TCE grants are in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.

[ix] TCE funds only supported the provision of information and education around relevant issues. Other funders were able to support the same organizations for direct legislative advocacy.

"In rural Kern County, there had been decades of work to build awareness of the need for safe drinking water. What BHC Kern added was the space, time, and resources for youth and adult residents, organizers, and advocates to coalesce, build even stronger trusting relationships, and organize around collective action. The power they built together ultimately led to sweeping local and statewide change. The power is theirs, not ours. What funders can do is 'step back' and support coalition building, multi-generational and multi-racial leadership development, a shared analysis of the root causes of racial inequities, and policy advocacy. Those capacities helped permanently shift the power dynamics between communities and water systems."

— Annalisa Robles, Program Manager, TCE

Looking forward, the power built ensures that residents and coalitions will now be able to hold state and local water boards accountable for the further changes needed to ensure safe water in California's communities.

This approach to building cumulative capacity for change is one of BHC's major contributions, a fact that is increasingly recognized and headlined:

"We do experience 'lightning in a bottle' moments of transformative change, but we can't underestimate the years and years of capacity building and advocacy support it takes 'in-between-moments' to reap the benefits of such moments. I know of tiny nonprofits that have labored in relative obscurity for many years, but were ready for the prime time moment of transformative change when that moment showed up recently—a reminder that 'moments' are both combustible and also created over time."

— Robert Ross, President and CEO, TCE

As long-term capacity building continues as a signature TCE strategy for policy change, it will be important to gauge progress in a comprehensive way:

- Achieving policy wins clearly counts, as even small changes can make a concrete difference in people's lives. Holding policymakers and systems accountable for implementing better policies is critical, too. Without effective implementation, policy wins mean little and systems don't change.
- In addition, BHC's experience suggests the need to track the capacity and power of key organizations and coalitions to bring about policy and systems change. The following are just a few relevant indicators:
  - The capacity of grassroots power-building organizations to organize and mobilize adults and youth;
  - The ability of power-building networks to acquire or connect to key capacities such as policy analysis and sophisticated communications; and
  - The increase in connections within networks of power-builders, both across sites and among local, regional, and state-level organizations.

BHC's experience suggests the need to track the capacity and power of key organizations and coalitions to bring about policy and systems change.

FIGURE 12. The "Power Flower" and the Component Activities of a Power-Building Ecosystem

Organizing and base-building alone are insufficient to influence those who have the authority, resources, and power to make the kinds of decisions that will improve the lives of historically excluded people and reduce inequities. A broader ecosystem of organizations with diverse capacities, skills, an expertise—and with reach from the local to regional to the state levels—is required to get to the big goal of health and justice for all.

Source: Jennifer Ito and Manuel Pastor, *Health and Justice for All: Power-Building Landscape*, 2019.

CONTRIBUTION #4: AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO POWER-BUILDING

In its final three years, BHC's learning coalesced into a new understanding of a *power-building ecosystem*.

The ecosystem is the combination of organizational infrastructure and relationships necessary to ensure that marginalized people have voice, agency, and power to create an inclusive democracy and close health equity gaps.

The ecosystem is grounded in local organizing, mobilizing, and base-building—i.e., community power—while recognizing that other roles and activities are essential if the organizations within the ecosystem are to advance health equity.

The power-building ecosystem's core activities have been defined by Jennifer Ito and Manuel Pastor at the University of Southern California's Equity Research Institute in several publications[17] and distilled in a graphic widely known among TCE staff and BHC partners as "the power flower," shown in **Figure 12**.

Information from the USC Equity Research Institute's database illustrates the size of the ecosystem. As of 2019, 743 organizations in California identified themselves as part of the ecosystem.[x] Approximately 431, or 58 percent, worked primarily at the local or regional level. Approximately 163 organizations, or 22 percent, reported that they worked primarily on statewide issues. An additional 20 percent identified themselves as working primarily on national issues. As Ito and Pastor note, among ecosystem organizations, alliances that *combine* local power with statewide influence "...are key to the power-building ecosystem, as they align otherwise dispersed local efforts around a shared theory of change and the exercise of building independent political power, together."[18]

Over the 10 years of BHC, 77 percent of TCE's total $1.75 billion investment in BHC[xi] were for grants that were directed in whole or in part to power-building. Of

Over the 10 years of BHC, 77 percent of TCE's total $1.75 billion investment in BHC were for grants that were directed in whole or in part to power-building.

[x] "The California Power-Building Ecosystem Database," compiled by USC Equity Research Institute (ERI): Data and Analysis to Power Social Change, 2019. TCE supported ERI (then USC PERE) to survey the organizations that could be considered ecosystem participants. The resulting data base portrays an initial landscape of California nonprofit organizations that are involved in power-building—and thus could be said to be aligned in a power-building enterprise.

[xi] This amount includes BHC investments through Healthy Communities, Healthy California, and Affordable Care Act, Fight Fund, and Program Related Investments.

that amount, the largest percentage (46 percent) supported grants that included organizing and base-building. Grants that were in whole or in part for other ecosystem activities were as follows: advocacy and policy (38 percent) alliances and coalitions (36 percent), communications (35 percent), organizational development (27 percent), leadership development (13 percent), and research and legal support (8 percent).[xii]

In the three years that BHC leaders have been using the ecosystem framework, experience has illuminated factors that appear to increase its effectiveness.

- **A power-building ecosystem must center local base-building organizations while connecting them to sources of regional and statewide influence.** Efforts to combine local and state strategies through BHC were often successful but could be difficult and frustrating as well. While highly effective, statewide campaigns could be out of sync with local priorities and feel "foundation-imposed" rather than "foundation-supported." Hard-won lessons are showing the way to get the combination of local, regional, and state strategies right.

- **The ecosystem requires infrastructure.** Capacity building will be required at multiple levels, with partners prioritizing additional support in leadership development, strategic communications and narrative change, data development and usage, and policy advocacy. The ecosystem will also require infrastructure support and general operating support that allow organizations to operate together and at scale.

> **"In terms of capacity building, you need at least two pieces. First, high level strategy work, so the groups doing this big work can come together around both a statewide and local agenda. Then, you need organizational capacity at the very tiny grassroots level. If we want to support those organizations to bring more people to the table and build a bigger strategy, then we must also support them to be stronger organizations that pay above poverty wages and have career paths. I call this soil reclamation. Some strategists are trying to get all the grass to move in the same direction, but some of the dirt is funky, not very conducive to growing things. With support, those smaller groups can connect with each other in deeper ways."**
>
> **— Tia Martinez, Executive Director, Forward Change**

- **With infrastructure support, the power-building ecosystem will engage new organizations and expand to additional jurisdictions.** BHC demonstrated that if base-building organizations have adequate support and capacity, they will reach out to communities that have been historically under-resourced and form alliances with other organizers around common concerns. By BHC's second half, power-building in the 14 BHC communities had expanded into surrounding neighborhoods, communities, counties, and even regions. This natural spread of power-building was a factor in TCE's decision to focus its next 10 years of work on

The ecosystem will also require infrastructure support and general operating support that allow organizations to operate together and at scale.

[xii] Note the numbers exceed 100 percent because many grants fall into more than one category, reflecting the fact that many organizations perform more than one of these activities.

expanded geographic areas defined in part by where local and state partners had already extended their influence.

"In the later years of BHC, more support went to alliances and networks that were supporting groups coming together across different places. With this support, grassroots leaders had resources to hire their own people and create their own structures to convene them, rather than an intermediary doing the convening. This highlighted the fact that most groups that are doing local work are also doing statewide work. One of the things that we can do is connect them and support them in coming together. That's part of what infrastructure building is."

— Alex Desautels, Program Manager, Strategy Development and Dissemination, TCE

TCE leaders and partners recognize both the promise and challenges that lie ahead for a power-building ecosystem. It will require a clearer purpose, pathways for getting there, and a stronger focus on capturing learning in real time as partners test new action strategies.

"We have a lot to do to flesh out the idea of a power ecosystem. We need to be clearer about how it's activated and the interplay between organizations supporting the development of individual community members' power, or youth power, and this larger ecosystem. How will resources be distributed and accessed? Who will make these decisions? What is TCE's role or roles? These are issues of power and privilege that all of the partners involved must grapple with. And, we can't assume that we will be able to plan for every eventuality. At some point we're going to have to just do it and learn."

— Martha Jimenez, Executive Vice President, TCE

"I hope the next trajectory of the ecosystem is less about the power flower and more about the strategic pathways forward for California to get to health equity for all. That requires attention to the geography of change in California. It means being aware of how folks grab the narrative and wield power in the electoral arena. It's about seeding the power-building ecosystem within the State—understanding what that looks like in different places and that what's needed will vary according to the different context and capacity and future directions of a place."

— Jennifer Ito, Research Director, Equity Research Institute, University of Southern California

TCE leaders and partners recognize both the promise and challenges that lie ahead for a power-building ecosystem.

BHC'S LESSONS AS A PLATFORM FOR FUTURE LEARNING

As TCE and partners start the next 10 years' work, they will launch new efforts, achieve new successes, make fresh mistakes, and produce a next generation of learning that will refine and perhaps even change what has been learned so far. The following lessons are platforms for future learning, both for TCE and its partners, and potentially for other philanthropies and public sector agencies seeking to advance health equity and racial justice.

- **Lesson #1: Be prepared to invest for decades.** Power-building for racial and health equity requires supporting the slow, steady work that will enable leaders and communities to organize, policy campaigns to launch, public attitudes to shift, and oppressive systems to change when windows of opportunity open. It requires undoing years of systemic oppression embedded in law, policy, and practice. Tackling this requires more than a time-limited project or initiative.
- **Lesson #2: Center racial equity and justice from the start.** TCE leaders are candid that they "came late" to committing to racial equity as a central element of BHC that underlies even power-building as a core principle. The foundation also recognizes the need to build its own capacity for centering racial justice in all its policies and practices. This requires defining how the commitment to anti-racism work will show up in detailed plans for policy and systems change, grantmaking priorities including core support and capacity building, ongoing professional development for staff and partners, and consideration of multi-issue, multi-racial movement building grants. Also required is working with public sector partners to support a strong racial equity lens, a root cause analysis of structural racism, and power sharing with communities.

TCE leaders are candid that they "came late" to committing to racial equity as a central element of BHC that underlies even power-building as a core principle.

- **Lesson #3: Redefine foundation leadership as part of an ecosystem, not apart from it.** In an ecosystem approach, foundations need to redefine the nature of shared leadership, assuming various roles in different contexts. Often, this means stepping back and following communities' lead and supporting grantees to step forward. At the same time, it requires knowing when a foundation's credibility and unique resources require more "upfront" leadership roles, such as organizing multi-funder investment strategies or investing in narrative change.

- **Lesson #4: Invest in long-term capacity to prepare for opening policy windows.** Many of the policy changes to which BHC contributed stemmed from power-building and advocacy efforts over many years' time, paired with unique policy windows of opportunity that opened. Continuous capacity-building support allows policy advocates, base-building organizations, and coalitions to maintain pressure on systems—then seize the moment when an opportunity for change presents itself in the form of new leadership, a new law, a systems crisis, or a shift in public opinion.

- **Lesson #5: Restructure grant-making and investment practices to support a long-term health equity and racial justice agenda.** This requires expanded support for organizations led by people of color, long term partnerships with grantees, and core support for the organizing, base-building, and policy advocates whose continuous efforts are essential for systemic change. Long-term organizational support is more likely to engender the trust between grantees and funders that allows for candid feedback about strategy and tactics. This grant-making approach also requires exploring additional supports for community power beyond investments in organizing, such as redeploying capital to community decision-making and/or community enterprises.

- **Lesson #6: Look for opportunities to link issue-specific campaigns to broader coalitions for equity and justice.** Organizing tends to happen around urgent interests and center on specific populations, geographies, or public systems. BHC communities' experience suggests that individual movements can acquire additional power by linking with others across themes of health equity and racial justice. This makes sense practically and thematically, as the root causes of many inequities in America's economy and public systems are identical: i.e., income inequality, racial bias, the persistence of White supremacy, and structural racism, among others.

- **Lesson #7: Seed grassroots organizations and invest in a leadership pipeline.** In geographic areas where power-building resources have been scarce for decades or longer, seeding and cultivating new organizations is essential. In addition, community mobilization requires

BHC communities' experience suggests that individual movements can acquire additional power by linking with others across themes of health equity and racial justice.

continual assessment of the strength of local organizations, fresh infusions of leaders and an intentional leadership development infrastructure, and attention to healing.

- **Lesson #8: Cultivate inside-outside partnerships with public leaders.** When community advocates make common cause with public agency leaders, stronger and faster system changes can result. Grassroots groups bring the keenest sense of the changes that will positively affect community members' lives, the drive to cut through bureaucratic processes, and the incentive to hold public agencies accountable. Agency leaders who choose to be internal champions for change know best which organizational levers to pull to effect change.

- **Lesson #9: Pair narrative change with organizing efforts and support the capacity of local groups to employ this strategy.** BHC's experience shows how powerful narrative change strategies can shift the public's and policymakers' view of policy challenges and thus their support for innovative and far-reaching solutions. Narrative change strategies are at their best when they're closely linked to and/or guided by grassroots groups, so that messaging centers the experiences and priorities of the most-impacted populations. Broad issue campaigns need to reinforce, not compete with, local action strategies. In the future, it will be important to expand the capacity of organizing groups to advance narrative change themselves.

- **Lesson #10: Measure the growth of power-building capacity over time.** Investments in power-building that can advance policy and systems change will require new measures of the strength and pace at which power is built over long periods of time. In addition to tracking achievement of policy wins and systems implementation, BHC's experience suggests the need to track: (1) the capacity of grassroots power-building organizations to organize and mobilize adults and youth, (2) the ability of power-building organizations to acquire and connect to key capacities such as policy analysis and sophisticated communications, and (3) the extent and strength of network connections within coalitions of power-builders, across sites, and among local, regional, and state level organizations. Whatever the frame, measures should be collaboratively developed, tested, and improved with partners so that as power-building grows, a sense of mutual accountability and demonstrated efficacy evolve simultaneously.

As important as any of these individual lessons is the broader approach to learning that underlies them. BHC's experience suggests that in undertaking the next generation of work, TCE, and/or any other funders, should commit to a learning strategy based on continuous, emergent learning rather than pre-defined solutions based on even the best prior lessons.

Some partners credit TCE with having done such "real time" learning and adaptation through BHC. The near-continuous refinement of BHC's central focus on "people power" is cited as evidence of the foundation's willingness to listen, learn, and adapt. Other partners, particularly those in local communities, simultaneously note the lack of opportunities to reflect on experience, translate lessons into action, assess impact, and have their voices and insights be heard by the foundation.

Both views can be true. Looking forward, the point is to have a learning strategy that is organization-wide at TCE, expands the focus on local learning activities, and extends to—and is co-owned by—partners in the ecosystem. In the next 10 years, the strategies that grow from TCE's initial set of "Bold Ideas" from the *Beyond 2020* plan are best treated as hypotheses rather than rigid rules for implementation. The aim should be to start with the best ideas gleaned from partners' experience; test these collaboratively with partners; observe the impact of strategies; keep effective solutions while changing or discarding those that are not; and integrate unexpected insights and effective ways of work along the way. Such a platform for learning, carried out with community and state allies and grounded in "disciplined adaptation," can pay off richly for health equity and racial justice in California and for the broader philanthropic field.

BHC's experience suggests that in undertaking the next generation of work, TCE, and/or any other funders, should commit to a learning strategy based on continuous, emergent learning rather than pre-defined solutions based on even the best prior lessons.

TCE'S LEADERSHIP IN THIS MOMENT

With 10 years of BHC experience propelling them forward, TCE and its partners are charting their next decade of work. Foundation leaders have articulated future directions (Figure 13) and they are engaging grantees and other partners to define how the work will be done together.

They are also building on a strong commitment "...to a more assertive and consistent application of a racial equity, racial justice, and racial healing lens to our work in the decade to come."[20]

As they do so, many colleagues in California see TCE as well positioned for leadership and partnership in this unprecedented moment, pushing for even greater seismic change. This peer assessment comes from the foundation's long-standing stature as a driver for health equity; its recent, more explicit focus on racial equity; the willingness to invest in power-building; and TCE's partnerships with community power forces and state-level policy advocates.

In addition, BHC has helped create new forces of community power to press for change. Networks of community leaders, youth activists, and base-building organizations are stronger and more experienced now than they were 10 years ago.

"BHC positions TCE in a different place, with a different level of credibility, to be a health care-focused foundation in this moment that's also focused on racial equity and power. There just aren't many institutions that bring the three legs of that stool together in the way that TCE does."

— Fred Blackwell, CEO, San Francisco Foundation

"BHC helped incubate a lot of organizing capacity that didn't exist before, plus a whole generation of new young leaders of color that will definitely help us in this new tsunami moment we're in."

— Luis Sanchez, Executive Director, Power California

Through BHC, TCE has earned continued respect for its ability to maintain an ambitious long-term agenda while responding quickly to immediate crises. The TCE board's deployment of additional resources when an opportunity or emergency arises—such as resources for ACA implementation in California, COVID-19 response funding, and the support of Black-led organizing as the national anti-racism movement has grown—is recognized and appreciated.

"The challenge in this moment is the interplay between the immediate crisis—i.e., 'pulling the babies out of the river'—and the imperative to develop a longer-term agenda and platform. TCE can do both."

— Joseph Tomás McKellar, Co-Director, PICO California

At the same time, TCE's colleagues urge the foundation to be modest and humble about BHC's accomplishments and address its own internal challenges. For all the advances in health care coverage, school climate, criminal justice, environmental justice, and other areas, California's health inequities have barely budged. Differential treatment of people and communities of color by public systems is still rampant. Power-building networks are still nascent in many places and require continued investment.

"TCE has certainly helped move the needle on power-building. However, what they've done is only the tip of the iceberg. We still need a next generation of power-building."

— Chet Hewitt, President and CEO, Sierra Health Foundation

TCE must also address its own challenges as it prepares for the next phase: being even bolder and more explicit about racial equity and the anti-racism work that will be required by the foundation and its partners; acting with greater organizational unity in interactions with the field; thinking through its role as a part of, not an orchestrator of, the power-building ecosystem; shifting or sharing power with partners in more explicit and intentional ways; and rethinking its grant-making and investment strategies to more fully support power-building for those least advantaged. For the latter, this could include multi-year grants, moving capital to support community decision-making, and strategies that help build community power in addition to investments in organizing.

Finally, TCE needs to share what it is learning—with its community and state partners, with other philanthropies, and with the broader social justice field. In the next 10 years, emergent learning will be even more profound as TCE moves from running an initiative focused on health and racial equity to embodying health and racial equity as its way of work.

"The beauty of BHC was that we had many different strategies going in different places, so we learned a lot about who we are and what we believe in. Now, we're at the point of figuring out how to make the powerful successes we had become the normal way of doing things. We're moving from a single foundation initiative to an approach based on our identity as a foundation committed to health equity and racial justice. That's the real legacy of BHC."

— Ray Colmenar, Director, TCE

FIGURE 13. TCE's Future Directions

In 2019, TCE's Board adopted three "bold ideas" that set the direction for the next decade of the foundation's work:

Bold Idea 1: People Power: Developing young and adult leaders to work intergenerationally to raise up the voice of marginalized communities and promote greater civic activism as essential building blocks for an inclusive, equitably prosperous state.

Bold Idea 2: Reimagining Our Institutions: Transforming our public institutions to become significant investors in, and champions of, racial and social equity, and in the healthy development and success of young people for generations to come.

Bold Idea 3: A 21st Century Health for All System: Ensuring prevention, community wellness, and access to quality health care for ALL Californians.

In the next 10 years, emergent learning will be even more profound as TCE moves from running an initiative focused on health and racial equity to embodying health and racial equity as its way of work.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: METHODS

This paper relied on qualitative methods to identify BHC's main contributions as well as lessons that can inform other foundations, policymakers, and community partners committed to advancing health equity and racial justice.

- **Participation in ongoing evaluation partner meetings.** This learning paper was one of a series of final BHC evaluation deliverables, each with different objectives and methods. We surveyed other evaluation partners' plans and progress to inform this paper's focus and content. Taking part in evaluation coordinating council meetings facilitated cross-project learning and insights that served as additional data sources.

- **Document review.** As a 10-year initiative, BHC produced volumes of reports and deliverables of all kinds, most for external audiences and some for internal use. While this paper is neither an evaluation nor a comprehensive review of BHC, we did rely on document review to inform our initial and ongoing thinking, as well as the scope and detail of our content. Examples included major BHC milestone reports and papers on specific elements such as youth activism, as well as relevant research outside of BHC.

- **Interviews.** The paper's primary data source was a set of 40 interviews and several conversations conducted in three waves between April and July, largely by phone. Respondents included: TCE executives, board members, and staff (current and former); other foundation leaders; state and local partners; researchers; and public officials. Many of the people interviewed outside of TCE were observers of BHC and the foundation's work who had been champions of health and racial equity in California for many years. Initial interviews with TCE executives were geared less toward collecting data and more toward confirming initial thinking on the paper's direction and hypotheses. Other interviews were conducted using a protocol organized by the major topic areas of the paper's outline. Questions were tailored to the specific respondent at hand and their vantage point on BHC and California's health equity landscape. Interviews were structured in a reciprocal, conversational style to better allow for emerging themes.

- **Qualitative Analysis.** Team members debriefed after interviews to reflect on main observations and emerging themes and patterns. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Data across interviews were organized into a "library" of major topic areas that mapped to the paper's outline. Each topic area was then further analyzed for sub-themes and particularly illustrative examples. This in turn helped drive the drafting of each section of the paper.

As with any study, we encountered challenges. BHC made outsized contributions to the health equity landscape in California, but these contributions are inextricably intertwined with the work of countless other leaders and organizations. As a result, the contributions and lessons highlighted here cannot be attributed solely to the actions or experiences of TCE and BHC. It was also beyond the scope of this study to contextualize BHC in a larger analysis of others' contributions and learning.

Given the enormous breadth, depth, and longevity of BHC, we wrestled with identifying the appropriate level of detail to include as a foundation for the paper's higher-level focus (BHC's key contributions and lessons). In the interest of producing

a paper geared toward the future, we had to leave many arresting details on the cutting room floor. We trust many of these details will find homes in other final BHC deliverables and live on in the next iteration of TCE's work.

Because not all interviewees spoke to all topic areas, and because of the informal style of the conversations, we do not have "complete" interview data for each topic area. However, we believe the advantages of semi-structured interviews (i.e., allowing for key themes to emerge organically) outweighed the limitations. We were able to engage in an iterative data collection process and identify intriguing new directions for the paper.

APPENDIX B: REPORT RESPONDENTS AND RESOURCES

We appreciate the generosity and time of the many people who contributed their reflections about BHC, its key qualities, and its legacies and challenges that provide much of the material for this report. These reflections came from 40 interviews, discussions of findings and related materials, and feedback based on review of full or partial report drafts. We are grateful for all of the input provided.

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APPENDIX C: SELECTED MATERIALS FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE APPROACH, IMPACT, AND LESSONS OF *BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES*

Building Healthy Communities (BHC) has generated a rich library of analytic reports, evaluative studies, and reflective papers about its origins, progress, contributions, and lessons. These products were guided by TCE's Learning & Evaluation Team. The cumulative work involved a number of evaluators and policy research organizations in California, including important work conducted by local evaluators in close partnership with community leaders, residents, and young people in the 14 BHC communities.

Interested readers are urged to contact the TCE Learning & Evaluation Team to learn more about all available materials. The materials annotated below represent a small portion of the complete BHC library. They are highlighted here because they:

- Address the main themes of power-building and systems transformation that are the focus of this report;
- Helped shape BHC;
- Provide still-current lessons; and/or
- Capture some of the "under the usual evaluation radar" issues that are central to a social change movement like BHC.

By listing the materials chronologically, the reader can gain a sense of the types of products that were useful at different stages of the initiative.

Title/Date	Authors and Sources	Scope and Focus
There's Something Happening Here...A Look at The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative (February 2014)	USC Equity Research Institute (ERI), formerly the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) (Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, Anthony Perez) (Sources: review of site documents, site visits, observation of BHC cross-site meetings, interviews with local leaders)	Commissioned by TCE in 2011, ERI was tasked with capturing the transition of BHC sites from the initial planning phase that started in 2009 to the early implementation phase. Rather than an evaluation or assessment of BHC, PERE offers an overarching story or meta-narrative that focuses on BHC's unusual attention to power-building and captures developments of the overall initiative.
Hosting the Hubs: What We're Learning After Five Years (October 2015)	Tom David (Source: Interviews)	Hubs were a key feature of local BHC activities in the 14 BHC communities. Through 24 interviews with TCE Program Managers, 10 Hub Managers, and external evaluators, this report assesses experience with Hubs as of BHC's midpoint and highlighted lessons that informed the future effectiveness of Hubs and of BHC.
The California Endowment Building Healthy Communities 2020 Foundation Transition Research Report (February 2016)	Social Policy Research Associates (Sources: interviews with 30 foundation leaders from 19 foundations with experience in place-based and organizing initiatives)	This report provides comprehensive findings about the experiences of other California and national foundations with transitions from major community change/place-based initiatives. This was one of several mid-point reports that helped shape planning for BHC's second half.
Building the We: Healing-Informed Governing for Racial Equity (2016)	Shiree Teng, Consultant (Sources: interviews with 10 philanthropic colleagues and partners, from California and national foundations)	This is a case study of an innovative partnership around racial equity among government, community nonprofits, and philanthropy in Salinas, CA.

Title/Date	Authors and Sources	Scope and Focus
A New Power Grid: Building Healthy Communities at Year 5 (Spring 2016)	The California Endowment (Source: multiple evaluation reports and case studies prepared by TCE's L&E team; Executive Team and Board deliberations; staff views and perspectives)	This document summarizes the views of TCE's Executive Team on the progress of BHC at the mid-point, including significant accomplishments, mistakes made, and lessons learned.
Picking up Speed: Spreading, Scaling and Sustaining Momentum for Change (October 2016)	Shiree Teng, Consultant (Sources: interviews with 10 philanthropic colleagues and partners, from California and national foundations)	This mid-point report summarizes the views of selected foundation leaders about the challenges of spread, scale and sustainability; what factors promote spread and scale; and considerations for expanding the impact of the progress in BHC communities and statewide.
A Brief Synthesis of Cross-Site Measures of Progress Over the First Five Years (January 2017)	Tom David (Sources: interviews, Endowment documents)	This document is a retrospective summary of cross-site data that were collected to document and assess specific dimensions of BHC community efforts in the first half of the initiative.
Power, Place, and Public Health: A Briefing Paper on Community Health and Inclusive Development in California (May 2017)	Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College (Sources: Multiple)	This report uses social determinants of health and movement building as two overlapping frameworks to establish an understanding of and commitment to addressing gentrification and displacement.
Voices of Partners: Findings from the Community/Stakeholder Engagement Study—Executive Summary (2017)	Center for the Study of Social Policy (Frank Farrow, Cheryl Rogers) (Sources: interviews and focus groups with 175 stakeholders nominated by TCE staff, including community partners, state advocates, adult and youth residents, evaluators and funders)	The report provides feedback from 175 stakeholders and partners who are engaged in or observers of BHC. Topics include the initiative's accomplishments, areas needing improvement, and priorities for sustaining the work.
Sustaining People Power: A Brief Based on A Pivot to Power: Lessons from The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities about Place, Health, and Philanthropy (January 2018)	USC Equity Research Institute (Jennifer Ito and Manuel Pastor, with May Lin and Magaly Lopez) (Sources: A multi-disciplinary review of academic and popular literature; results from the Resident Driven Organizing Survey; interviews with organizers, funders, intermediaries, and academics who have a broader understanding of the organizing infrastructure in California.	This brief, based on "A Pivot to Power," (full report highlighted below) highlights successes and challenges in building people power during the first half of BHC and offers recommendations for the rest of the initiative.

Title/Date	Authors and Sources	Scope and Focus
A Pivot to Power: Lessons from The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities about Place, Health, and Philanthropy (March 2018)	USC Equity Research Institute (Jennifer Ito and Manuel Pastor, with May Lin and Magaly Lopez) (Sources: A multi-disciplinary review of academic and popular literature; results from the Resident Driven Organizing Survey; interviews with organizers, funders, intermediaries, and academics who have a broader understanding of the organizing infrastructure in California.	The report offers an updated look at BHC's efforts to build people power and discusses what it means to pivot from people power as a driver of change to people power as an end goal. In addition, this report provides lessons for other community change efforts, the health equity field, and other funders. While TCE supports organizing groups throughout California, the authors note that this report focuses primarily on the work taking place in the BHC sites.
A Beloved Community: Promoting the Healing, Well-being, and Leadership Capacities of Boys and Young Men of Color (April 2018)	Veronica Terriquez, Uriel Serrano (Sources: Youth Leadership and Health Study, interviews, participant observations)	This report highlights how community-based youth organizations, along with statewide and regional youth development opportunities, can enhance the civic capacities and well-being of boys and young men of color.
The Health and Justice for All Power-Building Landscape Preliminary Assessment (October 2018)	USC Equity Research Institute (In collaboration with Health and Justice for All Power-Building Landscape Working Group) (Sources: assessment of power-building organizational landscape in California, literature review; discussions within TCE and with partners; previous research dating back to 2008)	This brief provides a framework for understanding California's power-building ecosystem, shares key observations about the types and distribution of organizations in that ecosystem, and proposes new ways of conceptualizing and measuring power. It also includes preliminary criteria and considerations for TCE as the foundation continues to think about future investments to support the power-building ecosystem in its next phase of work.
Ten Years of Building Community Power to Achieve Health Equity: A Retrospective (April 2020)	Tom Pyun, THP Impact (Sources: document analysis, extensive review of administrative data sets and policy and legislative accomplishments, interviews)	This on-line report documents the major impacts and accomplishments of BHC, particularly on policy and system changes in the 14 BHC communities and statewide in California. Interactive links are provided to more detailed analyses of many of BHC's key accomplishments.

Title/Date	Authors and Sources	Scope and Focus
A Review of BHC Grants and Investments, Issue Brief #1 (July 2020)	Center for Outcomes Research and Education (CORE) (Sources: data from TCE's grants management system)	This issue brief analyzes TCE's total expenditures on BHC, over $1.75 billion over 10 years, in terms of the nature of investments, the growth in investments in power-building, and the distribution of investments/grants by specific activity and grantee.
Foundation Role and Practice: Building Healthy Communities, 2010-2020 (Tom David and Prudence Brown, 2020) **Sustaining Board Engagement: Building Healthy Communities, 2010-2020 (Prudence Brown and Tom David, 2020)**	Center for the Study of Social Policy (Prudence Brown and Tom David) (Sources: interviews with TCE board members, literature review)	These two linked papers focus on different aspects of TCE board's role and activities during the decade of BHC. Together, they examine the multiple ways in which the board provided support for BHC; share board members' reflections on the risks and innovations of the initiative; and identify factors that helped the board sustain strong commitment for a 10-year investment.