

Appendix A:

Glossary

Some of the terms we use in this guide are defined below to clarify our assumptions and understanding.

Asset mapping: A process of defining the strengths and needs in a community. Asset mapping creates an in-depth “map” of a community’s local resources, networks, places of importance, and prevalent issues, along with charting how these elements are currently connected, and where potential connections may exist.

Clients: The people who receive services from a nonprofit service organization.

Constituents: Refers mainly to an organization’s clients, but can also include the broader community of potential service recipients and their families, as well as other stakeholders, including alliances and coalitions.

Ideology: A set of beliefs and/or assumptions; a framework that helps people process or filter information about the world and their day-to-day experiences.

Individual responsibility: The belief that individual choices and behaviors, rather than structural and institutional factors, are to blame for poverty, lack of advancement, lack of education achievement, and other socioeconomic problems.

Leadership: The ability to guide or give direction.

Leadership development: The process of preparing individuals to guide or give direction to others within the community, or to participate in organizational decision-making. Leadership development can occur through formal classes or trainings, mentorship, or informal conversations, and may impart skills such as fundraising, leading meetings, and analyzing information, among others.

Logic model: A planning framework that offers a tool for communicating how a particular set of actions can bring about a desired result.

Members: Constituents who have chosen to affiliate themselves with an organization by signing up as members and/or paying membership dues.

Mission statement: An organization’s description of what the organization does and why.

Movement building: The process of creating progressive social change through

social movements. (Social movements are large-scale, mass efforts to create fundamental change. Examples include the Civil Rights movement, the gay rights movement, the feminist movement, and many others. In this guide, we sometimes use the terms “social change work” and “social justice work” interchangeably with movement building.)

Movement-building capacity:

The extent to which an organization can contribute to social change. The Building Movement Project has defined key features of movement-building capacity to describe organizational structures and practices within nonprofits that generally indicate an ability to make progressive social change (see Appendix D).

Organizational culture: The often unspoken or unofficial ways that a given organization operates. Thinking about organizational culture can be helpful in determining who has unofficial or informal power in an organization and how that power operates.

Organizational structure:

The way that groups or individuals within an organization make decisions and exercise decision-making authority. Organizational structure can offer a roadmap to understanding who has formal and official power in the organization.

Popular education: A style of teaching and learning in which participants’ experiences are at the center of the learning.

Power: The authority or force to determine an outcome. A power dynamic is the pattern of who or what (an individual, a corporation, a government entity, a funding source, etc.) wields power in a particular context. This pattern is often “invisible” or unspoken.

Power analysis: A strategic planning tool used by organizing groups to understand who has direct and indirect power over specific decisions, and how to alter the balance of power. Power analysis can also be used to understand power relationships more generally.

Progressive social change:

Changes in society that reduce or eliminate the root causes of inequality (often used interchangeably with the terms “social change” or “social justice”).

Root causes: Underlying factors that create community problems, and make those problems likely to persist even though services may be in place to help individuals and families meet their immediate needs. One of the assumptions of this guide is that the root causes of most community problems are systemic, not the result of individual decisions or behavior.

Social change: Any work or analysis that addresses the root causes of oppression and promotes fairness, equality, equity, and sustainability.

Social change work: The process of creating progressive social change through social movements (see under “movement building,” above). In this guide, the terms “social change

work,” “social justice work,” and “movement building” are used interchangeably.

Structural barriers: The social and political forces that impede individuals’ ability to gain access to resources and opportunities.

Structural or systemic forces/factors: The underlying economic, political, and social forces or “systems” that shape people’s lives. Structural and systemic forces/factors include, but are not limited to, racism, classism, and sexism.

Theory of Change: A tool for defining all of the building blocks required to achieve a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks (outcomes, results, accomplishments, preconditions, interventions, assumptions, etc.) is depicted on a graphic representation or “map” of the change process.

Transformation: A process of change in an individual’s beliefs and/or actions that many organizations believe is a necessary basis for larger-scale change in our society.

Vision statement: A statement or image of the society we wish to create—a society in which the consequences *and* the causes of the problems our agencies deal with have been addressed.