Power Up!

Assessing Community Organizing Capacity with PowerCheck

July 14, 2015

Movement Matters
Nonprofit Capacity

- Skills, Resources, Knowledge, Practices
- **Not** Effectiveness of Campaigns
Continuum for Organizing & Advocacy

Advocacy

Community Organizing

Mainly Policy

Mainly Power

Policy, Some Power

Power, Some Policy

Policy & Power
# PowerCheck

**A Tool for Assessing Community Organizing Capacity**

Does your organization have what it takes to accomplish your community organizing goals? AFJ’s free self-assessment tool can help.

PowerCheck helps groups measure their capacity to effectively engage in community organizing. It’s useful for a range of organizations—whether big or small groups fighting to resolve problems and empower communities, or a coalition of groups working together, or a foundation looking for ways to support its grantees.

This free online tool contains a series of questions designed to gauge whether groups are working in ways that can empower the communities involved, bring about solutions, and help sustain the organization. The tool generates immediate results. Results for multiple groups can be aggregated to view combined strength.

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**Click here to use PowerCheck online**

[www.bolderadvocacy.org/powercheck](http://www.bolderadvocacy.org/powercheck)
Why Nonprofits Assess Capacity

- Get ideas, focus on strengthening
- Identify strengths, gaps, what to build
- Plan organization’s role
- Choose partners
- Share understanding
- Evaluate
- Grantmaking
Organizational Capacity

One size does not fit all!
Who Uses the Tools?

- Individual Organizations
- Coalitions/Networks/Alliances
- Foundations
PowerCheck Components

- Brief Demographics Questions*
- Survey of 24 indicators
- Basic and advanced measures
- Areas to Strengthen
- Numerical Results

* Identifying information is confidential
**PowerCheck**

**A Tool for Assessing Community Organizing Capacity**

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Click here to use PowerCheck online

Click here to request a PDF of the tool

www.bolderadvocacy.org/powercheck
PowerCheck: Content Overview

- Pre-Organizing: Goals, Power Analysis, Planning
- Empowerment/Constituent Leadership
- Organizing for Change
- Community Consensus Building
- Organizational Operations/Infrastructure
**PowerCheck Section I: Pre-O rganizing**

### 1.1 Commitment to Organizing

Assess the basic elements for preparing to engage in community organizing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff and board have a shared vision, a common understanding of community organizing theory and practice, and a shared analysis of what’s needed to bring about change.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 1.2 Power Analysis

Assess the key elements of building institutional power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff understands how race, class, and identity play into the power dynamics of the community being organized.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PowerCheck Section II: Empowerment/Constituent Leadership

2.3 Political Consciousness and **Empowerment**
Assess the extent to which organization helps constituents realize their individual and collective power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization helps constituents recognize how their individual concerns are connected to the concerns of other individuals and groups.</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PowerCheck Section III: Organizing for Change

- Campaign Strategy
- Activating Stakeholders
- Coalition Building/Partnering
- Messaging
- Media Relations
- Influencing Decision-Makers
- Change Avenues
- Action
- Negotiation and Follow-Through
### PowerCheck Section III: Organizing for Change

#### 3.4 Messaging
Assess how the organization develops and delivers its messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization develops clear, compelling, and concise messages tailored to its targeted audiences.</th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4 Messaging - Advanced (optional)
Organization conducts polling and **focus groups** to develop and test effective messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization conducts polling and <strong>focus groups</strong> to develop and test effective messages.</th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PowerCheck Section III: Organizing for Change

#### 3.8 Action
Assess how the organization takes organizing action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization uses escalating, non-violent, direct action tactics to pressure decision makers, empower constituents, and build public support.</th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PowerCheck Section IV: Community Consensus Building

## 4.1 Asset Mapping and Stakeholder Engagement

Assess how the organization identifies community resources and engages a diversity of stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization engages stakeholders in planning, using the <strong>participatory process</strong> to represent the full diversity of the community, including race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, language, ability, and religion.</th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization involves ordinary residents in the planning process as well as institutional and political leaders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PowerCheck Section V: Organizational Operations/Infrastructure

### 5.1 Community Connectedness

Assess the extent to which the organization has a relationship with the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strong / Always</th>
<th>Moderately Strong / Usually</th>
<th>Somewhat Strong / Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Strong / Rarely / Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization's office and meeting space are accessible and welcoming to community members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and its leaders have institutional and individual relationships in the various communities in which they organize.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PowerCheck Results

## Sample Individual Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Score (out of 16 per indicator)</th>
<th>Degree to Which Organization Relies on Partners (1=Not Strong/Rarely/Never, 4=Very Strong/Always)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Commitment to Organizing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Power Analysis</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Planning &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Constituent Leadership Development</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Participatory Process</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Political Consciousness and Empowerment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section III</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Research and Analysis</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Field Operation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Advocacy Partners and Coalitions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4 Messaging</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.5 Media Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.6 Influencing Decision-Makers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.7 Advocacy Avenues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Issue Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Action Campaign Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4 Negotiation and Follow-Through</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Asset Mapping and Stakeholder Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Community Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Community Plan Adoption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## By Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Average Degree to Which Organization Relies on Partners (1=Not Strong/Rarely/Never, 4=Very Strong/Always)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: Pre-Organizing: Goals, Power Analysis &amp; Planning</td>
<td>49 out of 48</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Empowerment / Constituent Leadership</td>
<td>43 out of 48</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: Methods</td>
<td>122 out of 240</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: Organizational Operations / Infrastructure</td>
<td>48 out of 80</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample aggregate report for question:

“Assess the extent to which the organization researches and gathers information, and conducts analyses on its issue.”
Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (RECO)

RECO Compendium

Community organizing brings communities together to advance shared goals. Properly evaluating those efforts can lead to success over time. We have found that the range of organizing styles, approaches, and philosophies used by nonprofits can make it challenging to formulate a consistent mechanism for evaluating the organizing process and its outcomes. To help raise the profile of and encourage investment in community organizing, we developed Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (RECO). RECO brings together a multitude of resources from various organizations and leaders in the field.

Several of the new RECO resources focus on network and movement building reflecting a current trend in community organizing.

For a list of these resources alphabetically as a PDF document, click here.

RECO Resources

FILTER THE RESOURCES BY

- All RECO Types
- All Core Components

Power Analysis Survey

This resource provides a tool designed to help communities understand power dynamics and incorporate this understanding into planning for social change efforts.
AFJ Tools

- Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT)
  www.bolderadvocacy.org/act

- International Advocacy Capacity Tool (I ACT)
  www.bolderadvocacy.org/iact

- PowerCheck
  www.bolderadvocacy/powercheck

- Resources for Evaluating Community Organizing (RECO)
  www.bolderadvocacy/reco
WEST COAST
Alliance For Justice
436 14th Street
Suite 425
Oakland, CA 94612
510-444-6070

EAST COAST
Alliance for Justice
11 Dupont Circle, NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-6070

advocacy@afj.org
Free TA Line: 866.675.6229
www.bolderadvocacy.org
@bolderadvocacy
@AFJBeBold

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