

# BUILDING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY POWER THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

## A BRIDGE Project Workshop: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue In the Global Economy

A Popular Education Resource for Immigrant & Refugee Community Organizers



by Rosita Choy and Eunice Hyunhye Cho



National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights



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**national network for immigrant and refugee rights**

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with support from the American Friends Service Committee

Building Immigrant Community Power Through Legislative Advocacy  
A BRIDGE Project Module: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue In the Global Economy  
Popular Education Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Community Organizers

By Rosita Choy and Eunice Hyunhye Cho

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The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) is a national organization composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights and labor organizations and activists. It serves as a forum to share information and analysis, to educate communities and the general public, and to develop and coordinate plans of action on important immigrant and refugee issues. We work to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the United States and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status. The National Network bases its efforts in the principles of equality and justice, and seeks the enfranchisement of all immigrant and refugee communities in the United States through organizing and advocating for their full labor, environmental, civil and human rights. We further recognize the unparalleled change in global, political and economic structures which have exacerbated regional, national and international patterns of migration, and emphasize the need to build international support and cooperation to strengthen the rights, welfare and safety of migrants and refugees.

We thank the American Friends Service Committee for their support.

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# Introduction

The BRIDGE Project of NNIRR is excited to introduce this new workshop module, “Building Immigrant Community Power Through Legislative Advocacy.” Like the BRIDGE Project workbook before it, this curriculum is intended as a tool for all organizers, community groups, educators, activists, and leaders to support the rights of immigrant and refugee communities.

As we write this module in Spring 2006, the immigrant and refugee rights movement is at a historical crossroads. Tens of thousands of immigrants, refugees, and their allies have mobilized in hundreds of cities across the U.S., marching against devastating immigration proposals. We offer this curriculum in the hopes that it will provide a tool to help build the long-term capacity of our movement to fight for all of our human rights. We hope that the discussions raised by the activities and questions in this module will help our movement to envision a mode of political engagement that moves from defending against “bad legislation” that endangers our communities, to honing our skills and deepening our understanding of what “good legislation” would actually look like.

What do we mean by legislative advocacy by and for immigrant communities, and why is it important? Immigrant communities face structural barriers to empowerment in the U.S. that other communities may not face. As newcomers to this country, immigrants who are not U.S. citizens do not have the opportunity to vote. Yet like other disenfranchised groups in the past, we have the right and the responsibility to help shape the world in which we live. Congressional debates often seem limited to those who have “expertise” or policy degrees—but we believe that we all have the right, responsibility, and ability for our communities to affect and shape the change we want to see. This participation is true democracy, and legislative advocacy can thus be seen in the context of increasing civic engagement of immigrant communities. Building capacity for legislative advocacy goes hand in hand with increasing civic participation and long term organizing for immigrant and refugee community power.

While this module focuses mostly on the federal government, anti-immigrant activists have also worked to target immigrant and refugee rights at the local and state level. Anti-immigrant initiatives such as Proposition 187 in California and Proposition 200 in Arizona, as well as a number of “copy-cat” bills in other states point critical fights at the local and state level. City, county, and state capitals remain key sites for immigrant community organizing around needs and concerns such as education, health care access, housing, and public benefits. While this workshop examines laws and policies based in at the federal level, we hope that the tools offered in this curriculum can be useful and adaptable to organizers working around issues at all levels of government.

Like other materials developed by the BRIDGE Project, this module is based on a popular education methodology. We believe that education should be participatory, develop critical thinking and engagement about relations of power, and should support people in organizing to change their lives. We believe that education should help support people to develop unlikely alliances—across the dividing lines of racial, ethnic, class, language, gender, and other difference.

This curriculum could not have been developed without the contribution, feedback, and support

## Introduction

of community organizations around the country. We offer this module as another tool for groups to build strong communities and form alliances between immigrant and refugee groups with others working towards social justice. In no way is this module close to perfect; however, we felt that at this important time, it was critical to produce this module into wider circulation as an additional strategy that groups can use in their work. Therefore, the activities should be changed and adapted to local needs.

Finally, we hope that this curriculum sparks further dialogue and discussion to help build a strong popular movement. This curriculum begins from the assumption that “when the people lead,” the “leaders” will follow. Instead of limiting community demands for human and civil rights by arguing that community visions are not possible in the “political climate” in Washington D.C. or state capitals, we know that political movements with expansive visions, now, and in the past, are the true forces that can “change the weather” and force leaders to take note.

Please be in touch with all of us at the BRIDGE Project of NNIRR with your feedback, innovations, and changes that you make to the curriculum so that your wisdom and experience can be shared with others doing the same!



# Acknowledgements

This workshop curriculum could not have been done without the help, expertise, and feedback of many people. We want to thank everyone who generously gave their support, critical thoughts, and help with the development of the module. We build on the strong work and ideas of communities who have been doing this work, and hope that this in turn will help build a stronger immigrant and refugee rights movement.

First, we would like to thank the members of the BRIDGE Trainers Bureau, the advisory group to the BRIDGE Project. This module was first tested out at the 2005 BRIDGE Trainers Bureau meeting. At the time of the session, members included: Suzanne Adely (Arab American Action Network, Chicago, IL); Tomas Aguilar (Colectivo Flatlander, Austin, TX); Sherri Ambrose (CAAELI, Chicago, IL); Hortencia Armendariz and Nathan Selzer (Valley Movement for Human Rights, Harlingen, TX); Amy Casso (Colectivo Flatlander, San Antonio, TX); Juan Canedo (Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Knoxville, TN); Ruben Chandrasekar (AFSC Project Voice, Baltimore, MD); Jose Esquivel (SAJE, Los Angeles, CA); Monica Hernandez (Highlander Center, New Market, TN); Monami Maulik (DRUM, New York, NY); Sandra Sanchez (AFSC Project Voice, Des Moines, IA); Alice Johnson; Shaily Matani; Alma Maquitico, Laura Santa Maria (Unite for Dignity, Miami, FL); Silky Shah (Grassroots Leadership, Austin, TX); Pedro Sosa (AFSC Project Voice, Portland, OR); and Liz Sunwoo (MIWON, Los Angeles, CA). We also thank those who participated in the Houston community workshop where this workshop was used.

Special thanks also to Ai-Jen Poo and members of CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, who hosted a session of this workshop; Liz Sunwoo and Max Mariscal who used early draft versions of this workshop and provided many new ideas. Many thanks also to the BRIDGE Trainers Bureau review committee: Gabriela Flora, Amy Casso, Pancho Arguelles, and Pedro Sosa, all of whom tried it out in their communities and provided inspiration, ideas, and critical feedback.

In addition, we thank all the participants who gave us feedback on this module at the 2005 Immigrant and Refugee Rights Training Institute (Oakland, CA); as well as the 2006 Northwest Regional Immigrant and Refugee Rights Training Institute. Their feedback was invaluable as we headed into the last stages of writing.

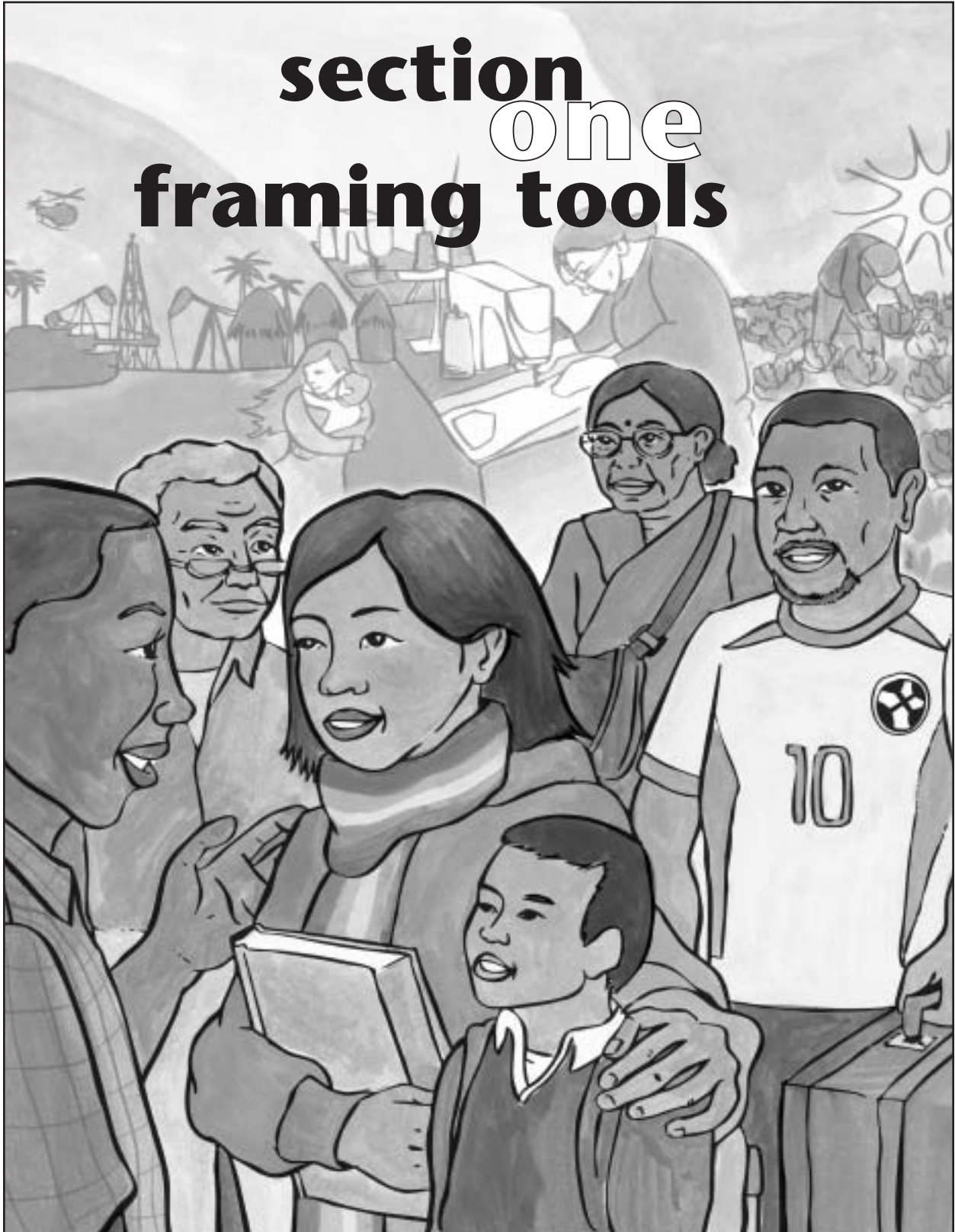
Special thanks to Paul Zilly at Casa de Maryland, who was gracious enough to allow us to adapt case studies from his excellent publication, “New Citizenship Activists: A Handbook for Citizenship and Civic Action.” Joelle Brouner’s invaluable compilation, “How to Build a Cross-Disability Movement: A Feminist Historical Framework for Discussion,” developed for the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment enlightened us on the history of disability rights in the U.S. Thanks to Pedro Sosa and Jose Esquivel for their photos; Christine Wong for the cover illustration, and Guillermo Prado of 8.2 design for the layout. A heartfelt thank you to Francisco “Pancho” Arguelles for his contributions and support that profoundly shaped BRIDGE Project as a whole over the years.

Our deep thanks go to the American Friends Service Committee for their support of this publication; the Dominican Social Action Fund; Poverty, Justice and Peace Fund; and the C.S. Mott foundation for their financial support of the BRIDGE Project and this publication.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks go to the staff, board, and members of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, whose work continues to build a strong road forward.



# section one framing tools





## Where Are We Coming From? What Do We Want to Do? A Few Words on Our Popular Education Model

BRIDGE is based on a popular education approach. In a few words, we believe that education should be participatory, develop critical thinking and engagement about relations of power, and should support people in organizing to change their lives.

We believe that popular education is a process that:

- Draws on the direct lived experiences and knowledge of everyone involved—including participants and facilitators.
- Encourages active participation, to engage people in dialogues, fun and creative activities, and draws on the strength of our diverse cultures. We learn in many ways—by seeing, hearing, talking, doing, creating, or a combination of these modes. We include dialogues and learning experiences that engage all of our senses, emotions, perceptions, and beliefs. Popular education draws on these multiple modes of learning: discussion, drawing, writing songs, making sculptures or acting out a skit gives us tools to express ourselves and communicate at all levels of our human experience.
- Creates spaces of mutual trust and participation. All education takes place within a larger context of behaviors, attitudes, and values. The ways in which we feel “safe” in a space depends on our own circumstances—our class, our race, gender, sexual orientation, age, immigration status, disability, and many other variables. As facilitators, we cannot remove these differences, but we can acknowledge their existence in order to open a space of more direct dialogue.
- Is clear about its agenda. All education reproduces a set of values, ideologies, and attitudes. Popular education is not neutral, but holds a commitment to liberation from oppression at its ethical core.
- Is accessible to all participants, and actively works to investigate and challenge ways that create unequal access to participation, such as language barriers, disability, and group dynamics.
- Connects our lived experiences to historical, economic, social, and political structures of power. When our personal experiences are placed in larger contexts and patterns of power, our personal realities are transformed.
- Investigates our multiple identities and experiences of inclusion and exclusion, oppression and privilege. The underlying truth of popular education is of the existence of oppression: racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, etc. is a reality in all of our lives. Popular education is not about building tolerance, but about building respect, acceptance, equality, and solidarity.
- Empowers individuals and groups to develop long-term strategies to transform structures of power and to build a more just society. Popular education and organizing should not be reduced to short-term campaigns, mobilizations, or events, but rather, a process based on values, connected and accountable to concrete needs of a community.
- Develops new community leaders to build movements for social change. Popular education is a way to develop new leaders, who will in turn, develop other leaders.
- Results in action that challenges oppression, and help develop political spaces that are democratic and equal.
- Affirms the dignity of every human being.

For an excellent breakdown of different liberatory educational traditions, including strengths, tensions, see *Education for Changing Unions*, by Bev Burke, Jojo Geronimo, D’Arcy Martin, Barb Thomas, and Carol Wall, page 46-52.

## Developing Popular Education in Our Work: Some Critical Questions

As we “cooked up” BRIDGE, we asked ourselves—is it *picoso* (Spanish for spicy or hot)? These are some questions to consider when integrating popular education into your work:

- P**articipatory
- I**ntegrated into group needs
- C**ritical thinking/Creativity/Constructive Criticism
- O**rganizing
- S**ymbolic Power
- O**perational Capacity

### **P**articipatory

**In the workshop:** Are we engaging all participants in the learning process? Do our activities and exercises encourage equal participation?

**Outside the workshop:** Who is participating in supporting the education process?

**On a larger scale:** How do people participate in an organization’s decision-making process? Are we democratic? Who defines the agenda, establish goals, and controls resources?

### **I**ntegrated into group needs

**In the workshop:** Are we integrating the experience, knowledge, and skills of the participants? Is the content relevant to the realities and needs of the participants?

**Outside the workshop:** Have we included everyone in the group? Who is included, and who is missing?

**On a larger scale:** Are we connecting the educational topics with the short and long-term needs and goals of the group? Is education integrated into the political work of the group?

### **C**ritical thinking/Creativity/Constructive Criticism

**In the workshop:** Are we raising critical questions of power in our workshops? Are we making space for creativity in our workshops? Do we have mechanisms for feedback?

**Outside the workshop:** How are we reacting to feedback (personally and as a team)?

**On a larger scale:** Is our work addressing the root causes of a problem or only the visible symptoms?

### **O**rganizing

**In the workshop:** Are we creating space for participants to connect knowledge to action and organizing?

**Outside the workshop:** Is our education work connected to organizing work?

**On a larger scale:** Are we creating and strengthening organizations and groups, or are we carrying out events and mobilizing?

## Symbolic Power

**In the workshop:** Are we incorporating the strengths of our many cultures and faiths into education?

**Outside the workshop:** Are we incorporating art and culture as part of our organizing strategies?

**On a larger scale:** What kind of power are we using and creating in our work? Are we clear about who we are? Are we using the tools and language of our oppressors, or are we drawing from our own strengths?

## Operational Capacity

**In the workshop:** Is the process and content of our education work helping to build the capacity of participants and the organization?

**Outside the workshop:** Is our education work helping to address and develop solutions to concrete issues in the group/organization?

**On a larger scale:** Are we responding to concrete needs of the community. Are our operations efficient? What are we doing right? How can we improve?

Adapted from the PICOSO Guide for Participatory Planning, developed by Pancho Argüelles, Universidad Campesina, Estelí Nicaragua, 1991.

## Tips for Effective Facilitation

**F**acilitators play a key role in creating a positive and respectful learning environment for participants, and for making sure that a workshop creates and develops new learning and knowledge for participants through activities and discussions. Here are some tips on effective facilitation:

- Listen to your group, and flow with how they are feeling. Good listening includes checking for non-verbal cues, such as body language, which may suggest more about how participants are feeling than what they are saying.
- Develop ground rules as a group. Ground rules can be an effective way to develop an atmosphere of trust and respect; you can refer to them later in the workshop when needed.
- Equalize participation throughout the group. Encourage a variety of participants to report back from discussions and in large group discussions. (Remind participants of the “Step up, step back!” ground rule). Ensure that you create small group discussion spaces to allow participants to share their perspectives in closer settings.
- Watch for power imbalances between individuals and groups of participants—and point them out (for example, if men are overshadowing women in the discussion.)
- Be flexible with your agenda—there may be moments where an activity goes on for too long or that may not be working for the participants. There are many ways to meet different goals, even if you have to cut an activity. The resulting activities will be stronger, especially if you don’t rush through them to fit the whole agenda into the day.
- Do everything possible to ensure that logistics—such as meals, location, etc. are taken care of well before the workshop, so they don’t disrupt the flow of the agenda. If possible, try and find another person who is not facilitating to handle logistics so that you don’t break the flow of the workshop while setting up lunch, for example.
- Challenge discrimination when it happens, without attacking the person.
- Take breaks when needed, or use energizing activities. If you don’t schedule breaks when they are needed, participants will often “take breaks” themselves, either by disengaging in the conversation, or leaving the room for the restroom. Breaks can also be useful in discussions that are particularly tense or have reached an impasse—they can allow participants to relax a bit, and for you to discuss ways with co-facilitators or with specific participants on ways to address the problem.
- Encourage participants to actively engage in the exercises and discussion by asking open-ended and clarifying questions, creating space for participants to speak up.
- Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and avoid making assumptions about what participants will say.



- Summarize key points and highlight points of agreement. You can repeat a statement back to a participant to clarify what s/he has said; connect points of agreement between participants to demonstrate a common thread developed by the group, but only after it has been stated by participants.
- Don't fish for the "right answers;" if there are important points that you want to make through a discussion, be sure to state it, instead of trying to lead participants into giving you the right answer. For example, if you would like to draw out the "teaching points" from a discussion, use discussion questions to develop some of the points—and chart out the different points raised by participants on easel paper. After the discussion is finished, highlight the points raised, and if all the teaching points have not been covered, add them to the list.
- If you are charting responses to a discussion on easel paper, be sure to record all statements made by participants—if you are selective about what you record, it implies that their point is not important.
- Allow participants to "pass" on an activity. Some participants may be uncomfortable with certain modes of activity, or may be emotionally triggered by an activity. Giving participants the option to pass conveys a message of respect for participants to choose their level of involvement.
- Expose yourself as a learner, particularly after you have established rapport with a group. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know," but instead, use it as a moment for the group to figure out what new information they need to discover. If a participant raises a point that is new to you, say so; it communicates to participants that what they have to share is valuable and important.
- Take care of yourself: if you are too exhausted or burned out, your capacity as a facilitator will also be affected. Work with a team, and take time out if you need!
- Be forgiving to yourself when you make mistakes. It's human nature, and only presents you with a learning opportunity for the future.
- Expect frustration! Expect joy! They are both elements of education.
- Remember: Good things happen when good people come together!

Many of the points in this list is adapted with permission from the excellent discussion in *Education for Changing Unions*, by Bev Burke, Jojo Geronimo, D'Arcy Martin, Barb Thomas, and Carol Wall, which explores this topic in much greater depth.

## Checklist for training

### Before your workshop....

- Consider your audience. Who will be participating in the workshop? What are their backgrounds? What is their previous experience with the topic of the workshop? What are the organizational goals of conducting this workshop?
- Consider the space. Is the space where you will be holding the workshop accessible to all participants? Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it large enough? Do you need additional equipment (i.e. TV/VCR, easel stand, chairs, tables, etc.)? Can you rearrange the furniture in the room? Are there restrooms nearby?
- Finalize interpretation and translation arrangements. What languages do your participants speak? What interpretation and translation support will you need to provide?
- Refreshments and meals. What are your participants' dietary needs? Can you serve food and refreshments?
- Outreach. Are your outreach tools relevant and in the language of your participants? Are you conducting outreach to participants to ensure diversity and representation of all people in your community?
- Facilitation. Consider co-facilitating your workshop with someone else. Co-facilitation can be an effective way to share the workload, develop new educators, and to ensure diversity within a facilitation team.
- Prepare the workshop content. Spend a few hours before the workshop to familiarize yourself with the training. How much time do you have? What activities are you going to do? Why are you going to do specific activities? Who will facilitate each section?
- Gather materials and equipment; prepare copies of handouts. We've included a list of "materials needed" and "facilitator prep" for each BRIDGE activity.
- Write down an agenda and session objectives on easel paper for your workshop.
- Circulate a "sign-in sheet" to gather contact information of participants. Be sure to ask permission from participants if you can circulate their contact information.

## Workshop Evaluation The BRIDGE Project

Workshop Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the appropriate rating for the following:

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Workshop content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions

1. Was the training what you had expected?

2. What was the most useful part of the training for you?

3. What was the least useful part of the training and why?

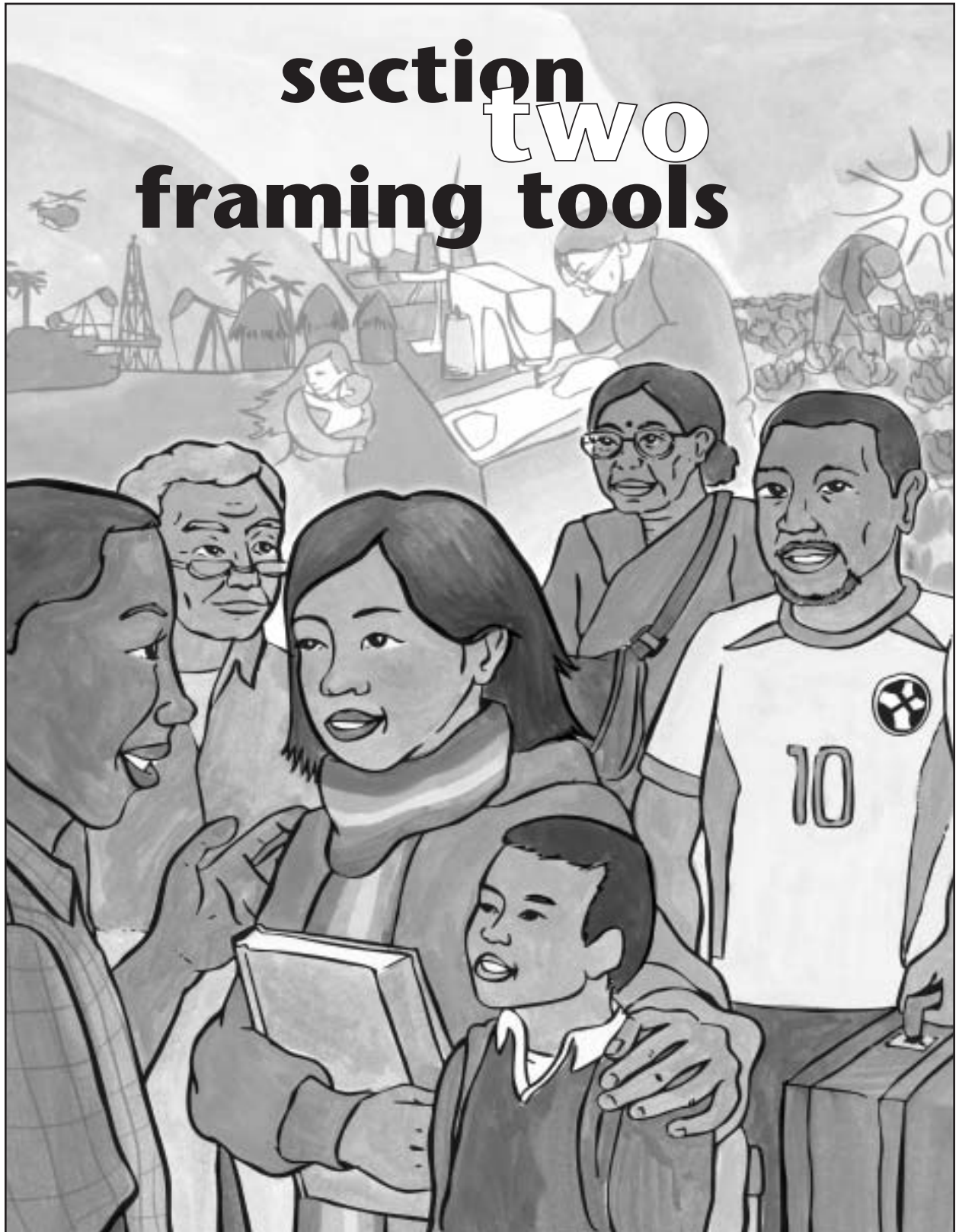
4. What would you have the trainer spend more time on?

5. What would you have the trainer spend less time on?

6. Other comments:

THANK YOU!!

**section**  
**two**  
**framing tools**



# Building Immigrant Community Power Through Legislative Advocacy

**OVERVIEW** The goals of this workshop are to:

- Explore the different roles of people and organizations that make policy in the United States
- Examine the power dynamics of policy making in the U.S.
- Investigate how immigrant and refugee community organizations can impact policies and laws that are made in the U.S.
- Review the specific steps passing laws in the U.S.
- Discuss and envision ways that immigrant and refugee communities can create and impact policy change
- Discuss the role of legislative advocacy in building community and long term popular movements

**WHAT WILL WE BE TALKING ABOUT?** In this workshop, we will think about the following questions:

- Who holds the power to change and enact new laws and policies in the U.S.? How is this system set up?
- How do laws get passed through Congress?
- What influences members of Congress to pass legislation?
- What can grassroots immigrant and refugee communities do to influence the legislative process?
- How have other popular movements created legislative change in the past?
- What is the role of legislative advocacy in building community and popular movements?
- What is our vision for creating change?

## Backgrounder

We use the term “legislative advocacy” to mean all the possible actions people can take to affect policy, including but not limited to lobbying. Legislative advocacy encompasses a wide array of actions including demonstrations, community education, and even the simple but powerful act of getting a group of people together to discuss what they think about a piece of legislation or the legislative process.

Legislative advocacy is a tool and technique for community building. The ultimate goal is to build power in communities. Success in legislative advocacy is measured by the increased capacity of people to engage in policy—not necessarily by whether or not a specific bill passes or fails.

The outcome of a specific bill can greatly affect community members’ lives, so the immediate target of legislative campaigns are specific bills—either in support or opposition. (We define a “legislative campaign” as the choosing of specific actions and strategies, within the wide array presented by legislative advocacy, to focus on a specific piece of legislation.) The long-term goal of any legislative campaign should be to increase political power and visibility of our communities. The passage of one piece of legislation may be beneficial immediately to our communities in a limited way; however, we need to create an environment where all human rights are upheld. That can only be achieved within a community building and organizing framework that reaches beyond a specific piece of legislation.

Regardless of whether or not a bill passes, a legislative campaign can shift the terms of the debate. By raising their voices through legislative advocacy, communities can share their ideas and expand the notion of what is “possible” in our society.

Because legislative advocacy is about the capacity building of community members, an important component is choice. Communities must decide for themselves how they want to engage in policy-making, if at all. They should set their own agendas and decide which actions to take. Instead of promoting specific actions or legislative positions, this BRIDGE module attempts to provide as much information and as many tools as possible for immigrant communities to decide for themselves the specific steps they take to affect policy.

**SUMMARY  
POINTS**

- Legislative advocacy includes activities to build political power and communicate an agenda such as lobbying, as well as demonstrations, community education, press conferences, etc.
- Community based legislative advocacy is a useful tool to achieve concrete policy changes to benefit communities; however, it is a short-term strategy that can be used to build towards a long term vision of human rights and community empowerment.
- Regardless of the outcome of a legislative campaign, legislative advocacy is an opportunity to educate and build our communities.
- We all have the power to influence policy-making, no matter our experience.

**WORKSHOP  
SETUP**

**Exercise:**

**Time:**

Welcome, Introduction to the workshop, review agenda	10 minutes
*Unfair Soccer: The "Rules" of the Game	30-45 min
*Role Play on Congress: How a Bill Becomes a Law	60-90 min
Case Studies: Immigration Bills in Congress	40 minutes
What Influences a Member of Congress?	20 minutes
Movement Organizing Throughout History	40 minutes
Closing: We Make the Road By Walking	10-15 min
Evaluation	10 minutes

\*core exercises

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**Total time: 3.5 hours-4.5 hours**

Any of these exercises can be done independently of each other, or mixed and matched according to your needs!



## Unfair Soccer: The “Rules” of the Legislative Game

- WHY DO IT**
- To use as an introduction and icebreaker
  - To develop a shared framework for analyzing power in developing legislation
  - To reflect on how community organizing relates to legislation and policy
- TIME** 30-45 minutes
- MATERIAL NEEDED**
- Big piece of easel paper, crumpled up into a “ball” (real soccer balls tend to cause accidents when used indoors)
  - Four chairs, cones, or pieces of tape to serve as “goal posts”
  - Large space where people can move around without hurting themselves
- FACILITATOR PREP**
- For safety reasons, you may want to clear the space of any furniture or items that could cause an accident when people move around
  - Before the workshop begins, pull aside 2-3 people to be part of the “small team” and explain the rules of the game to them
- DIRECTIONS**
1. Explain to participants that the group will play a game of soccer to begin the workshop. Then explain that there will be two teams: the first team is made up of 2-3 people (the volunteers you have picked before the workshop started), and the second team is made up of everyone else in the room.
  2. Clear as much space as you can in the room to create a “soccer field.” On one side of the room, place two chairs three feet from each other, to create one set of “goal posts.” On the other side, place two chairs ten feet from each other, to create another set of “goal posts.”
  3. Explain the rules of the game:
    - The big team scores a goal when it kicks the ball through the “goal posts” that are three feet wide
    - The small team scores a goal when it kicks the ball through the “goal posts that are ten feet wide
    - The game will begin when you drop the ball onto the floor
    - The small team can change the rules at any time
  4. Hold the ball over your head. Announce one more rule—the game will begin with a score of 5-0, where the small team has 5 points, the big team has 0 points.
  5. Drop the ball on the ground, and begin the game.

- DIRECTIONS**
6. After the game has been played for a while, have the small team begin changing the rules. For example, the small team can announce rule changes such as:
    - The goalie for the big team cannot use her/his hands to block a shot
    - Members of the big team cannot run, but can only walk
    - All of the people in the big team have to link arms with each other
    - Members of the small team can decide whether or not a goal counts
    - Everyone on the big team have to play with their eyes closed
  7. After the group has played for about 5 more minutes, end the game and thank everyone for playing.
  8. (15 minutes) Ask the group to sit down and form a circle. Then ask participants to introduce themselves by answering the following questions:
    - What is your name?
    - Where are you from? (i.e. neighborhood, city or organization)
    - What was your role in the soccer game? What did you do during the game?
  9. (15-30 minutes)After completing introductions, explain that the “unfair soccer” game can be seen as an analogy for how community groups interact with Congress. Here are some questions to discuss with the large group:
    - What happened during the game?
    - What strategies were you using during the game? What did the other team do?
    - How did people communicate during the game? Did it work well?
    - Who won the game?
    - With the analogy of the soccer game and passing legislation in mind, what did the small team symbolize to you? What did the big team symbolize to you?
    - What did scoring a goal mean? What does winning mean to you?

- TEACHING POINTS**
- This game can be seen as an analogy for how power is wielded in this country, and provide a context for how Congress runs.
  - The purpose of this module is not to tell you what to do, or how to work on legislation, but rather to give you the playing field to let you see what is on the field so you can decide what you want to do in this game.
  - The playing field for passing legislation through Congress is uneven, but with information on how the system works, community groups can decide for themselves how to be involved.

- CHALLENGES**
- The physical activity in this exercise is particularly geared towards people who are able-bodied; adaptations need to be made to ensure that participants with disabilities can also participate

**SOURCE** the authors, with inspiration from the staff of the Highlander Center and Pancho Arguelles

## Role Play on Congress: How a Bill Becomes Law

- WHY DO IT**
- To review how laws are made in Congress
  - To examine where different immigrant rights bills are in Congress
  - To set a context for how immigrant community groups can interact with legislation
  - Community power
- TIME** 60-90 minutes
- MATERIAL NEEDED**
- Easel paper, markers, tape
  - Scissors, blank paper, markers and crayons
  - (optional) Props, such as nametags for each character; “costumes” such as neckties for members of Congress; and pieces of paper that can indicate “bills”
- FACILITATOR PREP**
- You may want to copy the diagrams (page 21) onto a piece of easel paper before the workshop begins
  - Copy the handouts of “how a bill becomes a law” for all participants
  - Make 11 copies of the script of the skit; prepare any props needed for the skit

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Convene the large group. Explain to the group that this activity will explore how groups can influence Congress.
2. You may want to review the following questions with the group:
  - What are the three branches of the U.S. government? (Executive, Judicial, Legislative)
  - What does each branch of the government do? (Legislative: passes laws; Executive: enforces and enacts laws; Judicial: decides whether laws are Constitutional)
  - What are the two houses in Congress? (Senate and the House of Representatives)
  - What is the difference between the Senate and the House of Representatives? (Senate has 100 members—2 per state; House of Representatives has 435—depending on population of each state).
3. Explain to participants that this activity will look at how laws are passed in Congress, since it is an avenue that many community groups have used to further their agendas. Hand out the charts and together, review the steps that it takes for a bill to go through Congress (10 minutes)
4. Start the role play. Ask for volunteers who will take part in the play acting skit, and assign roles for each. (There is a script and list of characters on page 22.)
5. Hand out the script for participants. Give participants 3-5 minutes to familiarize themselves with the skit.
6. Action! Start the skit. (The structure of the skit is built so that each scene is introduced by the narrator, followed by action by the actors.)
7. (*Optional*) After the skit, review the flow chart of how a bill is passed through Congress using body movement, which is a different mode of learning. Ask participants to sit up in their chairs. Explain that the following motions will be associated for each step the bill takes in Congress. Then say each step of the process out loud and ask participants to follow with physical movement for each step.
  - <pat legs> for whenever a bill is moving to the next step
  - <rub hands together> for whenever a bill is being discussed or voted upon
  - <clap> for whenever a bill passes any vote
  - <make beeping noise> for whenever a bill is delayed or stuck in the process
8. Convene the large group for a discussion question. Some questions you may want to ask the group to discuss:
  - What did you think about the bill that was passed?
  - What did you learn about the process it takes to pass a bill?
  - Which senators or representatives did you feel supported immigrants? Which ones did you feel did not support immigrants?
  - At what point did you feel community members could have made a difference?
  - What can community members do to make a difference in the legislative process?
  - What more could have been done before the legislation was introduced?
  - What can community members do now that the bill has passed?

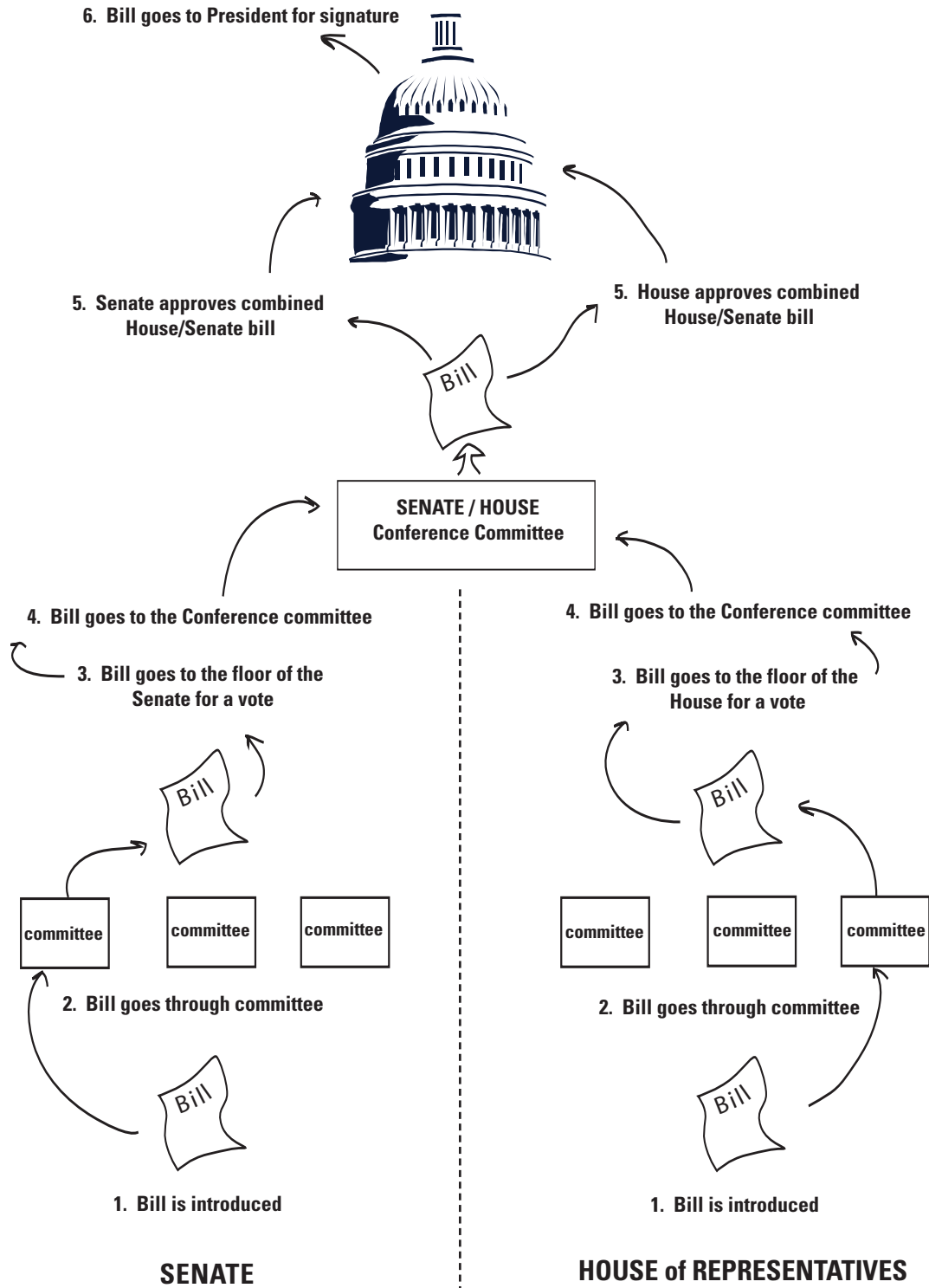
**TEACHING  
POINTS**

- Community groups often focus on the legislative branch of government as a strategy because there are many ways to influence Congress and the surrounding political environment.
- A bill goes through many stages before it becomes a law. At each of these stages, community groups can monitor and participate in the shaping of a bill.
- There are key points where a bill can be stopped or moved forward. These points include:
  - when the immigration subcommittee decides to talk about a bill;
  - when the immigration subcommittee decides to vote on the bill;
  - when the full House or Senate decides to discuss a bill;
  - when the full House or Senate decides to vote on the bill. If there is no version of the bill in both houses of Congress, it can not go through.
  - If the President vetoes the bill, although Congress can overturn this if 2/3 of each house votes in favor of it.
- Like the “unfair soccer” game, the playing field for passing legislation through Congress is uneven. With information on how the system works (how a bill becomes law), however, community groups can decide for themselves how to be involved.
- Community groups have the power to support or oppose legislation. Because the long term goal of legislative advocacy is to build community power, the positions and strategies that community groups take around specific bills should be determined by what the communities want and need themselves. Analysis around what is “possible” in Congressional circles can be a factor, but the final decision should be made according to community needs.

**SOURCE** The authors



### Steps for Passing a Bill through Congress



# Script for Role Play on Congress

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

- Narrator (All scenes, introduces the action of each scene—you may want someone with facilitation experience or familiar with the skit in this role)
- 2 community members (Scene 1, 4, 5)
- Senator A (Scene 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
- Senator B (Scene 2, 3, 5, 7)
- Senator C (Scene 5)
- Senator D (Scene 5)
- Senator E (Scene 5)
- Senator F (Scene 6)
- Representative X (Scene 7)
- Representative Y (Scene 7)

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### SCENE 1:

#### Actors:

Narrator, Senator A,  
2 community members

**Narrator:** Welcome, ladies and gentlemen! We are here to introduce the fabulous drama of the “Life of the Bill.” Because this drama is so long, we’ll only be showing half of the story—what happens in the Senate, because the same thing has to happen in the House of Representatives too. And now our story begins....

First, we will show what it takes even before a bill is introduced. Here we have a member of Congress who serves in the Senate. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a hand to Senator A! (applause). Next, please give a hand to the members of our Organized Community! (applause).

#### **ACTION FOR SCENE 1: COMMUNITIES MEET WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS**

Community members visit Senator A to present her/him with 5,000 postcards asking to introduce a bill with two items. The first item is give legalization to all undocumented immigrants. The second item is to stop the militarization of the border.

Senator A says s/he will agree to introduce a bill, but only if s/he can get someone from the other party to co-sponsor the bill.

## SCENE 2

### Actors:

Narrator  
Senator A  
Senator B

**Narrator:** So, our community members were able to get Senator A to agree to introduce a bill. But Senator A will only introduce it if s/he can get someone from the other party to be a CO-SPONSOR. Let's see what happens—here is Senator A and Senator B right now!

### **ACTION FOR SCENE 2: THE SENATOR FINDS A CO-SPONSOR**

Senator A meets with Senator B. Senator A says s/he wants to introduce a bill that gives legalization to all undocumented immigrants and to stop the militarization of the border.

Senator B agrees to co-sponsor, but only if legalization is limited to people who came to the U.S. five years ago and only if they compromise to militarize half of the border.

Senator A agrees with Senator B's changes.

## SCENE 3

### Actors:

Narrator  
Senator A  
Senator B

**Narrator:** Senator A and B are now about to unveil their new bill, called the "HALFWAY" bill, or short for "Highway for Amnesty or Legalization For Wanted Aliens, Yesterday."

### **Action for Scene 3: THE BILL IS INTRODUCED**

Senator A and B are at a press conference, announcing the new bill. They will talk about how great the bill is for immigrant communities, because it will allow people who have been here for at least 5 years to get legalization, and only half the border will be militarized.

## SCENE 4

### Actors:

Narrator  
2 Community members  
Senator A

**Narrator:** The community members have seen the press conference on TV and are very excited that the bill has been introduced. But when they read the bill, they see that the bill does not do what they asked for. They have a meeting with Senator A to talk.

### **Action for Scene 4: THE BILL IS INTRODUCED**

Community members ask Senator A why the HALFWAY bill only gives legalization to people who have been here for 5 years, and not to all immigrants; and why it does not stop the militarization of the border.

Senator A tells them that it was the only way to pass anything, and that the community members should support the HALFWAY bill.

Community members say that they are not sure that they can support a bill that does not protect the rights of everyone in their community.



## SCENE 5

### Actors:

Narrator  
Senator A, Senator B,  
Senator C, Senator D,  
Senator E, one  
community member

**Narrator:** Now the bill has been introduced to the Senate. The first place the bill goes to is the IMMIGRATION SUBCOMMITTEE. The chair of the subcommittee can decide whether or not to talk about the bill. Luckily for us, the chair says yes to this bill, and the Senators will put it through a process called MARK UP. In MARK UP, the Senators can change anything they want to this bill. After they have changed what they want, they vote whether to send it to the next step. This is one point where community members can try and make Senators change the bill.

### Action for Scene 5: THE BILL GOES TO COMMITTEE

Senator A explains what is in the bill: That it gives legalization for people who have been here for 5 years and only militarizes half of the border.

Senator C says that s/he wants to change the bill so that the whole border is militarized.

Senator D says that s/he wants to change the bill so that only immigrants here for 5 years and have blonde or brown hair get legalization.

A community member calls Senator E on the phone, and asks her/him to make sure the bill to gives legalization to all immigrants and to stop the militarization of the border. Senator E says s/he will try and stop the changed bill from leaving the committee.

Senators A, B, C, D vote to approve the bill with the changes, and Senator E votes against it, so it passes out of committee, 4-1.

## SCENE 6

### Actors:

Senator F (also known as  
President Pro Tempore  
of the Senate)

**Narrator:** It's been a couple of months now. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate has refused to even talk about immigration. But after many protests in the streets by immigrants, the President Pro Tempore is feeling pressure to act on immigration, and allowed a vote on the bill. Remember, the bill has changed, so now, it only gives legalization to immigrants who have brown or blonde hair and have been here for 5 years, and militarizes the whole border. Senators have been debating this for weeks. Here comes the President Pro Tempore now, to announce the results of the vote!

### ACTION FOR SCENE 6: THE SENATE VOTES ON THE BILL

Senator F, also known as the President Pro Tempore announces to the crowd that the Senate has passed the HALFWAY Bill (or the "Highway for Amnesty or Legalization For Wanted Aliens, Yesterday) on a vote of 62 in favor, 36 against, and 2 abstaining.

## SCENE 7

### Actors:

Narrator  
Senator A, Senator B  
Representative X  
Representative Y

**Narrator:** We have watched the Senate pass the HALFWAY bill. At the same time, the House of Representatives has passed their version of immigration reform, the LISA (or the Legalization for Immigrants, Seven Años) bill. Their version requires that only immigrants who have been here for seven years get legalization, and doesn't include anything about the border. Now, the Senate and House will send representatives from each party to form a CONFERENCE Committee. The conference committee will take the two bills and work out the differences to come up with a final bill. Let's see what happens next!

### ACTION FOR SCENE 7: THE BILL GOES TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Senators A and B, and Representatives X and Y will meet together. Senator A says that s/he is ok with giving legalization to only some immigrants, because it is only the first step.

Senator B says that s/he is ok with the bill as long as the border is militarized.

Representative X says that s/he is ok with the bill as long as legalization is given to people who have lived here for seven years.

Representative Y says that s/he likes giving legalization to people to only brown or blonde hair.

Senator A says that they have reached a compromise: The bill will give legalization to people with brown or blonde hair who have been here for seven years; and militarizes the whole border.

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## SCENE 8

### Actors:

Narrator

**Narrator:** So now, the bill has come out of Conference Committee. It will go back to the House and Senate for a final vote. Usually, the House and Senate will vote in favor of whatever comes out of Conference Committee. Then it goes to the President for his signature, and then it will become a law.

Applause for all members of the cast!

## Frequently Asked Questions About Congress

### 1. How many members are there in each house of Congress?

There are 100 members of the Senate, two from each state; and there are 435 members of the House of Representatives. The number of representatives per state depends on its population, but every state has at least one representative. In total, there are 535 members of Congress. Members of the House of Representatives have 2-year terms, while Senators have 6-year terms. In the House, the majority party controls what bills pass through, because it decides which bills to even consider based on a vote. In the Senate, individual Senators have more power to stop certain actions, so it is often slower and more deliberate about which bills to pass.

### 2. How is a bill introduced to Congress?

Any member of Congress can introduce a bill. The congressperson needs to write up the language of a bill and turn it in. Sometimes, it is referred to as being “dropped in the hopper.”

### 3. What is a co-sponsor of a bill, and why is it so important?

The members of Congress who originally introduce the bill are often known as the “original co-sponsors.” Signing onto a bill is a way to show support for it before it comes up for a vote. Members of Congress who later sign onto the bill are also known as “co-sponsors.” Co-sponsors are important because it shows how much support a bill has; its chances of being a winning issue; and also influences whether or not other members of Congress sign onto the bill. Often, in order for a bill to pass, it needs to have support from both parties. Bills that have original co-sponsors from both parties are known as bi-partisan bills. Bi-partisan bills have a stronger chance of being passed, but also means that key demands may be taken out in favor of a weaker, compromise position.

### 4. How are members of subcommittees appointed?

Members of subcommittees are appointed by their respective parties. For example, the Democrats can decide which Democrats can sit on which subcommittees, and Republicans can decide which Republicans sit on different subcommittees. However, the chair will always be a member of the majority party.

### 5. How are the chairs of the subcommittees chosen?

Chairs of subcommittees have a lot of power because they decide on how a subcommittee will deal with a bill, such as when a bill is brought up for discussion or for a subcommittee vote. All subcommittee chairs are members of the majority party. Therefore, the majority party chooses which its chairs. (This is why people are so concerned with what party holds the majority in either house of Congress.) Ranking members are the “head” of the minority party in each committee.

**6. Who is on the immigration subcommittee in the Senate? Who is the chair? What about the House of Representatives?**

Committee members are changed every two years with each session of Congress. In the House of Representatives, the name of the committee is: Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims. In the Senate: Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Citizenship. You can find out up to date information on members of subcommittees online. For the House of Representatives, check <http://judiciary.house.gov>. Click on "committees," and look under "immigration, border security, and claims." For the Senate, <http://judiciary.senate.gov>. Click on "subcommittees," and look under "Immigration, border security, and citizenship."

**7. Once a bill is introduced, what kind of changes can be made as it moves along in the process?**

Once a bill is introduced, any aspect of the bill can be changed. For example, a bill that was introduced to budget money for survivors of natural disasters changed at the last minute to include building a fence along the U.S. Mexico border in San Diego.

**8. What is the Conference Committee, and what happens if the Conference Committee can't agree to a compromise?**

The Conference Committee is the group set up to reconcile differences in bills passed by the separate houses in Congress. It is made up of Senators and Representatives with equal representation from both parties. Members of Conference Committees receive lots of pressure to reconcile the differences between the bills. Individual houses can pass resolutions forcing committee members to act or houses can re-appoint other members to get the job done.

**9. What happens to a bill if no action is taken? Does a bill ever expire?**

A bill dies if it is voted upon and voted down. If no action has been taken on a bill, it stays alive until the end of a session. A session of Congress runs for 2 years. At the end of the session of Congress, all bills that have been introduced die, no matter where they are in the process. Depending on when a bill is introduced, it has at most 2 years to be active during a session of Congress. However, when bills die at the end of the session of Congress, they can be introduced at the beginning of the next session of Congress.

**10. How many bills are introduced per session? How many pass?**

Thousands of bills are introduced each Congressional Session (a two year period). Very few pass both houses of Congress and become law. For example, in 107th Session (2001-2002), 9130 bills were introduced, and only 383 of bills became law (or 4%). In the 106th Session (1999-2000), 9158 bills were introduced, and only 604 became law (or 7%).

**11. What happens if the President doesn't sign the bill after it has passed the House and Senate?**

A bill becomes law if Congress passes the bill and the President signs it. Also, a bill usually becomes law after ten days if Congress has passed it and if the President has not signed it. However, if Congress has passed a bill, the President has not signed it, and the session

ends before the ten-day period, it will not become law. (This is called a pocket veto.) The President can also actively reject a bill passed by Congress, called a “veto,” by returning a bill to Congress within ten days.

Congress Passes Bill	President Signs	Anytime before session ends	Becomes Law
Congress Passes Bill	President does not sign	10 days pass in Session	Becomes law
Congress passes Bill	President does not sign	Session ends before 10 days	Does not become law (called a “pocket veto”)
Congress passes Bill	President vetoes the bill and returns to Congress	Within 10 days	Does not become law unless 2/3 of both houses vote in favor of the bill after it is returned to Congress

**12. How can Congress override a veto?**

If the President vetoes a bill (see above), Congress can override the veto if both the House of Representatives and the Senate vote in favor of the bill with a 2/3 majority. There is no way Congress can override a pocket veto, since Congress is not in session to vote.

**13. What are appropriations bills?**

Appropriations bills are bills that provide money. Unlike the other thousands of bills in Congress, they must be passed every year in order for the government to run. Otherwise, the government can shut down at the beginning of each fiscal year, on October 1. (In reality, Congress often passes “continuing appropriations” to keep the government running.)

Appropriations bills must be introduced in the House of Representatives first; then they pass into the Senate. Appropriations bills are important because so few bills pass every year and appropriations bills are required to pass. Therefore, they become opportunities for other bills (also known as “riders”) that might not pass on their own to be attached to the appropriations bill and become law.

**14. How can community members impact a bill once it has been introduced in Congress?**

There are many opportunities for community members to impact the outcome of a bill. Community members can have voice their concerns by building relationships with members of Congress, and urging them to introduce immigrant-friendly bills. When a bill is introduced, community members can voice their support or opposition for a bill in many ways. For example, petitions, demonstrations, visits to Congress, postcard mailings, press conferences are all ways that community groups have expressed their opinion to their own community, the general public, and members of Congress. Community groups can also track the progress of a bill through committees. Since the process can take so long, there are constant opportunities to impact the bill. However, there are particularly key times to act, which include when the bill is being discussed in subcommittee or on the floor, and when the bill is up for a vote. Once a bill becomes law, there are other ways to continue with advocacy, including administrative and legal advocacy.

# Case Studies: Immigration Bills in Congress

**WHY DO IT**      ■ To discuss recent examples of immigration bills in Congress  
                         ■ To compare where different immigration bills are in the Congressional process

**TIME**            40 minutes

**MATERIAL  
NEEDED**        ■ easel paper, markers, and tape  
                         ■ copies of “Recent Immigration Bills in Congress” handouts for small groups  
                         ■ copies of the “Steps for Passing a Bill through Congress” handout

**DIRECTIONS**    1. Divide the participants into four small groups. Give each small group an example of a recent immigration bill introduced in Congress.

                         2. Small groups will read and discuss an example of a recent immigration bill. (20 minutes).

                         3. Reconvene the small groups, and ask each small group to give a brief summary of their group’s bill.

**TEACHING  
POINTS**        ■ While the majority of bills that are introduced in Congress do not pass, Senators and Representatives can use different tactics to try and pass bills into law.

                         ■ Immigrant communities can impact the likelihood of whether a bill passes or not through direct advocacy, meetings with representatives, demonstrations, and education.

**SOURCE**        The authors

### Recent Immigration Bills in Congress Case Study 1: The Real ID Bill

#### instructions

As a group, read what happened to this recent bill in Congress. Pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group will have 2 minutes to report back to the large group about the bill you have discussed.

In the spring of 2005, Representative Sensenbrenner (R-WI) introduced a bill called the REAL-ID Act. The REAL-ID Act proposed many anti-immigrant enforcement measures, and bans undocumented immigrants from obtaining ID cards such as drivers licenses. The bill banned the use of “non-official” ID cards that did not identify whether a person was in the country legally. Also, the REAL-ID Act made it much harder for people fleeing persecution to obtain asylum, and made it much easier to build a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Although support for the bill from the House was doubtful, Rep. Sensenbrenner bypassed the usual procedures to pass the bill. He moved the bill forward without it going through the Immigration Subcommittee. Instead, he used a procedure to attach the REAL ID bill onto another bill regarding funding for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because it was a military funding bill, it was a bill that had a lot of political pressure to pass.

The Senate version of the funding bill for the war in Iraq and Afghanistan did not have any mention of anything in the REAL-ID Act. When the Conference Committee met to combine the House and Senate versions together, most of the parts of the REAL ID bill remained in the final bill. REAL-ID Act was never debated in the immigration subcommittee or on the floor of the House or Senate, yet it became law.

#### Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What is the name of the bill? Who sponsored it?
2. What would happen if this bill was passed?
3. How far did the bill get through Congress? What steps did it go through in the process?
4. Is this a bill that your community would support? Why or why not?
5. How do you think you or your community could affect whether or not this bill was changed or passed?

### Recent Immigration Bills in Congress Case Study 2: The Dream Act

#### instructions

As a group, read what happened to this recent bill in Congress. Pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group will have 2 minutes to report back to the large group about the bill you have discussed.

The DREAM Act is a bill that would allow undocumented students to have access to in-state tuition for college, and would allow undocumented students to apply for legal status. The DREAM Act was first introduced in the Senate in 2001, but did not go very far, and died at the end of the Congressional session. In 2003, the bill was re-introduced by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Richard Durbin (D-IL). The bill gained a bit more support, but at the end of 2004, died again at the end of the 2004.

In 2005, the DREAM Act was reintroduced, and this time, the bill passed through the Senate immigration subcommittee, although there were many changes to the original bill. For example, the original bill allowed students to apply for legalization after finishing 2 years of college, performed over 900 hours of community service, or joined the military. During mark up, the community service option was dropped. In mark up, it was passed out of committee. The DREAM Act has not yet come up for a vote on the Senate floor.

There is a House counterpart called the American Dream Act (HR 5131), although it has not yet passed the Immigration Subcommittee.

#### Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What is the name of the bill? Who sponsored it?
2. What would happen if this bill was passed?
3. How far did the bill get through Congress? What steps did it go through in the process?
4. Is this a bill that your community would support? Why or why not?
5. How do you think you or your community could affect whether or not this bill was changed or passed?



### Recent Immigration Bills in Congress

#### Case Study 3: Save America Comprehensive Immigration Act of 2005

##### instructions

As a group, read what happened to this recent bill in Congress. Pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group will have 2 minutes to report back to the large group about the bill you have discussed.

In March 2005, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee introduced the “Save America Comprehensive Immigration Act of 2005.” The bill included provisions that would legalize undocumented immigrants who had lived in the U.S. for five years, have a basic understanding of English and no criminal record. The bill also used immigration fees to fund job retraining programs for U.S. citizens, and included many new protections to protect against discrimination based on immigration status, and threats of deportation intended to stop worker protests. In addition, the bill had the support of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The bill was introduced to the House Immigration Subcommittee, but so far, no vote has taken place. While some immigrant community groups worked with Sheila Jackson Lee to generate support for the bill, other advocates contended that the bill had no chance of passing, and supported other, more anti-immigrant bills in the hopes of getting some immigration-related legislation passed.

##### Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What is the name of the bill? Who sponsored it?
2. What would happen if this bill was passed?
3. How far did the bill get through Congress? What steps did it go through in the process?
4. Is this a bill that your community would support? Why or why not?
5. How do you think you or your community could affect whether or not this bill was changed or passed?

### Recent Immigration Bills in Congress Case Study 4: HR 4437

#### instructions

As a group, read what happened to this recent bill in Congress. Pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group will have 2 minutes to report back to the large group about the bill you have discussed.

On December 6, 2005, Representative Sensenbrenner (R-WI) introduced HR 4437, also known as the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.” (Representative Sensenbrenner also introduced the REAL-ID Act.)

HR 3347 would make it a felony to be an undocumented immigrant. In addition, the bill made it a felony to assist an undocumented immigrant (including nurses, teachers, religious leaders); would build a wall along 700 miles of the U.S./Mexico border, and increase enforcement of employer sanctions. It has no guest worker or legalization provision. It would require the immediate detention and deportation of any undocumented person.

Two days after the bill was introduced, the House Judiciary Committee (oversees the immigration subcommittee) approved the bill with a vote of 23-15. On December 16, only ten days after the bill was introduced, the House of Representatives passed HR 4437 by a vote of 239 to 182.

After the bill passed the House of Representatives, the Senate began to consider its version of an immigration bill. In March, April and May of 2006, over 5 million people participated in street protests in hundreds of cities around the U.S. against HR 4437, calling for a fair and just immigration reform. The Senate is now debating immigration proposals, although if the Senate does not pass a bill, HR 4437 will die at the end of the Congressional session.

#### Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What is the name of the bill? Who sponsored it?
2. What would happen if this bill was passed?
3. How far did the bill get through Congress? What steps did it go through in the process?
4. Is this a bill that your community would support? Why or why not?
5. How do you think you or your community could affect whether or not this bill was changed or passed?

## What Influences A Member of Congress?

- WHY DO IT**
- To discuss what activities and forces influence the legislative branch of government, or Congress
  - To explore what grassroots community groups do to influence Congress, either directly or indirectly

**TIME** 20 minutes

- MATERIAL NEEDED**
- easel paper, markers, and tape
  - copies of “what influences members of congress” handouts
  - slips of paper

- DIRECTIONS**
1. Explain to the group that this exercise will be an opportunity to discuss what actually influences a member of Congress.
  2. Pass out 2 sticky notes to each participant. Ask participants to write down one thing they think influences members of Congress on one of their sticky notes. Ask participants to write down one thing that communities do to influence members of Congress on their other sticky note.
  3. Going around the circle, ask each participant to read what they have written down for “what influences a member of Congress,” and put it on one sheet of butcher paper. Repeat for “what do communities do to influence Congress?”
  4. After you have gone around the circle, ask the large group the following questions:
    - What do you think immigrant communities can do to influence Congress?
    - What are some of the challenges that immigrant and refugee communities face in influencing members of Congress?
    - What are some of the strengths and resources that immigrant and refugee communities have in influencing members of Congress?
    - What are some of the different strategies or activities that immigrant and refugee communities have taken or can take to influence members of Congress?

**TEACHING  
POINTS**

- We all have the power to influence policy-making, no matter our experience.
- Legislative advocacy includes activities to build political power and communicate an agenda such as lobbying, as well as demonstrations, community education, press conferences, writing letters, etc.
- Even if you cannot vote yourself, there are many ways to impact the political process, including participating in mobilizations, education activities, and helping others who support immigrant rights to vote. For example, mass mobilizations in April-May 2006 forced Congress to reconsider its stance on immigration.
- Policy groups and advocacy groups often function within a limited framework of “what is possible” in Congress. Community and organizing groups work in a broader framework in terms of a vision for community empowerment, and therefore consider different factors and use different methods to change the political environment.
- There are many factors that influence members of Congress. These include factors such as money (such as campaign contributions); votes (who will support them for re-election) and individuals (like lobbyists and peer pressure.)
- Those who are affected by policy must have a role in determining it.

**CHALLENGES**

- We have found that this activity works better with audiences that have had some experience working on legislative advocacy issues, and that it is more difficult for participants that have little to no experience working on advocacy issues.

**SOURCE**

The authors

## Movement Organizing Throughout History

- WHY DO IT**
- To think about the issues, strategies, and people that were involved in different grassroots movements for civil and human rights throughout history
  - To explore how immigrant and refugee communities can learn from the lessons of past movements
- TIME** 40 minutes
- MATERIAL NEEDED**
- easel paper, markers, and tape
  - A copy of each handout, cut along the dotted lines
  - scissors
- DIRECTIONS**
1. Divide participants into three small groups.
  2. Give each small group a case study of other movement histories to discuss. (20 minutes)
  3. Bring the groups back together, and ask each group to briefly give a summary of their discussion. In plenary, you may also want to ask the following questions:
    - How can these examples help us realize our own rights?
    - What are some lessons that we can learn from other movements?
    - How can we work together with other movements for all of our rights?
- TEACHING POINTS**
- There are many recent examples of grassroots movements fighting and winning legislative change.
  - While national organizations and coalitions played a role in advocacy work, only grassroots community actions created a political environment that pushed members of Congress to respond.
  - Winning positive laws and protections is only one step towards full justice—the work of making sure that laws are enforced and continuing to organize and educate continues after legislative victories.
- SOURCE** Adapted from “Communities Advocating for Change: A Training Manual for Facilitators Working in Grassroots Advocacy,” by Paul Zilly. Published by Casa de Maryland. To order, visit [www.casademaryland.org](http://www.casademaryland.org).

## Movement Organizing Throughout History

### Case Study #1: Winning Rights for People With Disabilities

#### instructions

Read this example of grassroots movement organizing together as a group. After your group has read the example, pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group should report back to the large group about your discussion.

People living with disabilities in the United States have and continue to face discrimination. For many years, individuals with disabilities had little opportunity to live fulfilled lives in a culture that regarded disability as a sickness, abnormal, and shameful. People with disabilities often could not attend school, find jobs, enter buildings, or even move around in the community, and were often treated with fear or pity.

In the 1970s, people with disabilities organized a powerful, grassroots movement for their rights across the United States. Disability rights activists began to protest and file lawsuits against school districts, bus and train companies, and local governments for not making schools, public buildings, and transportation accessible to all people. Organizations advocating self-determination began to form across the country to support disabled people to live on their own.

In 1973, Congress passed a bill called the “Rehabilitation Act.” Section 504 of this bill made it illegal for public agencies receiving federal funding to discriminate against people with disabilities. However, after the bill was passed, governmental agencies did not write any plans to implement it. The disability community demanded fairness from the government. In 1977, people with disabilities staged “sit-ins” at federal offices to protest in cities around the country. These sit-ins were made up of people who used wheelchairs, crutches, sign language, guide dogs—who all refused to leave the offices. In San Francisco, the sit-in lasted for 28 days. The demonstrations received national press coverage, and on April 4, 1977, the government released plans to implement the law.

However, disability rights organizers believed that more laws to protect disabled people were necessary. In 1988, a national coalition of disability rights organizations worked to persuade Congress to pass a new anti-discrimination law. While business associations opposed the bill, and wanted Congress to kill the bill, the disability rights’ movement grassroots organizing paid off. Disabled people came to Washington D.C. at their own expense, some sleeping on floors at night. They packed the Congressional hearing sessions, sent thousands of letters to members of Congress, explaining the discrimination that they faced. People who could not come to Washington organized local hearings and made phone calls to Congress.

When debate in Congress stopped, organizers planned for more drastic action by organizing a huge march and rally in front of the Capitol. At the end of the rally, people in wheelchairs got out of their wheelchairs and climbed up the steps of Congress, because there was no way for wheelchairs to enter the building. After many more meetings, protests, and arrests during demonstrations, Congress passed the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990. While this bill protects the rights of people with disabilities, disability rights organizers continue to fight for fair treatment of their communities.

# Movement Organizing Throughout History

## Case Study #1: Winning Rights for People With Disabilities

### Sources:

Disability Social History Project, [www.disabilityhistory.org](http://www.disabilityhistory.org) and “Education for Disability & Gender Equity”, by Tanis Doe and Corbett O’Toole of the Disabled Women’s Alliance. Questions for Discussion:

### Questions for Discussions:

1. What was the problem in the community?
2. Who was affected by the problem?
3. What were some strategies people used to make others aware of the problem?
4. Who were the people involved in the movement? How were they involved?
5. What were some of the outcomes of the movement?
6. How do you think this example applies to the work of the immigrant and refugee rights movement today?

## Movement Organizing Throughout History

### Case Study #2: Women and Domestic Violence

#### instructions

Read this example of grassroots movement organizing together as a group. After your group has read the example, pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group should report back to the large group about your discussion.

For the greater part of the 20th Century, women in the U.S. had little recourse when faced with an abusive spouse. There were no shelters to house women fleeing domestic violence, and the existing laws failed to protect women. Law enforcement was unresponsive and untrained to deal with the issue. For these reasons, victims of domestic violence instead suffered in silence and continued to live in fear of further abuse.

In the 1970s, the feminist movement began to focus on issues related to women's rights, including reproductive health issues, domestic violence, and sexual assault. Women all over the country began telling their stories in churches, at the workplace, in women's organizations, and to the media. The first domestic violence shelter was opened in Minnesota in 1976. Grassroots, local and national organizations began to confront the issue of domestic violence.

Women organizers used various strategies to draw attention to the issue. They focused much of their efforts on education—to communicate the fact that domestic violence is not acceptable. They published educational materials, held workshops, published research and promoted socially conscious television shows. Their aim was to inform people in the U.S. about the scope of the problem.

These educational efforts had a significant impact. They resulted in a push for national legislation that would protect women from violence. Advocates proposed legislation that would aid in the training of law enforcement, facilitate prosecution of offenders, support women's shelters, and establish a national hotline. In the end, after many revisions and a long struggle against opponents of the law, advocates helped to pass the Violence Against Women Act in 1994. Women had achieved the first legal provisions against abusive spouses. Women's organizations continue to push for more education and more safety nets for victims of domestic violence, and new community-based ways to deal with domestic violence.

*(Adapted from "Communities Advocating for Change: A Training Manual for Facilitators Working in Grassroots Advocacy, Casa of Maryland, [www.casademaryland.org](http://www.casademaryland.org))*



## Movement Organizing Throughout History

### Case Study #2: Women and Domestic Violence

#### Questions for Discussions:

1. What was the problem in the community?
2. Who was affected by the problem?
3. What were some strategies people used to make others aware of the problem?
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5. What were some of the outcomes of the movement?
6. How do you think this example applies to the work of the immigrant and refugee rights movement today?

## Movement Organizing Throughout History

### Case Study #3: The Civil Rights Movement

#### instructions

Read this example of grassroots movement organizing together as a group. After your group has read the example, pick one person to keep the discussion going, and one person to take notes. After your discussion, your group should report back to the large group about your discussion.

Racism has always been a form of inequality in the U.S. From the beginning of U.S. history, which was based on taking land from Native Americans, it also was the basis for slavery, and continues to mark U.S. society today. In the first half of the 20th Century, racism was not only rampant, it was enforced by law. African Americans faced discrimination all across the United States. In the south, blacks were denied the right to vote and subjected to humiliating laws of racial segregation, discrimination, economic disempowerment, as well as the ongoing threat of racially-motivated violence.

The Civil Rights Movement that took place in the 1950s and 1960s began to challenge this racism. Organizers at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began to train themselves in using civil disobedience as a tactic. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, an African American woman and local community leader, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama. Her arrest energized a growing number of African Americans and other activists who opposed the discriminatory laws.

This incident led to the founding of the Montgomery Improvement Association, one of whose leaders was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This organization organized a boycott against the bus company. The boycott was a success, and lasted for 382 days. During this time, African Americans in Montgomery had to organize alternative transportation, fundraisers, and solidarity with one another. The boycott eventually led to a Supreme Court ruling that outlawed racial segregation on public transportation.

The U.S. began to witness the growth of the civil rights movement, which challenged racial segregation and discrimination. In 1960, high school and college students began staging “sit-ins,” where they sat in “white-only” restaurants to protest segregation. In 1961, student volunteers participated in “Freedom Rides,” where black and white students traveled together to see if anti-segregation laws were being enforced. African American groups across the country continued to work for change in the U.S. Yet many leaders—such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, and others in the community, faced attack. Many of these activists faced angry protests, violence, and arrest.

However, the struggle of civil rights activists was not in vain. Their work led to the passage of legislation that would change the U.S. After years of fighting for freedom, they helped to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law outlawed racial segregation, and discrimination in employment and housing. African Americans won a major victory for democracy and freedom in a struggle that continues to the present day.

## Movement Organizing Throughout History

### Case Study #3: The Civil Rights Movement

#### Questions for Discussions:

1. What was the problem in the community?
2. Who was affected by the problem?
3. What were some strategies people used to make others aware of the problem?
4. Who were the people involved in the movement? How were they involved?
5. What were some of the outcomes of the movement?
6. How do you think this example applies to the work of the immigrant and refugee rights movement today?

*(Adapted from "Communities Advocating for Change: A Training Manual for Facilitators Working in Grassroots Advocacy, Casa of Maryland, [www.casademaryland.org](http://www.casademaryland.org))*

## Closing Activity: We Make the Road By Walking

- WHY DO IT**
- To close out the day's activities
  - To provide an opportunity to envision solutions and action for the future
- TIME** 20-30 minutes
- MATERIAL NEEDED**
- Easel paper, markers, tape
  - Copies of the worksheet for all participants
  - Pens/pencils for all participants
- DIRECTIONS**
1. Distribute the handout to each participant. Explain that this activity will provide an opportunity to reflect on what the group has discussed today, and to think about what action steps will come next.
  2. You may want to read the poem, "*We Make the Road By Walking*," by Antonio Machado (1875-1939).

Wanderer, your footsteps are the road,  
And nothing more;  
Wanderer, there is no road,  
The road is made by walking.  
By walking one makes the road,  
And upon glancing behind  
One sees the path that will never be trod again.  
Wanderer, there is no road—  
Only wakes upon the sea.

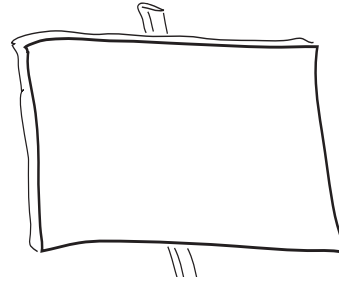
*Caminante, son tus huellas el camino,  
Y nada más;  
Caminante, no hay camino,  
Se hace camino al andar.  
Al andar se hace camino,  
Y al volver la vista atrás  
Se ve la senda que nunca  
Se ha de volver a pisar.  
Caminante, no hay camino,  
Sino estelas en la mar.*

3. Ask participants to write in the right foot someone who has inspired them, or has come before in fighting for justice; in the left foot, an action that they plan to do; and in the road sign ahead, one thing that they want to see achieved.
4. After participants have finished writing their responses, ask each participant to name one thing that they wrote on their paper.

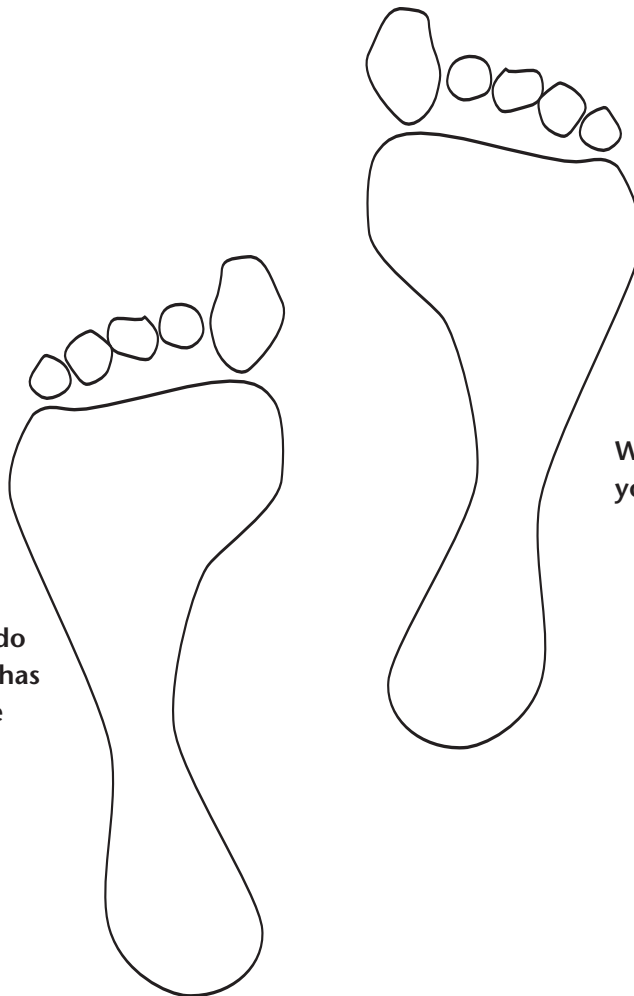
**SOURCE** The authors with inspiration from Pancho Arguelles.

## We Make the Road By Walking

Wanderer, your footsteps are the road,  
And nothing more;  
Wanderer, there is no road,  
The road is made by walking.  
By walking one makes the road,  
And upon glancing behind  
One sees the path that will never be trod again.  
Wanderer, there is no road—  
Only wakes upon the sea.  
— Antonio Machado (1875-1939).



WHERE DO YOU WANT THIS ROAD TO LEAD?  
WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?



Whose footprints do  
you walk in? Who has  
inspired you in the  
past?

What is the next step  
you want to take?

## Additional Resources

### Congressional Resources

Congressional Switchboard. To find out contact information for any member of Congress, dial 1-202-225-3121 and ask for your Senator or Representative.

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). Website for the House of Representatives. Contains information on daily House activity, list of Representatives, committees, and contact information. Educational section includes materials on “how a bill becomes a law” and “How Our Laws are Made.”

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). Website for the Senate. Contains information on daily Senate activity, list of Senators, committees, and contact information.

<http://thomas.loc.gov>. This website is maintained by the Library of Congress, and includes the full text, up to date status, and co-sponsoring information on all bills introduced in Congress.

### Non-Profit Advocacy Resources

“Worry Free Lobbying for Nonprofits.” This booklet describes how nonprofit groups, and the foundations that support them, can take advantage of the clear and generous provisions in federal law that encourage lobbying activity. By the Alliance for Justice. Available for download at: [www.afj.org](http://www.afj.org).

### Popular Education Resources

Building Grassroots Power: An Introduction to Electoral Politics, by the Western States Center, is a curriculum designed to support the electoral organizing efforts of groups with 501(C)(3) or 501(C)(4) tax-exempt status. Available at: <http://www.westernstatescenter.org/resources/electoral.html>

Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook: A Resource for Adult Educators. Edited by Andy Nash, New England Literacy Resource Center.

This sourcebook provides resources and articles to develop greater capacity for community participation and informed action. The book includes narrative accounts (written mostly by teachers) of past community education and action projects, as well as activities that focus on skill- and confidence-building, particularly in the areas of reflection, analysis, research, and communication. Available at: <http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/vera/index.htm>.

Communities Advocating for Change: *A Training Manual for Facilitators Working in Grassroots Advocacy*.

By Casa de Maryland

Communities Advocating for Change provides facilitators with a tool they can help community groups promote social change through advocacy. It is comprised of nine units that take participants through the process of developing an advocacy campaign. The units explore themes such as advocacy and government, message development, strategies of influence, successful lobbying, and developing a campaign action plan. Activities come with objectives, materials, and a time to complete the activity. To order, visit [www.casade-maryland.org](http://www.casade-maryland.org).

## New Citizens Vote! A Curriculum About Voting and Civic Engagement

By the Northern California Citizenship Project

The goal of this curriculum is to increase the skills and self-confidence of participants regarding voting and other local decision-making processes. Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean. Visit <http://www.immigrantvoice.org/ncv/index.html> for more information.

## Videos

The New Americans is a seven-hour PBS miniseries that focuses on the search for the American dream through the eyes of immigrants and refugees from Nigeria, India, the Dominican Republic, and Palestine. Filmed between 1998 and 2002, the series follows these newcomers before they leave their homelands and into their first years in America. The miniseries is also available in shorter, thematically-arranged versions for educators, and has a series of facilitators guides available for educators and organizers. Produced by Kartemquin Films. 7 hours, 2004. There is a special edited version and video on the theme of civic participation, with a study guide. To order, visit <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/>.

UPROOTED: Refugees of the Global Economy documents how the global economy has forced people to leave their home countries. UPROOTED presents three stories of immigrants who left their homes in Bolivia, Haiti, and the Philippines after global economic powers devastated their countries, only to face new challenges in the United States. These powerful stories raise critical questions about U.S. immigration policy in an era when corporations cross borders at will. Nominated for a 2002 Emmy Award! Produced by the National Network for Immigrant Rights with the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights. 28 minutes, 2002. Bilingual with English/Spanish subtitles. To order, visit [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org).

## Immigrant Rights/Civic Participation Organizations and Resources

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote. [www.apiavote.org](http://www.apiavote.org). Website includes resources for organizers, including tips on organizing voter registration drives, and specific information for API communities. Materials available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

Easy Voter Guide Project, California. [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org). The Easy Voter Guide project is designed to help new voters and busy voters become more familiar with the voting process and what will be on the ballot. Includes free resources such as voter guides, voter education workshop outlines, and other useful handouts. You can download their Voting is as easy as 1-2-3, Political party statements, and Easy Voter Guide in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean in PDF format.

Mobilize the Immigrant Vote. <http://www.immigrantvoice.org/miv2004/>. Mobilize the Immigrant Vote 2004 (MIV 2004) is a statewide campaign led by a collaborative of diverse organizations throughout California committed to supporting the full inclusion of immigrant communities in the political process.

## About the Authors

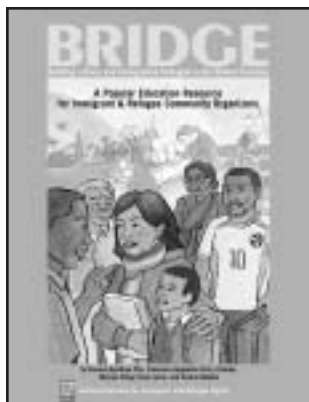
**Eunice Hyunhye Cho** is the Education Program Director at the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. She is the editor and co-author of *BRIDGE: Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy*, which was awarded the 2004 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award. Eunice also co-coordinated NNIRR's campaign to bring grassroots immigrant and refugee leaders to the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism, and edited and co-authored *From the Borderline to the Colorline: A Report on Anti-Immigrant Racism in the United States* and *A World On The Move: A Report from the World Conference Against Racism*. She serves on the National Steering Collective for Incite! Women of Color Against Violence; the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment; and the board of the Western States Center. A Korean American hailing from Arizona, she drums and chants with *Jamaesori: Sister Sound*, a drumming group of progressive Korean American women community activists.

**Rosita Choy** has had experience in direct services, grassroots organizing campaign development, training, fundraising, coalition building, organizational development, and policy advocacy with a variety of nonprofit organizations. In California, Massachusetts, and Washington, DC, she has worked for Asian Health Services, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, the National Immigration Law Center, the American Friends Service Committee, Amnesty International, and others. She is passionate about immigrant and human rights and the power of individuals to push for social change. An immigrant herself, Rosita has family and roots in both Asia and Latin America.



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— Loretta Ross  
*Executive Director, National Center for Human Rights Education*

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— Katie Quan and Lea Grundy  
*Center for Labor Research and Education, UC Berkeley*

BRIDGE ROCKS! I CAN'T WAIT to start using the workshops with youth--BRIDGE gives me tools for education in so many settings and communities.

— Liz Suk  
*Director, Just Act: Youth For Global Justice*

BRIDGE is a terrific collection of educational tools that any organizer can use to build the connections between immigration, worker and civil rights, and justice. The BRIDGE Project exercises were a great hit on the bus rides for the Immigrant Worker Freedom Rides!

— Maria Elena Durazo  
*National Chair, Immigrant Worker Freedom Rides and Vice-President, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union*



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