
Final Report

Building Action for Sustainable Environments

Peace Development Fund

Hazardous materials have historically – and shamefully – been produced, stored, and disposed of in communities of color and other poor communities across the United States. This pattern of environmental racism and abuse is all too evident in the case of communities affected by the production cycle of nuclear energy and of nuclear and chemical weapons. The BASE Initiative, a program of the Peace Development Fund from 2002-2012, was designed to support these groups most affected by the nuclear industry in realizing their potential – and their objectives.



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“PDF led the way funding people of color movements working on environmental justice.”
Teresa Juarez, PDF Board President

Executive Summary of the BASE Initiative

The BASE Initiative (Building Action for Sustainable Environments) was founded in September 2002 at a gathering outside of Atlanta, GA. PDF hosted 50 participants from 20 organizations working on environmental justice and nuclear issues in their communities. Over the course of four intense days, participants developed the vision for what BASE would become: a true partnership between a foundation and community-based organizations, often overlooked by the foundation community, working together to build a grassroots movement for environmental justice.

When PDF first conceived of BASE within our Capacity Building Program, we envisioned providing funding, training and extensive technical assistance to a broad range of environmental justice groups. As we began to discuss this concept with the environmental justice groups and networks gathered however, we recognized that BASE – with its potential for facilitating movement-building as well as capacity building at the organizational level – was especially well-suited to work with groups that share a common mission and vision. In light of this, PDF’s board of directors recommended that BASE focus its efforts on communities affected by the production and fuel cycle of nuclear energy as well as by nuclear and chemical weapons.

Given PDF’s own origins as a peace and anti-nuclear funder, it seemed particularly appropriate for us to direct our resources to organizations representing these communities. The consequences of weapons and power production have remained of great importance to PDF and are, of course, the source of urgent concern for communities that continue to suffer the devastating effects of related nuclear and chemical contamination.

The Ford Foundation was an early and generous supporter of the Initiative and the co-creation model that PDF proposed, which would bring communities into partnership with PDF. We sought to discover:

- What co-creation would look like;
- How each of the BASE members could be involved at the same capacity, or if not, could we raise the level of each organization so that they had a similar capacity;
- What role each partner would play;
- How to move nuclear issues off the back burner where the environmental justice movement had placed them while that movement focused mainly on industrial toxics, rather than the nuclear issues that BASE communities faced; and
- How to be true to the roots of PDF in its anti-nuclear and anti-militarism focus.

From the beginning of the BASE Initiative, we recognized and tackled the traditional funder-grantee dynamic, and challenged ourselves to create a model that honors the voices, perspectives, wisdom and power that lies in each member of our community. One of our goals for this Initia-

tive was to create a new model of how funders and grassroots communities can work together in authentic partnership, building our movement's capacity.

Our biggest strength, our biggest challenge

BASE meetings convened Indigenous people, Latino farmworkers, African Americans from the rural south, funders with decades of experience in philanthropy, groups and organizations who had never received a foundation grant, high school-aged youth and elders who were part of the beginning of the environmental justice movement in this country. Working with such a diverse group was part of our strength, as well as our biggest challenge.

BASE participants brought decades of experience from the front lines of the nuclear struggle, those communities most directly impacted by the nuclear fuel cycle. From the Diné (Navajo) Nation, where the mining began and where the multigenerational effects of genetic mutation are still playing out, to the Columbia River downstream from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, where those few salmon still returning to spawn exhibit many forms of genetic mutation, to the Savannah River Site and Los Alamos National Laboratory, around which the communities have health and social indicators far outside of the norm for this country.

Within this great capacity and organizing experience of BASE were more reactive, less seasoned participants from damaged communities, giving us strengths and weaknesses in organizing, as this report will address. For instance, we often spent more time discussing the ways in which BASE communities had been negatively impacted by the nuclear cycle and by systems of oppression, rather than organizing and planning our future.

While we were able to educate each other on our community's experiences, we were also struggling with the capacity to absorb and act in concert. We learned the importance of recognizing different levels of capacity. Early in the Initiative we were often frustrated by members' varying levels of participation, and by the reality of having only part-time staff devoted to the Initiative. Eventually we created a tiered organizational structure that allowed each group to participate to the level that they were able, at the same time focusing our resources on raising those groups' capacity. We created a Leadership Circle within the Community Board, and ultimately a three-tier structure that involved working groups.

From the beginning, young people were involved in everything that the Initiative did, as we trained the next generation of leaders for the environmental justice movement. Youth as young as 13 years old were present at the first BASE meeting. Many of them would continue to work with BASE and go on to become leaders of the BASE Youth Circle a decade later as young adults. In 2009, the BASE Youth Circle held their first meeting, and subsequently held several more youth specific activities. "BASE has impacted total families, not just individuals," said Martin Yanez of Northwest Social and Economic Development, noting that BASE brought in youth, including his daughter, at a critical time in their lives, as well as in their elders' lives.

Perhaps one of the greatest accomplishments of the Initiative was the simple fact that we were able to survive three years without any major sources of funding. What we lacked in finances, we made up for in relationships. We created smaller working groups to make discussions and decisions more efficient, used conference calls rather than face-to-face meetings, and strategically sent small delegations to various actions, conferences and other important events. In the end,

we organized a total of 34 opportunities for members to come together under various formats. We documented the whole process so that we could responsibly report on our findings, our experience, our successes and failures.

With this report we draw the BASE Initiative to a close. But we anticipate that PDF will continue to work with grassroots communities on nuclear and other environmental justice issues. We will apply all that we learned from BASE to our next cycle of work on these issues, keeping faith with the roots of PDF's history and remaining true to our principles of elevating the voices of grassroots people, sharing our resources, skills and passions in authentic partnerships.

History and Background

The BASE Initiative focused on the self-described “homeland casualties of war,” so-named because their communities are contaminated by radioactive materials, hazardous waste and extremely toxic chemicals produced, incinerated and/or stored at sites belonging to the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Energy (DOE) and their civilian contractors. Environmental racism - the disproportionate siting of the hazardous waste and toxic industry, dumps and government facilities on or near communities of color - has had a deadly impact experienced primarily and disproportionately by communities of color.

BASE groups were largely from low-income African-American, Latino and Native American communities where the development, testing, storage and disposal of nuclear waste have introduced radioactive materials such as tritium, plutonium and uranium into the environment. As a result, the ecosystems, local economies and self-sustaining traditional ways of life upon which the communities depend were compromised. Residents were no longer able to farm or fish. Community members suffered from high rates of congenital disorders, organ cancers, respiratory disease and neurological dysfunction. These communities, when organizing and resisting, received little funding or foundation support to strengthen their efforts to combat these life-threatening injustices.

The BASE Initiative had many unique aspects within the environmental justice movement. Members were primarily people of color but, as a network, BASE was not focused on any particular ethnic group. Some members worked in a large region, such as along the nuclear highway for highly radioactive waste, which stretches from Georgia’s Savannah River Site through Aiken, SC to New Mexico’s Waste Isolation Pilot Plant to Yucca Mountain in Nevada, and on to the largest contaminated nuclear facility in the nation in Hanford, WA.

Some worked in a specific cultural context, such as the sovereign Diné Nation, the largest tribal nation in the U.S. Although some groups had been in existence for two decades, they functioned on small budgets, focused on responding to issues tailored to the problems they faced in the region. As a whole, they were teaching organizations, providing knowledge and information to their communities in order to respond to the continued encroachment of toxic contamination. Nuclear industry whistleblowers provided the early leadership, but the communities’ proximity to nuclear sites also made it hard to recruit organizers because the nuclear industry was often the sole source of good, local employment.

The regional dimensions of BASE members’ work called for specialized skills in initiating, managing and maintaining a variety of relationships that would give the groups more capacity for impact on the policy level. Indeed, the challenges BASE encountered from the outset - strengthening infrastructure, fund-raising, organizational and leadership development - persisted throughout the duration of the Initiative because the groups came into the Initiative with dissimilar capacities for building a network.

It was remarkable that with relatively little funding on a yearly basis - and some years with no funding - that the majority of these very different communities in the Initiative stayed together, continuing to work together and learn from each other over the course of ten years. This spoke to the power and vitality of a common network (especially a network where people had much in

common) and affirmed the co-creation model PDF sought to pioneer. In this model, funders and grantees each have a role to play, yet come together under one umbrella. Part of what PDF hoped we could build were trusting relationships that would allow us to be honest with each other about our struggles and challenges, not just as funder to community organizer, but as community to community. It was made more complicated by the existence of shared resources, including the organizing funds available.

Specific Objectives

PDF's experience suggested that significant and lasting social change work is best achieved through grassroots efforts that work in coordination with the communities directly affected as well as with broad coalitions able to effect change on a regional or national level. Thus the BASE objectives had local, national and ultimately international dimensions. Our main objective was to build multiethnic, multicultural alliances among people of color.

Objective 1. Organizations participating in BASE would demonstrate measurable improvements in organizational capacity, with a particular emphasis on the development or reinvigoration of sustainable leadership.

Objective 2. Organizations participating in BASE would increase the involvement of community and other strategic allies in their efforts.

Objective 3. Organizations participating in BASE would create and implement an effective, diversified fund-raising plan, including gifts and other revenue, which would result in increased public and private investment in their work.

Objective 4. Each BASE group would achieve measures of redress or repair of the environmental and human harm caused by nuclear or chemical contamination in their community.

Objective 5. BASE groups would strengthen their organizing networks and work successfully towards shared objectives.

Objective 6. BASE groups and their networks would increase public awareness regarding the issue of weapons and waste contamination and advocate effectively for the enforcement and enactment of related environmental legislation.

PDF supported the groups with funding, technical assistance, mentoring and collaborative actions in their efforts to change the circumstances of contamination and the environmental abuse they faced. *How* each group chose to effect that change varied from community to community.

Chief Wilbur Slockish of Columbia River Education – Economic Development recalled a time when the phone wires had been cut to his home on the Columbia River. Without a cellphone, his commitment to participating in BASE conference calls meant he had to search out the rare pay phone booth so he could dial in and participate. “BASE was my place to learn and understand,” he said.

Our Experience

BASE members called building a network of like-minded organizations the most important contribution BASE made to their organizations and how they did their work. Being able to visit each other's communities and see first-hand the stages and effects of the nuclear cycle was critical. And they were able to show their communities that they were not working alone. "We weren't isolated in preparing for a fight," said Lori Goodman from Diné CARE.

"We met together for strategic and political reasons as well as trust-building," explained Teresa Juarez of the New Mexico Alliance. "Each time we took groups to meet in one of the BASE sites, there was a strategy behind it - and it produced results."

BASE helped the host organization where they were meeting build visibility and extend their reach, both locally and nationally. When people were scared to be involved with Pine Bluff for Safe Disposal because the incinerator site in Arkansas provides their livelihood, Evelyn Yates was able to show her community that she was connected to a larger network. She invited BASE to meet with community members from the churches and the university. Martin Yanez of Northwest Social and Economic Development helped to promote visibility via the local radio station and the *Yakima Herald* when BASE met in Washington. "I was glad to have the BASE consultants come. When the local media saw this, it validated our work, and they began to cover environmental issues in the Valley."

Mr. Yanez also brought a Latino voice to the environmental justice movement. "We were the only Hispanic community organization in our area," he noted. "Bringing awareness of environmental problems and talking about climate change - that was something different for Latino organizations. The ability to bring in outside experts helped those on the ground get recognition for our efforts."

Chief Slockish showed the Columbia River tribes that he had community support, not just tribal support. The tribes finally recognized him as being part of an important anti-nuclear voice. "My voice seems to want to be heard now," he stated. Other voices came to the forefront. In New Mexico, youth voices and a Think Outside the Bomb training went on to influence the Occupy movement.

Although BASE groups operated at different stages of the nuclear fuel cycle and other weapons-related issues, they gained knowledge through BASE that they did not previously possess as they listened to each other and visited other sites. "We learned from each other and supported each other's issues," said Chief Slockish. "We formed a really good brother/sister bond and today some of us are still working together."

"Each group had perspective and experience to offer, and we shared tools to use in our local areas," added Mr. Yanez.

Harambee House's Dr. Mildred McClain described it this way: "We began to look at the problem globally. We were also able to engage at an international level on our issues, something only a few of us had done before, and it was strengthened through BASE."

Policy Change

During the decade that groups engaged with BASE, they were able to effect some nuclear policy changes such as stopping uranium mining on the Navajo Reservation. Just as importantly, they were able to influence other policy in a way that they could not previously. “Federal agencies opened doors to us because of BASE,” revealed Ms. Goodman. She described the time spent with BASE going to Washington, DC and meeting with government leaders as making her group better prepared to take on the subsequent fight over the Desert Rock power plant. “We knew who the players were at the DOD, EPA and DOE, and we weren’t intimidated.”

The Imani Group was able to have better dialogue on existing policies with government agencies and a presence at the table. “We gained a level of respect by being part of BASE,” said Rev. Brendolyn Jenkins. “At the government level, they dealt with us as a unified group.” Dr. McClain agreed. “We didn’t change much policy but we were instrumental in changing practice. We got them to implement the regulations. We held their feet to the fire on agreements already in place.”

Chief Slockish described a new ability to testify at congressional hearings, with invitations from state lawmakers to consult over fishing rights and native land use. “This is progress, and it all stems from the work we did with BASE. People know about Hanford issues now. If not, we’d be just another dump site.”

“That was the mission of BASE,” said Ms. Juarez. “To create and open doors to the funding world and build the voice and capacity of these communities.”

Results

In the ten years of the BASE Initiative, PDF made a total of 123 distributions to 18 organizations, totaling **\$602,779**. This resulted in grants from \$3,000 to \$10,000 to the various organizations in any given year that funding was available. We considered BASE grant funding as seed money, with the expectation that over time, groups could become self-sustaining through better fund-raising or additional sources of revenue. “The first grant for us from BASE went to Radio Cadeña,” recalled Mr. Yanez. “It gave us office space and other resources so we could educate the public about environmental issues.”

However, we could not anticipate the impact of the Great Recession on these groups (as well as on foundation funding), when the small grants PDF was able to make were instrumental in keeping these community organizations alive.

Grantmaking

- **\$575,409 in general operating support** for BASE members. Recognizing that grass-roots organizations often times struggle to find unrestricted funding to maintain their core operations, the majority of the funding from the BASE Initiative went towards the organizations’ operations so that they could continue their local work while participating in the network.

- **\$20,200 in travel grants.** One of the main goals of the Initiative was to ensure that the voices of impacted communities were present whenever and wherever discussions were being held about nuclear technology, climate change and environmental justice. PDF sent BASE delegations to various meetings, conferences, forums and other important events at the national, international, regional and local levels.
- **\$7,170 for special projects.** This funding included supporting important local events being organized by BASE members.

Training, Technical Assistance and Advocacy

Initially, PDF staff and board made site visits to almost all of the organizations (holding lengthy phone conversations with others) to strengthen PDF's understanding of the critical issues facing each community, to build communication and trust between PDF and the BASE communities, and to determine the organizational capacity of each. On-site training and technical assistance was then tailored to the needs of each community. For example, PDF conducted development training for the The Imani Group and leadership and strategic program development training for the SHARP Sisters youth group, two groups that are part of the Savannah Coalition of which The Imani Group is a member.

Rev. Jenkins of The Imani Group enumerated the technical assistance and training opportunities BASE provided: "We had board training and were able to increase organizational capacity and build infrastructure. We learned better techniques such as board governance, fiscal management and fund-raising. We learned how to do much with little and on a larger scale."

PDF assisted Columbia River Education - Economic Development with writing and editing a solid fund-raising proposal. "We were all-volunteer and had been holding raffles for firewood and bake sales and that's how we survived," said Chief Slockish. "With BASE we met other anti-nuclear organizations and learned about strategic fund-raising."

PDF met with the Tribal Leadership Council of SHAWL Society (Save our Health, Air, Water and Land) on the Spokane Reservation, providing support in outlining its program plans and identifying on-going organizational development needs. PDF edited and helped articulate the program work for Pine Bluff for Safe Disposal as well as identifying funding sources. When funding for this type of on-site technical assistance evaporated after year two, PDF concentrated on larger group activities that could still provide support and peer-to-peer organizational capacity building.

Community Building

While BASE members were spread throughout the country, the initiative emphasized building relationships through face-to-face interactions. To this end, PDF organized 34 opportunities for members to meet and work together.

- **Seven Community Board Meetings.** The Community Board included at least one representative from each member organization. These meetings were used to do big picture strategy building and to facilitate cultural exchanges within the membership. They often included over 40 participants from around the country.

- **Five Leadership Circle Meetings.** Instituted in the fall of 2007, the Leadership Circle was a rotating body that included elders, youth, grassroots organizers and PDF participation. The Leadership Circle met regularly on the phone and in person, to work on the day-to-day management of the Initiative.
- **Twelve Delegations.** BASE sent delegations (including youth) to key conferences and meetings throughout the U.S. and abroad. This included gatherings and conferences of foundations, United Nations conferences and events, the U.S. Social Forum and other activist gatherings, as well as government summits and conferences dealing with the environment.
- **Eight Actions.** BASE actions included nationally coordinated campaigns among the local members as well as supporting a local action being organized by one of our members. In some cases, BASE paid for travel expenses so members could travel to be in solidarity with other BASE communities.
- **Three Youth Circle Activities.** From the beginning, young people were involved in everything that the Initiative did. They were present during all meetings and activities, and often held their own caucuses within the larger BASE Initiative's activities. In 2009, the BASE Youth Circle held their first stand-alone meeting, followed by several youth specific activities in later years. Additionally, they were part of developing a curriculum for youth media training used at the U.S. Social Forum and other venues, helping to build a larger movement by leveraging BASE resources.

“I’m grateful and most appreciative of the education BASE provided for me and The Imani Group,” said Rev. Jenkins.

Foundation-Community Relationships

From the beginning of the BASE Initiative, we recognized and tackled the traditional funder-grantee dynamic, and challenged ourselves to create a model that honors the voices, perspectives, wisdom and power that lies in each member of our community.

“The co-creation process was a way for us to honor all experiences and to recognize that all parties bring resources to the table,” explained PDF Program Coordinator Kazu Haga. “Our work is about collective liberation, and no one party’s experience is more important than another if we are to achieve that goal.”

Ka Flewellen, former PDF board president and a key leader in the early development of BASE, expressed it this way: “The co-creation process focuses on building sturdy, trusting relationships that can increasingly allow for a diversity of opinions and perspectives and that honors grassroots community members, experts, allies and funders, all as key and valued members of a community in a social change process.

“We see ourselves as both learners and teachers. In this context, we face the power dynamic of funder and grantee and attempt to level the playing field by engaging as partners in a joint en-

deavor. The process is then dynamic and flexible, where we can be responsive to opportunities for collective action, for understanding and responding to obstacles and setbacks and able to engage in strategic thinking, planning and action. Out of this dynamic process, co-creation allows for priorities to emerge from the work.” This was an ongoing, ever-evolving conversation.

The Co-creation Process in Action

Honoring Traditional Teachings and Spirituality

Recognizing, honoring and building from teaching traditions was a core focus and strength of the BASE Initiative from its establishment. In order to build trusting relationships with one another, we had to start by understanding each other’s perspectives and experiences. We had to share with each other the core of who we are, and build from a place of strength.

This was not always easy. Some members were initially hesitant to participate in other’s spiritual traditions and practices. Ultimately, these conflicts were viewed as an opportunity to challenge ourselves, expand our views and strengthen our relationships with each other.

Practical Application: Each BASE meeting opened and closed with an inter-faith prayer. Ceremony is one way in which many of our cultures begin and close all important community activities. This practice allowed us to engage in a deeper level of conversation.

We also spent significant time sharing each other’s cultural ways. Most of our Community Board meetings were held in one of our member communities, often coinciding with a cultural ceremony or festival. Whether it was participating in the salmon harvest festival in the Columbia River Klickitat community or homecoming weekend in Pine Bluff, AR, we made sure to be part of celebrations of our different cultures. “When you eat together, you honor each other,” affirmed Chief Slockish.

Breaking Down Power Dynamics

From the start, BASE members shared their experience of having foundations use the words “shared power” with the reality being that decisions were always made in the grantees’ name and without their input. Groups would then be asked to agree with the decision. That solidified the power dynamic: “We have the money and therefore the power to decide, and if you want our funding this is what we will need you to do.” At the time we began, many foundations did not recognize or were uncomfortable with alliances with communities and trying to break down barriers.

In contrast to much of the foundation world, PDF believed that trust had to be built through experiences with each other that reinforced the intent to share power and create a new paradigm for interaction. Through testing, learning and trying again, we are still learning.

Practical Application: All decisions from budget to strategy for the Initiative were made collectively by various committees and working groups. Each entity was made up of representatives from both grassroots partners and PDF, with each party holding an equal vote. Members of BASE communities were also on the PDF Board of Directors, ensuring ongoing dialogue and representation.

Trust over Money

Too often, a relationship between a foundation and a grantee is built around the money that changes hands. BASE recognized that in order to create a community and a movement for social change, our relationships needed to be built on something deeper. During times when funding was scarce, we would spend even more time with each other and on our collective goals, as opposed to decelerating activities. Under adverse conditions, the Initiative was able to stay together through two years without any major source of outside funding or internal community distributions because of the relationships and commitments of the BASE members to each other.

Practical Application: During times when the initiative had little funding, we focused on sending small delegations to various conferences and events to keep BASE on the environmental justice radar screen. We were flexible in our planning to allow BASE to take advantage of opportunities to add BASE voices to environmental justice organizing.

Due to the time spent building trust, we began to see BASE members sharing survival skills to weather not only the lack of BASE funding but also the Great Recession. At regular meetings they discussed what actions members were taking in their communities to sustain themselves. They shared grant proposals, state and federal funding resources, links to union funding and described fund-raising events held in their communities. They worked together to develop alternative sources of funding beyond the foundation world, both for themselves and for the network.

Financial Transparency

In order for there to be trust and to overcome power dynamics, financial transparency was critical.

Practical Application: All financial decisions were made within the BASE group system, including how funds would be spent and how much member groups would receive in community distribution grants every year. No one would be denied funding if they were an active member of the Initiative, on the Community Board or on one of the committees. The three-tiered structure allowed members to be involved in activities to the best of their ability, and the community distribution funds supported them to participate.

Youth Development

From the very first meeting, the BASE Initiative made an effort to include the voices of young people from the communities. Some of these youth were already seasoned environmental movement organizers, many coming from families active in BASE or other struggles. The Initiative offered a leadership role and the opportunity to become decision-makers.

Practical Application: Youth members were present at all BASE events, meetings and activities. The Youth Circle also held their own events and meetings, and were empowered to make their own decisions, manage their budget and design their own activities. Family relationships brought in other young people and strengthened the ties of their peers to the local communities. This was critical to one of the BASE objectives, to build closer ties and alliances in their home communities.

Shared Power, Shared Responsibilities

Shared power and collective decision-making meant that we also had to share in the responsibilities and workload of the Initiative, a tenet of the co-creation model. Over the course of the Initiative PDF provided staffing, sometimes full-time, sometimes part-time, and brought in consultants for media, fund-raising or strategic planning. BASE members were equally responsible for making the Initiative work.

Practical Application: PDF staff took on the majority of the administrative and logistical tasks, using consultants at times, while the programmatic planning and implementation was shared by all members. Grants were considered a community distribution for general support, to allow the BASE members to spend time on the Initiative, understanding that the expertise to build this movement would lie in the communities, not with PDF staff or consultants.

Sharing Our Experiences

PDF adopted this model as a way to relate to our grantees across our other initiatives. We believe that this model, and the lessons learned from its application can be of benefit to the larger philanthropic as well as social and environmental justice movements.

Practical Application: PDF and BASE members engaged in this discussion with other funders and grassroots organizations, in informal meetings as well as in presentations at various conferences and events, detailed in the following section, “Activities Highlights.”

Activities Highlights

2002 – September

BASE Initiative Innaugural Meeting

The BASE initiative was founded in September of 2002 during a four-day gathering held outside Atlanta, GA. During this historic gathering, close to 50 participants came together representing over 20 organizations, led by a diverse group of facilitators and mentors.

Over the course of four intense days, participants created a vision for what the BASE Initiative would become. The first day was dedicated to establishing a strong relationship, sharing our collective history, and to a healing ceremony led by Indigenous elder, Bruce Elijah.

“The ceremony allowed us to express the pain and hurt that many of us have suffered from the contamination,” explained Ms. Juarez, PDF board president and a member of the New Mexico Alliance, a BASE partner. “Part of the healing was to be able to cope with having lost so many members of our families and communities.

“We have fought from the beginning of the environmental movement to bring healing into our work. They have always given us western medicine, but we wanted to bring in traditional healing. We have always fought to include ceremony as a way of healing for our people. This is not only about healing, but is an act of defiance that comes from people affirming our culture and our traditions.”

This healing ceremony also served as an early example of an ongoing challenge that continued throughout the Initiative, but also an example of how we overcame those challenges to become

stronger as a unit. Heading into the weekend, one African American member from the South, whose work was grounded in his Christian faith, alerted us that he would not participate in this ceremony due to his own religious beliefs. However, after a morning of networking and discussions about our need to unite across various differences, this member ended up offering the opening prayer for the healing ceremony.

PDF's Executive Director Paul Haible noted, "If you are not willing to deal with the depth of what happens on a cultural and spiritual level, you can't do cross-cultural organizing."

PDF also engaged in an open and transparent discussion about what the co-creative process would look like in practice: how PDF, the organization that raised and provided the funds, could work as an equal partner with all of the grassroots organizations who were there. This would be the beginning of an ongoing discussion that continued to evolve over the course of the Initiative.

At this meeting BASE made a commitment to continue to support the development of our youth. Some as young as 13 were present at this meeting, and many of them would continue to work with BASE, going on to become leaders of the BASE Youth Circle.

2002 – October

Family Spirit Walk

During the first meeting, BASE voted to support member organization Shundahai Network that was organizing a major march and rally outside the Nevada Test Site. What started out in August with 25 walkers brought together 5,000 activists by October. The test site (now known as the Nevada National Security Site) is located on the traditional homeland of the Western Shoshone people and is also home to many controversial military research projects, including nuclear testing.

BASE brought 48 participants to support the Shundahai Network and to show solidarity from other communities who also deal with the negative impacts of the nuclear industry in their regions.

"This was the first time we came together as a BASE action, so this was an important trip, especially for many of our young people," explained Dr. McClain, of the Harambee House/Citizens for Environmental Justice. "Our youth had the chance to touch the land where nuclear technology became a reality. It took them out of their comfort zone and made it real for them. When we got back, they had a different level of understanding of our issues, including how our issues in Savannah are connected to issues in Arkansas, Nevada and all over."

BASE participated in the march, encampment and rally organized by Shundahai Network and held our own national press conference in Las Vegas, demonstrating the response of Indigenous and people of color. The press was particularly interested in the youth participation, and the BASE youth were able to make connections with other young organizers from around the country. The Nevada Test Site was not reopened.

2003 August

Public Letter Opposing the Modern Pit Facility in New Mexico

During the summer of 2003, the BASE Initiative drafted and submitted a joint letter opposing the creation of a new facility that would produce plutonium “pits,” which act as the trigger mechanism for nuclear weapons. This letter, signed by all members of the BASE Initiative, was submitted to the Department of Energy during its public comments period and forwarded to hundreds of congressional members and national media contacts. This was the first time people of color were heard to address this issue from Savannah to Hanford, and the government encountered their strong opposition. The pits continue to be on-hold in New Mexico. It was also a result of this letter that BASE was invited to meetings with the Department of Defense and Department of Energy during the early years of the Obama administration. It opened connections among the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Defense and Department of Energy, and linked federal agencies with state agencies so that the federal agencies would not overrule state agency regulations on the effects of contaminants.

2004 January

Community Board Meeting

Held in Washington, DC, this general organizational meeting was intended to facilitate several objectives, including time for workshops on grassroots fund-raising, working with the media, and to afford BASE members time to meet with federal officials from the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as with the membership of another environmental justice network, ACA-Net. The Environmental Support Center hosted the meeting.

2004 October

Community Board Meeting

Held in Aptos, CA, this was the first meeting after discovering that BASE would be losing the final year of funding from its major funder (due to changes at the funder, not due to BASE activities). While reaffirming our commitment to continue, the Community Board looked at new funding strategies, new organizing opportunities and in particular, the membership committed to participating in international gatherings hosted by the United Nations.

April 2005

Community Board Meeting

Held in The Dalles, OR, this meeting was hosted by BASE member Columbia River Education - Economic Development. In addition to our regular three-day meeting, Initiative members were invited to participate in the spring salmon ceremony of the Klickitat community, when the people honor and recognize the return of their traditional foods. The festival included a feast and potlatch, where the tribe gave gifts to everyone present.

Said Chief Slockish, who is also the administrator of the Columbia River Education - Economic Development, “This has always been our custom, to give gifts and provide for people and share what we have. It is our way of giving thanks for all of the gifts we have been given – the fish, the land, the water, the air.”

Participating in the local event gave BASE members an opportunity to engage directly with an important cultural activity of the local community. This was an important aspect of our work –

spending time immersed in another culture, getting to know each other better and building a stronger alliance. After this gathering, we continued to organize Community Board meetings in member communities, often times coinciding with an important local cultural festival or activity.

2005 – May

UN NPT Review Conference

BASE sent a delegation to participate in the United Nations Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference, which takes place every five years at the U.N. headquarters in New York City. BASE members were able to network with other anti-nuclear organizations and speak at a major rally in Central Park, bringing visibility to people of color speaking directly from affected communities. Others in the anti-nuclear movement saw that BASE members had a different “spin” on the issues (poverty, unemployment, health concerns, lack of educational opportunities as a result of living near nuclear sites), and BASE began to work in an international arena.

2006 – October

National Network of Grantmakers

The BASE Initiative sponsored a workshop entitled “*Who’s the Criminal: Blighted Communities and the Road to Incarceration*” during the annual conference of the National Network of Grantmakers (NNG), formerly a network of progressive foundations and donors. The focus of that year’s conference was on criminal justice. BASE members illuminated the connection between environmental destruction and its impact on community blight and crime, a first for NNG members.

It elevated the reality that environmental issues have real social as well as health consequences, hence the “justice” in environmental justice organizing. The affected communities spoke for themselves.

2007 – May

UN PFII

This was the first year that the BASE Initiative participated in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), an annual conference that takes place in New York City at UN headquarters. BASE sponsored a workshop on the impacts of the nuclear industry on Indigenous communities, showing that nuclear contamination creates community impoverishment and affects social issues such as employment, health and educational levels. Residents often have to leave their communities if they do not want to work in the nuclear industry - the sole source of good jobs - or in low-wage service jobs like McDonalds. They leave to get a better education. Exploring the downside of the nuclear industry was a key part of BASE’s movement building, creating relationships across boundaries to international Indigenous communities, noting that globally over 70 percent of the world’s uranium supplies are on Indigenous lands and territories. Since that time, BASE has participated at some level in the UNPFII annually.

2007 – September

Leadership Circle Meeting

Hosted by BASE member New Mexico Alliance in Chimayo, NM, this was the inaugural meeting of the Leadership Circle. Most major decisions up to this point were made by the Community Board, but due to the expense of bringing everybody together, as well as the time commit-

ments that it required, this smaller body was created to manage the Initiative. The Leadership Circle updated and reviewed the vision and mission, reorganized the budget and mapped out a work plan for the new structures, setting BASE up for the next round of fund-raising.

2008 – February

BASE Assessments

At the beginning of 2008, the BASE Leadership Circle conducted assessments of all BASE member organizations. This included updates on their current campaigns, an assessment of their organizational capacity and identifying technical assistance needs. Many of these assessments included face-to-face interviews conducted by members of the Leadership Circle. This work was tied directly to outreach and proposal preparation, as we sought new funding opportunities.

2008 - October

Leadership Circle Meeting

The Leadership Circle met to finalize a new, three-tiered structure for the Initiative. This structure was based on the various organizational capacities and needs of each member organization, and their ability to actively engage with the BASE Initiative. At this time, when new funding was approved for three years, the leadership took this moment to emphasize the new structures, to work with each member to find their appropriate role and to further clarify PDF's role to support leadership from among the community members.

2009 – March

Community Board Meeting

The BASE Initiative spent close to a week in Washington, DC on both internal discussions and strategy building meetings with various officials and allied organizations. This meeting was timed to occur after the inauguration of President Barack Obama, a time when new officials were coming into office excited to establish new relationships with community groups.

“This was a very strategic time for us to be in DC, meeting and building relationships with the new power players in Washington,” said PDF Program Director Mr. Haga. “Many officials expressed to us that during the eight years of the Bush administration, their hands were often tied in terms of their ability to meet with and work with community groups. With the incoming administration, there was a lot of energy in DC.”

The most successful of these meetings was a joint meeting between BASE members and representatives of the Federal Inter-Agency Working Group on Environmental Justice. This working group was established by President Clinton to coordinate the efforts of the offices of environmental justice within the various federal agencies. The Working Group fell dormant during the Bush years, with the agencies not collaborating on environmental justice issues. The Obama administration was more interested in restarting this interagency collaboration, particularly around environmental justice issues, and the Working Group began to meet again.

Our meeting was one of the most well-attended of its kind, as the BASE delegation met with high-ranking representatives from the Departments of Energy, Defense, Interior, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency and others. One participant commented that in his 20-plus years of doing this work, this was the best-

attended meeting between community members and federal agencies. It led to later meetings at the Savannah River Site and in Washington, DC, offering a platform for the voices of those most impacted by the military and civilian nuclear industry.

In addition to this joint meeting, BASE members split up to lobby all over Capitol Hill. BASE members met with their local congressional leaders, representatives from the White House, attended and spoke at a congressional hearing, and hosted a representative from the AFL-CIO to discuss collaboration with the labor movement.

Notably, at this meeting BASE made an active commitment to become more involved in the international movement for climate justice.

2009 – August

BASE Youth Circle Gathering

The inaugural meeting of twelve members of the BASE Youth Circle was held in Chimayo, NM. In an effort to maintain an inter-generational approach, several BASE elders sat in during portions of this meeting. In addition to the elders passing on knowledge and the history of the environmental justice movement, the youth shared presentations with each other about the work in their local communities, drafted a mission and vision statement for the Youth Circle and began identifying potential joint projects.

For some, this meeting was their first time on a plane or traveling outside of their home regions. Providing opportunities to see new environments and build relationships with young people from vastly different cultures, who all shared the same experience of living near a nuclear site, was a big, teachable moment.

2009 – October

Community Board Meeting

This meeting was held in Little Rock, AR, hosted by BASE member Pine Bluff for Safe Disposal. In addition to our annual planning and preparation for the upcoming delegation to the climate change conference in Copenhagen, the group spent an evening in Pine Bluff, breaking bread with the local community and participating in their homecoming weekend celebrations.

We worked with a consultant at this meeting who affirmed for us that BASE was travelling in uncharted waters. If we could successfully achieve much of what we were attempting, we could be a model for the social justice movement, where there is much tension and conflict between and among stakeholder groups.

2009 – December

COP 15

BASE members sent a seven-person delegation to Copenhagen, Denmark to participate in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Conference of the Parties 15-COP15). The delegation was joined by Chief Gary Harrison, International Chair of the Arctic Athabaskan Council. Chief Harrison, who has many years of experience working in the international arena including climate change conferences, acted as our guide for BASE's first international delegation.

BASE members noted a lack of an anti-nuclear analysis within the climate change dialogue prior to attending the conference. The nuclear industry was pushing their technology as a clean, green and sustainable source of energy; “peaceful uses of nuclear technology” has become somewhat of a catchphrase in international negotiations. But from the perspective of communities who live near the nuclear chain, we know that this technology has never been “peaceful, green or clean.”

For most of the conference, BASE was the only grassroots delegation from the U.S. with an anti-nuclear agenda. Many climate justice organizations had not addressed the question of how clean or green nuclear technology may or may not be, so the BASE delegation worked the halls to raise the issues, and to advocate that nuclear energy not be considered a “green” source of power.

BASE was one of the few delegations that had an “inside-outside” strategy. BASE was accredited to enter and participate in the official COP15 conference, where we held a panel discussion that was covered by several international media outlets. But we were also present in the grassroots climate justice movement, meeting with other activist groups and participating in a panel discussion at KlimaForum, the alternative “people’s forum.”

BASE also drafted and handed out hundreds of copies of a report entitled, “Ruling Out the Nuclear Option” (see Appendix 3). This position paper rebuffed many of the claims that nuclear energy can be climate neutral or green.

2010 – April

Earth Day Meeting with EPA

Harambee House/Citizens for Environmental Justice organized a community meeting with Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. Mr. Stanislaus was responsible for EPA’s programs on hazardous and solid waste management, hazardous waste cleanup, and Superfund and federal facilities cleanup and redevelopment.

Recognizing the significance of this meeting, the BASE Leadership Circle designated several representatives from BASE communities to attend the meeting. In addition to representatives from Harambee House/Citizens for Environmental Justice, other BASE members included the New Mexico Alliance, Diné CARE, two youth members from Product of Aztlan and the Northwest Social and Environmental Justice Institute, and a PDF representative.

The meeting with Mr. Stanislaus was very productive. He was impressed with the work of the BASE Initiative. He committed to building an ongoing relationship with our members, as well as re-establishing what used to be a valuable relationship between federal agencies and grassroots communities forged during the Clinton Administration. In his subsequent testimony before Congress regarding Superfund clean-up, Mr. Stanislaus noted, “While Superfund continues to make progress cleaning up hazardous waste sites, we still face numerous challenges. One such challenge involves ensuring that our cleanup activities are conducted in an accountable and transparent fashion so that communities have the information they need to be active and engaged participants in the cleanup process.”

BASE members had an opportunity to comment on the final report from the meeting, and Mr. Stanislaus hosted a follow-up meeting in Washington, DC in the fall with other Federal Agency representatives and BASE members.

2010 – August

Think Outside the Bomb Disarmament Summer

In the summer of 2010, the BASE Youth Circle partnered with Think Outside the Bomb to host a 10-day encampment in Chimayo, NM of young, anti-nuclear activists from around the country and Europe. BASE youth were joined by over 80 activists for 10 days of skill-building workshops, non-violent training actions, permaculture projects, rallies and demonstrations, culminating in a large march and rally outside of the Los Alamos National Research Laboratory. The encampment was the first time that the mostly white, European and American activists had worked with people of color. Some of these activists went on to Occupy Wall Street and other Occupy movements the following year, using the skills and training learned with BASE at Chimayo to become core members and strategists in key locations.

2010 – October

Follow-Up Meeting with EPA

At an inter-agency meeting hosted by Mr. Stanislaus in Washington, DC, BASE members presented a five-year plan to clean up hazardous waste sites all over the U.S., proposed working groups for each area and spoke directly with the Director about the possibilities for partnership with the EPA on clean-up programs.

2010 – December

COP 16

Following the success and the challenges of our delegation to COP15, BASE again sent a seven member delegation to the 16th UNFCCC, COP 16, in Cancun, Mexico. Unlike COP 15, this meeting was organized to keep civil society far from the proceedings, so our access was much more limited and we had to adopt different strategies.

“This was a great delegation, but we encountered the challenges of working in the international arena,” reflected Paul Haible. “These negotiations are not the most democratic process and we saw the dynamics between the formal state process and the people’s process. We learned a lot on this trip about how to engage internationally, and that we clearly needed to maintain our ‘inside/outside’ strategy to be effective.”

The need for an “inside/outside” strategy became evident as the people’s movement and civil society organizations outside COP 16 addressed the same questions, such as protecting resources and sustainable agriculture, that the “inside” delegates were talking about, but in a much more vibrant and active way. Inside COP 16, delegate nations were negotiating a global economy, government to government, with minimal input from a few favored civil society organizations and NGOs. For BASE, our most effective networking was available outside COP 16 with those communities most impacted by climate change, rather than in the conference.

2011 – May

Community Board Meeting

The last Community Board meeting was held in Aiken, SC, hosted by The Imani Group. In addition to our meeting and joining a community fish fry, The Imani Group arranged a tour of the Savannah River Site (SRS), a nuclear reservation that spans over 300 square miles. This is the second largest nuclear waste depository in the country and the site where the majority of the country's plutonium stockpile was developed. "The visit really made these issues real for many of us," said Program Director Mr. Haga, noting that several BASE members elected not to participate in the site visit. "It was a trip filled with mixed emotions."

The tour was made possible because of the good working relationship that The Imani Group had built with the SRS over many years and highlighted the complicated reality that many BASE communities have to live with: recognizing that these facilities are often times the only source of quality employment in their communities. So while they are working towards nuclear abolition, BASE communities often need to maintain a working relationship with the facilities. This complexity was reinforced by the public relations staff person who was present for the entire visit, yet who said not a word. It was clear that though this was a public relations tour for them, there was some information they wanted to ensure the attendees did not get, and that the SRS would be interested in our own internal comments and conversation while on site.

"BASE members understand the impact of these facilities on their own communities better than anyone," added Mr. Haga. "Understanding the issues from an inside perspective provides them with more information, and having that perspective is critical to their struggles."

2011 – June

Allied Media Conference

The BASE Youth Circle sent an eight member delegation to Detroit, MI, to attend the Allied Media Conference of media activists. The conference was focused on building media skills for activists, and the young BASE members participated in a one-day workshop training them to use donated media equipment, which they took home following the conference. They gained valuable skills in digital storytelling and some used those skills to help their communities tell their stories upon their return.

2011 – December

COP 17

The 2011 UNFCCC took place in Durban, South Africa, and BASE sent a four-person delegation. We used this opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with partner agencies in South Africa, other NGOs and civil society organizations, but we left convinced that the COP meetings were an increasingly poor use of BASE time and resources. As in COP 16, networking and sharing in the people's forums was more useful. Community organizations did not have access to negotiations at COP 17 and thus could not make an impact. Side meetings with officials became even harder to arrange in South Africa. Conferences were held in inaccessible areas, making it hard for NGOs or community groups to attend.

Finally, as in the other COP meetings, we realized there was a clear absence of a critique of nuclear power, despite the fact that Fukushima had happened just months before. If anything, with

the disintegration of the Kyoto protocols and the parties setting out on new framework negotiations, we felt that the COP meetings went backwards rather than forwards, forestalling any meaningful international protocols limiting uses of nuclear power.

Lessons Learned

After 10 years of organizing together across the country and around the world, the BASE Initiative taught us many important lessons, challenged us in many ways, and ultimately demonstrated what is possible when a small group of committed community leaders comes together around a common goal and are not afraid to think outside the box.

Among our goals for this Initiative was to create a new model of how funders and grassroots communities can work together in partnership. Furthermore, we explored how to build a national collective based in communities led by people of color, without losing the integrity and leadership from the local level? How do people of color make our movement stronger and more dynamic? In looking back on the last decade of work, we are left with many reflections that we hope will continue to benefit all who work for justice.

Part of what we hoped we could build were trusting relationships that would allow us to be honest with each other about our struggles and challenges. Too often, a grantee cannot be truly honest with its funders about a grantee's struggles for fear of getting their funding cut. Furthermore, funders rarely open up to their grantees about challenges that they may be going through.

We made a commitment to work in true partnership, where relationships are not reviewed and renewed each year through a grant cycle. We had to create a space where we could be honest, where we could challenge each other, and where we would be confident that we would be able to handle the hard discussions that we would enable us to learn from our collective experience.

“People of color’ aren’t a monolith,” said Ms. Juarez. “We are just not white folks.

“We couldn’t always overcome inter-racial dynamics,” she admitted. “This was a tougher challenge than organizing within one cultural group. Communication was not easy. So we needed to find new communication techniques to understand when to speak aggressively and when to stand back.”

In the same spirit, we want to offer readers some of the challenges that we encountered during this 10-year program. Our hope is that our mistakes and challenges will lead to the creation of more trusting, authentic relationships between diverse sectors and communities working for social justice.

Working Across Divides/Committing to Conflict

BASE was more than a network or an organization. Community Board meetings brought together a diverse, multicultural group of people. Working with such a group was part of our strength, but it also meant that we were often in conflict. Committing to a process of building authentic relationships across various divides and challenging traditional power dynamics meant committing to that conflict. We recognized from the start that this was not always going to be a fun, simple or easy process.

“In my community in rural South Carolina,” explained Rev. Jenkins from The Imani Group, “it is considered disrespectful to take more than two minutes to introduce yourself to a group. But I have learned through my involvement with BASE that in many Indigenous cultures, if you *don’t* spend 15 minutes introducing yourself, *that’s* considered disrespectful.”

These cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings, and those misunderstandings could escalate into assumptions and arguments. “We didn’t understand each other’s cultures,” said Chief Slockish. “We didn’t really understand how each other conducted business, but we worked on it.”

Ms. Goodman of Diné CARE spoke more bluntly about the divides: “We needed a Dismantling Racism workshop first. It didn’t matter that we were all people of color. We gravitated to the people who knew our culture.” But what foundation would have funded this, she wondered. “People getting together and talking - it’s not considered ‘work.’ We were uniquely building a network in a multicultural setting among people of color.”

Many discussions challenged our comfort levels, our assumptions and ideas about strategy, process, culture and traditions. Tears were shed, voices were raised, which is why BASE emphasized spending time soaking in a local host community’s culture every time we met. This time was built into our gatherings but did not include any agenda items. It was neither a time for meetings nor a time to discuss strategy. This was about spending time with each other and strengthening our ability to understand and work together, to know each other on the human and community level.

Authentic relationships and authentic understanding do not come from a weekend seminar on diversity, but by spending time with and immersing oneself in one another’s community and culture. Building a movement is much like building a family. Arguments are going to happen, and we cannot hide behind the wall of “professionalism” and “courtesy,” avoiding the difficult but necessary conversations that are essential in order to grow. Through it all, we struggled to remain focused on our common goals.

Differing Capacities

Another lesson that we learned was the importance of recognizing different levels of capacity. We all had a strong commitment to the principle that all BASE members were equal, yet various factors contributed to each community’s ability to engage in the Initiative. These factors included the amount of staff time a group could dedicate to national collaborations, language barriers, previous experience working with networks and coalitions, life circumstances for people who live and work in low-income communities under stress, family responsibilities or access to technology.

Early on in the Initiative, we were often frustrated at the lack of participation on conference calls. “Time management and commitment on the part of some groups was weak,” said Chief Slockish. “We couldn’t follow up and implement some great ideas and activities that we wanted to do,” added Dr. McClain, because communities did not understand clearly the importance of their engagement.

But rather than blaming the communities and making assumptions about their level of commitment, we recognized the challenges facing all of our communities. We ultimately created a tiered organizational structure that allowed each group to participate to the level they were able while focusing our resources on raising those groups' capacity. "The tiers resolved themselves by energy and commitment, not culturally," said Ms. Juarez.

This meant that at the beginning of the Initiative, all decisions were made by the Community Board, with representatives from every organization. This later changed to a two-tier structure with a Leadership Circle within the Community Board, and ultimately to a three-tier structure (See Appendix 1).

Our willingness to be fluid and not get mired in any ideology allowed us to constantly evaluate our process and allow best practices to emerge organically. This was an ongoing experiment, and a constantly evolving process. Nothing was set in stone, and all our internal practices and processes were recorded in what we considered living documents and evolving systems.

For all the reasons above, we realized the some communities were more capable of commitment than others to the BASE Initiative. They did not have the capacity to participate. Rather than consolidating the Initiative around those communities with the same commitment, we continued to work, longer than was feasible, to bring the "outlying" communities into the shared commitment. "We became enablers," said Ms. Goodman. "Some groups were ready to be part of BASE. They took charge and moved forward, but we were hampered by those groups that wanted or needed to be carried by the other members of the Initiative." In retrospect, we needed to be sure that all were on the same page, with the same expectations and working toward the same goal. This was difficult to gauge at the beginning of BASE, but became clearer as time went on.

Developing the Next Generation of Leaders

Youth leadership was a central element to BASE. Many positive developments emerged from BASE, including some that rippled across the country in the Occupy movement. Northwest Social and Economic Development started a theater group with BASE youth. Mr. Yanez noted that through BASE, his daughter built relationships with people of color across the country and developed public speaking skills. Now she is in college, addressing social and economic issues in her studies.

But Rev. Jenkins lamented that The Imani Group did not keep a fire under their young people or support them at all times. Many groups shared this criticism, pointing to insufficient mentoring on their part. "We wanted them to stand up and run, but we had not strengthened their legs," Rev. Jenkins acknowledged.

Avoiding Silos

Some organizations had never been involved in the international arena, so BASE was able to introduce them to the global nuclear movement. This brought participation in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and global climate change conferences in Denmark, Mexico and South Africa. Valuably, BASE members realized that they were not isolated in their local or even national movement. BASE was able to bring people with the same problems into

the room together, especially Indigenous and people of color for the first time. People understood that their concerns were larger than their own communities. At a time when nuclear energy is being presented as a clean energy alternative in the world, people of color must have a voice and participate in the international arena.

Some BASE members and PDF were also involved in more than environmental justice work, and this benefited BASE to realize that we are all involved in the larger movement for human rights and justice. For instance, at the COP 16 meeting in Mexico, BASE members met organizers from PDF's Cross Border Initiative, who helped them make better use of the meetings. Relationships flourished from PDF's Indigenous work over many years at the U.N. with BASE attendees meeting Indigenous groups from outside the U.S. PDF's Criminal Justice Initiative influenced BASE members at a U.N. workshop, as both struggles discussed the same social fallout from blighted communities.

Coordinator/Staffing Capacity

Due to reduced financial capacity following the first year, the Initiative scaled back staffing from full to part-time. For the majority of the decade, BASE relied on one part-time staff person, along with contributed time from many of the partners. The co-creation structure didn't adequately account for the fact that PDF itself needed funding to staff and manage the network.

We did our best to counter this by sharing tasks and responsibilities, but it was not always effective or fair to rely on the local organizations, who were so busy in their local communities. Without a dedicated full-time coordinator, it was a challenge pulling together a national network of locally based organizations, a liability that troubled us to the Initiative's close.

Who Needs Money?

Perhaps one of our greatest accomplishments was the simple fact that we were able to survive three years without any major sources of funding between the initial four-year Ford Foundation grant and later three-year funding from the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Without a single community distribution grant going out the door, the Initiative was able to persist based on nothing more than our commitment to each other, contributed staff time from PDF, continuing work by the membership, and the modest program work we were able to do which caught the attention of funders, eventually leading us to the Marguerite Casey Foundation.

From the fall of 2005 to the fall of 2008, we hunkered down, patched together a few small grants for travel, and relied on each other to engage in collective activities. Rather than complain about the money we did not have, we went back to our grassroots ways, got creative and made the available funds stretch. What we lacked in finances, we made up for in relationships and creativity.

Smaller working groups made discussions more efficient. More decisions were made over conference calls as opposed to face-to-face meetings. Rather than large national gatherings and actions, we sent small delegations to various actions, conferences and other important events. By trusting each other and remaining active in the environmental justice movement, we were able to re-secure long-term funding based on our work and track record.

Internalized Oppression

As with many communities of color that have faced decades and generations of oppression, our Initiative struggled with the many ways in which those forces become internalized. We could fall into the comfort zone of victimization, and we often spent more time discussing the ways in which we had been negatively impacted by the nuclear cycle and by systems of oppression, rather than organizing and planning. Many of our communities have been so badly damaged that it was often a challenge to move beyond that to finding solutions and remedies.

At the same time, the same sense of victimization also led to a sense of entitlement. “Our liberalism almost killed us,” said Ms. Goodman, who advocated asking groups that didn’t carry their weight to leave the Initiative earlier. Many BASE groups have the experience of being exploited by the mainstream environmental movement that raised money in the name of what may be happening in their communities, without permission or any sharing of resources. This led some to feel that they were finally “due,” creating challenges around our own finances and who deserved to get what. “Not all hands were on deck with the work but when resources were available, people were suddenly there,” commented Rev. Jenkins. We saw an expectation materialize regarding foundation funding, and a parallel and unhealthy dependency upon BASE and PDF to take care of them.

In retrospect, we needed to move all of us beyond foundations as the only potential sources of funds. The organizations needed to establish additional sources of revenue, including for-profit programs, to become more self-sufficient. Given that we were working with communities and tribal areas, rather than long-term, well known non-profits, this seemed possible. Indeed, a few of the communities did establish new revenue possibilities to become more self-sufficient. The New Mexico Alliance began to work with the U.S. Forest Service on a grant to “green” areas of northern New Mexico and remove invasive species. The Imani Group and Harambee House worked more closely with the EPA to secure federal funding for hazardous waste clean-up and training programs.

Closing Reflections

“Nuclear organizing will never go away for us,” stated Ms. Goodman. “We have three Superfund sites on Navajo land. It impacts our water and everything else. There may be no more uranium mining but the damage was done. We are forever tied to the issue.”

“Nuclear organizing is never going away,” reiterated Chief Slockish. “People don’t realize what has happened to the land. A free market isn’t free - something has to give its life in order to be utilized for profit, like the salmon, huckleberries, deer which have been overharvested. Something has to give. The nuclear industry takes advantage of people who have no other source of income.”

The nuclear industry needs to reckon with these issues, because over 70 percent of uranium reserves are on Indigenous lands and territories, whose rights to self-determination and free, prior and informed consent are now codified in the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“It is a complex and ongoing process. Nuclear organizing is not something you can work on from time to time,” said Dr. McClain. BASE members point to clean energy standards as a smokescreen for nuclear power. “It’s hiding behind a new vocabulary,” said Ms. Goodman. Meanwhile, the question of what to do with the nuclear waste remains unanswered.

“The mentality that clean energy can be nuclear energy needs to change,” said Chief Slockish. The way it is processed and how to dispose of it is not fully addressed. “It’s always on our land that provides us our food source. We’ve got to protect our lands.

“I have to answer to my Creator for all the things put here for our benefit, like the salmon, deer and the plants. These are things for giving life, not for recreation. The Creator is going to ask me about what I did, and I want to say I did my best to protect our lands.”

Dr. McClain noted that it is going to be a challenge for people of color to remain involved in nuclear organizing because with no funding, it is hard to engage in the level of work required.

The environmental movement has been and still is a segregated movement, with white people traditionally on one side and people of color - representing the affected communities - on the other. “We need to rethink how we will impact what’s going on,” she said, and continue to monitor and engage even when not welcome or invited to the discussion.

Nevertheless, over the course of the decade, we think BASE may have had a positive impact on the environmental movement. Mainstream organizations like the Sierra Club and other funders admit that their group does not reflect the communities impacted by environmental hazards; they have pledged to work on the ground with community organizations to bring their voices to the table. “We realize we are old and white,” said Robin Mann, the recent President of the Sierra Club at a 2012 lecture at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, “and we have to change and work with community organizations on issues that affect us all.” The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy’s recent report, *Cultivating the Grassroots*, argues that, “We can secure more environmental wins by decreasing reliance on top-down funding strategies and increasing funding for grassroots communities that are directly impacted by environmental harms and have the passion and perseverance to mobilize and demand change.”

Advocating a dramatic shift in foundation philanthropy, the report goes on to say, “Grassroots organizing is particularly powerful where social, economic and environmental ills overlap, as is all too common in lower income communities and communities of color. By engaging with the organizations that serve these communities and nurturing the growth of their leaders, we not only are investing in a healthy planet and people now, but also building a movement that reflects the future demographic majority of America.”

Had we continued beyond the ten-year period, we would have strengthened our international relationships, utilizing our access at the United Nations, and building on our work at the COP UN-FCCC. In fact, we have informally continued many of these connections beyond the life cycle of the BASE Initiative, and PDF, as a foundation, will continue in these activities.

Rev. Jenkins calls the continued connection of BASE members critical and wants them to remain connected to continue working on nuclear issues. “We created a movement that gained traction, recognition and respect,” she said. “We cannot walk away from something that has such great value. We need to figure out the next steps in our activism.”

“The relationships will always be there,” said Mr. Yanez. “BASE brought us together wherever we were located and now we will always have the connections we will need.”

The co-creation process opened up a movement-building dynamic that was cross-issue and cross-cultural, resulting in a movement consciousness for the BASE groups, rather than concentrating on single-issue organizing.

Finally, the main question for this 10-year project that we call the BASE Initiative was answered: Can we, as funders and grassroots groups, as youth and elders, as communities separated by culture, race, language and geography, come together and build a movement grounded in authentic relationships? We have proved it can be done.

The next phase of nuclear organizing among the frontline communities will reflect lessons learned, will build on relationships and strategies, and will continue to pursue the goals of ending nuclear fuel use and creating just systems of development that are inclusive of the affected people and communities.

Initiative Funders

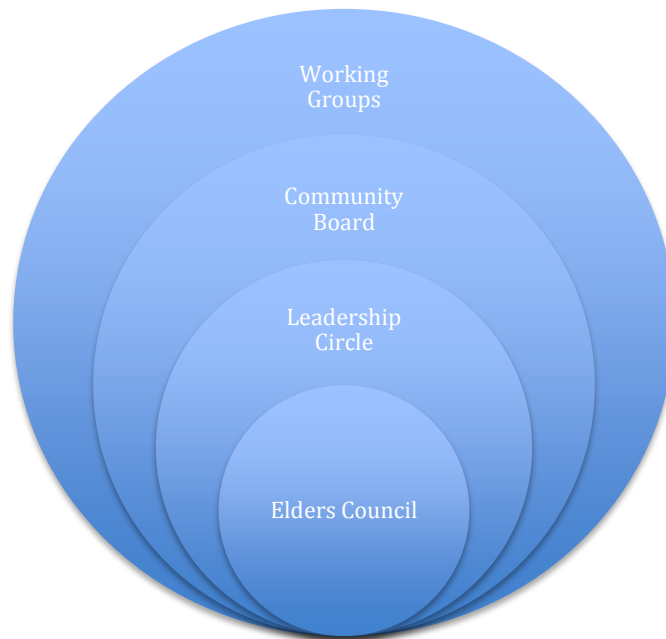
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Appendix

1. Structure
2. Community-based Members of the BASE Initiative
3. Position Paper: Ruling Out the Nuclear Option, by Max Bartlett

1. Structure



Elders Council. A permanent council made up of elders with a long history in the environmental justice movement. The Council provided overall guidance for the Initiative as well as managing the dynamics of our community.

Leadership Circle. A rotational committee made up of elders, organizational members, youth and PDF staff. The Leadership Circle managed the overall coordination of the Initiative, including developing budgets, prioritizing projects and facilitating communication with the membership. This was a working committee with equal voice from each party in that Circle.

Community Board. Representatives from all the communities that make up the BASE Initiative. The Community Board would have at least one face-to-face meeting every year to evaluate our work and develop our overall work plan.

Working Groups. Working groups were developed as the need arose and shifted their focus when it made sense to do so. The Initiative developed working groups such as:

- Youth Circle. After its initial meeting, the Youth Circle remained active throughout the rest of the history of the Initiative.
- International Working Group. This group focused on international activities and relationship-building, including participation at U.N.-sponsored events such as the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Domestic Working Group. Focused on domestic programs and policy, this working group concentrated on building relationships with other organizations, policy makers and government officials in order to expand our work.
- Organizational Development Working Group. Focused on internal communications, fund-raising and other internal aspects of the Initiative.

Other ad-hoc working groups were created to focus on specific projects on a time-limited basis.

2. Community-Based Members of the BASE Initiative¹

Center for Environmental And Economic Justice (CEEJ)

James Black, Director

Biloxi, MS

www.envirojustice.com

CEEJ addresses environmental racism and military pollutants in the Biloxi, MS area. Biloxi and its surrounding waterways are heavily impacted by dioxins and other chemicals such as Agent Orange, emanating from a Navy Base in the area. CEEJ is a diverse group of African Americans and Latinos who are training and involving community members in the government's clean-up, conducting health surveys and educating the greater Biloxi area.

***Columbia River Education - Economic Development**

Chief Wilbur J. Slockish, Jr., Administrator

The Dalles, OR

Columbia River Education is working for environmental justice and alternative economic development among Indigenous communities who have remained in their traditional homelands along the Columbia River. This group provides their people with information on nuclear materials production, storage and disposal; how the nuclear cycle affects their health, food supply and job safety; and promotes community involvement in decision-making about hazardous waste in and surrounding the river, which is severely impacting the communities' health. These communities on the Columbia are downriver from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

***Harambee House: Citizens for Environmental Justice (CFEJ)**

Dr. Mildred McClain, Executive Director

Savannah, GA

www.theharambeehouse.blogspot.com

The Harambee House works within four counties in Georgia and five in South Carolina where communities are generally African American and low- to-moderate income, close to the Savannah River Site (SRS). The SRS is a former nuclear weapons production plant that has spread pollution and nuclear contaminants far downriver, impacting fish, local wildlife and the communities surrounding this area. In addition, African American former employees of the site have been disproportionately exposed to the radioactivity involved in such jobs. CFEJ is working to reduce the level of nuclear toxics around the SRS, to educate local communities about the site, and to help raise their voice and empower them in the decision-making processes governing the facility.

***Defense Depot Memphis TN - Concerned Citizens Committee**

Memphis, TN

Doris Bradshaw, President

www.ddmtccc.org

The Concerned Citizens Committee is fighting military toxins and racism in poor communities of color around the Memphis, TN area. The community surrounding the military Defense Depot

¹Throughout the 10-year history of BASE, not all of the founding members remained with the initiative until the end. Some groups closed while others left due to a change in their focus, lack of capacity, etc. Groups who maintained an active presence until the end are noted with an asterisk.

Memphis, a former federal facility responsible for decades of chemical releases, has highly elevated rates of cancer, including breast and prostate cancer among teenagers and young adults. The Concerned Citizens Committee works to find solutions to those health problems caused by the Defense Depot. They also have a Youth Terminating Pollution wing that educates youth about environmental racism and strives to find answers to problems impacting young people in general.

***Diné Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment (Diné CARE)**

Durango, CO

Lori Goodman, Treasurer, Board of Directors

www.dinecare.org

Diné CARE is an all-Diné (Navajo) organization comprised of a federation of grassroots community activists in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Diné CARE's goals center on the empowerment of their communities to defend themselves from unwanted, environmentally destructive development – and the promotion of sustainable, small-scale, value-added industries; decentralized energy production; recycling; and environmental regeneration. Since its formation in 1988, Diné CARE has worked on environmental hazards and projects across the Diné Nation, including battles against logging, water theft, coal and uranium mining within sacred Diné lands.

***Eastern Navajo Uranium Workers (ENUW)**

Melton Martinez

Prewitt, NM

Eastern Navajo Uranium Workers is based in McKinley County, NM on the Diné (Navajo) Reservation. There are over 100 open pit and underground uranium mines that remain where Diné people were recruited to work in the earliest days of nuclear development. Today, the Diné continue to suffer from the side effects both of mining uranium and contamination from unreclaimed mines. There are severe inter-generational health issues among the people caused by exposure to uranium, radioactive contamination of the drinking water and a serious lack of knowledge in the community about these hazards. The ENUW is an all-Diné environmental justice organization that works to raise public awareness, educate and empower Diné communities.

Hyde and Aragon Park Improvement Committee

Charles N. Utley, President

Augusta, GA

www.hapic.org

Hyde and Aragon Parks are located in the low-to-middle income communities of color in a flood-prone area of Georgia, surrounded by a dozen industrial and chemical facilities that dump cancer-causing byproducts in the area. The Hyde and Aragon Park Improvement Committee fights environmental racism by educating local communities about the dangers of the industrial facilities in the area and working for their change or elimination.

***The Imani Group**

Reverend Brendolyn L. Jenkins, Executive Director
Aiken, SC

www.theimanigroup.org

The Imani Group works to develop holistic educational, social, economic and spiritual opportunities for empowerment and capacity building within communities in the Savannah River Site area. Initially focused on educational, cultural and social events for the community, The Imani Group is also working to educate and organize the community surrounding the Savannah River Site about environmental issues, and offering youth education around environmental, social and cultural issues, job training (in environmental clean-up) and advocacy.

Jesus People Against Pollution (JPAP)

Charlotte Keys, Executive Director
Columbia, MS

Due to inadequate data produced and provided by Reichold Chemical Company, Environmental Protection Agency officials, and other government agencies about Agent Orange and other chemical agents, JPAP set out to educate and inform their impacted communities about the availability of toxicology and environmental health information so that the community can better understand the relationship between environmental exposure and disease, and to facilitate the organizing needed to remedy these conditions.

Macedonia Baptist Church Environmental and Academic Tutorial Program

Gwendolyn Littlejohn, Coordinator
Blackville, SC

The mission of this program is two-fold: to educate, enlighten and inform children about environmental health hazards in and near the community; and to help students meet South Carolina Curriculum Standards in Math, Science, Language Arts and Social Studies by improving their study, writing and critical thinking skills in researching and analyzing information. The community is near the Savannah River Site.

***New Mexico Alliance**

Teresa Juarez, Loretta Mendoza
Chimayo, NM

New Mexico Alliance is a grassroots, statewide organization composed of community-based groups and individual activists who are involved in social, political and environmental justice issues. The Alliance is working to educate and organize local communities around the transportation and storage of nuclear waste that will be going through rural and indigenous communities on its way to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in southern New Mexico. In Northern New Mexico, the Alliance is educating people about the long-term environmental, economic and health effects that Los Alamos National Laboratory (home of the first nuclear bomb) has had on local communities.

***Northwest Social and Environmental Justice Institute (NWSEJI)**

Martin Yanez
Granger, WA

NWSEJI, a Latino farmworker community organization, directs its efforts toward educating, organizing and mobilizing the Latino community. They have built partnerships with academic institutions, community groups and friends in government agencies to confront and find solutions to environmental threats that agricultural practices and nuclear contamination (from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation) present to the health and safety of people living in the rural, agricultural communities of eastern Washington. They produce and program radio campaigns that inform and educate farmworkers on environmental injustice issues, health and safety, amnesty and human rights.

***Peace Development Fund**

Paul Haible, Executive Director
Kazu Haga, Program Director (to 2012)
Amherst, MA and San Francisco, CA
www.peacedevelopmentfund.org

The Peace Development Fund works to build the capacity of community-based organizations through grants, training and other resources as partners in human rights and social justice movements. As a public foundation, we nourish, foster and encourage the diverse, self-sustaining and economically viable communities that are essential to building a peaceful, just and equitable world.

***Pine Bluff for Safe Disposal**

Evelyn Elaine Yates, Executive Director
Pine Bluff, AR

Pine Bluff is a low-income community of color in which there is an old chemical weapons arsenal and 26 different affiliated companies. Destroying the stockpile at the Pine Bluff Arsenal requires the Army to build and operate a hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facility. The group works to protect their community by conducting environmental and health testing of Pine Bluff and the surrounding area, identifying and addressing educational programs and activities to empower the people in Pine Bluff and throughout Arkansas.

Proyecto Caribeño de Justicia y Paz - Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace (CPJP)

Wanda Colon Cortes, Director
San Juan, PR

CPJP is a Puerto Rican peace group that focuses on education, documentation and dissemination of information about human rights, militarism and peace. CPJP's work on environmental issues focuses on the U.S. use of Puerto Rico as a military colony and its pollution of the land, water and air on the island of Vieques, PR as a result of extensive nuclear and conventional bombing practice from the U.S. Naval Base at Roosevelt Roads. CPJP strives to develop values of solidarity and cooperation that permit each person to act individually and collectively to transform the rigid structures that maintain injustice.

Shundahai Network

Pete Litster, Director
Salt Lake City, UT

Shundahai Network was a nonprofit organization dedicated to breaking the nuclear chain by building alliances with Indigenous communities and environmental, peace and human rights movements. They advocated for the closure of the Nevada Test Site to all nuclear weapons programs except for radioactive contamination containment and clean-up. Shundahai Network also opposed all nuclear waste dumping on Indigenous peoples' lands, especially Yucca Mountain and the Skull Valley Goshute Reservation. They worked to educate the people about the dangers of radioactive waste transportation and to promote safe and sane energy policies based on conservation and renewable resources. To this end, Shundahai Network organized and participated in nonviolent direct actions, demonstrations, workshops and conferences, until their closure in 2007, following the end of the proposal for the Skull Valley nuclear waste facility.

***S.H.A.W.L. Society (Sovereignty, Health, Air, Water, and Land)**

Deb Abrahamson, Director
Wellpinit, WA

www.shawlsociety.blogspot.com

SHAWL Society is a grassroots advocacy group, based on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Eastern Washington. The major focus of this effort involves developing community education and strategies to address impacts of radiation exposure due to 50-plus years of uranium mining and milling on this reservation. SHAWL Society works to keep toxic waste from ruining the environment; to protect the air, water and land for the children; and to promote awareness and educate the community about environmental concerns and social injustices.

***Tribal Environmental Watch Alliance (TEWA)**

Gilbert Sanchez, Director
Santa Fe, NM

TEWA is made up of Indigenous Tewa-speaking Pueblo Indians, and is a voice for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities that deal daily with extreme poverty, lack of social services and environmental racism. Local Indigenous communities have been seriously impacted by the Los Alamos nuclear laboratory, testing and radioactive material in the area that has led to significant environmental and health hazards. TEWA was formed to address issues that local tribal governments could not. TEWA continues to address pollution-based illness in Indigenous communities and to get more social service funding from the state and federal governments.

Tewa Women United

Kathy Sanchez, Environmental Health and Justice Program Manager and Gathering for Mother Earth
Santa Fe, NM

www.tewawomenunited.org

Tewa Women United provides educational and empowerment training activities for residents of the six Tewa-speaking pueblos in northern New Mexico. With members aged 18 to 65, the group's activities focus on environmental justice, the prevention of domestic violence, alcohol abuse, teen suicide, peer support for Indian women and the strengthening of Tewa values (including in relation to the forces of acculturation). Tewa Women United is committed to improv-

ing the economic, physical, environmental and social aspects of Indigenous communities, and to do so for women in particular. The group has held annual gatherings to address the nuclear contamination of Pueblo lands arising from their proximity to Los Alamos National Laboratory.

3. Ruling out the Nuclear Option: Impacted Communities Speaking for Ourselves

This paper was produced by the BASE communities in response to growing pressure from corporate and governmental sources in support of the nuclear option as a response to climate change. The nuclear option is neither clean, nor green. The details of the legacy of industrial development of both nuclear energy and nuclear and chemical weapons upon people of color, Indigenous and low-income communities within the United States should rule out this option.

I. The BASE Communities Are Impacted Communities:

We are communities that, in partnership with the Peace Development Fund, form the Building Action for Sustainable Environments (BASE) Initiative. Who are these communities that comprise BASE? We are low-income communities and communities of color in the United States who bear the legacy of 50 years of nuclear energy and weapons production. We are those who have lived near and worked in the uranium mines, the transportation routes, nuclear power and weapon production sites, and toxic waste facilities. We are Indigenous nations. We are Latino citizens and farmworkers. We are African American communities.

Our communities suffer from diseases and illnesses that we contend are related to our exposure to the highly toxic processes of mining and milling uranium, to the unsafe storage of radioactive materials, and to the lack of clean-up of sites and facilities. They are related to the transportation of highly radioactive waste through our communities and to the lack of safe disposal methods for potentially deadly nuclear waste. Our communities are affected by illnesses that include cancer, neurological damage, genetic damage, lung disease, respiratory disorders, lupus and heart problems.

Our people of color, Indigenous and low-income communities have a major stake in reducing and eliminating the wasteful and dangerous means of producing nuclear energy and bringing to our communities in its place the production of renewable green energy, accompanied by safe, sustainable jobs.

II. The BASE Communities Are Concerned Because:

We are especially concerned that, within the United States, there is a resurgence of corporate and governmental interest in further development of the nuclear industry as one, perhaps the major, response to climate change. A significant element of the climate debate must therefore include the collection, review and presentation of the legacy of nuclear fuel production on the environment and on people living near nuclear facilities. All of the BASE communities are connected through the transport of radioactive waste, which threatens the life of our communities and the ecosystems upon which we must depend for our livelihoods. Many of our communities have suffered the damage of the mining, milling and transportation of uranium “yellow cake” that has left our lands with contamination and radioactive “hot spots” all along the transportation route.

We are concerned about the nuclear legacy for the following six, specific reasons:

- *The human legacy of nuclear energy and weapons production must be addressed*
- *Nuclear accidents have and will continue to occur*
- *Nuclear energy is not carbon neutral*
- *Nuclear energy could contribute to nuclear proliferation and terrorism*
- *Nuclear energy is not cost-effective*
- *Nuclear energy cannot be brought on-line in time to impact climate change*

III. Within the Climate Debate, the BASE Communities Call for:

The BASE communities call for respect for the right of people of color, Indigenous and low-income communities to be an integral part of the debate for climate justice, in the name of humanity, solidarity and respect for Mother Earth.

We call for the empowerment of our communities in order to strengthen our capacity and resilience to respond to climate change. The debate over climate change and how to respond to it offers an opportunity for our communities to voice our concerns regarding climate justice and to develop strategies that lead both to successful adaptation to climate change and to better lives for Indigenous peoples and local communities.

We call for the following ethical tenets to be considered as part of the debate:

1. Decision Making Must Rest Upon an Equitable and Just Foundation.

We are the stewards for future generations of life on earth. We will be making choices as to how to bring climate change under control. We will have to determine how to cap and reduce the levels of carbon in the atmosphere. We will have to choose which methods of producing energy are too dangerous for current and future consideration. The energy generation choices we make today will affect the future of the planet's climate, the health, safety and livelihoods of billions of the world's people. These choices will shape the evolution of our own species and the preservation of an earth that can sustain all of its biodiversity.

To make the correct choices, we must ensure that our processes for making decisions rest upon an equitable and just foundation.

We seek to live in balance with Mother Earth. Global warming threatens the planet on multiple fronts. In addition to an environmental crisis, we face challenges in the economic and financial realms, all because of changes in global climate brought on by the unprecedented growth of industrialized society during the past two centuries. While this process began on one small part of the planet, it has now spread throughout the globe. Moreover, this industrialization

has itself already brought burdens and benefits that have not been shared equitably or justly among the peoples of the earth. With global climate change we now risk escalating inequities and injustice. We are on the path towards the loss of vital coastal lands, the inexorable rise of a massive food crisis, and then almost inconceivable social, political and cultural challenges as well.

In securing such a just foundation, we must take special care not to exchange one problem for another. As we deal with climate change, we are not starting with a blank slate. We must first understand the impacts and historical legacy of the nuclear industry, the coal industry and the petrochemical industry among others, before we confront the future. If we do not, we may be making life worse for many of our most vulnerable communities. For example, we must take into account the inequity arising from fuel poverty, where one out of every three people living on the planet has neither light nor heat. We must consider the entire energy cycle, from mining through production and distribution, to storage of waste and restoration of disturbed lands. We need to review the health, social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts at each of these stages. Both uranium and coal miners have experienced severe health impacts long after the end of their careers. Restoring lands and communities after strip mining for coal has proven to be very costly. The problem of nuclear waste is completely unresolved.

We must take care not to make any worse those health disparities that already occur. Today, people of color, Indigenous and low-income communities too often face challenges from superfund sites and other major sources of pollution. Our decisions with regard to the reduction of carbon in the atmosphere must ensure that we do not create new sources of pollution and that we move to ameliorate existing sources. Public health must be at the forefront of our concerns as we seek true climate justice.

2. Impacted Communities Must Have Official Channels for Their Voices.

The voices of people of color, Indigenous and low-income communities must be heard in this debate that will determine our economic and environmental futures throughout the 21st century. As communities that bear the greatest burdens of past and current pollution and that are disproportionately impacted by climate change, these communities have an inalienable right to help shape the directions and outcomes of this debate.

To address the most impacted communities, official venues and processes must be established to ensure that their voices are heard in a regular, timely and effective manner.

Building on an equitable and just foundation is not possible unless political spaces are provided for BASE communities and others, who have lived with the direct impact of these harmful industries, to have their voices and concerns heard and their issues addressed and redressed. Within the United States, formal channels of communication between local communities and governing authorities must be established in order to achieve a just and equitable outcome of the climate negotiations.

We value the leadership internationally of the movements of Indigenous peoples towards governance processes that transcend negotiations among nation states and that “recognize the

rights of Indigenous peoples which includes the full and effective participation in all negotiations by Indigenous peoples' traditional governments, institutions and organizations. It must also embrace diverse contributions and intercultural collaboration, recognizing distinct and valuable contributions from children and youth, women, Indigenous peoples and local communities.”

We join with the 2009 Anchorage Declaration of Indigenous People in asserting that, “Indigenous Peoples are Rights-holders, and we call for the rights of Communities of Color in the U.S. to also be recognized due to the violation of our human rights due to centuries of racial discrimination and exploitation.”

In addition to having access to official channels at state and national levels, our communities must be heard at international levels, including the United Nations and the International Human Rights Commission. The standards of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) must be applied to decision-making with regard to climate change. The United Nations must remain committed to the protection of these rights and should work to strengthen the capacity and resilience of Indigenous peoples and local communities to respond to climate change. The legacy of nuclear fuel production on the environment and people living near nuclear facilities must be collected, reviewed and presented to the International Human Rights Commission by a U.N.-supervised body.

3. Polluters Must Be Held Accountable.

Those entities that have been most responsible for creating climate change must bear a proportionate cost of responding to the resulting economic, social and environmental crisis. As we move away from dependency upon a fossil fuel economy, we must simultaneously deal with the existing impacts of pollution and other legacy costs of the coal and petrochemical industries. In determining the proportionate cost of the impacts that arise from climate change, the full environmental, health, social and economic costs of energy use from extraction to disposal must be included.

We must hold accountable those polluters that have contaminated the shared birthright of all peoples.

We must be able to calculate the comprehensive costs of energy production or other activities that impact the climate and to monitor and regulate the pollution, health effects and all other externalities arising from any production process. We cannot permit corporations or governments to amass profits that come about from shifting their costs and burdens to local communities or other external parties.

Solutions to the climate change crisis must include the establishment of protocols that address currently inadequate monitoring and reporting systems. Otherwise, it will be impossible to cap the atmospheric release of carbon, to control other forms of pollution, and to eliminate or reduce other negative impacts of energy production. Regulatory agencies need to be capable of monitoring energy producers and of imposing meaningful penalties for failure to comply, and all relevant information needs to be readily available to the public. All of these steps are necessary

to address accurately the costs that energy use has on our environment, our health and our communities.

4. Local Communities Must Be Able to Utilize Green Technologies.

Our communities can make crucial contributions to the solution of the climate change crisis and the effective transition towards a green economy. We need to draw upon Indigenous knowledge as we build this new, renewable economy. By combining traditional knowledge with climate science, we can find solutions that balance the needs of local communities, the global economy and the nature's ecosystems.

People of color, Indigenous and low-income communities have the right and the capacity to help create and implement green technologies at the local community level.

Knowledge from Indigenous peoples and the traditional knowledge of communities of color are a crucial aspect of any solution that could lead to healthy, vibrant communities globally. We must draw upon both the experiences of communities of color in the developed world and the developing world's non-governmental organizations. Together, they must be given the opportunity to join with scientists and governments in constructing a new global system for producing renewable sources of energy that restores ecological balance and contributes to a sustainable, fulfilling life for human beings in all of our communities.

We have to create the opportunity for all Americans, especially people of color, Indigenous peoples and low-income Americans, to experience a just transition to a renewable economy. As local communities begin to utilize green technologies they will need appropriate workforce development programs in order to participate in the creation and operation of the new economy. With full participation by local communities, we will have a realistic chance to eradicate poverty. The goal must include the capacity to grow living-wage, clean, safe, green jobs in the energy sector and beyond.

We, the BASE communities, remember the words of Chief Seattle (1786-1866):

**“We do not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.”**