

Fundraising Futures for Community Gardens

Baylen Altizer

May 3, 2021

Introduction

The new educational center at Huerta Del Valle will include a rammed earth classroom, a shade structure, and an amphitheater which will act as a community meeting space. These developments are exciting and will provide a home for Huerta Del Valle's youth literacy program and farmer training programs, along with numerous workshops and events. The rammed earth classroom will provide a much more conducive setting for educational programs as the Ontario garden is located very close to a small airport. Low flying planes have been known to disrupt communication on site, and the effects of this are especially detrimental to children trying to learn a second language.

The goal of this paper is to develop an understanding of fundraising and capital campaigns, and to utilize the relevant academic literature and conversations with Huerta Del Valle volunteers, staff and community members to create a strategy that helps the organization achieve their goal of funding a community educational center. By asking the question of "How can Huerta best achieve the completion of the educational center?" I hope to bring together resources from the community, the academy and the non-profit world to craft an action plan that answers the question. By utilizing the appreciative inquiry approach, I attempt to bring to the surface the knowledge that is ingrained within the Huerta Del Valle community, as well as through conversation with non-profit professionals. By acting as a conduit between the community action world and the large non-profit world, I hope to provide helpful lines of questioning which allow the Huerta Del Valle to develop a creative solution to the question of financing the project.

As I collaborated with the grant writing/fundraising volunteer team at Huerta Del Valle to find and apply for grants, I consulted outside resources to develop my understanding of non-

profit financing. By bringing in the more “typical” non-profit mechanisms from my conversations with Leah Humphries, a non-profit fund developer and major donor cultivator, we as a team were able to bring elements of capital campaign financing into the plan for Huerta Del Valle’s educational center. Using professional experience to guide my line of questioning allowed me to be able to help generate knowledge and ideas within the fundraising team, without necessarily injecting my opinion as a new member of this community. I also attempted to bring in the principles of Community Centric Fundraising, a modern approach to socially just fundraising to help guide fundraising practices so they reflect Huerta Del Valle’s values. By integrating traditional and novel fundraising strategies, we developed a sort of road map for how Huerta Del Valle can achieve their goals.

Research Setting and Methodology

Before college I had never even heard of the idea of food justice, but my family centered healthy and affordable food in my household ever since I can remember. After spending a year on campus eating only dining hall food, I moved off campus, mainly to cook for myself as I had grown up cooking with my family. I quickly realized that Pitzer is surrounded by communities lacking the appropriate access to affordable, local produce when I moved off campus. In Atlanta, where I grew up, I was used to shopping at an incredible marketplace called “Your Dekalb Farmers Market,” a giant warehouse with very affordable and fresh produce. This was an intercultural hub where people of all colors and classes shopped and I normalized the access I had there. When moving off the meal plan at Pitzer, I quickly realized how privileged I had been back home. In the Inland Empire I found I had two options: I could choose either affordable, and significantly less fresh food, or pay much higher prices for produce from boutique groceries such as Sprouts. Given the incredible agricultural production in the state of California, I was shocked that there was not bountiful access to affordable, fresh produce. When I joined CASA, I felt drawn to HdV due to their mission and luckily I was able to join the organization as an intern this semester.

Huerta Del Valle is a community-centered organization focused on cultivating sustainable and healthy food practices in the Inland Empire. Huerta was founded by Maria Alonso, who began this project because she desired healthier food for her family. She first looked for healthy and affordable grocery options which she quickly realized were not easily accessible or reasonably priced in the area. She desired change, which led her to establish the central food hub site in Ontario, CA. At the Ontario location, which is an urban farm that sells to

restaurants, marketplaces as well as providing produce for volunteer hours at the farm. The produce is all priced at an incredible 1\$/lb and volunteers can earn 1 lb of produce for each hour they volunteer.

While HDV began as just the Ontario location, it has since expanded to include 7 gardens throughout the Inland Empire, which provide a range of services and community programs to people living in the region. Huerta offers farmer trainings, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, volunteer opportunities, composting workshops, youth educational programs, summer internships for high school students, as well as garden plots where community members can cultivate their own fresh and organic produce. These plots are 20' by 10' and can be rented for 1 year for just 30 dollars, with seeds, water and tools provided by the organization. Community members can also receive help establishing and maintaining their own home garden from the staff at HDV.

The Ontario location is located adjacent to a small city park, with colorful signs pointing community members towards the garden. When I stepped inside for the first time, I suddenly noticed the smell of the sun baking dark, moist soil. The garden is full of color and life, with the community plots just past the entrance. Mosaics colorfully adorned a water fountain which sat alongside community garden plots. As I walked towards the center of the garden I passed rows of produce of all varieties protruding from the earth and I was impressed at the scale. In the center of the garden, dividing the community plots from the production plots stood a small building and a few storage sheds. I met Maria Alonso just next to the central building, where she sat on a picnic table with Necils Lopez, the project director at HdV. I quickly introduced myself in English and then in Spanish as I knew by the advice of former interns that Maria preferred to speak in her native tongue. I could see her broad smile through her mask and felt an immediate

warmth and excitement. Although my Spanish was not perfect, with Necils' help we discussed plans for the semester, and she inquired about my interests. She introduced me to Andrés, the head gardener for the large production farm situated on the other side of the garden, and he gave me a quick tour, pointing out various rows of produce and naming them. On one side was a row of cilantro, then parsley, and on another he pointed out garlic and onions. In the back corner he showed me the banana trees which had been damaged by severe winds recently, then we moved to the greenhouse, which was as Andres said before we entered, much hotter than the outside air. Just as my time at the Ontario site reflects the importance of growth and community, the values which are core to HdV do as well.

Respect, Justice, Support and Responsibility are the core values of Huerta Del Valle, and are key to the organizations success. These values are key to the mission and the goals of HDV, and combine to create a sense of social justice within the community that the organization fosters. HDV hopes to empower people to learn and grow within their programs, but also provides necessary support. To achieve growth of produce, gardening skills, as well as community, mutual respect is a must and is practiced in many ways, especially through recognition, trust and communication. Responsibility is integral to the cultivation of produce, but is also reflected in community. The actions of the community reflect the organization as a whole, and members take responsibility for the survival of gardens, as well as the survival of community. Members renting community plots are asked to take responsibility for their gardens, but the HdV also asks members to nourish the community through sharing produce as well as emotional and spiritual support. Finally, the core value of justice is interconnected with the entire idea of community gardening. Food justice is reflected in the ability to grow, sell and eat fresh and affordable produce. It allows for an essential human right, the right to nutritious food,

through local, sustainable and affordable food. HdV recognizes the intersectionality of different areas of social justice, as they state “a threat to justice somewhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” and they work towards community which includes people “of all classes, sexual orientation, religion, language, educational background, age and ability” (HdV website).

Throughout my internship with Huerta, I attempted to become integrated into the fabric of the organization in a variety of ways to become both as part of the community as well as an asset in the continuation of the work. I did this by volunteering on site in the garden as well as working within the teams of volunteers online. When talking with Maria and Necils at my first meeting, we discussed the potential of me helping write grants as they are currently raising money to fund the educational center. We also discussed the fact that Maria has a lot on her plate, and with my organizational studies background I could work with her and others within the organization to delegate responsibility through the development of a clear organizational structure. Although we discussed many possible areas of research, in the end the most practical and seemingly helpful to the organization was assisting the research and grant writing volunteer team. I participated in regular meetings as well and consulted outside literature and

As a white, English speaking college student, I was an outsider when I entered into my internship position at HdV. Stepping into a community which is adjacent, but not congruent to my own college community is precarious, and I tried to go into the work with intention. I wanted to bring a methodology to the research which could both uplift the community and their goals, as well as make use of my own knowledge and expertise in conjunction with community voices. This led me to the *appreciative inquiry* model, which in short, “suggests that human organizing and change at its best is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation,” (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2010).

This approach to organizational change is based in the idea that organizations are collective sources of people's varied skill sets. It follows naturally that through asking questions, communities can investigate the range of potential ideas, innovation and knowledge available within to achieve organizational change. It is fundamentally opposed to the *deficit model* which is used in many approaches to organizational change. The deficit model asks "What is the problem?" and then attempts to identify causes, and solutions. In contrast, the appreciative model asks "What is working well?" and then asks organizations to imagine or dream up potential opportunities for the future. Finally it asks what *should* be and a commitment to the future is made.

Appreciation is foundational, as the simple act of recognizing successes and strengths helps to ingrain them into organizations and can increase their value. Inquiry is the heart of this idea and can facilitate learning and collaboration as different minds combine ideas creatively. In this respect, appreciative inquiry allows people to come together and answer questions which individuals may not be able to answer. It also allows the different levels of hierarchical organizations to collaborate and be recognized as valuable to the organization as a whole. Through the appreciation of what is, people are uplifted within organizations as the affirmation of positives increases employee and volunteer confidence.

Implementing appreciative inquiry at HdV was fairly smooth, as it is already a highly community driven project which values and utilizes the ideas of volunteers and employees in decision making. In meetings with staff and volunteers the values of respect and communication are thoroughly upheld, so everyone is able to contribute, to be appreciated, and to be heard. By utilizing this methodology in conjunction with my personal connections in the non-profit and fundraising worlds, I was able to help generate knowledge within Huerta through intentional

inquiry among the other volunteers and employees.

The major project facing Huerta Del Valle currently is the construction of an educational center to house programs and events. The design is complete with a rammed earth classroom, an amphitheater for community gathering, and a shade tent to provide rest area for farmers, volunteers and community members. This project has been in the works for years and much of the groundwork occurred before I became affiliated with the organization. Logistical preparations such as design and zoning have been settled and now the last component is the fund raising. By utilizing the appreciative inquiry methodology within the structure of HdV along with some advice from experienced non-profits, I hope to develop a strategy for HdV to successfully run a capital campaign-type fundraising campaign with guidance from the local and national non-profit community as well as the available literature. By consulting the community, the gap between the typical capital campaign and the proposed fundraising strategy, which will be specific to HdV, can be closed and issues can be addressed by those they will be affecting.

This situates HdV differently than the typical non-profit attempting this sort of large scale project, as normally funding is secured before things like zoning and logistics. The passion of those individuals involved in the organization have supported the development of the plan and it is already in motion, but a huge sum of money must be fundraised before construction can begin.

Certain methods typical of fundraising for community gardens are already utilized by HdV to support the staff and operations, such produce stands multiple times each week, CSA box subscriptions, and the fees for the garden plots themselves. The staff and volunteers at HdV have already begun to look into alternate sources of funding, including personal connections, partnership organizations, grants and events. Unlike some non-profits, HdV's board does not

have direct connections with any obvious major anchor donor, so they have decided to apply for some large scale grants including a private \$100,000 grant from Kubota Tires as well as large scale USDA federal grants. Even with these grants, there is substantial fundraising left to do, which I in conversation with HdV staff and volunteers, have come to believe could benefit from the formation of a sort of adjusted capital campaign.

The reason many capital campaigns are successful is the prevalence of wealthy white philanthropists on the boards of non-profits. This brings up the inherent white-supremacy ingrained within fundraising. The typical system of how capital campaigns are structured forces organizations to show to large foundations the ability to provide a substantial amount of the total goal. This works similarly to the idea of a down payment, with the initial anchor gift providing the assurance to other donors that the project can be completed.

By centering the community in my research, and utilizing the appreciative inquiry model, we have created a schema for fundraising for HdV which values and uplifts community members and the knowledge and skills they bring to the community. Community Centric Fundraising (See literature review) can be utilized in conjunction with appreciative inquiry and outside help to guide the way in which HdV approaches fundraising. By using these combined methodologies, the problematic systems such as white-supremacy, patriarchy and economic injustice which are upheld by traditional fundraising can be resisted.

Literature Review:

Community Gardens exist in a variety of formats, and thus it is difficult to pin down a single specific definition for them, but for the purposes of this paper, I will define them in terms of Huerta Del Valle (HdV), a non-profit community garden operating 7 gardens in the inland valley region of southern California. Huerta Del Valle operates similarly to many community gardens; running a commercial organic farm as well as providing community plots for a \$30 annual fee. In addition to these main operations, HdV provides workshops, farmer trainings and other community events and programs. Huerta Del Valle's mission is to develop a community garden every mile in the inland valley in order to provide access to fresh affordable produce to the inland valley community.

Community Gardening began in the USA during the depression of 1893 as a means to provide for poorer populations during economic recession to make use of vacant public lots. (Garrett and Leeds 2014) From the 1970s through the 1990's, manufacturing jobs (along with those who worked them) left large cities like Philadelphia, for the suburbs. Community gardens became popular during this time among first generation immigrants and low-income people living in urban areas with minimal access to fresh produce. Out of this history of low income and immigrant community building emerges the story of the inland valley and Huerta Del Valle.

Community gardens have been shown to have sustained impact on the communities in which they exist. In a study conducted by Katherine Alaimo, an associate professor at Michigan State University, 1.4 times more fruit and vegetable consumption was found among participants in urban gardens, (Alaimo et al., 2008). In addition to this benefit, RMIT University researchers in Australia found that community gardens also are shown to influence people positively in terms of contact with the natural world (Maller et al. 2006) and finally, a societal externality produced

by community gardens is the shortened supply chains for produce consumption within local communities (Wang et al. 2014).

In her undergraduate finance thesis research, Heather M. Blalack investigated the financial stability of non-profit organizations. She found that Non-profit organizations often struggle to balance financial stability and upholding the stated mission of the organization (Blalack, 2016). Blalack concluded that monitoring expenses and cutting costs when able are key to financial stability in non-profits. Non-profits organizations were also found to be more susceptible to economic downturns, thus financial monitoring and cost cutting are essential. Additionally, maintaining a regular donor base is another key to financial stability in non-profits, and Blalack found that communication with the donor base is vital, as it maintains the relationship between the organization and the people supporting it.

One interesting difference between Huerta Del Valle and other community gardens is the goal of affordable produce. As HdV attempts to provide low prices to the community, they do not ask for membership fees or donations from garden members, and have subsisted on mainly grant based moeny. This presents a challenge for fundraising, as there is a minimal base of individual donors contributing to the overall

Although the mission is the driving force behind non-profit actions, certain situations or projects call for funds which go beyond the scope of the normal budget, and are not directly furthering the mission. Huerta Del Valle is currently in the process of raising funds for the construction of an educational center and a centralized meeting area at their flagship location in Ontario. Although this project does not directly further the mission of “one garden every mile in the inland valley region,” it is an important project which will allow the youth literacy program, among other programs to have a physical home for the community to meet and learn together.

The constraints of HdV's budget, along with the negative economic effects of the Covid-19 virus have pushed HdV to seek the aid of federal and private grant funding and to develop a fundraising campaign for the project. The project itself will require close to \$1 million, almost twice HdV's usual annual budget. In situations like this, non-profits often utilize capital campaigns to "attract large amounts of resources in a relatively short amount of time," (Woronkowitz, 2018).

"The need for a capital campaign is typically the result of an organizational strategic plan that outlines the goals and direction of the organization for the next several years," (Monica, 2017) which is the case at HdV, as the construction of infrastructure will impact the garden and its community positively for years after its construction. Capital campaigns tend to involve multiple phases, and usually begin with an internal resource assessment to see what resources are currently available to the organization. Once this is complete, the next step is often a feasibility study. A feasibility study involves assessing the support for the project by the donor base and other associated financial backers of the organization, usually in the form of interviews about the prospect of the project. After feasibility has been assessed, the next phase according to the Association of Advancement Services Professionals (AASP) is to create a budget for the which compares the available resources to the total budget, so that the amount of additional fundraising needed is known. The AASP also advises that organizations create a brand or message which grabs interest of potential donors and outlines the importance of the project. This message can be propagated to the greater community by the use of campaign videos, email, traditional mail.

AASP breaks the total campaign process into three distinctive phases: the quiet phase, the leadership phase and the public phase. The Quiet phase is usually planning of the project itself and also involves securing a lead or anchor gift. Board members often donate or pledge money to

the campaign during this phase to get the financial ball rolling so to speak. The leadership phase is described as “leveraging gifts and support from the quiet phase,” (Monica, 2017) to secure more donations. This is the phase when collaboration with other partner organizations, increased campaign branding/messaging, and events to garner support are utilized to increase support. Finally, the Public phase is entered when around 50% of the total money has been raised, and the message and branding is emphasized to the community often through a kick-off event wherein the organization invites further contributions to be made from the community and continued public events and identification of donors (Monica, 2017)

By developing the physical space to suit the needs of the community, HdV is providing a home for workshops and classes as well as the community of growers and consumers who care about food insecurity. These benefits to the community though, are not direct reflections of the mission to implement community gardens every mile of the inland valley region. This qualifies the educational center as a project that would benefit from a capital campaign to fundraise the large quantity of money beyond the normal annual budget of HdV.

Leah Humphries, a non-profit fund developer who has worked with non-profits for 15 years. Her focus areas include major donor cultivation, events management and private foundation grant procurement, and through conversation with her I was able to further my understanding of Capital Campaigns and non-profit financing. According to Humphries, the situation of HdV is a common one: “Often the organizations doing the best work on the ground are driven by passionate community activists who don’t necessarily have connections in the non-profit world.” As HdV arose through community action, it has been sustained through the passion of those involved, even when organizational and non-profit experience may have been lacking.

To combat this, she recommends seeking help from people like her, and other larger foundations. This provides a smaller organization like HdV the access to the non-profit know-how and experience found at larger orgs, and many even have leadership programs which allocate team members to help with leadership tasks within smaller orgs. She also recognizes the position that Huerta is in currently, and how the lack of internal resource assessment and feasibility study mean that acquiring large scale funding could be difficult. To secure large investments in capital campaigns, finances want to see evidence that the final project will be completed, and that their money is going to directly impact the project. Without a lead or anchor gift, the feasibility of hitting the fundraising goal is diminished in their eyes, which leads to skepticism of the donations worth. In other words, if the financier is not sure the goal will be reached, they worry their donation will not produce as much impact and therefore may not be willing to donate. Humphries recommends that HdV secure a package of multiple \$10,000-\$20,000 gifts from community businesses, other organizations and donors, which would accumulate to around \$200,000. This would take the place of the lead gift and could significantly help convince funders to give larger donations since the lead gift bundle would show financial feasibility. In addition to this, Humphries recommends getting in contact with the regional community foundation, which in HdV's case is the Inland Empire Community Foundation. Community foundations often support local non-profits in their region. These organizations often tend to have connections to the larger regional community as well as connections to private funding sources, which Humphries says could be extremely helpful.

In grass roots organizations, there are often driven, smart and capable people, as there are at HdV. These same people are often low-income, people of color striving to make their communities better, but when it comes to financing major projects there is less capital available

in these sorts of organizations, along with less traditional fundraising knowledge or connections. HdV has no major philanthropists on the board of directors, and is driven by low-income people of color. Given this situation, there is inherent bias in the system which prevents many groups like HdV from fundraising large amounts, even when the impact of such projects may be more than the impact of philanthropy driven infrastructure in regional or national non-profits. Due to these factors, I will be incorporating a framework of Community Centric Fundraising into my discussion of this fundraising project for HdV. Community Centric Fundraising is a fundraising model that is grounded in equity and social justice, and prioritizes the idea of community over the idea of individual organizational mission. It was developed through multiple years of conversation between fundraisers of color in Seattle after a blog post by Vu Le outlining the inherent structural oppression upheld by the non-profit fundraising system.

The movement is intended to shift the way fundraisers go about fundraising, and the values which guide this system are listed in the 10 guiding principles. Of these principles, I would like to frame the conversation around three specifically which can help guide HdV's fundraising efforts in a meaningful, socially just way.

The second principle, and first one I would like to use to frame this work is the idea that individual organizational missions are not as important as the collective community. At Huerta, the mission is to promote gardens in the inland empire. Very simple. But, the construction of the educational center will do much more than that, and the community impact is more important than the creation of a new garden. This is especially true if the community of the Ontario garden, the first one established by HdV, is not being supported in the ways that HdV would like to, or need. This seems to be the case as the educational center will allow for the continuation of the youth literacy program, and will allow those classes to be uninterrupted by the constant noise

generated by planes flying overhead. The farmer training will also be housed and by giving a physical space to an idealistic program HdV will greatly improve its longevity and impact. The greater Huerta Del Valle community will also gain a space to gather in the time when communities need it most. As the world reopens after COVID-19, communities need space for healing and growth, and this center provides the HdV community with exactly that. Thus, the center will impact the community and by keeping the community in mind in fundraising now and in the future, HdV will be able to provide important, non-mission driven services to the community.

The next principle of Community Centric Fundraising I would like to focus on is #3: the idea that generally, non-profits are supportive of one another. By reminding ourselves this during the fundraising process, HdV can work with other non-profits to receive funding and organizational help, as well as free advice regarding any operational measures. This was especially evident as I reached out to Leah Humphries who was more than happy to discuss the situation at HdV as well as typical fundraising approaches in the non-profit world. The level of support and interest I felt immediately after contacting her made me realize that people who are involved in social justice and change work all are driven by the same goals, and therefore are likely to help in whatever ways they can.

Finally, I would like to use the 10th and last principle of Community Centric Fundraising, which states, “We recognize that healing and liberation requires a commitment to social and economic justice.” (communitycentricfundraising.org) This to me reflects the core values which drive Huerta Del Valle and reflect how food justice is intertwined with all justice movements. By entering fundraising with this value in mind, HdV can develop relationships with donors who align with this value. This will promote a future in which HdV’s funding, as well as the methods

of procuring funding reflect the values of the organization itself. Without this framework, fundraising can still happen, and projects can still create impact in communities. The issue with traditional fundraising is not really related to the impact of the funds, but is in systems of white-supremacy, patriarchy and economic injustice which are upheld and supported.

Findings/Discussion

By bringing in Humphries ideas and advice, I accidentally began a larger conversation about organizational structure and the use of experienced outside help at Huerta Del Valle. I had not realized as it happened before I arrived, but there was already money budgeted for hiring a consultant for a one-year contract. With this new information, I realized that being a conduit as I had been with Leah was not enough. Huerta recognized that they need professional guidance, and have simply not hired or decided on a candidate yet. With a board meeting tomorrow, a lot is up in the air. Grant writing and research was put on hold until the board grants approval, which is a bylaw of the organizations original charter.

As I reflect on what I learned, and what knowledge arose from inquiry, I find a few take aways more salient than others. The first is that by combining Community Centric Fundraising and Huerta Del Valle's unorthodox approach to capital financing, we can create a mechanism for community centric capital campaigns. Although Huerta began the process of getting approval for their infrastructure development years ago, and have no feasibility study or internal assessment, there is potential for their fundraising strategy to be highly in line with the Community Centric Fundraising principles.

The idea of bundling smaller gifts to achieve an anchor gift is extremely in line with Community Centric Fundraising, as relying on one single large donation for the anchor get would mean a single donation of \$200,000. By using a single donation, the organization would be reflecting the individual ability to fund, but not the community's ability to create a coalition. By asking multiple businesses and other organizations who serve similar populations to contribute chunks of an anchor gift, HdV can resist the unequal economic system of capitalism in America, and build trust and solidarity within the leaders of the community. By pitching the

educational center as a space created by a coalition of Ontario organizations and businesses, the larger community could gather around a shared ideal of youth literacy and promote inter-organizational growth.

In the beginning of the educational center project there was a Kickstarter campaign to raise money from the community. Kirill, one of the staff members and architect behind the education center said the money was raised mainly from the staff's family and friends, and not community members. This showcases how difficult it is for a low-income serving, immigrant serving organization to crowdsource funds from their community members. This in turn reflects how fundraising is inherently uplifting white-supremacy and economic injustice as a system, since different communities with different demographics have unequal access to resources via community donors. Community Gardens serving wealthy white clientele often charge unreasonable prices for their organic produce, and can on top of that ask for donations from the same community. The mission at HdV is about giving the community access to organic and affordable produce, which means cheaper prices and not asking the community to contribute anything more than those reasonable prices. Huerta also does not have any extremely wealthy board members who can commit large amounts of money in the name of philanthropy. By utilizing the bundled anchor gift, HdV bypasses the need for wealthy white contributors, which is especially relevant as wealthy white people are not prevalent members of the community.

Another take way of the research was that HdV could break the project into more achievable phases which fundraising could be done for individually. This makes some logical sense as there are multiple separate building projects involved in the educational center as a whole. This would allow HdV to pitch certain parts of the project to different funders. For

example, education and youth literacy related organizations and grants could be applied for for the rammed earth classroom construction, while other food and nutrition related groups could support the construction of the demo kitchen. In this way the overall fundraising could be managed piece by piece, and the entire project would look less intimidating. By breaking it into phases, we also gain the added benefit of funders being more confident in the project's completion. Many big level foundations want to see financial breakdowns of every part of a project like this, to ensure that their money gets used for the project they gave it for. They worry that large projects, especially construction projects may stagnate if the entire fundraising goal is not reached prior to the start of construction. To combat this, HdV can present contingency plans which could showcase the feasibility of different phases depending on the amount of money raised. For example, "if 500,000 were raised, we can complete X Y Z, if \$700,000 is raised, we can complete X Y Z and L", and so on.

The guiding principle of Community Centric Fundraising that non-profits are generous to one another is another important take away for HdV and funding the educational center. By looking to other organizations for help, and advice for funding sources, the collective knowledge of those organizations can be accessed for HdV to utilize. By incorporating an increased information exchange with other organizations in the region, HdV can increase its overall knowledge, productivity and find answers which cannot be answered internally. This continues the idea of coalition building, which is integral to justice movements and to the future of the fight for food justice in the inland empire. By collaborating with business leaders and other non-profits, HdV can increase its and other groups impact. This brings me to the last principle which is that the mission is not as important as the community. By building coalitions and networks of people pushing for food justice and youth literacy, not only can HdV further its goal of building

this community space, but it can also further the fight for food justice and create an environment where real change can occur.

Conclusion

By utilizing appreciative inquiry, I was able to bring up the idea of the traditional mechanisms which had not been utilized, such as an internal resource assessment and a feasibility study. After asking about these processes, we realized that although it is later than is traditional, these could be hugely beneficial in terms of receiving funding from large scale foundations with deep pockets. Another take away from this approach was the idea of a phased strategy, with detailed contingency plans for what can be done with certain amounts of money. This was already partially in the works, with Kirill mentioning that with the first round of funding we hope to secure, the walls of the rammed earth classroom could be constructed. To improve the strategy, we discussed the possibility of phasing it in complete parts, with the different structures representing the phases of construction. Appreciative inquiry allowed me to ask questions about these processes and thereby prompt conversation among the entire team regarding how to proceed. This also made it less about me, a white college student coming and explaining what I had discovered. Instead, we talked as a community and each individual's knowledge could be accessed and utilized.

Another key takeaway is the resistance of injustices and oppressive systems upheld by traditional fundraising. By investigating and talking about the way injustice creeps into the best intentioned non-profits, we can both stop upholding and even resist the systems of oppression and injustice which are present in fundraising. By bringing Community Centric Fundraising to

the conversation HdV can continue to deepen their commitment to values of social justice in fundraising and well as the local community.

In conclusion, I propose that Huerta Del Valle can utilize a combination of fundraising techniques which suit their goals as well as their values. By incorporating principles of Community Centric Fundraising into the process of funding the educational center, HdV can uphold their community oriented value system discussed. Humphries suggestions also allow Huerta to incorporate the principles of Community Centric Fundraising, as the techniques she outlined are ways to approach funding that align with their values. This includes the idea of a bundled anchor gift, which lessens the need for large one time donors. In this way the classic systems of economic oppression upheld by white and wealthy boards of directors in fundraising are resisted, and values of community engagement are upheld. This also allows for the local businesses who invest in the project to become more deeply integrated into the HdV community.

a