



FIRST STEPS:

Integrating Transformative Community Engagement at Martha's Table

**A guide to understanding and practicing
transformative community engagement**

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A. INTRODUCTION: Why explore integrating transformative community engagement at Martha's Table?

For nearly four decades, Martha's Table, believing that “every child deserves the opportunity for the brightest future, and a deeply engaged family and community committed to their success,” has been dedicated to enriching children's lives through providing quality educational programs, family support and emergency relief services, and access to healthy foods.

The organization's work has historically taken place from its headquarters in the 14th Street Corridor—an area that has significantly transformed due to enjoying the benefits of economic prosperity. To continue to better serve communities that have been underserved and under-resourced for generations, and that have not enjoyed the positive impacts of recent economic booms in D.C., Martha's Table, throughout 2018, will be transitioning to a new headquarters space in D.C.'s Fort Stanton/Hillsdale area in Ward 8 (while still maintaining a satellite location in Ward 1).

Martha's Table's move will involve the organization respectfully adapting to a new location, with new community dynamics to navigate and new community neighbors to know and form meaningful ties and partnerships with. **To ensure that the organization's development of new Ward 8 ties and partnerships are authentic, impactful, and long-lasting, it is imperative that the organization evaluate and evolve its present community outreach and engagement strategies. “First Steps: Integrating Transformative Community Engagement at Martha's Table” is a tool created with the intention of facilitating such evaluation and evolution.**

Transformative community engagement (TCE) is a genre of community engagement that builds horizontal, fully collaborative relationships between public bodies and community members. As Martha's Table considers community outreach and engagement models to refer to and use to successfully connect with its new Ward 8 neighbors, “First Steps,” chapter by chapter, offers TCE as a potential model to utilize. Section B summarizes relevant literature that defines different types of community engagement, including TCE. Section C explores the benefits of and barriers to transformative community engagement. Section D discusses how TCE is being used currently by other Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organizations. Section E provides a SWOT analysis of Martha's Table to assess the organization's capacity to adopt transformative community engagement strategies. Section F offers recommendations for how Martha's Table can begin to adopt TCE. Sections G and H provide notes and resources for further exploring the tenets of transformative community engagement.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW: What is transformative community engagement?

As Martha’s Table shifts its current community engagement strategies to be transformative, the organization must first develop a robust understanding of the transformative community engagement (TCE) tenets. Section B summarizes and discusses literature that defines types of community engagement, including transformative community engagement.

In relevant literature, **community engagement** is used interchangeably with related terms, such as **civic capacity**, **civic engagement**, **civic life**, and **public participation**.¹ Fox, in the context of community regeneration, broadly defines community engagement as an interaction between a public body and a defined community that is established for the foremost objective of understanding and redressing challenges faced by the defined community.² Similarly, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Committee for Community Engagement describes community engagement as “the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.”³

Community engagement is not characterized as a “single tool,” but, rather, is characterized as a “process that may take place at various levels and employ different approaches.”⁴ El-Chibini offers a model for classifying different types of community engagement. The business sector-oriented model situates the “various levels” of and “different approaches” to community engagement along a continuum that includes three categories of community engagement: **transactional**, **translational**, and **transformative**.⁵ Figure B1 summarizes characteristics of transactional, translational, and transformative strategies for community engagement within the context of an organization-community interaction.

¹ Holley, Kip. The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement: A Guide to Transformative Change. The Ohio State's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement: A Guide to Transformative Change, kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ki-civic-engagement.pdf.

² Fox, Roz. “Transformative Community Engagement for Sustainable Regeneration.” University of Bolton, The University of Bolton, The University of Bolton, 2014, ubir.bolton.ac.uk/734/1/Fox%2C%20RozPhD%20thesis%20Final.pdf.

³ As cited in Mina Silberberg, et al. Principles of Community Engagement . Clinical and Translational Science Awards Consortium, Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task, Force on the Principles of Community Engagement, 2011, Principles of Community Engagement , www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pdf/PCE_Report_508_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ “Community Engagement Tools.” Puget Sound Regional Council, Puget Sound Regional Council, www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/community_engagement_tools.pdf.

⁵ El-Chibini, Sabrina. “Transformative Community Involvement: What It Means, What It Takes, What It Gives.” Conscious, Conscious Magazine, 8 Aug. 2016, consciousmagazine.co/transformative-community-involvement/.

FIGURE B1.⁶ El-Chibini’s Community Engagement Continuum⁷



The conceptualization of community engagement practices as falling under the categories of “transactional,” “translational,” and “transformative” is mirrored by the Network for Business Sustainability. The Network for Business Sustainability offers a community engagement continuum that categorizes community engagement acts as either **transactional**, **translational**, or **transformative**.⁸ Within the context of an organization-community relationship, transactional community engagement involves an organization investing in a community, translational community engagement involves a community participating in an organization’s decision-making processes, and transformational engagement involves the complete integration of a community into an organization.

While Martha’s Table is in the process of taking steps to engage with communities more transformatively (or transformationally), the organization already engages in transactional and translational (or translational) community engagement practices:

- **An example of a transactional community engagement practice:** At Martha’s Table’s Lobby Market, patrons are able to engage in a transaction where they receive vegetables, fruits, and pantry goods, which have been tailored to meet patron needs

⁶ Figure B1 includes arrows and the gradient color effect to suggest that the categories of transactional, translational, and transformative community engagement are not strictly defined but, rather, are interrelated and fluid. Also, the arrows and gradient color effect are included to suggest that an organization’s interaction with a community can easily shift between the three categories of community engagement.

⁷ El-Chibini, Sabrina. “Transformative Community Involvement: What It Means, What It Takes, What It Gives.” *Conscious, Conscious Magazine*, 8 Aug. 2016, consciousmagazine.co/transformative-community-involvement/.

⁸ Bowen, Frances, et al. “Engaging the Community: An Executive Briefing.” Network for Business Sustainability, Research Network for Business Sustainability, swift.van2.auro.io:8081/swift/v1/6bda5a38d0d7490e81ba33fbb4be21dd/sophia/blox/assets/data/000/000/039/original/NBS-Executive-Report-Community-Engagement.pdf?1492523761.

captured by past Lobby Market survey efforts. However, patrons do not have the authority to propose and execute decisions related to all aspects of the Lobby Market (e.g. patrons are not able to determine the market's hours of operation).

- **An example of a translational (or transitional) community engagement practice:** Martha's Table is home to a Youth Advisory Council—a council comprised of Ward 8-based high school students who advise the organization on its programming and expansion to Ward 8, support organizational outreach, and participate in quarterly skill-building activities. Martha's Table provides the council with the resources and authority to plan some of the organization's older youth programming, direct the execution of community events, and determine the details of the council's skill-building curriculum. However, the council does not have full oversight over Youth Advisory Council-related decisions.

Beyond models provided by El-Chibini and the Network for Business Sustainability, alternative models exist for classifying community engagement strategies. Considering community engagement in a government context, the King County Community Engagement Guide represents community engagement methods as happening on one of five distinct levels: **informs, consults, engages in dialogue, work together, and directs action**.⁹ Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, a frequently referenced "typology of participation,"¹⁰ depicts community engagement as happening on eight interrelated levels (**citizen control, delegation, partnership, placation, consultation, informing, therapy, and manipulation**) that fall under one of three categories: **citizen control, tokenism, and nonparticipation**.¹¹ The International Association for Public Participation conceptualizes five categories of community engagement: **inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower**.¹² The Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery guide—a "practical guide to engagement in planning" developed by Planning Aid for Scotland—imagines that a public body can move from **informing** a community to **consulting** a community to building a **partnership** with a community.¹³

⁹ "Community Engagement Guide." Racial Equity Tools, King County, 2011, www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/CommunityEngagementGuideContinuum2011-2.pdf.

¹⁰ Fox, Roz. "Transformative Community Engagement for Sustainable Regeneration." University of Bolton, The University of Bolton, 2014, ubir.bolton.ac.uk/734/1/Fox%2C%20RozPhD%20thesis%20Final.pdf.

¹¹ "Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation*, The Citizen's Handbook, www.citizenshandbook.org/arnsteinsladder.html.

¹² Community Engagement in the NSW Planning System. PlanningNSW, 2003, Community Engagement in the NSW Planning System, www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/CommunityEngagementHandbookNewSouthWales.pdf.

¹³ "Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery: A Practical Guide to Better Engagement in Planning." *PAS Building Active Citizenship*, 2015, pas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SPEED.pdf.

SECTION GUIDING QUESTION(S):

- How has Martha's Table historically defined "community" and "engagement"? How does the organization define both presently? How can Martha's Table define both through a TCE lens?

C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: What are the benefits of and barriers to transformative community engagement?

Regardless of relevant literature defining transformative community engagement (TCE) in diverse ways, the literature is consistent on one specific aspect of transformatively engaging with communities: TCE can offer benefits to both organizations and communities. Section C explores the advantages that can be derived from enacting transformative community engagement strategies and describes potential barriers to practicing TCE.

The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities, from PolicyLink and the Ohio State University’s Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, details potential benefits of TCE¹⁴:

- **Legitimacy and increased support for plans and projects:** Organizations that practice TCE participate in the “substantive engagement of...communities” facing specific problems. With the deep engagement of communities, organizations can develop solutions to community issues that “incorporate equity outcomes,” attract community support, and “reflect legitimacy.” Legitimacy, specifically, builds the “trust, political will, and ownership” necessary for effective implementation of decisions and projects.
- **Improved community/government relations:** Robust community engagement can “build trust between diverse stakeholders.” Increased trust engenders a community setting where it is not difficult to resolve differences or navigate conversations regarding “racial disparities, economic conditions, and community development needs.”
- **Deeper understanding of the issues:** When organizations enact TCE strategies, organizations receive information regarding community issues from community members. Information from “the people who are facing and addressing” specific community challenges helps to establish more effective community solutions.
- **Increase in community capacity:** More meaningful interactions between community members facilitate the formation of “stronger networks across racial, ethnic, generational, gender, and socioeconomic divides.” Stronger relationships within a community foster a solidarity that is able to “[achieve] equitable outcomes and [leverage] additional resources, outside of public processes.”

¹⁴ Bergstrom, Danielle, et al. The Sustainable Communities Initiative: The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities. PolicyLink, Kirwan Institute, The Sustainable Communities Initiative: The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities, www.kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/reports/2012/11_2012_CommEngGuideSCI_PolicyLinkKirwan.pdf

- **Reduced long-term costs:** Ineffective or completely lacking community engagement can create a lack of community support for projects proposed by an organization. While disagreement may arise in project planning and implementation processes regardless of the quality of an organization's community engagement strategies, TCE "creates an environment of positive communication where creative and inclusive solutions can be found to resolve conflicts."
- **Democracy in action:** TCE is a method through which a community can have greater ability to "connect to and shape local and regional decision-making processes."

While transformative community engagement can offer a variety of benefits, Stirling, exploring TCE in a business context, notes that **community**, **relational**, and **organisational** barriers to enacting transformative community engagement exist.¹⁵

Community barriers refer to community characteristics or dynamics that may impede effective transformative community engagement¹⁶:

- **Educational levels:** Differing educational levels among community members can lead to conflicting understandings of projects, decisions, etc.
- **Expectation/entitlement:** Community members' unrealistic expectations of an organization can disrupt potentially fruitful community-organization relationships.
- **Complex environment:** An insufficient understanding of the "complexity" of a community—its "different needs, demands, challenges and ways of doing things"—can lead to community-organization collaborations that do not meaningfully meet the needs of the community.
- **Motivation/responsibility:** Enacting TCE necessitates buy-in from a community.
- **Community liaison/leader issues:** While community liaisons and leaders are critical to successful transformative community engagement, community liaisons and leaders "[do] not always represent the interests of the community and can at times be more interested in protecting their political status."
- **Inclusive communication:** Difficulties can arise related to effectively communicating with all actors at all levels of a community.

¹⁵ Stirling, Lauren. Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement. University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, 2013, Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement, repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/40645/Stirling_Practices_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹⁶ Stirling, Lauren. Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement. University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, 2013, Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement, repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/40645/Stirling_Practices_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

- **Politics and power:** Community politics and power struggles, as well as external (e.g. regional, statewide, national) politics, can threaten transformative community engagement.

Relational barriers are impediments to transformative community engagement related to how an organization and community relate and interact¹⁷:

- **Trust:** Building a relationship between an organization and community requires the establishment of mutual trust.
- **Conflicts between actors:** Collaboration between diverse actors can reveal significantly polarized perspectives, vested interests, expectations, etc.
- **Different agendas:** Agendas between organizations and communities may not always overlap, hindering impactful partnership-building.
- **Identifying stakeholders to engage with:** Identifying community leaders to engage with is an imperative of deep, transformative community engagement. Challenges to such a task include recognizing that any community “doesn’t have simply one voice” and discerning between community leaders who are impactful and those who just have the “loudest voice.”
- **Language:** If an organization engages with a community that utilizes a different language, there is “risk of mistranslation and misinterpretation.”
- **Turnover of people:** The constant exit and introduction of actors (staff members of an organization, leaders within a community, etc.) can disrupt long-established relationships and ongoing collaborations.
- **Implementation structure:** The strategy with which an organization-community project, decision, etc. is “carried out or *implemented* can determine how sustainable or successful it is.”

Organisational barriers identify characteristics or dynamics of an organization that can undermine transformative community engagement¹⁸:

¹⁷ Stirling, Lauren. Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement. University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, 2013, Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement,

repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/40645/Stirling_Practices_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹⁸ Stirling, Lauren. Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement. University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, 2013, Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement,

repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/40645/Stirling_Practices_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

- **Capacity:** An organization that desires to execute transformative community engagement must first have the capacity (e.g. financial resources, people power, time, etc.) to execute TCE.
- **Paternalism:** Organizational attitudes and actions undergirded by paternalism (e.g. using “we know better” approaches to projects, harboring “misconceptions around how a community operates and functions,” etc.) can stunt the formation of meaningful partnerships with community members.
- **Structure:** If an organization does not make structural changes that reflect its commitment to TCE, then the organization’s integration of TCE may fail.
- **[Organization] buy-in:** Enacting TCE necessitates buy-in from an organization.

Beyond community, relational, and organisational barriers, Stirling lists time (e.g. community members may be significantly occupied with certain priorities that limit the time available to engage with organizations), money (e.g. an organization may not have the funding to compensate members of a potential community advisory group), and legislation (e.g. local policies may affect what resources an organization can offer community members) as other items that hinder the practice of transformative community engagement.¹⁹

SECTION GUIDING QUESTION(S):

- What can Martha’s Table gain from TCE that the organization is not gaining from its present community engagement tactics?

¹⁹ Stirling, Lauren. Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement. University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science, 2013, Practices, Barriers and Enablers for Transformational Community Engagement, repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/40645/Stirling_Practices_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

D. CASE STUDIES: How is transformative community engagement practiced in real life?

Moving from theory to praxis, elements of transformative community engagement (TCE), and the benefits of transformative community engagement, are visible within organizations across the world. Section D evaluates what characteristics of TCE are evident within, specifically, Washington, D.C.-based organizations that are parallel (mission-wise, etc.) to Martha’s Table: Brainfood, Bread for the City (BFC), Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB), DC Central Kitchen, DC Greens, Jubilee Housing, the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC), and N Street Village.²⁰

Figure D1 features brief case studies that detail TCE elements that are present within the above eight organizations. Alongside providing concrete examples of TCE practices, Figure D1 discusses the organizations to better showcase how Martha’s Table’s TCE strategies compare to those of other organizations, providing an opportunity for Martha’s Table to consider ways that it can further evolve its transformative community engagement tactics.

FIGURE D1. Transformative Community Engagement Case Studies²¹

TCE Characteristic 1: Be proactive and targeted in engagement strategies

Example strategies:

- “Work through existing networks of community-based organizations”

²⁰ Brainfood uses “the power of food to engage, empower, and employ DC teens and young adults”; Bread for the City works to manifest a future where all D.C. residents “have access to the basic material resources they need for survival and growth, and the prosperity of their social, emotional, and spiritual lives”; Capital Area Food Bank works with hundreds of community partners in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia to provide foodstuffs to those experiencing food insecurity; DC Central Kitchen is a “community kitchen” that “develops and operates social ventures targeting the cycle of hunger and poverty,” including a venture that “[hires] dozens of...graduates to prepare the 3 million meals [DC Central Kitchen] [provides] for homeless shelters, schools, and nonprofits each year”; DC Greens uses the “power of partnerships to support food education, food access, and food policy in the nation’s capital”; Jubilee Housing creates “service-enriched affordable housing” to ensure there is a “place in [D.C.] for those at risk”; the Latin American Youth Center empowers a “diverse population of youth to achieve a successful transition to adulthood through multi-cultural, comprehensive, and innovative programs that address youth’s social, academic, and career needs”; and N Street Village “empowers homeless and low-income women in Washington, D.C. to claim their highest quality of life by offering a broad spectrum of services, housing, and advocacy in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.”

²¹ Figure D1 displays and uses characteristics of TCE listed in the Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities from PolicyLink and the Ohio State University’s Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. Information for each organization was found via accessing digital, public-facing materials (websites, etc.). It should be noted that information listed under one characteristic of TCE may also be relevant to other characteristics of TCE. Also, a majority of the represented organizations are located in Northwest D.C.

- “Attend community meetings and cultural events as a participant”
- “Develop awareness of the racial and economic disparities in your city or region”
- “Seek out relationships with leaders from non-English speaking communities”
- “Translate materials and provide interpretation at community meetings”
- “Engage faith-based organizations”
- “Host a ‘meet and greet’ with community organizations and advocacy groups to build connections across sectors and develop partnerships”
- “Build incentives for engagement for each strategy that reduce barriers to participate”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Use visuals that represent and appeal to supported communities:** Across digital (e.g. websites, social media platforms) and print materials (e.g. promotional collateral), the organizations use visuals (e.g. photographs, graphic art) that represent and appeal to the communities that the organizations support. Intentionality with visual language helps organizations to more readily center and connect with particular community populations. *E.g. When promoting its 2017 Grocery Walk event, DC Greens utilized a graphic for the event that reflected the racial and ethnic diversity of the communities that the organization serves.*²²
- **Build and maintain strategic community relationships and partnerships:** The organizations foster and nurture strategic relationships and partnerships with community businesses, nonprofits, etc. to support programming and services, increase organizational visibility, and to integrate community members into the organizations’ decision-making processes. Attending, participating in, hosting, and co-creating community events; contributing to or collaborating on community projects; and establishing channels for receiving community input are specific tactics the organizations use to establish ties with community members.
- **Provide programming and services informed by the needs of specific populations:** All of the organizations provide a host of programming and services that are targeted toward specific groups of people. The tailoring of the social interventions for unique groups ensures that the interventions are informed by and, therefore, sufficiently meet the needs of the groups. *E.g. BFC extends resources (e.g. space, funding) to defined community populations, expanding the capacity of the populations to create and direct efforts that address the issues they face. For example, BFC provides resources for WomenStrong DC—a program comprised of women in Southeast D.C. that establishes clubs and workshops for sharing experiences; building confidence; developing leadership skills; and receiving assistance with employment, financial literacy, and physical and emotional challenges.*²³ *In another example, CAFB operates and contributes to food distribution programs that meet the needs of diverse*

²² “Flyer for DC Green's Grocery Walk.” Milken Institute School of Public Health - The George Washington University, The George Washington University, 5 Oct. 2017, publichealth.gwu.edu/blogs/deptannouncements/2017/10/05/bphsn-joins-dc-greens-in-a-grocery-walk-on-oct-14/.

²³ “WomenStrong United States - Bread for the City WomenStrong - DC.” *WomenStrong International*, WomenStrong International, www.womenstrong.org/projects/bread-for-the-city.

community demographics, including children, seniors, and families, to ensure that the organization's impact is as deep and broad as possible.²⁴ For instance, CAFB operates its Weekend Bags, Kids Summer Meals, Mobile Food, and Kids After School Meals programs. The programs help to curb children's vulnerability to hunger and food insecurity using strategies that are informed by the causes of hunger and food insecurity unique to children (e.g. the Mobile Food program provides "lunches during the summer to children in hard to reach neighborhoods via a customized bus" to provide transportation means that are necessary to access healthy food). Also, the N Street Village is wholly dedicated to meeting the needs of women in D.C.²⁵

TCE Characteristic 2: Build clear opportunities for decision making and partnerships among community organizations

Example strategies:

- "Structure your consortium to include substantive representation of people of color"
- "Communicate all key decision points in planning process"
- "Fund equity-focused organizations to train participating residents"
- "Establish a social equity caucus or working group with decision-making authority and oversight"
- "Set aside resources to be shaped and decided on by community members"
- "Articulate expectations for equity inclusion and partnership with other stakeholders in the consortium"
- "Proactively cultivate new community leaders"

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Provide community leadership opportunities at all levels of the organization:**
The organizations provide internal opportunities for community members to participate in and direct decision-making processes, transforming community members from passive spectators of and occasional participants in organizational affairs to leaders within the organizations. *E.g. BFC has an active advocacy branch that utilizes coalition-building, engagement with public officials, and community outreach to advocate for "policies that preserve and create affordable housing."*²⁶ *To encourage participation in the organization's advocacy initiatives, especially as leaders, BFC's Advocacy Director and Client and Community Organizer oversee a "12-week organizing institute to introduce community members to organizing skills, direct action, and strategies for building effective campaigns." The institute's classes discuss "the affordable housing crisis, impact storytelling, race, gender, class, and other critical topics to empower individuals to act to improve the lives of DC residents." Beyond the organization's advocacy department, BFC also provides other*

²⁴ "How We Work." *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/programs-2/.

²⁵ "Get Involved." *N Street Village*, N Street Village, www.nstreetvillage.org/get-involved/.

²⁶ "Building Power for Change." *Bread for the City*, Bread for the City, breadforthe-city.org/advocacy/.

opportunities for community members to share decision-making power and responsibilities with the organization: BFC has a Client Advisory Council that “offers feedback and insight to help the organization to better provide meaningful and impactful programming and services,”²⁷ and 51% of the organization’s Board of Directors members are clients.²⁸ Similarly, Jubilee Housing invites community members to “contribute to the progress of their neighbors through leadership opportunities on [Jubilee Housing’s] Resident Council and Board of Directors.”²⁹

Specific strategies used by organizations:

- **Invest in specific populations as community leaders in consecutive stages (Brainfood):** Brainfood uses a 3-step “engage, empower, and employ” model tailored to refine youth’s leadership skills over time: the organization’s Cooks in Training program engages participants in learning the basics of “cooking, leadership, and teamwork in the kitchen”³⁰; the Community Cooking Coaches program empowers participants to direct “healthy cooking workshops to all ages”³¹; and Brainfood’s food entrepreneurship enterprises (Brainfood Homegrown, Brainfood Test Kitchen CSA) employ participants.³² The Brainfood Homegrown program is a “local food venture” led by Brainfood graduates who direct the development and sale of snack foods³³; the Brainfood Test Kitchen CSA is “run by Brainfood graduates who lead recipe development, food production, packaging, and run the pick-up process for [Brainfood’s] summer food subscription.”³⁴ The “engage, empower, and employ” is supported by a Brainfood Homegrown Manager, Community Cooking Coaches Program Director, Cooks in Training Senior Program Associate, Brainfood Homegrown Production Lead, Program Manager, Brainfood Homegrown Kitchen Associate, Brainfood Homegrown Interns, and a Program Associate.³⁵
- **Mobilize a geographically, etc. broad base of community leaders (Capital Area Food Bank):** CAFB maintains an advocacy branch that aims to “[educate] the community and public officials on the causes and consequences of hunger”; “[enhance] and [accelerate] policies that impact hunger, strengthen the safety net, and improve outcomes for low-income individuals”; and to “[empower] food assistance recipients and the broader community to serve as advocates on behalf of the food bank and its mission.”³⁶ To accomplish the latter objective, CAFB galvanizes the support and

²⁷ “Building Power for Change.” Bread for the City, Bread for the City, breadforthecity.org/advocacy/.

²⁸ “Bread for the City 2016 Strategic Plan.” Bread for the City, Bread for the City, breadforthecity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/BFC-Strategic-Plan.pdf.

²⁹ “What We Do.” Jubilee Housing, Jubilee Housing, www.jubileehousing.org/what-we-do/.

³⁰ “What We Do.” Brainfood, Brainfood, brain-food.org/mission-support/.

³¹ “Empower.” Brainfood, Brainfood, brain-food.org/empower-positive-change/.

³² “What We Do.” Brainfood, Brainfood, brain-food.org/mission-support/.

³³ “Brainfood Homegrown.” Brainfood, Brainfood, brain-food.org/homegrown-products/.

³⁴ “Support Brainfood Youth and Local Food through Our Test Kitchen CSA.” Brainfood, Brainfood, brain-food.org/brainfood-csa/.

³⁵ “Who We Are.” Brainfood, Brainfood, brain-food.org/who-we-are/.

³⁶ “Advocacy.” Capital Area Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/advocacy/.

contributions of a broad (as far as location, issues of interest, etc.) network of community-based organizations in Washington, D.C., Prince George’s and Montgomery County, Maryland, and northern Virginia.

- **Galvanize community leaders who are experiencing the challenges the organization is addressing (DC Greens):** On its “Community Advocates” web page, DC Greens articulates that “in order to develop effective solutions for food justice” in Washington, D.C. there needs to be an investment in “building the power and leadership of people who are experiencing the brunt of the problems.”³⁷ The organization invests in such power- and leadership-building, in part, by dedicating resources to cultivating new community leaders via its Community Advocates program—a training program that seeks to address food-related issues by “uplifting the importance of community voice in...decision-making spaces and equipping D.C. residents who experience food injustice with the tools, connections, skills, and information” needed to “build power in their communities and create the change they want to see.” Each Community Advocates training cycle lasts for six months, with six to eight Community Advocate trainees (chosen via an application and interview process) attending bi-weekly, two-hour meetings during the first half of the program and weekly, two-hour meetings during the second half. During each training cycle, trainees learn about DC budgeting, food justice, community organizing, being a spokesperson, testifying at city budget hearings, participating in public meetings, and engaging in community outreach. To encourage community participation, the program’s structure takes into account the “barriers that prevent people from participating in the decision-making process that shape their lives, their city, and their food” (e.g. participants are paid hourly for their commitment and contributions). The Community Advocates program is supported by Community Outreach Specialists.³⁸

TCE Characteristic 3: Grapple with past failings and current challenges in fragmented and disempowered communities, for they are the starting points to envisioning a sustainable future

Example strategies:

- “Create many entry points for engagement and recognize the relative levels of power, voice, impact and opportunity for knowledge-sharing and relationship-building that they afford”
- “Stay the course—listening to the community’s concern is central to developing and building trust”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **State intentions to explore issues of power, privilege, and oppression:** Demonstrating a desire to give context to communities subjected to systematic

³⁷ “Community Advocates Program Overview.” *DC Greens*, DC Greens, www.dcgreens.org/community-advocates.

³⁸ “Staff.” *DC Greens*, DC Greens, www.dcgreens.org/staff/.

marginalization in order to better understand and serve the communities, several of the organizations have articulated (via language in mission statements, strategic plans, etc.) a commitment to unpacking issues of power, privilege, and oppression found within supported communities. Such a level of organizational transparency creates an opportunity for communities to keep organizations aligned with their commitments. *E.g. The curriculum for Brainfood's Cooks in Training program includes a section that explores local food systems and acknowledges D.C.'s food-related power differentials and systems of oppression*³⁹; *BFC lists understanding and removing unintentional biases as an organization-wide objective within its strategic plan*⁴⁰; *CAFB, within language describing its advocacy branch, recognizes that the "root of hunger is poverty"*⁴¹; *DC Central Kitchen nods to the fact that certain injurious circumstances—incarceration, addiction, homelessness, trauma, unequal access to economic opportunity and food, lack of living wages, poverty*⁴²—*stemming from "systemic failures"*⁴³ *are at the root of hunger; DC Greens, in the organization's 2016 Annual Report, expresses a desire to further focus on addressing the root causes of food insecurity in D.C.*⁴⁴; *and Jubilee Housing acknowledges that "poverty and disenfranchisement" are impediments to opportunity.*⁴⁵

Specific strategies used by organizations:

- **Offer programming and services informed by a community's history of power, privilege, and oppression (Latin American Youth Center):** To support youth of color, LAYC developed and uses the Promotor Pathway model, which is a "long-term client management intervention model for disconnected and disengaged youth facing multiple obstacles that prevent them from accessing resources and achieving educational, employment, and healthy living goals."⁴⁶ The model matches young people from particular backgrounds ("[I]ow-income youth, ages 14-24, who live in neighborhoods that are substantially Latino and African-American and exhibit a substantial combination of risks"⁴⁷) with a *Promotor*—a youth worker who wears hats as a mentor and case manager. A Promotor "focuses on cultivating and maintaining a

³⁹ "Engage." *Brainfood*, Brainfood, brain-food.org/engage-culinary/.

⁴⁰ "Bread for the City 2016 Strategic Plan." Bread for the City, Bread for the City, breadforthecity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/BFC-Strategic-Plan.pdf.

⁴¹ "Advocacy." *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/advocacy/.

⁴² "Core Issues." *D.C. Central Kitchen*, D.C. Central Kitchen, dcentralkitchen.org/core-issues/.

⁴³ "Our Social Ventures." *D.C. Central Kitchen*, D.C. Central Kitchen, dcentralkitchen.org/our-social-ventures/.

⁴⁴ *2016 Annual Report*. DC Greens, *2016 Annual Report*, static1.squarespace.com/static/5a0de798ccc5c53cfc15685c/t/5a3bfafa41920213f70e64c5/1513880322336/Annual+Report+FY16.pdf.

⁴⁵ "What We Do." Jubilee Housing, Jubilee Housing, www.jubileehousing.org/what-we-do/.

⁴⁶ "Promotor Pathway Model." *Latin American Youth Center*, Latin American Youth Center, www.layc-dc.org/what-we-do/promotor-pathway-model/.

⁴⁷ "Latin American Youth Center's Promotor Pathway." *Latin American Youth Center*, Latin American Youth Center, 1e9y013z93et1bb4ds44867z.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/pp-results-2016.pdf.

lasting, trusting relationship with the youth to achieve success in education, employment, and healthy behaviors”⁴⁸ and provides “service coordination across various programs to address multiple needs.”⁴⁹ To ensure Promotors operate with a substantive knowledge of the backgrounds and communities supported youth come from, Promotors utilize a Risk Screening Tool that allows Promotors to “assess the barriers in a young person’s life, allowing [Promotors] to identify, outreach, and serve those experiencing the highest level of risks.”⁵⁰

TCE Characteristic 4: Prioritize community knowledge and concerns

Example strategies:

- “Hold listening sessions or study circles”
- “Incorporate storytelling activities”
- “Work with community leaders to facilitate walking or bus tours with elected officials and stakeholders to highlight assets, opportunities, and challenges”
- “Using diverse communication techniques such as social media, pictures, video, painting”
- “Work with community organizations or community/university partnerships to conduct participatory action research”
- “Create an inventory of past and current community initiatives”
- “Include equity representation on technical advisory committees”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Offer varied channels for receiving community input and for keeping community members informed:** The organizations maintain multiple channels for receiving community input, feedback, and perspectives, especially digital channels (e.g. social media platforms, email). Also, the organizations use a variety of means for communicating with community members and keeping them looped in on future organizational projects, plans, etc. Such communication channels include social media, blog posts, and print and digital newsletters. The use of communication channels to bring information to communities and to receive input from communities helps to create organizational transparency, increased community trust of an organization, and opportunities for increased community participation in organizational affairs.

TCE Characteristic 5: Develop cultural competency skills and cultivate humility

Example strategies:

⁴⁸ “Promotor Pathway Model.” *Latin American Youth Center*, Latin American Youth Center, www.layc-dc.org/what-we-do/promotor-pathway-model/.

⁴⁹ “Latin American Youth Center's Promotor Pathway.” *Latin American Youth Center*, Latin American Youth Center, 1e9y013z93et1bb4ds44867z.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/pp-results-2016.pdf.

⁵⁰ “Promotor Pathway Model.” *Latin American Youth Center*, Latin American Youth Center, www.layc-dc.org/what-we-do/promotor-pathway-model/.

- “Dedicate resources for staff training on structural racism and racial disparities”
- “Assemble a diverse public agency staff”
- “Attend community meetings and cultural events as a participant”
- “Translate all materials and provide interpretation at all meetings”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Affirmatively hire individuals from marginalized communities:** To cultivate cultural competency through hiring practices, the organizations affirmatively hire women, people of color, those with histories in the communities that the organizations support, and individuals from other marginalized communities. In addition, many of the organizations articulate (via online materials, etc.) a belief in fostering work settings that are inclusive and that value diversity. *E.g. CAFB believes, per its “Diversity and Inclusion” web page, in “cultivating diversity and inclusion of all races, ethnicities, religions, ages, sexual orientations and genders.”*⁵¹
- **Offer organizational information in multiple languages to increase accessibility:** Adapting to demographic changes, several of the organizations provide access to their online materials (e.g. website) in English as well as Spanish, ensuring that they are able to reach and effectively engage with as many communities as possible.

Specific strategies used by organizations:

- **Integrate community input into strategies for building cultural competency (Bread for the City):** In an effort to expand the capacity of community members to shape the organization’s cultural competency climate, BFC commits resources to its Client Advisory Council (CAC) for planning organization-wide “undoing racism,” racial equity, and Protective Action Response (PAR) training, and sensitivity training.”⁵² In a 2017 blog post (“What’s Up with the Client Advisory Council?”), a CAC member describes the significance of the CAC helping direct BFC’s cultural competency efforts: “I like that it’s a collective of mostly African Americans sharing their ideas about how an organization should operate to best serve their needs and improving relationships between clients and staff.”
- **Provide programming and services that reflect the cultural backgrounds of community members (Capital Area Food Bank):** Beyond providing online materials in both English and Spanish, CAFB expresses that it aims to use additional means to “[e]ngage the Spanish-speaking community in understanding hunger,

⁵¹ “Diversity and Inclusion.” *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/diversity-and-inclusion/.

⁵² “What’s Up with the Client Advisory Council?” *Bread for the City*, Bread for the City, breadforthe-city.org/blog/whats-up-with-the-client-advisory-council/.

volunteering, and raising funds,” especially in order to more effectively partner with Spanish-speaking community members to resolve hunger-related issues.⁵³ Such additional means include CAFB’s recent decision to start sourcing, collecting, and distributing more culturally diverse food stuffs.⁵⁴ A 2016 blog post (“New Menu Items for Hispanic Neighbors”) discusses CAFB’s new commitment to diversifying the foods the organization disseminates: “...the CAFB recently committed to making a selection of the foods commonly requested by the Hispanic neighbors we serve—largely residing in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Prince William and Fairfax County—available all the time”

TCE Characteristic 6: Support capacity building to engage meaningfully

Example strategies:

- “Target resources for training, educational sessions, and conference attendance”
- “Structure trainings and educational sessions”
- “Provide opportunities for resident leadership development”
- “Work with community organizations to identify ways they can build institutional and government capacity to connect with marginalized communities”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Hire individuals with the authority and expertise necessary for sustaining offered programming and services:** Alongside affirmatively hiring women, people of color, those with histories in the communities that the organizations support, and individuals from other marginalized communities, the organizations meet capacity needs by hiring individuals with the authority, expertise, and backgrounds needed to sufficiently support provided programming and services.
- **Use technological means to expand capacity:** To compensate for capacity needs that can not be met by staff members, organizations embrace and use technology to expand the organizations’ ability to provide programming and services. *E.g. BFC’s website includes a “Frequently Asked Questions” section that offers information about how to access emergency relief supports⁵⁵; CAFB, through the organization’s website, provides digital access to a “Healthy Recipe Database” that supplies community members recipes for making healthy and affordable meals⁵⁶; DC Greens’ website has a web page dedicated to supplying digital resources (e.g. maps, guides) that direct community members to health clinics, community and senior centers, WIC clinics, food*

⁵³ “Rethink: CAFB’s Strategic Plan for Solving Hunger in the Washington Metro Area.” *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Strategic-plan.pdf.

⁵⁴ Bourne, Kristen. “New Menu Items for Hispanic Neighbors.” *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/2016/02/new-menu-hispanic/.

⁵⁵ “What Would Help?” *Bread for the City*, Bread for the City, breadforthecity.org/services/#faq.

⁵⁶ “Recipes from the CAFB Kitchen.” *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/programs/capacity-building/recipes/.

pantries, referral sites, and other locations that offer emergency relief supports⁵⁷; LAYC hosts a digital database of resources to support youth’s educational, etc. goals (e.g. resources for becoming involved with AmeriCorps, resources for finding internship and/or community service opportunities)⁵⁸; and DC Greens uses technology to expand its advocacy capacity by using its digital newsletter as a platform for sharing information on how community members can be more involved in local social justice efforts.

- **Utilize education to invest in community members as leaders:** Alongside investing in technology to expand capacity, the organizations also invest in community members as leaders to broaden and deepen impact. Such investment happens, in part, via community member education. *E.g. CAFB offers Face Hunger—a free, 90-minute “hands-on simulation and discussion activity” that allows individuals from “[s]chools, universities, community and professional organizations, [and] workplace and faith based groups” to “become” individuals experiencing hunger in order to “raise awareness about the issue of hunger.”*⁵⁹ Also, CAFB educates community partners, and transforms them into anti-hunger leaders, by providing a series of free, digital messaging documents that detail how to discuss hunger-related issues with others.⁶⁰ DC Greens also invests in community partners through education, as seen with the organization’s Regional School Garden Summit. The summit is an annual event that nurtures “the emerging regional network of nonprofits, schools, and government agencies interested in capacity and network building around school gardens by providing a space to learn, share best practices and make new connections.”⁶¹
- **Collaborate with community members to make use of their volunteering and fundraising capabilities:** The organizations ensure the sustainability of programming and services by leaning on volunteerism to maintain people power and by utilizing the fundraising capabilities of community members to secure financial resources. *E.g. CAFB provides volunteer opportunities to support CAFB programming and services. To ensure that as many community members as possible can be involved in CAFB volunteer efforts, the organization offers opportunities that are tailored for specific populations (e.g. the organization has opportunities available for individuals with intellectual disabilities).*⁶² In addition, CAFB⁶³ and N Street Village⁶⁴ provide digital toolkits for community members interested in hosting fundraising events for the

⁵⁷ “Community Food Guides.” DC Greens, DC Greens, www.dcgreens.org/community-food-guides/.

⁵⁸ “Find a Program.” Latin American Youth Center, Latin American Youth Center, www.layc-dc.org/what-we-do/find-a-program/.

⁵⁹ “Face Hunger™.” Capital Area Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/programs/face-hunger/.

⁶⁰ “Capital Area Food Bank.” Capital Area Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank, 1qf95e43hn5t3dvchxhllkupz-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Hunger-is-Here.pdf.

⁶¹ Citation not available due to a recent DC Greens website update.

⁶² “Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities.” Capital Area Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/volunteer-5/intellectual-disabilities/.

⁶³ “Events & Campaigns.” Capital Area Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/events-and-campaigns/.

⁶⁴ “Donate Your Birthday.” N Street Village, N Street Village, www.nstreetvillage.org/get-involved/donate-your-birthday/.

organizations. For instance, community members have the option to host a digital CAFB food drive⁶⁵, and community members can initiate fundraising for N Street Village by “donating” their birthday.⁶⁶ Additionally, N Street Village is home to a host of councils and committees comprised of community members who are dedicated to sustaining the N Street Village mission through fundraising and ambassadorship efforts.⁶⁷ For example, N Street Village Ambassadors Council is a “select group of energetic, passionate and talented leaders who are dedicated to N Street Village’s mission, and are in a position to network and raise friends, funds, and visibility for the women of N Street Village.”⁶⁸

TCE Characteristic 7: Engagement processes should include space to be iterative and reflective

Example strategies:

- “Work with community members and equity organizations to identify benchmarks for success”
- “Establish regular check-ins to gauge progress”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Routinely measure, evaluate, and reflect on the impact of transformative community engagement strategies:** The organizations produce a number of digitally accessible documents (e.g. strategic plans, impact reports, annual reports, case studies, programmatic evaluations) that give opportunities for the organizations to reflect on past efforts and measure outcomes to help inform the evolution of programming and services. Also, the documents contribute to organizational transparency *E.g. Some of the produced documents are a result of direct input from community members, such as Brainfood’s Brainfood Kitchen All Stars 2015-2016 Executive Summary document, which assesses the results of a survey mechanism given to participants of the organization’s Cooks in Training program.*⁶⁹

TCE Characteristic 8: Target resources to support ongoing engagement

Example strategies:

- “Put implementation front and center”

⁶⁵ “Events & Campaigns.” *Capital Area Food Bank*, Capital Area Food Bank, www.capitalareafoodbank.org/events-and-campaigns/.

⁶⁶ “Donate Your Birthday.” *N Street Village*, N Street Village, www.nstreetvillage.org/get-involved/donate-your-birthday/.

⁶⁷ “Ambassadors Council.” *N Street Village*, N Street Village, www.nstreetvillage.org/about-the-village/village-leadership/ambassadors-council/.

⁶⁸ “Impact Committee.” *N Street Village*, N Street Village, www.nstreetvillage.org/get-involved/join-a-committee/impact-committee-application/.

⁶⁹ Engage.” *Brainfood*, Brainfood, brain-food.org/engage-culinary/.

- “Contract with local, community-based organizations in low-income communities and communities of color to conduct engagement processes”
- “Create a community liaison or community organizer position”
- “Leverage additional funds to support engagement”

TCE Characteristic 9: Align engagement efforts with clear opportunities to influence more equitable policies and allocation of resources

Example strategies:

- “Develop key community priorities into policy agendas”
- “Identify lead agencies with authority to address policy priorities”
- “Develop timelines to synchronize processes with decision points”
- “Establish regular communication mechanisms”

General strategies used by organizations:

- **Establish advocacy- and activism-oriented initiatives:** Many of the organizations utilize advocacy and activism to build relationships with public officials to engender policy-level change, especially policy-level change that serves supported communities and that aligns with the organizations’ programming and services. *E.g. LAYC has an advocacy brach dedicated to encouraging staff members, youth and their families, and other community members to be involved with participating in public hearings, establishing meaningful partnerships, engaging governmental officials, community organizing, performing outreach, and forming and being involved with committees focused on a range of issues (e.g. justice for immigrants, racial equity).⁷⁰ The committees, especially, present opportunities for community members to direct LAYC’s decision-making processes that contribute to political change.*

SECTION GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- In comparison to the discussed organizations, in what ways is Martha’s Table succeeding in regards to TCE? In what ways could Martha’s Table be improving in regards to TCE?

⁷⁰ “Advocacy.” *Latin American Youth Center*, Latin American Youth Center, www.layc-dc.org/what-we-do/advocacy/.

E. ANALYSIS: How does Martha’s Table currently integrate transformative community engagement?

Section D presents examples of how organizations that are analogous to Martha’s Table practice transformative community engagement (TCE). Pivoting from the public inward, Section E examines Martha’s Table’s major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the organization’s adoption of transformative community engagement strategies.

To provide an understanding of where Martha’s Table’s community engagement practices align with TCE and where its practices do not align with TCE, Figure E1 presents a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of Martha’s Table’s current community engagement strategies. The SWOT analysis presented in Figure E1 is an aggregation of information from one-on-one semi-structured interviews with four Martha’s Table staff members representing varied Martha’s Table sectors and also feedback from a TCE-focused meeting with Martha’s Table’s key leadership.

FIGURE E1. Martha’s Table Transformative Community Engagement SWOT Analysis⁷¹

Strengths (internal advantages, assets, resources, and prospects)

- **Attends and hosts community events:** Martha’s Table participates in and attends community events (e.g. 12th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Walk and Parade) and also hosts and co-produces community events with community members (e.g. Community Thanksgiving Dinner). To ensure constant representation of Martha’s Table at community happenings, the organization established an Advance Team—a group of four dedicated staff who serve as Martha’s Table frontline ambassadors in Ward 8. Specifically, the Advance Team participates in activities and events in Ward 8 in order to spread the word about Martha’s Table’s work and transition; supports the planning and execution of summer 2018 programming at the Commons; shares key transition-related messages internally at Martha’s Table; and supports engagement of Martha’s Table staff during the organization’s transition. The organization’s attendance of, participation in, hosting of, and co-hosting of community-based events contributes to deeper engagement with communities, more community trust of Martha’s Table, more robust understanding of community challenges among staff, and the development of opportunities for community members to make decisions regarding Martha’s Table’s resource allocation and operation of programming and services.
- **Develops and maintains community-based advisory groups:** Martha’s Table has

⁷¹ “Section 14. SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.” *Community Tool Box*, Community Tool Box, ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/swot-analysis/main.

started to dedicate resources to developing and maintaining community-based advisory groups, creating opportunities for community members to weigh in on decisions related to the organization's operation of programming and services, resource allocation, and, recently, expansion into D.C.'s Ward 8 area. Currently, the only active community advisory groups at Martha's Table are the Youth Advisory Council and the Community Advisory Council. The Youth Advisory Council is comprised of Ward 8-based high school students who advise the organization on its programming and expansion to Ward 8, support organizational outreach, and participate in quarterly skill-building activities. The Community Advisory Council is a collective of Ward 8 community members that advises Martha's Table on programming.

- **Establishes and nurtures strategic community relationships and partnerships:** With a history that spans nearly 40 years, Martha's Table is a familiar institution within the D.C. community. Through its enduring presence and resulting familiarity, Martha's Table has established, and continues to establish, critical and strategic relationships and partnerships with community members, businesses, government officials, other nonprofit organizations, etc. The strategic community relationships and partnerships help to sustain the organization's day-to-day operations. For example, Martha's Table, in 2017, worked with 17,000+ volunteers to distribute 87,000+ groceries at all of the organization's markets; distribute nearly 2 million meals through the organization's markets, McKenna's Wagon, and Healthy Start; and assist 14,000+ Outlet participants.

Weaknesses (internal disadvantages, limitations, restrictions, and challenges)

- **Operates by an organizational mission that lacks flexibility:** Martha's Table's programming and services reflect the organization's commitment to its mission: "We believe that every child deserves the opportunity for their brightest future and a deeply engaged family and community committed to their success." With its dedication to its mission, Martha's Table is structured and resourced to achieve certain objectives and priorities (making Martha's Table an organization with specific strengths, capacities, and assets). Therefore, the organization's mission does not have a flexibility that would make it feasible for the organization to consider and act on the fullest range of community needs and desires, which can disrupt the practice of TCE. For example, if community members were concerned about addressing local transportation issues, Martha's Table, using a TCE lens, would collaborate with community members to establish relevant acts of redress. However, with the organization's mission-driven focus on food, education, and opportunity, addressing transportation issues may not be a relevant goal for Martha's Table.
- **Lacks capacity to fully adopt TCE:** Right now, Martha's Table does not enough diverse resources (people power, time, etc.) to begin to fully adopt transformative community engagement tactics. This is especially apparent when considering that the organization has historically initiated certain endeavors that were halted due to a lack of capacity (e.g. the staff at the organization's Southeast Outfitters location have used survey mechanisms in the past to assess patrons needs, but the use of the mechanisms was halted due to a lack of needed people power and time).
- **Has a staff that is not representative of the communities that it supports:**

Currently, less than 20 Martha's Table staff members reside in Washington, D.C.'s Southeast region—the region that is home for the communities that Martha's Table supports. A lack of organizational Southeast representation can produce decisions, projects, etc. that lack the perspectives of individuals from the Southeast area, which can produce decisions, projects, etc. that do not effectively serve those living in the Southeast region. Also, a lack of organizational Southeast representation can strain relations between Southeast D.C. community members and Martha's Table (e.g. community members may be skeptical of an organization moving to Ward 8 that has not hired individuals from Ward 8).

Opportunities (external advantages, assets, resources, and prospects)

- Can use existing programming and services to integrate TCE:** As the organization transitions into transformatively engaging communities, the organization does not have to completely innovate new programming and services. Instead, Martha's Table can integrate TCE by reconfiguring existing programming and services. For example, as mentioned by an interviewee, Martha's Table can pilot iterations of the Joyful Food Markets model that are shaped by TCE strategies (e.g. pilot the introduction of “community market leaders” who oversee markets alongside Martha's Table's market leaders)
- Can further integrate community members into organizational structure to further leverage the resources of its network of strategic community relationships and partnerships:** Through its programming and services, Martha's Table has established a network of community members that offer diverse resources that the organization can tap into (e.g. political clout, access to community members Martha's Table has not yet reached, fundraising capacity, etc.). The organization has the opportunity to further access the resources of its network by further integrating community members into its organizational structure. For example, to further leverage relationships with community members with political ties, the organization can develop an advocacy branch that is led by community members with access to governmental leaders. The further integration of community members into its organizational structure expands the capacity of Martha's Table while also increasing the ownership that community members have over the organization's affairs.

Threats (external disadvantages, limitations, restrictions, and challenges)

- May be viewed unfavorably by community members:** Perceptions of Martha's Table formed by community members can disrupt meaningful community-organization interactions necessary for facilitating transformative community engagement. Such perceptions are justified considering recent trends of gentrification in D.C. and also considering community members' experiences with nonprofits moving into their neighborhoods and stay true to delineated commitments. Unfavorable perceptions of Martha's Table from community members can also be exacerbated by the racial makeup of Martha's Table key leadership (e.g. community members may be mistrustful of organizational leaders with whom they do not share similar cultural

backgrounds).

- **May be adversely impacted by community political activity:** Political discord within the communities that Martha's Table serves can lead to strained intra-community relationships, limiting Martha's Table's capacity to establish relationships and partnerships with and between community members to achieve TCE objectives and priorities.

SECTION GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What are other strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that should be considered that were not mentioned above?
- How can Martha's Table utilize and take advantage of its strengths and opportunities to overcome and circumvent its weaknesses and threats?

F. CONCLUSION: How can Martha’s Table further adopt transformative community engagement in the future?

Section E’s Figure E1 investigates Martha’s Table’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to organization’s adoption of transformative community engagement (TCE). Section F synthesizes the findings in Figure E1 to introduce broad and more specific suggestions for Martha’s Table regarding how the organization can further adopt TCE strategies.

Figure F1 provides final recommendations for how Martha’s Table can better practice transformative community engagement. The recommendations are informed by the organizations strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (examined in Section E’s Figure E1) and also by the present TCE strategies executed by organizations comparable to Martha’s Table (discussed in Section D’s Figure D1). Figure F1 lists the recommendations under one of two tiers: a tier dedicated to discussing *philosophical and theoretical* changes and a tier dedicated to offering *structural and practical* changes.

FIGURE F1. Final Recommendations for Further Adopting Transformative Community Engagement at Martha’s Table⁷²

Tier 1: Making philosophical and theoretical changes

As highlighted in Section E’s Figure E1, Martha’s Table’s programming and services reflect the organization’s dedication to its core mission, which does not explicitly reference transformative community engagement. With the organization’s mission not robustly reflecting TCE, Martha’s Table’s operations, as a result, do not robustly incorporate the characteristics of TCE. To ensure Martha’s Table’s commitment to and full implementation of TCE, it is imperative that the organization **establish a vision statement regarding transformative community engagement that can be integrated into the organization’s overarching mission.** With Martha’s Table’s mission directly guiding its operations, the organization’s mission—its philosophy, ethos, theory of change, and constitutive “fabric”—must be expanded to include TCE, especially to produce TCE-derived acts.

Beyond further elevating and including TCE within the organization’s identity, it is also critical that Martha’s Table’s **staff members and community partners gain a full**

⁷² The decision was made to not offer the final recommendations in the form of a timeline (e.g. providing goals for 2018 alongside goals for 2019 and beyond) to acknowledge the fact that the process of integrating transformative community engagement is process without concrete starting and end points.

comprehension of transformative community engagement. Before the organization can even begin to meaningfully adopt TCE, a staff-wide and community-wide understanding of the basic ideas undergirding TCE must be present. For the organization, understanding TCE aids with ensuring decisions made, projects offered, etc., in all ways possible, clearly align with TCE tenets. For the community, understanding TCE aids with assessing whether or not Martha's Table's practices align with tenets of transformative community engagement.

Key Priorities:

- Educate the organization and community about transformative community engagement
- Create a transformative community engagement vision statement that the organization can feasibly operate by
- Reinforce the organization's transformative community engagement vision statement

Specific Recommendations:

- **Educate the organization and community about transformative community engagement:**
 - Host a series of internal events that will introduce Martha's Table staff to the concept of TCE (e.g. a staff OPS event) for the purpose of establishing staff-wide comprehension of TCE
 - Mandate regular intradepartmental meetings to discuss and learn about TCE for the purpose of establishing staff-wide comprehension of TCE
 - Develop and distribute internal staff materials discussing TCE for the purpose of establishing staff-wide comprehension of TCE
 - Provide TCE trainings for newly onboarded Martha's Table staff for the purpose of maintaining consistent staff-wide comprehension of TCE
 - Host external events that inform the public about TCE (e.g. TCE town halls at Martha's Table's Outfitters location) for the purpose of expanding the community's capacity to assess whether or not Martha's Table's current and future practices align with TCE
- **Create a transformative community engagement vision statement that the organization can feasibly operate by:**
 - Establish channels for receiving staff input to establish Martha's Table's TCE vision statement (e.g. staff survey mechanisms, staff focus groups, staff-wide meetings) for the purpose of increasing the staff's dedication to and also involvement in the development of the organization's TCE vision statement
- **Reinforce the organization's transformative community engagement vision statement:**
 - Refer to the TCE vision statement in internal materials (e.g. the Playbook) for the purpose of reinforcing the TCE vision statement among Martha's Table's staff
 - Refer to the TCE vision statement in external materials (e.g. blog posts, print and digital newsletters) for the purpose of keeping community members

informed about TCE and for the purpose of expanding the community's capacity to assess whether or not Martha's Table's current and future practices align with TCE

Tier 2: Making structural and practical changes

Following the organization's evolution from being not being robustly informed about transformative community engagement to having a firm comprehension of TCE, and after the organization furthers embeds transformative community engagement into its overarching mission via the integration of a TCE vision statement, Martha's Table can then shift from developing theory to enacting praxis and **engage in actions that will materially manifest transformative community engagement.**

As detailed in Section E's Figure E1, Martha's Table has **a host of existing programming and services that can be reconstructed to better reflect TCE** tenets (e.g. the organization's Outfitters location can be made available for events conceptualized and executed wholly by community members). Alongside restructuring existing social interventions to reflect a buy-in of TCE, Martha's Table can also consider completely **innovating and introducing new programming and services** (e.g. there is the opportunity for the organization to establish its own advocacy-focused initiatives). Whether made on extant foundations or on fresh ground, it is essential that structural and practical **changes made at Martha's Table are measured, evaluated, and reflected upon** to ensure that the changes are truly engendering outcomes that align with transformative community engagement.

Key Priorities:

- Establish transformative community engagement goals derived from the transformative community engagement vision statement
- Pilot organization-wide operational changes that enact transformative community engagement
- Pilot department-specific operational changes that enact transformative community engagement
- Pilot new programming and services that enact transformative community engagement
- Create and use mechanisms for measuring, evaluating, and reflecting on the outcomes of piloted structural and practical changes

Specific Recommendations:

- **Establish goals derived from the transformative community engagement vision statement**
 - Establish channels for receiving staff input to establish Martha's Table's organization-wide TCE goals (e.g. staff survey mechanisms, staff focus groups, staff-wide meetings) for the purpose increasing the staff's dedication to and also involvement in the creation of TCE goals that will inform TCE strategies

- Mandate the generation of departmental TCE goals for the purpose of increasing each department's dedication to and also involvement in the creation of TCE goals that will inform TCE strategies
- Mandate the generation of individual staff member TCE goals for the purpose of increasing each individual staff member's dedication to and also involvement in the creation of TCE goals that will inform TCE strategies
- **Pilot organization-wide operational changes that enact transformative community engagement:**
 - Mandate that Martha's Table staff attend and participate in a community event at least once a month for the purpose of allowing each staff member to engender and maintain community ties
 - Establish Board of Directors seats for community members, especially community members who are patrons and clients of Martha's Table's programming and services, for the purpose of fostering opportunities for community members to have more ownership over Martha's Table's affairs; consider making the seats rotating seats for the purpose of allowing many community members to have more ownership over Martha's Table's affairs
 - Dedicate resources to providing staff with funding for attending and participating in conferences, workshops, trainings, etc. related to understanding issues of power, privilege, and oppression in the Washington, D.C. area for the purpose of expanding the staff's capacity to develop decisions, projects, etc. informed by an understanding of D.C.'s unique power dynamics; utilize educational mechanisms that integrate community members (e.g. monthly community dinners where community members discuss issues of power, privilege, and oppression in D.C. with staff members) for the purpose of fostering community ties and for the purpose of increasing channels for community input
 - Affirmatively hire individuals from D.C.'s Southeast region for the purpose of more thoroughly integrating community members into the organization
- **Pilot department-specific operational changes that enact transformative community engagement:**
 - *Healthy Start*
 - Establish an advisory group comprised of ECE and OST parents and develop and use additional means for aggregating parental input, especially technology-based means (e.g. a digital forum with information on Healthy Start programming and services and also channels for providing input), for the purpose of keeping parents in the know about ECE and OST happenings and for the purpose of further integrating parents in the formation of ECE and OST curricula
 - Evaluate the content of ECE and OST curricula for the purpose of finding opportunities to adopt TCE methods
 - *Healthy Eating*
 - Create and test iterations of the JFM model that create standing leadership positions for community members (e.g. create and test a

- market that would establish opportunities for community adults to be market leaders) for the purpose of expanding community ownership of the markets
 - Create and test iterations of the JFM model that curb barriers community members face when attempting to volunteer with and participate in JFMs (e.g. create and test a market that occurs during the weekend to accommodate community members who can not volunteer during weekdays) for the purpose of expanding community ownership of the markets
 - Establish an advisory group comprised of JFM school administrators and other key/interested staff for the purpose of expanding community ownership of the markets
- *Community Supports*
 - Open up Martha's Table's Outfitters location for the development and execution of events directed by community members for the purpose of expanding community ownership of the Outfitters location
 - Resurrect and evolve past efforts to receive input from Community Supports patrons and clients (e.g. surveys) for the purpose of assessing whether or not Community Supports services and programming align with TCE
- *Volunteer Engagement*
 - Collaborate with community members to create and promote volunteer opportunities that target specific volunteer demographics, such as seniors, millennials, etc. (e.g. volunteer opportunities tailored just for churchgoers), for the purpose of creating volunteer opportunities that effectively cater to community members and for the purpose of offering community members more oversight over the development of volunteer recruitment strategies
 - Work with active advisory groups to establish volunteer pipelines (e.g. provide the Youth Advisory Council with the resources needed to engage high school-aged students as potential Martha's Table volunteers) for the purpose of offering community members more ownership of shaping volunteer recruitment strategies
 - Establish channels for receiving input from volunteers (e.g. questionnaires, survey mechanisms) for the purpose of assessing whether or not Martha's Table's volunteer opportunities and recruitment tactics align with TCE
- *Misc.*
 - Evaluate the content of the Youth Advisory Council's curriculum for the purpose of finding opportunities to adopt TCE methods (e.g. allow council members to determine and plan the workshops they will engage in, provide council members with a budget for overseeing events and projects)
 - Introduce digital resources that will assist Martha's Table clients with

receiving needed programming and services (e.g. online directories with information for diverse emergency relief supports) for the purpose of increasing the capacity of Martha's Table

- Update Marketing and Communications strategies to include opportunities for community members to have a hand in determining what and how community perspectives, narratives, etc. are collected and presented by Martha's Table (e.g. establish opportunities for the Youth Advisory Council to produce content for publication) for the purpose of expanding community ownership of the collection and distribution of community perspectives, narratives, etc.

- **Pilot new programming and services that enact transformative community engagement:**

- Inaugurate advocacy- and activism-centric initiatives at Martha's Table for the purpose of offering community members opportunities to engage in the process of creating structural, systemic solutions to the challenges they face

- **Create and use mechanisms for measuring, evaluating, and reflecting on the outcomes of piloted structural and practical changes:**

- Determine key indicators that signal success of TCE-related structural and practical changes (e.g. production of collaborative community events) for the purpose of assessing the impact of the structural and practical changes
- Determine how to measure defined key indicators of success of TCE-related structural and practical changes (e.g. count the number of collaborative community events that take place) for the purpose of assessing the impact of the structural and practical changes
- Design and implement measurement mechanisms (e.g. use a spreadsheet to track collaborative community events) for the purpose of assessing the impact of the structural and practical changes
- Internally assess and reflect on findings of measurement mechanisms (e.g. produce evaluative reports, etc.; review findings during a staff-wide meeting) for the purpose of assessing the impact of the structural and practical changes
- Create opportunities for community members to participate in and even direct the process of measuring, evaluating, and reflecting on the outcomes of integrated structural and practical changes (e.g. provide community members with the resources to lead a forum on the findings of utilized measurement mechanisms) for the purpose of expanding community ownership over assessing the impact of the structural and practical changes

SECTION GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What are additional philosophical and theoretical or structural and practical changes that can be made at Martha's Table to facilitate the organization's adoption of TCE?
- Which of the above final recommendations can be manifested in the short-term? Which of the above final recommendations are more likely be manifested in the long-term?



G. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 provides critical notes and questions from a February 13, 2018 meeting with Martha's Table staff regarding how to take first steps to actualizing transformative community engagement strategies at Martha's Table.

- **General Notes**

- When it comes to adopting TCE, a strength that the organization has is that the organization wants to adopt TCE. However, weaknesses may be that the organization is undergoing a significant move and the organization may be forcing the adoption of TCE. An opportunity for furthering the integration of TCE is introducing TCE concepts during the organization's 2019 Strategic Plan development process.
- The organization has to find ways of being consistent with its community engagement strategies in the Maycroft and the Commons.
- Historically, Martha's Table has defined "community" in terms of geography; today, the organization conceptualizes the community it serves as being comprised of varied groups or "silos" (e.g. volunteers, donors, clients/patrons). How can the organization evolve its understanding of community to be more TCE-oriented?

- **Questions**

- How should Martha's Table measure accountability?
- How can the organization engage a type of community engagement that is very grassroots when the organization is not grassroots itself?
- How much power is the organization willing to give community members?
- Where exactly does TCE fall into the organization's 2018 headquarters move?



H. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ***Nonprofits Integrating Community Engagement Guide:*** “The NICE Guide is designed for organizational development experts, management support organizations, and internal and external consultants to facilitate efforts to integrate the voice of community members and constituents into the daily practice of nonprofit organizations.”