Creating the Political Will to Reduce Poverty and Promote Opportunity

IRP General Poverty Research Seminar

Thursday, October 10, 2013
From 1962 to 1964, the convergence of four events brought the nation’s hidden poverty to the attention of the public and policy makers

- In 1962, Michael Harrington published *The Other America* giving a face to rural Appalachian poverty
- A widely read review, "Our Invisible Poor," in *The New Yorker* by Dwight Macdonald brought the issue to the attention of President John F. Kennedy
- In August 1963, the historic March on Washington brought economic disparities to the nation’s attention and put political pressure on policy-makers to act
- In January of 1964, President Johnson announced the “War on Poverty”

A decade later, the nation's poverty rate was cut in half – reduced from 22% in 1959 to 11% in 1973
WAR ON POVERTY: STALLED

CHANGES IN THE OFFICIAL POVERTY RATES SINCE THE 1960s

OVERALL CHANGES IN POVERTY AND ALTERNATIVE MEASURE OF POVERTY

Note: For data 1973 to 2011, data for whites exclude Hispanics. Prior to 1973, data for whites include Hispanics.
And mobility—defined as whether children from low income families move up the income ladder—is also stuck.

Lighter colors represent areas where children from low-income families are more likely to move up in the income distribution. To look up statistics for your own city, use the interactive version of this map created by the New York Times.
50 YEARS LATER…

• Can we once again build the political will to take on that challenge?
What’s Ahead: Continued Challenges in 2014

- Continued gridlock in DC
- Budget and “role of government” battles continue in DC and in states
ALMOST 7 YEARS AGO

- In 2007, at a Council on Foundations session an idea was born......
- We need a concerted effort to put the dual concepts of poverty and opportunity into the public debate.
CASEY INVESTMENTS

2014 Annual Budget: ~$165,000,000

- **Opportunity**: $17,441,500
- **Family**: $25,383,650
- **Community**: $11,728,000
- **Cross-Cutting (Capacity Building)**: $3,000,000
- **Future Grant Opps**: $41,455,750
- **In-House Programs**: $17,902,500
- **Administration and Operations**: $11,860,800
- **Additional Funding**: $36,231,871

Poverty and Opportunity: $2,058,000
• Focus is directly on poverty and opportunity to help bolster work across the foundation.

• Aims to shape the debate and move people to action
  – Invest in innovative ways to communicate and advocate
  – Create an “echo chamber” for key themes & policies

• Advance “big tent” policy agenda around children and families, including multiple voices and unlikely allies

• Enhance policy advocacy work on legislation that is moving: “bringing a simmer to a boil.”
Three interlocking and mutually reinforcing strategies:

1. Provide compelling research and analysis with a focus on better data on poverty and opportunity

2. Coupled with smart communications and advocacy directed towards building both public and political will on a set of common-sense cross-party policy ideas

3. Reinforced with strong capacity building grants that help
   - Grantees to better communicate and advocate
   - Incubate a systems reform effort that builds capacity of states in implementing strong poverty and opportunity polices
COLLABORATION

• Work in collaboration across Casey (with our place based and poverty investment program officers) and with other funders to advance many solutions and efforts including:
  o Ford Foundation
  o Kellogg Foundation
  o Mott Foundation
  o Kresge Foundation
  o Open Society Foundations
  o John and Barbara Picower Foundation
CONTINUED NEED FOR THESE STRATEGIES

- Election cycles bring change: influx of new policymakers means we must pay constant attention to messaging
  - New members of Congress don’t know the issues and haven’t tuned into our messages
- We also need advocacy: many members were not in Congress when bi-partisan compromise was accomplished
  - Momentum is to do “nothing”
- Increased need for a “big tent”: Republicans leading many legislatures
  - Now 46 one party-ruled states
GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS

• Core Strategy Partners:
  – Spotlight on Poverty & Opportunity
  – Opportunity Nation
  – Michael Gerson and the Center for Public Justice
  – Robert Putnam
  – Ascend
  – Work Support Strategies Initiative
  – Center for Community Change
  – Social Mobility Project

• Together with other investments in the Foundation:
  – These become a set of strategic & disciplined, but also nimble & opportunistic partners that build on policy infrastructure
  – Scale through grantees success in influencing legislation, regulation and implementation of sound policy solutions
SPOTLIGHT ON POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY

• *Spotlight* continues to be the central clearinghouse for respected news and information on poverty and opportunity

• The award-winning website attracts more than 50,000 visits each month, bolstered by nearly 19,000 Facebook and Twitter followers and 7,300 newsletter subscribers
SPOTLIGHT ON POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY

- Recently added state pages highlighting statistics and policies within states

"I’m very impressed with the information that is contained in Spotlight on the States. Very very helpful for busy policymakers who need the snapshot and can use the factoids in their advocacy for policies to alleviate poverty, and in the ongoing discussion in every state legislature about 'priorities.' Whether to give another tax cut for special interests, or invest in health, education, family supports, on and on."

- State Legislator

- Special section on Election; newly launched section on race and equity
A bipartisan, cross-sector national campaign with 200 non-profits, businesses, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, community organizations, and individuals, reaching more than 100 million Americans.

Their guiding principle: the zip code you’re born into shouldn’t determine your destiny….

Launch Summit in November 2011 with significant press coverage and 12 follow up summits at colleges around the country. At scale in less than two years.
OPPORTUNITY NATION

- 2013 work included: First Hill Day with over 50 Congressional office visits
- Hosted 7 Community Conversations around the country (Seattle, Miami, Atlanta, Charlotte, Providence, Des Moines, St. Paul)
- Planning a three city release of the Opportunity Index with Washington Monthly as a media partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economy Score</th>
<th>Education Score</th>
<th>Community Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>National Avg.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>56.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>53.7</td>
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<tr>
<th>ECONOMY</th>
<th>MARYLAND</th>
<th>NATIONAL AVG.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate (%)</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Household Income ($)</td>
<td>$68,854</td>
<td>$50,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty (%) of population below poverty line</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
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<td>80/20 Ratio (Ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that at the 20th percentile)</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<td>Banking Institutions (commercial banks, savings institutions, and credit unions per 10,000 residents)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households Spending Less than 30% of Household Income on Housing (%)</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Speed Internet (% of households)</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
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<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>MARYLAND</th>
<th>NATIONAL AVG.</th>
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<td>Preschool (% ages 3 and 4 in school)</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
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- For comparative analysis, the scores and metrics of Maryland are presented alongside the national averages. The Opportunity Index aims to measure the degree to which individuals and communities have access to economic opportunities, education, and other factors that contribute to their overall well-being. The scores range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating better opportunities.
• Goal: to work with the Clapham Group and Michael Gerson to improve our communications and spark dialogue with young evangelicals
  
  o Speaking engagements to bridge dialogue with Casey partners
  
  o Key outreach on poverty to new evangelical audiences (18 radio segments and speech at Jubilee with 3,000 evangelicals)

• CPJ’s new Shared Justice website (6,000 unique visitors) targeting young evangelicals is running an in-depth series on poverty and opportunity
• Putnam work on inequality is already proving influential

• “And the work he’s doing right now has to do with this issue of inequality. …[People] write to me about: ‘I'm doing okay right now, but what I've seen over the last 20 years and what I learned profoundly during this crisis is that the ground under my feet just isn't as secure, and that the work I'm doing may not be rewarded.’ And everything that I am proposing and everything I will be proposing over the next three years goes right at that issue. And if that’s not what Washington’s talking about, then we will be missing the boat.” – President Obama, New York Times Interview, 7/28/13
• Working to move the policy and practice around two-generation services and supports
• Engaging thinkers, researchers, practitioners, funders and others to build collective impact
• Increased funding to build out online resources and engage high level policymakers to explore potential of two generation lens
• An opportunity to bring systems reform strategies to income and economic support programs.

• The initiative, working with 6 states, aims to:
  – boost the share of families who receive and keep all the public benefits for which they qualify (especially Medicaid, children’s health insurance, food stamps, and child care subsidies)
  – minimize states’ administrative burden delivering benefits
  – disseminate lessons to inform state and federal policies and practices.
North Carolina elected a new GOP Governor who agreed to keep the initiative going through his term.

Working to help states use implementation of the ACA as an opportunity to improve systems.

Significant interest and process in improving the child care subsidy systems and integrating with other supports.

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992, because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."

--Department of Social Services, Greenville, South Carolina
2014: EXPANDED GRASSROOTS CAPACITY

• Center for Community Change – launches a new grassroots campaign on poverty with a 12-year goal of cutting poverty by 20%.

• Over the next four years they will show the following outcomes:
  – One million low-income people currently NOT civically engaged will become active participants in democracy with focus on women, people of color, particularly African Americans, and young people
  – Six to eight breakthroughs at state and local level that provide the beginnings of a foundation upon which to build a national movement
  – Poverty will be a major issue in the 2016 Presidential debate and other races, followed by positioning poverty as a key issue with political salience so that by 2017 we’re able to pursue federal initiatives
SOCIAL MOBILITY PROJECT

• New effort building off of Putnam, Harvard, Pew and others

• Partnership including Brookings, Urban Institute, Heritage Foundation, Manhattan Institute, Child Trends and others

• Goal is to generate new research, convenings and communications to turn economic conversations into bipartisan social mobility policy solutions

“The New York Times

“Income mobility has become one of the hottest topics in economics, as both liberals and conservatives have grown worried about diminished opportunities following more than a decade of disappointing economic growth. After years of focusing more on inequality at a moment in time, economists have more recently turned their attention to people’s paths over their lifetimes.”

– David Leonhardt, New York Times
OTHER GRANTEEES

Grassroots
Feeding America
Results

Research
MDRC
Children’s Health
Watch
Columbia
University

Broad Influence/
Communications
Demos
Economic Hardship
Project
RESULTS: REFRAMING AND ADVANCING THE ISSUES OF POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY

SHADOW CONVENTIONS 2012

Poverty

Should The Government Be Responsible For Caring For The Poor?

From the Emmy Award-winning writer and producer Linda Sargent, Sargent Op-ed

The Washington Post

Sargent Op-ed

King Op-ed

Watch the Trailer and Buy the DVD
The Data Behind Romney’s 47% Comments

By Damian Paletta and John D. McKinnon

In his comments to fundraisers captured on video, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney said 47% of Americans would almost automatically vote for President Barack Obama because they were “dependent” on the government, in part because they received government benefits and paid no federal income taxes.

In a press conference late Monday, Mr. Romney said his comments were “not elegantly stated” while at the same time reiterating the main point. Our translation: If you don’t pay federal income taxes, you may not be swayed by a candidate that
• New ways of measuring poverty help to capture policy impacts

• Circle of Protection for key poverty programs
  – Sojourners and Bread for the World

• ARRA benefits in tax credits and increased/expanded program spending on UI and SNAP

• Leveraged $5 billion in TANF emergency contingency funding
RESULTS: INFLUENCING THE DEBATE