

Long Island Progressive Network

Common Interests and Desired Directions

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A total of 56 agencies have expressed interest in either collaborating with other progressive Long Island nonprofit agencies or supporting such collaboration. On November 7, 2015, 178 people from 43 agencies attended the “Progressive Vision for Long Island: Organizing for Success” conference at Stony Brook University. In this report, I use the websites of interested progressive organizations, lunch worksheets from the conference, and end-of-conference surveys to assess common areas of interest and discuss the ways that organizations and individuals would like to collaborate for progressive changes.

Common Areas of Interest

To assess common interests across agencies, I first analyzed the mission statements and current campaigns of 48 activist, progressive nonprofits on Long Island as presented on their websites or Facebook pages. A total of 24 different, though often overlapping, causes emerged across organizations. The most common 15 causes are presented in Table 1 along with the percent of organizations addressing this each issue. Worker rights, immigrant rights, and education stand out as being key areas of common interest. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of all organizations organized by cause.

Table 1: Percent of Progressive Nonprofit Organizations Incorporating Listed Causes into Organizational Mission or Recent Campaigns (N=48 Nonprofit Organizations)

Cause	% of Organizations
Worker Rights	41.67
Immigrant Rights	29.17
Education Equality	25.00
Income Equality or Raising Minimum Wage	20.83
Health Care	20.83
Voting/Civic Engagement	20.83
Gender Equality	18.75
Housing	18.75
Racial Equality	16.67
Fair Elections	14.58
Leadership Development	14.58
Reproductive Rights	12.50
Safety	12.50
Sustainability or Environmental Issues	12.50
LGBT Rights	10.42

Participants at the “Progressive Vision for Long Island” conference were divided into 20 diverse, inter-organizational groups for lunch. Each group was asked to work on a series of broad questions about the perceived problems on Long Island and how to best collaborate as a network. Discussions about perceived problems addressed a wide range of issues across the different lunch groups, as shown in Table 2. Many of the topics - such as education, housing and income inequality - were discussed in multiple groups (see

Table 3). While the group of topics in Tables 1 and 3 are very similar, there are differences in ranking of importance. Notably, the topic of transportation came up as a problem within 8 of 20 discussion groups, but does not appear among the top issues being addressed by Long Island nonprofit groups.

Table 2: Topics that Lunch Groups at Progressive Conference Identified as Important

Workers' Rights	Sustainability	Increasing Crime
Income Inequality	Environment	Gun Control
Job/Retirement Security	Climate Change	Drug Addiction
Credit Checks for Jobs	Transportation	Civic Engagement
Access to Health Care	Bike Paths	Corruption in Politics
Student Debt	Race Inequality/Racism	Finance Reform
(Invisible) Poverty	Transgender Rights	Undermining of Democracy
Jobs for Youth	Gender Inequality	Citizens United
Education/Education Inequality	Immigrant Rights	(Predatory) Gambling
Respect for Teachers and Nurses	Language Access	Too Many Layers of Government
Housing Segregation	Reproductive Health	Trans Pacific Partnership
Affordable Housing	Sex Education	Anti-War/Peace
Zoning	Disability Rights	Dispel Stereotype of Atheist
Homelessness	Criminal Justice	
Hunger	Profiling	
Childcare	Policing	

Table 3: Most Commonly Identified Topics of Importance Across Lunch Groups (N=20 groups)

Topic	# of Groups Discussing	% of Groups Discussing
Education and Educational Inequality	13	65.0
Housing (Segregation and Affordability)	13	65.0
Income Inequality	12	60.0
Racial Inequality/Racism	10	50.0
Workers Rights (Including Job and Retirement Security)	9	45.0
Problems with Political System	9	45.0
Transportation	8	40.0
Reproductive Health	8	40.0
Civic Engagement	5	25.0
Immigrant Rights	5	25.0
Environment/Climate Change	5	25.0
Transgender Issues/Rights	4	20.0
Criminal Justice (Inequality, Profiling and Policing)	4	20.0

Ways to Collaborate

People were drawn to the Progressive Vision conference for a number of overlapping reasons, the most common of which were to build relationships, become more active, and to learn more about activist issues on Long Island. The panels on education, gender equity and identity, immigration, income inequality, and sustainability were well-received, especially the gender equity, income inequality, and sustainability panels. The comments on these panels were almost entirely positive and many noted the panelists did a good job of showing the interconnectedness of issues. Many of those attending the education panel had hoped for more discussion of potential solutions, while several attending the immigration panel had hoped for a discussion that was more Long Island focused.

The lunch session was the highlight of the conference for many, with 23 of 58 respondents on the end-of-conference survey identifying it as the favorite portion of the day. Attendees repeatedly used words like “awesome,” “excellent,” and “thought provoking” to describe these lunch discussions. More specifically, many liked the networking opportunities, meeting new people, seeing interconnectedness between agencies, and the opportunity for a “face-to-face brainstorming session.” The main critique is that several people had wished there had been more time for discussion.

Conference attendees also generally reported really liking the training sessions. In fact, eight out of 58 respondents specifically noted that the media and messaging training session was their favorite part of the day, two people named Organizing 101 as their favorite, and one mentioned Coalition Building session as their favorite. Respondents talked about these

Table 4: Progressive Conference Training Session Attendance

Session	# Attending of those Completing Survey
Coalition Building	10
Engaging in Youth Organizing	13
Media and Messaging	24
Organizing 101	16

four training sessions as interesting, informative, and even amazing. However, there were some areas of critique, especially with regard to the Engaging in Youth Organizing session. Several of the people expressed interest in discussing the topic further, learning more strategies of *how* to organize youth, and wanting to learn more about engaging non-student youth. One attendee noted that the session “did not engage the deeper issue: What if anything motivates getting people to progressive issues and actions?”

Comments on the conference were overwhelmingly positive, but many respondents on the end-of-conference survey wanted to know what was next. They expressed a desire to keep the momentum up and find ways to better collaborate beyond the conference. When the lunch groups were asked how we can collaborate as a progressive community, the responses centered around six main points: education, political mobilization, working with communities, using media, finding common ground, and increased communication across groups.

Education. Education repeatedly came up as a way to collaborate as a progressive community. Groups talked about education in terms of educating one another on the issues, “working together to educate (starting in high school) for change,” and promoting “experiential learning for young people.” They also talked about education as related to the political process. Three groups discussed the need to work together to educate the public about public officials, with one specifically noting that we should “get information out on hypocrisies and do it over and over.” Finally, one group suggested that we should “create a curriculum that explains how these issues are connected to use for voter education.”

Political Mobilization. The lunch groups also discussed working together politically as a way to move forward as a network. This includes “reaching out to sympathetic politicians,” “getting rid of reactionary legislators,” and participating in letter writing campaigns about key issues. Other groups discussed the need to get people involved in local elections and “working together to mobilize our

separate issue-based organization supporters to vote for progressive issues generally.” One group talked about the need to “start uplifting people we do not see as traditional leaders” to promote change.

Work With Communities. Groups expressed needing to involve local communities more, including religious groups, senior citizens, and youth. One group said “we need to stop just talking to other progressives and reach out to the rest of the community.” Groups noted the need to go to Town Board Meetings, “listen to communities”, and “have community events to discuss common issues.” There was a recognition that each community is different and may have different concerns.

Use Media. Several groups had discussions on how to use media, especially social media, to spread information and progressive ideas. Relatedly, there was discussion on the kind of message that needs to be disseminated. For example, groups talked about needing a “new narrative,” to “develop our own language like the conservatives,” and to “speak to hearts so people hear us.” One group stated that we “have to challenge structures – cannot oversimplify issues – but can have a simple message for the media.”

Finding Common Ground. The vast majority of groups talked about the need to support one another and “find common ground.” For example, one group stated that we need to “find the common thread that connects us to help engender working together.” Another group clarified that “the uniting front should be solidarity rather than one unifying issue.” The desire for support of one another includes going to each other’s organizations and events “even if it’s not your issue.” Though one lunch group warned that groups “have to be pragmatic about how we use each other for support.”

Increased Communication (and Interaction). Continued communication between groups was stressed by many of the groups, including better circulation of e-blasts by organization members, having more targeted e-blasts, and creating a common Progressive Network calendar of events. Conference participants (in both end-of-conference surveys and lunch groups) also repeatedly stressed a desire to meet together more frequently. The groups thought that face-to-face interactions were important, whether this be in the form of conferences, workshops, or meetings. One group even suggested a common physical hub to bring the groups together.

Additional Ideas. There were several other ideas posed by groups that don’t neatly fit into the above categories. These additional ideas included combining school districts, hiring “more diverse people in our organizations,” and needing “structural change with our workplaces.”

This report has outlined the ways in which the progressive organizations of Long Island overlap in their missions and interests, a comparison of their challenges, and a discussion of how they may collaborate going forward. This is a working document, especially the section discussing the overlapping missions of the organizations in the Progressive Network. If there are organizations that need to be added to the list of Progressive Network organizations, or if an organizational needs to be re-categorized under the list of causes, please feel free to contact Dr. Heather Parrott at heather.parrott@liu.edu.

Appendix 1: Progressive Organizations Organized by Cause (as discussed in the organization's mission or listed as one of the organization's current campaigns)

Worker Rights

1199SEIU United Health Care Workers East
Coalition of Labor Union Women
CSEA
CWA Local 1108
DRUM – South Asian Organizing Center
Empire Justice Center
Fusco, Brandenstein, & Rada, PC
International Brotherhood of Electrical
Workers, Third District
LI Fed of Labor
Long Island Jobs with Justice
New York Committee for Occupational Safety
and Health
New York Communities for Change
New York State Nurses Assoc.
NYS United Teachers
RWDSU Local 338
SEIU 32 BJ
Sierra Club Long Island
STRONG Economy For All
UFCW 1500
Working Families Party

Income Equality or Raising Minimum Wage

1199SEIU United Health Care Workers East
LI Fed of Labor
Long Island Jobs with Justice
Long Island Progressive Coalition
NAACP
New York Communities for Change
North Country Peace Group
SEIU 32 BJ
STRONG Economy For All
Working Families Party

Gender Equality

ACLU Suffolk
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Empire Justice Center
LI Fed of Labor
Long Island Jobs with Justice
NARAL Pro-Choice New York
Planned Parenthood Hudson Petonic
Planned Parenthood of Nassau County
Sepa Mujer

Reproductive Rights

1199SEIU United Health Care Workers East
ACLU Suffolk
Coalition of Labor Union Women

NARAL Pro-Choice New York
Planned Parenthood Hudson Petonic
Planned Parenthood of Nassau County

LGBT Rights

ACLU Suffolk
Empire Justice Center
LI Transgender Advocacy Coalition
LIGALY
Pride For Youth

Racial Equality

ACLU Suffolk
Long Island Civil Engagement Table
Empire Justice Center
ERASE Racism
Hofstra Center for Civic Engagement
Long Island Housing Services
NAACP
SEIU 32 BJ

Immigrant Rights

1199SEIU United Health Care Workers East
ACLU Suffolk
Long Island Civil Engagement Table
DRUM – South Asian Organizing Center
Empire Justice Center
Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association
Hofstra Center for Civic Engagement
Long Island Immigrant Alliance
Long Island Jobs with Justice
New York Committee for Occupational Safety
and Health
New York Immigration Coalition
SEIU 32 BJ
Sepa Mujer
The New American Leaders Project

Education Equality

DRUM – South Asian Organizing Center
Eastern Suffolk BOCES
ERASE Racism
Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association
Hofstra Center for Civic Engagement
LIGALY
Long Island Jobs with Justice
Long Island Progressive Coalition
NAACP
New York Communities for Change
New York Immigration Coalition
Working Families Party

Housing

Empire Justice Center
ERASE Racism
Greater Uniondale Area Action Coalition
Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association
Huntington Township Housing Coalition
Long Island Housing Services
Long Island Progressive Coalition
New York Communities for Change
Vision Long Island

Health Care

1199SEIU United Health Care Workers East
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Empire Justice Center
LIGALY
NAACP
New York Immigration Coalition
New York State Nurses Assoc.
Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic
Planned Parenthood of Nassau County
RWDSU Local 338

Safety

1199SEIU United Health Care Workers East
CWA Local 1108
LI Fed of Labor
LIGALY
New York Committee for Occupational Safety
and Health
New York State Nurses Assoc.

Voting/Civic Engagement

ACLU Suffolk
Long Island Civil Engagement Table
CWA Local 1108
Greater Uniondale Area Action Coalition
Hofstra Center for Civic Engagement
Move to Amend
MoveOn
NAACP
New York Immigration Coalition
The New American Leaders Project

Fair Elections

Long Island Progressive Coalition
Move to Amend
MoveOn
New York Communities for Change
North Country Peace Group
STRONG Economy For All
Working Families Party

Leadership Development

Long Island Civil Engagement Table
DRUM – South Asian Organizing Center
Ethical Humanist Society
LI Fed of Labor
Long Island Jobs with Justice
MoveOn
The New American Leaders Project

Sustainability or Environmental Issues

Hofstra Center for Civic Engagement
Long Island Progressive Coalition
NAACP
New York Communities for Change
Sierra Club Long Island
Vision Long Island

Supportive Organizations¹

Hempstead School Board
Long Island Outreach Network (LION)
Long Island University - Post
Long Island Athiests
Long Island Community Foundation
Stony Brook University Center for Working
Class Life
Ward Melville Secular Student Alliance

¹ “Supportive Organizations” include educational institutions/boards, student organizations, religious groups, and foundations. While the missions of these organizations typically do not include direct activism around specific campaigns, members of these groups have expressed support of progressive ideas and the Progressive Network.