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CASE STUDY:

How Undocumented Youth Moved the Immigrant Rights Movement

November 2015

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How Undocumented Youth Moved the Immigrant Rights Movement

In 2010, the immigration rights community faced a key strategic decision: whether to stick with its longstanding “all-in” strategy pushing for comprehensive reform or shift to a more incremental approach. For years, Washington-based policy organizations had been pushing for comprehensive immigration reform through Congressional lobbying. From elected officials like Rep. Luis Gutierrez to advocates like the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) to grassroots leaders and organizers, everyone involved shared a strong philosophical commitment to working for reform that would win legal rights for the entire immigrant community. However, tactical differences, always in tension, came to the fore in 2010. While prospects for comprehensive immigration reform were fading, momentum was gaining for an incremental win—passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which creates a pathway to citizenship for people who arrived in the United States as children, graduate from high school and meet other requirements.

By September 2010, comprehensive reform was dead and the DREAM Act was under debate as a stand-alone measure. This signaled the immigration rights movement’s full shift from “all-in” on comprehensive reform to a more pragmatic, nimbler strategy that sought incremental wins and confronted head-on the most pressing challenges immigrants faced in their day-to-day lives, like stopping deportation, gaining access to higher education, and winning the right to work legally. Though the DREAM Act itself failed in the Senate in December 2010, the energy unleashed by the work for its passage quickly refocused on the successful campaign that forced President Barack Obama to create DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and later expand it.

The force that moved the movement so rapidly came from a seemingly unlikely source: undocumented immigrant youth. The Dreamers, as they came to be known, entered the national spotlight, led the shift to a more pragmatic strategy and ultimately gained legal protection for 1.1 million undocumented youth and, in 2014, legal protection for parents of American citizens.

It is hard to imagine a more marginalized, powerless group than undocumented immigrants in their teens and 20s. These Dreamers grew up as undocumented immigrants in a legal limbo, confronting severe limits on their opportunities, from obtaining a drivers’ license to going to college. They faced the constant risk (for themselves as well as their parents and many other family members and friends) of deportation. Although undocumented young people are the public face of the movement, it includes a significant number of documented immigrants of the same age who share a common identity and outrage against injustice.

How did these unknown newcomers become the vanguard of the immigrant rights movement? By using bold, creative tactics to highlight their unique predicament—brought here as children and raised as Americans, yet trapped in a legal limbo that denied

them civil rights—the Dreamers entered the national spotlight, led the shift to a more pragmatic strategy and ultimately gained significant legal protections. In this case study, we examine how the Dreamers movement evolved into a powerful political force that has shifted public opinion, put their concerns on the public agenda, and achieved major legal changes.

Origins of the Dreamers: 2001-2009

The history of the Dreamers is complex and existing accounts are limited in their perspective. For the purposes of this case study, we will outline some of the key events from 2001 through June 2012, when President Obama announced deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA), which offered administrative relief from deportation to 1.1 million eligible undocumented young people.

In August 2001, the DREAM Act was first introduced into Congress with bipartisan co-sponsors and technical assistance from NILC. To win the Republican co-sponsors, immigration rights advocates went hunting for a young academic achiever in Utah who was facing obstacles to college based on immigration status. They found one quickly: she was the first Latina to win a full-tuition scholarship to the University of Utah, who then discovered she couldn't accept the award because she lacked legal status. Later, immigration-rights advocates introduced Congressional representatives to outstanding young undocumented students in hopes of resolving their individual cases. The warm reception those young people received when sharing their stories with lawmakers gave advocates a first glimpse of the power of their unique position—American in all ways except that of authorization—as a base from which to advocate immigrant rights for themselves and their communities as a whole.

By the early 2000s, undocumented immigrant youth had begun to organize in states such as California, Florida, New York, Massachusetts, and Texas. Many were working within the structure of state immigrant rights coalitions. A top priority was achieving “tuition equity” by passing state laws to eliminate out-of-state tuition rates for undocumented students. In states like California and Texas, where undocumented students already had tuition equity and had established a presence on college campuses, undocumented college student groups formed to support each other and advocate for the DREAM Act. California's undocumented youth organizing incorporated both support from the state immigrant advocacy coalition and a network of campus-based groups. Though state immigrant rights coalitions tended to view undocumented youth as useful faces for the movement more than as strategists, they did give youth space and practice to develop their organizing skills.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, immigration and national security became conflated in new and troubling ways. In the harsher climate, undocumented immigrants found themselves victims of racial profiling, detention, and sometimes deportation. Two cases—those of Kamal Essaheb in New York and Marie Gonzalez in Missouri—spurred advocates and undocumented youth to campaign publicly and

successfully to stay their deportations and allow them to remain in the United States. In these campaigns, undocumented youth not only shared their stories, but also began to plan the strategy and tactics that won the victories.

By 2004-2005, undocumented immigrant youth along with other immigrant rights and civil rights advocates started to come together in national calls to discuss how to pass the DREAM Act, with the acknowledgement that at the time the DREAM Act would be one of the only possible legislative solutions for undocumented families. The New York State Youth Leadership Council, the Student Immigrant Movement in Massachusetts, the University Leadership Initiative in Austin, TX, and the California Dream Network, were the undocumented student organizations that started building the momentum for immigrant youth organizing in those states. Through the years, they would organize “Dream Graduations” in DC as well as other strategies to get their perspective members of Congress to co-sponsor the DREAM Act. NILC and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) provided legislative analysis and resources for conference calls and convenings.

By 2005, the youth-led state groups were forging ties and sharing ideas for protest actions. Josh Bernstein, then a NILC staff and coauthor of the original DREAM legislation, observed that, “More and more, the students were taking responsibility, and rebelling against being marginalized, because they were always seen as a secondary or additional thing within organizations.”¹

In 2006, comprehensive reform lobbying efforts were bolstered by highly-visible state and local community organizing that fought the draconian anti-immigrant legislation introduced by Wisconsin Rep. James Sensenbrenner and pushed for a path to citizenship for 11 million unauthorized immigrants. Marches in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and 100 other cities put more than one million people in the streets calling for justice for immigrants. Undocumented youth not only marched in the streets but also led the organizing, media and lobbying efforts that accompanied these marches and the DREAM Act was touted as part of the solution. In Massachusetts, California, and New York, pro-DREAM Act banners achieved high media visibility.

Both comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act failed in Congress in 2007, prompting advocates to rethink strategy. Since 2004, state and local immigrant rights coalitions had come together nationally through the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM), a project of the Center for Community Change. FIRM and its members have benefited from the Four Freedoms Fund, a partnership between the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation that supports direct services for immigrant communities as well as immigration-related organizing. Other funders, like the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Open Society Foundations, have also invested millions to support immigrant communities and advocate for broader pathways to citizenship.

In the wake of the 2007 defeat, the Atlantic Philanthropies, Ford Foundation, and other funders sponsored a series of retreats for immigrant rights advocates in which they

¹ Daniel Altschuler, “The Dreamers Movement Comes of Age,” *Dissent*, May 16, 2011 (online at: http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/the-dreamers-movement-comes-of-age).

hammered out new tactics toward the same strategic goal. They would redouble local organizing, expand into voter outreach, conduct policy research and “turbocharge” communications and media efforts. A new coalition, Reform Immigration for America, or RIFA, was launched in 2008 to direct the effort and re-grant funds to the state and local partners. Funders liked this model—an umbrella coalition combining advocates and community-based groups—because one grant to one entity could support both policy advocacy and grassroots organizing.

By some accounts, RIFA created a much stronger top-down push regarding strategy and tactics than coalition members had seen before. Though NILC had been advocating for both comprehensive reform *and* the DREAM Act for nearly a decade, RIFA leaders were quick to insist that NILC turn down the volume on DREAM Act advocacy in order to focus squarely on comprehensive reform.

At the same time, undocumented youth were working with their allies to create their own national organization, rooted in a commitment not only to pass the DREAM Act, but to reshape and influence the broader movement for immigrant rights. Leaders of state networks of undocumented youth in New York, Massachusetts, Texas and California determined they needed a powerful organizing network that had its own resources, could set its own priorities, and produce results.

After the 2008 election – during which many Dreamers worked for Obama, hoping he would be their ally once in the White House -- immigrant youth activists from around the country launched a national network, United We Dream (UWD). In December 2008, these leaders met in Washington D.C. and founded UWD, with fiscal sponsorship from NILC. United We Dream intended to expand immigrant youth organizing beyond grass-roots lobbying for the DREAM Act and build a broad movement of undocumented immigrant youth seeking justice for themselves and their families, building a national network.

United We Dream held its first convening in Minnesota in 2009, with just 40 participants from 7 states. (Today, UWD is the largest immigrant youth-led network in the nation, composed of 55 affiliates in 26 states.) For many at this convening, it was the first time they had publicly met and interacted with other youth who were undocumented. They recognized that one of their main sources of power to shift the narrative was to share their stories as undocumented immigrant youth. With help from veteran organizers like Joy Cushman, they learned powerful methods to tell their stories. LGBTQ undocumented youth in the movement already knew the power of “coming out” as gay and applied the theory and practices of coming out to revealing their status as undocumented immigrants. Through the years, coming out at private and public events has continued to be one of the most empowering and liberating actions for immigrant youth and adults.

The Dreamers Emerge as a National Movement: 2010-2012

By the first half of 2010, the DREAM Act was part of the comprehensive immigration bill then under debate in Congress. But warning signs of a need to shift strategy away from comprehensive reform had begun to appear. Health care reform was stalling. The

effects of the Great Recession deepened. As mid-term elections approached, the rise of the Tea Party forced moderate Republican senators to tack right, especially on immigration. Although Obama publicly supported immigration reform, there were clear internal obstacles. While in Congress, White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel had worked against comprehensive reform, calling immigration a “third rail” issue that could kill Democrats politically. During this pivotal year, undocumented youth took their organizing to new levels of tactical acumen and national visibility.

Four undocumented student leaders from Florida -- Felipe Matos, Gaby Pacheco, Carlos Roa and Juan Rodriguez -- began a 1500-mile walk from Miami to Washington, D.C. to raise awareness about the DREAM Act, and end deportation of undocumented youth, a threat Pacheco had faced personally but eventually resolved. The four were members of Students Working for Equal Rights, the youth arm of the Florida Immigrant Coalition, the state’s umbrella immigrant rights advocacy group.

Though they made thoughtful preparation by talking with Rev. Jim Lawson (who had trained 1960s civil rights activists in civil disobedience tactics) and other civil rights leaders, they had minimal financial resources and were developing logistics as they went. Pacheco and Rodriguez chipped in their personal savings, and the Florida Immigrant Coalition paid for their first round of supplies. Then the students fundraised and found food and shelter as they went. “We knew where we were going to be and where we were staying for at least two weeks,” when they started, Pacheco recalled. Thereafter, “every week we would get the new week. We were planning as we were walking.”

The Trail of Dreams attracted national media coverage and engaged in face-to-face dialogue through parts of the rural South where, as Pacheco said, “a lot of people don’t understand this issue. We knew we were putting ourselves in danger.” They also inspired a similar group of state-level leaders in New York (whom the Florida group knew) to walk to Washington.

Undocumented youth hold the first Coming Out of the Shadows public event on Chicago’s Federal Plaza, where young people lacking legal status declared themselves “undocumented and unafraid.” During the rally, organizer Tania Unzueta, who had previously come out publicly as a lesbian, quoted from Harvey Milk in her remarks.

Chicago’s was the first of a number of Coming Out of the Shadows events planned at the Minnesota convening in late 2009. Other similar events in New York, Los Angeles and Massachusetts were held a week later.

Unzueta’s work on immigrant rights highlighted the complexities of ties and strategic decisions being made in 2010. She founded the Illinois Youth Justice League, which became a United We Dream Affiliate. A daughter of immigrant rights organizers, she had helped organize a campaign prevent the deportation of Rigo Padilla. An honors student at the University of Illinois-Chicago, Padilla’s unauthorized status was discovered when he was arrested for drunk driving. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights lent office space and media support to the campaign.

But as the 2010 pushback of the mainstream organizations on comprehensive versus piecemeal approach became evident, immigrant youth disagreed about when was the right moment to shift toward a more multifaceted strategy. Early on, IYJL made the shift, working to oppose Arizona's draconian immigration law, SB 1070, as well as to push for the DREAM Act as a standalone measure. In 2010 Unzueta took part in direct actions advocating the DREAM Act both in Arizona and on Capitol Hill. She also connected with so-called "dissident Dreamers" who founded a splinter group, the National Immigrant Youth Alliance.

In late 2009 and early 2010, the Dreamers set their eyes on President Obama and winning relief from deportation. Lorella Praeli, UWD's legislative director, said that the movement sought to create an air of possibility around Obama using executive action to stop deportations. "We got a lot of pushback when we pivoted and when we started to push for administrative relief," she told a *Buzzfeed* reporter. "Our moral authority and our power is derived from our unpredictability — people want to control us. We got a lot of pushback publicly and privately, but what we knew from looking at the political strategy is that sooner rather than later we needed to be really firm. It was about creating this inevitability." The Dreamers also argued, and sought to persuade the media and the president alike, that Obama had the legal authority to act on his own. Their thinking was influenced by the NILC, which eventually sent a 41-page memo to the Department of Homeland Security and another memo to the White House making the case for executive action.²

On March 11, 2010, Obama met with some leading immigrant activists, including Deepak Bhargava, head of the Center for Community Change, and Anjelica Salas of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles, in the White House's Roosevelt Room. The activists knew that Obama was primarily engaged with the battle over health care reform, a financial regulatory overhaul, and efforts to improve the economy, while facing the rise of the conservative "Tea Party" that threatened to end the Democrats' control of Congress in the upcoming November elections. The activists were stark in their criticism of Obama, calling out the "moral catastrophe" of increasing deportations "terrorizing" Hispanic neighborhoods and breaking up families—over Obama's objections that the administration was merely deporting criminals. The activists pointed out that Obama's campaign to register minority voters in 2008 clearly helped Obama win several swing states. They called for Obama to deploy his political capital to push immigration reform through Congress, even identifying specific Republican senators for the President to lobby. Clearly angered, Obama told the activists that he was on their side, but "I am not a king." He urged them to focus their pressure on the Republicans in Congress. He said he didn't have the legal authority to issue an executive order stopping

² Adrian Carrasquillo, "How the Immigrant Rights Movement Got Obama To Save Millions From Deportations," *Buzzfeed*, Nov. 22, 2014 (online at <http://www.buzzfeed.com/adriancarrasquillo/how-the-immigrant-rights-movement-got-obama-to-save-millions#.mmjv9VwvB>).

deportations. The activists disagreed, telling Obama that he did, in fact, have the authority to do so.³

That evening, Obama met with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. The meeting was more cordial, but the lawmakers made some of the same points that the activists had made earlier that day. They were frustrated that Obama seemed to be reluctant to push hard on the issue. Ten days after the encounter, Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, a Democrat from Obama's hometown of Chicago, spoke at a rally on the Mall, demanding that Obama take action on immigration reform. Obama addressed the rally via a taped message. "I've always pledged to be your partner as we work to fix our broken immigration system," Obama said, "and that's a commitment that I reaffirm today."

The national march called by RIFA, mobilized about 100,000 people, but President Obama did not attend and the march failed to draw significant public attention. In Chicago, grassroots immigrant youth leaders fundraised and recruited through local parishes to send three busloads of local residents, many undocumented. "Undocumented people who hadn't traveled in years found themselves in front of the White House. It was really powerful," recalled organizer Edy Dominguez.

The next month, while returning to Washington on Air Force One, Obama told reporters that he was not going to make immigration reform a priority that year. Dreamers in response organized a demonstration on May 1 directly in front of the White House. Obama was obviously upset about being targeted and by the negative media attention. He agreed to host another White House meeting with the activists in late June. But this meeting didn't go much better. The following day, Obama met again with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Obama began by criticizing Rep. Gutierrez for attacking him in public. Then Sen. Robert Menendez, a moderate Democrat from New Jersey, told Obama that Latinos were finding it "hard to reconcile" his public support for helping immigrants with his unwillingness to exercise his executive authority. Over the next five months, Obama hosted a series of Oval Office meetings with Gutierrez, Menendez and other Hispanic politicians to determine if they could get something done – perhaps during the lame-duck session after the November midterm elections.⁴

Meanwhile, Dreamers mobilized at the state and local level, including in Arizona. Arizona had been a hotbed of activism since the introduction of SB 1070 and its passage in April, but RIFA leaders tried to maintain focus on the larger federal fight. Dissident Dreamers lent support to Arizona through direct action focused on the Dream Act, not on comprehensive reform. Four undocumented young people and an Arizona U.S. citizen sympathetic to the struggle were arrested in Sen. John McCain's office in Tucson following a sit-in in May 2010. The group called on Congress to pass the DREAM Act as a standalone bill by June 15. This appears to be the first known youth action where

³ Peter Wallsten, "President Obama bristles when he is the target of activist tactics he once used," Washington Post, June 10, 2012 (online at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/president-obama-bristles-when-he-is-the-target-of-activist-tactics-he-once-used/2012/06/09/gJQA0i7JRV_story.html).

⁴ Ibid.

DREAM as a standalone measure was advocated, and the first time undocumented youth risked deportation to push the DREAM Act forward.

In June, the Trail of Dreams walkers met with senior White House advisor Valerie Jarrett and requested President Obama issue an executive order to halt deportations of Dreamers. (Previously, Senators Dick Durbin and Richard Lugar had sent Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano a letter requesting deferred action for Dreamers but had not yet received a response.) Administration officials said Obama's preferred strategy was to work with Republicans to develop a comprehensive reform, but viewed incremental approaches as likely to undermine the larger strategy.

By July, UWD convened undocumented youth around the country for the first Dream University in Washington, D.C., with the mantra: "If they don't allow us in their schools, we will construct our own." The makeshift school highlighted the plight of undocumented youth throughout the country as a way to push the DREAM Act forward. By this time, there was much public acknowledgement that comprehensive immigration reform's chance of passage was slim to none. On July 21, a group of 21 students were arrested for sit-ins in four Democratic senators' offices in an action intended to push for the DREAM Act to be introduced as a standalone bill. Shortly thereafter, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid expressed willingness to move forward with the DREAM Act as a standalone. Meanwhile Dreamers continued to discuss publicly the pros and cons of the DREAM Act, including in an August 2010 town hall sponsored by the Dream Team LA and the Orange County Dream Team, the first town hall discussion of the Act by and for undocumented youth. But on September 21, the Senate refused to end debate on the DREAM Act and the measure failed in regular session.

In its push for the DREAM Act in late 2010, United We Dream began developing its inside-outside strategy. While some undocumented youth leaders met with Congressional leadership to demand the DREAM Act be brought to a vote, UWD members organized daily pray-ins, 'Walks of Jericho' around the Capitol grounds, study-ins in the congressional cafeterias, and Dream caroling, among other actions.

Thanks to strong pressure from the immigrant youth actions, coupled with insider meetings with House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi and immigration reform leader Rep. Luis Gutierrez, Pelosi finally agreed to take a vote. The DREAM Act passed in the House. The pressure then shifted to the Senate, where five Democrats refused to end a filibuster and killed the DREAM Act. Thousands of Dreamers watched from the congressional gallery, frustrated by the Senate's lack of vision and courage.

This was the lowest point in the campaign—"total devastation," as Pacheco recalled. Yet Dreamers watching the vote from the UCLA Labor Center that night took to the streets and marched through MacArthur Park, in a show of determination to carry on despite the defeat. Ultimately, that loss gave birth to a stronger movement.

Soon after this painful defeat, UWD leaders met in Memphis to determine their next steps—reframing their target and resetting their goals. President Obama had made

promises to the immigrant community that had gone unfulfilled. Dreamers demanded he deliver on the most pressing issue: halting deportations of DREAM Act-eligible youth. During the Memphis congress, UWD launched its “Right to Dream” campaign, seeking administrative relief for Dreamers.

When President Obama spoke at a National Council of La Raza event in June 2011, Dreamers and allies attending shed their formal wear to reveal t-shirts bearing the slogan “Obama Deports Dreamers” and heckled his speech, changing “Yes, you can! Yes, you can!” regarding providing Dreamers relief from deportation. This action prompted the region’s Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) director to send Dreamers a letter saying that deferring deportations would be determined on a case-by case basis. United We Dream and Dream Team Los Angeles, which led an October sit-in at the ICE office in Los Angeles, went on to enlist legal expertise to develop a counter-argument showing the President exactly how deferred action could be implemented more broadly.

By 2012, the Dreamers were gaining some momentum. After months of careful relationship cultivating, Senator Marco Rubio in April 2012 invited UWD’s Pacheco to advise him in crafting a bill that would provide some permanent protection to undocumented youth, but not full citizenship. Within hours of the conversation, the White House was urging Pacheco not to trust Rubio.

Pacheco explained that she used the relationship with Rubio—and some fast thinking on her feet—to push the White House for administrative relief over deportations. “I told Durbin and Reid that Rubio wasn’t going to run for Vice President. He was going to run for President and show strength by retaking the Senate. I told [Reid]: ‘He’s coming after your house. He’s going to get all these Republicans to support the DREAM Act, and you’re going to be stuck like chuck.’”

Her strategy—and creative non-fiction—worked. “Durbin’s calls to Napolitano were insane,” Pacheco recalled. “He screamed, ‘You’re lying to me! I know that Dreamers are still getting deported.’” Durbin and others knew this was true because United We Dream was publicizing cases of Dreamers still in deportation proceedings despite Obama’s and Napolitano’s claims to the contrary. United We Dream also won a meeting with Napolitano’s office, where Natalia Arstizabal delivered information regarding many cases of Dreamers in deportation proceedings, in direct contradiction to her claims.

In May, Dreamers Neidi Dominguez, Gaby Pacheco and Lorella Praeli brought White House staff a letter outlining possible legal strategies to offer relief from deportation to Dreamers as a group. United We Dream worked with UCLA law professor Hiroshi Motomura to lead a campaign that garnered 94 signatures from immigration law professors all over the U.S. The influential Spanish-language newspaper *La Opinión* published the letter the same day.

In June, a wave of sit-ins took place inside Obama for America Headquarters in California, Florida and key election swing states. Not all these sit-ins were coordinated by United We Dream. Local Dreamers also launched “wildcat” actions without higher-

level coordination. But United We Dream's June 12 deadline for a response from the White House regarding administrative relief from deportations passed without a response. UWD continued to plan direct action on June 15 in Los Angeles during Dream Summer, an organizing training event for Dreamers,.

Then on June 15, 2012 Obama announced DACA The previous night of June 14, UWD leaders started to get texts and calls from UWD leadership with the rumor that something big was about to happen. After 25 years of defeats, undocumented immigrant youth won a significant victory - they pressured President Obama deliver relief. On that day, Dreamers from around the country were gathered to kick off Dream Summer and as planned blocked the street in front of the city's U.S. Customs and Immigration office. During the action, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA. "We got everything we had been fighting for," said Dominguez in an article published by both Narco News and LA Progressive. "It is as if they just copied and pasted our memo and issued it as the executive order."

Themes for Discussion

1. The role of resources in the Dreamers' success must be viewed broadly. It is easy to make the claim—as some have—that the Dreamers won victory with “pocket change” while the movement for comprehensive immigration reform, with more than \$300 million in foundation support over the last decade, failed to gain traction. Many of the state-level youth started grassroots efforts with little or no support from mainstream organizations. While it is true that Dreamers and their families relied heavily on their own resources—cars, houses for traveling organizers to sleep, and grassroots fundraising—to achieve their victory, assuming only those resources were in play overlooks the fact that the funders' hundreds of millions of dollars made important in-kind contributions to the Dreamers.

These contributions were made both locally and nationally. Some of the state-level youth leaders who came together to create United We Dream were mentored and supported by state and local immigrant rights organizers whose organizations benefitted from the larger pool of funds. Those young people used their office space, computers, phones and sometimes even were supported by paid staff; in California, the Center for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), invested a paid staff position to coordinate the California Dream Network. Even a dissident Dreamer like Chicago's Unzueta turned to Josh Hoyt and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights for help with the Padilla deportation case and for media and legal support during the Capitol Hill sit-ins. NILC, a player in the RIFA coalition, convened the youth leaders who became United We Dream and served as its fiscal sponsor in the group's early stages. It is also important to note that foundations did not uniformly toe the official RIFA line during the period of strategic shift; for example, the Open Society Foundation supported state-level training for Arizona activists during the spring of 2010.

The Dreamers had vital resources that went beyond money. The value of their masterful use of storytelling, nonviolent direct action, social media and relational power cannot be

underestimated. “Young people speaking in their own voices, putting a human face on this, engaging in civil disobedience, was critically important,” observed Hoyt, now executive director of the National Partnership for New Americans. “It was really the transformational point when the undocumented started speaking for themselves in an organized way.” Just as important, the Dreamers built strong alliances with forward-thinking groups to move their agenda. The National Day Labor Organizing Network, MALDEF and the UCLA Labor Center are some of the allies who shared their strategic vision and offered them support.

2. The federated nature of the undocumented youth movement creates many organizing handles and targets as well as opportunities to address intersectionality.

Even now, when undocumented youth have created a national organizing structure, thousands of young people not formally engaged with United We Dream are working at the state and local level to win tuition equity, create and manage alternative scholarship programs and fight deportations. Dreamers took pains to learn strategy and tactics from leaders of the civil rights movement, including SNCC, to which Dreamers are sometimes compared. Many intuitively understood the power of “coming out” from their own experience as LGBTQ people. In an interview, United We Dream managing director Cristina Jimenez suggested that a likely next frontier for organizing will be to connect anti-enforcement and anti-deportation campaigns with the struggle to end criminalization of communities of color.

In recent years, funders have taken greater notice of the movement’s federated nature. The Alliance for Citizenship, a new coalition connecting funders with advocates and grassroots organizing, launched in 2013. For some observers, this initiative could become a more democratized, coalition-oriented, rather than top-down form of the RIFA model.

3. Though the strategic conflict of 2010 left some bitter wounds, visionary adult mentors provided examples of how to bridge the differences. Though funders and grassroots organizers now acknowledge the success of the Dreamers’ argument to lead with relief for undocumented youth, the wounds from the conflict over strategy in 2010 still run deep. Some sources for this case noted the charge leveled at the Dreamers—“you’re leaving your parents behind”—carried particular weight and was intended to guilt Dreamers into sticking with the RIFA strategy.

A number of Dreamers mentioned that their parents fully understood the political landscape and analysis that prompted a change in strategy. For example, Unzueta’s mother, Chicago immigrant rights organizer Rosi Carrasco, fully supported her daughter and now works jointly with her on the Not One More anti-deportations campaign.

The charge tended to come from organizers and advocates connected to the national coalitions like RIFA, whose long experience in the movement led them to fear policymakers would lose interest in immigrant rights once the low-hanging fruit (Dreamers) were protected. But not all veteran organizers saw things the same way. “In 2010, there was a huge upsurge in youth activism. A lot of immigrant rights organizations

thought this was a distraction. Many funders thought that way as well,” recalled Kent Wong, director of the UCLA Labor Center. “The all or nothing strategy—I thought that was wrong. I saw enormous potential in immigrant youth who saw an opportunity to advance a campaign that spoke to them. Seated at the table of the comprehensive immigration campaign was not a single undocumented voice. How could you have a movement without their voice at the table?”

4. The final rewards of the incremental strategy are as yet unknown. Crucially, it remains to be seen whether the incremental strategy results in further wins for immigrant rights at the federal level. After much pressure from the undocumented immigrants, including United We Dream, and through the “We Can’t Wait” campaign, the Obama administration has attempted to expand DACA and create a similar relief from deportation for parents of children who are citizens or legal residents. However, that effort has been delayed by a court order—the legal battle is continuing. Beyond the 2016 elections, many are concerned that the next president could instantly undo all that has been done to date to protect undocumented residents from deportation.

Appendix Dreamer Victories

National

Dream Policy Table: The Dreamers and NILC worked together to organize this coalition of more than 100 organizations working to pass the DREAM Act.

Deportation reform: In June 2011, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Director John Morton issued two memoranda providing guidance on the use of prosecutorial discretion in enforcing immigration law. The first memo encouraged ICE attorneys and employees to focus their resources on noncitizens who pose a serious threat to public safety and national security, and to refrain from pursuing noncitizens with close family, educational or other ties to the United States. The second memo instructed ICE officials to refrain from launching removal proceedings against noncitizens who were victims of or witnesses to a crime. The memos relied on pre-existing policy but were unique in placing explicit, affirmative responsibility on ICE employees to initiate prosecutorial discretion in individual cases.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): On June 15, 2012, the Obama administration created a process for qualifying undocumented youth to request prosecutorial discretion to defer deportation for a period of time. Currently DACA protection from deportation and legal authorization to work in the U.S. is valid for two or three years, depending on when a person's application was approved. DACA is currently renewable. Because DACA is not legislation, merely administrative policy, it could change drastically depending on the outcome of the 2016 elections.

DAPA: In late 2014, Obama announced an expansion of DACA eligibility and a new deferred action initiative (DAPA) intended to prevent deporting parents of children who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. However, in February, a federal district court in Texas issued an order that temporarily prevents the program from launching. The legal battle to implement expanded DACA and DAPA is continuing.

TheDream.US Scholarship: In June 2013, longtime Washington Post publisher Don Graham, who has a deep interest in college access for first-generation students from all backgrounds, joined with veteran Dreamer activist Gaby Pacheco and architect Henry Muñoz III (now finance chair of the Democratic National Committee) to convene a group of Dreamers, business leaders, college administrators and others.

These stakeholders have launched a private scholarship program intended to serve as “the Pell Grant for undocumented students.” Between 2014 and 2015, its pool of available funds grew from \$1 million to \$81 million. For comparison, this year the federal Pell Grant program will award \$30 billion in aid to more than 8 million students.

State and Local

DACA Implementation: United We Dream affiliates have worked with the NEA and AFT to create clinics on DACA for educators interested in helping undocumented students access its benefits.

Tuition Equity: As of 2014, 18 states allow undocumented students who graduated from state high schools (public or private) to pay in-state tuition. Most have done so through state legislation (see below) but a few have instituted policy through state Boards of Regents for higher education.

Instate Tuition Laws: At least 12 states have passed legislation supporting Dreamers access to college, with Texas being the first state to grant instate tuition and provide state financial aid for Dreamers. In California, which has allowed Dreamers to pay in-state tuition rates since 2001, the recently passed DREAM Act allows them to qualify for state financial aid. In 2011, the Illinois DREAM Act established the first statewide private scholarship fund for Dreamers, allowed immigrant families to participate in state college savings programs and provided training for high school counselors advising undocumented college aspirants.

Local organizing: Innumerable local campaigns have saved Dreamers from deportation, created small scholarship funds to increase college access, and raised awareness among high school teachers and counselors of the existing local pathways available for Dreamers to attend college. Local awareness has also affected youth-related policymaking in cities like Chicago, where helping undocumented youth access legitimate income was a factor in the decision to award stipends for participating in the city's flagship after school and summer youth program, After School Matters.

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