



Ensuring Opportunity Campaign to End Poverty in Contra Costa

ART East Contra Costa Project Final Report to Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)

July 9, 2019

1. What were your organization goals for the project? Did you meet them?

In entering into this project in partnership with BARHII and BCDC, Ensuring Opportunity (EO) envisioned this as an opportunity for to advance several important organizational goals:

- A. **Leverage our role as a trusted local partner** to strengthen shared local and regional knowledge about community needs and assets in East County, and their intersection with climate resilience.
- B. **Increase our understanding** of sea level rise and climate resilience, and of the ways in which climate adaptation can and should intersect with the policy issues we most frequently work on with community members and policy makers, including health equity, housing, food security, transportation, and economic opportunity.
- C. Deepen our **existing relationships** with key organizations and individuals in East County who are working on a variety of social and economic issues that impact low-income residents and/or build resident power.
- D. **Expand our network** of East County organizations beyond our current network, to create a stronger base to build from in conducting future community outreach and policy campaigns in East County, including continued work on climate resilience.
- E. **Build strong working relationships with regional entities** including BARHII and BCDC, to pave the way for additional productive collaboration in the future.
- F. Increase and **support linkages and alignment** of nonprofit service providers with community organizers, to amplify and support the voices and power of East County residents.
- G. Leverage this project to **secure additional resources** to expand the scope and impact of EO's efforts in East County.

We met all of these goals, while recognizing that the longer-term benefits of these efforts will continue to accrue over time.

2. What were the outputs and outcomes of our outreach plan?

Activity (per Outreach Plan)	Outputs	Outcomes
Develop detailed list of East County organizations, public agencies, policy makers and others who could be allies/actors in climate resilience work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed extensive database that includes a total of 98 individuals and organizations. • Shared the list with partners. • Includes organization name, brief description, and sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatly expanded EO’s knowledge of East County assets and resources, including climate/ environmental entities as well as those that address other issues such as health, housing and social services. • Laid groundwork for targeted outreach and engagement for future community initiatives.
Facilitate convening of other entities engaged in climate/ environment work in East Contra Costa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in meeting in Bay Point that was attended by about 20 diverse public and nonprofit organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased shared knowledge and understanding of the work of diverse agencies and organizations in East County in relation to climate change and the environment. • Initial exploration of opportunities for more closely aligning and cross-informing East County work.
Conduct one-on-one interviews with 8-10 key informants in East County organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth phone interviews with 14 key CBOs and community leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified key themes (listed elsewhere in this report). • Built/strengthened relationships with key organizations in East County. • Increased knowledge/ awareness among interviewees about facts/ impact/ importance of SLR and climate resilience.
Organize two community workshops co-hosted with BCDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 workshops held, total of 20 attended • 8 in Pittsburg (May 6) • 12 in Antioch (May 13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated residents and stakeholders about SLR overall and projected impact in their community. • Increased level of shared knowledge among residents and stakeholders about the scope and urgency of pending SLR. • Mapped community assets and vulnerabilities, which will be of value both to local residents/ stakeholders and to the BCDC/ART team.

3. Synthesize themes from one-on-one interviews. What are your major takeaways?

Significant community needs are not being addressed:

- Large numbers of residents in East County are struggling to make ends meet.
- Shared sense that there is not enough attention/investment to address economic and social needs in East County.
- Racism and racial tensions are tacitly acknowledged but are not being publicly/thoughtfully addressed.
- Northern Waterfront development is creating concerns about displacement, and is not sufficiently incorporating SLR/climate change/resilience into its deliberations.

Climate change is not a common topic of discussion among community service providers or other local groups:

- Lack of information and attention.
- Little sense of urgency around this issue, especially compared to economic issues including jobs, housing, and transportation.
- Heat and wildfires are the climate issues seen as having more of an impact vs. SLR.
- Few elected officials appear to have SLR/climate change on their radar.
- Not a lot of resources or capacity dedicated to environmental justice in East Contra Costa.

Challenges in engaging community members:

- Long commutes, multiple jobs means very little free time to attend community meetings
- Many newer residents who've been displaced from other Bay Area communities have not put down roots in East County – i.e., retain religious/social affiliations in the community they came from.
- Each community (Antioch, Pittsburg, Bay Point) is self-contained for the most part; e.g., it is difficult to get residents from one community to travel to another to attend a meeting. This is partly due to congested highways and poor public transit, and partly due to a culture of isolation and to some extent, competition for attention and resources.
- There are a lot of governing bodies and they are not well-coordinated or connected.

Development of resident voice and power is in its infancy:

- There have been some significant early investments over past two years (e.g., Lift Up Contra Costa), but much work to be done to build capacity and impact.
- Many residents do not have training or experience in social justice or equity framing or advocacy (unlike in Richmond in West County). Unlike in West County, there is not a strong grassroots base that has the political power/savvy to push for necessary public/community action or policy change.

Opportunities for future focus:

- Link climate change/resilience to transportation and housing issues.

- Support and enlarge current efforts to build grassroots base of engaged, informed citizens.
- Educate and engage elected officials and policy makers.
- Work with trusted local groups (e.g., First 5, Parent Voices, schools, Healthright 360). Meet people where they are. Find out what they care about and then link that to climate issues.

4. Summary of key themes from community meetings

- Participants at both workshops enthusiastically participated in the community mapping exercise, and added extensive detail about community assets and vulnerabilities within SLR-affected areas.
- Pittsburg themes:
 - Many businesses and services are clustered around Highway 4, rather than near the waterfront.
 - Concern about large amount of industrial development along the waterfront and potential impact of SLR.
 - This issue (SLR impact) is not being discussed by local city leaders or residents.
- Antioch themes:
 - Areas nearest water have older housing stock, lower-income residents.
 - Downtown businesses could be at risk, and area is already struggling economically.
 - Areas near water also include significant community assets, including schools, key transportation routes, retail corridors and parks/recreation facilities.
 - Concern about SLR impact on municipal water intake (near northern boat ramp)
 - Emergency operations center is near the water.