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### Summary

The cumulative experience of Community Design Centers over a period of almost forty years is presented. The key goals of the field are defined, although these are not always realized, due to political, institutional or funding constraints. A history and description of types of centers are provided, which include university-based, independent nonprofit organizations and volunteer organizations. Centers respond directly to local contexts and community-based concerns and needs. Organizational issues of professional competition and the need for more comprehensive community design education are discussed.

### Key words

capacity building, community design centers, economic development, nonprofit community development, participatory design, social justice, technical assistance, volunteerism



**October 24, 1998.** Neighborhood residents demonstrate to save the Knightsbridge Armory for adaptive reuse. (Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and PICCED.)

# Community design centers: an alternative practice

## 1 WHAT IS A COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER?

Community Design Centers (CDCs) provide planning, design and technical assistance to low- and moderate-income urban and rural communities, many of which have limited resources. Those involved with CDCs thus work for social, economic and environmental justice, particularly serving local community-based development needs. CDCs plan and design with, not for, local community-based development organizations and residents. CDCs sustain relationships over a long period of time so that mutual trust can be established and shared learning can occur. They place themselves in opposition to institutional and corporate interests when a process or project may contribute to further decline of an already stressed environment or result in displacement of existing residents.

CDCs also build local knowledge and organizational capacity by assisting communities in leveraging the resources and tools necessary to meet a variety of challenges. CDCs held to educate community residents to participate effectively in the process of directing change. Community designers take on as a professional the responsibility to understand that communities are complex social systems and that physical design is only part of an integrated solution. Technical teams and solutions should remain flexible in response to specific communities and their unique conditions necessary to take economic control over their own assets. Community design practice is based on the three key tenets of affordability, accessibility (political, physical, economic, social and cultural) and aesthetics.

## Why is design important in CDC practice?

Design, as a process, is an effective way for advancing the cause of social justice. It facilitates a wider range of community concerns and fosters a multidisciplinary approach. Better decisions are achieved by combining a community's experiential knowledge with academic and professional knowledge. Design solutions are, therefore, more contextual, inclusive and appropriate resulting in better use of resources. Process-oriented design translates human needs into achievable plans compared to traditional design which is often product oriented and devoted to institutional or corporate goals (Francis 1983). A specific style emerged in participation and environmental justice in landscape architecture. It was "highly personal, comfortably homemade and well-loved, indistinct edges that are more complex than the modern style, moving away from a preoccupation with joining materials to more emphasis on human movement and activity" (Hester 1983:53). "The resultant plans, being flexible and open-ended rather than fixed, anticipate and aid the incremental development that usually follows. Design became a continuous process of improvement."

If process and product are equally valued, the systematic and systemic ways in which various groups of people experience exclusion in their daily lives are more comprehensively addressed. Funders should recognize the value that CDCs bring in contributing to design quality within the framework of community organizing, Community Economic Development (CED) and capacity building. Designers should keep in mind that design is an important component of low-income and moderate-income communities because it demonstrates

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respect for the residents and contributes to further local investment. However, designers also should understand that community design is not solely about “fashioning more handsome buildings, interesting views, or attractive landscapes.” It is about “empowering the citizens of local communities to shape their own preferred futures by acquiring and applying information and knowledge about their communities in a far more systematic, thoughtful, and democratic manner than current practice” (Mehrhoff 1999:122).

### 2 WHAT IS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

Technical assistance provided by CDCs in the field of community development can be characterized and defined in three ways, helping, enabling, empowering:

**Helping:** Technical assistance helps in resolving the need or crisis but the person or organization being helped may not be in any position to avoid the same crisis in the future.

**Enabling:** The person or organization is encouraged to help themselves by being provided with the rudimentary tools, knowledge and sometimes money to resolve an immediate set of problems.

**Empowering:** The person or organization is provided with the knowledge to understand why they are in the situation that is contributing to local disinvestment. This type of technical assistance helps build local research, analytical and development skills moving the community toward organizing and taking responsibility for themselves and their neighborhood and toward developing their ability to change their conditions (that is, achieving social change).

**Types of technical assistance provided by CDCs:** CDCs serve a variety of clients (see Box 1: CDC Clients). The goal of effective CDCs is to empower nonprofit Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) to be able to do comprehensive community building and development with and for existing residents. Services range from neighborhood planning, project development consultation, architectural design, graphic design and media services to a wide range of consultation services in planning, design, development and management. Activities such as information and referral assistance, community planning, envisioning, design, and the work leading to coalition building, program monitoring and evaluation, public policy development and analysis are all important aspects of a CDCs growth and development (ACD 1997). CDC services are responsive to their context, based on local needs, and available funding and staff skills and interests. Technical teams and solutions must remain flexible in response to specific communities and their unique conditions.

### 3 WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING?

The core of CDC technical assistance that enables and empowers is based on providing education to residents and community-based development organizations or related agencies so that capacity is in place locally to continue work in the future. Examples include, but are not limited to, assistance in understanding what community building is and how to achieve it, providing technical courses in planning, development and management of local neighborhoods and their assets, or building knowledge of planning and design criteria during participatory design processes:

**Community building:** Recently, poverty alleviation in community development is more focused on the practices of community building, moving away from models of dependency to local self-reliance and responsibility. Community building is not new to CDC practice. It is defined by seven themes (Kingsley *et al.* 1999):

- Focused around specific improvement initiatives in a manner that reinforces values and builds social and human capital;
- Community-driven with broad resident involvement;
- Comprehensive, strategic and entrepreneurial;
- Asset-based;
- Tailored to neighborhood scale and conditions;
- Collaboratively linked to the broader society to strengthen community institutions and enhance outside opportunities for residents;
- Consciously changing institutional barriers and racism.

**CED Internship:** In order to achieve self-reliance, CDCs have assisted in building development skills in CED. One of the premier training programs in organizational capacity building was collaboratively designed and delivered by Development Training Institute (DTI) in Baltimore and Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED) in New York, the oldest CDC in the country. The CED internship included courses in the history of social movements and CED, strategic planning, organizational effectiveness, nonprofit real estate development and management, community economic development, accounting, law and tax, youth entrepreneurship, alternative financial institutions and practices and programs that empower. Once participants completed the course, consisting of six workshops over the period of nine months, they could access the second year of the graduate planning program at PICCED. The graduate program schedules all classes in the evening to allow opportunities for staff of local organizations to participate. This provides access to advanced education to many, particularly women and minorities. PICCED is now delivering related short technical workshops.

**Participatory design and knowledge transfer:** The inherent challenge is to move beyond participation in design that is limited to consultative processes or charrettes to building local capacity. Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) has been very effective in developing local knowledge during their participatory design process. Their former Director, Terry Curry, developed a set of eight workshops to assist participants in making informed decisions about building quality, project budget, programmatic requirements and building character, and spatial experience. For example, participants are provided with workshops on factors that affect decision making in housing design, regulatory rules that influence physical design and budget analysis (Fig. 1). The building is designed based on the results of a collaborative design process that includes both technical information and design evaluation knowledge (Fig. 2). Participants develop a greater understanding of key areas of planning bylaws, design criteria and process. They understand what to ask professional planners and designers on future projects and can collaborate more effectively rather than merely be consulted.

#### 4 HISTORY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTERS: FROM ADVOCACY TO EMPOWERMENT

CDCs emerged in the 1960s in opposition to urban renewal policy that encouraged removal and gentrification of neighborhoods. They also opposed policies that contributed to the destruction of the natural environment represented by suburban sprawl. In 1968 at the 100th Convention of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Whitney M. Young, Jr., Executive Director of the Urban League, demanded greater accountability from the architecture profession. Referring to the “white noose around the central city,” he indicated that architects shared the responsibility for the mess and that the profession had distinguished itself by its “thunderous silence” and “complete irrelevance” (Curry in Cary 2000). Architecture once had a strong care-taking tradition lost in the Master Architect model. CDCs began to rebuild civic engagement at the grassroots level (Mehrhoff 1999).

Studies and profiles produced between 1970 and 1977 documented between fifty to eighty CDCs in the U.S. But by 1987 only sixteen remained. Of these, only twelve were established in the early years (Curry in Cary 2000). By the 1980s, CDCs had to become more entrepreneurial, drawing their funding from a wider range of sources including government programs, foundations, local AIA chapters, fee-for-service work, universities, historic preservation programs, private philanthropists and corporations. They became less political and focused more on product than process. This evolution was influenced by a changing political and economic climate at the government level. Also community ownership and economic development initiatives were emerging at the grassroots level. However, justice, social change, community participation, empowerment and control of resources remained key to CDC practice (Comerio 1984).

As a result of this trend to an entrepreneurial model, many CDCs evolved into private practices. Some disappeared and some are occasionally “reactivated” to deal with a crisis. CDCs that evolved into community-based development organizations had difficulty managing the conflict between political intervention and specific project development. Licensed architects started many CDCs, but almost none of these centers survived, many pressured out of existence by the profession.

The ACSA Sourcebook (Cary 2000) documents forty-six university affiliated programs and twenty-six independent design centers. There has been a recent surge in the establishment of CDCs, in part due to recent government and foundation funding initiatives and a recognition by architecture schools of their value in education (see Box 2: SWOTS of Community Design Education).

A national networking organization, Community Design Center Director’s Association was incorporated in 1978, renamed the Association for Community Design (ACD) in 1985. ACD holds an annual conference and runs a website and intranet forum (see References). ACD supports the formation of CDCs as capacity building professional vehicles with a broad range of architecture and planning professionals from universities, professional societies and the nonprofit sector. Members are dedicated to finding an alternate form of community planning and architectural practice that combats racism and policies that contribute to the persistence of poverty.

#### Box 1: CDC Clients

##### Examples of CDC clients include:

- Self-help neighborhood development organizations
- Unincorporated community-based associations
- Public officials/administrators of major metropolitan areas
- Nonprofit housing development corporations
- Private individuals/families eligible for special housing programs
- Nonprofit community development corporations
- Government (social welfare, housing, economic development)
- Community business assistance corporations
- Religious organizations providing services to community
- Senior citizen and youth organizations
- Block associations, civic organizations
- Rural and small town communities

**Fig. 1. HOUSING DESIGN: Factors affecting decision making**

##### Primary factors influencing the design of affordable housing are:

- organizational capacity
- marketability
- economic feasibility
- government requirements (codes and ordinances)
- project design
- stakeholder expectations

Source: Detroit Collaborative Design Center Affordable Housing and Community Design Forum

**Fig. 2. HOUSING DESIGN: Factors affecting decision making**

##### Critical questions:

- What is the occupancy and use group?
- What are the applicable construction classifications with and without sprinklers?
- What is the allowable number of occupants?
- What are the egress requirements that must be met?
- What are the fire separation distances required for site placement?
- What are the height and area options?
- What are the minimum levels of light and ventilation required?
- Are there any special requirements for handicap accessibility?

Source: Detroit Collaborative Design Center Affordable Housing and Community Design Forum

## Box. 2: SWOTs of Community Design Education

### Strengths

Design schools that teach the following subjects, for example, can bring real value to the community design process:

- Historic preservation;
- Sustainable planning and design;
- Research methods in planning and design;
- Design methods and programming;
- Landscape resource management;
- Landscape architecture;
- Building assessment;
- Affordable housing design;
- Placemaking;
- Small town conservation;
- Universal design;
- Graphic communication techniques.

### Weaknesses

Designers should be able to articulate various alternatives in collaboration with the users and reflect on past projects and experience to inform future decisions. They should have the ability to translate the daily experiences of the users into not only plans and designs that can be built, but also policy. They need to understand that good environments are not designed but evolve and are only part of a comprehensive and integrated community development strategy. Multidisciplinary linkages are needed to integrate physical, social, economic, environmental and political concerns. Weaknesses are related to limited or no knowledge in design schools about the following areas:

- Community organizing and community building;
- Community economic development in community and downtown revitalization;
- Tools and techniques for effective community engagement combined with organizational capacity building;
- Nonprofit real estate development and management;
- Managing and marketing techniques in community design;
- Conflict mediation and resolution;
- Policy analysis;
- Evaluation criteria in planning and design.

### Opportunities

CDCs that are connected to a design school can provide a commitment to both process and product. Communities are more than just statistics. As well as being about natural, social, economic and political environments, they are also about people and places. Wates (2000) provides a variety of tools, techniques and scenarios for collaboration in shaping various environments. He also explains the benefits of getting involved:

- Additional resources leveraged by including local resources;
- Better decisions by including local knowledge and experience;
- Building community by creating stronger relationships;
- Compliance with legislation that requires community participation;
- Democratic credibility when residents participate in decisions affecting them;
- Easier fundraising with grant organizations who encourage participation;
- Empowerment by building local capacity for addressing future problems;
- More appropriate contextual design solutions that use resources effectively;
- Professional education that results from mutual learning;
- Responsive environments that can be constantly tuned and refined over time;
- Satisfying public demand for participation;
- Speedier development by reducing time wasting conflicts;
- Sustainability, both environmentally, but also by reducing vandalism and neglect.

### Threats

Universities have traditionally focused on research and evaluation. In turn they have devalued sustained implementation which is critical for mutual organizational learning and social change to occur. Studio and service-based learning models can only be mutually effective if they are a footnote in the longer term framework provided by established CDCs that function throughout the calendar year. The priority always has to be given to the community-based organizations and local residents, rather than students. Curry (2001) provides a few prerequisites for a service based learning studio:

- A neighborhood in socioeconomic distress is not a place for class experiments;
- It is necessary to define and redefine the problems collectively with all participants;
- The work is a full-time job with full-time responsibilities;
- Community engagement processes are not limited to one-time workshops and visioning processes, but are multiple planning and design techniques applied to shifting contexts throughout the timeframe of a process and product.

For a guide to evaluating implementation for tenure and promotion of academic staff, see Barry Checkoway. 1998. "Professionally Related Public Service as Applied Scholarship: Guidelines for the Evaluation of Planning Faculty." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 17, 4: 358-60.

## Three Types of CDCs

Many CDCs are located in large U.S. cities and generally serve non-profit community-based organizations in distressed urban and rural communities. In the United Kingdom, they are referred to as "community technical aid centers." Planning and design activities dominate. However some CDCs provide education and training programs for organizational capacity building, advocacy, referral and financial services. Most CDCs have more architects than planners on staff. Some have engineers, landscape architects, interior designers, graphic designers and other professionals, based on the nature of activities and opportunities for funding. Budgets range from a few thousand to a few million dollars.

CDCs are either university-affiliated, independent nonprofit or volunteer. The descriptions, below, provide examples of this range of CDCs. However, they vary extensively in their mission, types of services provided, the degree of project involvement, staffing, budget, size of project area, organizational structure and fee policy. They share a common interest in bringing together the integrative capacity of the various physical planning and design professions with the complex challenges of comprehensive CED. For the most complete description of CDCs, refer to the ACD website or *The ACSA Sourcebook of Community Design Programs* (Cary, 2000).

## University Affiliated CDCs

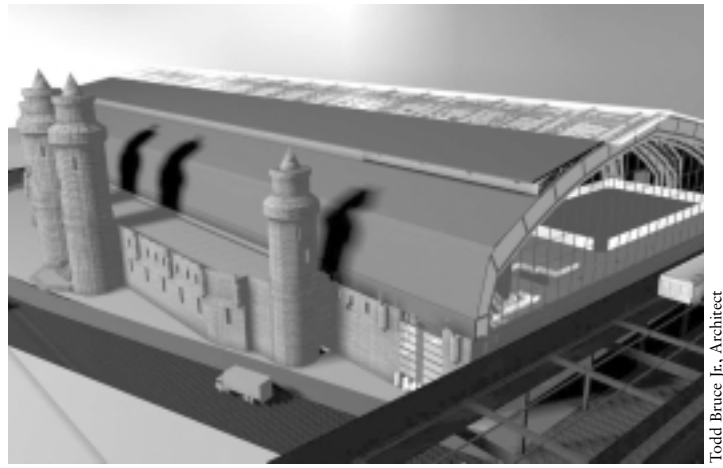
The majority of university-affiliated CDCs are operated either as part of a university department or are nonprofits that have projects providing training opportunities for students. Some also have collaborative activities for community involvement and extension services. University affiliated CDCs are also involved in direct publication of academic journals, newsletters, or books. They may provide services for free, or at minimum charge or have a cost reimbursement policy based on available funding. University affiliated CDCs often evolved out of an individual staff person's initiative or are faculty- or university-wide initiatives.

The Pratt Institute for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED) in Brooklyn, New York emerged out of a collaboration between local residents, municipal authorities and university staff in planning and architecture in 1963 and eventually came under the administration of the President's office. PICCED, described on their website at [www.picced.org](http://www.picced.org), was founded on the triangulation of three key areas to support local community-based development initiatives—education, technical assistance and policy and advocacy. The Pratt Planning and Architectural Collaborative was established in 1975 to provide planning, design and development services, primarily for affordable housing production working from a base of community organizing (Fig. 3). In addition to planning and architecture design services, PICCED has recently developed a GIS team to compile and analyze data for assisting CBDs in defining difficult problems and identifying resources for CED opportunities. PICCED has a strong relationship with the graduate planning program. Staff of PICCED teach in the program and students can work at the Center. Currently, full-time staff is about twenty, including five architects and several planners. Their operating budget is approximately two million dollars.

The mission of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC)—established in 1994 as a nonprofit subsidiary of the School of Architecture, University of Detroit-Mercy—includes education, service and leadership. It focuses on educating responsible professionals through an undergraduate neighborhood design studio and providing internship opportunities for students at the center. It is committed to serving nonprofit organizations. Significantly, DCDC integrates its education and service mandates through an effective engagement technique that involves community-based organizations, funders, residents and other relevant parties in the design process and builds their organizational capacity at the same time. DCDC's goal for leadership is to set high standards for quality design solutions while building local capacity and taking local needs, budget limitations and program requirements into consideration. Their design work has been recognized by the American Institute of Architects and has won local, state and national awards. DCDC is staffed by five full-time employees, including two design fellows and one student intern (rotating position). Their yearly operating budget is \$300,000. Further information can be accessed through the School of Architecture website at [www.arch.udmercy.edu](http://www.arch.udmercy.edu).

## Independent Nonprofit CDCs

Independent nonprofit CDCs have been able to sustain themselves longer than most university-affiliated CDCs. They primarily do fee-for-service work based on ability to pay or direct project costs. Asian Neighborhood Design (AND), founded in 1973 as an independent nonprofit by Asian-American architecture students from the University of California, Berkeley, focused initially on providing design services



Todd Bruce Jr., Architect

**Fig. 3. The Kingsbridge Armory.** The Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) organized the community to save a historically significant building. NWBCCC and local residents believed that the Armory should remain a public asset. Given that local schools were overcrowded and vacant land scarce, the adaptive reuse design proposed by PICCED and NWBCCC provided room for three public schools, an indoor athletic field, retail frontage and community, recreational, cultural and parking facilities.



PHOTO: John Martine



PHOTO: Angeliki Georgiou

**Figs. 4 and 5. Denny Row (before and after).** A \$6,000 recoverable Design Fund from CDCP enabled Allegheny West Civic Council (AWCC) to develop renovation plans for Denny Row, a row of six deteriorated historic homes. AWCC invested \$500,000 in renovating the facades, designed by Integrated Architectural Services, to demonstrate the intrinsic value of the homes as a row. They then sold the shells to homebuyers, establishing a new development model that is being replicated elsewhere throughout the Pittsburgh area.

to nonprofit organizations, primarily serving the Chinese community. Their constituency and their organization evolved over time in direct response to the community development sector. Their activities—described on their website at [www.andnet.org](http://www.andnet.org)—include divisions in Architecture and Planning, Family and Youth Resources, Community Planning and Development, and Construction Management. AND becomes involved in a project before an architect is selected and stays involved through the completion. AND designs and builds housing, playground equipment, day care centers, youth clubs, and community service agency offices. They run job programs and developed a carpentry and cabinetmaking factory to train disadvantaged youth. This evolved into a very successful high-end furniture design and carpentry business. They publish, provide emergency repair services and lobby city officials on policy issues. Their focus has been on keeping housing affordable even if it means giving up the opportunity to do a major architectural design project (Comerio 1984). AND has evolved from a small community design center to a regional community development corporation with a primary focus on housing and community economic development. It has a staff of over one hundred and twenty, including nine architects and a budget of several million dollars (AND 1999).

The Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP) was originally established as the Pittsburgh Architects Workshop in the late 1960s, providing direct architectural services to organizations and individuals. It changed to its name and approach in 1987, becoming a combination independent nonprofit and broker of architectural services. Through its Design Fund, the CDCP provides recoverable grants plus technical assistance to help community-based organizations hire architects and professional planning assistance for early phases of revitalization projects (Figs. 4 and 5). The grants have been used for a wide variety of projects, including housing renovation and new construction, commercial and mixed-use development, open-space and community planning. The CDCP's Renovation Information Network provides opportunities for individuals to consult with volunteer or intern architects for advice and information. The organization's annual recreational event, Volkswagen Pedal Pittsburgh, has introduced over 10,000 riders to design landmarks and revitalization activities citywide. The CDCP is also engaged in broad Civic Stewardship initiatives that help strengthen the region's "quality of place." The CDCP offers a wide range of educational resources, including Design-In-Action! Workshops (Fig. 6), informal brownbag lunches and interactive visual presentations like "Negotiating with Retail Chains" and "Add Value to Your Home—by Design." Many educational resources are available at their website at [www.cdcp.org](http://www.cdcp.org). They have five full-time staff with a range of community development and design backgrounds, including one registered and one intern architect. Their budget is approximately \$325,000 per year for operations plus approximately \$60,000 for Design Fund grants. To date, the CDCP has focused primarily on distressed neighborhoods within the City of Pittsburgh, but is broadening their focus to include new clients and new geographical areas. Criteria for reviewing requests for support are based on neighborhood need, strategic impact, project feasibility and community-based organizational capacity.

## Volunteer Organizations

Volunteer organizations act as resource centers that link professional service providers and community-based organizations, or coordinate activities of various professionals who volunteer their services to nonprofit community projects. Volunteer organizations often use a charrette process of intensive engagement over a short period of time.

The Minnesota Design Team (MDT), established in the early 1980s, is a volunteer model that coordinates professionals from a wide range of fields, including architecture, landscape architecture, city and regional planning, economic development, interior design, architectural history, anthropology, marine biology, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and tourism. They primarily work with small towns and visit only those communities that demonstrate broad-based support, based on the results of a set of questions that the local community responds to before being selected. Once selected, a community is asked to contribute \$3,500 to defray expenses and demonstrate their commitment to the process.

Mehrhoff (1999) describes the MDT process in detail. It involves several months of advance preparation by two team leaders and participating communities, collecting survey data, base maps, physical, economic, social and cultural data using action research. Several drafts of a community design framework are developed throughout the preparation and on-site process with the full team. Over a four-day period on site, the full team employs several key techniques and tools. These include slide presentations, briefing sessions, SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, focus groups, visits to schools and other centers, bus and walking tours, visioning exercises, town meetings, democratic brainstorming, charrettes, storyboards, maps, drawings and networking. On the final day, community leaders are advised on ways to get started on key projects, additional resources they can call upon for help, and how they might coordinate public, private and volunteer efforts to move forward. An overall design framework that understands a community as a system of systems is crafted. The MDT team visits six months later to assess and evaluate progress. During the collaborative process, they post the on-going work at their website, [www.minnesotadesignteam.org](http://www.minnesotadesignteam.org).

This volunteer process can be an effective way to galvanize public opinion, jump-start a revitalization process and generate initial excitement and participation. However, there are limitations to this model. A high level of citizen involvement is often produced in the short term, but underlying problems may be glossed over (Mehrhoff 1999). Too often, volunteer processes become limited to “step one,” defining the problem and a visioning process. Although it is possible to connect the community vision to a plan of action, there may not be the necessary capacity, political will or democratic mechanism, locally, to sustain the process. Without longer-term technical assistance and willingness to politically intervene when necessary that an established CDC provides, allowing for mutual trust and learning to occur, there may not be opportunity for local community-based leadership and social change to be nurtured and alternative markets to be created. This volunteer process is important, but should not be considered the sum total of CDC practice. It still does not meet the challenge put forward by Whitney Young to the architecture and urban design professions. The goal of CDC practice is to generate a political process that involves plans, programs and projects. ■



PHOTO: Anne-Marie Lubenau

**Fig. 6. Green Building Workshop.** Design-in-Action workshops by CDCP, like this one on “Green Building” offer opportunities for participants to learn about issues influencing community development and practice what they have learned through hands-on exercises.

### Box 3: On the Issue of Professional Competition

The issue of “unfair” competition for development projects is constantly raised in relation to fee structures, nonprofit status, and overall mission of the Community Design Center in serving the low- and moderate-income community and client. Whenever this issue reaches confrontation stages it has generally been between the private architectural community and architects working in the low-income community as members of community design centers. Design centers generally resolve these issues in the following ways:

First, the design center as a nonprofit has every right to bring public and private support funds into the process of community development. It is a legitimate strategy for project development, and it is in fact, the very essence of a policy statement made by the AIA that supported the formation of CDCs.

Second, where the support of the local architectural community is particularly strong on the provision of comprehensive high quality services in low-income areas, a support network is often established. CDCs provide the back-up support and continuity to the process in the form of a business partnership with volunteers and community-based clients. This partnership established the framework for training and education and the context for dialogue on public policy issues.

Third, volunteer systems are needed in every profession, but do not work without an administrative structure, often named “community design center.”

Finally, ACD has documented the work of CDCs. In all cases the services of these organizations have facilitated hundreds of projects and joint ventures where they were most needed, yet least likely to occur without a commitment to advocacy, empowerment and access to technical assistance.

Operations and Policy Manual, ACD Inc., 1997. Also see this manual for minimum criteria for eligibility for CDC services, income eligibility guidelines used by CDCs, policy guidelines for free professional services, related policy issues regarding provision of services, fee structures, code of ethics and a policy statement developed by the AIA regarding CDCs.

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