

## **WHICH WAY FOR THE NORTHWEST SOCIAL FORUM?\***

### **A dialog on cross-issue organizing**

The Northwest Social Forum (NWSF) was organized over a 2 ½ year period, leading up to a planned weekend long event in Seattle, Washington. Since the World Social Forum was started in 2001 in Brazil, local and regional Social Fora have become a significant positive force in global justice organizing by connecting activists and organizers across issues and geography, resulting in several movement coalitions and actions. The NWSF would have been the second Social Forum in the US, following the Boston Social Forum. Concerns about process emerged 2 ½ months before the planned event, eventually resulting in the Indigenous Planning Committee's decision to pull out of the Forum. The Film Planning Committee and Youth Planning Committee followed, and the main Planning Committee decided to cancel the event just 9 days before it was to be held. Both the process and the call to cancel have resulted in a significant amount of criticism, but no formal process was undertaken to evaluate and move forward. The first US Social Forum is planned for June 27<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 in Atlanta, and some effort is being made to organize regionally for the Forum in the Northwest. This report has collected and organized online organizing documents, survey results and interviews around 10 main themes that emerged through the process: *organization, decision-making, race, conflict, technology, funding, geography, time, cancellation, and thoughts for the future*. Participants and readers are invited to contribute to a dialog around these themes and issues on the project's website, hopefully contributing to the development of further Social Forum organizing.

#### **Statements from the NWSF:**

**Summer, 2004:** “In answer to the WSF's [World Social Forum's] call for regional forums, the Northwest Social Forum will be held October 14-17, 2004, in Seattle, Washington. This event will be the first of an annual series of social forums in the Northwest that will bring together activists and organizations to share ideas and to build and strengthen social change networks throughout the region. We have undertaken extensive outreach and established a deliberative and inclusive planning process that will lead to a successful event in the fall. We hope the NWSF will serve as a model for other regional social forums in the US.”

**Fall, 2004:** “Northwest Social Forum will not be held October 15-17, 2004. The International Forum on Globalization pre-event, scheduled for October 14 will not be held. The Northwest Social Forum Planning Committee has decided to cancel the three day event after both the Indigenous Programming Committee and the Youth Planning Committee withdrew their participation from the Forum.”

#### **Why talk about the NWSF? - Because 'another world is possible'**

*“I think this is an opportunity for us to learn. It gives us the opportunity to self-critique and think about the next time. How are we going to learn if we are not willing to look at our mistakes, if we are not willing to self-critique?... There are going to be people coming behind us and they need to know, this is what we did, we don't want to make these kinds of mistakes again... we have to be willing to look at ourselves and say I fucked up, how can I do better?”*

--- NWSF Participant

---

\* This report was researched and written by graduate students and faculty at the University of Washington: Amoshaun Toft, Nancy Van Leuven, Lance Bennett, Jonathan Tomhave, Mary Lynn Veden, Chris Wells and Lea Werbel. Published by the Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, Seattle Washington . July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Primary contact: atoft@u.washington.edu

## **From the authors: The process for creating this report**

To record as many voices as possible, we emailed all participants mentioned on the NWSF website, email list and other promotional materials. 42 people responded to an online questionnaire. We also engaged 20 participants in in-depth interviews (11 of whom also answered the online survey). In all, 51 people representing a broad range of perspectives and levels of involvement with the planning of the forum contributed their views. To maintain anonymity, we have omitted names and other identifying characteristics; in addition, everyone who participated in this effort was shown a copy of their quotations and invited to revise or add anything.

To capture the clearest feelings of participants, most of the words here are direct quotes. We often use the present tense because so many participants speak about the NWSF as a still-viable project. As a gathering of opinions by many of those most involved with the Northwest Social Forum this report is intended to foster a learning environment that may help future social movement efforts. This document has been published online, and an opportunity has been provided there for readers to discuss findings and future steps.

**For complete statements, and online discussion about the themes discussed here please visit the project website. [www.engagedcitizen.org/nwsf](http://www.engagedcitizen.org/nwsf)**

## **Prominent Themes**

Interviewed participants cited numerous instances of what they believe to be important factors of the Northwest Social Forum (NWSF). Those quotes were organized in prominent themes:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Page</u>
Organization .....	3
Decision-making .....	7
Race .....	9
Conflict .....	12
Technology .....	15
Funding .....	17
Geography .....	18
Time .....	19
Final Words: The Cancellation of the NWSF .....	20
Which Way for the NWSF? Some thoughts for the future .....	22

## **ORGANIZATION**

When asked to describe if they thought of the Social Forum as a meeting space for creating dialog, an organizing opportunity for movement building or both, 91.9% of survey respondents who answered described it as both, with only 8.1% identifying it as a movement building space only. WSF organizers have resisted characterizing the Forum as a movement building space. The NWSF seems to have attempted to achieve both. On the one hand, several organizers of the NWSF said that “There was a clear intention of going with the Brazil model.” On the other hand, there was an effort to shape participation and highlight particular issues and people that are not typically highlighted in open events, such as “small farmers, women, homeless people... people of color and those sectors that are not traditionally part of coalitions like the homeless community.” In the end, participants identified particular dynamics unique to North America and the Northwest that differed from Brazil. “There is just a lot of cynicism that we need to confront about broad-based movement building - i.e., that it can be done here in the US. A lot of it is our own cultural/cross-cultural pre-conceptions – some sort of disbelief that we’re ready and right for having it here. What does it look like? What does a discussion like this look like that would still be based in the US? It is going to have all our ways, all our baggage tied up in the process. It is not going to look exactly like Brazil or India.”

The majority of survey respondents (68%) ranked the purpose of the forum as follows: 1. The NWSF could aid in collaboration across issue groups and between local communities; 2. The NWSF could educate people about particular issues and campaigns by holding events; 3. The NWSF could add a regional voice to the World Social Forum process.

Some feel that early ideas were not discussed enough in local communities. “It was announced that we were having a NWSF before anyone in the Northwest could come together and agree that we were going to do it.” As a result, some look back and ask, “How can you bring all these organizations and people to a preconceived idea? People had already come up with what they wanted to do, and then asked others to come into it, instead of asking them to come in the beginning...”

### **Process and Event**

Several people remember a difficulty in organizing what the NWSF should be like. It was as if “we are going to do this project and invite communities of color to it instead of let’s talk to communities about what a Social Forum should be first’. Since that did not happen, all these things influenced small organizations’ abilities to show up. It is the kind of process that was involved --- Some of that is a result of the organizers lack of money in the early stages and still saying ‘lets have a conference that gets people together for one weekend’ instead of thinking about a long-term process that would result in a forum.”

“Explaining what a Social Forum is in this country is really difficult,” comments one person. “People just don’t get it...the process is about having input from the beginning and building it together --- we are not organizing a conference. This is different, and it is different because that is what is required. And, after a while of trying, we thought, ‘Well, this is a hybrid and we will build something this time and do it better next time. And again people came in at the end and expected it to be like a conference.’”

The April planning retreat, funded by the Positive Futures Network (PFN), and organized in collaboration with the NWSF Planning Committee, was "a gift from PFN to the process. It was understood from the beginning that the NWSF planning committee would assume responsibility for guiding and implementing the NWSF after the retreat -- and that was an agreement also made explicit at the retreat itself. Some people, however, expected that the Positive Futures Network have a bigger subsequent role than was ever agreed on."

The circumstances were "uncomfortable for some people," such as one attendee who says, "I liked the retreat, and respected the people that participated, but thought that a privately funded retreat was a strange way to start a community process." Those who did participate in the retreat expressed a great deal of appreciation for the process used, and came away feeling positive about the prospects of the NWSF.

A good deal of time was spent during the NWSF retreat "talking about the identity politics that were in the group and trust-building. It was an incredibly dynamic and diverse group of organizers, predominantly people of color. Many people seemed energized and focused on mobilizing towards the NWSF by the end of the retreat. Unfortunately we didn't have enough time to really focus on developing a solid work and communication plan, including sharing strategies for developing regional participation." One participant from outside the area said, "We needed a little bit more of a cookbook. As it got late into the process, there was nothing. During the last six weeks to a month of the process, there was nothing...we didn't know what to do. There were certain things that had to come out of Seattle. I didn't have anything to give people."

Participants noted that many "did not follow through on their commitments" and there was not enough "communication infrastructure to keep those people together." For instance, a lack of built-in checkpoints left people feeling "isolated" and "There were never any conference calls to bring people back together right away." One participant recalls signing up "for an interest area and no one contacted me . . .When you have people's energy, you need to run with it or they drop off."

Organizers are viewed as coming from different positions of privilege and committing to varying degrees of participation after the retreat. According to one retreat member, "It became clear that the majority that were there could not commit to being nuts and bolts organizers. There were a few that could because they had the time and privilege to participate because they were staff or whatever...The same people that were involved before the retreat continued." Some of the core organizers said that they tried to involve more grassroots groups but that "We found out that a lot of the major base organizations that we felt should be intimately involved had other campaigns

#### Communication

"We did not have the communication infrastructure to keep those people together."  
"It would have helped if the organizing committee had shared what they were doing, minutes of meetings, periodic requests for input, advise...anything to make those of us on the fringes feel involved and needed. I...was never given an inkling of what I could do."  
"communication was non-existent."  
"there was no communication between staff and planning committee."  
"There was allot of good will and allot of good intention, but bad communication. There needed to be more community meetings."

going on and no capacity to help organize it - - so, they were supportive and did not really get involved until two or three months before the event.”

Many brought up how people were brought into the NWSF. One organizer notes that retreat participants were “hand picked to bring the core of people that were from disadvantaged communities into the planning committee.” When asked about who was invited to attend the planning retreat, one person explained that, “the planning group identified a group of people from around the Northwest that were at least two from each state that covered as many issues as possible...It did feel like a very representative cross-section of activists in the region (except for Muslims)...but that was the only one that happened. The only time that I ever felt the promise of a true regionalism was at the planning retreat.” Organizers tried to target potential participants that were networking within and across issues, with 63% of respondents listing more than 1 organizational affiliation.

Inviting people into the Social Forum was a contentious model for encouraging participation. “By the nature of the recruiting model, you don’t know the universe of organizations and people to invite,” says one participant who “never had the sense that there was any attempt to narrow it or exclude anyone.” A committee member recalls the process as very inclusive, stating that, “The Social Forum committee organizing was a very open process. There was a public call that went out to everyone you could think of. Every meeting I went to was openly publicized. I don’t think anyone was denied participating in any of the working groups.” People outside the organizing committee, took issue with the way that initial outreach was carried out. “While doing outreach to people of color communities or any communities, its important to develop rich and authentic relationships, with more than the 'token' person from that community.”

Outreach efforts were viewed as insufficient to the broad goals of the Forum. “There was never really an extensive outreach effort going on down to the community level” and that “in terms of a focus on outreach to women’s groups, it was not really happening.” One participant noted that the core organizers of the NWSF were extremely diverse, and that “In terms of future local social forum development, I believe that the emphasis needs to be on how we integrate our work together from our various localities. What are the tools that we need to do outreach in [our] communities and bring all of our good work together?” Outreach was largely on the shoulders of volunteer Planning Committee members, many of whom did not have the time and/or resources to do outreach. One participant noted that doing cross issue organizing is largely about building relationships, but “people didn’t build relationships outside of the original planning committee body.”

“I was frustrated by how quickly people thought it (the NWSF) was a conference,” one respondent recalls. “It is not. It is a gathering of social movements that can create new thought processes and vision that create new ways of being.”

Towards the end of the organizing process, staff was hired to do outreach, but they expressed “some concerns about internal dynamics, [i.e., unclear job descriptions and relationships to the Planning Committee] which led to a decreased ability of staff to do outreach, cause we did not have confidence in what we were doing.” Several people felt that hiring (in July for the October event) was too late in the process and more staff were hired later to make up for it. Late hiring

was closely tied to the short timeline and funding only coming through towards the end. “Having paid staff [earlier on] would have given people the sense that things were moving forward with a weekly report.”

One major forum for getting others involved were regular open meetings in Seattle. But these meetings were not felt to have functioned well, with one respondent noting that “There was no way to get involved, just one person talking the whole time...Seattle meetings...were not cool, fun things to go to at all.” “The monthly organizing meetings for wider community planning got an early reputation as being not that fun. People would come wanting to find out what is going on but we did not have people coming with new ideas.” One respondent suggested that “It could have also been about groups with their own interests, or people floating around, and have a report-back at the end so people could get jazzed about new and fresh ideas.”

Discussions of structural transparency center on communication expectations and outcomes. A lack of communication hindered the process, according to one respondent: “It would have helped if the organizing committee had shared what they were doing – minutes of meetings, periodic requests for input, advice – anything to make those of us on the fringes feel involved and needed. I...was never given an inkling of what I could do.” While one person viewed such postings as giving one “a sense of process and things were happening,” another remarks that a reason for not posting meeting minutes was that it “might have been embarrassing to show that our meetings were about solving problems and were very crisis oriented.” They continue, “Before I was involved, I tried to get an email response to just a one line inquiry. I heard they were trying to get some volunteers to be responsible for taking minutes, distributing, and even creating infrastructure but later – after July – these minutes were posted on the website and several newsletters were distributed in print and by email to anyone on the NNWSF email list-serves.” Communication processes are important in shaping participation. One participant remarks that “It is important to have a transparent and accessible social forum organizing process in order to outreach in our communities and make the process participatory.”

Committee membership was questioned by one member, noting that the boundaries of who was on what committee was vague, such as how people were allowed to join committees, who could vote or not, and no space for discussing who should be on what committee. Some participants describe the result as top-down, with most decisions going through one person toward the end. “One of the people in the planning process even said in the end that we didn’t have enough hierarchy,” says one respondent, advocating a more participatory structure. Another participant said that they “heard that it was about people feeling that they did not have an opportunity to be on the planning committee. That was a dynamic of who wanted to commit to the process from the beginning as opposed to coming in at the end. There is tension among people in every city of the country, and that is a reality. No one was shut out of the process.”

The pressures of the organizing process resulted in a loss of trust among Organizing Committee members. “[P]eople were not trusting and communicating with each other very effectively. I saw some of those challenges manifesting in the planning meetings.” “When we decided to cancel the NWSF, if [the Organizing Committee] had been together, we wouldn’t have seen the negative fallout that happened.”

## DECISION-MAKING

Under its Charter of Principles, World Social Forums are seen as “plural and diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental, and non-partisan.” Decision-making that is less than open and transparent is thus viewed by some respondents as a challenge of the NWSF. So, why did people feel unhappy with the decision-making process? Mentions are made of “not listening to the voices that were out there” and not keeping a commitment to an agreed process, leading to the breach of trust and exclusion of people from the community.

For instance, a few people noted issues of the committee make-ups. “The Organizing Committee wasn’t broad enough and there was cross-over with the Planning Committee,” said one person. Some members were involved in other committees and ended up controlling the process. Some noted that the Youth Committee was brought in early and present at the planning retreat, “But as the process moved forward, they didn’t have much power or input.”

### Seniority:

Some people had long records of involvement, while others joined just one or two meetings. One participant said that *"It can be frustrating when you have people [who] have been working together for over a year and others who walk in off the street with no clear commitment to staying with the process and yet want to have their views determine decisions. You need ways that many people can participate at different levels but not everyone determines core decisions. The World Social Forum has worked hard at finding that balance -- with a core organizing committee that makes key decisions, yet a process of broad participation in the events themselves."*

According to another participant, *"Late-comers to the process who questioned not having a say in the leadership were told, 'Hey, we are very late in the game and we have a lot going on'."*

Control issues range from information bottlenecks to poor facilitation. “There was great concern about people having the proper look and feel of what was being offered,” offers one participant, “and they had a particular conception of what it meant to be non-racist and non-classist and they were going to make sure that everyone understood how that worked.”

Leaders were described as being “too eager to manage it . . . rather than honoring the position that [another participant] had and asking, ‘What would you like to have happen?’ and even, ‘We are running out of time, can we make a compromise?’ a couple of people came and took the steering wheel [in the Program Committee] and were driving it.”

Several participants expressed “the impression that there was so little respect

for each other and our needs,” and that there was not really a space to be involved early in the process. “I remember going to a couple of meetings and people saying ‘trust us, it is all going to work out.’”

Although the April retreat established a consensus process as the working model for the Forum organizing, several participants believe the NWSF decisions reverted to a democratic process due to a deadline crunch, limited resources, and diverse interests. “The process sucked,” said one person. “People signed on for a consensus process and for being at the center of the process, and then the whole end-focused process, driven by the deadline, happened. And that was all lost.”

One person commented that, “What I saw happening over and over were discussions being had, people dissenting, and a decision being made to move forward at the end of the meeting regardless of the fact that people were disagreeing.” However, another participant believes that, “There are problems with the consensus model because it does not allow space for dissent. People feel very free to dissent vigorously but in the end . . . I am still obligated to go with what the group wants because I am part of this.”

*“We are not good at consensus in the U. S. We are used to living in a democracy, where majority rules and decisions are made by who shows up. But when you bring people in to a consensus process, everyone needs to be involved in decisions down the road, and if you do not do that, than at that moment you have stopped operating on a consensus model...”*

One participant said that the concept of “facilitation” was interpreted as “controlling the agenda” and told an organizer “...more than once that they never checked for consensus, and I worried that people were not on board, and understanding the decision. [They] said, ‘...our process is fine, everyone is happy with it, you should shut up.’” As one participant noted, “you vote, and you have winners and losers. That does not work from a cultural perspective.”

Several participants noted that there was no clear structure for the decision-making process. This was cited as resulting in control issues around deciding committee membership and voting rights, and a lack of follow-through to make sure that the process developed in the way that it had been agreed to at the April retreat. One participant explained that “The process is just as important as the outcome,” and they did not “want to have to educate everyone in the process.”

Inadequate staffing was cited as a problem that made many aspects of organizing the NWSF difficult. “There was no paid staff at all until July, just three months before the event was to be held. So for most of the time everyone contributing to this was working on weekends or evenings, fitting it in with the demands of their normal job, which made it difficult to be responsive to the many people who wanted to play a part. For the World Social Forum, they have about eight strong institutions involved, several of which release a staff member to work on the WSF -- so there is a strong institutional base for organizing the WSF. The NWSF did not have that.”

*“All that is a very western, very white, very male, and a very traditional normal non-profit approach – we are very end-driven in this country: the ends justify the means.”*

Many respondents talked about the need for transparency, noting that the organizing body “wasn’t able to be clear about what they were expecting and open up the process and be transparent about it.” “Everything should not always be open or closed, but it should be transparent.”

Race, was often mentioned in relation to decision-making and gate-keeping by white leaders. “One of the key documents [from the April retreat] that was dropped was a people-of-color working document about how we were going to make decisions,” says one

participant. “It just came down to who was there to do the work...I am a consensus-trained facilitator and [consensus] was not happening.” Another participant remarks that, “The white man in the center of this never gave up any power.”

## RACE

Initial meetings created a lot of excitement about “the commitment to indigenous wisdom and worldview and to youth and people of color in leadership.” One person who attended the retreat thinks it was a great starting ground for minority leadership: “It is not really accurate to be talking about racial justice and what can be done if it is only white people talking about it, so, in being with immigrants, we should be talking about immigrants, they should be leading it.”

*“You need to identify early on about what the needs are, and deal with that - uplift the voices of those people of that city, starting with the first people.”*

Observers describe several ramifications of not embedding enough minority leadership. One person thinks that early meeting locations were marked by class privilege, noting that geography was marked by whether it was “above the ship canal or below the ship canal.” And, although the Planning Committee was handpicked to insure a majority of people from disadvantaged communities, respondents feel that, “People don’t see the importance of bringing together communities of color and in giving them control of things.”

*“The people who were doing the organizing had the right impulse, but didn’t realize that the people they went to were a very thin tie to the community they were reaching out to. There was no one voice that could be the voice or be the conduit for the community. And again with the people who stepped up as youth of color organizers ... you can’t just invite one of each group and say we had representation.*

*Also, when we do invitations to communities, we need time. Because the timeline was abbreviated to get the forum done “in time” for the 2004 elections, there became pressure to be “efficient.” The interest of time and efficiency instead of building relationships is a white middle class bias. There were a bunch of people that they did not reach out to.”*

In terms of diversity, there was a disagreement around how peoples’ visions of “justice, peace, and democracy are embodied in practice.” Some communities of color report a great deal of initial suspicion of the event, thinking, “We are going to stand back and see what happens, and if it (the NWSF) pulls itself together, we will jump in and go and bring our people there.” Faced with inadequate translation services and understaffed with insufficient time for outreach, one participant believes, “I am not sure...as a culture that we are ready for this – at least in the complete radicalness that I think of Social Forums to be about. And allot of it is about embracing diversity.”

Outreach efforts to grassroots groups were left to a few people and happened “too late in the process.” This was especially true of outreach to minority groups: “So when we went to them in July and said, ‘Let’s conceive of what [the NWSF] would look like where we can create a vision of a better world in this open space for dialogue across communities,’ they were like, ‘What the fuck are you talking about?’ The response was like, ‘You are adding work to my plate and I don’t appreciate it.’”

“The Idea of a SF was very new to people. Allot of white activists knew about it but most communities of color don’t go to Cuba, and the people of color that were

involved in the organizing – they were from an international perspective, doing international organizing.” One participant that was responsible for doing outreach late in the process described the recruitment process as that of, “a missionary...and I was playing the role of the converted native. I was asked to put my position on the line, so I felt terrible going out and asking organizations with no funding to participate.”

Several participants viewed the Planning Committee as not coming from the communities that they were trying to organize. “It didn’t start from the ground up. It started by conversations and some planning meetings by people who were well intentioned and had money. They were basically part of the white bourgeoisie...From the beginning it should not have been initiated by wealthy white people.” One participant describes what they saw happening around race and class: “So often the emphasis is largely based on race only, rather than talking about race only but also class, and other factors. I think it makes it more difficult because it sets up some false walls that make it even harder to move through racism. It is hard work to undo privilege. In all of organizing in Seattle, class needs to be addressed head-on.”

Access to financial resources was a difficult thing to negotiate in the organizing process, and many participants talked about a feeling of privilege around who raised and had access to funds. “You have all of national organizations and stuff that have deep pockets, and then you have very small non-profits.” Who received funds, to some extent, “had to do with where the friendships were. I am sure that there were financial proposals that went through the Planning Committee, but towards the end there were some executive decisions that went through – I think they were justifiable – but it wasn’t like ‘ok this is what we think we should do, is everyone on board with it?’”

Indigenous participation is a major topic of NWSF discussions. “The notion that we would put this on and the Native people would come flocking to it in retrospect looks naive in the extreme. We were naive about the amount of careful groundwork that it would take to encourage significant participation from the Native people of the area.”

#### **Attention to Protocol**

*“The indigenous planners are held accountable to the native communities and organizations they continue to work with and support. Most of these communities are severely impacted by toxic contamination, mining, development, diminishing natural resources, and are basically just surviving. Many native communities subsist off Mother Earth and eat foods taken or gathered directly from the same sites or waters since the beginning of time. Our issues are very important and we have traditional knowledge that instructs us how to live in balance with Mother Earth. Thus, through this relationship we are responsible for the well being of our next generations to come and in this process we are held accountable by our villages and communities to uphold our responsibilities. It is sometimes quite difficult to dance in two worlds, that of our indigenous cultural and traditional world and that of the Western colonial world. Just as our canoe culture has protocol that teach us of respect, reciprocity and safety, we as the indigenous planners agreed to participate if the protocol established and agreed upon by the full planning committee and staff were followed and upheld...in the end, it was not and thus the process broke down and the NWSF eventually stopped as more folks began disengaging.”*

The power, and privilege themes run throughout many discussions of race; common beliefs are that the NWSF was about wealthy white people controlling the process. One respondent believes that it is “a delicate situation for a white person to organize on issues that mainly concern people of color, especially if you have got the money.” “It is about the implementation of the process. The people that actually implement the idea need to be acting from a perspective of marginalized groups...What would be good would be for some key people in the organizing process to just take some accountability for what their unintentional impact on the event was.”

According to some, ethnic divisions began early, and that after the retreat, the Planning Committee did not really understand expectations from the native participants. The International Forum on Globalization was not thought of as an opening event and when it became clear that it was being planned as such, there was dialog about changing course. The planning committee and the IFG made some efforts for native inclusion in the opening schedule but this was too little, too late.

Several participants believe that the eventual cancellation was a good idea based on the native participants pulling out. Believing that there would be significant tribal involvement was naïve, says one observer, who thinks that “We are not going to come down and beat on a drum, that’s tokenism. Protocol is so important. Pay tribute, and honor those voices.”

Differences were also present in how different populations understood the process. For example, the Planning Committee and indigenous participants thought differently about the Social Forum process. “Social Forum protocols were different from the indigenous protocols. There were several key elders that were resistant to the notion that they were being approached late in the process and that started to create quite a bit of tension” observes one participant, but there was not enough time to resolve issues between groups. Several feel that the western way of doing things was not compatible with a community-based way of organizing, and that such differences need to be dealt with. “You are tied to a system so much that is so much based on individuals, we are not living in communities anymore. The world is just about what we can get for ourselves and not what is good for our communities. For us to move, we need to move out of this, and into a new way of doing things.” Respondents talk about micromanaging of NWSF groups by some planning committee members, calling out problems with processes were ignored, and that the “people of color working document about decision-making was not taken seriously after the retreat.”

#### **GRASSROOTS-LED?**

*“From what I understand the people who were at the table initially were majority white folk. You need to invite communities that are impacted and people of color who are working with these communities. I am talking about NAACP, CCEJ, CAMP – those organizations that are doing grassroots efforts. They are out there addressing issues around police brutality and environmental justice issues, issues that impact communities of color. So that is bullshit to say that they wanted to, you know, have communities of color at the table and they didn’t.”*

## CONFLICT

The process of bringing together the people and goals of a Social Forum involves many layers of compromise. “It calls into question your own identity and beliefs and values,” remarks one participant. “A lot of people felt compassion and understood underneath it all it is about being human.”

Others view the NWSF as providing a space for opposition in that the World Social Forum has a great deal of dissent so that the “process is actually one of the better mechanisms for taking into consideration that not everyone gets along and not everyone agrees with each other... Those dynamics were hopefully going to be dealt with by participating in one of the planning process venues, or in the Social Forum.”

“Trust” is mentioned in various contexts, ranging from the necessity of trying to trust and love each other to the shock of “so many organizers having so much distrust of each other”. According to one participant, “In Seattle, people are deeply distrustful of each other.” Some participants cited the bad reputations of “people at the top” and soured interpersonal relations as a factor of the NWSF. Personal attacks made participation more difficult, especially when funding and working relationships became a challenge.

According to multiple respondents, conflict was not integrated into the NWSF process at all, let alone as a necessary element of strength.

Representative comments include:

- “We need to have everyone feel as though they have a complete capacity to confront”;
- “It takes a lot of self-reflection and humbleness and a willingness to listen to disagreement and not exclude it – almost embrace it”;
- and,
- “I think that there was a desire to squash dissent and present the NWSF as a united front... Having (the) prospect of people protesting outside the forum was thought to be a huge disaster and that was a big mistake. That is part of the reality of letting things form from the ground up.”

Egos were also cited as being a factor in the NWSF, in that “it felt to me that ego-play came into things as we were getting closer to the forum. . . This created a lot of conflict that could of been hashed out at the forum, but should not have forced its cancellation. There was so much work that went into building the NWSF, it was disheartening that the issues that came up became so polarizing.” In the end, according to another participant, it was mostly about “Am I being taken care of?” Rather than allowing personal opinions to dictate needs for a greater good, one person believes, “It takes a certain amount of work that is partly social but also dealing with learning what your own sense of responsibility is about being part of something else.”

Several respondents said that working on the Forum required honesty in recognizing differences. “You have to be honest about it and say, ‘I know we have had issues before, but this is a cause that we need to put them aside for and work together on this particular Forum’.” “If people are not willing to be honorable I cannot stay engaged, because it is about survival.”

Money was another concern, with differing views on its role. One respondent said that financial decisions were not equitable or transparent, and that it played a significant role in the decision by one of the groups to pull out towards the end. Another participant says that “There were many

other considerations involved in their decision . . . there was a lot more to it” than money, and that focusing on money misses the substantive issues.

Structure is mentioned by many participants as a constraining factor, including the challenges of time constraints which curtailed outreach efforts and prohibited resolution of conflicts. Calls to check-in about process and postpone the event were not respected, and one participant began “to feel invisible and discounted in a way... We went to the table with at least recommendations and they were not heard.” Others observed that shifting deadlines and staff changes created a situation where participants were “pitted against each other, with changing definitions of committees and job descriptions.”

The International Forum on Globalization (IFG) and their involvement in headlining the opening event for the NWSF were criticized for their own lack of open democratic process, and for diverting attention away from local organizing issues and towards a global academic focus. “The IFG was a different entity with its own decision makers; there was this perception – because later it became the opening event of the NWSF – that it should uphold the same working principles that were established during the NWSF organizing retreat. It had been decided during the retreat that indigenous participation was essential to the entire fabric of the NWSF, and that without this, the forum was not realizing its principals of social justice and inclusion. However, the IFG was not functioning within the NWSF working principles, and the main NWSF organizers I think did not foresee how problematic this would be in terms of the NWSF Indigenous Planning Committee (IPC) when it was decided later that the IFG would be the kick-off event. This is because the IFG had already established its events and speakers; it was not an open organizing process but an academic forum on globalization... Issues developed when the IPC attempted to bring in more indigenous participation to the IFG, and things became critical. One of the IFG participants took steps to apologize and attempt to invite local Seattle indigenous participation however this came too late and the perceived damage had already been done.”

In addition to personal and other conflicts, several respondents pointed to cultural issues rooted in the American way of life. “In the U.S. there has been a culture of division in this country that is based on profit; even the non-profit world is funded by corporations, and you are evaluated by that lens,” says one participant. “There is a culture of division and competition and it is really hard to overcome that.”

“I believe that the issues that developed during the last few months of organizing would of been resolvable had there been the time, space and protocol to do so.” They go on to say that, “racism was not what motivated the NWSF decision-making process, also because many of its key organizers were people of color. This was the hardest idea to understand in the end because there was so much focus over the main list-serve around racism and that being perceived as what brought the process down. Being an organizer that was involved with the key organizers and who was in regular communication with them, I felt that people had a really misconstrued idea of what had taken place.”

*Yes, a Social Forum can come about if people are truly brought together and agree on a common cause, according to a NWSF participant. “That is what the SF is about -- action together to reach a common goal -- that has to be figured out.”*

To that end, mediation is often mentioned as a factor that could have possibly healed divisions that led to the NWSF cancellation. “It was sad that they cancelled it, instead of postponing it as we had suggested, and engaged in a different kind of a process,” said one respondent. Another notes that “The work load burnt a lot of the key organizers out and that left even less room for conflict to be dealt with and resolved.” Says another, “If there had been some kind of mediation process that might have been a good thing, that people would have felt that there was another avenue.”

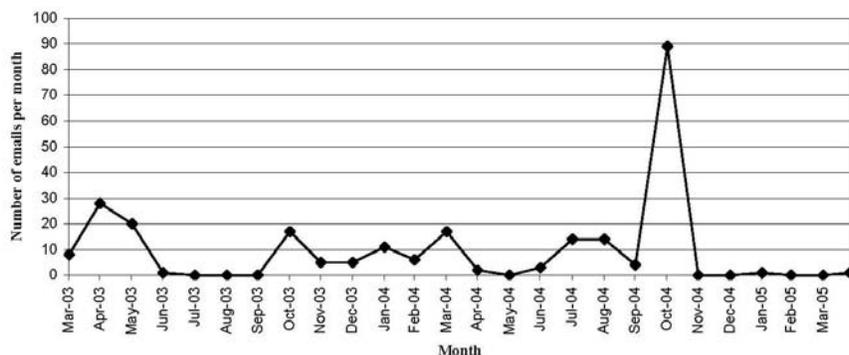
## TECHNOLOGY

As one person notes, a “major obstacle was bringing together the organizing [of] communication. The NWSF had an ongoing Internet component which consisted of list serves and working groups, files that were stored on-line. This was a tricky element as it required people from other areas than Seattle to engage in the organizing process via the web. This isn’t necessarily an accessible mode for many people who are just learning about what [a] social forum is and are trying to understand how to be part of the building process.”

Access and use of technology continues to reflect structural inequalities along racial, class, and geographic divisions. As one respondent pointed out, technologies are important in doing the organizing but you have to “do the work of supporting people in using that resource,” and this was not done. There was also broad recognition for the need to combine online with offline organizing, with one participant commenting that, “Digital technologies should be used to augment and strengthen organizing that is happening in the real world”

The decision was made early on to prioritize face-to-face organizing and outreach as a way to focus energies on engaging underrepresented groups. “With marginalized communities you need to work face-to-face.” The interpersonal social networks that organizers had played a significant role in outreach and community involvement. Survey respondents overwhelmingly reported first hearing about the NWSF with non-digital means (78%), such as a personal contact (46.3%). According to another respondent, the strategy was to start with on-the-ground organizing and rely more heavily on IT after the event for maintaining ties.

Several participants said that the absence of technology, and funding for technology, stunted outreach efforts and contributed to a lack of transparency in the organizing process. One participant says that “For the NWSF there was no online workspace so that you can see the organizing process.” This also affected the ability of planners to collect and coordinate workshop proposals for the event. “It was not until very late in the game that we started to have a mechanism where we could receive proposals and event suggestions,” says one participant. “We had the open online event proposal process but we were on a short time-frame.”



The technology that was developed was fairly flat with few spaces for interactivity for participants. The website and ‘discussion’ email list was used primarily for announcements and posting minutes. This changed once word got out that the Forum

may be cancelled, and participants began using it as a space to voice their opinions and ideas on the situation. Almost overnight, the list went from a low traffic announcement platform with very few authors (only 4 authors posted 47% of all emails) to a popular discussion platform (accounting for 47.3% of all sent messages) with 24 participants posting their comments or ideas

for the first time. Not only did the number of posts go up, but the number of posts per thread went up as well – signaling a significant rise in discussion on the list from a mean of 1.4 to 2.5 posts per thread.

*“I think that I believe that within a functioning group of people who are working and trusting each other and are collaborating together to produce social change, they can use technology as an incredible tool to facilitate communication and the archiving of ideas, self-organizing and networking those groups.”*

*“Organizing has to come from people, and digital technologies can facilitate not reproduce some of the work... You cannot really resort to a technological fix when the real problems are social and between people.”*

Participants did not see social networking technologies as viable vehicles for conflict resolution, preferring face-to-face spaces. As one person stated, “If people do not trust each other in an in-person meeting, than they cannot trust each other online.” Further, while technology makes the transfer of information quick, it does not guarantee that those receiving the information can decipher nuances. In fact, many participants feel that digital technologies can create conflict and are terrible at resolving conflict.

Software for proposing workshops came on late due to no funding. According to one participant, “That was a budget problem. We were looking into good development planning software as early as the YES retreat. I had done some research to present the tools that we could use. With that amount of time and no money we ended up having to patch together software from different places.”

Open source software was used. Says one user, “I used open source code very heavily, and a type of open source that really models the same kinds of ethics that are in positive social change work but...building a seamless system that is user friendly on no budget can’t be done, regardless of the time frame and I told people that. But it was just ridiculously impossible with no budget AND no time ... And only 1-2 volunteers who were open source developers.”

## **FUNDING**

Whether describing precise sums of money for specific purposes or discussing the power of resources in social movements, many respondents touched on how issues of funding are riddled with questions of how donors affect the outcome in that “those with the money get up and ask everyone to get on the bus...those with resources win and the others lose out.” Several believe that money aggravated basic differences about the role of the NWSF, saying that “The forum is about bringing ideas together, not just for organizations that have resources.” One participant observes that “in this country it comes down to money: how much did you raise and why didn’t I get it? Dear god...”

*“It is clear that there isn’t sufficient funding anywhere in this country for Social Justice and Human Rights work and that is a reality. It is particularly unfair for Northwest Social Justice when you compare it to environmental causes; there is so much funding available for environmental work.”*

Many of the concerns stem from how a budget process determines which programs are most deserving. “Anytime you have a certain amount of money, you have to decide how it is allocated,” said one participant. Funding decisions determined priorities such as, “Migrant workers in Yakima Valley need to have resources to get to the Forum” to whether people should receive money for doing workshops. One participant said that towards the end, there was no open

### **Primary Funding Sources**

\$25,000 from the Institute for International Education (for participant travel. The funds were never released nor used); \$25,000 from the Casey Foundation; \$20,000 from the Community Foundation Serving Boulder County; \$10,000 from an individual donor; \$1,000 from the Asia-Pacific Labor Alliance; and many smaller individual donations.

### **Fixed Cost Allocations**

Staff salaries, venue deposits, website fees, and other related logistical expenses with the remainder returned to the funders after cancellation.

### **Remaining Funding**

Around \$2000 from individual donors remained under the purview of the Center for Social Justice on the request of the donors to be used “for other networking opportunities.”

process for allocation of funds, and that “there were some executive decisions that went through...there became a blur between staff and planning committee...who had voting rights, what were the roles and spheres of responsibility.”

“That decision was made probably by the handful of people who were initially setting up the planning committee,” remembers one participant. “If there was a (funding) process I am not sure what it was. It would have to be worked out in advance not on the spot.” Several people believe that, past disagreements and personality issues came into play in Seattle. One participant recalled that, “it came down to who has the money and who gets paid. It had to do with where the friendships were.”

One participant feels strongly that money should not have been a factor of the NWSF cancellation, stating that “More money can be useful, but it is not a requirement for moving forward. There were priorities that were established to create the foundation of the event, and each sector or constituent group was advised early on that we were not going to have sufficient funds to fund even the most important groups.” Some felt that money “was put out front as the cause” to pull out, but that “there were many other considerations involved in their decisions.”

## GEOGRAPHY

Just as the World Social Forum hopes to bring the world to its events, the NWSF hoped to include people from all over the region in its planning and event. However, there are significant challenges in ensuring geographic representation. Many organizers live in urban centers, and travel was difficult to plan for. 68% of survey respondents reported living within 10 miles of downtown Seattle during the planning process. As a result “it was certainly Seattle-centric,” and “the Seattle – Portland – Vancouver axis would be about it.”

Attitudes towards geographic representation in planning the Forum were incremental. “Even if we got five groups from Idaho and Alaska, that would have given us something to build from,” believes another contributor. “Hopefully, the second or third year would of seen even greater regional participation. It takes a lot of strong organizers to mobilize a region and the majority of the organizers involved were working out of Seattle.” While a few participants think the NWSF was “way too ambitious” in not recognizing the lack of money and contacts in states outside of Washington, others believe that, “there were people from the planning committee that did organize in their region and it did pretty well.”

Some participants believe that narrowing the geographic breadth of the Forum would be a good idea. “Resources and importance of relationships is what we have to build upon; the important relationships are the local ones, building within a closer regional level,” says one participant. “The learning has come and it is time for us to reinvest at a regional and local level; to name off states and territories makes it too large of a thing.” In retrospect, “just focusing on Washington State or the Seattle to Vancouver region would have been more realistic,” adds another NWSF participant. “But then we have to think, what do they do in the World Social Forum -- how do they cover these broad areas? If we are truly trying to build a movement, how do you do this when you are just talking to the same people?”

Some participants work with isolated communities without adequate communication or roads, or live far enough away that forward planning was a necessary requirement for travel. “I would have gone to Seattle once or twice if I had known two or three weeks ahead of time that there was going to be a planning meeting and I should be there,” one participant recalls. “But instead, I only ever got three days notice or so...”

Other participants are still asking questions about how to bridge geographic divides. “What is going to pull people from different areas? Is it a broad progressive issue agenda, or is it a particular issue that is going to draw people and keep up the momentum?” asks one respondent. Next time, would it be better to start with a smaller region and build up? Or expand the planning process to include multiple regions?

Believing that “the geographic breadth is not too great if you give it enough time and create a process for it,” one respondent outlines specific steps for the future: “First, you need to develop a crew of people that want to think about the region and travel to other places; then you need to encourage people to have regional gatherings about what is important in the Northwest; and third, you need time – this is a three-year process, not a one-and-a-half year process.”

## TIME

Only 22% of survey respondents thought the timeline for organizing the event was adequate, with 50% of respondents disagreeing. There were several factors adding to timeline crunches, such as the geographical reach of the NWSF which proved to be a larger expanse than could be easily facilitated. One participant observed that “It was too short of a time for such a huge geographical area as the whole Northwest. We had strong participation from Portland through Seattle up to Bellingham. If we had been less ambitious, we might have been able to do this, but to try to stretch all over the region in just a few months was not realistic.”

Organizing came to a head in the last few months of the planning process. “The organizing logistics were the focus the last seven months before the forum,” states one participant. “This was such a short period of time that people were burning out trying to get the basics together and make the process inclusive, participatory and representative. The forum was really an enormous organizing effort that required a ton of space, energy and capital.” Says another participant, “We should have postponed the forum for six months to a year so that the power dynamics that were making people pull out could be addressed.”

*“The structure and short time frame was very unattractive to community-based organizations and small organizations that did not have a lot of staff and power.”*

Earlier and consistent funding sources escaped the NWSF, and the absence of funding worked against organizers. As one participant observed, “I think in hindsight we had to wait too long to find an event organizer or coordinator because the funds were delayed longer than we thought they would be. And that was the point that we should have rethought the time-frame. I still think we could have had a successful event, but it added one more level of challenge and complexity.”

The November 2004 election dominated the country’s attention, and occurred one month after the NWSF was supposed to have taken place. The NWSF had great potential, as one participant stated: “We wanted it to influence the election cycle, but we also wanted school to be in session so we could get students.” Some believed there were logical threads to the country’s political landscape and the NWSF’s ability to help rebuild that landscape: “A lot of us felt that it was important for us to have it before the elections because almost all the electoral strategies were about getting out the vote and here was one opportunity for civil society to say here are the issues that we feel are important.”

Time constraints had a significant negative affect on process. “Giving it the time to build the kind of relationships to know and understand how we want to honor and trust each other, and how we want to make our decisions... You need a timeline that does not press in the end.”

Several participants commented that attempts to propose postponing the event were not heard by organizers. “When we slowed it down, we got slapped. The timeline was so fast paced... We were negotiating to push the date back, and they would not do that.” Others can see in hindsight what they may not have seen at the table in 2004: “I think it should have been put off longer. It is a huge waste of resources to put on these things without a long term vision.”

## **FINAL WORDS - Cancellation of the NWSF: “We kind of lost our way . . .”**

There are many thoughts about why the Northwest Social Forum collapsed. As this report shows, a combination of organizational issues, decision-making process, race relations, use of technology, difficulties with funding, geographic dispersion and a tight timeline all played a part.

Initially, the NWSF was postponed, but given the lack of follow-through by organizers, the future of the event and the process that many participants were committed to seemed to fall apart. Many remember a chain of events: after the Indigenous Planning Committee withdrew, the Youth Planning Committee and the Film Planning Committee followed, and the event was postponed by the Planning Committee. One participant said “Just two weeks before the NWSF was to be held, there were demands that it be postponed. I don’t know if people really realized the amount of volunteer time that many people had put into this to try to make it work, even with all its flaws. I felt that if it was postponed at that late date, that it would turn out to actually be a cancellation, because it was not clear that others would be willing to put in the amount of time and energy needed to resurrect it.”

The idea of specific groups walking out is part of a longer history of World Social Forums, according to people who note that, “Brazilian natives walked out of the first [WSF],” and “One of the limitations of the World Social Forum had been the challenges of the indigenous community in Brazil and South America.”

*“Two groups were pulling out with an organization that had no less than 150 groups involved, and compelled it to say that we could not go ahead with this,” comments one person. “I would have not gone along with that, and I think it was a situation of political correctness.”*

Some people question the lack of transparency and the process involved in the decision to cancel by the Planning Committee. “Basically, the organizing committee was saying that we have to be accountable to the Native American community and apologize to them before we do anything else, and we were like ‘OK,’ which Native Community did you talk to?...People were pretty stymied about how to proceed since they were not given any visibility into the process earlier on.” “This is really a non-democratic thing to do and unfair to do to people who were already planning to come. Why was that not a more participatory process?”

Many wish that more voices had been involved in the decision to cancel. “People did not really have a say in whether to call it off except those people in the planning committee” notes one respondent.

There is also concern with the prominence given to the IFG as a global voice in the opening of the Forum, sidelining local participants. “We went in with the notion that the voice of the regional and grassroots people would be honored and heard first...This is about ego, but who will ultimately be accountable?” One participant comments on the dynamics that led to the decision, saying that “In the face of an event that was looking increasingly underwhelming, with very little programming and little outreach in the community, there was increased pressure to bring in the IFG to provide significant content.”

Other issues emerged after the cancellation, such as a desire for accountability with the money in terms of “the budget, how much was spent, what was being returned and what was being held onto.”

Several of those involved with the NWSF believe that basic structural flaws led to its cancellation. “In my opinion, what I saw was unrealized intent,” comments one observer. “It was very much a result of a process that did not reach fruition because the structures were not put in place to make it happen.”

Others remember how calls to postpone or stop the process that went unanswered. “So we asked them to cancel it in the middle of August and they refused” says one participant. One participant comments that “Let this be a "lesson" learned about truth, honor and most importantly relationship building. It takes time to build trust and keep the integrity and strength of the protocol established by all at the front and center of the decision making process. I am a certified mediator and peacemaking consultant to tribal communities throughout the country, it is through this work that I understand the nature of protocol, principles and ground rules. When working across cultures, classes and sectors in the movement let us remember to revisit the "Principles of Working Together" developed at the Second People of Color Environmental Justice Leadership Conference in October 2002 (see attached) as a starting point.”

One participant was frustrated with the tone from participants after the cancellation, making demands of organizers instead of stepping up themselves. “People were coming out of the woodwork with their complaints at the end...After the collapse, there was a lot of anger from people that they had not had their hand held in participating.” The demands of stress and time for core organizers are at fault, believes one observer, commenting that, “It was about tired people trying to do too much.”

**In defense of the decision to cancel:**

*“We felt and were told that there were efforts to challenge and disrupt the Social Forum, and there were efforts made on key people to cancel that IFG event, which was cancelled, and there were other efforts to put pressure on other individuals and groups to pull out, and at that point it became clear to us that it was going to be a divisive event, and that the main goal of the Social Forum is to bring people together in a positive movement, and have enthusiasm for moving forward together.*

*It became clear that we wouldn't be able to achieve that goal and we felt that not having it was less damaging. We had planned and organized this for two years and had the most acute awareness of the challenges and struggles involved in the planning process, and partly because it was the Indigenous Planning Committee that had pulled out, it seemed appropriate to make that decision.”*

## WHICH WAY FOR THE NWSF? Thoughts on the future ...

When first contacted to arrange interviews for this report, a number of participants expressed ideas about how such research could be best used to “start the conversation” of healing and build toward future Social Forums. “Having this paper would give us a basis of having something to discuss,” believes one person, “I think it would help the organizers, people who were at the center, to sum it up...I think you can still see it with [one of the organizers], it still tears at [their] heart.” Not having a process for learning from the NWSF “impacted our ability to do regional processes that could lead to the USSF,” says another respondent. This was not true for everyone, however, with one respondent noting that “trust did not fall apart for our work after the event was cancelled.”

“There is a lot of healing that has to happen,” but how would such a healing process come about? First, it was suggested that this report be easily accessible, downloadable on the web as a PDF file, sent to the USSF, and translated in Spanish, if possible. It might also be helpful to create an online discussion form or convene workshops and invite people to “react to and mull over these results.”

One participant calls for other participants and organizers to “practice radical honesty.” Another says that “What would be good would be for some key people in the organization process to just take some accountability for their unintentional impact on the event.”

Next time, participants might set more realistic goals. As one participant comments, “Social Forums don’t need to be stadium- sized events. Things can be smaller and less branded, and still be an effective tool for organizing. Just ‘cause it didn’t work the first time doesn’t mean there is no potential for original efforts in this area. Bioregions really should be working together and building relationships . . . creating spaces so that people that do not work together can get to know each other.”

“It is even more critical today that we grow as organizing communities in communication with one another, especially across borders, regions and perceived cultural divides.”

One participant said of this project that, “It would be most effective for this to de-personalize the experience. It would help to disseminate another version of events in terms of the story that is told about the NWSF...In the end, it is all about relationships, and

*One participant has a list of suggestions for what’s needed “next time”:*

1. “A longer timeline”;
2. More delineation of responsibilities. “I looked at other Social Forum organizational structures, and to me it looked like there was a long list of steering committee members, and they actually broke it down as to what their job descriptions were and what they were responsible for. The Planning Committee should have been more for things that fall between the cracks, not actively working on things. (A primary organizer) gave up [their] whole life for this, and [they] shouldn’t have had to, or maybe chosen to, and because of that [they] took the fall for controlling the process too much.
3. Some guiding principles that could be about the process. It could be referred to and introduced to a newcomer so they could see what they are getting into.”

who talks to whom about what happened. I would like to see some complication in that narrative.”

It is our hope that this document helps to complicate some of the narratives about the NWSF, offers insights from some of the participants, and practices ‘radical honesty’ in a way that provides a resource for future cross-issue organizing projects.

Thank you to everyone that participated in this process. It is our hope that this can be a discussion point for participants in moving forward with regional cross-issue organizing. There are many places that this might be able to happen. We have provided an **online forum** for this discussion as part of the online presentation of this study. To **participate in this discussion**, please go to the project website and post a comment on one of the themed pages.

**[www.engagedcitizen.org/nwsf](http://www.engagedcitizen.org/nwsf)**

*“When it comes to justice we need to be on the same path. Some people may think this could be a punishment, but this is a gift no matter how painful and hard this is and we need to look at this and treasure it. I don’t want the next generation to make the same mistakes where this can be something that can help them with that.”*

To request a hard copy version of this report,  
please contact us with your full mailing address:

Which Way for the Northwest Social Forum?  
C/O Center for Communication and Civic Engagement  
Department of Communication, Room 125  
Box 353740  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA 98195 USA  
206-685-1504  
atoft@u.washington.edu

**A US Social Forum is planned for June.**

To participate in regional USSF organizing efforts, please contact  
the regional organizing contact for Washington, Oregon and Idaho:

Cindy Domingo | Center for Social Justice  
1325 4th Avenue | Seattle, WA, 98101  
(206) 621-5805 | cindynwsf@hotmail.com.

**<http://www.ussf2007.org>**