Preserving a Transformative Community Health Worker/Promotor Workforce:

El Sol's CHW/P Training Center Approach

El Sol
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS AND PROMOTORES
TRAINING CENTER

Comments from Friends

"This study is a very timely and significant contribution to both the professional identity of the CHW/P and the principles and practices necessary to protect that identity, while responding to the growing embrace of CHWs/Ps by the health care establishment. We must all keep this truth visible: if institutions want the benefits that CHWs can provide to communities, populations and individuals, they must 'let CHWs/Ps be CHWs/Ps' and not try to make them into something resembling another health-related profession that may be more within their comfort zone. El Sol CHW/P TC has captured the key points needed to maintain this crucial focus."

CARL H. RUSH, MRP

This document offers many useful reflections and tools to institutions contemplating the inclusion of CHW/ Ps into their workforce.

"Institutions that have not work with the CHW model are now contemplating including them in the workforce in the hope that by having the "appropriate workers" many social determinants of health could be addressed and we all could have a more equitable society. In this document, El Sol CHW/P TC offers an important guidance to those institutions to assess their readiness in this process. It provides analysis on the importance of preserving the transformative power of CHWs/Ps."

AMERICA BRACHO
Latino Health Access CEO

"This publication is important because it collects and documents the history of the [transformation communities] through the empowerment of community health workers/promotores and the information establishes an incomparable testimony of the vital role that CHWs/Ps play at all levels and especially in reducing inequities and disparities.

It beautifully captures the history and the evolution of CHWs movement until the present's times. It describes a replicable training model that contributes to increase the capacity of all CHWs while getting deeper into discussion of sustainability and financing of CHWs as a workforce."

BETSY RODRIGUEZ,
CDC/DDNID/NCCDPHP/DDT
Senior Public Health Advisor
Division of Diabetes – Center for
Disease Control and Prevention

"Building on long-standing practice in CHW programs around the world, the El Sol CHW/P Training Center uses popular/people's education to draw out and build on the existing capacity of CHWs/Promotores/as/xs. This report appropriately and effectively highlights how using popular/people's education in CHW capacity-building efforts can help to maintain the integrity of the CHW profession and equip CHWs to play a full range of roles. The description of the capacity-building process is detailed and insightful and can be used by others to enact a similar process."

NOELLE WIGGINS, EDD, MSPH
Co-Principal Investigator
CHW Common Indicator Project

"This case study from El Sol Community Health Workers and Promotores Training Center (El Sol CHW/P TC) serves as a powerful review of best practices and addresses many of the urgent questions around expanding and preserving the workforce such as training, integration, advocacy, career pathways, and most importantly, centering equity in these systems. Community-Based Organizations, such as El Sol CHW/P TC, continue to lead in these systems transformations and we hope to see organizations new to [the] workforce following their lead and partnering with them."

AURORA GRANT WINGATE
Member & Partner Engagement Associate,
National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 not only revealed our vulnerability, but also showed us the strength and resilience that exists within our communities and is embodied by community health workers and promotores (CHWs/Ps). We see a trend of more organizations integrating CHWs/Ps into their operations. These institutions can become partners in preserving the health equity roots of CHWs/Ps by assuming more roles that promote community transformation.

Yet, the systems around payment, reimbursement, and integration models for CHWs/Ps that are being developed have attempted to fit CHWs/Ps into existing organizational systems and paradigms.

> **To take advantage of this transformative opportunity, an approach that seeks to understand and embrace the skills, talents, context, and paradigms that the CHW workforce possess is needed**.

Through this case study of a CHW/P training program in southern California i.e., the El Sol CHW/P Training Center, we sought to build the capacity of organizations to expand their community transformation role as they integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations and mitigate the threat of CHW/P co-optation. We explain how a community-based CHW/P training center applied popular education throughout the CHW/P capacity-building process in order to advance and maintain the roots of the CHW/P movement. By describing the interrelated components of El Sol CHW/P TC theory of change and explaining the application of this guiding principle, this case study generates implications for organizations that aim to integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations.

As more organizations are integrating CHWs/Ps into their operations, we hope that this case study can help stimulate reflection, dialogue, and action among CHW/P organizations on how to incorporate these long-standing guiding principles into their operations. In doing so, we can continue to build examples of CHW/P-centered interventions that reflect values and paradigms such as health care for all, health equity, and health as a right.
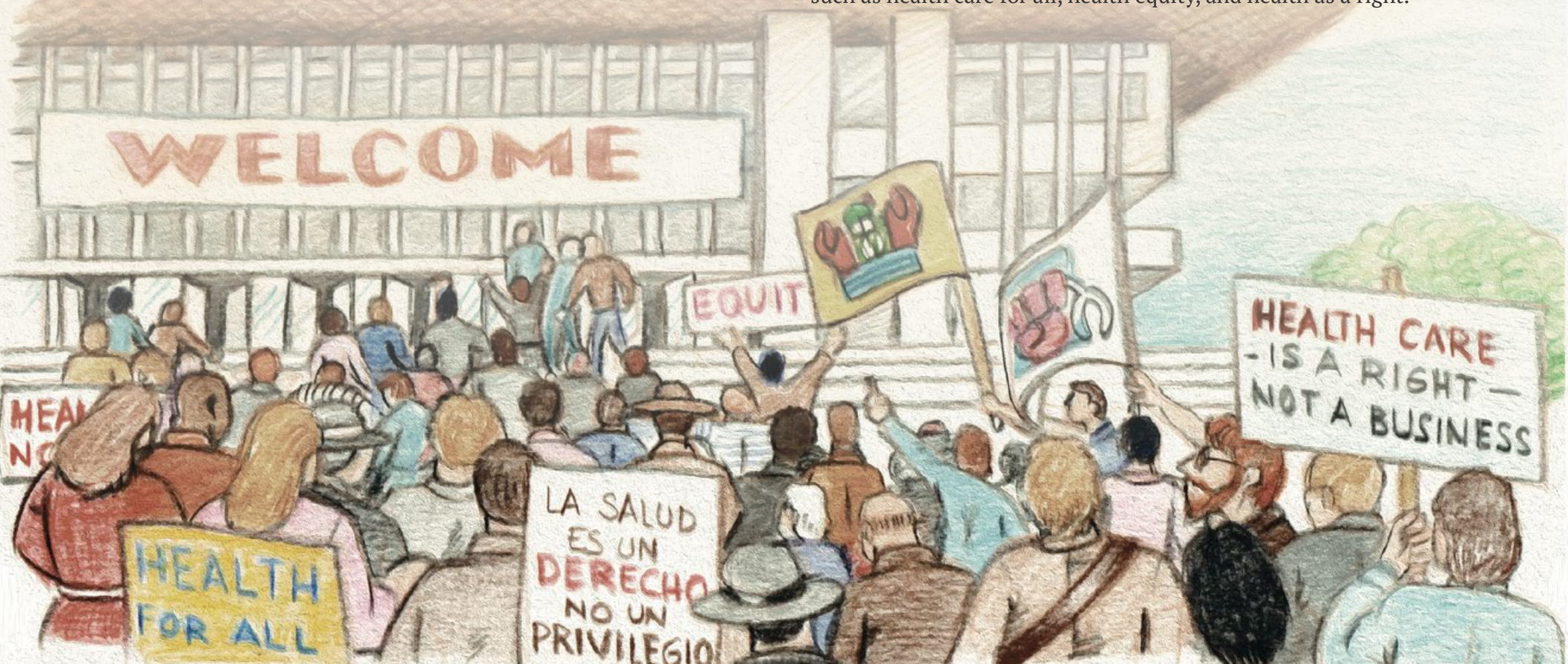
INTRODUCTION

Larger-scale initiatives are underway to integrate Community Health Workers and Promotores (CHWs/Ps) into organizations and institutions, such as state and local government, health care plans, schools, local hospitals, and clinics. The integration initiatives include the certification and professionalization of systems and both reimbursement and payment models. Historically, CHWs/Ps' scope of practice has typically revolved around community-driven transformation with marginalized groups– outside of, yet interacting with, institutions. The talents around community transformation that the CHW/P workforce possesses represent an opportunity for institutions to transform their policies, systems, and environments to achieve more positive outcomes among the people they serve and surrounding communities. This transformation can involve applying common CHW/P workforce principles such as health care as a right, and skills like navigating existing resources and putting them into an institutional context. To take advantage of this opportunity for transformation, institutions can seek to understand, preserve and embrace the talents, experiences, and paradigms that the CHW/P workforce possesses.

A growing body of literature provides recommendations for institutions to integrate CHWs into their operations/leadership. Yet, for the most part, the institutional systems to integrate CHWs/Ps that are developed have attempted to fit CHWs/Ps into existing service delivery models. This institutional momentum towards CHW/P adaptations to institutional roles/norms poses a risk to the CHW/P workforce and the communities they serve.

If this institutional momentum advances, the CHW/P workforce faces a risk of drifting away from their social justice and systems change roots. Instead, they would become accountable to and allied with the institution they work in - and not the CHW/P's community.

One way to increase awareness about the potential contributions of the CHW/P workforce is to understand what the CHW/P capacity-building process is (e.g., the driving paradigms, the training package, and the intended outcomes).

The Reflection

To illuminate the underlying principles that guide CHW/P training program implementation, we embarked on a reflective journey to explain our experience in the application of the principles that guide a CHW/P training program in southern California, the El Sol CHW/P Training Center. As we wrote this case study, we looked into what are the conceptual approaches of existing CHW/P workforce training programs. In the literature we reviewed, we saw that while the skill-building content and teaching methods are described, the intended community transformation principle, intended outcomes, and related skill set are usually not articulated. To embrace and support this opportunity for the CHW/P workforce to transform the institutional policies, systems, and environments, we began a retrospective analysis of the approach, and lessons learned, from the El Sol CHW/P TC.

To understand how the El Sol CHW/P TC guides the work of CHW/P capacity-building, we examined how the organization's principles were being approached. *What is the El Sol CHW/P TC praxis* (the process by which a theory or idea is enacted)*? That is, what is at the intersection of the guiding principles and the actual practices of the training center? What is the relationship between the components comprising the praxis?* After defining what the praxis is, we looked at its implications for transforming institutional settings' policies, systems, and environments.

BACKGROUND

Community Health Worker/ Promotor Training:
Application of Underlying Principles

In September 1978, the WHO International Conference on Primary Health Care was held in Alma Ata - what is now known as Almaty, Kazakhstan. At the Conference, 138 countries agreed that achieving 'Health for All' was a global imperative. A central strategy to make the Health for All vision a reality was strengthening CHW/P interventions.

Over 40 years later, health-promoting entities continue to recognize the crucial role CHWs/Ps play in helping to reduce health disparities in underserved communities (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2022).

Health Equity Foundation of CHW Values

CHWs/Ps serve in various vital roles to promote the health of communities, for example, as a bridge between the community and health organizations, the government, and social services. These roles come with varying titles depending on the entity they are associated with. Common titles include health coach, community health advisor, family advocate, liaison, promoter, outreach worker, peer counselor, patient navigator, health interpreter, or promotor (Kaur, 2022).

Yet, CHW/P work is more than a set of roles. At the individual level, CHW/P work is a vocation, to identify and journey with those relegated to the margins. At the macro level, it is a movement to carry the hopes of marginalized communities. This movement has health equity as its guiding value and legacy.

This paper aims to preserve and expand the CHW/P legacy by offering insight into how organizations that are incorporating CHWs/Ps in their operations can be an ally in preserving and expanding the legacy of the CHW/P movement.

"At the macro level, it is a movement to carry the hopes of marginalized communities. This movement has health equity as its guiding value and legacy."

Community Health Workers and Promotores Contributions to Health Equity

Before the historic conference of Alma Ata, where CHWs/Ps were announced as an integral part of achieving Health for All, CHWs/Ps already had an impressive track record as agents for health equity. CHWs/Ps have a history of serving communities in roles such as midwives, healers, and mentors.

In the early 1920s, larger-scaled community health programs such as the Farmer Scholars in China and the subsequent Barefoot Doctors movement trained local residents to keep vital statistics, administer vaccination campaigns, administer essential medicines, provide health education, and promote environmental hygiene.

During the 1960s, CHW/P-led programs were widely disseminated throughout countries such as Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In California, promotora-centered community interventions that embraced a popular education approach spread throughout the 1990s, including El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center and Latino Health Access. While community, clinic-based CHW projects and statewide CHWs networks, such as Vision y Compromiso and others, ascended in the early 2000s.

Since the Alma Ata Declaration, the recognition of the CHWs/Ps' contributions to community health continues to grow. Their scope of practice has revolved around community-driven transformation, with and for marginalized groups. CHWs/Ps remain outside of, yet interact with, non-community-based institutions. CHWs/Ps have demonstrated their effectiveness in addressing social determinants of health (Rosenthal et al., 2011). As part of the COVID-19 response strategy, the US Department of Homeland Security included CHWs/Ps as part of the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce in 2020 (Rodriguez, 2022).
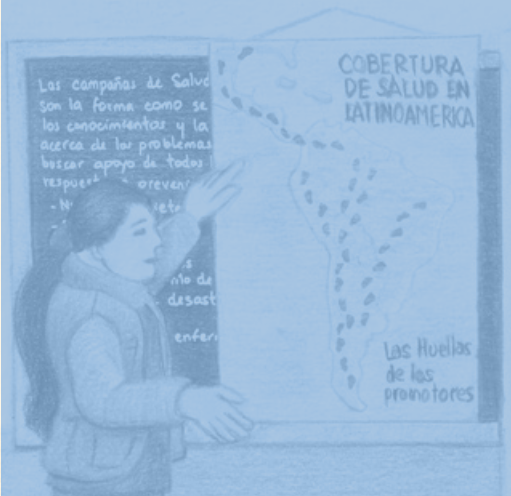
The History of CHWs/Ps

1920
"Farmer Scholars" and "Barefoot Doctors" in China emerge

1960
CHW/P-led programs widely disseminate throughout Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela

1970
Paulo Freire's Peagogy of the Oppressed is published

1978
In September 1978, the WHO International Conference on Primary Health Care
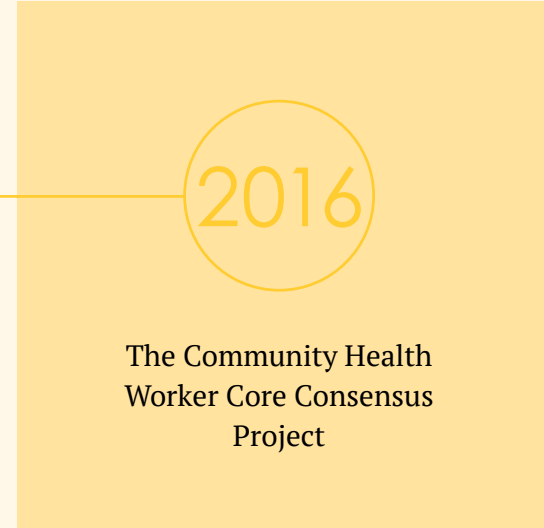
1991
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center is founded

1998
National Community Health Advisory Study

2007
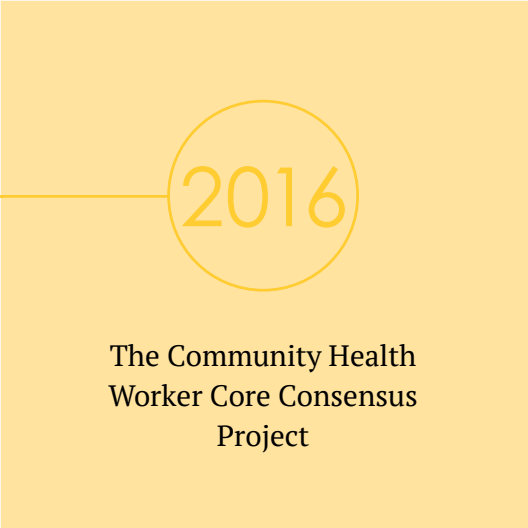HRSA National Workforce Study

2010
Bureau of Labor Statistics assigned an occupational code to CHWs

2016
The Community Health Worker Core Consensus Project

Toward More Integration

There is now a growing number of larger-scale initiatives underway to integrate CHWs/Ps into a broader range of organizations and institutions including state and local government initiatives, health plans, schools, local health systems and health centers, and faith-based organizations.

Some of these integration initiatives include efforts to identify sustainable reimbursement and payment models (George et al., 2020), while others include certification and/or professionalization systems. The hope is that the significant contributions CHWs/Ps have made to community health and equity through community-based organizations and grassroots settings would translate and come to fruition in new settings and different contexts.

This trend towards integrating CHWs/Ps into more organizations has multiple drivers, including national-level funding legislation and funding streams, such as state Medicaid programs, which allow for the reimbursement of some CHW/P activities. Also with the growing body of research around the County Health Rankings (Gennuso et al., 2022), there is a growing awareness of the importance of addressing social determinants of health to improve patients' lives and their health care.
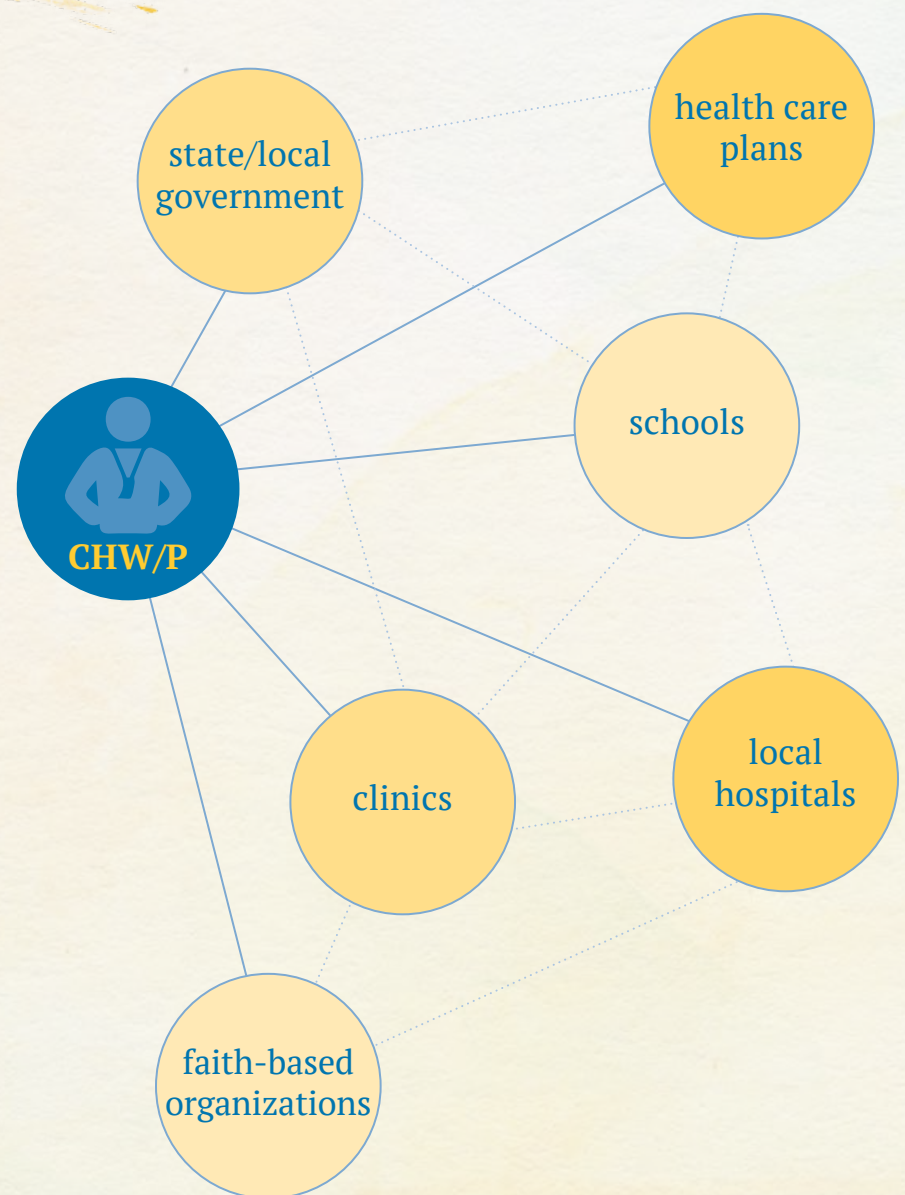
Challenges and Opportunities of Larger-scale Integration

Organizations integrating CHWs/Ps into these new settings have achieved mixed results. Most organizations have had success in engaging CHWs in the roles of care coordination and as health navigators. Other roles include group health education, collecting vital signs, and conducting outreach (George et al., 2020).

Yet, many organizations have experienced the challenges of not having the organizational readiness or support systems to place CHWs/Ps in community transformation roles, such as capacity-building and advocacy (Visión y Compromiso, 2017).

In many settings, CHWs/Ps have had to adapt to the culture of organizations with limited experience in, or motivation among leadership to embrace, health equity/community transformation work. With the trend toward large-scale CHW/P integration into new settings, discussions about CHW/P certification have resurfaced. Some of the unresolved questions related to CHW/P certification include: What/who is being certified? Who benefits? Who gets left out? These questions are especially important if certification is used as a criteria to determine who gets to practice as a CHW/P.

These challenges experienced by health and social service systems represent a risk to the health equity legacy of the CHW/P movement.

> **Large-scale CHW/P integration initiatives not valuing CHWs/Ps' community transformation roles can result in the co-optation of the CHW/P movement.**
>
> **The co-optation happens when CHWs/Ps become less embedded within their community, and become more accountable to and allied with the institution they work in instead of their original community.**

When this happens, CHWs/Ps can drift away from their health equity and community transformation legacy, and become less effective at achieving health equity outcomes.

CHWs/Ps operating in these new settings represent an opportunity to amplify the community transformational impacts of CHWs/Ps and the impact of the organizations they are integrated into. The existing literature points towards key steps to build the readiness of these organizations to advance this type of institutional transformation. Institution leaders and team members in settings that integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations should seek to understand and embrace the CHW/P community transformation model. In reviewing the existing literature on the foundational methodologies that guide CHW/P capacity-building programs, we saw that, while the skill-building content and teaching methods are described, the intended strategy to achieve intended community transformation and an explanation of how the guiding principles affect training content are usually not articulated. With greater insight into the foundational methodologies that guide CHW/P capacity-building, institutions can build the organizational readiness to place and support CHWs/Ps in change agent roles.

Institutions integrating CHWs/Ps into their operations can become partners in preserving the community transformation and health equity roots of CHWs/Ps by assuming more health equity and community transformation roles as an organization.

This can contribute to more positive outcomes among the people they serve and surrounding communities. These settings can also develop more CHW/P career advancement pathways that reflect CHW/P talents and contributions.

THE CASE STUDY

To embrace this opportunity to amplify the transformative impact of the CHW/P workforce, a group of colleagues and allies set up an interpretive team to explore the design and implementation of a CHW/P training program in southern California, the El Sol CHW/P Training Center, with over 30 years of experience building CHW/P capacity. We bound this retrospective analysis together as an exploratory case study. Through this case study, we sought to build the capacity of organizations to expand their community transformation role as they integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations and mitigate the threat of CHW/P co-optation.

We developed inquiry-guiding questions with the intention to offer deeper insights to organizations that aim to integrate CHWs/Ps into their organizations.

To address the gap in articulating how foundational methodologies guide CHW/P capacity-building programs, we asked:

▶ *What are the underlying principles that guide and inform the training program's design?*

▶ *How are these principles applied in training center operations and tactics?*

To offer organizations insights into what are the potential community transformation contributions of CHWs/Ps, we asked:

▶ *What are the components of the training package?*

▶ *How do the capacity-building components intersect with each other?*

▶ *What are the intended outcomes of CHW/P training?*

▶ *How does a CHW/P Training Center build CHW/P capacity for health equity/community transformation work?*

To promote more organizational support systems (e.g., supervision, career enhancement, community embeddedness) to foster CHW integration, we asked:

▶ *How can CHW/P career advancement be structured to recognize CHW/P contributions and training?*

MORE THAN 2,000 CHWS/PS TRAINED WORLDWIDE

Consistent with qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018), we used a spiral approach to data collection analysis. This involved moving in an interpretive loop between reviewing documents, memoing, group reflections, key informant interviews, categorizing and visually representing the intersection between emergent categories. We began our inquiry in 2021, the year El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center celebrated its 30th year of partnering with CHW/P on community transformation.

Our first step was to identify CHW/P documents to review. We identified documents from the gray and peer-reviewed literature that illuminated the current trends in CHW/P integration into new settings. From the El Sol CHW/P TC document archive, we identified documents that illuminated the El Sol CHW/P TC paradigms and practices. We drew content from foundational texts in the historical CHW/P literature (Freire, 1970). The interpretive team developed analytic memos based on the document reviews and conducted group reflection sessions based on the analytic memos. We conducted semi-structured key informant interviews with a few national-level CHW workforce development in order to better understand/validate the current trends in CHW/P integration. The emerging categories were identified and visually represented.

VSOT:
Vision, Strategy, Operations, Tactics

In the process of reviewing documents, we used the VSOT model to reflect on how El Sol is carrying the thread from vision to tactics from strategies and operations.

Vision drives strategy.
Strategy shapes operations.
Operations implement tactics.

A vision is best described as a direction that the organization wants for the future. A strategy is the logic for how to approach the vision, along with a primary level of detail overviewing the method for how to achieve the vision. An operation is the initiation of strategies designed to promote the vision. A tactic is a very detailed action, driven by specific timetables and operational plans. The creation of the vision that translates the strategy into intentional operations and tactics

are all pieces of a cycle that is necessary to effectively serve the public. All four components are needed to work together.

Within El Sol, there is a vision of people, groups, and organizations working collectively on a path toward health equity. El Sol's strategy is to build CHW/P capacity to facilitate community-driven, coordinated action to advance transformative social change. The El Sol CHW/P TC is an operation in which to establish a CHW/P training ecosystem (e.g. training curriculum/ experiences, including reflection and dialogue) that supports CHW/P personal/ emotional empowerment while building CHW/P capacity to promote transformative social change. Within El Sol, a tactic is to facilitate space for personal and emotional wellness and empowerment.

"Within El Sol, there is a vision of people, groups, and organizations working collectively on a path towards health equity."

Vision
collaborative work on a path towards health equity

Strategy
build CHW/P capacity for community-driven coordinated action for social change

Operations
establish a CHW/P training center ecosystem that supports personal/ emotional empowerment and capacity for social change

Tactics
facilitate space for personal and emotional wellness and empowerment.

El Sol CHW/P TC VSOT model

The El Sol CHW/P Training Center

Since its founding in 1991, El Sol has built a trajectory of training, deploying, and supporting CHWs/Ps in California and across the Country. To strengthen the support systems for CHW/P capacity-building, El Sol founded the Community Health Worker Academy, which evolved into the El Sol CHW/P Training Center in 2007.

Through an ecosystem of transformational learning experiences, the El Sol CHW/P TC cultivates emotional and cognitive readiness so that CHWs/Ps use critical thinking to listen, train, inform, provide, advocate, and ultimately impact their communities' health.

The development of learning experiences begins with the incorporation of Paulo Freire's popular education philosophy and continues with critical thinking, communication skills, and self-reflection integrated with mentorship and coaching (Freire & Ramos, 1970).

The training package includes skill building to deliver interventions through direct services, informal counseling, health education, and community organizing. El Sol CHW/P TC has developed over 200 transformative training curricula and trained more than 2,000 multi-cultural/multi-lingual CHWs/Ps, nationally and internationally, and provided Technical Assistance to more than 200 agencies.

The El Sol Training Center is well-suited for this case study since it has a history of reflecting on the Training Center's practice, and effectiveness, and is already positioned within the California and nation-wide CHW/P capacity-building network. In striving to adhere to the foundational principles of the CHW/P movement of popular education, the El Sol Training Center is not unique on some level.

Given the scarcity of explanations of how CHWs/Ps apply their underlying guiding principles in the literature, this case study can provide insights for organizations that want to incorporate CHWs/Ps into their operations in a way that can maintain fidelity with the underlying principles and roots of CHW/P work and that fit within the organizational context.

MORE THAN
211
CURRICULA

Training topics

► Topics range from clinic-based, mental health, diabetes, nutrition and physical activity, life coach, domestic violence, emergency preparedness (COVID-19), supervisors and management, community leadership

Population-specific/Culturally sensitive:

► Latino, Asian, African American, Native American, LGBTQ, Youth

Over 2,000
CHW/Promotores
have been trained

El Sol has received state-wide and national recognition from the White House as Nonprofit of the Year

El Sol was one of the first agencies in the state to develop a curriculum for CHWs/Ps in mental health.

History of El Sol

30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

1991
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center was founded

1996
El Sol developed its first curriculum of the CHW/Promotor model, mothers supporting other mothers in topics of domestic violence

2002
El Sol developed the nutrition and obesity curriculum

2003
El Sol developed the first state-wide curriculum on mental health, reaching the latino community across 7 zip codes

2004
El Sol developed a curriculum on post-partum depression

2007
El Sol director launched the vision/ concept of creating a structured CHW/P training methodology

2010
El Sol launched the CHW/P training academy with mission, vision, core competence and strategic plan

2012
El Sol trained and developed an African-american, Asian-american, Native-american curriculum

2013
Along with several other agencies, El Sol convened in the 3rd conference of promotor organizations, "Building World-Class Promotores de Salud," in Riverside County's Coachella Valley

2015
The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors declared El Sol as the leading agency of CHWs in the region

2017
El Sol Training Center started providing training and technical assistance in other states and overseas

2021
El Sol received state-wide (California) and national recognition from the White House as Nonprofit of the Year

El Sol celebrated 30 years of service

Over the years, El Sol CHW/P Training Center has trained over 2,000 CHWs/Ps and has provided technical assistance nation-wide and internationally.

Application of Popular Education

The inspiration and guiding approach of the El Sol CHWs/Ps Training Center stems from popular education. Popular education is a form of adult education that, for popular education practitioners, is a philosophy, a methodology, and an art.

Four interrelated concepts within popular education are the learning and teaching cycle, horizontal power relationships, the search for root causes, and conscientización.
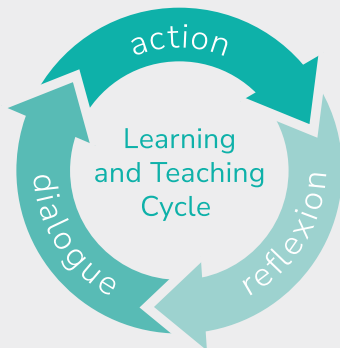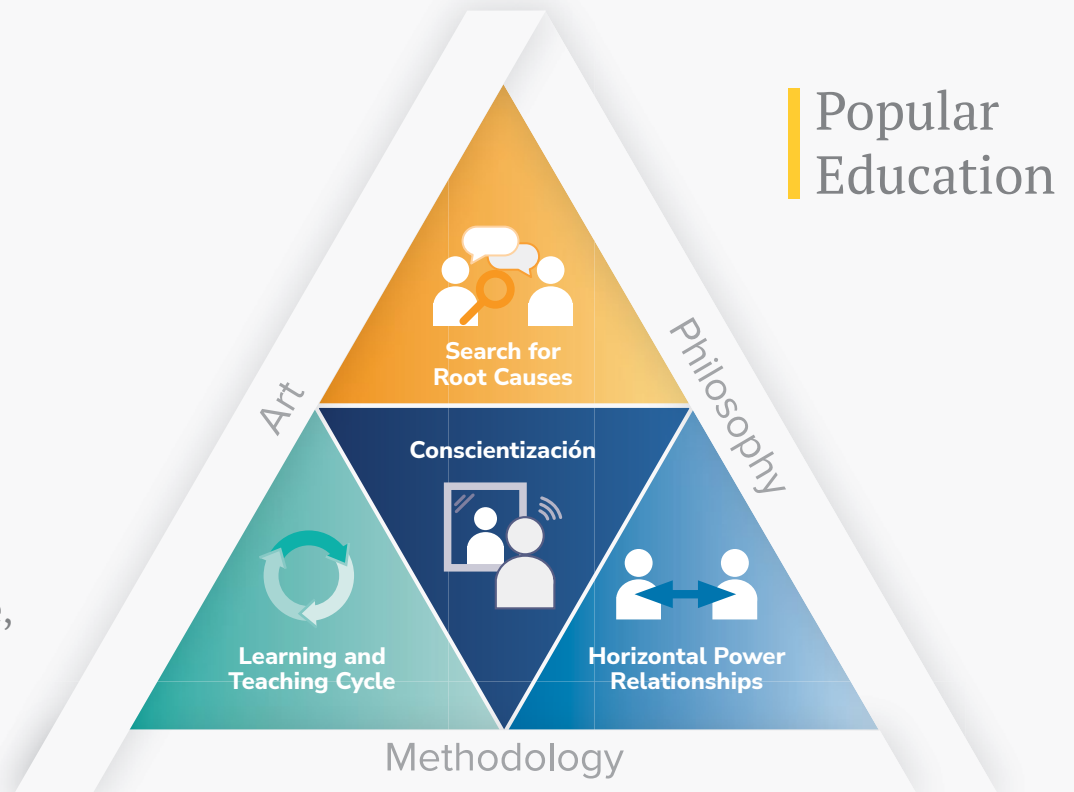
1. Learning and Teaching Cycle

In popular education, the overall learning and teaching refer to the cyclical steps of action, reflection, and dialogue, then back to action. For example, when CHWs/Ps implement an intervention in the field, they reflect on how it went and share with a group of CHWs/Ps to analyze and discuss the implications for subsequent action.
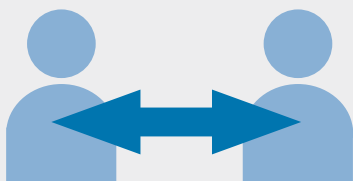
2. Horizontal Power Relationships

Horizontal power relationships refer to equitable, non-hierarchical relationships between learners and teachers, given that our lived experiences place us all as learners and teachers. It is the practical application of social/educational equity in learning settings. Instead of El Sol CHWs/Ps Training Center staff assuming the top-down position as the source of knowledge, they facilitate dialogue so that the learners' knowledge, the analysis of their lived experiences, flows to the rest of the group. This environment allows learners' voices and opinions to be heard, shared, and most importantly, valued. This allows for not only learning but social-emotional empowerment and individual growth.

3. Searching for Root Causes

Searching for the root cause of a particular behavior or condition involves facilitating dialogue so that learners examine their lives critically in order to engage in collective analysis of the source causes of inequities. This then informs subsequent social, political and cultural action. For example, when CHWs/Ps implement a health education intervention in the field, they can reflect and collectively analyze the cultural, religious, economic, or societal factors that influence individual and group behavior. This type of analysis fosters innovative collective action for social change.

4. Conscientización

An overarching concept in popular education is conscientización, or the awareness of one's role to improve the conditions people experience. To strengthen CHW/P capacity to serve as catalysts for change through a holistic transformative learning approach, El Sol CHW/P TC encourages self-directed transformational learning through a blend of learning opportunities to promote continuous personal growth in CHWs/Ps as community agents of change. As a cross-cutting thread throughout the training experiences, El Sol CHW/P TC instills conscientización by incorporating psycho-emotional empowerment experiences such as relationship building, compassionate community work, journaling, and self-directed learning goals.

As CHWs/Ps become more psycho-emotionally empowered, they also are better equipped to navigate the psycho-socially dynamic and multi-layered work of community transformation. El Sol Training Center has seen how using popular education as a guiding approach for building CHW/P capacity eventually fosters community empowerment through awareness and capacity to address the social determinants of health conditions.

As a result of experiencing these four elements of popular education in their capacity-building journey, CHW/P incorporate these popular education concepts into their practice as the foundational principles to support their community transformation work. As the CHW/P capacity-building process reflects the lived experiences of CHWs/Ps, the CHW/P's craft of transforming the community must reflect the aspirations of their community (Wiggins et al., 2013).

The alignment between the CHW/P's capacity-building process and their people's aspirations is the foundation of CHW/P's success. In the next section, we describe the components of CHW/P's capacity-building process.

El Sol CHW/P Training Center Components

El Sol CHW/P TC provides an ecosystem of learning-practice-reflection opportunities to analyze and innovate solutions to address health/social inequities. To offer organizations insight into the components of CHW/P's capacity-building process, we developed a theory of change specific to El Sol CHW/P TC's process. A theory of change assists in explaining a program framework, lessons learned, how and why a desired change is expected to happen, and communicate the intricacies of an intervention (Center for Theory of Change, 2021).

The El Sol Training Center's Theory of Change consists of key interrelated components:

1. Selection/Recruitment
2. Learning Goals/Objectives
3. Capacity-building Eco-system
4. Areas for Action
5. Workforce Development
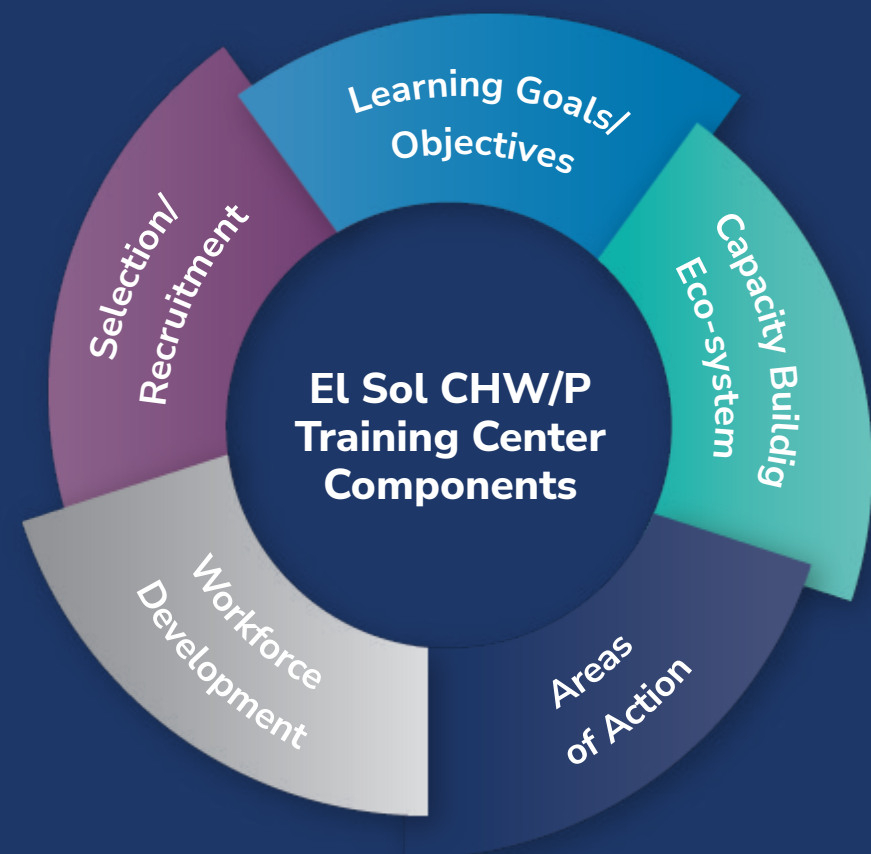
Selection/ Recruitment

Learning Goals/ Objectives

Capacity Buildig Eco-system

El Sol CHW/P Training Center Components

Workforce Development

Areas of Action

Selection/ Recruitment

The El Sol Training Center recruits CHWs/Ps based on their pre-existing vocation to serve their people. Many become CHWs/Ps because they themselves were touched by a CHW/P. Their vocation is infused with wisdom from a rich history of life experiences. In harmony with the concept of consconcientización, this type of vocation involves a commitment to bring about the conditions that benefit everyday people, even when it's easier to accept an unjust status quo.

El Sol CHW/P TC recruitment is also based on CHW/P's degree of community embeddedness (Werner & Bower, 1984) and explains that it is important that community health workers be culturally close to those they serve in terms of geographically, language, occupation, amount of formal education, etc., and to have the basic skills and knowledge pertaining to health issues, problem-solving and teaching in order to facilitate learning.

Emerging literature on positionality provides insight into how community embeddedness is an important piece of CHWs/Ps effectiveness as agents of change (John et al., 2021). It explains that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands their experiences and the world around them. Therefore, El Sol CHW/P TC capacity-building experiences are designed to maintain and strengthen CHWs/Ps' community embeddedness so that CHWs/Ps are accountable to, and in alliance with, their community.

The ecosystem of El Sol CHW/P TC capacity-building experiences is designed to nurture CHWs/Ps vocations and community embeddedness. In doing so, El Sol CHW/P TC cultivates hope to achieve more just conditions, especially for those relegated to the margins. This hope is the fuel for the struggle toward health equity.

In the next section, we explain how the learning goals/objectives of the El Sol CHW/P TC ecosystem are developed and evaluated.

Learning Goals/ Objectives

" "The wisdom of the community always exceeds the knowledge of the experts."

-Harold Flaming

The El Sol CHW/P TC capacity-building ecosystem is designed to build knowledge, skills, and confidence related to selected learning goals/objectives. These learning intentions reflect the El Sol CHW/P TC strategies to foster continuous growth in CHWs/Ps' personal development and capacity as agents of community transformation.
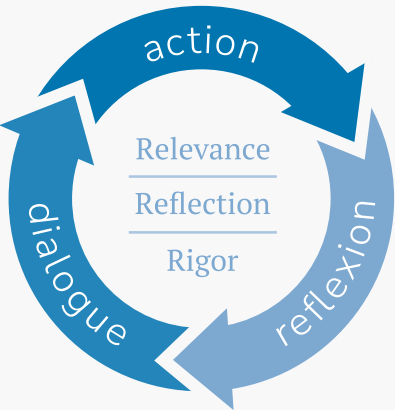
To guide the process of prioritizing the learning intentions, El Sol CHW/P TC applies the principles of relevance, reflection and rigor included within the popular education learning cycle.

▶ RELEVANCE

In the context of prioritizing learning goals and objectives, relevance refers to identifying learning goals that are informed by salient topics in the lives of CHWs/Ps and their communities. As community health issues emerge, El Sol engages in developing new CHW/P-centered projects with local community partners. To stay relevant, El Sol CHW/P TC updates existing training content, based on CHW/P feedback, on an on-going basis.

By involving CHWs/Ps in the planning of interventions, capacity-building plans, and subsequent interventions, they reflect the direct needs of the community and the CHWs/ Ps' concrete experience. By addressing the current causes of the inequities that impact their communities, El Sol CHW/P TC reinforces the concept that through collective and coordinated interventions, CHWs/Ps have the capacity to address the health inequities in their communities.

▶ REFLECTION

Evaluation of the CHW/P learning goals is designed as a capacity-building process in which the evaluation process fosters deeper engagement, reflection and action. To accomplish this type of evaluation, El Sol CHW/P TC established equitable learner-teacher relationships. The learner is in fact equal to the teacher, as the information exchange between the two encourages learning from both sides. Consistent with the popular education learning cycle, El Sol CHW/P TC encourages CHWs/Ps to analyze the root causes of social conditions in the context of their lived experience. In debriefing sessions, CHWs/Ps bring up what they have learned from their current projects and previous experiences. The insights gained from these reflections are used to identify ways to strengthen the effectiveness of CHW/P strategies and tactics, individually and collectively. To strengthen individual CHW/P effectiveness, El Sol CHW/P TC developed a self-directed learning process in which CHWs/Ps identify and work towards individual goals. To strengthen the collective CHW/P effectiveness, CHWs/ Ps must also identify ways to strengthen the specific aspects of the El Sol CHW/P TC capacity-building experience.

▶ RIGOR

While the El Sol CHW/P TC learning goal development is an iterative process, it is not a random process. The learning goals and objectives in all of El Sol CHW/P TC training curricula are aligned with the national consensus around the set of core competencies, skills, and roles that all CHWs/Ps should possess, the CHW/P Core Competencies Consensus (C3 Consensus) (Rosenthal et al., 2018).

Instead of working on CHWs/Ps certification, El Sol CHW/P TC has embraced the C3 Consensus as a way to assure that CHWs/ Ps trained at the El Sol CHW/P TC are becoming competent in all the relevant areas. The C3 Project is a living framework, developed by CHWs/Ps, practitioners, and leaders, and provides

quality assurance guidance in a way that is responsive to historical CHW/P values. As individual CHWs/Ps acquire skills in given competencies, they complete a self-reported assessment to identify their level of confidence in a given competency.

1. Communication Skills

2. Interpersonal and Relationship-Building Skills

3. Service Coordination and Navigation Skills

4. Capacity-Building Skills

5. Advocacy Skills

6. Education and Facilitation Skills

7. Individual and Community Assessment Skills

8. Outreach Skills

9. Professional Skills and Conduct

10. Evaluation and Research Skills

11. Knowledge Base

► COMMON INDICATORS

In addition to using the C3 framework to guide training content, El Sol CHW/P TC is integrating the lessons learned from the on-going CHW/P Common Indicators Project (CI) into its operations and trainings (Wiggins et al., 2021). The CI initiative aims to create a set of common methods, metrics, and evaluation indicators to understand the unique contribution of CHWs/Ps to successful program outcomes and the examination of employment practices (Rodela et al., 2021).

CHW/P PROCESSES	CHW/P MEDIATED OUTCOME
CHWs/Ps' level of compensation, benefits, and promotion	Participant self-reported physical, mental, and emotional health
CHW/P enactment of the 10 core roles	Participant health care and social needs
CHW/P -facilitated referrals	Participant social support
CHW/P involvement in decision and policy-making	Participant empowerment
CHW/P integration into teams (for example, health care teams)	Policy and system change: program/employer level
Supportive and reflective CHW/P supervision	Policy and system change: state level

In the next section, we describe how El Sol CHW/P TC facilitators use the learning goals and objectives to create a non-linear, self-directed, and empowering capacity-building experience.
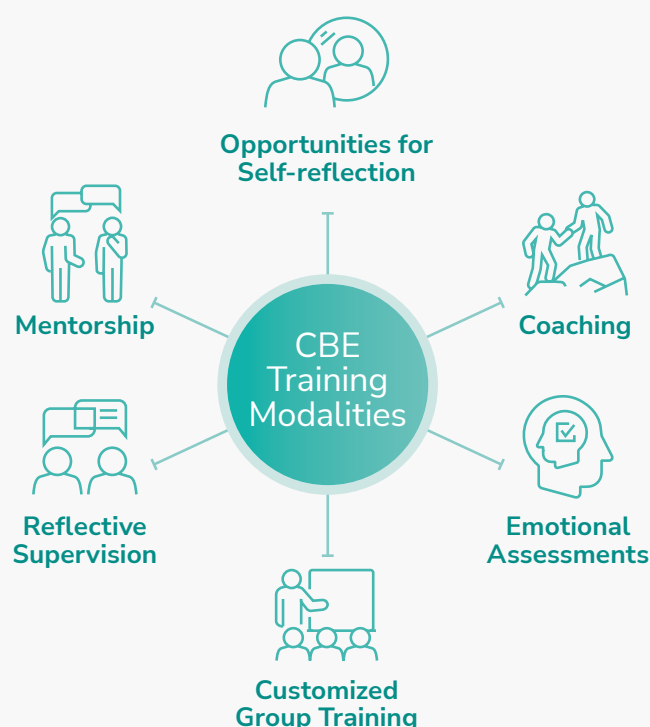
Capacity-Building Eco-system

Capacity-building is about bringing together timely and relevant life experiences with the motivation and skill to empower action.
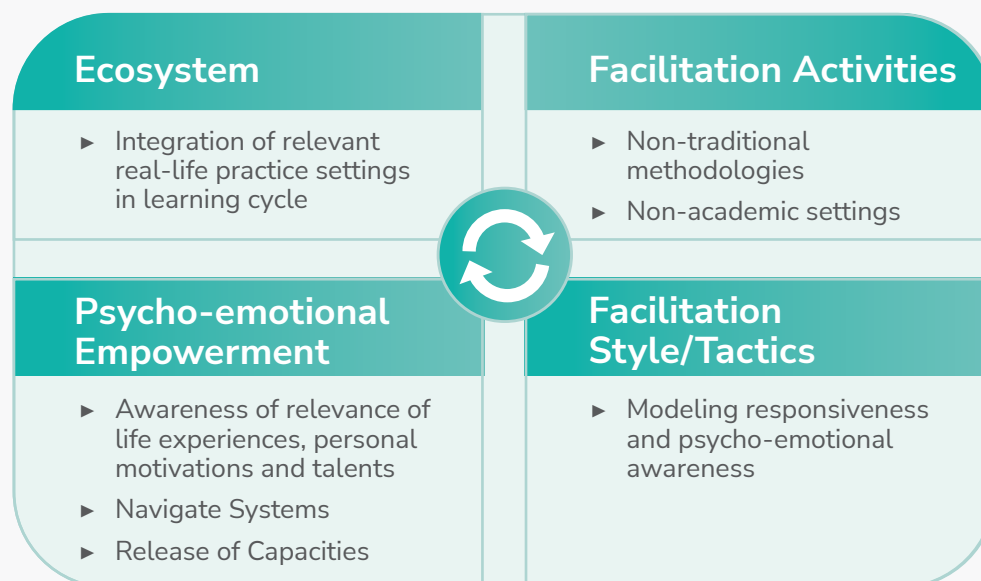
In this section, we summarize how El Sol CHW/P TC builds the capacity of CHWs/Ps to accomplish positive change in communities by bridging relevant life experiences with learning objectives. El Sol CHW/P TC facilitators foster professional and emotional development so that CHWs/Ps have the capacity to transform their communities' health conditions. El Sol CHW/P TC has combined a set of training modalities and facilitation processes into a Capacity-Building Ecosystem (CBE). The CHW/P scope of practice anchors the CBE.

CAPACITY-BUILDING MODEL

Ecosystem

- ► Integration of relevant real-life practice settings in learning cycle

Facilitation Activities

- ► Non-traditional methodologies
- ► Non-academic settings

Psycho-emotional Empowerment

- ► Awareness of relevance of life experiences, personal motivations and talents
- ► Navigate Systems
- ► Release of Capacities

Facilitation Style/Tactics

- ► Modeling responsiveness and psycho-emotional awareness

CBE Training Modalities

- Opportunities for Self-reflection
- Coaching
- Emotional Assessments
- Customized Group Training
- Reflective Supervision
- Mentorship

► CAPACITY-BUILDING ECOSYSTEM

The CBE training modalities include mentorship, coaching, customized group training, opportunities for self-reflection, emotional assessments, and reflective supervision.

For example, the Basic CHW/P Foundations Training Program, developed by El Sol, utilizes individualized training plans for cohorts of 10-20 individuals in an interactive group setting that encourages meaningful discussion, reflecting on personal experiences, and developing action plans for connecting with the community. CHWs/Ps participate in knowledge-based group training sessions, develop a personal intervention work plan, conduct home visits both during and after the training, and debrief with a program mentor/coach.

► FACILITATION ACTIVITIES

The CBE facilitated group training using non-formal education methods that model horizontal power relationships. These include activities such as self-reflection, team-building activities, art, photovoice, theater, and debriefing during or after an experience. Aspiring CHWs/Ps share their own stories and realities and connect their experience to their knowledge and skill-building. Debriefing can occur during or after an experience. The facilitator asks the group to reflect on their experience and to identify points of learning. There exist many ways to debrief an experience. Leaders can use journaling, photography, and drawing, to mention a few techniques. Getting thoughtful responses from participants is the key element.

► FACILITATION STYLE

While each El Sol Training Center facilitator has their own style, there is a common thread among all El Sol CHW/P TC facilitators. El Sol CHW/P TC facilitators see every CHW/P as an expert and leader in their own community with a wealth of experience and insight.

Therefore, training sessions are inclusive of individual experiences, with CHWs/Ps sharing their own stories and realities, connecting their experience to their knowledge and skill-building. The group is able to bounce ideas off of one another and experience the power of collective analysis. By creating a safe space

that models listening and psycho-emotional awareness, El Sol CHW/P TC facilitators foment a learning environment that allows authentic personal and professional growth.

The dialogue provides the facilitator with real-time insight into how to guide the session. While still reaching the session learning objectives, facilitators might opt to deviate from the lesson plan in order to uncover and highlight the wisdom of the group. This means that at times if participants are deeply engaged in a conversation that is exploring personal and community themes, the facilitators must recognize the opportunity to deepen the analysis of the topic and modify the training schedule accordingly. This emergent and dynamic facilitation technique encourages conversation about individual and community transformation based on the experiences of the people in the room which is associated with psycho-emotional awareness that involves self and group awareness.

► PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Psycho-emotional awareness is how El Sol CHW/P TC operationalizes conscientización and refers to a CHW/P being aware of the intersection between their life experiences, their personal motivations and talents - and of those around them. As CHWs/Ps build their psych-emotional awareness, they are better able to influence both their own and their community's knowledge and skills on various health topics. They become more confident to acknowledge and integrate their talents and personal experience with their work with others. Given the challenges of community-engaged work, emotional readiness and resiliency is a key ingredient to CHW/P success. Therefore, the El Sol CHW/P TC capacity-building experience, and subsequent practices, highlight the emotional readiness, self-growth, and adaptability of each CHW/P.

The El Sol CHW/P TC capacity-building ecosystem prepares CHWs/Ps for community-based interventions. When practice is integrated into the learning curriculum, it fosters action and problem solving orientation. The next section describes how El Sol CHW/P TC approaches community-based interventions to health inequities.

Areas of Action

> "
> Hope …demands an anchoring in practice.
>
> - Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Hope

The CHWs/Ps' scope of practice is the inspiration that animates the work of the El Sol CHW/P TC. CHW/P-centered interventions can take place with the community, most especially hard-to-reach populations, and for the community at both the individual and the group level.

In this section of the El Sol Training Center theory of change, we summarize how El Sol CHW/P TC engages in and learns from that practice. El Sol Training Center addresses current and relevant public health issues by building the capacity of CHWs/Ps to intervene at different levels and in different settings such as in homes, communities, and health centers.

► SPECTRUM OF PREVENTION

There are various practice settings in which CHWs/Ps are able to utilize as Areas of Action. The El Sol CHW/P TC selects areas for action that allow for conscientización and social change outcomes using public health frameworks such as the Spectrum of Prevention. The Spectrum of

Prevention (Prevention Institute, 2022) articulates the levels where health equity interventions can be addressed.

►	media advocacy and public policy
▲	promoting organization change
▲	fostering collaboration
▲	educating providers
▲	community education
▲	building individual skill and knowledge

The Spectrum of Prevention levels include building individual skills and knowledge, community education, educating providers, fostering collaboration, promoting organization change and media advocacy and public policy. At the Fostering Collaboration level, CHWs/Ps learn about the various local committees, collaboratives, partnerships, and organizations that influence health in surrounding communities. CHWs/Ps participate in network activities that lead to CHWs/Ps partnering with organizations on efforts to address social determinants of health collectively. These types of experiences provide CHWs/Ps an opportunity to build collective power to address social determinants of health.

At the organizational change level, CHWs/Ps can help institutions that they serve to strengthen the organization's commitment to positive community transformation.

These changes might influence resource allocation and decision-making as well as strengthen health navigator support systems. As community advocates functioning outside of institutions, CHWs/Ps can impact organizational/administrative policies that affect local communities. These system changes can also transform how organizational leaders and team members define CHWs/Ps roles and their potential for impacting the health and wellbeing of communities.

While working at any level on the Spectrum of Prevention, El Sol CHW/P TC highlights the importance of CHWs/Ps using an empowerment approach and to embrace an ongoing learning approach. This involves a CHW/P assuming roles as a collaborator and facilitator rather than expert and counselor. As a collaborator, CHWs/Ps learn about the community they serve through their culture, worldview, and life struggles, by working with the community rather than advocating for them. The CHW/P's skills, interests and plans are not imposed on the community, but rather they become a resource for the community. On-going learning involves practicing self-assessment, reflection and striving to strengthen their capacity in the areas they feel less experienced. El Sol CHW/P TC encourages each CHW/P to individually identify training opportunities to grow in and further nurture, while reinforcing their expertise.

Workforce Development

> "The people begin to get their history into their hands, and then the role of education changes."
>
> -Myles Horton

El Sol CHW/P TC's mission and vision revolve around preparing CHWs/Ps to fulfill their vocation to advance Health for All. This section describes how the combination of developing psycho-emotional empowerment, competence in diverse settings/roles/levels and career pathways contribute to El Sol CHW/P TC fulfilling its mission. During El Sol's 30-year history, CHWs/Ps trained by El Sol have demonstrated their effectiveness at addressing health inequities in a variety of roles and settings. This includes helping to improve adverse conditions such as asthma, depression, diabetes, and obesity, and improve mental and cardiovascular health.

As in many communities throughout the nation, CHWs/Ps trained by El Sol were instrumental in the coordinated COVID-19 response throughout Riverside and San Bernardino Counties (Rodriguez, 2022). El Sol CHW/P TC's approach of building CHW/P competency in a broad range of skills/roles (using the C3 framework) while developing psycho-emotional empowerment was key to the success. During contact tracing phone calls, CHW/P leveraged their psycho-emotional awareness skills to establish rapport with clients. In addition to contact tracing, CHWs/Ps' roles expanded to include food distribution to those most in need, providing informal family-support counseling and mobilizing marginalized communities (e.g., farmworkers) to access available resources/services. Moreover, CHW/P addressed the misinformation circulating in the community about vaccinations through educational materials and popular songs and by co-hosting successful vaccination enrollment events with CHWs/Ps on-hand to answer questions (Garcia, 2021).

▶ CAREER PATHWAYS

For El Sol CHW/P TC to fulfill its mission, there needs to be more career pathways for CHWs/Ps. When CHWs/Ps working for organizations look for opportunities for career advancement beyond frontline implementation of interventions with marginalized communities, the typical options are to move to established helping professions such as social work, nursing, or public health.

However, according to a multi-state survey conducted by El Sol, of 169 CHWs/Ps, 81% would like to advance into a career opportunity that is grounded in the identity and historical values of the CHW/P movement.

81% Say Advance as a CHW

19%
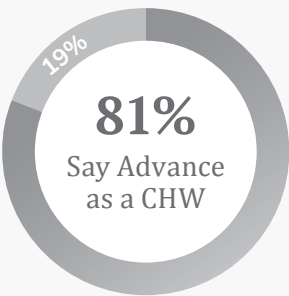
In response, El Sol developed career pathway opportunities for CHWs/Ps in roles such as training, supervising, and being a key informant. The intention is for CHW/P to have a variety of pathway options so that they can reflect and identify a good fit based on their talents, experiences and motivations. As more CHWs/Ps develop in their field of interest, they will likely strengthen community transformation through their perspectives and skill sets (Fajardo & Garcia, 2022).

Community Health Education & Training
- Training Director
- Health Educator Facilitator
- Training Coordinator
- Subject Matter Specialist
- Train of Trainers/ Facilitator

Health Care Settings
- Chronic Care Specialist
- Preventive Care Specialist
- Health Navigator

Professional Development & Curriculum
- Peer-to-peer Coach
- Cultural Linguistic Specialist
- Internal Consultant
- Development and Curriculum Specialist

CHWs/Ps Management
- Manager
- Team Leader
- Supervisor
- Coordinator

Community Advocate
- Community Organizer

Policy and Advocacy
- Policy Advocate

CHW/P

CHW/P CAREER PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES

Interrelationship of the Five Components

Selection/ Recruitment	Learning Goals Objectives	Capacity-Building Eco-system	Areas of Action	Workforce Development

The five components interrelate with one another to create the essence of the El Sol Training Center.

Selection of CHWs/Ps that stems from the community, by the community, and for the community makes for the best CHWs/Ps. The greatest identifier of a strong CHW/P is a passion for helping others.

Learning Objectives: El Sol CHW/P TC embraces learning objectives that will encourage CHWs/Ps to influence community welfare through shared lived experiences peer-led and peer-guided CHWs/Ps and intervention best allows for connection to the community based on shared experiences and upbringing, thus allowing for better connection and understanding.

Capacity-building: When people share their experiences, those experiences are shaping the knowledge and education of others. In the capacity-building process, the facilitators follow a liberatory process in which learning is shaped by the feedback and inputs that are shared by the group and in discussions.

Areas of Action: Capacity-building strengthens implementation in practice settings to best prepare El Sol CHW/P TC lessons in the community. Doing so drives the overarching goal of developing CHW/P skills in the practice settings and ensuring full comprehension by the CHWs/Ps. With better-developed CHW/P skills and practice, they will be a better-equipped and developed workforce.

Workforce Development: It is important to remember that the learning process is not unidirectional and curricula do not follow a particular order. The learning process that El Sol implements is called, "empowerment evaluation and self-directed learning". To encourage workforce development using the CT model, this process prompts CHWs/Ps to identify, based on their experience, what more they want to learn and assess their confidence in the learned skills and teachings from the training. They take an active role in not only identifying the areas and skills they want to develop but also in deciding how they want to further build skills into those teachings. Oftentimes evaluation is thought of as an expert teaching the learner how to develop skills; however, the idea is really that the learning is occurring in both directions. The learner is in fact equal to the facilitator, as the information exchange between the two encourages learning from both sides.

Areas of action are responsive to CHW/P learning objectives based on practice experiences in capacity-building. CHWs/Ps are practicing their skills to see what works for them and identify what they want to further develop. Based on CHW/P feedback, El Sol CHW/P TC then modifies the training to incorporate those areas into future training sessions. As facilitators have a lesson plan, learning objectives and activities are prepared and ready for the session. However, as facilitators see participants sharing their views and opinions on how the content plays in their personal life, everyone, including the facilitators, is learning, so adjustments are made to the plan accordingly. Helping people better their self-awareness prompts healthier individuals. The goal is to develop a workforce that brings healthy individuals together to form a healthy community.

DISCUSSION

This case study describes how a CHW/P training center applied popular education throughout the CHW/P capacity-building process in order to advance and maintain the roots of the CHW/P movement.

> By describing the interrelated components of El Sol Training Center's theory of change and explaining the application of its guiding principles, this case study generates implications for organizations that aim to integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations.

We Make The Road By Walking

Myles Horton and Paulo Freire

To highlight the implications of this case study, in this discussion section, we present a vignette that depicts the theory of change in an adult education training center to discuss the key themes that both Citizenship Schools and El Sol CHW/P TC have in common.

VIGNETTE FROM THE ADULT EDUCATION LITERATURE

The El Sol CHW/P TC is not unique in its embrace of popular education. Other CHW/P training centers in the United States also base their operations on the philosophy. Since popular education has its origins in the field of adult education, we looked to the adult education literature to gain more insight into how the principles and practices of other popular education interventions compare with the El Sol Training Center theory of change.

We present a vignette of a notable adult education intervention that focused on the empowerment of the learners in order to advance social change. In Myles Horton's and Paulo Freire's spoken book, We Make the Road by Walking, Horton explains the origins of an adult literacy program, the Citizenship Schools.

The Citizenship Schools taught African Americans in Johns Island, South Carolina to read and write in the 1950s. Responding to the discriminatory social and physical conditions of the segregated South, the Citizenship School's popular educators helped learners use their reading and writing skills to gain the ability to vote and political power. The Citizenship Schools started in 1957. By 1961, there had been over 400 teachers trained and over 4,000 participants, primarily from African American communities in the South. The Schools played a formative role in the emerging civil rights movement, impacting leaders such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Citizenship Schools started out as an adult literacy project. Two men from Johns Island that had previously attended the Highlander Folk School asked Myles Horton for help. They wanted to teach community members how to read in order for them to pass the literacy voting restriction. Previous adult literacy efforts in Johns Island had tried to teach adults to read using the same teaching methods used with children, even having the adult learners be in the same classroom as school children.

Horton and the two community members agreed to ask Bernice, the niece of one of the requesting community members, to be the first literacy teacher. Bernice was not sure if she was the best person for the role. She was born in Johns Island, had completed two years of high school, left for the city and came back to Johns Island. She operated a beauty salon and taught sewing. Bernice had spent some months at Highlander Folk School. Horton and the two community members recognized that Bernice was already a leader and a teacher, and most importantly, she loved the people.

Bernice started out without a lesson plan. She told her students that she was learning and that, "we will learn together."

She taught practical skills, such as practicing writing names and filling out money orders. Bernice was cognizant that there were other issues deeper than individual literacy skills at play in Johns island. In response, she adapted her teaching to help the people take more control over their destinies.

To capture the aspirations of the learners, Bernice asked for a poster of the Declaration of Human Rights and the Highlander Folk School statement of purpose to read together with her students. Even though some of the words were not understood, her students clearly grasped the themes of liberty, freedom and self-determination. The literacy project expanded into the Citizenship School. The School merged the principles of literacy education with civic engagement. Other neighborhoods and surrounding communities requested Citizenship Schools. Bernice helped to start those. Eventually, Highlander partnered with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to disseminate the Citizenship Schools model in other states such as Alabama and Georgia.

As the Citizenship Schools grew, Bernice's roles evolved to be a mentor to new teachers and to disseminate the Citizenship School model to other communities. Popular African American leaders were the Citizenship School's teachers. They taught literacy based on the students' expressed needs and desires to gain freedom.

[1] In 1932, Myles Horton co-founded the Highlander Folk School in Appalachian Tennessee. Highlander grounded its work in the idea that knowledge grows from, and is a reflection of, social experience. In the 1930's, Highlander worked on labor issues. By the 1950's, Highlander was focusing on supporting desegregation in the South and had become a meeting and educational setting for emerging civil rights movement leaders.

Common Themes among the Vignette and the El Sol CHW/P TC Theory of Change

VOCATION AS CHW/P SELECTION CRITERIA

Bernice did not understand how she was qualified for the role of literacy teacher and at first, she was reluctant to accept the role. Horton and allies selected Bernice based primarily on her "care for the people." Other qualifications included: coming back to Johns Island after going away to the city; already being a teacher by providing sewing classes, and being in a leadership position because of the beauty salon she ran.

Given the trends to scale up CHW/P-infused interventions, some entities are looking for ways to make CHW/P recruitment and selection more objective. Yet, basing selection/recruitment primarily on formal educational attainment may result in excluding aspiring CHWs/Ps that would otherwise be well-suited to use their talents to benefit their community. While some propose that CHW/P selection be based on their formal educational attainment, El Sol CHW/P TC, and the Highlander Folk School, as depicted in the vignette, select CHWs/Ps based on their vocation and their passion to serve their community. To complement this selection method, the capacity-building process is designed to nurture and develop this vocation while maintaining its embeddedness within the community. Organizations that aim to integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations should assess to what extent their selection criteria base can be based on CHW/P vocation.

> "...some propose that CHW/P selection be based on their formal educational attainment, El Sol CHW/P TC selects CHWs/Ps based on their vocation"

PRACTICE-BASED EVIDENCE TO INFORM LEARNING GOALS AND AREAS OF ACTION

In the vignette, Bernice and her students learned together and innovated together. Bernice shifted the focus of her lessons in literacy learning based on what her students were motivated to learn, such as practical skills like writing a money order. Bernice saw that literacy was not an end in itself. It was the means to exert more control over their lives and destiny. Highlander helped Bernice and her learners adapt the literacy classes to what would become the Citizenship Schools.

Being able to adapt CHW/P interventions to the community's lived experiences taps into the community's capacity for innovation and nurtures the alliance between CHWs/Ps and their community. This alliance is the platform in which hope can take root and propel us toward a more humane, democratic and just society.

As described in the Learning Goals Section, El Sol CHW/P TC adapts training center learning goals, and subsequent objectives of the areas of action, based on the CHWs/Ps' interactions with the community such as practice-based evidence. As large-scale health and social service systems integrate CHW/P into the staffing structure, there may be a tendency to attempt to standardize CHW/P community interventions with an emphasis on fidelity to an intervention package. In order to build readiness, organizations that want to incorporate CHWs/Ps should consider strengthening support systems that respond to opportunities to adapt community intervention packages based on the CHW/P's practice-based evidence , or simply put, what the community wants.

PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL EMPOWERMENT AS A COMMON THREAD

In the vignette, Bernice demonstrated psycho-emotional empowerment by overcoming self-doubt and recognizing the talents and insecurities in herself and in others. She had to have the confidence to adapt and innovate the Citizenship School model with her community and the Highlander Folk School.

In the business literature, there is a growing recognition of the relevance of emotional intelligence as a predictor of employee effectiveness (Karimi et al., 2021). As described above, psycho-emotional empowerment goes beyond emotional intelligence by adding a layer of awareness about the importance of intervening to address societal inequities, or concientización. Therefore, consistent with popular education, El Sol CHW/P TC sees psycho-emotional empowerment as foundational for sustainable and effective interventions. El Sol CHW/P TC weaves in psycho-emotional empowerment as a cross-cutting

thread throughout the capacity-building process. Organizations that want to incorporate CHWs/Ps should consider how to nurture psycho-emotional empowerment among CHWs/Ps. Psycho-emotional empowerment among CHWs/Ps can also contribute to a more sustainable CHW/P workforce.

CAREER PATHS FOR CHW/P WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY

As the Citizenship Schools multiplied and the model was disseminated to other communities in the South, the Highlander Folk School helped Bernice transition into different roles such as becoming a mentor of other teachers. As CHW/P interventions grow and CHW/P develop personally and professionally, some CHWs/Ps seek other roles in which to promote change. Some CHW/P entities encourage CHWs/Ps that want to vary or expand their roles to pursue fields such as social work or public health. As Meredith Minkler articulates, there are commonalities between CHWs/Ps, health educators, social workers and other social change professionals. They are all conscious contrarians (Minkler, 2005).

Yet, while the CHW movement has overlaps with these fields, El Sol CHW/P TC and other CHW/P entities see the value of building up the CHW/P movement by encouraging CHWs/Ps to transition into new roles of increasing leadership, such as training coordination and supervision, within CHW/P organizations. Forging an expanded range of roles for CHWs/Ps has the benefit of:

a) CHWs/Ps staying to work within the same community
b) building institutional memory, expertise and continuity
c) motivating others to follow the CHW/P career trajectory

Organizations incorporating CHWs/Ps into their operations should consider how to support an expanded range of roles for CHWs/Ps within their organizations.

CONCLUSION

In this section, we summarize the contributions of this case study to the CHW/P field. We end the case study by offering a tool designed to provide organizations that aim to integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations with a stepwise approach to reflect on key readiness-related decision points along the way.

This case study contributes to the CHW/P field in three different ways. These include:

1. Providing insight into how El Sol Training Center applies historical CHW/P guiding principles

2. Identifying potential areas to build organizational readiness to integrate CHWs/Ps

3. A Guide for Organizational Readiness

Application of Guiding CHW/P Principles

As discussed above, the growing number of large-scale initiatives to integrate CHWs/Ps into organizations/institutions represents both a risk and an opportunity. The risk is for the CHW/P field to drift away from its agents of change and social justice roots. The opportunity is that with greater insight into the principles, values and intended outcomes that guide CHW/P capacity-building, institutions can build their organizational readiness to place and support CHWs/Ps in conscious contrarian roles.

> The risk is for the CHW/P field to drift away from its conscious contrarian roots.

This case study explained the inner workings of a CHW/P capacity-building process and the interrelationship between the components. The case study allowed the reader to gain insight into how popular education, health equity and community transformation principles are applied throughout the CHW/P capacity-building process. The authors hope that this insight can generate more reflection, dialogue and action around the process of building organizational readiness to place and support CHWs/Ps.

Recommendations for Building Organizational Readiness to Integrate CHWs/Ps

The existing CHW/P literature describes how many organizations do not have the readiness or support systems organizational culture in place to integrate CHWs/Ps into their organizations, including placing CHWs/Ps in community transformation roles. In the prevention science literature, Flaspohler et al (2008) provide a thorough taxonomy of how organizations can build their capacity to integrate and sustain prevention innovations such as integrating CHWs/Ps. We recognize it is beyond the scope of this case study to address the multiple levels and ways to build organizational readiness to integrate and sustain CHW/P initiatives.

Therefore, we analyzed key themes that the Citizenship Schools had in common with the El Sol CHW/P TC theory of change in order to identify potential key areas to strengthen organizational readiness for entities that aim to integrate CHWs/Ps into their operations. We identified the following four areas: selecting CHWs/Ps based on their vocation, being able to adapt CHW/P interventions based on what CHWs/Ps are seeing in the field, promoting on-going psycho-emotional empowerment and building career pathways that invite CHWs/Ps to stay in the CHW/P field while advancing their career trajectory.

✓	selecting CHWs/Ps based on their vocation
✓	adapting CHW/P interventions in the field
✓	promote on-going psycho-emotional empowerment
✓	building career pathways to advance in the CHW/P field

Organizational Readiness Self-assessment Tool

To enhance the usefulness of this case study, we developed a tool with a stepwise self-assessment tool designed to help organizations identify their level of readiness to move forward with integrating CHWs/Ps.

We recognize that each organizational context is unique. Therefore, this self-reflection tool is not intended to be prescriptive. It is intended to motivate leaders and team members to reflect and discuss how to build their readiness to integrate CHWs/Ps into change agent roles. This process may involve partnering with CHW/P training organizations to advise on how to achieve a balance between maintaining the heritage of the CHW/P movement while responding to the organizational context/conditions.

Epilogue

This case study highlighted how a CHW/P training center incorporated long-standing guiding principles underlying the CHW/P movement such as popular education. As more organizations are integrating CHWs/Ps into their operations, we hope that this case study can help stimulate reflection, dialogue and action among CHW/P organizations on how to incorporate these long-standing guiding principles into their operations. In doing so, we can continue to build examples of CHW/P-centered interventions that reflect values and paradigms such as health care for all, health equity and health as a right.

If more organizations are successful at applying these long-standing principles, the CHW/P movement will be that much closer to reaching the health equity goals that the Declaration of Alma Ata laid out almost half a century ago.

"As more organizations are integrating CHWs/Ps into their operations, we hope that this case study can help stimulate reflection, dialogue and action among CHW/P organizations..."
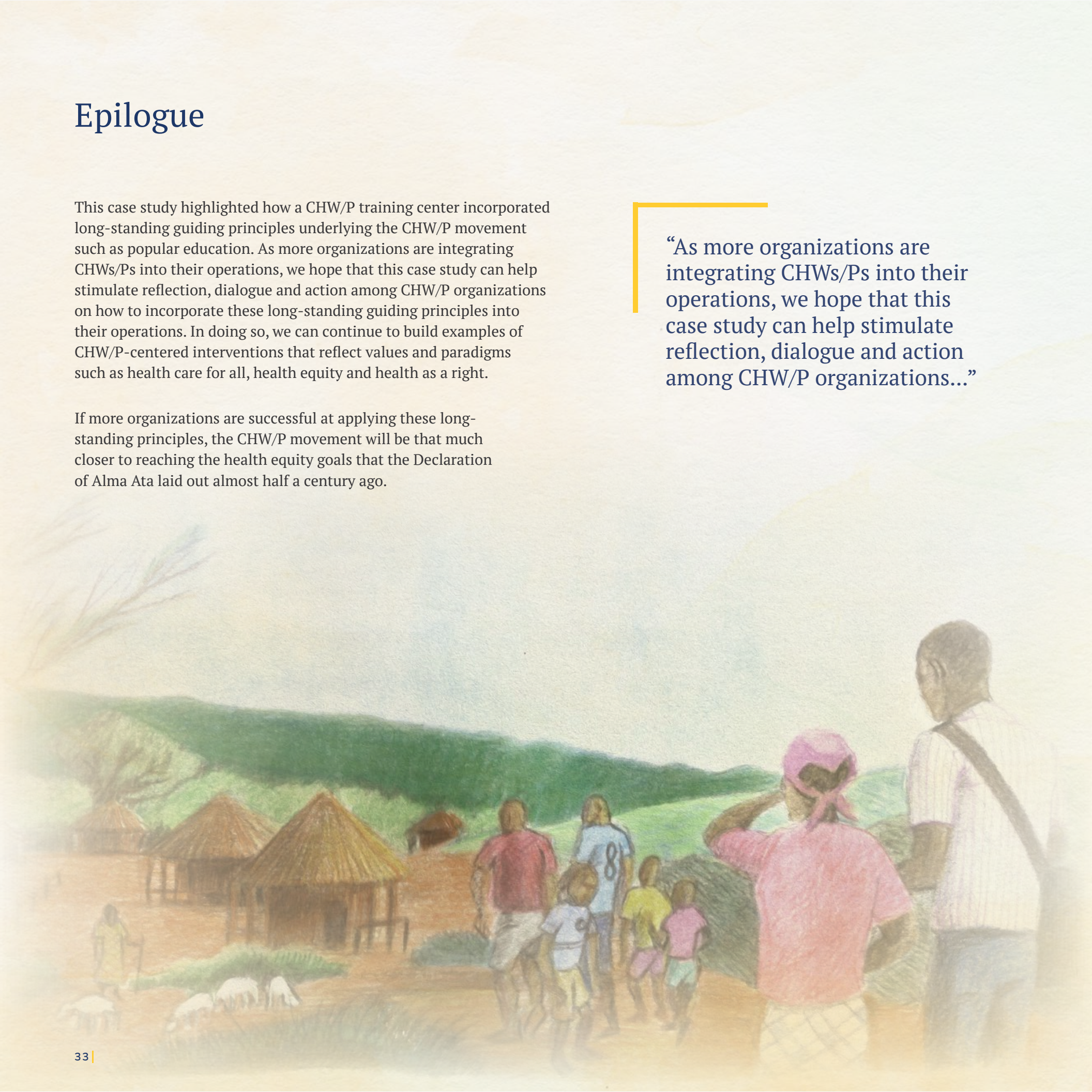
APPENDIX

Guide for Organizational Readiness

We propose that organizations engage in the following steps to discern their level of readiness to partner with CHWs/Ps. Organizations that are integrating CHWs/Ps into new settings must understand their roles in community transformation, addressing social determinants of health, and how to build the capacity to engage in that journey.

El Sol has created an organizational readiness self-assessment tool. For more information about this tool, please reach out to:

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1. Describe your VSOT (Vision, Strategies, Operations and Tactics).
   Optional: Consider articulating the relationship between the V,S,O and T.

2. Use insight from this case study about the application of CHW/P principles, such as popular education, to do an organizational self-reflection to identify the degree to which your organization embraces community transformation and popular education.

3. Identify how applying community transformation and popular education principles education relates to your organizational VSOT.
   Optional: Consider involving CHWs/Ps and CHW/P Orgs to advise/participate in the reflection process.

4. If you are not embracing community transformation, consider innovative ways to partner with other CHWs/Ps and CBOs that have years of expertise.
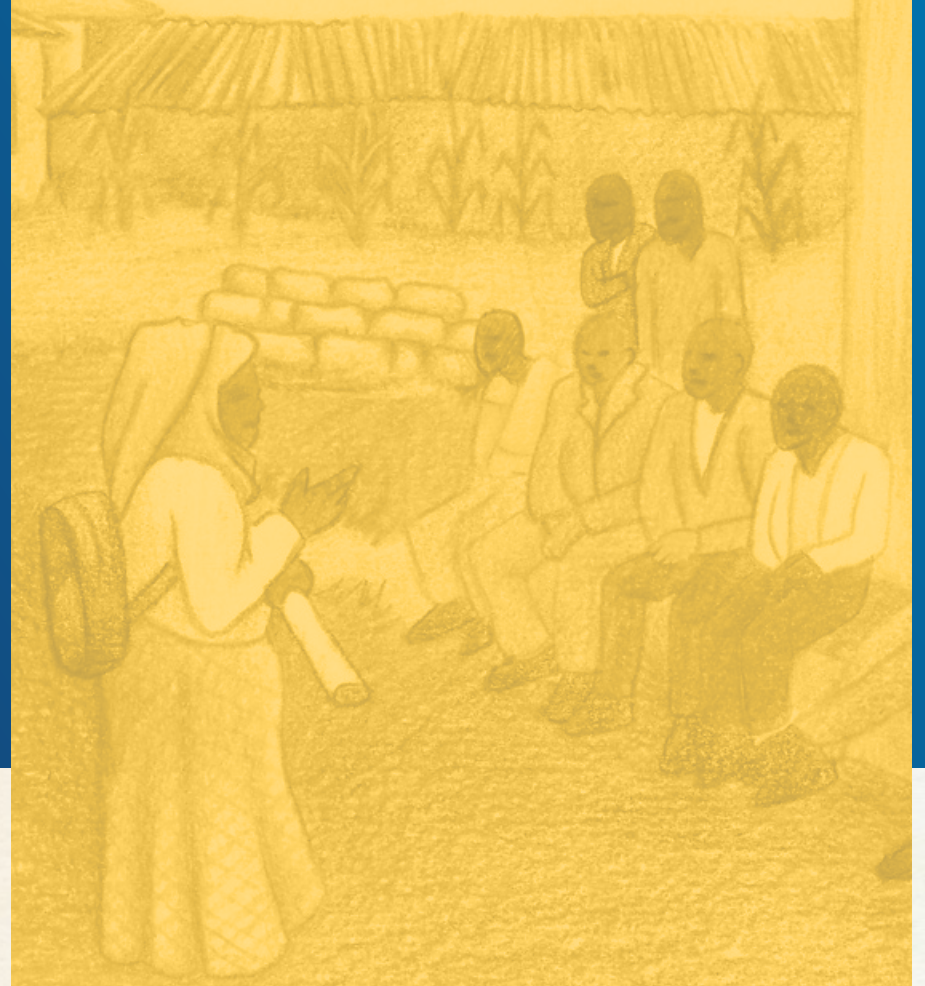
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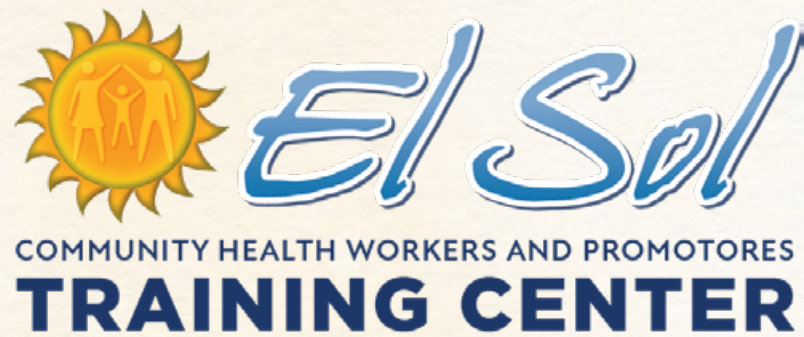
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"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

– Helen Keller

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