

BUILDING THE MERCADO CENTRAL:

ASSET-BASED DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP



A COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKBOOK
FROM
THE ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Building the Mercado Central: Asset-Based Development and Community Entrepreneurship

A Community Building Workbook
from the
Asset-Based Community Development Institute
Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
2040 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60208-4100

John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, Co-Directors

By Geralyn Sheehan

Distributed exclusively by:
ACTA Publications
4848 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60640
Phone: 800-397-2282; Fax: 800-397-0079; E-mail: actapublications@aol.com

Supported by the Chicago Community Trust in consultation with the Kinship Foundation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is a story of community members believing in their ability to create their dreams. To achieve that goal, leadership is needed. Special thanks goes to the members of the Mercado Central Cooperative for their openness in sharing their story, especially to Manuella Barraza, Ramon Leon, Becky George, and the many merchants at the Mercado. It is also a story of committed community partners working together and listening to the dreams of the community. Special thanks to Salvador Miranda and Juan Linares for introducing me to community members, providing background materials, and helping with translation when needed. Thanks to Father Larry Hubbard and Carl Valdez for their insight and perspective on the community impact of this project. Thanks to Rachel Dolan and Mike Temali from Neighborhood Development Center, John Flory of Whittier Community Development Corporation, and staff from Project for Pride in Living for sharing their work, photographs, and perspective on how this opportunity was made a reality. Everyone's work is an inspiration to us all.

Mercado Central logo designed by Miguel Linares, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Cover art incorporating the Mercado Central logo designed by Val Lorimer, Chicago, Illinois

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INTRODUCTION

Building the Mercado Central is the story of one community that believed in its own capacity to transform its collective vision of home and neighborhood into reality. The Mercado Central in Minneapolis — a retail business cooperative and incubator at the intersection of Bloomington and Lake streets — is the result of the creativity and hard work of members of a Latino immigrant community that joined forces with a faith-based organizing group and a variety of community organizations to build a traditional marketplace in their inner-city neighborhood. These partners came to the effort with different motivations: Latino community members were determined to make a neighborhood that felt like home and supported their efforts at economic advancement; leaders of the coalition of churches wanted to help organize Latino residents; local organizations were committed to economic development in the neighborhood. But these interests merged into a common vision through recognition of a straightforward premise: that the best way to create the neighborhood everyone wanted was to look among local people for the individual gifts and talents that could form its foundation. Currently housing over 40 businesses, the Mercado Central is a reality because of the synergy that developed among these groups as they worked together to make their vision a reality.

The author, the Asset-Based Community Development Institute, and the Latino community in Minneapolis believe that this story can offer inspiration to other communities around the United States. Through building the Mercado Central, the local Latino population gained acceptance and appreciation for their cultural traditions from the larger community, and developed a culturally relevant economic development vehicle that enabled its members to integrate into the city's economic life. Thousands of cities and towns across the country have growing populations of immigrants from all over the globe. Many of these communities feel challenged because they do not know how to build bridges between long-term residents and newcomers that both enable the newcomers to become a part of the larger community and to maintain and share their rich traditions. In some localities, the growing concentration of immigrants has created pressure on local institutions to address the needs for access to jobs, affordable housing, English as a second language, job training, etc. Latino immigrants tend to be monolingual, some arrive without legal documents or higher education, and many have a limited number of competitive skills with which to compete for well paying jobs. This leaves them vulnerable to poverty, isolation, and hopelessness. By focusing on the positives such immigrants bring with them to their new country, by combining many principles, perspectives, and tools, and by encouraging little things to accumulate into big things, the Mercado Central story offers one possibility for building this kind of bridge.



Using This Workbook

This workbook tells the story of the development of the Mercado Central, reviewing the roles of the community, partner organizations, and individual leaders in the process, as well as illustrating the strategies that contributed to the results. The individual components of the success achieved are highlighted, as well as the lessons learned along the path to development.

The workbook is organized into eight chapters. This *Introduction* provides general overviews of the two main traditions that influenced the Mercado Central effort: asset-based community development and community organizing. *Community Organizing and ABCD: Laying the Groundwork* tells the story of three important preliminary phases of the work, including organizing a congregation, the design and use of the Community Talent Inventory (CTI), and implementing ideas that emerged from the CTI. *Development: Building the Mercado Central* explores the three strands of the multi-pronged community-building project — real estate, business, and cooperative development — that merged into the primary result, as well as the technical assistance and skill-building support that helped make things happen. *Results: Mercado Central Achievements* highlights the financial, community, and leadership benefits that accrued as a result of the work. *Lessons: Learning through Doing* shares eight categories of new knowledge generated through the community-building process that was undertaken in Minneapolis and offers a brief conclusion to the story. The *Epilogue* brings the story back to its beginning and back to the community today. Finally, the *Resources* chapter shares information that may be useful to readers as they think about, plan, and implement development projects in their own communities.

As you read this story you are invited to consider how the values, principles, and methods used may be applied to work you are doing in your own community. Consider also the lessons that may be gleaned from the various strategies and techniques used in the Mercado Central effort. These lessons, highlighted in this workbook, can be almost universally applied. Finally, examine the resources at the end of the workbook where copies of forms and other tools developed to carry out the work have been included. The individuals and organizations essential to the Mercado Central story hope that each reader finds it instructive as well as inspiring.

At the core of the Mercado Central story is a community's dream, built on the recognition that the dream could be realized by recognizing the gifts and talents existing among the people living there. This extraordinary story demonstrates that what some communities view as "the immigrant problem" can instead be the basis for remarkable community revitalization that incorporates and showcases the cultural traditions of the immigrant population. Instead of taking the more customary needs-based approach to development, these Latino residents directed their energies to identifying assets and creating opportunities for local people to use their assets in ways that helped build a stronger neighborhood. Beginning with local spirit and a powerful sense of community, the Latino residents of Minneapolis first identified their talents and hopes, then sought training for individual

entrepreneurs, and finally arrived at a collective vision of a community marketplace that could support both individual and community endeavors.



The story of the Mercado Central is one of unfaltering commitment to leadership development, as well as a story of how the power of community can overcome individual limitations. It is a story of how one group of people integrated two important sets of principles and practices — asset-based community development and more traditional community organizing — into a cohesive and powerful approach to building their community. Their thoughtful combination of the two models allowed them to generate the necessary force to stand together on important issues as well as to create the Mercado, a homelike community gathering place for caring, celebrating, commerce, and connection.

The Mercado Central has brought enormous economic benefit to individual entrepreneurs, to local workers, to the Bloomington/Lake Street business community, and to the entire city of Minneapolis. A few examples of the important outcomes of this effort include:

- ❑ The purchase and renovation of three dilapidated buildings; \$2.4 million dollars invested.
- ❑ Over \$277,000 dollars in small business loans made to new Latino businesses.
- ❑ Forty-three businesses established and/or expanded in the local community.
- ❑ First-year sales of over \$2 million at Mercado businesses, benefiting both the owners — many of whom are local residents — and the neighborhood itself.
- ❑ Increased local employment opportunities at Mercado businesses; 70 new jobs employing mostly local people.
- ❑ Increased city and state revenues; over \$80,000 in sales tax paid out by Mercado merchants in their first year of operation.

A Minneapolis *Star Tribune* editorial illustrates that the entire city is aware of the success on Lake Street and is watching its growth with enthusiasm and support:

The Mercado won't be the first Hispanic business operation on Lake Street, but will be the biggest. When the Mercado and other projects draw people, Lake Street will become more active, more inviting. The gaps between projects should start to fill in with additional businesses. And Minneapolis' new residents from south of the border will share credit for bringing back central Lake Street.¹

¹ Leonard Inskip — Minneapolis Star Tribune, April 1999.



The Mercado Central

Asset-Based Community Development

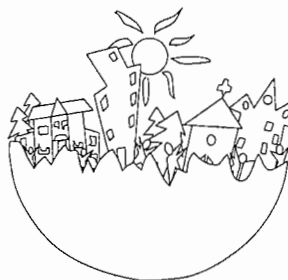
Over the past 10 years there has been increased interest in the assets approach to building and strengthening communities. This approach is described by John Kretzmann and John McKnight in their book, *Building Communities from the Inside Out*.² The book outlines a set of principles and practices for building and maintaining healthy communities that emphasize the positive in local places as the central building block. Termed *asset-based community development* (or ABCD), this approach appeals to communities interested in cultivating their strengths as they work toward creating healthier environments for their residents.

The ABCD approach suggests that the first step toward building a healthy community is identifying the assets already existing *within* it. Such assets can be described as gifts or resources, and generally fall into one of five categories:

- ❑ Individuals: Skills, work experience, knowledge, culture, teaching ability, volunteer experience, life experience, technical know-how, hobbies, etc.
- ❑ Associations: Group energy, membership, knowledge based on group skills, professional and technical know-how, group trust, financial support, information, clout, etc.
- ❑ Institutions: Facilities, employees, volunteers, financial resources, expertise, local power, political voice, equipment, purchasing power, etc.

² Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, *Building Communities From the Inside Out*, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.

- ❑ Physical Environment: Land, buildings, bodies of water, infrastructure such as transportation systems, roads, utilities, airports, etc.
- ❑ Local Economy: Locally owned businesses, jobs, personal income, employment opportunities, entrepreneurs, etc.



Processes and Tools Associated with the Approach

When a community group decides to build on local assets, it first considers the entire community and the range of assets that exist within it. The positive building blocks existing within a community can be identified by taking an inventory of one or all of the asset categories. Depending on the goals of the community-building effort, a community group may choose to focus on just one or a combination of the five different types. Asset inventories are often used to identify the extensive capacities possessed by the individuals living in a community, but can also be used to capture the wide range of assets held by local associations and institutions. Sometimes overlooked, assets also exist within the physical environment and the local economy.

Completing an asset inventory does not in itself result in asset-based community development. On the contrary, ABCD is a holistic approach to how communities work and requires both “mapping” existing assets and “mobilizing” them toward increased community benefit. ABCD work begins with identifying local assets as the foundation on which to build, and developing connections and relationships between the assets identified. Once these steps are accomplished, the critical part of the process begins: designing and implementing ideas for mobilizing the assets that have been identified and the connections that have developed. The key is that the data collection makes little sense unless there is also a plan for using the asset-based information to spark community action. This critical focus on *doing something* with the newly discovered assets eliminates the possibility that community groups will find themselves with lots of data but also wondering, “Now what do we do?”

Over the last decade, communities all over the United States, Canada, and, increasingly, the world, have developed their own versions of the asset inventory. A series of workbooks published by the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University highlights the stories of local resident groups that have achieved community building successes through the process of mapping

and mobilizing their local assets. These workbooks have served to extend familiarity with the many kinds of inventory tools these groups have designed, and have promoted confidence among community groups interested in designing their own asset-building project. Focusing on community-based examples of mapping and mobilizing local assets, these workbooks describe the process used to collect and organize asset-based data. (See the Resources section for a complete list of ABCD Institute community-building workbooks.)



Community Organizing

Saul Alinsky (1890-1967) is considered the father of community and grassroots organizing in the United States. Alinsky established a training center called the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to train community-based leaders on not only the philosophy but also specific strategies and tactics for effective activism to achieve their goals. The techniques taught at IAF help previously disconnected community members form a collective voice that can be powerful and effective at demanding changes and/or building opportunities for the community. Using these techniques, low-income communities have been successful in lawsuits against real estate redlining practices, building affordable housing in partnership with non-profit developers, and changing social policies that negatively impact their populations.

The Gamaliel Foundation is one of many contemporary organizing training programs built on the basic teachings of Saul Alinsky. The Gamaliel Foundation is headquartered in Chicago and offers week-long organizing training to members of church congregations. The week-long training is “designed to encourage personal growth, foster profound relationships, and challenge leaders to transform their faith into powerful public action.”³

According to The Gamaliel Foundation’s approach, community organizing is a process of building grassroots power, assessing where systemic or institutional power is located, engaging community residents with powerful people and systems, and building a sustainable community-run organization.

³ National Leadership Training Manual, The Gamaliel Foundation, Chicago, 1999.

Isaiah Organizing in Minneapolis

The Mercado Central story begins with the community organizing efforts of Isaiah (formerly Interfaith Action), a coalition of churches in the Minneapolis area committed to mobilizing congregations to social action. The techniques and strategies of community organizing are a central feature of the coalition's work and regularly employed by Isaiah as its members work to reach specific goals. Isaiah is deliberate about recruiting local individuals to attend the Gamaliel Foundation's leadership training program, intentionally creating an ever-expanding network of trained organizers and leaders to work together from its base of churches throughout the Minneapolis area. Of the many community residents who received organizing training from Gamaliel at the encouragement of Isaiah, 10 of these individuals were among those most active in the Mercado organizing effort. Isaiah members believe that some of the success of the Mercado Central can be attributed to the fact that so many local people participated in the week-long training.

Merging ABCD with Community Organizing

In Minneapolis, the asset-based approach to development was merged with traditional community organizing principles and practices within Isaiah, the faith-based organizing component of the Mercado Central partnership.⁴ Isaiah is a multi-denominational, congregation-based community organization made up of 69 member congregations throughout Minneapolis, its suburbs, and surrounding rural communities. Isaiah's commitment to community is reflected within its own mission statement.

We commit ourselves to strengthen our congregations, revitalize our communities and effect justice on social and economic issues. Our commitment arises from our faith in God and is developed by fostering individual relationships, mobilizing community leaders and building social relationships.⁵

Before the leaders of Isaiah got involved in organizing for the Mercado Central, they had worked for a number of years to connect the talent and energy of the community on other important issues such as building a church and working on immigration issues. Isaiah consciously took information it gathered about the interests, gifts, and passions of the community and moved these assets to direct action by combining ABCD tools with community organizing techniques and strategies. In combining these two community-building approaches, Isaiah was able to combine organizing for power with a process of recognizing community assets and mobilizing them for concrete change and community improvement.

⁴ Traditional community organizing is associated with groups such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), Gamaliel, Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO), and Direct Action Research and Training (DART). See Resources section for more detail on traditional organizing.

⁵ Interfaith Action Organization (Isaiah) Mission Statement Update, Minneapolis, Fall 1996.



Isaiah's involvement with what was to become the Mercado Central project began when its community organizers were asked by members of the new Latino immigrant population to help address the lack of access to a church for Spanish-speaking immigrants.⁶ Because these people were recent arrivals to Minneapolis, many had difficulties with the new language and felt that they were living in a strange land. In 1991, as a result of these requests, Carl Valdez, a deacon and trained organizer visited over 200 Latino homes in a neighborhood in South Minneapolis, talking directly to families about their hopes and dreams for the Latino community. Through these conversations, he discovered that at the center of the residents' vision was a sense of the importance of a strong community church. Carl asked the people what they themselves could do to build the church because in order to develop a Spanish-speaking parish, the families would need to be central to the process. Eventually, the parish did open as La Comunidad Catolica del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Sagrado Corazon, or "Sacred Heart").

During this period of church organizing, Isaiah emphasized the asset-based approach to community development when Carl met with local families. Through conversations about community members' desires, concerns, and skills, several themes emerged that guided subsequent community-building activities and, ultimately, the development of the Mercado Central. The three themes were:

- ❑ People wanted to start a church in the community at which they could worship in Spanish.
- ❑ People wanted help to address the many immigration issues affecting their community.
- ❑ People wanted to do something with economic development, such as training for small business start-ups.

Working with many supportive local partners, Isaiah was ultimately able to organize the community and open a church for the Spanish-speaking population, and to resolve many of the immigration issues at the same time. Following these key accomplishments, Isaiah moved forward on addressing the economic development issues it had identified as important. Using the ABCD strategy of the asset inventory, Isaiah designed and implemented the Community Talent Inventory with members of the new congregation. During the inventory period, people

⁶ The Latino population of Minneapolis started growing prior to the 1990 census, which reported a population of 13,978; by 1998, this number had almost tripled. In 1991, there were 985 K-12 Latino students in the Minneapolis Public Schools; five years later, this number had grown to 2,362. Most of this incoming population settled in the Whittier neighborhood.

named many specific community and economic skills they could contribute, including music, leadership, home visiting, supporting elders, translation, cooking, working with children, and care and maintenance of the new church.

The community vision that emerged from these local interviewing and organizing activities was the economic power of the Latino residents using a central marketplace as the main strategy. Many Latino immigrants had business experience in their home country, but job programs and social service programs in this country never tapped into that experience as a way to stabilize their lives here. Instead, they were assessed only on their formal education or training, and then urged toward employment in areas that seemed to fit those experiences. In the minds of the initiators, the Mercado Central would be the concrete manifestation of the economic abilities of the Latino business community and would demonstrate to the larger community how immigrants can help revitalize a struggling neighborhood. By focusing on their assets, the community became stronger than the leaders of the effort ever anticipated. They not only achieved their dream but also achieved a number of other significant goals along the way.

Ultimately, as this story demonstrates, the organizing mechanism that enabled the community to succeed at opening its church also enabled it to strengthen its members to support one another in their quest to build local businesses and the local economy. Community organizing was made even more effective because the leadership in Isaiah included an asset-based approach to development. Isaiah's approach was the "glue" that initially brought church leaders and community members together. Isaiah's initial work to organize the church provided the model that later helped residents identify partners and develop the skills that would build broad based support and develop the Mercado Central.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND ABCD: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The Mercado Central story begins with five El Salvadoran immigrants who approached a Catholic Charities social worker with a simple request. These men asked Juan Linares, a man with a reputation for helping Latinos, "Since you work for the Catholic church, can you help us open St. Stephen's, the church in our neighborhood?" Juan was told that the church was locked during the day and that the Latino community wanted a place to pray together. The men also told Juan that there were no Sunday masses available in Spanish at any local church.

The men approached Juan because he is considered not only reliable, hard working, and responsive, but also a caring leader whose faith guides his work. But Juan found himself unsure how to respond to this request. He was accustomed to being asked for food stamps, transportation tokens, rent assistance, etc. Those requests he could handle.

The lack of opportunity to worship at a Spanish-language mass prompted a request for help

I had been distracted for so long by the tangible needs — the requests for food and rent money. These men challenged me to help meet their spiritual needs. Most of these people are from far away and feel they are in a strange land. For them it's not just about food. They need to feed the Spirit to continue the struggle they are in. They miss the strength that comes from belonging and working together. *Juan Linares*



Organizing a Congregation

As a first step in trying to respond, Juan called Salvador Miranda to ask for his help in opening St. Stephen's, the local Catholic church. Sal was a long-time organizer for Isaiah, a multi-denominational, congregation-based community organization in Minneapolis regularly engaged in mobilizing congregations around multiple issues and actions. Juan thought Isaiah might represent a

vehicle that could help address the lack of access to the local church in the Latino community. Together, Juan and Salvador organized a meeting with church leaders of the Hispanic Ministry team of the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul to discuss how to open St. Stephen's to Spanish-speaking immigrants. At the first meeting, Juan and Salvador met a Latino deacon from a different

congregation named Carl Valdez who ultimately was assigned to St. Stephen's parish as a result of Juan and Salvador's request.

Carl invested his time in meeting with local Latino residents in and around St. Stephen's church to find out whether there was strong enough interest among both immigrant and established Latino families to support the development of a Spanish-speaking parish. Because of the initial interest expressed by these local families, a Spanish mass was conducted at St. Stephen's in 1991. This first Spanish mass was attended by 35 local families, and it paved the way for subsequent church-building activities. Over the next several months, Carl continued the effort to mobilize local residents around building the kind of church they desired. He knew it would be important to offer regular weekly masses at St. Stephen's in Spanish, and he arranged for 12 bilingual priests working throughout the region to commit to being part of a weekly rotation to say a Spanish mass. Carl also knew that it would be important to keep the church open even when mass was not being held for use by local residents' in the course of their daily lives.



Carl's visits with community residents represented the initial steps of organizing a congregation for the church. He conducted over 200 meetings in the homes of families, talking about

the community's desire to build a church. Carl asked about people's ideas, fears, interests, and willingness to help. He listened to their dreams and their concerns about the economic issues their families faced. He talked about their ability to work together to address their concerns and build the kind of community they desired; he invited them to come to mass and pray together. As a result of the visits and the new accessibility of the church, local participation in the church organizing effort began to grow. Once the effort produced regular, Spanish masses at St. Stephen's, many long-term residents joined the effort. Eventually these locally based church-building activities led to the assignment of Father Larry Hubbard, a bilingual priest who had lived and worked for many years in South America, in a permanent position at St. Stephen's.

In the fall of 1992, when Carl had completed the neighborhood home visits, he sent invitations to all the families to whom he had spoken, inviting them to attend a Spanish mass as a community. This time, more than 250 families came. By 1995, Father Hubbard had established a church within St. Stephen's Parish called La Comunidad Catolica del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (Sagrado Corazon).⁷ What started with five families searching for a place to pray rapidly grew to 35 families attending the first Spanish mass at St. Stephen's, and then to 300 families who attended mass at the new church. In 1999, a community of over 750 families attended Sagrado Corazon — now

⁷ In English, the Catholic Community of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

recognized by the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul — on a regular basis. It was the first of many neighborhood dreams to come true. The church would become the center from which Isaiah would help newer Latino residents address their concerns for economic stability, mobilize around building the local economy, and address other concerns facing the community.

People who can connect their social and spiritual worlds can gain power. The people can then mobilize that power to achieve their goals. *Carl Valdez*

In addition to the interest expressed in building a church and the local economy, the residents with whom Carl Valdez spoke also expressed concern about a variety of issues associated with the immigrant status of some community members. As a result, the community became actively involved in a simultaneous set of organizing activities associated with immigration and the INS treatment of Latino residents. This effort was also led by Isaiah, whose ongoing goal is to engage and mobilize congregations around important local issues.

To mobilize large-scale action around these issues, Isaiah put together a “sponsoring team” made up of community members who developed a highly successful action plan around unfair immigration practices. Termed the “Campaign to Preserve Immigrant Families,” the strategy was to demand that INS transform its interactions with Latino residents in ways that respected language barriers and other concerns. Although the Mercado organizing activities were distinct

from the immigration organizing that took place during the same period, many community members were involved in both sets of activities and considered them two components of the larger community transformation they were trying to achieve.

As the work to organize the local church progressed, Carl Valdez and Father Hubbard, both active members of Isaiah, maintained a strong connection to Juan Linares and Salvador Miranda. Each of these Isaiah leaders brought unique skills and abilities to the church-building effort. Salvador had been trained as a community organizer but his work was also influenced by John Kretzmann and John McKnight’s asset-based approach to building community. Salvador urged Juan, who was already familiar with asset-based community development, to attend a workshop on community organizing and be trained as a community organizer.⁸ Carl and Father Hubbard also attended community organizing training and adopted asset-based community development principles in their work as well. The early community-building activities undertaken by these four key figures reflect a combination of the two approaches. By merging the tools of asset-based community development and the strategies of traditional community organizing into a combined practice, these leaders paved a powerful and inspiring path for local residents in their community-

⁸ Salvador, Juan and others from the Latino community attended the week long *National Leadership Training*, offered through the Gamaliel Foundation in Chicago.

building work. This path proved especially meaningful for newcomers to the Latino community in Minneapolis, as they found it allowed them to sidestep any barriers to community integration they might otherwise have encountered.



The Community Talent Inventory

Because of their belief in an asset-based approach to community development, Salvador and Juan wanted to use the idea of doing an “asset inventory” of the community.⁹ Because they wanted to tap into the talent, interests, and dreams of the community, they decided to conduct what they called a Community Talent Inventory (CTI).

From Juan’s longtime experience with the community, he knew there were untapped entrepreneurial skills and experience among local people. The business experience brought from their home countries by many of the Latino immigrants was being ignored by the local programs and services to which they turned for assistance in improving their lives. Salvador and Juan wanted the CTI to capture the skills, knowledge, dreams, and life

experience of the immigrants. The inventory had two broad goals:

- Identify entrepreneurial skills within the community.
- Begin to build relationships among community members.

To meet the first goal, inventory questions were designed to capture the entrepreneurial interests, skills, and experiences of local individuals. Questions about how people were connected, or willing to be connected to others in the community addressed the second goal.

Set clear goals and design inventory questions to capture the desired information

The church was seen as the natural location for conducting the inventories because residents’ trust of the church would help ensure people’s participation. When Salvador and Juan shared their idea for the CTI, Father Larry Hubbard was interested. As a committed member of Isaiah, he saw that the project represented a mechanism for local empowerment and community-driven action. Not only did Father Hubbard agree to let them speak to the congregation about the inventory and invite participation, but, over a series of Sundays, Father Hubbard used the gospel message to encourage community members to participate and act collectively. He asked them to bring their God-given gifts to share in the creation of community.

⁹ For a complete review of citizen capacity inventories see *A Guide To Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing The Community Skills of Local Residents*, By Kretzmann, McKnight, Sheehan, 1997.

On designated Sundays, Salvador or Juan announced at the end of mass that there would be a meeting to talk about how, as a community, church members could support one another. They expressed their willingness to assist community members to use their skills and talents to improve family income as well as build a stronger community. Each time they spoke, Sal and Juan asked for a show of hands of people who had an interest in starting their own business.

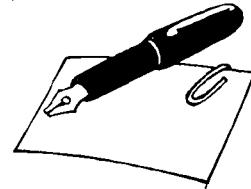
Conduct the inventory process in a way that fits the culture of the community, in a situation in which people will be relaxed and open to sharing

As people saw how many others had the same entrepreneurial aspirations, they were encouraged to participate. Community members were then invited to be part of a discussion to assist people in mobilizing their skills and talents into launching new businesses. On the first Sunday, 25 people stayed for a three-part meeting which included:

1. Discussing community talents as the foundation for action

This segment began with a presentation on the asset-based approach to building community. The term, *asset-based community development* was not used. Instead, there was discussion about the many talents existing within the community and examples were presented of the kinds of things the community had already achieved by tapping into its own resources; for

example, building the church itself and the experience of some Latino community members who had already developed their talents by starting small businesses. Gradually, the idea of mobilizing the talents within the community began to make sense to people.



2. Completing the Community Talent Inventory

When the participants arrived at the meeting, they sat in small groups of 5-6 people. Juan and Sal asked them to break into pairs and each person was asked to interview and complete the CTI for his or her partner. Following this exercise, the three pairs came back together in a group to talk about the talents and information discovered among all members in their circle. An exciting array of talents was shared, including designing and making Latino novelty gifts, public speaking, cooking, singing, sewing, teaching art, professional tailoring, selling plants and garden products, chauffeuring, carpentry, graphic art, technical sound system management, photography, fiction writing, and greeting card design. As people began to discuss what the inventory had revealed, the room began to buzz with excitement. People shared not only their specific skills, but stories also emerged about past successes and future dreams.

3. Envisioning the community based on individual dreams

Salvador and Juan then led a discussion about all the possibilities that existed in the kinds of talents and skills they had just discovered within the community. They urged people to take time to consider opportunities together. Participants were amazed at the experience, knowledge, and practical skills that existed right within their own community. This new knowledge led to a sense of excitement, and soon, people were asking about how they might move forward. What was next? How could they do something productive together?

When the members of a community talk about their assets, creative ideas emerge in exciting and inspiring ways

The CTI included only five core questions, as illustrated on the following page.¹⁰

Questions 1-3 highlight the talent, skills, and business experience of individuals living in the community. These questions also identify who has been paid for their skills and who may be willing to teach their skills to others. Question 4 identifies how people may be connected through organizations or volunteer experiences, and also provides useful information for use in traditional organizing activities. From the asset-

based community development perspective, this information could be useful as a way to identify natural networks that exist among people because of a common affiliation. Through existing members, such networks could also be tapped by new businesses looking for employees, expertise, or other kinds of talent. Question 5 identifies those people willing to share their personal information with the entire community, creating the possibility of a community talent bank of skills that could be shared.

After completing the CTI at three separate meetings, Juan and Salvador had gathered 75 completed inventories, and important themes were emerging. They knew that the energy created as community members began to know themselves and their neighbors by their assets was the energy that would guarantee the success of the project. They also knew that moving forward quickly with action steps would be critical in order to maintain the momentum generated through the Community Talent Inventory process. At this point, it was important to demonstrate how sharing talents could lead to something concrete that would benefit the community.

The energy created through community members getting to know themselves by their assets is the energy that guarantees success

¹⁰ The original version of the inventory provided more space for writing people's answers.

ISAIAH-COMMUNITY TALENT INVENTORY

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

LIST BELOW THE ANSWERS YOU GET TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What do you do well? For example, cooking, "I'm a good listener," cross-stitching, public speaking, plumbing, etc. (We want to know practical skills and social skills).

Have you ever been paid for any of these skills?

Yes _____ No _____ Which ones: _____

2. When you think about all of these skills which would you say are the ones you are best at or enjoy doing most? Would you be interested in making money doing them or teaching someone else to learn them? (I.e., a gardener selling produce, someone who makes quilts selling them at a craft fair, teaching someone carpentry skills, etc).

Which skills would you like to use to: Make money _____
Teach others _____

Have you tried to make money on a skill and been successful? Yes ___ No ___

What skills? _____

What happened? _____

3. Have you ever thought of starting a business at home or in the neighborhood?

Yes _____ No _____

What kind of business would you start?

Why haven't you started it?

What would lead you to try?

4. What are some of the groups you belong to? _____

Do you have a role in these groups? (chairperson, fund-raiser, troop leader, etc).

5. Can we list these skills in a published inventory for the community?

Volunteer Skills Yes _____ No _____

Paid Skills Yes _____ No _____

This inventory was completed by: _____

Salvador and Juan halted the CTI meetings and began to focus on how to match the interests expressed by residents in the inventories with the community-building dreams that had emerged from the group discussions. Three community-building themes identified from the first 75 inventories were:

- ❑ Confirmation of wide-ranging business experience and talents.
- ❑ A desire for targeted entrepreneurial training.
- ❑ An interest in addressing immigration issues collectively as a community.

Implementing the Ideas from the Community Talent Inventory

Building on the Skills and Talents of Community Members

Juan Linares launched the first phase of the implementation process by making connections between the skills identified on the CTI and the interest people expressed in starting new businesses. First, he approached two local organizations he thought might be in a position to support the group. Juan first spoke to John Flory of the Whittier Community Development Corporation (Whittier) about the possibility of getting their assistance with helping local entrepreneurs develop their small business plans. John was Whittier's economic development specialist with experience in business start-up, developing retail space, and working with immigrant communities, as well as other aspects of community development. Juan also spoke to Western

Initiative for Neighborhood Development (WIND), a well-established community development corporation of Western Bank in St. Paul. WIND has a reputation in the Twin Cities as a creative organization that is responsive to community needs. WIND's Neighborhood Development Center, Inc. (NDC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to respond to the local need for entrepreneurial training, loans, and technical assistance to micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses. Already offering their training program in Spanish in neighboring St. Paul, NDC responded positively to the interest expressed by the neighborhood group and offered the course in Spanish in Minneapolis as well. Instrumental in their decision to do so was the evidence generated through the CTI of residents' interest in starting small businesses. John Flory participated directly, facilitating the business planning sessions with the budding entrepreneurs. The courses were offered at Sagrado Corazon, in part as a way of confirming to community members that their efforts in building the church were paying off, and that their collective dreams were resulting in positive action and immediate local change.



The Entrepreneurial Training Course: A Community-Building Opportunity

The entrepreneurial training provided by WIND was a 16-week course that represented a vehicle for individual learning for the entrepreneurs *and* a vehicle for continued community organizing for Isaiah. Juan Linares attended each session in order to continue to build relationships with and among the entrepreneurs. Father Hubbard began each session with prayer and his presence at the classes maintained the spiritual connection in the work. Coursework included discussions at two levels of interest: the individual entrepreneur level and the community-building level.

At the individual level, the NDC curriculum provided the entrepreneurs with the technical information they required to write valid business and marketing plans. One goal of this aspect of the course was to teach entrepreneurs the basics of small business management and to give them the ability to get financing for their business ideas. Another goal was to identify those entrepreneurs with the persistence and motivation to be successful in business. The core purpose of the training was for participants to create viable business plans they could use to move forward with their individual and collective dreams for a vibrant community.

At the community-building level, the group talked about how they wanted their entrepreneurial successes to effect broader change in the community. They discussed what role they wanted their businesses to play in helping to revitalize the local economy, and continued the process

of transforming their dreams into a vision for the community. In addition to the learning that took place, the classes provided another place for community energies to assemble and begin to mobilize.

The participants in the entrepreneurial training program represented some of the most motivated and creative people in the Latino community. During the training, the entrepreneurs began to think and talk about themselves as leaders in the community and to assume roles that reflected that leadership.

As the entrepreneurs went through the training program, Father Hubbard spoke with them about creating an atmosphere of brotherhood in their community-building work. He challenged them to think about how they could develop individual businesses that would be competitive in the larger marketplace without competing with one another. This powerful challenge led to the idea of a cooperative, a vehicle that would enable each business owner to achieve financial success while simultaneously working together and supporting each others' efforts. For the entrepreneurs in this class, part of the challenge was to create a successful network of businesses surrounded by friends, family, and community support. Members of Isaiah had the goals of empowerment and community spirituality in mind when they asked for the training.

The role of Isaiah is to empower people. Linking people up to others in faith-based relationships brings power. *Father Larry Hubbard*

The Mercado Central Idea is Born

Reflecting on the importance of their individual training and Father Hubbard's challenge to create an atmosphere of brotherhood rather than competition among the new businesses, the entrepreneurs reached into their own traditions to help synthesize the two perspectives and clarify how they might proceed. All Latino immigrants share the experience of a central marketplace where people gather, socialize, hear news, share lives, gossip, celebrate, and grieve as a community. In all Latin American towns and cities, a central market is a physical, social, and cultural center of town. Much more than simply the center of commerce, it is the heart from which one can sense the pulse of the community.

Shared learning and building group identity leads to unity and inspiration

As John Flory led the entrepreneurs in discussions about their business plans, questions arose about how the new businesses would relate to the city as a whole. "How could the presence of your businesses be a blessing to the entire city of Minneapolis?" asked Father Hubbard. The training classes were the place where the entrepreneurs began to consider how the gifts they possessed — individually and collectively — represented the basis of their collective identity. The discussions, along with the entrepreneurs' growing confidence and business acumen, led to a vision directly related to their cultural experience as Latinos: they would build a central

marketplace for the people of their neighborhood and to offer to all the citizens of Minneapolis. Thus, the idea of the Mercado Central was born out of the idea that one small immigrant neighborhood and its people had an important gift to give the larger community.

Individual and historic cultural assets combine to make the Mercado a reality

The emerging vision included finding a building that could house a collection of complementary stores, restaurants, and other commercial services as well as provide space for concerts, community meetings, masses, and other social events. The market would be a family-focused venture, allowing the Latino community to express their strong sense of family even in their economic ventures. Soon, the entrepreneurs began to call their idea the Mercado Central (central market). During the first entrepreneurial training course, the idea became central to how the emerging merchants saw their ongoing work together as community business men and women.

During this period, Father Hubbard often quoted the Spanish saying:

El pueblo vive como sujeto de su propia historia, no vive ya como objetos de un historia que otros han escrito.¹¹

¹¹ English translation: The community lives as the subject of its own history, not as objects of history someone else wrote.



Corner of Bloomington and Lake Before Mercado Development

As this group of Latino immigrants moved forward with their plans for the Mercado Central, they were engaged in deciding on their own destiny and writing their own history. Community members could not have accomplished as much if they had acted individually; the fact that they organized for collective thinking and collective action is what made it possible.

To organize is to help people find what they really want rather than to focus on what they need. Once they start thinking and talking on that level, you can't stop them! *Juan Linares*

Once the development of the Mercado Central was agreed on, a number of things started to happen. For the venture to be successful, it would need to maintain its commitment to the principles of both asset-based community development and tradi-

tional community organizing. The two practices were merged into an approach that emphasized building the capacity of individual community members by investing in the development of both leaders and businesses.

Investing in the Development of Both Leaders and Businesses

Salvador Miranda, the Isaiah organizer, urged members of the entrepreneurial training class to also obtain training in traditional community organizing. He believed the training would allow them to be more strategic in their vision for the Mercado Central, as well as to develop their own leadership in the broader community. With the success of organizing the Sagrado Corazon congregation as inspiration, several active church members/entrepreneurs attended a week-long training session on community organizing.



Members of the First Board of Directors of the Mercado Central Cooperativa

At the same time, the Mercado Central idea was taking form among community members, and individual business plans were starting to emerge. John Flory, the economic development specialist of Whittier CDC, started working with individual vendors to address their financing needs. Following John's advice, the entrepreneurs established a Mercado Central coordinating committee to make necessary decisions until a legal entity could be formed. The members of the coordinating committee were all graduates of the first entrepreneurial training class and up-and-coming vendors who had already launched their businesses. They agreed to meet 2-4 times each month to develop the legal and operating policies for the Mercado Central.¹²

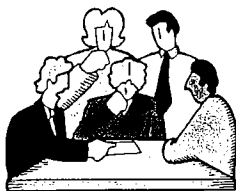
¹² Board members pictured from left to right in photo: Ramiro Hernandez, Ivan Vaegorre, Monica Vaegorre, Marie Capouch, Ramon Leon, Jose Payon, and Guiermo Rodriquez. Board members not pictured here: Jose Angel Picina and Manuella Barraza.

Getting over the initial hurdles in creating the legal vehicle for the Mercado Central was not easy. John Flory played a central role in convincing local leaders that the cooperative structure was most appropriate for the venture. John had grown up in Ecuador and understood the concept of a marketplace as the center of local community life. With over 15 years experience with the cooperative movement in the Twin Cities, John clearly became "hooked" by a particular vision of a Mercado Central. Because of his ability to speak Spanish, John was a key figure in building comfort and trust with individual group members and maintaining the full participation of the Mercado Central entrepreneurs through the long hours of discussion and planning to establish a legal cooperative. Most of the entrepreneurs were interested in the cooperative idea and wanted to develop the Mercado Central in this way, thus assuring ownership by the



Key Community Partners Speaking at the Mercado Central

vendors with businesses in the Mercado Central. Some local non-profit developers believed that the development of a cooperative would greatly complicate the project. With more than 10 years experience on small business development and his close connection to the entrepreneurs,



John Flory captured the interest and passion of the entrepreneurs with his vision.

After substantial discussion, the group decided to form a cooperative to serve as the vehicle for property ownership. A co-op structure would place management responsibilities in the hands of a Mercado Central Board of Directors and could also serve as a leadership training structure. Members were officially elected to the Mercado Central Board by the new cooperative membership at its first meeting, and the project was on its way.

Establish creative structures to maintain community ownership and control

In laying the groundwork for the Mercado Central, the organizers identified resources for planning, training, and expert advice for community members as they moved the project forward. By leaving the central roles to community members while providing them with supportive resources, local control of the decision-making process was maintained, and validation of the ability of local people to build the community they desired for themselves and their families achieved. One of the expert resources John Flory brought on board was Emily Anderson, an expert in cooperatives and cooperative development. John contracted with Emily to serve as a consultant to the Mercado Central coordinating com-

mittee. Emily helped the merchants explore what kind of cooperative structure would meet their needs and best serve their vision. After a few months, the coordinating committee decided on a vendor-owned cooperative. The cooperative model represented a creative and intentional deviation from the standard business incubator model, which usually creates an entity operated by a nonprofit business developer. Because the coordinating committee wanted to make sure that the Latino merchants would have total ownership of the cooperative, they decided to sell shares to each merchant who wanted space in the new Mercado Central (see Resources Section for materials associated with the development of the cooperative).



For the Mercado Central board and members, the entire process reflected the principles of building community from the inside out. The critical first step of identifying internal assets ultimately allowed for building bridges to external assets, and finally to leveraging additional assets both internally and externally.

The principles from both asset-based community development and Community Organizing were successfully merged in the efforts that laid the groundwork for the Mercado Central project.

ABCD Principles Found in the Work

- *Incorporating the gifts of every person.* Community members' potential was not underestimated and the temptation to focus on problems within the community was eliminated. Residents were not dismissed because of the "immigrant" label, or because they lacked specific marketable skills.
- *Celebrating difference.* Cultural understanding and respect for the unique gifts of each participant distinguished the organizing work in this community.
- *Trusting partners.* Working with people from a base of trust allows true passions, concerns, and opportunities to surface.
- *Valuing local strengths.* The most important resources are those that community members themselves invest in their project or dream. The initial Mercado Central effort focused on the discovery of local talent, passions, and dreams, and the overall project focused on valuing them through the development of a mechanism through which they could be shared.
- *Broadening relationships.* Being well connected with community development organizations, local agencies, churches, and community members throughout the area and knowing how to tap into common interests and connect agendas among groups gave power to this group.

- *Building on Faith.* A sense of faith and spiritual connection to God is central to life within the Latino community. Meeting the Spiritual needs of this community became the most important way to build strength from within.

Community Organizing Principles Found in the Work

- *One-on-one meetings.* Face-to-face conversations are an opportunity to develop legitimate relationships while tapping into each person's passions and interests. The central goal is to listen to people as they talk about issues in which they are interested, and the talents and skills they possess with which to address those issues.
- *Meet to act.* Meetings are an opportunity to move to action. Never meet if there is not a determined action that will result.

- *Individual Commitment.* Individuals must live out their personal commitments to lead powerful lives. It is not enough to be concerned about an issue, each person must commit to participation in its resolution.

- *Action must be collective.* Action should always support and mobilize the power of the group. Successful group action builds the confidence of a group to do even more.

To build the church, the leaders used one-on-one meetings and other organizing techniques to connect with the community, and asset-based community development techniques to tap into community interests and energy to get things done. The initial success of organizing the community around opening St. Stephen's as a home for Sagrado Corazon, the new Latino parish, provided the impetus to move forward to address the economic concerns the community had expressed.

DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING THE MERCADO CENTRAL

The Mercado Central plan that emerged from the work of the coordinating committee and new Mercado Central board of directors reflected a complex undertaking. To achieve the vision of a community gathering place, the Mercado Central needed land and a building that would eventually be owned and controlled by the cooperative members. The cooperative was also seen as a vehicle for business development in the Latino community that could provide business training, support, and access to financing — in fact, a retail business incubator for emerging and start-up Latino retailers. Part of the idea was that as individual businesses successfully grew, they would leave the Mercado Central and move into available storefronts in the surrounding neighborhood, eventually creating a Latino shopping district with the Mercado Central as the anchor.

This expansive vision required that several distinct strands of activity be undertaken to develop each component. Ultimately, this meant that to develop the Mercado Central, a multi-pronged community economic development project would have to be launched.

A Multi-Pronged Community Economic Development Project

The Mercado Central effort can be understood as three distinct development projects:

- ❑ Real Estate Development — the development of a building to house the Mercado Central.
- ❑ Business Development — the support for 30 individual businesses start-ups plus several expanding businesses that would occupy vendor spaces in the Mercado Central.
- ❑ Cooperative Development — developing the board of directors, structure, staff, and legal entity of the Mercado Central Cooperativa.

Any one of these activities would have required an enormous amount of commitment from local people and institutions. But for the Mercado Central vision to be successful in its entirety, all three components needed to be developed simultaneously. John Flory, the economic development specialist from Whittier CDC, acknowledged his lack of experience in an economic development endeavor of this scale, but pledged his support in helping to get all three project areas moving. Most Mercado Central members aligned themselves with at least one of the three development areas, and because it was impossible for every individual to be part of every aspect of the work, members learned to trust one another to fairly represent their interests on occasions when they were unable to be present.

*Build ownership by using
all the talents available*

The total financing for all three projects was almost \$3 million; and ultimately derived from about 25 sources, including banks, foundations, the City of Minneapolis, nonprofit development organizations, local corporations, and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.¹³ Initially, \$332,000 was raised to finance the Mercado Central's development as a cooperative. Of that amount, \$190,000 was committed to leasehold improvements for specific merchants, \$60,000 for organizational costs, \$20,000 for start-up expenses, and \$62,000 for working capital. The real estate project financing totaled about \$2 million. Most of the renovation costs were covered by grants to substantially reduce the debt on the property, allowing vendor rents that could be managed by the emerging businesses. Financing for individual businesses totaled over \$500,000.

Real Estate Development

Initially, the Mercado Central coordinating committee invited a Latino architect to develop the design for a Mercado Central building. With the architect's drawing as a guide, they began to look for real estate. The committee hoped to find a building site in a commercial stretch of Lake Street, which, in spite of years of decay, was fast becoming a neighborhood hub for the growing



Latino community. At the time, many of the buildings on Lake Street were occupied by businesses — such as pawn shops, liquor stores, and after-hours clubs — that did not meet the broader needs of the community. Centrally situated in an area home to an estimated 8,000-9,000 Latinos, the city of Minneapolis had also targeted Lake Street for significant reinvestment and revitalization work.

At the same time, Project for Pride in Living (PPL), a local nonprofit community development corporation, was working with a small business association, the Bloomington Lake Business Association, on a local development effort. The Commercial Club had renovated a building on one corner of Lake Street and Bloomington Avenue and had worked unsuccessfully for over a year to attract a national business chain to the buildings on the opposite corner. With their failure to find a “family oriented” anchor tenant for three buildings, they invited PPL to consider a major renovation of the buildings with the purpose of leasing the space to local businesses. By upgrading the buildings and filling them with desirable tenants, the Commercial Club felt that the successful Lake Street neighborhood reclamation they had initiated with the renovation of a building on the opposite corner could be advanced. As the coordinating committee launched inquiries about property on Lake Street, PPL approached the committee with an invitation to consider the property on the corner.

¹³ See Resources Section on Detail: Mercado Central Partnership, for more specific information on financial partners.

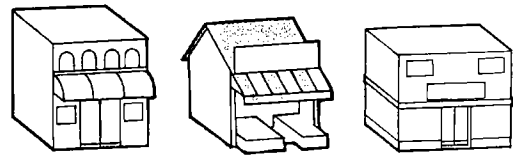
At the same time that PPL started to build the interest of the coordinating committee in the Lake Street property, committee members began to realize just how expensive the architect's proposal for a new building would be to implement. They also knew that financing would be difficult because the project was considered a high-risk investment by traditional financial institutions both because of the location and the large number of start-up businesses involved. As talks progressed, PPL offered to handle the financing for the purchase and renovation of the existing property, and offered to remodel as much as feasible to the specifications of the merchants. With these guarantees, the committee agreed that the Mercado Central would be the anchor tenant for the project.

PPL viewed the real estate development effort in four phases:

- ❑ The purchase of three buildings on the site.
- ❑ The relocation of the six existing businesses to other sites.
- ❑ The rehabilitation of the three buildings to create a contiguous commercial space (see floor plan on the following page).
- ❑ The lease of the newly renovated space.

To launch the effort, PPL purchased the three adjacent buildings and quickly relocated the businesses already situated there. Working with an overall purchase and renovation budget of \$2.4 million dollars generated from about six sources, PPL provided construction management

and served as the general contractor for the work.



Project for Pride in Living described some of the many development challenges faced in upgrading the buildings for the Mercado Central space:

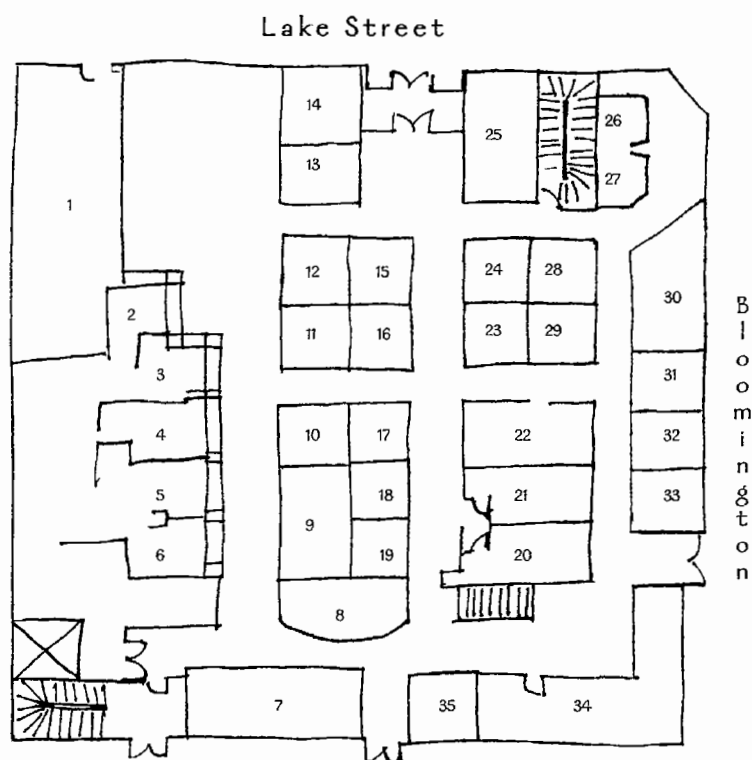
While the buildings were structurally sound, the utility systems needed to be upgraded, a new facade was necessary, off-street parking had to be provided and a large first floor space had to be constructed after tearing out the separating walls of two of the buildings. A new roof was necessary, and the heating and ventilation system had to be upgraded to fully service the Mercado Central and second floor tenants. A new entrance was created from the rear of the building where the parking lot is located. Acquisition and demolition of two dilapidated houses was required to create the necessary off-street parking lot at the rear of the property.¹⁴

The completed Mercado Central building covers 28,000 square feet and offers 26 parking spaces. The first floor includes 12,000 square feet and has 35 vendor stalls, including

¹⁴ From Project for Pride in Living grant application to the Minneapolis Foundation, Sept. 1997.

Mercado

Central

*Artesania*

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Abraxas | 13 |
| Artesania Guanajuato | 24 |
| Casa Lojana | 31 |
| Creaciones Monica | 16 |
| Centro Cobijero del Norte | 17 |
| El Serpiente Emplumado | 28 |
| Tijuana Imports | 18 |

Restaurants & Café

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Cafeteria Garcia | 26 |
| Comales y Cazuelas | 6 |
| Taqueria La Hacienda | 4 |
| Manny's Tortas | 3 |
| Otra Cocina | 2 |
| Taco Morelos | 5 |

Fresh Foods

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Dulceria La Piñata (candy store) | 14 |
| Galapagos (groceries) | 9 |
| Me Gusta Meat Market | 34 |
| El Mexicano (bakery) | 30 |
| Produce Stand | 7 |
| Reina de los Jugos (fresh juices) | 27 |
| Tortilleria La Perla | 1 |

Clothing & Jewelry

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Amazonas (western wear) | 2 nd Floor |
| Infinity | 25 |
| La Joyeria | 2 nd Floor |
| Modas Jennifer | 2 nd Floor |
| Novedades Alexis | 15 |
| El Rodeo | 19 |
| Victor Hugo Jewelry | 22 |

Books & Music

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Mundo Musical | 2 nd Floor |
| Discomania | 12 |
| Sonido Latino | 35 |
| Libreria Cristiana | 11 |
| Libreria Medrano | 10 |

Specialty Shops

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bueno's Dollar | 32 |
| Deportes Azteca (sporting goods) | 2 nd Floor |
| Flower Shop | 8 |
| Jennifer's Regalos (party favors) | 29 |
| Perfumeria | 2 nd Floor |

Services

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Amazonas (money transfer & package delivery) | 2 nd Floor |
| GR Transport (passenger & cargo transport) | basement |
| MEXAM (furniture manufacture & upholstery) | basement |

Floor Plan and Vender Layout in the Mercado Central

26 stalls of about 125 square feet in fixed locations, and an additional six larger stalls and shared kitchen for food vendors. The first floor also provides a large open space for cultural events, music, and dining, central to the idea of building a community environment as well as a marketing tool for the Mercado Central. Stalls average \$387 in rent per month, with the income covering the building's operating expenses. A fee is charged to vendors for marketing, security, maintenance, and the cost of the Mercado Central manager's salary. Most vendors on the first floor sell a variety of Latino-oriented products and services; two-thirds of these merchants are start-up businesses.



The second floor covers 8,000 square feet and is occupied by established Latino businesses. These include *La Prensa*, the Latino news-paper for the Twin Cities, travel agent, accountant and tax service, jewelry store, leather goods, music store, Spanish language school, as well as offices for the Mercado Central and the WIND Neighborhood Development Center. These businesses pay \$10 per square foot, which is estimated to be slightly under market rent in the area.

Business Development

The Mercado Central Cooperativa vision was designed to allow small businesses to take advantage of the large customer base that would be drawn to a Mercado Central as a destination because of the grouping of

a variety of small businesses. John Flory of Whittier CDC assisted the merchants with their business development and financing plans, beginning with a marketing feasibility study that determined the optimum mix of products and services required to attract the high levels of customer traffic the group desired. A crucial aspect of the marketing study was the recognition and exploration of the entrepreneurs' cultural assets which included their individual and collective knowledge about the products and services offered in markets in their home countries. This cultural know-ledge was tapped throughout the process of adapting the product and service mix to the Mercado Central setting. Priority recruitment was done among vendors whose businesses offered the key products and services that reflected this desired retail mix. Mercado Central recruiters also looked for a mix of established and start-up businesses.

The initial (and ongoing) requirements for a business to be part of the Mercado Central Cooperativa are:

- ❑ The business owner must be a graduate of the Neighborhood Development Center's entrepreneurial training course or other Mercado Central-approved training program,
- ❑ The business must offer goods or services that meet the needs of the Latino community in the Minneapolis metropolitan area, and
- ❑ The business owner must purchase \$1,000 in stock in the Mercado Central Cooperativa.



Vendors in the Mercado Central

The required NDC training program (the 16-week course) creates a “feeder” system of entrepreneurs for the Mercado Central. To date, there have been three 16-week entrepreneurial training classes attended by over 60 entrepreneurs; there is also an ongoing waiting list to get into the class. The close connection between NDC and the Mercado Central assures the Mercado Central members that they will not have a problem filling stalls that are vacated in the future due to the closing of a business or moving out to a larger storefront.

The marketing and feasibility study done through the Whittier CDC lays out three categories of the typical Mercado Central consumer. Examining the following hypothetical visits to the Mercado Central can give a sense of the individual businesses in the Mercado Central as well as insight into the overall mixed retail strategy behind the Mercado Central project.

Neighborhood Latino Residents as Mercado Central Consumers

The typical Latino shopper lives in the neighborhood and may stop in at the Mercado Central to send a package to relatives in Mexico through one vendor, buy fresh tortillas from another, a dozen tamales from a third, and a bag of dried peppers from another. This shopper will pass several booths selling Latino clothes and shoes, a booth selling typical Latino party novelties and cards, and will make a note to come back the following week since there are important birthdays coming up. As this shopper turns to leave, he or she will see a leather soccer ball imported from Mexico that represents the perfect gift for a child in the family. Most conversations will be in Spanish with people the shopper knows; most shoppers will also make new acquaintances through the Mercado Central shopping experience.



Employees of a Tortilla Factory in the Mercado Central

Latinos from Outside the Neighborhood as Mercado Central Consumers

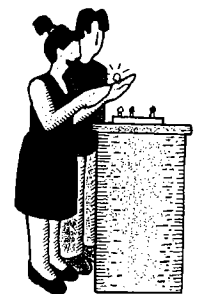
A second kind of customer is someone from the Latino community in the broader metropolitan area. This type of customer spends \$10-\$20 dollars and returns to the Mercado Central once or twice during the week, thus circulating money he or she has earned through the local economy to other members of the Latino community. The sense that the Mercado Central is a Latino institution will motivate them to become loyal shoppers. This type appreciates having contributed to the development of a Latino institution that builds Latino businesses and employs Latinos. These shoppers will be drawn by the availability of Latino clothing and will



stock up on food products or other specialty items not available from American retailers. Their purchase totals will be higher but will occur less frequently.

Non-Latinos as Mercado Central Consumers

A third type of customer is the non-Latino who seeks a unique international experience. This shopper may be looking to enjoy an evening of Latin music or food; he or she may be drawn to the available arts and crafts that are a reminder of past Latin American vacations. This customer will target the craft artisans, will visit the Mercado Central infrequently, but could generate high individual sales on every visit.





Fresh and Dried Flower Business at the Mercado Central

Currently, the anchor tenants in the Mercado Central include a variety of fresh and prepared food vendors. More than 50% of the Mercado Central's total sales is drawn from these merchants, who represent the principle draw for customers. There are five food court vendors, a coffee/juice bar, a bakery, fresh fruit and grocery market, fresh meat market, and a tortilla manufacturer situated in the Mercado Central (see Resources section for complete list of Mercado Central businesses). The majority of capital improvements by the Mercado Central Cooperativa went to develop the kitchen and equipment needs of these vendors.

Cooperative Development

During the Mercado Central development period, the coordinating committee met 2-4 times each week and

worked directly with Emily Anderson, a cooperative consultant. The coordinating committee continued to meet until the first membership meeting was held in 1996, when the first members of the Mercado Central Cooperativa board of directors were elected. With the development of the Board of Directors, three operating committees were established. These committees were:

- ❑ Membership
- ❑ Promotional activities
- ❑ Market management.

Often, the financial benefits derived from commercial developments are limited to one individual or business. The Mercado Central Cooperativa represents an intentional design that had the potential to spread the opportunity for and financial benefit from business development to a broad

¹⁵ Becky George, owner of Fiesta Flower and Design, Board President beginning in 2002.

network of local families. The Mercado Central provides opportunities for ownership at two levels. First, each vendor is an owner in the cooperative itself. Second, mature businesses that have readied themselves — through experience and customer base — to move out of the Mercado Central are in a strong position to buy other storefront space on Lake Street. With the maturity that results after 5-10 years of business experience in the more protected cooperative setting, Mercado Central business owners have a much better chance of success when they launch out on their own as independents.



Row of Restaurants in the Mercado Central

The Mercado Central Cooperativa leases space from the building owner, PPL, and is also very strategic in terms of how it leases space to vendors. The Mercado Central leases the first floor to start-up vendors and assumes responsibility for marketing, maintenance, cleaning, and security for the first floor. PPL leases out the second floor and is responsible for its maintenance, cleaning, and security. PPL is also responsible for overall exterior maintenance and security as well as parking lot maintenance and security. The Mercado Central board of directors currently holds an option to purchase the entire building at such time in the next 10 years it can afford to do so. The cooperative employs one staff person, a manager who runs the market and provides business support to the vendors.

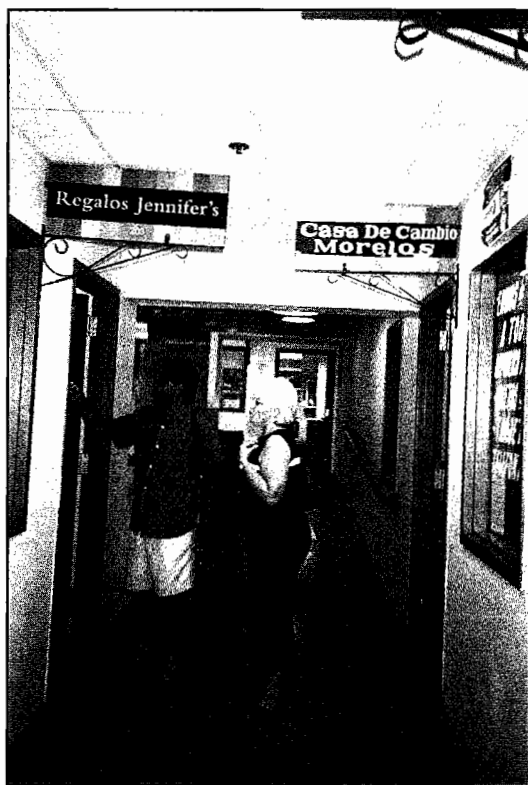
Over the course of the development, the relationship between PPL and the Mercado Central Cooperativa has experienced typical landlord/tenant tensions and conflicts. During the real estate development stages of the project, PPL and the Mercado Central board met weekly or bi-monthly until the development was completed. The purpose of these meetings was to enhance the balance of power and decision-making between the Mercado Central board and PPL. Board members raised important issues and discussed concerns, vendor needs and ideas, and changes to the original plans. After the physical development of the facility, PPL and the Mercado Central board met monthly. Currently, board members

and PPL sit down annually to evaluate the performance of the Mercado Central and establish an operating budget for the coming year.

Ongoing support from Emily Anderson, Whittier, and NDC continue to help familiarize members

with their role(s) in the development of a viable cooperative business.

Establish communication and check-in systems to handle conflict and tensions between partners



Customers at a Gift Store in the Mercado Central

RESULTS:
MERCADO CENTRAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The many results of the Mercado Central effort reflect the goals of the various partners in the development effort. These results have been achieved at the individual and community levels, and have increased the well-being of the community and its members in a variety of ways. The financial benefits of the project have been impressive, but the more general community and leadership benefits that have resulted from the project also represent important outcomes of the Mercado Central effort.

What Does the Mercado Central Represent?

1. A model of asset-based community development
2. A small business incubator
3. A revitalization strategy
4. A community gathering place
5. A bridge between old and new community members¹⁶

Mercado Central: A Model of Asset-Based Community Development

The Mercado Central was created through the commitment of local Latino community members combining their skills, abilities, and dreams to create an economic opportunity that none of them could create on their own. Because the Mercado Central was built from within the community, the community was able to leverage outside resources to support its unified vision and goals.

The Mercado Central is a result of the coming together of a number of community groups in partnership:

The Mercado Central is particularly important, for it's a model of cooperation between immigrant churchgoers, the broad faith community, nonprofit urban institutions, city neighborhoods, federal and local government, lenders and philanthropic donors. *Leonard Inskip, Star Tribune 7/6/99*

The powerful vision presented to multiple investors was based on the fact that the Mercado Central was built on the collection of talents and experiences present within the Latino community itself. This fact was instrumental in the Mercado Central's success as an economic development project.

This project was unique from the start. I have been doing economic development work for 14 years, never have I had banks calling me to say, "We want to invest in this project." It happened here. The power and uniqueness

¹⁶ Adapted from a presentation by Rachel Dolan of the Neighborhood Development Center, Inc.

of this project was palatable to all who saw it. *John Flory, Business Development, Whittier CDC*

The leaders of the Mercado Central project were very focused on their two-pronged strategy to bring the Mercado Central into existence. They needed to create a mechanism to continuously draw potential entrepreneurs from *within* the community into the project as well as draw *outside* resources (the city, funders, government, other business owners, etc.) into the project. Marketing the unique assets of the Latino community became the mechanism to draw both elements together.

Mercado Central: A Small Business Incubator

The intent of the Mercado Central is to be a mechanism for entrepreneurs to have access to capital financing, technical assistance, and ongoing support as they venture into business ownership. For this reason, it is a requirement for all merchants in the Mercado Central to be graduates of the 16-week entrepreneurial training course offered by Neighborhood Development Center. On completion of the course, a business owner can apply for entry into the Mercado Central.

Over half of the businesses in the Mercado Central are first time, start-up microbusinesses. The Mercado Central incorporates a number of business “incubator” services to maximize the potential success of its members. This is unique in that most business incubators across the country are for high-tech companies or for companies sharing industrial space. It is very unusual to create a “retail incubator” business. In this case, it made sense given the targeted entrepreneurs. The small business stalls rent for \$350 per month; restaurants pay \$900 per month and did not have to build out kitchens (basic kitchen provided). Because of the open Mercado Central layout, all businesses can share customers and client traffic. The unique emphasis on layout and an environment that duplicates Latino markets is attractive to customers.

The Neighborhood Development Center works with the merchants to clarify the technical assistance needed for merchants in general as well as to provide individualized advice and problem solving to merchants. Because the merchants are all graduates of the entrepreneurial training course, and they are jointly located, the cost of delivering business services is minimized. General services offered include:

- ❑ Legal assistance – e.g., sales tax advice, incorporation of business entity.
- ❑ Sales & marketing – joining together marketing dollars allows each merchant to advertise his or her businesses to a broader market than otherwise possible.
- ❑ Bookkeeping.
- ❑ Business planning – available on a one-on-one basis.
- ❑ Personal technical assistance available with an on-site business advisor (20 hours per week).

Mercado Central: A Revitalization Strategy

All around the country, cities are experiencing the impact of economic and social change, and most have experienced some degree of disinvestment. The Latino neighborhood in Minneapolis, home to the Mercado Central, was no different. Lake Street, a commercial street that historically was the center of commerce for decades, began to change in the 1960s. Older established businesses closed down, homeowners fled the city, city taxes were reduced, and ultimately city services could not keep up with the need to upgrade the aging infrastructure.

By 1970, Lake Street was known as a “seedy” district with adult sex businesses, bars, and liquor stores. The story is all too common across America. Turn-around strategies have included identifying key properties for development on a commercial corridor. Good solid “pioneering businesses” are expected to draw additional development to fill in the gaps. Over time, a commercial corridor can be transformed, providing a key deterrent to crime. Business owners along the corridor naturally establish a stake in the community, which encourages their collective voice demanding reinvestment by the public sector. A “virtual circle” is thus established that leads to reinvestment in a community.

The Mercado Central is housed on a strategic corner of Lake Street and Bloomington Avenue in Minneapolis. Its presence, along with active involvement of member merchants, can contribute to the work already being done by local business and neighborhood associations.

When the Mercado Central and the other projects draw people, Lake Street will become more active, more inviting. The gaps between projects should start to fill with additional businesses. *Leonard Inskip, Star Tribune, 7/6/99*

Mercado Central: A Community Gathering Space

The Mercado Central becomes the province of families, mostly Latino, who find it a comfortable place in which to socialize. *J. Trout Lowen, Siren, Oct./Nov. 1999*

Traditional mercados in Latin American cities are in the center of town. They are centrally located because not only are they the commercial center for a community, but they also serve as a social center. The Mercado Central follows this long tradition. The Mercado Central is designed to be an informal place for families to eat and socialize. It is a venue for public forums of particular interest to Latino families. Forums in the first year included topics on immigration, the 2000 Census, and county resources. It has hosted Catholic Church services on special occasions and holidays. The Mercado Central has also been a mechanism for distributing information to the community, as well as a social hub hosting dances, concerts, poetry, and other cultural events.

Mercado Central: A Bridge between Old and New Community Members

The Latino community has often been stereotyped as low-wage farm workers with few transferable skills. The Mercado Central challenges those stereotypes. The Mercado Central demonstrates in a visible way to the entire Minneapolis community the success of Latino business people. That Latinos are savvy entrepreneurs and community leaders. In the development stage, Mercado Central members were aware of the opportunity to build local leaders, and the decision to form a cooperative was a deliberate one. They wanted the businesses not to be competitive, but to establish a common sense of collective success. Each individual is responsible for his or her business success, but everyone's success enhances each individual. These business leaders serve as role models to the entire community.

The Mercado Central creates a bridge between Latino community members and the non-Latino community. Schools have already used the Mercado Central as an educational destination for field trips. The Mercado Central is a safe environment in which individuals or groups can explore another culture. Food, products, people, and environment all share the telling of the story.

Today, the Mercado Central includes over 40 established businesses. The Mercado Central is a viable commercial space. It is the hub of a community; a place for families; a place of pride and culture; a Latino Place. It is a testament to what the power of community can do.

Financial Benefits of the Mercado Central

The Mercado Central has brought enormous economic benefit to the individual entrepreneurs, to local workers, and to the Bloomington/Lake Street business community and city of Minneapolis. Specific financial outcomes include:

- ❑ \$2.4 million dollars generated to invest in the purchase and renovation of three dilapidated buildings on Lake Street.
- ❑ Over \$277,000 dollars in small business loans made to new Latino businesses.
- ❑ Forty-three businesses established and/or expanded.
- ❑ Over \$2 million in first-year sales at Mercado Central businesses, benefiting both the owners — many of whom are local residents — and the neighborhood itself.
- ❑ Seventy people employed by Mercado Central businesses, many of them local residents who spend their money in local stores.
- ❑ More than \$6,500 paid out weekly in wages to employees, most of whom live in the local neighborhood.
- ❑ Over \$80,000 in sales tax paid out by Mercado Central merchants in their first year of operation.

Because the coordinating committee had the insight to design the project as it did, many of the financial benefits *remain in the neighborhood*. Creating an economic engine like the Mercado Central allowed neighborhood income to remain within the local economy where it could be spent again and again. This recycling of income produces ever-increasing neighborhood income (e.g., through salaries and the profits earned by local owners). This virtual cycle multiplies the economic benefit of the Mercado Central, as well as establishing it as a new economic asset for the entrepreneurs, the Latino community, and the entire neighborhood.



A sustainable local economy is created as local people start businesses, spend more of their money locally, and more fully engage in the commercial life of the community. As more people in the local community have money to spend, and when they spend more of it locally, the neighborhood economy grows and the benefits of the initial investments are multiplied again and again.

Community Benefits of the Mercado Central

The financial benefit figures capture only a snapshot of the economic value of the Mercado Central to the community. The figures do not include the long-term impact of the Mercado Central on the overall Lake Street revitalization effort. While some of the benefits are immediate and obvious, the hidden value of a retail incubator that can nurture and support emerging businesses until they are experienced enough to expand and be successful elsewhere will only be apparent after many years. By 2002, two of the original Mercado Central entrepreneurs had already expanded to storefronts on Lake Street. One, a furniture builder who needed additional space, moved to another location in the neighborhood. Another entrepreneur maintained her retail stall in the Mercado Central but also opened a larger store in a nearby Lake Street building. Both have continued to operate successfully. In early 2003, more business owners are considering embarking on independent commercial ventures outside the Mercado Central. In addition, the presence of the Mercado Central has encouraged other Latino business to locate nearby. A Latino grocery store has opened across the street, and a number of Latino professionals, such as attorneys and accountants, have located their offices within a block or two of the Mercado Central. What has happened has attracted the attention of the larger Minneapolis community as well, and enthusiastic support for the success on Lake Street continues to grow.



Local People on the Opening Day of the Mercado Central

The Mercado Central effort also resulted in the creation of two new Latino community groups: Sagrado Corazon, a church, and the Mercado Central Cooperativa, a business enterprise. Both of these entities emerged where no organized voice existed previously; both created organized structures through which members have accomplished their specific community-building goals. As a result of the Mercado Central effort, these new community associations represent new mechanisms through which the Latino community can mobilize for the continuing support of the Mercado Central vision, and nurture community members' dreams for the future. Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the Mercado Central work is the creation of these sustainable community groups dedicated to building on the assets of their members.



Leadership Benefits of the Mercado Central

The most important impact of the Mercado Central community-building effort has been in the hearts and minds of the community's residents and families, and there are no statistics that can adequately quantify this impact. One aspect of the change is the degree to which local people have assumed leadership positions on activities related to the Mercado Central, the cooperative, local associations, and the broader Minneapolis community. Individual business owners have improved their skills and their confidence levels for contributing to all sorts of local and more extensive community discussions. They had the positive experience of seeing their personal

efforts contribute to their own improved financial well being and the commercial health of the community, and gained the kind of self-assurance that comes from that triumph. Members of the cooperative board of directors are recognized as community leaders among members of the Latino community and among local business associations. Some cooperative members have also enjoyed recognition in the larger Minneapolis community. A former Mercado Central board president was asked to join the Governor's taskforce on small business development. Another Mercado Central leader was invited to be part of an advisory committee to the Archbishop of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Without their experience and leadership roles within the Mercado Central effort, these individuals' capacities might not have been recognized by these mainstream institutions.

Mercado Central leaders were asked to help develop a similar marketplace in the city of St. Paul, which is now called the Plaza Latina. Mercado Central leaders continue to use their extensive experience in small business development and training and work with immigrant groups throughout the Twin Cities area. They have formally created the Latino Economic Development Center, a new nonprofit that applies the Mercado Central lessons for the benefit of other Latino community groups.

LESSONS: LEARNING THROUGH DOING

The participants in the development of the Mercado Central learned a number of important lessons. This chapter highlights the lessons that occurred at each step in this community-building process.

Quality not Quantity

When engaging in asset-based development, it is important to realize the opportunity to harness local energy and mobilize local assets toward building the relationships that allow individuals to express their talents and dreams. Isaiah learned that their efforts with the Community Talent Inventory would have been wasted had they not also invested time in building connections between the assets they identified through the inventory process. Isaiah conducted 75 inventories and then turned its attention to the themes that emerged from them rather than pursuing ever more inventories. Moving very quickly to focus on the opportunities and dreams represented by the first 75 individuals — doing fewer inventories but in the right way — was the key to success. Without care, mapping local assets and inventorying local capacities can soon become just another exercise in data collection. Some community groups get caught up in the process of asset mapping to the extent that it becomes a project in itself. The emphasis shifts from gathering sufficient information to guide local action, to the unfocused pursuit of information from every member of the community. Once this happens, communities become overwhelmed with the volume of information they have collected, and their enthusiasm turns to discouragement because their original goals are no longer at the center of their energies. Isaiah learned that it is the quality of the information, not the quantity that matters, and that less is often more. Isaiah very quickly moved to action that took advantage of its findings. Because Isaiah allowed the inventories to guide the action, and because they moved rapidly to mobilize the assets they identified, community enthusiasm was maintained and the Mercado Central was born.

Less Is Often More



Know Your Goals; Build on Proven Strategies

Knowing how information will ultimately be used is critical to a successful capacity inventory effort. Before getting started, every community group should know what

information it wants to gather and what it will do with the information once it is collected. Asking questions out of curiosity is only an exercise; directed questions whose responses serve a purpose are more effective.

Blending an asset-based mindset with traditional community organizing techniques can create a powerful combination of hope, energy, and action that can enable a group to tap into individual talents and move them collectively toward a shared vision of a better community.

*Have Clear Ideas for
Potential Action*

Capitalizing on the energy that begins to surface by developing an association of citizens, in this case a new church, can create a vehicle for ongoing support and development of community leadership, ideas, and action.

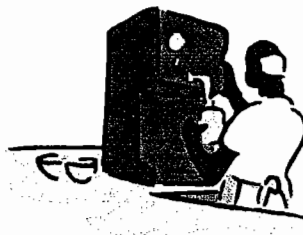


Family Shoppers at the Mercado Central

Balanced and Consistent Leadership is Critical

Effective community-building work also requires attention to nurturing the natural leadership of local people as it emerges through their involvement. It is important to consider how leadership roles can be shared among people in such a way that the skills and abilities of each person complement those of other participants. Salvador Miranda and Juan Linares were both leaders who respected each other's skills and perspectives. When asked about the leadership abilities of these two individuals, community members responded that they were a combination of Salvador's strong and strategic "head," and Juan's relationship-oriented "heart." Both qualities were vital to Isaiah's success in organizing community and church leaders to build the Sagrado Corazon church. The kinds of leadership Juan and Salvador brought to the effort were also key to identifying the many partners needed to build the Mercado

Central dream. Neither could have led this endeavor alone; each would have lacked the specific leadership capacities of the other. Especially for the Latino community, it was critical to have multidimensional leadership dedicated both to developing authentic relationships while focusing on the deployment of multiple strategies.



In the Mercado Central project, the original cooperative board members became the community voice and local guides for what the Mercado Central would ultimately become. Many board members invested heavily in the development of the cooperative, putting their individual businesses at some risk as a result. There was consistent commitment on the part of the Latino community businesses to work collectively toward the creation of a mutually owned cooperative.

It was critical that Juan Linares and John Flory were paid by their organizations to provide consistent and ongoing support in their various areas of expertise. The timeline stretched beyond the initial timeline set by all parties, yet staff were allowed to remain on the project without interruption. At different periods, both Juan and John each played the role of supporter, problem solver, convener, negotiator, coach, etc. Identifying the value and necessity for these roles to be played by people who have earned the trust of the community is critical.

*Everyone is a Leader;
Everyone Contributes*



Action Strengthens Action

When engaged in community-building work, there are always conflicting demands for the time and energy of participants. It can sometimes seem more efficient to work independently than with a group, and it sometimes seems that one person can make a faster and better decision than a group of people. But the Mercado Central project proved that in a crunch, it is almost always better to put more energy into collective action than individual action. When a group of people engage in developing a vision, strategize how to achieve it, and then invest in making it

happen, their relationships are solidified and they have built a sense of community. Each shared endeavor leads to greater strength and unity as a group. The learning experience from working together helps to build a common history that also builds trust among people.

The church-building work done by Isaiah provided many opportunities for the entrepreneurs to work together before they moved into the tasks associated with building the Mercado Central. Early efforts of working together cumulatively added up to a greater assurance of their success with the Mercado Central itself. Spending time developing a cooperative legal structure was complex work that could not have been achieved without the earlier group success in building the church. Developing the cooperative allowed leaders the experience of collective ownership and action, positioning them to do even greater community work.

*Experience in Group
Decision Making Builds
Capacity for Greater
Collective Work*



Media Savvy is Important

The media can be a powerful community-building tool. Isaiah's effective use of the media helped change the perception of the Latino community in the larger Twin Cities region. Too often, the media reinforce ethnic, racial, and class stereotypes. This is often because those working in community do not develop relationships with the media. One of Salvador Miranda's strategies was to develop several key relationships with columnists and local reporters. He was able to inform them of newsworthy activities associated with the Mercado Central project. Salvador was also able to frame the story and position information according to the view of the community, which helped to educate and frame the issues and topics for the reporters.

*Be Prepared to Frame
and Label Your Effort for
Media Consumption*



It Will Take Twice as Long as You Think

When involving community members: Increased effort is needed to be inclusive and assure ongoing ownership and authority by community members. Consider creative structures and ways to communicate to keep an ever-expanding network of people involved. The broader and deeper the organization stretches in community, the more power and recognition achieved toward the goals.

When involving multiple partner organizations: As a general rule, multiply the timeline by the number of diverse partners involved. Communities often want to partner with many local groups but underestimate the necessity for someone to coordinate and facilitate communications on an ongoing basis among all the partners on a project. Community-building work is labor intensive and requires continuity in leadership, coordination, and communication.

When involving multiple agendas: Expect different agendas from and conflict among members of an alliance of support organizations. Clearly identify the roles each organization will assume in the project. Identify the goals and objectives of each organization and be clear about how the project will benefit from their work. Develop a mechanism for negotiating conflicts when they arise.

Each partner organization may offer support to distinct parts of a community's agenda. Community members in the Mercado Central project were often torn between a desire to focus solely on starting their business and the urging and desire of Isaiah to provide leadership in community organizing activities. These differences in goals among partners created tensions and conflicts that had to be taken seriously and resolved. Clarifying expectations up front among the various partner groups can help to reduce the need for conflict resolution later on.

Think Long-Term Sustainability from the Outset

In community-building projects, maintaining involvement by community members is critical. Often a project begins with high levels of involvement, but after a few months, only a handful of people are doing all the work. When this happens, the project has lost the energy of the community.

Consider three strategies to avoid such a situation:

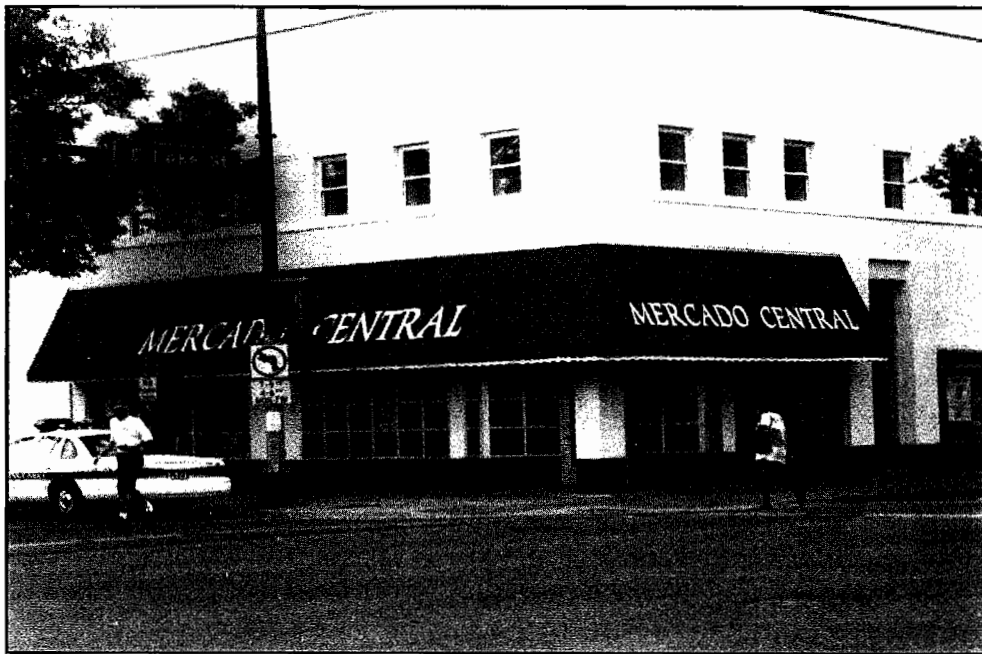
- 1) Make certain short-term "wins" occur (small, intermediate goals that can be accomplished easily) so that community members see results that keep them active and involved. Working on church issues provided many such positive results along the way to the larger goal, and these kept people involved during the long development process of the Mercado Central.
- 2) Expect turnover in participation as people's lives and commitments change. Expect that some people will experience burnout and will need to take a break

from the action. In anticipation of this inevitable situation, community groups *must* have a strategy for developing leaders in an ongoing way. The entrepreneurship classes that supported the Mercado Central vendors served such a purpose for the project and became an ongoing source of new leadership.

3) Create ongoing mechanisms for individuals to connect with one another and act jointly. The creation of a church and a legal cooperative entity were critical community mechanisms that allowed for sustained local action. The Mercado Central Cooperativa is the ongoing source of continuity, development, and operational support for Latino businesses. Successful communities need organizing vehicles to maintain and develop community infrastructures.

Follow Through is Valuable

A project as complex as the Mercado Central must be entered into with a long-term commitment. Currently, although many successes can be identified within certain aspects of the project, much of the impact remains to be seen. As an organizing vehicle for the Latino community, it has been a clear success. As a demonstration of the positive contribution low-income immigrants can provide to an inner-city community, the Mercado Central has had tremendous success. As a public relations project, it has been successful. The larger-scale economic development impact, however, will take several more years before it can effectively be measured.



The Mercado Central, at the Corner of Lake Street and Bloomington Avenue in Minneapolis

The complexity of the Mercado Central project required ongoing support well beyond the official grand opening. The Mercado Central project is still heavily dependent on PPL, Whittier CDC, and NDC working consistently with the board of directors to address endless changes, adaptations, and modifications to assure growth and success for individual vendors and the cooperative itself.

Conclusion

Within the story of the Mercado Central there are other stories to understand. There is the story of Isaiah, a coalition committed to developing leaders and building organizing skills among community members. Isaiah's leadership training and organizing techniques successfully assisted leaders in building the first Twin Cities church constructed from the dreams and faith of diverse Latin American immigrants. Isaiah also linked Latino community members to church allies, nonprofit organizations with needed expertise, and through media connections, with the Twin Cities community-at-large. Sagrado Corazon as a church establishes a powerful faith-based association from which Latinos can be unified in achieving their dreams.

There is the story of the Mercado Central Cooperativa itself, made up of Latino small business entrepreneurs. Individuals with little financial security risked \$1,000 each and placed it in a cooperative where success depends on unity of purpose and community effort. This new association of Latino businesses, with support and guidance of partner organizations then built the Mercado Central, drawing almost \$3 million dollars of investment to an inner city neighborhood that others had abandoned.

The building of Sagrado Corazon and the Mercado Central stories are founded on the use of the gifts, talents and personal potential of individuals. In each story the actors are community members. They are both the beneficiaries *and* change agents writing their story. As a famous Spanish saying notes, "Community lives when it is the subject of its own history, not an object of history someone else writes." The creation of the Mercado Central has allowed the Latino community in Minneapolis to be "the subject of its own history."

We await additional stories of success, gifts, and benefits that will result as the Latino community in Minneapolis continues to build and strengthen itself from within.



EPILOGUE

Since this story was originally written, the Mercado Central in Minneapolis continues to evolve in fascinating directions. We wanted to leave you with an up-to-date account of the status of the Mercado Central itself. Here are a few highlights.

Current Facts

- ❑ The Mercado Central Cooperativa Board continues to develop. There has been continuing commitment by the merchants with more applicants to board seats than positions available. Elections have occurred and new leadership continues to emerge.
- ❑ There are 43 businesses currently in the Mercado Central. Twenty-seven are start-up businesses, three moved from a previous location, and 13 opened a second location at the Mercado Central.
- ❑ During the first year in operation, 5 businesses have closed and have been replaced with five new start-up businesses.
- ❑ Mercado Central businesses have created over 56 jobs.

Ongoing Challenges

- ❑ Although perhaps one-third of the business members of the cooperative are doing very well, an equal number have struggled in their business ventures. Five businesses have moved or closed down, and another 3-4 existing businesses may be forced to make similar decisions. In each case, a new business has been recruited to keep the building fully occupied. However, it should be noted that the cost of supporting new business development is ongoing and includes both successes and failures.
- ❑ Costs of renovating of the building exceeded budget predictions by well over \$500,000, incurring significant unanticipated debt on the building. Operating costs are also higher than expected due largely to increases in energy costs. As a result, the building lost \$50,000 in cash flow in the first year of operations, and anticipates the loss of \$35,000 in the second year. The cost overruns and losses have placed the owner of the building (PPL) under financial strain.
- ❑ The nonprofit partners, along with the Mercado Central Cooperativa, have developed and implemented a turnaround strategy to improve financial performance of the building itself. This includes rent increases, new management contracts with NDC and Whittier to provide transitional management for the cooperative, as well as new property management for the building.

- The partners decided to restructure the underlying financing of the building to insure positive cash flow and a stable future for the entire project. For the real estate restructuring, McKnight Foundation provided a grant that paid off the entire first mortgage on the building (approximately \$400,000), the balance of the co-op loan of approximately \$120,000, and some additional funds for immediate improvements. The total grant was \$655,000. McKnight provided the funds under the condition that the plan for restructuring resulted in majority ownership of the building by the co-op over three years. Under the restructuring, the co-op, Whittier CDC, NDC, and PPL are all partners in an LLC that was established in January 2003 — with each partner currently owning a share of the building. The McKnight Foundation also provided a grant of \$40,000 to subsidize management costs for two years (\$20,000 each year), while Christian Sharing Fund provided \$7,500. Over the next three years, if the operations continue to go well and a cash reserve is built, Whittier CDC and NDC (which each currently own 25%) will sell their shares to the co-op for \$1, resulting in majority ownership by the co-op. The co-op will then have the option to buy out PPL's share for \$250,000 or continue with PPL as a minority partner in the ownership.
- Through the refinancing, a pathway has been created for the co-op to take ownership. The financial status of the building is now strong and should continue to improve. In about two years, the building begins paying off city debt, and this obligation is expected to proceed as planned. McKnight's commitment in the restructuring set the project on a solid financial footing. The next three years are an opportunity for the co-op to gradually become accustomed to managing the entire building. The co-op will take over responsibility for leasing the second floor, which will mean that eventually, all tenants will become co-op members.

Positive Outcomes

- The original business plan had anticipated total sales of \$2.6 million by year three. By the second year of operations, total sales reached \$3.5 million, greatly surpassing original projections.
- One of the largest businesses has 10 employees and sales approaching \$500,000 annually.
- Another business will surpass total sales of \$400,000 this year.
- Seven businesses will report sales totals between \$200,000 and \$350,000.
- Two businesses have opened second storefronts along the Lake Street commercial corridor, based on the initial success of their Mercado Central site.
- Five other businesses are seeking a second location, some outside of Minneapolis.

-
- The redevelopment of the buildings to accommodate the co-op and the strong customer traffic drawn to the area by the Mercado Central has contributed to a revitalization of commercial businesses and buildings along several blocks of Lake Street around the Mercado Central. Numerous new Latino businesses have opened nearby, and several buildings have been purchased and renovated by Latino owners.
 - Media coverage of the Mercado Central since its opening has focused on the contributions being made by Latino immigrants to tough Minneapolis neighborhoods. Media messages from the cooperative have deliberately focused on the entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to the family-centered businesses being developed by the cooperative and other Latino business owners. This coverage has contributed to a positive response to the many changes in the city brought about by the rapid growth of the Latino community in Minneapolis.
 - John Flory of Whittier CDC and Ramon Leon, a former Mercado Central Cooperativa board member and officer, have started the Latino Economic Development Center. They are currently working to develop, train, and provide business assistance to emerging Latino businesses.

RESOURCES:
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AT ISAIAH

This brief review of community organizing techniques is offered as a basic introduction to how organizing can be used as a complement to asset-based community development. This basic structure and technique of Isaiah's organizing work is abbreviated directly from the Gamaliel Foundation's training program.¹⁷

Establishing a Core Team

A core team is the term used to refer to establishing a committee structure within the church from which to organize the congregation (usually 5-7 people). The elements of a core team are the basic elements you would expect to find in any church committee:

1. Leadership: A list of identifiable people in positions of leadership.
2. Membership: A list of names of people to be invited to each monthly meeting.
3. Place and Time: A monthly meeting place and time.
4. Notification: The core team meetings are mentioned in weekly bulletins or other communication outlets of the church.
5. Budget: Committee work is an established part of the church budget.

Creating a Culture of Intentional and Intensive Relationship Building

This is accomplished through the use of "one-on-ones," a meeting technique in which one person meets individually with another to discover underlying motivations, self-interest, and ambitions. The result of a successful one-on-one is the discovery of a common agenda for action.

Carl Valdez, a member of the core team conducted almost 200 one-on-ones as Sagrado Corazon was organized. This relationship-building contributed to the core team's sense of community as well as to the building of community within the church.

Recruitment, Training, Development, and Agitation of Local Leaders

As Sagrado Corazon was organized, the core team conducted the Community Talent Inventories after church on Sundays along with group discussions on dreams and possibilities. This inventory of talent became essential information for mobilizing the church around microbusiness development as the focus for economic development action.

¹⁷ The Gamaliel Foundation, 203 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 808, Chicago, IL 60601. Tel: (312) 357-2639. E-mail: GAMALIELUS@aol.com; Website: www.GAMALIEL.org

Taking the Church into the Public Arena

So it can live out the gospel mandate of justice and deliver on the self-interest of its people, Isaiah brings entire congregations into the public arena. Sagrado Corazon and the Mercado Central project are examples of Isaiah defining the issue of economic development and inviting churches to connect their team with Isaiah to achieve success. The core team of Sagrado Corazon developed ownership in the creation of the Mercado Central. It is no coincidence that a number of the original members of the Mercado Central board of directors were from Sagrado Corazon and the entrepreneurial training classes were established at Sagrado Corazon. The church has since used its core team meetings to address other self-identified community issues, such as unfair housing practices of local landlords.

Church-based organizing that influenced the creation of the Mercado Central

- ❑ Moved people from isolation to being connected to a community vision.
- ❑ Recognizing their common faith and belief in God and desire to build their own church gave a disconnected community an anchor among many diverse Latinos.
- ❑ Created a common identity and community that was not there.
- ❑ One-on-ones gave people a way to approach one another. Knowing this was a “tool” to work from gave people a sense of “duty” to carry out the one-on-ones as their contribution to building the church.
- ❑ Having an organized church made Minneapolis seem more like “home,” given the role of the church in Latin America. A certain comfort and trust felt natural among Latinos who had not worked together in the past.
- ❑ Gave people training and experience at “being a group.”
- ❑ Built identity with their church (Sagrado Corazon) and allowed them to realize the church connection to multiple other brother/sister church communities through the 30 churches in Interfaith Action (later 69 churches in Isaiah). The Mercado Central built business connections with other local businesses on Lake Street.
- ❑ Developed the courage to address the immigration issues many of its Latino members faced. Through this effort, many Latinos felt the support of the non-Latino community for the first time, which gave them a sense of being valued and recognized.

RESOURCES
MERCADO CENTRAL TIMELINE

1990

- U.S. Census reports 13,978 Latinos in Minneapolis.
- Juan Linares is first challenged by five Latinos to find a place to worship in Spanish.

1991

- April — First mass held in Spanish draws 35 people.
- Mid-year — 100 regulars attend the masses.
- December — Carl Valdez begins doing one-on-one visits with Latino families.

1992

- February-August — Carl Valdez continues doing one-on-one visits in homes.
- September — Carl Valdez finishes up visitations and invites everyone to a Spanish mass.
- Fourth Sunday in September — Mass is held at St. Stephen's and attended by 250 people. Afterward, a meeting is held in basement of church where people begin talking about their dreams and community concerns.

1995

- Comunidad Catolica del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus is created and is the first Spanish parish to join Interfaith Action (renamed Isaiah in the late 1990s).
- Fr. Lorenzo Hubbard is brought to Sagrado Corazon as their first full-time Spanish-speaking priest.
- Juan Linares attends the Gamaliel Foundation's training.
- The Joint Ministry Project merges with Interfaith Action (renamed Isaiah in the late 1990s), giving it a membership of 25 churches.
- August — the Community Talent Inventory is administered after mass and a group meeting held to discuss entrepreneurial opportunities.
 - Juan approaches John Flory of Whittier CDC to help with business development interests of the Latino church members.
 - November — Juan & John approach WIND to bring Spanish entrepreneurial classes to Minneapolis.

1996

- ❑ Spring — Mike Temali initiates entrepreneur training classes.
- ❑ Mercado Central first board of directors established from graduates of entrepreneur training.
- ❑ Project for Pride in Living (PPL) approaches the Mercado Central board and suggests they consider purchasing and renovating a property on Lake Street.

1997

- ❑ First grant was received from Powderhorn Park Business Association to PPL to help revitalize neighborhood.
- ❑ Summer — PPL targets property on corner of Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street.

1998

- ❑ The Latino population in Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs is estimated to be between 31,600 and 37,920 by HACER.
- ❑ January — A purchase agreement is reached on target property by PPL.
- ❑ June — Construction is started on Mercado Central building.
- ❑ Interfaith Action changes its name to Isaiah.

1999

- ❑ June — Construction on Mercado Central is completed.
- ❑ July — Businesses begin to move into Mercado Central.
- ❑ August 1 — The Mercado Central opens its doors.

2000

- ❑ Spanish entrepreneur training is being held in both Minneapolis and St Paul.
- ❑ The first Community Talent Inventory is conducted at a Spanish parish in St Paul.
- ❑ Isaiah has grown to 69 parishes.
- ❑ Latino residents on the East Side of St. Paul begin consulting with Mercado Central leaders and community partners to establish a similar marketplace in St. Paul.

RESOURCES:
MERCADO CENTRAL PARTNERSHIP

An In-Depth Introduction to the Project's Partners

| Partner | Description | Role in Mercado Central |
|---|--|---|
| Isaiah (Interfaith Action) | A multi-denominational, congregation-based community organization made up of 69 member congregations in Minneapolis and its western suburbs. Isaiah strengthens communities by building relationships, developing leadership, and creating a vehicle for congregations to collectively and publicly fulfill their mission of social action. | Organized Latino community to create Sagrado Corazon church. Conducted Community Talent Inventories among parishioners to identify community members interested or experienced in business development. Maintained connections to the faith-based communities in the local area and became the "glue" among partners in the Mercado Central effort. |
| Whittier Community Development Corporation | Whittier CDC is a nonprofit corporation in the Whittier neighborhood. Whittier provides services that spur the growth of small business and commercial real estate development in the Twin Cities. The CDC's work emphasizes special project development, incubator services, and employment services, all of which intentionally support ethnic diversity in the local economy. | Whittier CDC provided organizational support to the Mercado Central project, including business development, assistance in developing Mercado Central business plans and providing technical assistance as needed, establishing financing plans for individual businesses, and restructuring the debt of the cooperative. |
| Western Initiatives in Neighborhood Development (WIND), Neighborhood Development Center, Inc. | WIND is a Community Development Corporation of Western Bank in St. Paul, Minnesota. Through its nonprofit Neighborhood Development Center (NDC), WIND provides organizations with a variety of capacity-building tools to assist in commercial district revitalization. WIND is dedicated to broad-based community participation in economic development and offers a unique, hands-on approach to training. | Provided specialized entrepreneurial training in Spanish for potential Mercado Central merchants. Delivered technical assistance to Mercado Central businesses. Provided financing to individual businesses. |
| Project for Pride in Living | Project for Pride in Living (PPL) is a nonprofit neighborhood development organization that assists low and moderate income people in becoming self-sufficient by addressing their employment, housing, and neighborhood needs. | PPL acquired the property and through extensive fundraising, was able to fund all of the necessary building renovations for the Mercado Central. PPL was the property owner, principal developer, and general contractor for the project. |

| Partner | Description | Role in Mercado Central |
|--|--|--|
| Mercado Central Board of Directors | An initial group of five individuals representing the Latino business owners and members of the cooperative. | Design operating and governance structure for Mercado Central. Establish equitable ownership plan for individual businesses to have equity interest in Mercado Central. Hire Mercado Central building manager. Plan community events. Joint marketing. Represent the interests of merchants in the ongoing cooperative. |
| Private Foundations and Other Financial Institutions | A long list of financial partners includes Minneapolis Foundation, TCF Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis Community Development Agency, Office of Community Services, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Revitalization, and Phillips Neighborhood Revitalization, (for real estate development); US Bank, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Wedge Community Co-op, Target, El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad, and National Co-op Bank (for cooperative development); Marquette Bank and Wells Fargo Bank (small business loans). | Local foundations were key funders whose investments leveraged other private and public dollars to the Mercado Central project. The foundation's investment legitimized the business plan and vision of the Latino community. Once foundation support was secured, local banks offered loans to the Mercado Central Cooperativa. |
| Project Consultants | Consultants such as Emily Anderson, with 25 years of experience in cooperative development. | During the initial stages of the project, Emily Anderson was hired to help build the cooperative. She worked very closely with the original five-member board of directors, advising them on the details of running a successful cooperative. Emily continues to work with the board on cooperative-related issues as they emerge. |

RESOURCES:
MERCADO CENTRAL COOPERATIVA

Mercado Central – Project Summary

The mission of the Cooperativa Mercado Central is to provide high quality retail space for multiple Hispanic vendors, promote the sale of their products in a traditional market setting, and support the development and growth of member businesses to further the economic progress of the growing Hispanic community in the Twin Cities. The Cooperative provides low and moderate income entrepreneurs the opportunity for the start up of new or the expansion of existing businesses.

The Cooperativa is organized and incorporated as a cooperative with each member purchasing a minimum of \$1,000 in stock. Member/owners are governed by a Board of Directors which sets policy and hires management. The Cooperativa provides financial, educational, and technical support to its members by partnering with non-profit business development organizations such as the Whittier Community Development Corporation and Neighborhood Development Center.

The Mercado Central building opened on July 31, 1999. The 20,000 square feet on the first floor and in the basement rented by the Cooperativa house 36 separate businesses selling a selected variety of products and services targeted to the Hispanic community and the “cross-over” North American market with an interest in Hispanic culture. The second floor is leased to 12 non-cooperative vendors with related businesses.

Three buildings have been combined and reorganized into small stalls to create a northern version of the typical Hispanic market. Non-profit developer Project for Pride in Living purchased and rehabbed the buildings in cooperation with the Cooperativa at a cost of approximately 2.5 million dollars. Funding was provided by a variety of organizations including the Office of Community Services, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency, the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, the National Coop Bank, and numerous private individuals and philanthropic organizations. In order to provide the maximum opportunity for the Cooperativa members, much of the build out expense was absorbed in the development cost and the rents are being kept low (\$6.00/s.f.).

After nine months of operation, the Cooperative is doing well though, as anticipated, some members are more profitable than others. The building is completely full and there is a waiting list of vendors. Public acceptance has been very good and overall business has been increasing steadily.

From Project for Pride in Living, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, 1999.

Give me a fish and I eat for a day; teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime.

Cooperativa Mercado Central 1999 Results

Number of Businesses in the Mercado Cooperative: 43

Business Status:

| | | |
|------------|----|---|
| Closed | 2 | (businesses started up in the Mercado and closed) |
| Start-Up | 27 | (owners were not in business previously) |
| Transplant | 3 | (owners moved their businesses from another location) |
| Expansion | 13 | (owners opened up an additional location) |

Gross Sales:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| \$741,812 | (31 businesses reported unaudited financial information) |
| \$150,000 | (8 businesses' estimated sales based on results of similar businesses) |
| | (4 businesses did not respond) |

Total estimated 1999 sales: **\$891,812**
Estimated sales tax paid: **\$49,000** (based on \$700,000 taxable sales)

Business Organization:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Sole proprietor | 23 |
| Partnership | 7 |
| LLC | 6 |
| Corporation | 7 |

Business Type:

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Retail | 29 |
| Service | 13 |
| Wholesale | 1 |
| Owner Operated | 30 |
| Owner Managed | 5 |
| No response | 8 |

Average hours per week worked in business by owner: (no response from 8 businesses)

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Owner Operated | 66 hours |
| Owner Managed | 23 hours |

Employees: (no response from 8 businesses)

| | | |
|-----------------|----|---|
| Family unpaid | 21 | average of 30 hours per week |
| Family paid | 3 | \$8-\$9/hour, approximately a total of 160 hours/week |
| Non-family paid | 23 | \$6-\$7/hour, approximately a total of 800 hours/week |

Approximately \$6,560 in wages paid per week.

Mercado Central Facts & Figures

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Project Costs | \$2,466,440 |
| Grants | \$1,208,816 |
| Loans | \$1,085,000 |
| Other | \$110,000 |

The project was funded through the generous support of: The Barry Foundation, the Beim Foundation, Burt McGlynn, the Carolyn Foundation, the Federal Office of Community Service, El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad, the General Mills Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency, the National Co-op Bank, Pentair Foundation, the Pohlrad Family Foundation, the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Foundation, TCF Foundation, U.S. Bank, The Wedge Community Co-op, and anonymous donor, and the Amigos of the Mercado.

Project Highlights

Since opening on July 31, 1999, the Mercado Central has served as a home and an incubator to 41 start-up businesses. Of these start-ups, 15% have closed, 22% have moved, 10% were sold, 54% are still open and thriving in the Mercado Central, 8% have expanded with the Mercado, 22% have opened second locations, and 15% are currently looking for expansion opportunities and/or have second locations currently under construction.

Since opening, the Mercado Central businesses have received a variety of awards for excellence in business, including: Tortilleria La Perla, NDC 2001 Small Business of the Year; Cafeteria La Loma, NDC 2002 Latino Business of the Year; Dulceria La Piñata, 2002 City Pages Best Candy Store; Mercado Central, 1999 & 2000 City Pages Best Cheap Eats; Mercado Central, 2000 Amigo Award from El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad, among others.

During its first three years in operation, the Mercado Central has served as a real life language and cultural lab for thousands of elementary, high-school, and college age students. These visits serve as a bridge to the new and growing community in Minnesota, the Latino Community, and help to challenge stereotypes.

The Mercado Central has and continues to serve as a successful economic development model for retail business incubation and commercial corridor revitalization. Many organization, city governments, and private property owners from all over the nation have solicited information about the project in the hopes of replicating it. The first of those, the Plaza Latina, was opened on September 21, 2002.

Sales, Employment, and Taxes

| | 1999 July - December | 2000 January - December | 2001 January - December |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Gross Sales | \$902,517 | \$3,508,000 | \$4,252,000 |
| Employment | 59 | 71 | 89 |
| Est. Sales Tax Paid | \$50,000 | \$190,000 | \$230,000 |

INTERFAITH ACTION

ORGANIZATION

Hispanic Community Talent Inventory (CTI) Orientation Meeting**Santos Rosario****Sunday, February 9, 1997****12:00pm – 1:30pm****Proposed Agenda**

| | | |
|-------|--|---------------------------|
| 12:00 | Welcome and Opening Reflection | Fr. Leahy |
| | Introduction of CTI Sponsoring Organizations | Juan Linares |
| | Overview of CTI process | |
| 12:10 | Present the CTI visit process/inventory form and pair up for CTI visits | |
| 12:15 | CTI visits are conducted | |
| 12:45 | Re-Group | Fr. Leahy Juan Linares |
| 12:50 | De-brief the CTI visits and list the skills, talents, and ambitions that were shared in the visits. Discuss potential directions that the responses offer. | |
| 1:10 | Discuss and decide next steps | Fr. Leahy |
| 1:25 | Evaluate | Juan Linares |
| 1:30 | Adjourn | |

INTERFAITH ACTION

ORGANIZATION

INTERFAITH ACTION INVENTARIO DE HABILIDADES Interfaith Action Community Talent Inventory (CTI)

Visitante _____

Nombre de la persona que visitas _____

Dirección _____

Telefono _____ Institución _____

Enlista las respuestas de las siguientes preguntas.

1. Que crées que tú hagas bien? Por ejemplo: "Yo soy bueno para escuchar," Costura, Hablar en publico, Plomeria, etc., (necesitamos saber habilidades practicas y habilidades sociales).

Alguna vez te han pagado por estas habilidades que tienes?

2. Cundo tú piensas en las avilidades que tienes, cuales crées que sean las que mejor haces y y las que disfrutas más cuado las haces?

Estarias tú interesado en ganar dinero por hacerlas ó por enseñar a alguien más (ejemplo: producers de jardineria, alguien que sabe tejer, bordar, y venderlas a una feria, enseñar carpinteria, etc.).

Has tratado de ganar dinero en alguna habilidad, y que halla resultado? Que paso? Si fracasaste? Que paso?

3. Alguna ves te sientas y piensas en empezar un negocio en tu casa ó en tu vecindario. Que es? Porque no lo empiezas? Que es lo que te a detenido?
4. Cuales son los grupos a los que perteneces? Que es lo que tú haces en estos grupos? (Presidente, Organizador de actividades para recaudar fondos, Tesorero, Lider, etc.).
5. Podriamos enlistar estas habiliddes tuyas y publicarlas a la comunidad? Estarias tú dispuesto a ofrecer estas habilidades ó estas tú interesado en que te paguen por hacerlo?

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

¿QUIENES SOMOS?

Este programa es una colaboración única entre corporaciones de desarrollo comunitario de las Twin Cities:

Hispanic Organizing and Outreach (HOO) es una organización que tiene como base principal la Iglesia. HOO utiliza el inventario de talentos y habilidades para ayudarnos descubrir la riqueza de nuestra comunidad. Por medio de un desarrollo económico, podemos compartir los valores que tenemos unos con otros.

Interfaith Action es una organización de 24 Iglesias y un grupo comunitario. Su función principal es identificar asuntos que afectan nuestras comunidades, desarrollando y edificando relaciones con organizaciones financieras así como con organizaciones políticas.

Whittier Community Development Corporation es una organización para el desarrollo de la comunidad de Whittier enfocando en particular en las empresas pequeñas.

Neighborhood Development Center es un centro sin fines de lucro creado por varios organizaciones comunitarios y Western Initiatives for Neighborhood Development (WIND), una corporación de desarrollo económico subsidiada por Western Bank.

PARA MAS INFORMACION**Hispanic Organizing and Outreach**

2211 Clinton Avenue So.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 870-2268
Juan Linares

Whittier Community Development Corporation

2845 Harriet Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(612) 8769-0109
John Flory

Neighborhood Development Center

651 1/2 University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 291-2480
Rachel Dolan

**Neighborhood
Development Center**

**Programa de
capacitación y préstamo
para las microempresas**

EL PROGRAMA

¿Qué es un programa de capacitación y préstamos para la microempresa?

El programa trabaja con microempresas ubicados en los barrios de las Twin Cities. La capacitación ayuda a los empresarios abrir o crecer sus negocios.

Las clases de capacitación están ofrecidos en español. Cada participante escribirá un plan de negocio.

¿Quiénes pueden solicitar capacitación y préstamos?

El programa enfoca específicamente en residentes hispano-hablantes de Minneapolis quienes no tienen acceso a las fuentes tradicionales de fondos y quienes quieren capacitarse para empezar y dirigir un negocio con éxito. Uno puede solicitar si está planeando dirigir su propio negocio dentro de St. Paul o Minneapolis.

El programa seleccionará entre 10 y 15 empresarios para cada ciclo de clases. Los empresarios serán seleccionados según su compromiso y la viabilidad del concepto para el negocio.

CAPACITACION

Metas de capacitación

Lograr un buen entendimiento de la administración de un negocio y completar un plan del negocio y del financiamiento que el empresario puede utilizar para abrir su negocio.

Horario del programa de capacitación

Las clases con los sábados de 9:00 a 11:00 a.m. Por favor llama a NDC (651) 291-2480 para las fechas de las clases.

Tipos de capacitación

- Clases, talleres, y sesiones individuales con instructores quienes tienen experiencia con negocios pequeños.
- Una variedad de temas según las necesidades de los empresarios.
- Si uno se decide que esté listo para obtener un préstamo, puede solicitarle durante o después de las clases.
- El costo es \$50.00 dólares, lo cual se pagará el primer o segundo día de clase.

PRESTAMOS

¿Cuánto dinero se puede pedir en la forma de un préstamo?

El empresario puede solicitar préstamos entre \$500 y \$10,000 dólares si se ubica su negocio en Minneapolis o St. Paul.

Tasa de interés

10.00% fijo.

Cuota de clausura

Igual a los gastos de NDC; generalmente menos de \$50.00 dólares.

Colateral

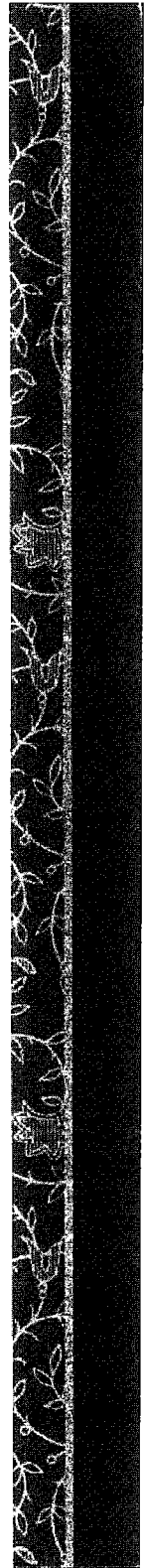
Se prefiere el 50% del valor del préstamo. El comité de préstamos de NDC considerará aspirantes con colateral menos de 50%.

Usos de fondos

Los préstamos se pueden usar para capital o bienes raíces fijos.

Historia de crédito

Problemas con las historias de crédito serán revizadas. Generalmente no descalificará a una aspirante.



WESTERN INITIATIVES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

economic development toolbox

Western Initiatives for Neighborhood Development

651½ University Avenue St. Paul, MN 55104 Tel: 651 291 2480 Fax: 651 291 2597 email: windndc@windndc.org

Results-oriented consulting for neighborhood organizations since 1990.

WIND is a community development corporation subsidiary of Western Bank.

WIND works on an hourly fee basis providing time and expertise to help inner-city community groups build capacity for economic development.

WIND believes in broad-based, open community participation in economic development.

■ Community Development Corporation (CDC) Start-Up

- board and staff training, organizational development, strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, hiring process, program development

"WIND worked very closely with our business club to transform it into a CDC that is now revitalizing West Seventh Street. Last year we completed more than 30 storefront projects!"

Holly Crouse, Executive Director, West End Business Revitalization Corporation

■ CDC Turnaround and Transition Specialist

- transitional strategic planning and program development, crisis financial management and bookkeeping, fundraising, rapid hiring processes

"With WIND's expert planning guidance and bookkeeping services, we have recovered from a down year and face 2000 with a great plan and staff."

Charles Ellis Muhammed, President, Selby Area Community Development Corporation

■ Commercial District Revitalization

- revitalization strategies, organization workplans, market analysis, loan and grant program set-up and support, real estate development, marketing, business attraction

"We have successfully taken on challenges, like branding "Old Town Payne Avenue" and acquiring the old bank building, that would have been much more difficult without WIND's help."

Mike Anderson, Executive Director, East Side Neighborhood Development Center

■ Loan Fund Start-Up and Administration

- establishment of loan guidelines and procedures, underwriting and loan presentation, closing documents, loan servicing assistance, portfolio management

"WIND's help with our loan fund administration freed my time, giving me the ability to be out on the street working directly with businesses."

Holly Crouse, Executive Director, West End Business Revitalization Corporation

■ Fundraising

- preparation of solid grant requests and report

"WIND gave us all we needed to know in order to submit successful grant requests in our early years."

Anne Briseno, Executive Director, Riverview Economic Development Association

■ Bookkeeping for Non-Profits

- system set-up, monthly financial statements, financial management advising

■ Real Estate Development

- Experienced guidance with site control, analysis, acquisition, renovation, reuse, and property management.

WHITTIER CDC, INTERFAITH ACTION, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
Programa de Capacitación y Apoyo para Microempresas

Whittier Community
Development Corporation

Interfaith Action

Neighborhood
Development
Center

Programa de Capacitación y Apoyo para Microempresas

building neighborhood economies from within

El programa de capacitación y apoyo para microempresas es una colaboración única entre corporaciones de desarrollo comunitario y el Neighborhood Development Center, Inc. (NDC). NDC es una agencia sin fines de lucro creado por varios organizaciones comunitarios y Western Initiatives for Neighborhood Development (WIND), una corporación de desarrollo comunitario subsidiario al Western Bank. Whittier CDC es una corporación de desarrollo comunitario basada en la vecindad Whittier en Minneapolis. Interfaith Action es una organización basada en la Iglesia con función primaria de trabajar con organizaciones políticas y financieras en asuntos que afectan nuestra comunidad.

PARA MAS INFORMACION

John Flory
Whittier CDC
2845 Harriet Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612.879.0109

Juan Linares
Interfaith Action
2211 Clinton Avenue South
Minneapolis MN 55404
612.870.2268

or

Hector Martínez
Program Coordinator

Neighborhood Development Center, Inc.
651½ University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
tel: 651.291.2480
fax: 651.291.2597
windncc@mtm.org

¿Qué es el programa de capacitación para microempresas?

Este programa ayuda a negocios recién-formados obtener capacitación, financiamiento, y otro apoyo en sus propias comunidades. En Minneapolis, el programa es ofrecido por Whittier Community Development Corporation (WCDC) y Interfaith Action con el Neighborhood Development Center (NDC).

Desde 1993, NDC y sus socios han capacitado más de 1000 empresarios. Graduados del programa manejan negocios exitosos en diseño gráfico, traducción, cuida de niños, reparo de autos, y muchas otras industrias.

Donadores

NDC's Programa de Capacitación y Apoyo para Microempresas está financiado por el apoyo generoso de la Fundación Otto Bremer, la Campaña Católica para el Desarrollo Humano, la Fundación Cargill, la Fundación Dayton Hudson, la Fundación Grotto, Hennepin County, la Fundación McKnight, la Fundación McNeely, la Fundación Minneapolis, la Fundación Charles Stewart Mott, NSP, la Fundación Norwest, the St. Paul Companies, la Fundación St. Paul, la Small Business Administration, el Estado de Minnesota, la Fundación TCF, y el Twin Cities-Metro Certified Development Company.

Building Neighborhood Economies From Within

Programa de Capacitación

¿Quién puede aplicar?

El programa es dirigido a los residentes del West Side en St. Paul quienes quisieran aprender como arrancar un negocio exitoso y no tengan acceso a las fuentes tradicionales de financiamiento. Aplicantes deben tener la intención de abrir su negocio en o cerca del West Side.

Metas de capacitación

- Lograr un buen entendimiento de la administración de un negocio
- Completar un plan de negocio

Tipos de capacitación

- Clases, talleres, y sesiones individuales con instructores expertos en negocios pequeños.
- Clases con 6 - 10 empresarios asegura atención personal para cada participante.
- Temas incluyen: administración financiera, mercadeo, manejo del negocio, y más.
- Contenido y paso del curso están adaptados al requisito del empresario

Horario de capacitación

- El curso dura aproximadamente 16 semanas
- Favor de llamar a WDCDC o NDC para el horario y la fecha del próximo curso

Costo de la capacitación

- La cuota del programa se determina en base al ingreso y tamaño de la familia
- Cuota mínima es \$50.00; máxima es \$550.00.
- La cuota será pagado durante la primera clase.

Compromiso del Participante

La selección de participantes será en base a su compromiso al programa y la viabilidad de su idea. Los participantes exitosos tendrán:

- la voluntad de pasar tiempo fuera de la clase investigando y escribiendo el plan de negocio
- la habilidad de realizar una personal inversión financiero personal en el negocio

Apoyo Corriente

Empresarios quienes completan el programa y escriben un plan de negocio, califican para apoyo técnico de NDC, incluyendo:

- acceso a servicios de consultores profesionales para los dueños de negocios graduados del programa.
- una gazeta con avisos para el empresario y artículos sobre los negocios participantes
- inclusión en un directorio de negocios publicado anualmente
- oportunidades de participar en programas de mercadeo colectivos
- elegibilidad de solicitar préstamos de \$500 - \$10,000

NDC's Purpose

Residents, small businesses, and neighborhood groups in all communities have the talent, the energy, and the ideas to revitalize their own communities.

Many residents operate informal businesses in the underground economy, but cannot come "above ground" without business training and access to capital.

As they develop, small businesses provide jobs, income, and visible signs of progress. Most importantly, they provide leadership and inspiration "from within."

NDC's mission is to train and finance small businesses in partnership with established neighborhood groups. The neighborhood groups, in turn, provide ongoing support and resources to those businesses.

Since 1993, NDC and its partners have trained more than 1100 entrepreneurs. Program graduates operate successful businesses in child care, graphic design, catering, landscaping, auto repair, translation, and many other industries.

NDC is a non-profit agency formed in 1992 by Western Initiatives for Neighborhood Development (WIND), a community development corporation subsidiary of Western State Bank.

Board of Directors

Steve Cramer, Minneapolis Community Development Agency
Wafiq Fannoun, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council

John Flory, Whittier CDC

Tony Genia, Renegade Associates
Tom Kingston, Wilder Foundation
Juan Linares, Interfaith Action
Lorrie Louder, St. Paul Port Authority
Bonita Martin, Clothes Encounters of the Plus Kind
Lillie Sanders, Queenie's Bus Tours
William Sands, Western Bank
Connie Stewart, Western Bank
Patti Torozintle, Wilder Foundation
Barton Warren, Model Cities Health Center
Lee Pao Xiong, Concordia University

Staff & Consultants

Megan Bartlett, Communications Coordinator
Dave Boroko, Marketing Consultant
Rachel Dolan, Business Advisor & Loan Officer
Lao Lu Hang, Business Advisor & Loan Officer
Wendy Hines, Business Consultant
Hector Martinez, Program Coordinator
Kathy Moriarty, Financial Asst./Program Coordinator
Mara O'Neill, Chief Operating Officer
Barry Siebert, Chief Financial Consultant
Kathy Sundberg, RECIPES Consultant
Mihailo Temali, Executive Director
Charlotte Thorpe, Receptionist
Dale White, Business Consultant

651½ University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
tel 651.291.2480 fax 651.291.2597
windndc@windndc.org

Neighborhood Development Center, Inc.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.
Building Neighborhood Economies from Within

*building neighborhood
economies from within*

Building Neighborhood Economies From Within

Neighborhood & Ethnic Entrepreneur Training

A program designed to train inner-city entrepreneurs in their own communities.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Class participants learn basic small business management and write a solid business plan. The 16 week class is offered twice annually to 9 entrepreneurs per cycle. Income limit based on Area Median Income.

St. Paul Partnerships

Aurora/St. Anthony, Dayton's Bluff, Selby, Payne/Phalen, Frogtown, North End, Hamline/Midway, & West Side.

Minneapolis Partnerships

North Side, Phillips, Seward, & Whittier

Ethnic Community Partnerships

American Indian, Hmong, Latino, and Somali

RECIPES for Business Success

A training program for start-up food product businesses in the greater metro area.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Course curriculum includes food science and safety, recipe scale-up, packaging and labeling, business and marketing plans, co-packers, distributor and buyer networks. Kitchen facility available.

Business Supports

INCUBATORS

Midtown Business Center: Constructed and managed in partnership with the Frogtown Action Alliance. The MBC houses 11 small businesses in Frogtown.

Wildier Kitchen: A commercial kitchen incubator at the Wildier Foundation which houses up to ten specialty food entrepreneurs.

Minneapolis Mercado: A member-owned cooperative retail incubator housing 40 Latino businesses. The Mercado was developed in partnership with Interfaith Action, Whittier CDC, and Project for Pride in Living.

INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One-on-one technical assistance in marketing, accounting, insurance, legal issues, and business planning. Available to alumni businesses in English, Hmong, and Spanish.

CLUSTER & ALUMNI MARKETING

NDC's cluster marketing program allows entrepreneurs to participate in group promotional campaigns, trade shows, and other marketing activities for a minimal fee. NDC also advises individual businesses on recruiting new customers and developing comprehensive marketing plans.

OTHER SUPPORTS

Other benefits to program alumni include newsletters with business tips and feature stories about participant business, free listings in our annual business directory, and invitations to an annual banquet honoring outstanding program graduates.

NDC Loan Funds

NDC has developed three revolving loan funds to assist entrepreneurs who may not have access to traditional sources of capital. Applicants must have a completed business plan with financial projections to be considered.

Microloan Fund
\$500 - \$1,000

Neighborhood Small Business Loan Fund
(for existing business in St. Paul)
\$1,000 - \$30,000

Special Opportunities Loan Fund
\$10,000 - \$200,000

BUSINESS PLANS & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Both must be presented with the loan application for review during the evaluation process.

LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicant's business or residence must be located in target neighborhoods.

CREDIT HISTORIES

Poor credit histories must be addressed and improved, but will not automatically disqualify an applicant.

The NDC Loan Committee is made up of six NDC Board members, all with small business lending or management experience.

**ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
COOPERATIVA MERCADO CENTRAL, INC.
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**

I the undersigned resident of the State of Minnesota, acting on behalf of the members, do hereby organize and incorporate a cooperative association under the provisions of Minnesota Statute 308A and to that end do hereby adopt and sign the following Articles of Incorporation:

Article I. (Name)

The name of this association shall be Cooperativa Mercado Central, Inc. (Central Cooperative Market).

Article II. (Registered Office)

The registered office of this association shall be at the Whittier Emerging Business Center, 2845 Harriet Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55408. The principal place of business shall be 2845 Harriet Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55408.

Article III. (Purpose)

The purpose of this association shall be to establish and direct a Latino market association, and to establish market facilities that will be a center of Latino community commerce and culture. The purpose of the association, furthermore, shall be to direct and manage market facilities for the benefit of its member businesses; to publicize and promote through advertising and other means the market association; and to engage in other lawful activities which support the profitability and development of its members and the Latino business community.

Article IV. (Duration)

The period of duration of this association shall be perpetual.

Article V. (Capital Stock)

Section 1. (Amount)

The amount of authorized capital stock of the association shall be Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000), which shall be divided into \$20,000 of voting stock, \$180,000 of non-voting stock.

Section 2. (Voting Stock)

Voting stock may be issued for cash or promissory note to associations or individuals eligible for membership as described in bylaws. No dividends shall be paid on voting stock.

Section 3. (Non-Voting Stock)

Nonvoting stock may be issued for cash or promissory note or in payment of patronage refunds to members or to any member of this association.

Section 4. (Transferability)

No stock shall be transferred or sold except back to the association with the consent and approval of the Board of Directors. Stock shall be redeemed as provided in the bylaws or by the Board of Directors.

Section 5. (Issuance)

No stock shall be issued for less than its par value nor until the same has been paid for in cash or its equivalent as required by the Board of Directors. The association may commence business whenever ten percent (10%) of the authorized capital stock has been subscribed and paid in. The association shall have a prior lien, with the usual right of ordinary liens for enforcement, upon all outstanding stock for any indebtedness due it. Stock shall be non-assessable.

Article VI. (Voting Rights)

Only owners of voting stock are eligible to vote in the affairs of the association and voting shall be as set forth in the bylaws. The voting rights of each member of the association are equal, and each member is entitled to one vote, regardless of any variations in proprietary interests. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed. If authorized by the Board of Directors, voting by mail shall be permitted.

Article VII. (Patronage Dividends)**Section 1.**

All of the annual net income from patronage, available for distribution, shall belong to its members and shall be allocated to them on the basis of patronage and as provided in the bylaws.

Section 2.

All or any part of the patronage dividend declared by the association at any time may be paid in stock, by allocating equity reserve or by the issuance of certificates or other equivalent media as determined by the Board of Directors.

Article VIII. (Dissolution)

This association may be dissolved in the manner provided by law. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the association, all debts and liabilities shall first be paid according to their respective priorities. Holders of capital stock (non-voting stock) shall then be paid the par value of their shares. The remainder of the property shall be paid and distributed equitably among the members of the association in accordance with their interest in the reserves and surplus of the association as shown by its records. Any remaining assets shall be contributed to an association doing business on a cooperative basis or a nonprofit corporation which is exempt from taxes under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code as the Board of Directors or Trustees of the association shall determine.

Article IX. (Board of Directors)**Section 1.**

The governance of this association and the management of its affairs shall be vested in a Board of Directors of not less than five (5) nor more than nine (9) directors who shall be elected by ballot by the voting members at the annual meeting. Voting by mail for the board of directors shall be permitted in accordance with the Minnesota Statutes 308A.311 subd. 4. The exact number of directors, their terms and the manner of selection shall be prescribed in the bylaws.

Section 2.

The names and addresses [deleted] of the first Board of Directors who shall hold office until the first annual meeting of the members and until their successors are elected and have been qualified, are as follows:

1. Consuelo Ortiz
2. Jose Angel Pecina
3. Guillermo Rodriguez
4. Jose Antonio Aguilar
5. Rodolfo Alvarez
6. Salomon Cejudo

Section 3.

A director is not personally liable to the cooperative association or its members for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty except in the following circumstance:

- a) for a breach of the director's duty of loyalty to the cooperative association or its members
- b) for acts or omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law; or
- c) for a transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

In Testimony whereof, I the incorporator, have signed these Articles of Incorporation this _____ day of _____, 1997.

Rodolfo Alvarez

BYLAWS
OF
COOPERATIVA MERCADO CENTRAL, INC.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Article I. (Membership)

Section 1. Qualifications

Membership in this association shall be open to a business enterprise with the following characteristics:

- a) Latino owned, by majority of 51%, or with majority control of Latino owners, and,
- b) owner (at least one owner) must have completed Neighborhood Development Corporation (N.D.C.) business training, or other business training approved by the board of directors, and,
- c) owner must present viable business plan and/or demonstrate current viable business performance, and,
- d) must demonstrate viable financing appropriate to business plan, including Mercado membership requirements, and
- e) must offer product(s) or service(s) that fit the overall market vision and plan, and that will contribute to profitability and success of market as a whole, and,
- f) may be owned in any of the following ways:
 - sole proprietorship
 - partnership
 - conventional corporation
 - cooperative corporation
 - other legal business structure
- g) must be incorporated in the state of Minnesota, or in the case of sole proprietorship or partnership, must be Minnesota state resident(s).

The Mercado Board of Directors will give priority to new and emerging Latino businesses, but will also consider established businesses, being guided always by the goal of success for the Mercado as a whole.

Section 2. Application

Application for membership shall be made to Board of Directors by filing written application. Applicant shall agree to comply with requirements of bylaws and other requirements specified by Board of Directors and agree to purchase at least one share of voting stock, and a minimum of nine (9) shares of non-voting stock. Applicant must be approved by the Board of Directors.

There shall be at least two, and not more than five membership options. Membership capital investment (number of shares of non-voting stock) requirements shall be based equitably on units of square footage of retail market space occupied. A member may apply to expand or reduce space occupied not more than once per fiscal year. After approval by the board of directors, corresponding adjustment in non-voting stock purchase required will be applied.

Section 3. Termination

Membership shall be terminated if a member ceases to exist (through death or dissolution), voluntarily resigns from the association, fails to comply with the requirements of the bylaws or Board of Directors, or when the Board of Directors, by a two-thirds majority, revokes membership for cause (other justifiable reason). Upon vote for termination, the Board of Directors will give 15 day notice to a member, during which time, the member may request a hearing by the Board. If the member requests a hearing, it must be held within the month of termination.

Upon termination of membership (voluntary or involuntary) shares shall automatically transfer to the cooperative, and the par value of shares shall become a note payable to the terminated member. This note shall be paid in full within three (3) years, at the discretion of the Board of Directors. No interest shall be paid on note.

Article II. (Meetings)

Section 1. Annual Meeting

The annual membership meeting shall be held within four (4) months after the close of the fiscal year at a time and place specified by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the membership shall be called by Board of Directors upon written request of at least twenty percent (20%) of the members of each class or by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Notice of Meeting

Notice shall be given by the Board of Directors of all meetings of the membership by mailing a notice thereof to each member not less than fifteen days preceding the date of the proposed meeting. The failure of any member to receive such notice of the annual or special meeting of the membership shall not invalidate any action that may be taken by the members at such meeting.

Section 4. Quorum

A quorum for transacting business at membership meetings shall be representation from one member more than fifty percent (50% plus 1).

Section 5. Voting

Each member of the association shall have one vote in election of Board of Directors and all votes brought to the membership. A voting representative shall be registered by each business at the time of membership application; registered voting representative may be changed by written notice to the Secretary of the Board of directors. Voting by mail may be authorized by the Board of Directors for specific purposes. No proxy voting shall be allowed.

Section 6. Meeting Agenda

The items of business at the annual meeting and so far as applicable at all other meetings of the membership shall be:

- a. Registration of members
- b. Verification of quorum
- c. Proof of notice of meeting
- d. Reading and approval of all unapproved minutes
- e. Annual reports of officers and committees
- f. Election of Board of Directors
- g. Unfinished business
- h. New business
- i. Adjournment

Article III (Board of Directors)**Section 1. General Powers**

The business and the property of the corporation shall be managed and controlled by its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may hire such staff as is necessary for the day to day operation of the association, including a general manager who shall report directly to the Board of Directors. The Directors may exercise all such powers and all such things as may be exercised or done by the association subject to

the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws and all applicable law. The Board of Directors may appoint such committees to perform such functions and possess such powers and responsibilities as the Board shall prescribe when creating such committees.

Section 2. Number and Tenure

The Board of Directors shall consist of nine (9) persons. The directors shall serve for two (2) year terms. The terms of all directors shall be staggered so that one year five (5) directors are elected and the next year four (4) directors are elected. At the first annual meeting four of the nine directors elected shall be elected to one year terms, and the remaining five directors shall be elected to two year terms.

Section 3. Qualification and Selection

The Board of Directors shall be natural persons, representatives of business members of the association. There may be no more than one (1) representative from each member elected to the Board of Directors at one time.

Section 4. Removal

Failure of a Director to attend two consecutive Director's meetings or one-third of Director's meetings during one year, except for cause as determined by a majority vote of the remainder of the Board of Directors, shall result in automatic removal from the Board of Directors. In the event that a Director loses his or her affiliation with the member designated at the time of the election, that Director shall cease to be a member of the Board. Any director may be removed from office, with cause, by a majority vote of the members of this association at a regular or special meeting of the membership called for that purpose, but with due notification of such action and the right to be heard thereon.

Section 5. Resignation

A Director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors or President of this organization. Unless the written notice states otherwise, the resignation shall take effect upon receipt.

Section 6. Vacancies

Vacancies arising from whatever cause except removal by the members may be filled by the Board of Directors. Board members so appointed shall serve until the next annual meeting.

Section 7. Compensation

Directors shall receive no compensation for their services as Directors, but this shall not restrict compensation, or reimbursement, for reasonable expenses incurred in attending board meetings or carrying out any other business of the association or for payment when a Director renders administrative, professional or other bonafide services to the association in a capacity other than as a Director of the association.

Article IV. (Meetings of the Board of Directors)

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Board of Directors shall hold regular meetings at such interval and at such time and place as may be determined by the Board.

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the President at any time or upon request of any two (2) of the Directors then in office. Written request shall be made to the President who shall call the special meeting within thirty (30) days of receiving the request. If the President fails to give notice of the special meeting within the prescribed time period, the person requesting the meeting may fix the time and place of the meeting and give notice. Notice of special meetings shall be given at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting either by mail, telephone or personal contact.

Section 3. Notice

Written notice of regular meetings including a written agenda shall be given at least five (5) days prior to the meeting. Notice of any meeting may be waived in writing before, at, or after a meeting. Appearance at any meeting by any Director shall be deemed a waiver of notice.

If notice is given by mail, such notice shall be mailed at least two (2) additional days prior to the meeting and shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the United States mail properly addressed with postage thereupon prepaid. No notice shall be given more than thirty (30) days before any meeting.

Section 4. Quorum

Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, a quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of one-half of the Directors. No Director may give a proxy for him or herself or vote by proxy. If a quorum is not present, a majority of the Directors present may adjourn the meeting without further notice.

Section 5. Voting

Passage of a resolution shall require a vote of a majority of the Board members present at the meeting, unless a greater number is required by the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or law.

Section 6. Action in Writing

Any action which might be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a lawfully constituted committee may be taken without a meeting if such action is taken in writing and signed by all of the Directors then in office or by all members of such committee, as the case may be. Any action taken in writing will be recorded in the minutes of the following meeting of the Board.

Section 7. Absent Directors

A director may give advance written consent or opposition to a proposal to be acted on at a board meeting. If the director is not present at the meeting, consent or opposition to a proposal does not constitute presence for the purposes of determining the existence of a quorum, but consent or opposition shall be counted as a vote in favor of or against the proposal and shall be entered in the minutes or other record of action at the meeting, if the proposal acted on at the meeting is substantially the same effect as the proposal to which the director has consented or objected.

Article V. (Officers of the Board of Directors)

Section 1. Description and Number

The officers of the association shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary and the Treasurer, and such other officers as may from time to time be elected by the Board. No person may hold two (2) offices at one time, except that the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. Except as provided in these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall fix the powers, duties and compensation of all officers.

Section 2. Election, Term of Office and Qualifications

The officers shall be elected by the Board at the first meeting following the annual election of Directors. The President and Vice President shall be elected from among the Directors. Officers shall serve for one (1) year or until their successors shall have been elected or until their earlier resignation, removal from office or death.

Section 3. Removal and Vacancies

Any officer may be removed from office at any time by the vote of a majority of the directors with or without cause, but with due notification of such action and the right to be heard thereon. A vacancy in an office of the association by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Board at a regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 4. President

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors or shall delegate such authority. He or she shall sign and execute such documents as may be necessary to the transaction of business by the corporation. The President shall be entitled to vote on all matters before the Board in the same manner as any other Director. In general, the President shall perform all duties usually incident to that office and such other duties as the Board may prescribe.

Section 5. Vice President

The Vice President shall preside and perform the duties in the absence or disability of the President.

Section 6. Secretary

The Secretary shall be secretary of the meetings of the Board of Directors and shall record or cause to be recorded all proceedings of the meetings in the appropriate minute book of the association. He or she shall give or cause to be given proper notice of meetings. He or she shall sign and execute such documents as may be necessary to the transaction of business by the association. He or she shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Board of Directors or by the President.

Section 7. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall cause to be kept accurate accounts of all monies and assets of the association and shall render to the Board of Directors or the President, whenever required, an account of the financial condition of the association and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Board of Directors or by the President. He or she shall be responsible for supervising the receipt, deposit and disbursement of the funds of the association in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Directors.

Section 8. Vocales / Ad Hoc Committees

The Board of Directors may from time to time, and at its own discretion, set up among its members Vocales or Ad Hoc Committees for the purpose of

accomplishing its responsibilities. The Board of Directors may assign responsibilities to individuals and committees at its own discretion, in a practical manner, to accomplish its business.

Article VI. (Association Records and Reports)

Section 1. Required Records

The Association shall keep adequate and correct books and records of account and minutes of the proceedings of its members, Board, and committees of the Board. It shall also keep a record of the members, including the names, addresses and numbers of shares held by each. The minutes shall be kept in written form or in any other form capable of being converted into written form.

Section 2. Annual Report

The annual report shall be available to members at the time of the annual meeting. Included in the annual report shall be the following financial reports a balance sheet as of the end of the fiscal year, an income statement, and statement of changes in financial position for the fiscal year.

Article VII. (Bylaw Changes)

After the first annual meeting, the bylaws may be amended only at an annual or special meeting of the cooperative.

Article VIII. (Patronage Distributions)

Section 1. Definition of Patronage

Patronage by a member of the association shall be defined as the total amount of rent paid by the member to the association during the fiscal year.

Section 2. Annual Net Income from Patronage

The annual net income (defined as gross income less necessary expenses) from patronage (business done for or with member-patrons) shall be distributed to the member patrons based on their patronage with the association. Such distributions shall be made in cash, stock or other equity credit, or some combination thereof, as the Board of Directors of the association shall determine.

Section 3. Annual Net Income from Other Sources (Non-Patronage)

The annual net income from sources other than business done for or with members shall be retained by the association in an unallocated capital reserve.

Section 4. Losses

If this association has sustained an annual loss in its member-patron business, it shall have the power and authority to allocate such loss to the member-patrons for such year or years on a patronage basis and apply the same against equity credits or stock of such member. The Board of Directors may also, in its discretion, elect to offset the loss by using the unallocated capital reserves of the association. Losses may also be carried forward to offset future patronage dividends of the members.

Article IX. (Tax Consent)

Each individual or organization who applies for and is accepted to membership in this association by such act alone consent that the amount of any distributions with respect to his, her, or its patronage occurring in any fiscal year which are made in written notices of allocation (as defined in 26 U.S.C. 1388 of the Internal Code) and which are received by him her or it from the association, will be taken into account by him, her, or it at their stated dollar amounts in the manner provided in 26 U.S.C. 1385 in the taxable year in which such written notices of allocation are received by him, her or it, it being the intent of this bylaw provision to provide a consent binding on all members of this association for the purpose of making such distributions "qualified written notices of allocation" within the meaning of the United States Income Tax Laws.

Article X. (Indemnification)**Section 1. Liability**

No member of the Mercado shall be liable for any indebtedness or obligation of the Mercado in an amount exceeding such member's unpaid current fees and any duly authorized levy or special assessment.

Section 2. Indemnification Rights

Subject to the limitations in this Article, the Mercado shall indemnify a person made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of the former or present official capacity of the person against judgements, penalties, fines, including without limitation, excise taxes assessed against the person with respect to an employee benefit plan, settlements, and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees and disbursements, incurred by the person in connection with the proceeding, if, with respect to the acts or omissions of the person complained of in the proceeding, the person has not been indemnified by another organization or employee benefit plan, acted in good faith, received no improper benefit, and in the case of a criminal proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe the conduct was unlawful, and in the case of acts or omissions occurring in his or her official capacity, reasonably believed that the conduct was in the best interests of the association, or in the case of an omission, reasonably believed that the conduct was not opposed to the best interest s of the association.

Section 3. Determination of Eligibility

If a determination of eligibility is not made in a legal proceeding related to the claim, it may be made by a quorum of disinterested directors or by independent legal counsel selected by such quorum. If not made or able to be made by either of these methods, the determination shall be made by independent legal counsel selected at a membership meeting.

Section 4. Payments

Indemnification payments and advances of expenses shall be made only in such increments and at such times as will not jeopardize the ability of the Mercado to pay its other obligations as they become due. All such payments made shall be reported in writing to members with or before the notice of the next membership meeting. Payment of advances shall be conditioned upon the person affirming in writing that the conditions for indemnification contained in this Article have been met and agreeing to repay any advances should it be determined that the criteria for indemnification was not met, and after a determination by the payer of the advances that the facts then known to those making the determination would not preclude indemnification under this Article.

Article XI. (Dissolution)

On the sale of all the assets, liquidation or dissolution of the cooperative, any residual assets shall be applied in the following sequence: 1) payment of all outstanding debt; 2) payment of all non-voting shares; 3) payment of all voting shares. Any remaining assets shall be distributed to members equitably, in proportion to total number of non-voting shares at the time of sale or dissolution. Payments shall be made to current and former members, or their heirs, except that no payment need be made to any person who fails to acknowledge, in a timely manner, the receipt of a notice of liquidation. It shall be deemed sufficient notice to a former member to send notice of liquidation by certified mail at least 30 days before distribution of any residual assets, to the person's last known business or residence address. Any amounts unclaimed after sufficient notice shall be distributed in proportion to the patronage of all previous and current members who acknowledge receipt of the notice of liquidation.

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bylaws were adopted as the Bylaws of the Cooperativa Mercado Central, Inc. at a meeting of the board of directors of the association held on the ____ day of _____, 1997.

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bylaws were adopted as the Bylaws of the Cooperativa Mercado Central, Inc. at a meeting of the members of the association held on the ____ day of _____, 1997.

Cooperativa Mercado Central Reglamento De Operación

Horas de Operación

El horario de atención al público será de 10:00am a 7:30pm de Lunes a Sabado y de 10:00am a 6:00pm los Domingos. Cada negocio deberá permanecer abierto al público un mínimo de 8 horas consecutivas diarias 7 días de la semana durante este horario. Los locatarios que quieren estar abierto mas de 8 horas, podrán abrir a las 7:00am y mantenerse en operación hasta las 7:30pm. Además, deberá exhibir su propio horario en un lugar visible al público, así mismo remitirlo a la gerencia general para su archivo y como referencia en el caso de posibles violaciones al mismo.

Horarios especiales extendidos por motivos de producción serán disponibles a aquellos que lo soliciten por escrito y unicamente con un minimo de anticipación de 24 horas, el cual deberá ser submitido y aprobado por la gerencia general.

Negocios con giro comerciales que requiere un horario diferente de los arriba mencionado serán sujetos al horario que sea determinado como satisfactorio entre el negocio en cuestion y el Mercado Central y deberá ser aprobado por la Mesa Directiva.

Estacionamiento

No se permitirá que los locatarios ni sus empleados se estacionen en el estacionamiento del Mercado Central. Este estará reservado para clientes solamente.

Limpieza

Todos los locatarios del Mercado Central serán responsables de mantener sus locales y el area inmediata a este limpia y libre de obstaculos. La limpieza deberá realizarse diariamente para ayudar a mantener la imagen profesional del Mercado. La limpieza de las areas de uso común del Mercado serán la responsabilidad de el personal del Mercado y/o un compañía ofreciendo este servicio.

Anuncios y Letreros

Cada negocio deberá tener por lo menos un letrero del tipo uniforme de todos los negocios designado por el Mercado con el nombre y numero del espacio. No se permitirá la colocación de anuncios ó letreros otros afuera de su espacio sin la autorización de la gerencia.

Exhibición de Mercancia

Cada negocio puede usar las paredes de la parte afuera de su espacio para exhibir su mercancía. Estas exhibiciones no podrán ser más de 2 pies de ancho ni podrán bloquear el movimiento fluido de los clientes. Es importante mantener las áreas de uso común libres de obstáculos que puedan causar accidentes a clientes, empleados y personal del mercado.

Música

Los locatarios no deberán tener música de ningún tipo a menos que sea un negocio que lo requiere por su giro comercial, por ejemplo, los que tengan venta de discos compactos y cassettes ó stereo. La música que se toca en estos negocios no se debe de oír afuera de su espacio.

Niños

Por estrictas razones de seguridad, los locatarios que se hagan acompañar por menores de 16 años deberán ser siempre responsables de su supervisión y cuidado, primordialmente en las áreas comunes. El Mercado NO se hace responsable por accidentes ó incidentes causados por negligencia ó descuido a esta disposición.

Servicio al Cliente

Los locatarios deberán proveer buen servicio al cliente así mismo deberán entregar productos y servicios de calidad a los clientes del Mercado. Quejas en relación a la operación de locatarios deberán de ser presentadas a la gerencia. Quejas en relación al personal del Mercado Central deberán ser presentadas a la Mesa Directiva. La gerencia y Mesa Directiva se encargaran de investigar estas quejas y proveer soluciones ó recomendaciones por ellas.

Competencia

Los locatarios con productos y servicios similares deberán mantener una actitud profesional, ofreciendo productos de calidad y precios competitivos sin intentar limitar o perjudicar la operación de otro negocio. Evitando así perder locatarios por inestabilidad.

Retiro Voluntario ó Cancelación Temprana de Contrato Arrendatorio

Un locatario que rompe el contrato de arrendamiento, será responsable de los pagos por concepto de renta restantes hasta la fecha de terminación de contrato así como cargos adicionales generados en este proceso. Para evitar esto se recomienda presentar una solicitud de cancelación temprana de contrato y de este modo

obtener aprobación por escrito de la Mesa Directiva. Esta solicitud deberá presentarse 90 días previos a la fecha propuesta para cancelación.

1. Deberá comprobar que la continuación del contrato resultaría en serios problemas financieros para el negocio.
2. Deberá de proponer un reemplazo satisfactorio a la Mesa Directiva. Esta puede recomendar un cambio en el giro del negocio así como un periodo de prueba de 90 días antes de autorizar la terminación del contrato.

Pago de Renta

El pago de renta deberá ser entregado a Patricia Brown en la oficina de NDC, 1515 E. Lake Street, Suite #208 ó a Becky George de Fiesta Flor y Diseño, Suite # 108 y podrá ser recibido sin incurrir en sanciones hasta el día 10 (decimo) del mes en vigor. El incurrir en falta agravante a la presente poliza, se hará acreedor a multas como lo estipula el contrato entre Mercado Central y el negocio en cuestion.

Seguridad / Llaves al Edificio

Los locatarios no tendrán llaves del edificio. El acceso será limitado a las horas normales de operación. Se considerará la solicitud de ingreso al edificio fuera de horas de operación solo en presencia de un representante de la gerencia. Todos los locatarios serán responsables de cerrar y asegurar sus negocios al final del día. Se recomienda no dejar dinero en efectivo dentro del local despues de cerrar.

Queda Estrictamente Prohibido

1. La entrada de mascotas al edificio.
2. El circular en bicicleta, patineta y patines.
3. Fumar dentro de las instalaciones del Mercado.
4. El consumo de bebidas alcohólicas y sustancias tóxicas.
5. La entrada de personas en estado de ebriedad o bajo la influencia de drogas.
6. La entrada a personas descalzas y/o sin camisa.
7. La portación o posesión de cualquier tipo de armas.
8. Venta de productos ó servicios ilegales en el estado de Minnesota ó en Los Estados Unidos.

Seguro General de Negocios y Seguro Contra Daños a Terceros

Todos los locatarios tendrán que tener seguro general de negocio y seguro contra daños a terceros.

Responsabilidad para los acciones de sus empleados

Legalmente, cualquier empleador esta responsable para todas las acciones de sus empleados mientras que esten trabajando. Así mismo será con los reglamentos de la Cooperativa. Es la responsabilidad de cada locatario averiguar que ellos tanto como sus empleados siguen todos los reglamentos operacionales de la Cooperativa.

Asistencia de Asamblea

Es obligación de todos los miembros de la Cooperativa Mercado Central, asistir a las reuniones, ASAMBLEAS GENERALES, cuando así lo requiera la Mesa Directiva ú enviar a un representante por el negocio y con previo aviso. Sin embargo, el representante no tendrá derecho a voto en la asamblea, y será responsabilidad de cada locatario obtener la información de lo acordado en dicha asamblea, comoacatarse a las resoluciones determinadas en ellas.

Revisión del Reglamento

Este reglamento será revisado constantemente por la Mesa Directiva de la Cooperativa Mercado Central.

Consecuencias Por No Seguir Los Reglamentos De Operación

Cada locatario que tiene cuatro ó menos infracciones durante el año tendrá la opción de comenzar el proximo año con una nueva historial. Si tiene cuatro infracciones ó mas, las infracciones y consecuencias seguirán acumulando.

Primera infracción

Recibirá un aviso describiendo la infracción y otra copia de los reglamentos de operación que provee las consecuencias de futuros infracciones.

Segunda infracción

Recibirá una multa de \$50.00 que contiene una descripción de esta, la segunda infracción, y otra copia de los reglamentos de operación que provee las consecuencias de futuros infracciones.

Tercera infracción

Recibirá una multa de \$100.00 que contiene una descripción de esta, la tercera infracción, y otra copia de los reglamentos de operación que provee las consecuencias de futuros infracciones.

Cuarta infracción

Recibirá una multa de \$200.00 que contiene una descripción de esta, la cuarta infracción, y otra copia de los reglamentos de operación que provee las consecuencias de futuros infracciones.

Quinta infracción

Para la quinta violación de reglamentos de operación--que no se relacionen con el pago de renta u otros deberes monetarios--el Locatario tendrá que reunir con la Mesa Directiva quien revisará el historial del locatario y tomar una decisión sobre como se resolverá la situación. El primer paso en el proceso será notificar por escrito al locatario que este tiene 10 días dentro de que puede presentar su caso ante de la Mesa Directiva. Si se establece un convenio para resolver la situación y este no es respetado, el proceso de desalojo podrá ser iniciado inmediatamente. Como lo estipula el contrato de arrendamiento entre La Cooperativa Mercado Central, Inc. y el locatario en cuestion, no seguir los reglamentos de la Cooperativa se considere incumplimiento del contrato de arrendamiento.

DECLARACIÓN DE CONOCIMIENTO Y CONFORMIDAD

Declaro haber leído y entendido esta estos reglamentos interno de la Cooperativa Mercado Central, Inc. y entiendo que dentro del contrato de arrendamiento con la Cooperativa Mercado Central he prometido cumplir con estos reglamentos.

Firmas de aprobación de los arrendatorios:

Posición:

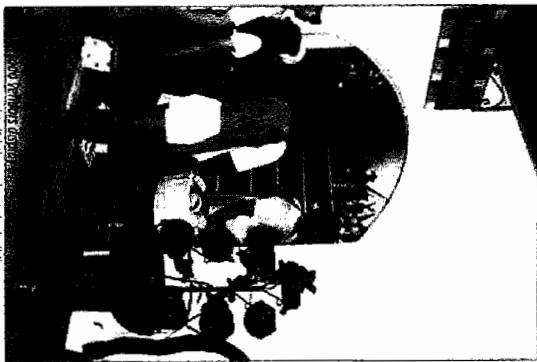
Posición:

Posición:

Posición:

RESOURCES: MERCADO CENTRAL PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

The Mercado Central is a member-owned cooperative of Latino businesses, located at the corner of Bloomington and Lake in South Minneapolis. Designed by its members to recreate a traditional Latin American market, the Mercado offers a wide variety of fresh and prepared foods, imported art and handicrafts, music and more. A vibrant commercial and cultural center, the Mercado also functions as a small business incubator.



Stalls throughout the building.

The vision for the Mercado Central was developed over a three-year period by Latino graduates of NDC's Spanish language training classes, offered in partnership with Whittier CDC/Interfaith Action (Minneapolis) and Riverview Economic Development Association (St. Paul). As increasing numbers of Latinos completed NDC's training and searched for business locations, the idea of a common market was born. With the help of Whittier CDC's John Flory, the newly-incorporated Mercado found a home in South Minneapolis, at a building redeveloped by Project for Pride in Living.

The Mercado's development was spearheaded by an organizing committee of Mercado entrepreneurs, with John Flory, Interfaith Action's Juan Linares, and NDC's Megan Bartlett, Dave Bonko and Rachel Dolan. NDC staff provided marketing expertise, business development assistance, and organizing energy for the grand opening event, a three-day celebration with more than 5000 people in attendance.

NDC Business Specialist Rachel Dolan, who worked one-on-one with prospective member businesses for 30-40 hours a week for 18 months before the Mercado opened, now provides technical assistance 25 hours a week from NDC's satellite office at the Mercado.



July 31, 1999: Mercado Board President Ramon Leon cuts the ribbon during the grand opening celebration.



After the grand opening, children are seen looking at the various items at the Mercado.

MERCADO CENTRAL

ARTISANÍA

Abraxas
 Artesanía del Bajío
 Creaciones Monica
 Centro Cobijero del Norte
 El Serpiente Emplumado
 Tijuana Imports

LIBRERÍA

Discomania
 Librería Cristiana
 Librería Sagrado Corazon
 La Paloma
 Relámpago Musical 2
 Sonido Latino

MODAS

Amazonas
 Boutique con Angel
 Infinity Fashion Design
 Joyería Latina 2
 Modas Jennifer
 Novedades Alexis
 El Rodeo
 Victor Hugo Jewelry
 Zapatería Aracely

COMIDA

La Cosecha
 Dulcería La Piñata
 Me Gusta Meat Market
 El Mexicano
 Reyna de los Jugos
 Tortillería La Perla

COMIDA

Comales y Cazuelas
 La Loma
 Manny's Tortas
 Otra Cocina
 Taco Morelos
 Taquería La Hacienda

DEPORTES

Creaciones Lupita
 Deportes Azteca
 Fiesta Flor y Diseño
 Regalos Jennifer
 Perfumería Sanchez

OTROS

Amazonas
 CREATE
 Envios Rapidos
 La Escuela
 Foto Imagen
 Mano Employment
 MEXAM
 Mirella's Custom Sewing
 La Prensa
 Uno

The following is a list of the vendors who are currently operating in the Mercado Central. This list is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all vendors in the market. The list is subject to change without notice.

The following is a list of the vendors who are currently operating in the Mercado Central. This list is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all vendors in the market. The list is subject to change without notice.

Organizing energy and support for the Mercado Central was provided by a coalition of Catholic Charities, Interfaith Action, the Neighborhood Development Center, Project for Pride in Living, and Whittier Community Development Corporation.

MERCADO CENTRAL

Noviembre 29, 1998
Vol. 1 No. 1



MERCADO
CENTRAL
CIRCULAR
INFORMATIVA

Información Actual de las Operaciones del Mercado Central para la Membresía

Prestamos y fondos adquiridos por el Mercado.

Los fondos recaudados por la Cooperativa del Mercado Central fueron de \$170.000 dolares recibidos por parte del Banco Nacional de Cooperativas. El Fondo de Nuestra Comunidad nos dio \$3.000 dolares para Promoción y Mercadeo. Wedgeshare nos dio \$3.000 dolares para entrenamiento de los miembros del Mercado Central en Ventas a clientes y Servicio bilingüe a clientes. La Mesa Directiva del Mercado Central está esperando respuesta del U.S. Bank de \$7.500 dolares para eventos y promoción, y otros gastos de la campaña. De la promoción del Amigo flyer resivimos una respuesta de 60 gentes que han firmado la lista para mandarles avisos. Y también recibimos \$555.000 dolares de 18 donaciones individuales. La mesa del Mercado Central Pidio \$40.000 a la fundación Campaña para el Desarrollo Humano de los cuales no recibiremos respuesta hasta Junio de 1999.

Eventos en los que ha participado el Mercado Central:

El Mercado Central participo en un evento a nivel local "Recursos de las Americas" donde miembros de la Mesa Directiva estuvieron contestando preguntas sobre el Mercado Central y repartiendo el flyer Amigo del Mercado. También participo en un festival de la calle "Lake Cultural Festival"

Actividades en las que esta trabajando la Mesa Directiva

La Mesa Directiva también esta por publicar la Posición del Gerente Operacional del Mercado Central para el 1° de Marzo de 1999. Y el 17 de Enero los miembros de la Organización Interfaith Action de la que son miembros 30 Iglesias de las cuales 4 son Latinas celebraran el Día de Martin Luther King en el cual asistirán un promedio de 1200 personas lo cual sera una buena oportunidad para promover el Mercado Central, nosotros tendremos una mesa con información y esperamos que todos puedan asistir.

Los negocio que estamos reclutando y que no hay en el Mercado Central son:

- Tiendas de Artesania
- Flores
- Abarrotes
- Vegetales y Frutas
- Café
- Juguetes
- Periódicos y Revistas
- Cosmeticos
- Velas aromaticas
- Instrumentos Musicales de Latino americanos

Apertura del Mercado Central Primavera 1999.

MERCADO CENTRAL

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Mpls., MN
Permit # 530

VOL 28 - NO. 7 SEPT-OCT 1999



**PPL
NEWSLETTER**

GIVE ME A FISH AND I EAT FOR A DAY
TEACH ME TO FISH AND I EAT FOR A LIFETIME

MERCADO CENTRAL:

**OPEN FOR
BUSINESS**



The long-awaited marketplace on the SW corner of Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street in Minneapolis opened in August. Over 40 Hispanic and Latino entrepreneurs have set up shop inside this string of small buildings and storefronts, which PPL rehabbed to resemble an outdoor Mexican market.

For more on the Mercado, see inside center page



Also Inside:

**Edison/PPL School
begins second year with
added Junior Academy**

**PROJECT FOR PRIDE
IN LIVING, INC.**
2516 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404-4598
(612) 874-8511 FAX 874-6444
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Project for Pride in Living is an equal opportunity employer

Printed on Recycled Paper



MERCADO CENTRAL

staff news

Mission Accomplished Award: PPL Construction

For work done on Mercado Central —see center page of this newsletter for grand opening news

Just over a year ago, PPL bought a hodge podge of attached commercial buildings and put PPL Construction to work on them, to stabilize the structures and give them an integrated design.

Then, a car drove through the front, which threatened to collapse half of the building. Still, by August, 1999, the team had succeeded in making Mercado Central into an attractive, inviting marketplace.

PPL is grateful for this team's tremendous efforts. Mercado Central represents a great stride in our goal to assist neighborhoods

through economic development. It makes entrepreneurial enterprise in the area possible, and energizes a block that has been sorely in need of upgrading for some time! It is also one of PPL's largest projects which we hope will impact the community culturally and economically for years to come.

Renovation PPL did on the Mercado included:

- Reinforcing the entire roof structure
- Installing casework and hardware, bathroom and kitchen fixtures, doors and windows salvaged from the Edison/PPL School rehab
- Replacing exterior pink plywood with wood paneling
- Repairing large areas of framing, tin ceiling and molding, and hardwood floors
- Making things shown on the plan as three feet high, four feet high; making things shown on the plan as four feet high, three feet high
- Covering up ugly walls; exposing good looking walls



PPL Construction team:

Lisa Ross, PPL Construction Manager
.... and Bronco Buster

Paul Hyser, PPL Carpenter
.... and Master of the Tin Ceiling

Carrie McCann, PPL Intern Carpenter
...and Latch and Hinge Artist

Stephen Fautsch, PPL Carpenter
.... and Hardware Virtuoso

Tom Panek, Superintendent, Site Supervisor
... and Purveyor of Odd Hardware and Fire Caulk

Chuck Olund, PPL Carpenter
.... and Casework Magician

MERCADO CENTRAL

INTERFAITH ACTION

MERCADO CENTRAL

*Cooperativa Mercado Central**Latin America on Lake Street*

The NEW shopping experience evoking the sights, sounds and smells of a Latin American market – right here in your backyard, at the corner of Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street in South Minneapolis. The Mercado Central is an alliance of 40 Latino merchants offering diverse products and services, many unique to the Mercado. The Mercado Central is an essential element of the exciting Lake Street corridor revitalization. This is a collaborative community development project between Interfaith Action, Whittier Community Development Corporation, Catholic Charities, Project for Pride in Living and the Neighborhood Development Center.

FOOD

Eat at the Mercado or grab convenient take out. Taste specialties from South of the Border – fresh tortillas, fresh juice drinks, tacos, tamales, sandwiches, fresh breads and more. Specialty meats, fresh foods and ingredients are also available ... yucca, chiles, tomatillos, herbs and fresh tropical fruits.

TRADITIONAL & CONTEMPORARY HANDICRAFTS

More than thirty vendors offer a wide variety of shopping opportunities, including jewelry, Latin American music, cosmetics, leather goods, party dresses, traditional crafts, imported artesanía, gifts, flowers, shoes, hats, and other gifts.

SPECIAL MUSIC EVENTS

The Mercado is open on evenings and during the weekends for special events, including music, dance, and other live performances.

SERVICES

The second level houses Hispanic services including a travel agency, accounting service, translation services, and package delivery to Latin American countries.

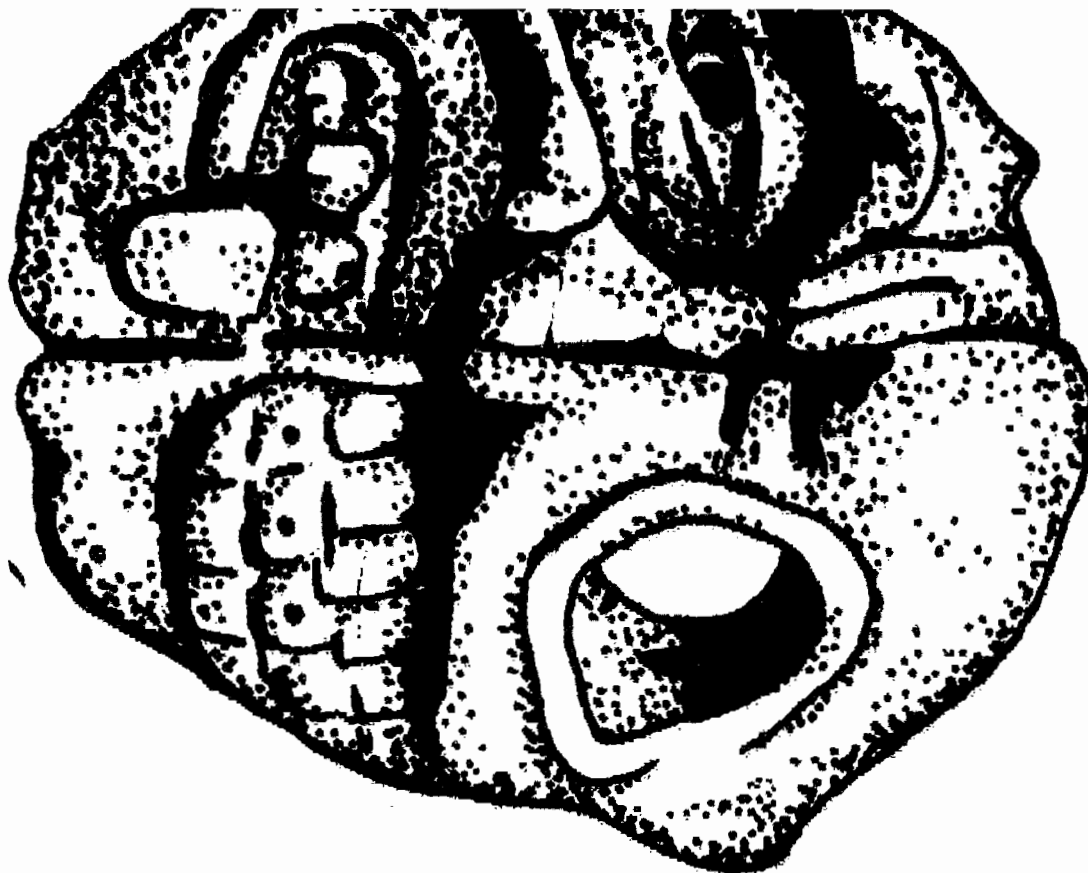
WATCH FOR COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS AT THE MERCADO CENTRAL!

PHONE (612) 333-1258

2720 EAST 22ND STREET, MINNEAPOLIS MN 55406
E-Mail SPEAC@SPEAC.ORG

FAX (612) 333-1261

MERCADO CENTRAL



DI A
DE LOS
MUESTRAS

CHICANO LATINO
MUSEUM AND MUSEUM

MERCADO CENTRAL

MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL

MERCADO CENTRAL

Mercado Central

Latin America on Lake Street



Restaurants
Fresh Foods
Artesania
Gifts
Clothing
Music
Books

Open 10:00 am - 8:00 pm Seven Days a Week

1515 East Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407

(corner of Bloomington and Lake)

information: 612.728.5400

MERCADO CENTRAL

Amigos del Mercado Central

¡Gracias!

Joan Adkins
 Bill Barnett *
 Cheryl Bolden *
 Suzanne Buresh
 Cara Carlson
 Ivan & Gail Chavez
 Julie Cox
 James Davnie *
 Martha Dunn
 Alicia Fragoso
 Mary Garcia
 John Givogre
 Teresa Glass *
 Tomás Gonda
 Mike Gramling
 Michael Guest
 Anne Hamre *
 Carolyn Hansen
 Chris Hansen
 Kathleen Hansen
 Sandra Heidemann *
 Annalisa Heig
 Randi Helling
 Maria Hernandez
 Bridget Higgins

Mark Hoiland *
 Gloria Hopkins
 Sue Hulsether *
 Beth Hynes
 Ingebretsen's Gift Shop *
 Nancy Johnson Black *
 Sheila Jordan
 Cathy Kehrwald *
 James Killian *
 Sally Koplin *
 Diane Kruse
 Hannah Lewis *
 Jim Lewison
 Margaret McGuirk
 Jan Milner
 Colette & Greg Moder *
 Heidi Morlock *
 Ann Morrison
 NDC *
 Randy & Joy Nelson *
 Charles & Regina Nicolosi *
 Eduardo Ortegon, Jr
 Emmanuel Ortiz *
 Stephanie Oyen
 Barbara Parker

Mirta Peredo Martinez
 Richard Peterson
 Nora Plesofsky *
 Aldo Ramos
 Marie Rickmyer
 Marisa Riviere
 Angel Roa-Ayala *
 Cynthia Rodriguez
 Mary Roth
 Mary Satre
 Ana Silva *
 Ramon Silva
 Fred Smith & Mary Martin *
 Beverly Stadum *
 The Stavrou Family *
 E. B. Stephens
 Miguel Stoesz
 Ida Swearingon *
 Mihailo Temali *
 Becky & Molly Tilsen
 Diana Watters
 David Wee *
 Joel & Janet Watchman Weisberg *
 WIND *

* donor

Become An Amigo Of The Mercado

Hagase Un Amigo Del Mercado

By becoming an Amigo of the Mercado, you help us prepare the Mercado's home at Bloomington & Lake. Benefits include: your name inscribed on a plaque honoring supporters of the Mercado; an invitation to special Grand Opening events; and ongoing notification of special events, promotions, and news of the Mercado

Por hacerse un amigo del mercado, usted apoya con la preparación del hogar del Mercado. Beneficios incluyen: su nombre escrito en una placa en honor de todos los benefactores del Mercado; una invitación a eventos especiales para celebrar la apertura del mercado; notificación continua de todos los eventos especiales, promociones y noticias del Mercado.

Sí, apoyo el Mercado Central con un regalo de:

\$25

\$50

Yes, I will support the Mercado Central with a gift of:

\$100

Otro / Other

Nombre / Name

Dirección / Address

Ciudad / City

Estado / State

Zona Postal / Zip Code

Teléfono / Telephone (día / day)

(noche / night)

Please return to: Mercado Central c/o Neighborhood Development Center 651 1/2 University Avenue St. Paul MN 55104

Cooperativa Mercado Central, Inc.

The Mercado Central is a member-owned cooperative of 41 Latino businesses, located on the corner of Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street in South Minneapolis. Replicating an authentic Latin American marketplace, the Mercado serves as a vibrant commercial and cultural center, offering a wide variety of fresh and prepared foods, imported art and handicrafts, music, books, and much more.

The vision of the Mercado Central was developed over a three year period by Latino graduates of the Neighborhood Development Center's small business training classes. NDC alumni, many of whom are recent immigrants, share the dream of opening their own businesses; most have developed solid business plans by the time they complete the training program. In recent years, as a growing number of Latinos completed training and searched for business locations, the idea of a common market was born.

Designed by its members to recreate a traditional Latin American market, the Mercado functions as a small business incubator, with the unique characteristic of being owned by the very businesses being incubated.

The Mercado's Board of Directors, consisting of nine member-entrepreneurs, designed and implemented a selection process to fill the 35 locations on the first floor of the Mercado Building.

Organizing energy and support for the Mercado Central was provided by a coalition of Catholic Charities, Interfaith Action, the Neighborhood Development Center, the Project for Pride in Living, and Whittier Community Development Corporation.

MERCADO CENTRAL

*The first Latino Shopping
Center in Minnesota—with over 40 stores,
including 6 award winning restaurants offering the
best Latino food in the Twin Cities!*

1515 East Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612.728.5401

Books, Music & Videos

Libreria Cristiana
Libreria Sagrado Corazon
Libreria 2Culturas
Relampago Musical
Discomania
Video El Mexicano

Clothing & Shoes

El Paraiso de los Niños
Novedades Alexis
Moda Rosi
El Rodeo
Zapateria Aracely
Amazonas
Modas Jennifer
Moda Latina

Fresh Foods

La Cosecha
Me Gusta Meat Market
Panaderia El Mexicano
Tortilleria La Perla

Restaurants & Cafés

Comales y Cazuclas
La Loma Restaurant
Taqueria La Hacienda
Manny's Tortas
Pupuseria Salvadoreño
Cafeteria La Loma
Reyna de los Jugos

Specialty Shops

Fiesta Flor Y Diseño
Ocatime's Relojeria
Abraxas
Dulceria La Piñata
Creaciones Lupita
Coleccion y Elegancia
Victor Hugo Jewelry
Luggage Anarely
Super Precio
Azteca Sport
Regalos Jennifer
Joyeria Latina
Perfumeria Sanchez

Services

Trujillo's Tax Services
Centro de Recursos y Info
CD Gerrard, Abogado, PA
Century 21, Luger
La Escuela
2Culturas Publishing
NDC--Nghbrd Dev Cntr
Mexico Aeroviales
Mano Employment
Envios Rapidos Morelos
Infinity Fashion Design

RESOURCES
CONTACT INFORMATION FOR KEY PARTNERS

For information on the development of the Mercado Central, tours, presentations, or specific merchant information, contact:

Mercado Central Cooperativa
1515 East Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Tel: 612-728-5401 (cooperative office)

OR

Becky George
President, Mercado Central Cooperativa — 2003
Owner, Fiesta Flower & Design
1515 East Lake Street, #108
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Tel: 612-728-5417 (store)

For information on neighborhood development using Asset Based Community Development strategies or information on entrepreneurial training courses or curriculum, contact:

Mike Temali
Executive Director
Neighborhood Development Center, Inc.
651 1/2 University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
Tel: 651-291-2480
mihailo@windndc.org

For information on Isaiah and the formation of a Latino parish, contact:

Father Lorenzo Hubbard
Sagrado Corazon de Jesus
2645 First Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Tel: 612-874-7169
Fax: 612-870-0408
l.hubbard@usfamily.net

For information on Latino business development, contact either:

Ramon Leon
Executive Director
Latino Economic Development Center
2845 Harriet Avenue South Suite 205
Minneapolis, MN 55408
Tel: 612-879-0124 Ext. 5
rleon@rconnect.com

OR

John Flory
Economic Development Specialist
Whittier Community Development Corporation
2845 Harriet Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408
Tel: 612-879-0109
jflory@webcenter.org

Thank you for your interest in the Mercado Central.

RESOURCES
ABCD COMMUNITY-BUILDING WORKBOOKS

- Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (1993). John Kretzmann and John McKnight.
- A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Economic Capacities of Local Residents* (1996). John Kretzmann, John McKnight, and Deborah Puntenney.
- A Guide to Mapping Local Business Assets and Mobilizing Local Business Capacities* (1996). John Kretzmann, John McKnight, and Deborah Puntenney.
- A Guide to Mapping Consumer Expenditures and Mobilizing Consumer Expenditure Capacities* (1996). John Kretzmann, John McKnight, and Deborah Puntenney.
- A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents* (1997). John Kretzmann, John McKnight, and Geralyn Sheehan.
- A Guide to Evaluating Asset-Based Community Development: Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities* (1997). Thomas Dewar.
- A Guide to Creating a Neighborhood Information Exchange: Building Communities by Connecting Local Skills and Knowledge* (1998). John Kretzmann, John McKnight, and Deborah Puntenney.
- City-Sponsored Community Building: Savannah's Grants for Blocks Story* (1998). Deborah Puntenney and Henry Moore.
- Newspapers and Neighborhoods: Strategies for Achieving Responsible Coverage of Local Communities* (1999). John Kretzmann, John McKnight, and Deborah Puntenney (Eds.).
- A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Associations in Local Neighborhoods* (1999). Nicol Turner, John McKnight, and John Kretzmann.
- Leading by Stepping Back: A Guide for City Officials on Building Neighborhood Capacity* (1999). Henry Moore and Deborah Puntenney.
- The Organization of Hope: A Workbook for Rural Asset-Based Community Development* (2001). Luther Snow.
- Community Transformation: Turning Threats into Opportunities* (2001). Luther Snow.
- Asset-Based Strategies for Faith Communities* (2002). Susan Rans and Hilary Altman.
- Building the Mercado Central: Asset-Based Development and Community Entrepreneurship* (2003). Geralyn Sheehan.

More resources on the Asset-Based Community Building approach . . .

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets, by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. This 376-page book suggests that communities cannot be rebuilt by focusing on their needs, problems, and deficiencies. Rather, community building starts with locating the assets, skills, and capacities of residents, citizens, citizens' associations, and local institutions.

\$25.00 for a single copy. Discounts available for multiple copies.

Mobilizing Community Assets—This six-module video training program featuring McKnight and Kretzmann introduces the concept of "asset-based community development" as outlined in *Building Communities from the Inside Out*. (\$79.50)

ABCD Workbooks (\$12.00 each):

- ▶ **A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Economic Capacities of Local Residents (1996)**
- ▶ **A Guide to Mapping Local Business Assets and Mobilizing Local Business Capacities (1996)**
- ▶ **A Guide to Mapping Consumer Expenditures and Mobilizing Consumer Expenditure Capacities (1996)**
- ▶ **A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents (1997)**
- ▶ **A Guide to Evaluating Asset-Based Community Development: Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities (1997)**
- ▶ **A Guide to Creating a Neighborhood Information Exchange: Building Communities by Connecting Local Skills and Knowledge (1998)**
- ▶ **City-Sponsored Community Building: Savannah's Grants for Blocks Story (1998)**
- ▶ **Newspapers and Neighborhoods: Strategies for Achieving Responsible Coverage of Local Communities (1999)**
- ▶ **A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Associations in Local Neighborhoods (1999)**
- ▶ **Leading by Stepping Back: A Guide for City Officials on Building Neighborhood Capacity (1999)**
- ▶ **The Organization of Hope: A Workbook for Rural Asset-Based Community Development (2001)**
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