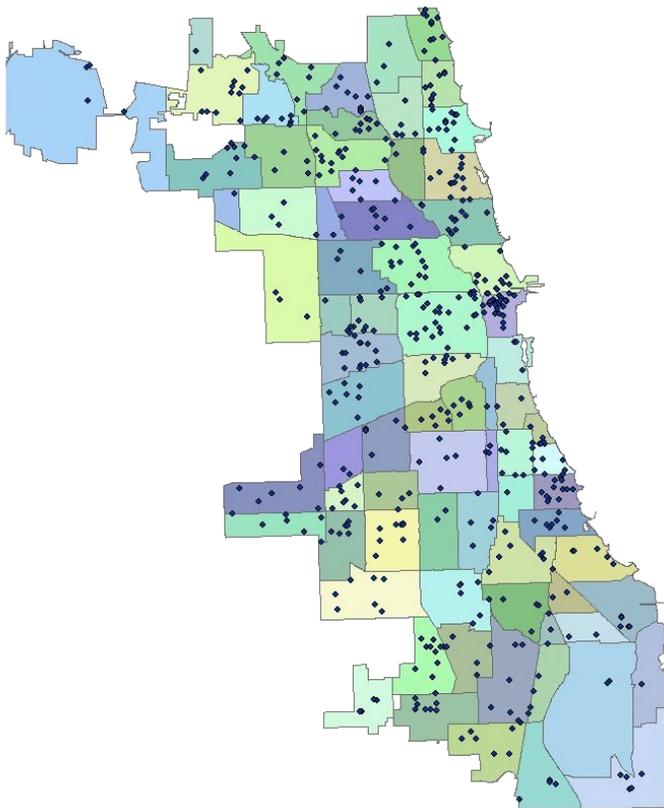




# accelerate 77

## Phase I & II Report

October 2012



## Project Description

As a part of its Resilient Communities Program, the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) is coordinating a three-phase project, “Accelerating Sustainable Initiatives in Chicago’s 77 Community Areas,” (more widely known as “accelerate77.”) **The goal of this project is to accelerate existing local programs and initiatives and increase the strength of their impacts on Chicago communities.** The underlying strategy is to first **IDENTIFY** sustainable initiatives currently active in all of Chicago's 77 community areas; **CONNECT** them with one another to form a network of new ideas, practices and motivation; and **ENGAGE** them in systematic learning, planning, and cooperative action. It is anticipated that the project will thereby **ACCELERATE** sustainability and community well-being through a grassroots approach driven by practical action, expanded imagination, and greater organizational capacities among local groups.

## Phase I: IDENTIFY



### “Listen and Learn” January 2011 - September 2012

Starting in the Fall of 2011, over 200 students from 5 Chicago-based Universities began to uncover the organizations, initiatives and individuals working at the community level toward creating a more sustainable Chicago. Professors from Chicago State, DePaul, Northeastern Illinois, Loyola and Roosevelt integrated the project into their curricula as a civic engagement component to their courses. During the summer of 2012, over 40 interns from around the US continued to uncover what was taking place at the community level within Chicago. All the students were asked to use an asset-based lens when in the communities.

## Phase II: CONNECT

### “Sharing Approaches That Work” - September 15, 2012

The culmination of 18 months of exploring and uncovering was a Share Fair event that aimed to both showcase and connect initiatives, organizations, and individuals from each of the 77 communities. In this day-long event at Truman College, participants were able to network, learn about local and city-wide resources available to them, and learn about the city’s plan to promote sustainability. Over 400 people attended the event with over 150 local organizations and initiatives showcasing their work.



## Phase III: ENGAGE

### “Collaboration, Training, and Planning” - 2013 – 2015



In the three years following the Share Fair, the accelerate77 team will collaborate with individuals and organizations we met in Phase I and II and facilitate networking, training workshops, local share fairs, and the building of new collaboration between neighborhood groups. The organizing sponsor (ICA) has a long history and years of experience in facilitation, consensus building, and community development. This phase will be defined through the innovations which come to light during the continued engagement of the local participants. The anticipated result will be the expansion of effective and creative community initiatives that will significantly contribute to a more sustainable Chicago.

# Phase I: IDENTIFY

## Goals

*"This week made me think a lot more about simple things that I can do in my community to make changes. I think that's really important because we often look at issues on such a large scale, they are overwhelming, making it difficult to facilitate change."\**

There were two major goals for the accelerate77 team during Phase I. The first of which was to uncover individuals, organizations and initiatives working towards a more sustainable Chicago. Sustainability can mean a lot of different things, but our team decided to refer to it as something that gave life to the community, and strengthened the community socially, culturally or environmentally. The second goal was to engage with college and post college students and introduce them to basic community organizing methods, asset-based approach to community development, and practical ways of understanding social and environmental justice concerns. We also wanted to get them engaged with the city around them, and involved and excited about community areas in Chicago.

## Participants & Partnerships

The Institute of Cultural Affairs was the organizing sponsor, but Phase I would not have been possible without University participation, of both undergraduate and graduate students, and volunteers, our partners, supporters and advisory board. See [Appendix A](#) for a full list of participants & partners.



*"In a way I think it was good that we went out into the community early on without too much background. It forced us to figure it out for ourselves and then examine and evaluate our methods."\**

## Process & Methodology

The initial canvassing took place with students from Oklahoma City University as part of a pilot project. We wanted to ascertain if students took a 'deep dive' into learning about an unfamiliar community and started uncovering what systems were at play, it would both get them more engaged in the area, and surface insightful information on who was organizing and working within the area. The students were given an introduction to community organizing theory and tools, safety guidelines, as well as a background in asset mapping. After an evaluation of the pilot, we determined it was successful in achieving both of our goals. We continued to partner with several different university professors and students throughout the city. The project was integrated into course curricula - generally as a civic engagement component. Over 200 students participated in the process, and 8 different classes, covering many different fields of study. To see full list of universities, professors, classes and fields, see [Appendix B](#).

\* quotes are taken from evaluations of the summer internship program – done anonymously.

**During the summer of 2012** we had over 40 interns from around the US continue the work, and started inviting organizations to come to the share fair, or Phase II. Ten of the forty students provided leadership throughout the summer staying on for 10 weeks or longer, while most other student interns stayed on for 7 or 3 weeks. The students worked in groups, taking responsibility for certain areas of the city, and began to have an in-depth understanding of the communities they were working in. Student groups also partnered with retired ICA colleagues from around the US that brought with them years of community development experience. Although Phase I was mainly a student led initiative, the students were encouraged to combine the skills of older colleagues with the creativity and ingenuity of their own ideas.

## Statistics

Participants included 182 students from over 5 Chicago based universities. During the school year the accelerate77 team partnered with 8 professors that then integrated the project into their classroom curricula. To see a full list of universities, professors, and classes see [Appendix B](#). Before the summer of 2012, over 55 communities had been partially canvassed.

Of the 40 summer interns, 71% of them were females, 63% were upperclassmen and grad students, and over 20% of the students were from out of state. We also had 5 volunteers working on the accelerate77 website, and 13 retired ICA colleagues. Over 900 initiatives throughout Chicago were uncovered.

By the time all was said and done over 300 volunteers, students, colleagues, and staff worked on ensuring that Phase I was complete, and contributed to the planning of phase II. It was truly an impressive endeavor that could not have been accomplished without an excellent and diverse group who were passionate about accelerating sustainable initiatives in Chicago.



## Lessons Learned

There were many lessons our accelerate77 team learned throughout this two year process:

- There is an amazing amount of energy at the university level, even though it tends to be an untapped resource for community areas.
- Individuals are willing to do an incredible amount of work and invest their time and energy into something they really believe in.
- Sustainability is a hard term to define perfectly. We were able to make a lot more progress as a team when we created our own working definition of the word.
- Students want to be engaged!

# Phase II: CONNECT

## Goals

The September 15th 'Sharing Approaches that Work' Share Fair aimed to showcase and mobilize the sustainability work of organizations, initiatives, and individuals from each of the 77 communities. The event provided participants an opportunity to share knowledge, highlight best practices on emerging trends relating to urban sustainability, and learn about resources available to them. The experiences, connections and conversations that took place at the Share Fair are giving shape to Phase III of accelerate77.



*"[It was an] incredible event, bringing a multitude of communities and organizations together. Guests and presenters were so relieved to know so many folks were out there doing good work and happy to share in the process."*

*Seneca Kern  
We Farm America*



## Participants & Partnerships

The participants for the Phase II of accelerate77 included volunteers, interns, and ICA associates and staff along with city officials, community initiatives & organizations, citywide organizations, media outlets, and the general public. While these participants differed in regards to their scope and contributions to Phase II, their efforts and presence were integral in making the 'Sharing Approaches that Work' Fair a success. See [Appendix A](#) for a comprehensive list of partnerships and participants.

## Process & Methodology:

Organizations and individuals who attended the Share Fair were identified from the working database produced from Phase I of accelerate77. The community outreach and engagement conducted during Phase I served as the foundation for the invitation process for the Share Fair. The accelerate77 team wanted a diverse array of organizations that embodied community leadership, employed innovative strategies, and were passionate about accelerating sustainability to be represented at the Share Fair. Due to a space limitation, we could have, in most cases, three organizations from each community area to a table.

The 'Sharing Approaches That Work' Conference took place from 10am to 4pm on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at Truman College. Introductions from NBC5's Lisa Parker set the stage for speeches by Alderman Graham, Alderman Cappelman, and Terry Bergdall, the CEO of the Institute of Cultural Affairs. A great keynote address from Karen Weigert, Chief Sustainability Office for the City of Chicago, officially commenced the Share Fair.

From 11am to 4pm, community level initiatives were then given the opportunity to share their work with attendees and conduct candid conversations with other member of Chicago's sustainability community. The event was organized to emphasize and highlight the sustainable work happening at the community level. In addition to the main floor showcasing community level initiatives, a total of twenty-one 'connection seminars' presented in break out rooms throughout the day. The citywide organizations presented on resources available within eight different categories: Food/Space, Transportation, Energy, Building Efficiency, Community Organizing, Green Economy, Community Resources and Chicago Innovators.

## Statistics

The accelerate77 team was very pleased with the turnout at the Share Fair. Through valuable feedback, we determined that most of the participants found that the information from the tabling organizations exhibiting their work was the most beneficial piece of the event. For others, connection seminars and general networking were the most gratifying aspects of the day. Several evaluations also highlighted the alderman's address and keynote speaker as an integral part of the event and a great way to start the day.

- ◆ **Over 100** community organizations tabled and shared information and 'approaches that work'.
- ◆ **Over 400** attended the Share Fair itself and over 150 people attended connection seminars.
- ◆ **Over 10** city wide initiatives tabled.
- ◆ **21** presenters shared resources at the connection seminars.
- ◆ **62** of Chicago's 77 community areas were represented at the Share Fair.



## Lessons Learned

Our team learned a lot throughout the planning process and the day of the event:

- There are some things you just cannot plan for! Although we had written or verbal confirmation from nearly all of the community areas of Chicago, Chicago Public School students and/or teachers could not participate due to the teacher's strike. In a lot of the community areas schools are doing an amazing amount of work toward sustainability, but, due to unfortunate timing, many of these schools were not represented.
- Don't overschedule! The first set of connection seminars during the day took place concurrently with the official launch of the event. Since organizations were so excited to talk with one another, it was hard to get people to leave the main room and listen to presenters! If we had to do it over again we would give folks at least an hour or so to chat before starting the seminars.
- People were excited to stay longer and connect! It was great to see how excited people were to share and learn about each others projects.

*"I was inspired by the level of sharing and participation at accelerate77. We learned of the City of Chicago's plans for the future and our Edgewater Environmental Sustainability Plan was shared with many other Chicago Communities. We connected with a great variety of organizations striving for sustainability and as a result, just last week we introduced Getaround Car Sharing at our monthly committee meeting. The Share Fair is truly helping to 'accelerate' sustainability initiatives in the City of Chicago!"*

*Helen Cameron  
Uncommon Ground*

# Phase III: ENGAGE

## What's Next?

We plan to harness the energy and enthusiasm cultivated in Phases I and II as we move on to the next several years. We are excited to promote and facilitate rich exchanges across the city— both by geography and by interest area. We are in the process of coordinating with organizations across the city to determine the structure of these programs so that they best meet the needs and visions of the communities they will serve.



We are expanding our current team and including those around the city who are interested in becoming more involved in this initiative. Keep on the look out for us! We presented Phases I and II at the Great Lakes Bioneers Conference this year and will be continuing to support local initiatives throughout Chicago. As always, we will continue to bring student energy to all the work we do.

If you are interested in becoming part of our team and volunteering your time, or interested in learning more, please contact us at [accelerate77@gmail.com](mailto:accelerate77@gmail.com).

*“We create a system to imagine the future, fed by everyone’s perspective and everyone’s skills and potential The future is ours to see. Step well and enjoy the view.”*

- Lucy Neal  
Transition Network

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A Sincere Thanks to our Sponsors:

**TheJoyceFoundation**

Improving the Quality of Life in the Great Lakes Region and Across the Country.

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CHARITABLE TRUST**



Our deepest gratitude to our volunteers and supporters, without whom none of this would be possible

# APPENDIX A

## Participants & Partners

312 Aquaponics, LLC	Environmental Law & Policy Center	Olive's Neighborhood Garden for the Hungry	
A Just Harvest	Fishin' Buddies	P.E.R.R.O.	Active Transportation Alliance
A Knock At Midnight	Fulton Street Flower and Vegetable Garden	Peace School	Business Partners - Uptown Chamber
Academy for Global Citizenship School	Gage Park Kids Harvest Garden	Peggy Notebaert Museum	CEDA
Alliance for a Greener South Loop	Garfield Park Community Council	Plastic Bag Solutions	Center for Neighborhood Technologies
Aryan Bhavan Restaurant	Garfield Park Urban Farmers	Prosser High School	Community Investment Corporation
Beard Elementary School	George – Sealey	Rebuilding Exchange	Cook County Forest Preserve
Benton House	Gingko Gardens	Renewable Energy Alternatives	Delta Institute
Bethlehem Starr	Glenwood Sunday Market	Savoy Square at Legends South	Edgewater Sustainability Council
Beverly Area Planning Association	God's Gang	Sierra Club	Energy Impact Illinois
Bike-a-Bee	Good Earth Catering Company	South Chicago Chamber	Faith in Place
Blacks in Green	Great Lakes Bioneers—Chicago	South Shore Chamber Inc.	Heartland Alliance
Bowmanville Community Organization	Greater Southwest Dev. Corp	South Shore Sustainability Collaborative	Illinois Environmental Council
Bronzeville Children's Museum	Green Lots Project	Southeast Environmental Task Force	LISC
Brother Tim's Vegetarian Fast Food	Green Sanctuary Group	Sustainable Pilot Project	Millennia Consulting
Budlong Woods Library	Green Wheels	Tarkington School of Excellence	Openlands
C.R.O.P. - Chicago Rarities Orchard Project	Howard Alan Architects	The Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center	Seven Generations Ahead
CCA Academy High School	I-Go Car Sharing	The Renaissance Collaborative	The Field Museum
Chatham Business Association	Imagine Englewood If...	The Urban Canopy	Transition US
Chicago Green Restaurant Coalition	Indigo Spins	Transition Jeff Park	Uptown United
Chinese American Service League	Inspiration Kitchens	Transition Uptown	
Christy Webber Landscapes	Institute of Cultural Affairs	U-Farm IIT	Bridgeport Coffee
Claretian Associates	Iron Street Farm	United Business Association of Midway	National Car Wash
CLESE — Global Garden	Jane Adams Hull House Museum	Urban Art Retreat	Native Foods Café
Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community	LET'S GO Chicago	Urban Worm Girl	The Coffee Studio
Columbia's Papermaker Garden	Logan Square Farmer's Market	UrbanPonics, LLC	Transition Chicago
Community Youth Dev. Institute	Loud Grade Produce	Washington Park Consortium	Truman College
DePaul University: Urban Farming Org	Mariano Azuela Elementary School	Wilbur Wright College Service Learning	Tukaiz LLC
Design Makes Change	Mathers—More Than A Café	Wilbur Wright College: Building Energy Technology Program	Whole Foods
Dunning Read Conservation Area	Morgan Street Garden	Wood Street Farm	
Easy Breezy Energy	Neighbor Capital LLC		Ald. Harry Ostermann
Eco-Andersonville	NeighborServe, Inc.		Ald. James Cappleman
Edison Park Elementary School	North Lawndale Greening Committee		Lisa Park
EEE- Green Lungs	Northside College Prep High School		Karen Wiegert
			State Senator Heather Steans
			US Congressman Danny Davis

# APPENDIX B

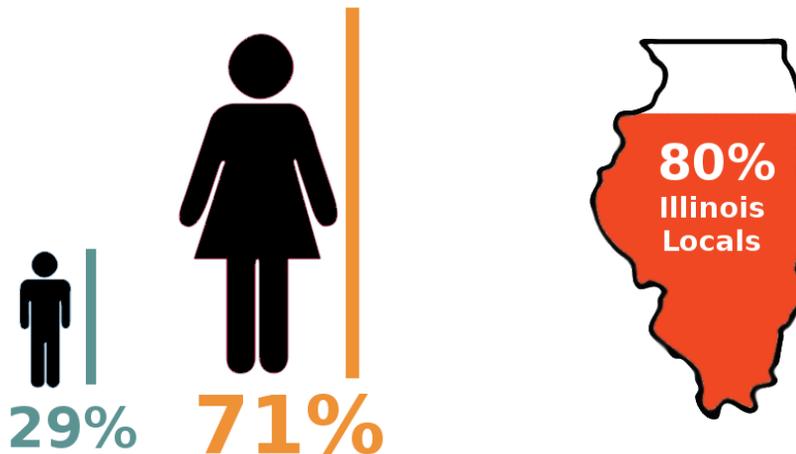
## Student & University Involvement 2011- 2012

Accelerate 77 partnered with over 225 faculty and students from over five Chicago-based Universities for Phase I & II

University	Course	Faculty	# of Students	Year in School
Chicago State University	GEO: Neighborhood Development	Daniel Block	17	Seniors/Graduates
DePaul University	Geographic Information Systems	Julie Hwang	9	Soph/Juniors
	Intro to Journalism	Lou Rutigliano	21	Freshmen
	Steans Center - Green Chicago Course	Student Initiated	7	Freshmen
	Environmental Ethics	Michael Edwards	34	Juniors/ Seniors
	Freshman Immersion Program	Michael Edwards	21	Freshmen
	Content Management Systems	Danny Mittleman	6	Graduates
Loyola University	Environmental Sustainability	Reuben Keller	16	Freshmen
Northeastern Illinois	Conservation Psychology	Melinda Merrick	16	Soph/Jr/Sr
Roosevelt University	Sustainable Futures	Michael Bryson	20	Freshman
Other Schools	UIC, OCU, Oberlin College	Student Initiated	8	Seniors/ Graduates
Interns from Chicago/ US	Multidisciplinary	Student Initiated	50	All
<b>Number of students that participated in Phase I &amp; II of Accelerate 77</b>			<b>225</b>	All

## The Student Interns - Summer 2012

Over 40 interns from around the US canvassed, documented and started inviting organizations to come to the Share Fair, or Phase II. Ten of the forty students provided leadership throughout the summer staying on for 10 weeks or longer, while most other student interns stayed on for 7 or 3 weeks.





# Phase I & II Report