

Rubèn Lizardo

Rubèn Lizardo is a Senior Associate at California Tomorrow. In addition to his work as the Project Director of Leading by Example Initiative, Rubèn serves as staff lead for a number of other capacity building efforts that aim to help leaders in the non-profit sector improve their professional and organizational practices in the areas of diversity, inclusion, and equity. Through Rubèn's leadership California Tomorrow has offered training and technical assistance to support the work of non-profit leaders in the following fields: community building, after school and youth development, parent led school reform organizing, and family resource centers.

Prior to moving to the Bay Area, Rubèn spent 20 years in Los Angeles where he was active in a variety of professional and civic efforts to improve race relations, public and community education, and economic and social justice.

As the Education & Training Director of the LA based Community Development Technologies (CD Tech) Center, Rubèn was responsible for coordinating all education and training programs in the field of community development. This field includes a wide variety of inter-disciplinary courses focusing on affordable housing and real estate development, community planning and organizing, and community economic development. During his tenure at CD Tech Rubèn served as the Director of the Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) at LA Trade Technical College, where he also taught courses in community organizing, community violence prevention, and schools and community development. The customized training and technical assistance resources provided by CD Tech and the CPED program served to build the knowledge and capacity of youth, community, business, and civic leaders in Los Angeles.

As a Co-Director and Project Director at the MultiCultural Collaborative he was principally responsible for facilitating the organization's efforts to advance educational efforts which respond to the urgent need to improve relations across racial and economic lines in Los Angeles. Among the initiatives the Rubèn helped to establish at the MCC is Community-School Initiative (CSI), multi-organizational partnership to build inter-ethnic organizing capacity among parents engaged in school reform. As an MCC Project Director Rubèn provided long-term technical assistance to the Watts/Century Latino Organization and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, who jointly sponsor the Parents and Students Organized for Excellence in Our Schools and Communities (PASO) in Watts.

Apart from his work in community development, Rubèn has also served as volunteer or as board member with several community-based organizations and efforts, including: the African & Latino Youth Summit, the United Youth On The Move Coalition, the Este Es Tu Barrio Project, and the LA Coordinating Committee to Defeat Proposition 187, the Metropolitan Alliance. In addition, Rubèn has served or serves on the board of directors of the Blazer Safe Haven House For Youth, Search To Involve Pilipino Organization, KPFK Radio Station, the Mexican American Education Commission, the East LA Community Corporation, the Watts/Century Latino Organization, the Gang Violence Bridging Project, Homies Unidos, and the community funding board of the Liberty Hill Foundation.

Rubèn has a history and passion for dealing with the need to improve race relations through collaborative community action that addresses the social inequities that are root causes of inter-group competition and conflict. In 1999 he was awarded the California Peace Prize by the California Wellness Foundation for his work to address root causes of youth violence and served as Member and President of the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission from 1999-2001. He currently serves as member of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's RESPECT Advisory Committee, a national roundtable of experts in race and race relations matters.