**Wednesday, October 26th (3:45 PM ET)**

2022 NNIP DC Meeting, October 27th

Session Title: Power Dynamics and Data

Room: Columbia Heights B

Led by: Bob Gradeck, Western Pennsylvania Data Center at Pitt

Notes by: Gabe Samuels

Present: Kelly Davila (Data Haven); Pablo Castro (Microsoft); Katrina Audry (The DoD Center NOVA); Lori Henson (The Children’s Trust); Melyssa Tsai O’Brien (Johnson Center Community Data & Research Lab); Jake Cowan (Consultant); Bob Gradeck (Western PA Regional Data Center); Logan Shertz (BNIA); Amy Carroll-Scott (Drexel UITC); Jeremy Pyne (CI: Now); Seema Iyer (BNIA); Jenna Loo(sp?) (TDC New Orleans)

**Question 1: What attracted everyone to this session, and how do you think about power?**

**Jake:**

* Interested in this session from experience managing grant programs
	+ Power is about who receives the grant

**Melyssa:**

* Power as a reframing for equity
* Thinking about how power dynamics play a role
* Interested to hear about how other grantees have advanced power in their work

**Lori:**

* Major mission at the Children’s Trust - taking investments from property tax dollars and using them for community needs; being aware of needs and funding them
* Layers of power: community organizations, then the people they serve
* Hard question - how do we get our work back to the community members? How to best reach the beneficiaries of the funding?

**Jeremy:**

* Main goal is to get data out into the community (mainly through reports) so people have access
* Strategy: making sure that they’re incorporating data users from all over the community, having them be a part of the data design
	+ Started by making connections with beginner data users
	+ After developing work, bringing them back, and asking if they’ve hit the mark
	+ Getting the community involved in the process helped them make sure that they were meeting their needs. Very intentional
* Moving forward, need to make sure they’re maintaining connections through data trainings, tool trainings.
* Working on a data tool that’s entirely in Spanish

**Kelly:**

* Community members facilitate focus groups
* Looking to hear more about how other groups are getting community involvement throughout the process

**Katrina:**

* Wants to hear more about how other people combat issues with community involvement

**Pablo:**

* Catalyst grant program: provides funding to community-based organizations to advance racial equity

**Logan:**

* Getting community to give feedback
	+ Looking for help with that

**Amy:**

* Important to think about what the community will allow you to spend money on?
* Promise Neighborhoods helped invest more in the community workforce
	+ The hard part: how to get funding to build community research infrastructure? People either think that it already exists, or that everyone is using community research.
		- Created a community research review board - reviewing studies that are proposed to happen in their community
		- Communities want to be a part of data usage
* Power = building infrastructure before, during, or after projects.

**Jenna:**

* Brookings data roadshow gave was invigorating opportunity to see community feedback about what research entails
* Started a project on Louisiana climate action plan
	+ Asking community what they think they should do to account for the equity aspect?
	+ Working with community groups, trying to get them involved earlier
	+ At the same time, it's so early on in the project and not clear if it will go on, so there are concerns about whether or not it’s worth it to get them involved.

**Question 2: How do we define power?**

**Jake:**

* NNIP should have a framework on power, or a common definition of power and what that is

**Melyssa:**

* Agrees; important to explain what we mean when we use certain terms, power
* On power dynamics and shifting power: thinking about opportunities to shift the language and use people-first language

**Amy:**

* Community engagement; Community engaged research, etc
	+ These ideas are institution-oriented- who are they working with?
* Community empowerment paradigm is underinvested in
	+ We need to think about communities as their own systems.

**Kelly:**

* Empowerment vs. powerful vs. power as something that you exercise
	+ We don’t engage with all elements of power

**Question 2A: How do we build an infrastructure so that communities have the power to set the agenda, make decisions, and do the work?**

**Jenna:**

* As an analyst, doesn’t feel that she has that much power. It’s the funders that have the most power.
* They use the funders’ playbook in communications because that is what funders want.
* Where do we begin to upset funding systems? They’re making this possible, so it’s hard to disrupt.

**[name rescinded]:**

* Curious about: where does the buy-in happen?
* Example: Kellogg has their mission, and when a project is funded, it has to align with their mission. Their mission is not always practical for each city
	+ Funders have a lot of power in the speaker’s city

**Amy:**

* Philly is experiencing an uptick in gun violence
* What has been revealed is that funders are creating a competition mindset between organizations that should be working together
	+ This also creates a scarcity mindset among non-profits at the front line
	+ We need to change funding systems because they are traumatizing - they are recreating the same system over and over again
	+ We need stronger community foundation systems that are more responsive to their communities

**Jake:**

* There is competition between different jurisdictions, different levels, different organizations that should be working together

**Bob:**

* Carnegie Mellon and other partners are part of the conversation, but they’re not telling people what the issues are
	+ Appreciates that partners and community work together to figure out the problems; it’s more iterative

**Lori:**

* Lots of conversations about how to help youth - came to the conclusion that we should just ask youth.
* Important to consider - people may not know what’s out there and what isn’t
* Need to have a more balanced exchange, but how do we do that when there is already an imbalance?
	+ When one actor has the power over the funding and who gets it, or the power over the data, etc.

**Bob:**

* Maybe we need to change the rules, but how do we do that?

**Lori:**

* Her org has community volunteers who review grants
	+ That’s how they make funding decisions - but there is still a long way to go

**Seema:**

* You need two eyes to have perspective
	+ One eye may be valuable, but you won’t get the full depth
	+ Example: Organization asking a community what they need is like the pharmacist asking the customer what they need
	+ Need to have a three-legged stool
		- In Baltimore, OCC comes into the communities and hosts listening sessions.
		- The issue: community members give their answer, the bank responds that they can’t help (community doesn’t fit the demographics they serve), and that’s the end of the conversation
	+ Data is important because it helps the community know what they need to ask for

**Jeremy:**

* The investment needs to be in the training, so that they don’t only know how to read the data, but also so that they know what it means

**Amy:**

* Listening sessions are a bad word in Philly now - people are sick of others coming into their community and asking what they need
* Systems are realizing that we want to change so that we can have more consistent community involvement in solutions.
	+ But our systems aren’t set up for engagement; no funding, no transparent systems that allow for community members beyond listening sessions and advisory boards.
	+ Advisory boards are not always truly engaging. They’re important, but have to be used in a way that isn’t just a one-off, using the community’s expertise and then moving on

**Logan:**

* Lots of similarities in this room, a lot of experiences are shared, specifically around philanthropic organizations and the associated “rules”

**Seema:**

* Piece of advice - before you go to a community and ask them what they want, help fund the stuff that gets them what they actually want

**Bob:**

* Why do we have to go to a community when a question/issue pops up.
* Those feedback loops should already exist

**Amy:**

* Interested in learning if the issues that are addressed are the same as what the communities want

**Bob:**

* Thinking about systems change around data governance
	+ What gets changed?
	+ What is the process for re-defining categories, deciding the data systems that we use, the role that people play?
	+ What do public sector agencies need to prepare for that?
	+ How do we represent communities in data?
	+ What rules do we go after, what are our data guidelines?
	+ Just some things his organization has been thinking about; not sure if that’s shifting power, but it may build capacity and shift mindsets

**Question 3: What are some practices that we can all adopt?**

**Melyssa:**

* “Data evangelism” - going to organizations and talking about the importance of disaggregating data and sharing in a way that represents how it can be useful
* “Data biography” - lays out the data sources, why indicators were selected, where they’re from, etc.
	+ Gives transparency to the work that is being done

**Jeremy:**

* Taking the fear out of it for people; lack of clarity around some sources created a lot of anxiety for people. Can build on that

**Amy:**

* Demystifying data and data terminology at the grassroots level
	+ Open things up so people can use data better
* Having success in building capacity for residents to look through data and build data stories into advocacy
* Next steps: wants to get youth fellowship to have them be involved in the process
	+ Community-curated stories are more compelling
* Community data collection as a counternarrative
* -Need to rethink systems of data in the community research review board work
* Community members often think that institutions all collaborate with each other, but they don’t
	+ This leads to multiple IRB’s coming into communities.
	+ IRBs need to think at the community-level, not just the individual-level

**Bob:**

* Building a meaningful role for the community in data analysis
	+ For example:here’s what the data says, but what’s missing?; is this data any good; can you help us interpret this data?
* Involving communities in the design process: “No Dashboards about us without us”
* Listen to community, create a set of governance practices so that communities can approve: this is what you need to do to get their participation

**Melyssa:**

* Data walks/ Data chats
	+ Not just having the advisory voice up front, but at the end as well.
	+ Reviewing data together to create more conversation and give feedback

**Seema:**

* Simple act of monitoring what is going on in one’s neighborhood
	+ Monitor if something is working, if its not working, and make adjustments accordingly
	+ Important to empowerment
* The community changes - you can see how they learn over time.
	+ Not sure how to measure that, but would be great to know how people are adjusting to using the data
* For secondary data/administrative data: if the community doesn’t like the data, they know where the admin data is from and can work to correct it
	+ This allows community to go to their local governments, and advocate for better data
	+ Example: vacant housing count in BMore: people realized that vacant houses were undercounted, went to the local housing authority, and got them to come back - they counted more vacant homes

**Kelly**

* Collecting primary data on homelessness and substance use - not going to be successful for people who look like “us”
	+ Instead, training community data workers to collect the data

**Logan:**

* Systems context; people don’t always understand the civic or capital systems that govern them
	+ It’s one thing to give them a data point, but need to point out where that data is coming from

**Jenna:**

* Really important to include the history (e.g. white flight)

**Jake:**

* Build data literacy