**Data for Promise Zones and Other Collective Impact Work**

Alexander Ballroom

Leader: Matt Nowlin

Notes: Rob Pitingolo

Attendees: Nowlin, Goulding, Berg, Healy, Bellows, Li, Knott, Pitingolo, Abraham

Berg: Promise zone is a 10 year federal designation. Allows neighborhoods to get bonus points on applications. Indy has always been low on ranking of federal funding. It’s a way to convene partners around 5 indicators (see handout). We’re 1 or 13 urban zones. Urban is run by HUD, rural by USDA. We’ve brought together stakeholders to figure out how to evaluate the program. There is a renewed sense of interest from HUD. They want to make sure they’re getting their money's worth. It’s going to take a long time to accomplish this, but what questions should we ask now to track over a long period of time. How do we pull in more quarterly and less annual data?

Nowlin: I thought we could talk about the basic struggle of narrowing down indicators to a useable set. We’re thinking about direct survey data among people in the neighborhood. Then there’s stuff like ACS data, state ed dept, where you might see outcomes. Each has issues. Perception data has sample size issues and question text. Over years the answers might change but so do the people served. So what is changed lives vs. changed demographics. The next level up, it’s hard to make sure data collection is accurate and timely. With Census and others the data is solid but it’s hard to know what the program actually did. So that’s the framework of problems.

Berg: West Philly zone has an open data platform. We are a nonprofit so we have less access to city systems. We have 8-12 systems in the city. What Philly did is use the open data platform to see how number of vacant houses or number of jobs changed. That’s good in some ways but not in others.

Nowlin: What’s it called?

Berg: West Philly open data.

Nowlin: Has anyone had experience with a process to narrow down indicators?

Knott: I’ve had the opposite. We were planning the Byrne grant. I developed great longitudinal data profiles. Special emphasis on crime and safety but also cleanliness and environment. By the end of year 3 I had tripled the number of indicators based on feedback from residents and funded partners. They identified what’s actually important. We went in thinking we know what’s important and ended up making new indicators that we now report for the whole city not just the neighborhood.

Nowlin: what are they?

Knott: Property crime rate. Gun homicide vs. other. We started publishing street light outages. Reports to 311 for lighting. It was always raised about crime because of street lights being out.

Nowlin: That’s a big issue here.

Knott: We have it from the open data portal. I started just downloaded it but have started making special requests that aren’t in there. We started using LEHD. For other projects we can look at employment by age. We have a robust open data portal, so with the report we started going on and pulling down crimes every 2 weeks. 911 calls for service is live, so we are able to use that. Same thing with housing data. Code violations and vacant housing is published twice per month. We don’t struggle too much with lags.

Li: One of our projects is integration vision. Baltimore is a city, SF is another location. We have been working with the cities on collective impact. We start at the top and do data training. It’s been helpful to have everyone on the same page and using the same dashboards so that you don’t have to learn a bunch of different dashboards.

Knott: Most of our indicators are based on point level data. For ACS we have to do best fit to the Byrne neighborhoods. The city did buy special cuts of the 5 year ACS for their boundaries. We could compare it back to the 2000 and 2010. The neighborhoods don’t follow census geographies.

Berg: We know all about that.

Knott: Health data is only at census tract. For the Byrne site it’s just 6 census tracts and the neighborhood is just a corner of each. We didn’t even want to try. Someone at the Bmore housing dept is interested in a proposal and application to overlap with the area. I’m excited.

Nowlin: When people were giving their opinion about indicators. Were those in public meetings? Neighborhood groups? How did you get feedback?

Knott: Sometimes and community association meetings? I would give a recap of data and prepare a handout. Sometimes people would say ‘why are you talking about this’ or ‘I don’t care about certain things’. One of the issues is that the project is fluid and no one was saying that you can’t change your mind or amend your proposal. I had trainings to show stakeholders how to download data, map data, and connect them with resources. Then they feel more empowered like they’re working on it. They’re probably running wild with indicators now. Baltimore open data is pretty solid.

Berg: Let’s talk about neighborhood surveying. One thing we were asked to do is a neighborhood survey of perceptions. How do you know how to pull the right sample and survey those people?

Goulding: We do that. We worked with the mayor’s office. Students go out and survey residents. We work with them to write the report. I’m new and making guesses, but I think the past few years we’ve done it this way. In terms of how to pull the best sample, I don’t know.

Knott: University of Baltimore administered 2 years of collective efficacy survey. Administered by a criminal justice professor and a student. The approach was to hire outreach workers from the community. They received a small stipend depending on the number of completed surveys. I provided a master list of residences in the community. I pulled housing data on total properties and matched it to houses listed as vacant by the city. Pulled out anything definitely commercial. Assigned them block IDs. The first year we did this the professor used a random number to pull out houses to visit. They had issues getting people to answer the door. I know there were a few concerns raised. There wasn’t a research partner going out. We don’t know how the data was collected. The community is near Johns Hopkins and there is a lot of researchers and surveyors who come in, survey, then disappear. The benefit is that it was people from the community doing that, so they felt a greater sense of ownership. It was a good way to get people responded who might not have before.

Bellows: We had lots of ways to determine eligibility for a survey and then had a hard time getting people to take it.

Knott: A mail survey was considered but mailing 30 pages to 300 people and then the response rates would be low. It was a low income community so we thought there would be access issues if it’s online. Even though there is a library nearby we worried that people would ignore it. We tried collecting email addresses before. How on earth do you get that? People in that community use burners so phone survey was out.

Nowlin: What about people who work in the neighborhood but don’t live there?

Healy: We have responses from another survey and a lot of people responded are people who work there, not live there.

Nowlin: What about data collection from other nonprofits working in the area?

Bellows: [removed]

Berg: Going back to how data is collected and stored… can you get the same type of data, like homeowner data, in a timely manner and on a consistent basis? It’s very challenging for us.

Li: At NNIP I hear a lot about data training. Is that something you do?

Berg: We haven’t gotten there yet. We are still making sure we have a source of data to be collected.

Healy: that will come later in the process. All of these orgs are a bigger deal to use than we are to them.

Berg: You also have orgs that in some cases aren’t doing that effectively. Even if you paid them we are finding there is a major lag in data collection.

Knott: Don’t make assumptions about capacity. Entering in names and creating IDs is easy for us but not for other groups. I wish we had considered that.

Bellows: when you get data, how much do you trust it?

Berg: Interesting question. We’re just hoping for any data. We’ll worry about the trust later.

Bellows: [removed]

Knott: If you’re in a pinch, just say where you got the data with no description. The data we get thats administrative is pretty much all like that. We have to be mindful that it’s the crime rate “as published by the police dept” because there are going to be biases, missing data, funky things. Sometimes no one else has no better data. We didn’t create it and everyone is using it.

Abraham: We run a statewide promise zone with oversampling larger cities.

Nowlin: How much does this cost?

Abraham: It’s every 3 years. A million dollars or so. There’s so much need for the information. With the partner data they’ve already reported it to partners.

Berg: I think that it would be great to connect to everyone here as a follow-up. As we roll this out it’s great feedback.

[End of session]