Session 4: Thursday 5/7/2015, 4pm-5pm
Location: Board Room

Session Title: **"How to Include the Whole Community?"**
Organizer: Preston Rhea, Code for America
Primary Notetaker: Leah Hendey
Participants:
Brandon Nida and Cheryl Knott, Baltimore; Richard Parks, USC; Tyler Waring City of Durham; Ashley Clark, Charlotte; Anthony Galvan, Dallas; Ryan Gerety, Open Tech Institute; Starr Silver, Pinellas; Courtney Denton, San Antonio.

Notes:
Preston Rhea – Code for America- when were you a high functioning participatory outsider? When I was the only American in a Chinese company.

Cheryl Knott– BNIA- community in East Baltimore - trying to build community trust   - anger resentment against other universities etc. Outsider- some of the meetings have been really good –you feel connected.

Anthony Galvan – IUPR UT Dallas small survey with this a local weed & seed in west Dallas (African American community) had great conversations and experiences. Helps to live in the city and know what they call their neighborhood, where the streets are, etc.

Ashley UNCC - Charlotte – being an outsider – not from Charlotte and the south in community meetings.

Tyler Waring – Durham – boxing match in a mining camp. – learned blacksmithing after.

Richard Parks – USC – lives in South Central LA - -data not broken out for white kids at his own kids' school.

Brandon Nida – BNIA- did a lot of organizing in southern West Virginia – strong insider/outsider culture– figuring out in Baltimore how to patch into community work. Experiences that I won't understand. Currently trying to figure out how to deal with in a smart, sensitive way

Starr Silver - Pinellas County.

Ryan Gerety – Open Tech Institute- project in DR Congo – helping community radio station set up a wireless network – good local partner so we can facilitate the exchange- My work with Social Compact – talk to community members about the issues they were facing – research arm trying to get business and investment – need locals there all the time.

Leah Hendey – Urban Institute- work with community tax aid.

Courtney Denton - San Antonio.

Preston – structure of jobs and institutions and comfort zone- often lose or neglect to practice after the initial set up – groups and consistencies building meaningful relationships with them over time. Code for America - standard for effective community engagement [see https://www.codeforamerica.org/governments/principles/engagement/] competencies governments need and get people to participate beyond voting or public meetings – who are we reaching? Meaningful examples? Treat people like they are people and not means to an end for a project. What challenges? Job is to be behind a computer? – I've been lucky enough to find situations that are authentic and meaningful. Other barriers? Brandon – the time commitment- to really engage communities it takes a lot of time – are there ways to more effectively reach a lot of community members that aren't parts of formal associations but are doing work in their neighborhoods and could use data? How to do that in a time efficient manner?

Anthony – we have a staff that's pretty mission driven. Maybe this is a lot to ask for a lot of people. I live in the city of Dallas- I don't live in a bad neighborhood but literally live on the wrong side of the tracks. But I know the guy down the street talking loudly on his porch at 2 am. We live in the city and participate in the city. We serve on boards on community organizations or collaborative that include multiple organizations. Not part of my job but part of my board commitment – go into communities people recognize us -we have the job because we do those things. Not the case for everyone we work with. We get our foot in the door because we are in those communities already.

Starr - Sitting behind a desk and a funder - applying to be part of the campaign for grade level reading- excited about the opportunity to do outreach – time commitment – we go pick the low hanging fruit – talk to the parents that I know we can get there– but we want to make sure everyone is at the table. Example of hearing a speaker talking about community engagement – but only talking about churches as faith-based not

mosques, etc. How do you get that mind set to change in the decisionmakers in the organization?

Ashley – applied research center- how you define community varies widely. We are set up with focus areas- Ashley is housing person – have allowed me to have a chunk of my time on community engagement– new projects and ideas come from that. We work with agencies that don't look the communities they are serving. I've gotten push back they have been trying to include residents – but residents they don't feel comfortable so they don't push. Charlotte has a lot of coalitions- they are not very diverse and there is not wide representation – how do you get a wide set of voices?

Preston – deep engagement in Boulder Co – working on civic engagement around their housing plan. Smaller than Denver – 30 miles away – white liberal paradise- all the land/housing used up need to address it- working with them to figure out how to reach all kinds of people. Becky Boone working in Boulder – engaged with people who come to our meetings the same six, older homeowners – Becky wrote quick tool – on demographics of Boulder- vs people who have come to housing meetings in one year. But no renters or young people have come to the meetings. She engaged with a student get-out-the-vote group – got people to come to a student led housing meeting on campus.

Leah – hard to fundraise for?

Ryan – if you are generating research and data for a goal – measuring healthy food access in a city- no one should just fund that – would want it tied to a community organizing strategy and solutions, and policy solutions and cities. What successful partnerships are there around issues?

Anthony – had a group at the university do a survey in south Dallas – the faculty never went out with the field team and never went to the neighborhood – presenting on their research at the Fed and there were leaders from community organizations in the room. And someone asked a question about stray dogs. Researchers don't know and didn't ask about stray dogs. [stray dogs a huge problem in the community] they conducted a "Community survey" but had no idea this was any issue.

Preston – horizontal barrier to engagement- team collaboration – and funders –that's a vertical barrier- feel like we have more control of the horizontal part- vertical part is hard and beholden to the structures is either risky or impossible. Trying to find a new way

that funders fund to get money in a meaningful way – something is more comprehensive for community engagement.

Brandon – this is something think a lot about. How to pull resources from the larger pool to do community participatory research- alternative sources of funding- working out a plan in my head- how to make a direct route to large pool of capital – (not indirectly through donations from wealthy people) –university guy has written about how to get funds without strings-give a community $5000 and not going worry what they do with it. Strictures on funding is going to have certain outcomes some might be transformative but importance to break out the funding streams or community capacity to spend the money.

Starr –how much money are we talking about? Local government does give mini-grants to local organization-with no strings attached. For me that's not a lot of money -to fund my own [work] time. Are there other barriers? It's amazing when people are engaged when it's a cause they believe and have the person power to do it. Unclear that money is a barrier – lived on the soft side of money for years. What would the money go for?

Anthony- not sure if really successful – done work with our local PBS affiliate- between $5-15K – we'll go with them into the community – there is some radio/TV program being consumed by wealthy people who give money to social causes *and* gets us into the community.

Richard- Some communities are burnt out – they've been surveyed too much. When we fund a faculty research team – we fund a report back to the community, to reconvene and report back the results and share and listen to them. The richness of the conclusions is deepened through that end of project component. Food security project in City Heights. It is important to avoid professional lingo in order to increase residents' ability to engage in research questions and outcomes.

Cheryl – do a lot of empowering the people doing the engagement- how do you communicate these things that don't have the same type of data literacy. We live in this bubble sometimes – how do you break yourself away from that and don't have a back ground in statistics and how do you start and maintain that conversation?

Leah = Austin example forum – Children's Optimal Health's practice is to conduct community forums in the middle of the project not as an end point. Really an opportunity to engage stakeholders on the data and cross-sectors and people who aren't normally meeting like low income mothers and the head of the hospital system.

Cheryl- how to go from being a person thinking about the numbers- and then never see how it is being used and interpreted, or what the impact is.

Richard- Breakout tables can be really significant – in low-income communities, residents are often deferential to positional authority – but when we break people into smaller groups – they share – then report out. This invites and facilitates community engagement.

Anthony –Break outs are a good facilitation tool

Brandon – back to money as a barrier – thinking about project – want to have different inputs: labor, capital, materials, – if things are completely out of balance you may be able to run for a while- having a good mix of people willing to volunteer and also the resources to do that.

Starr- what kinds of costs are involved for what purposes. Money is necessary – to fund the long term work and good work. I have been struck by how much can get done when there is a will to get it done.

Preston – what do people want to get out this conversation?

Anthony: What's the purpose of the end goal? Neighborhood in Dallas – high citations for kids not in car seats – what do you want to do with that- write more tickets and generate more money? or do you want more kids in car seats? Turns out having car seat wasn't an issue –it was a faith issue- solution was to get the car seats blessed.

Preston – Eric Gordon researcher at Emerson College – role of technology and play in the civic space and the mediation of groups – a lot people mediate their adoption of things like technology through groups like churches, etc. Need leader to say it's a good idea.

Starr – barrier – I perceive- is cultural understanding – growing Hispanic population and have many other immigrant groups – the children speak English – but many of the parents don't speak English well- in order to be really inclusive in a community endeavor - do you get interpreters, deaf interpreters, etc. I don't always think like that but I want to. How do you find those expertise and keep the costs down?

Anthony – have a Spanish speaker on every door to door team and when we do parent meetings.

Brandon – as a person with anthropology background- there are a lot of people –trained to figure out those cultural barriers.

Anthony- has to be both seeing and talking to people – had a group do a great redevelopment project and redeveloped the houses one at a time –built nice wrap-around porches for people because it was observed they spent a lot of time outside on porches. But people didn't want porches they were outside because they didn't have air conditioners.