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Session 4 – Working with Community Groups

Led by Chris Walker, Sabina Deitrick, Jane Downing, Anne Secola

Notes by Maia Woluchem

Present: Sabina Deitrick, Chris Walker, Mallory O’Brien, Josh Long, Elizabeth Guernsey, April Urban, Jake Cowan, David Epstein, Geoff Smith, Laura McKiernan, Liz Monk, Ryan Kelly, Mary Ohmer, Jane Downing, Kristen Murray, Anne Secula, Joanne Forrester, Mike Schramm, Nancy Jones, Bob Gradeck, Don Baylor, John Killeen,

Sabrina – We’re working on a project for Jane Downing about neighborhood indicators. Wondering why you're interested in neighborhood indicators -

Chris walker – Work at a national community development group

Mallory O’Brien - Working because we're doing an IDS.

Katie Pritchard, Milwaukee - NNIP applicant for the transition to IMPACT and my focus is on what people in the neighborhoods want to know about the neighborhoods. The Data Center was Michael Barndt and Todd Clausen who had been active members. The Data Center was housed in the nonprofit but overtime, investment in the staff decreased until they weren't able to provide the services. So it's been a cooperative community transfer.

Josh long – D3. Interested in community indicators because we work with them and with foundation in which Erie continently being asked to measure progress

Sean - Manage the indicators resort for the city. So happy to share how we approach new indicator development and tweaking and how they approach the same

Elizabeth Guernsey - With Open Society Foundations, and interested in how to work with community groups, especially due to our work in Buffalo

April Urban - From Cleveland. We have some neighborhood indicators data systems and work with community groups and determine the best indicators to measure their work.

Jake Cowan - consultant in Chicago

David Epstein - BNIA

Geoff smith - institute for housing studies

Laura McKiernan - City or county level. Helping people understand how to use the data.

Liz monk - Working on this project with Sabina and manage the SWPA Community Profiles. So what are the most useful indicators?

Ryan Kelly - job is split into three sectors, helping to build the infrastructure for the dope data portal and to sit on or chair the open data teams and third with the code for America brigade, getting people to use the data

Mary Ohmer - School of Social Work at Pitt, so I'm worrying about all the partnerships. Just recently used the neighborhood indicators and we partnered with OBB on a project. So indicators that inform the development of community based interventions and help us to tweak our outcomes.

Sabina Dietrich

Jane Downing - Pittsburgh Foundation. Twelve funders came together to support community-based activity. Someone did an assessment and said we didn't have a theory of change and we hadn't collected the appropriate data over the last twenty years. Over that time, Sabina and Bob invited Chris who presented on what LISC was doing in thirty communities, so I said that we could use that free work but at the same time, we have a local neighborhood who is using crime data who was doing a Neigborworks America project. So let's hire both of them to help the funders understand what indicators we could combine from secondary and primary sources to see how we could do this. And do a pilot with a neighborhood to see how they could use this data to impact their communities and how to use this to have a robust system. So we hired Anne to manage this project for us.

Kristen Murray - University of Minnesota Twin Cities is interested in how cities stay engaged throughout.

Anne Secula - I'm helping herd the cats because we have a lot of partners - Success Measures, LISC, UCSUR, and other three pilot partner communities, advisory group. So that's my role, helping get this all on track.

Joanne Forrester – With Allegheny County, one of my responsibilities is to develop an Open Data portal for county government.

Mike Schramm - Cleveland, do a lot of the pre-session stuff, ETO, generally I'm the one with the glue stick

Nancy Jones from BNIA - Put out a lot of indicators but people wanted more, so we asked people in the communities for the stuff they want, and now we have 200 potential indicators. But if the indicators are not driven by the communities and the neighborhoods, then they're irrelevant.

Bob Gradeck - I do data staff generally, and work with community groups and indicators

Don Baylor - I'm with the Policy Advisory Group at UI. We're attempting to do more policy engagement in Pittsburgh

John Killeen - wear most hats. That other thing that we're missing is developing the stuff that's really hyper relevant locally, neighborhood by neighborhood, and what we can do with the stuff related to that.

Chris - To lead off, can you talk about the early work that you and Success Measures did?

Sabina - Jane thought she'd get six to ten systemic indicators and now we're into about year three

Chris - To our benefit that Jane thought LISC actually had a theory of change. We have a target dashboard through community-based partnerships and our hope was to provide people with info across a bunch of different areas. So it wasn't much more to it than that. They are what they are. PDFs that they hand people and they are a set of indicators that Eve concocted on whatever indicators are available at the zip code level or below and that are thought to be useful, all the data you could want. UPS vacancy data, HMDA data, etc. Along with success measures. When we came along, they had developed a toolbox or an inventory of primary collection tool . They're surveys that can be administered to accumulate info that's of direct interest to people who are participating in a larger community effort. The first thing that they will do is that they'll give you the first five to seven things that there isn't a systemic interest in. Our hope is that by going into communities and asking them to develop  a theory for those policy issues that are most important to them, we’ll make a difference. Usually it’s that there's a community organization, or some other community-based organization within a neighborhood. But is they who explain to themselves what they're trying to accomplish that would likely lead to the outcomes. Would the NeighborWorks people deal with the operations of how that would happen? The initial experience is that they enter into the communities and asked people what was important and what they wanted to accomplish. The neighborhoods came up with a number of things they wanted. Oakland is interested in protecting themselves from student housing and illegal student housing. Homewood was interested in who's doing what to their neighborhood. Absentee owners. They've adopted different kinds of data collection efforts. I did my own sort of inquiry about these issues, came back out to consider this, and asked what was in UCSUR’s data system and there’s an interesting convergence. They want to know who's buying property and whether they like them. Crime. What’s happening with schoolchildren in their neighborhood. Differently motivated because they want to show people that there's maybe good schools, the other neighborhood is interested in education data because they want to know whether there was truth to the idea that kids really aren't doing well in school. The workforce data. In some ways it was validating the neighborhood indicator projects without input. They all had different reasons for wanting the same kind of data. Not only was it possible to develop a set of common indicators, but we felt confident that this other part of the project could devise that same set of indicators, but that there's a validity of doing that work.

Anne - The other piece of the primary data stuff. They had to be a community that had a group and a plan, that would help recommend the administrative data you might look at. And look at what are the types of the community surveys you hit do. A quality of life survey, a collective action survey, and then a property observation. A property survey that would show property observation. It was the focus about outcomes. We focused around how they monitor their impact and outcomes.

Chris - In terms of uses, the dominant way we did this is that there is a dominant interest in tactical decision making. What to do when. Less inclined in the theory, annual changes, indicators, etc. Nothing you do there is that surprising, they want a concrete decision making process. These are the properties that we bought and now we know who bought them and when. That's a different set of policy interests.

Anne - They're grappling with something immediate. Sabina you help with code enforcement data

Sabina – The three were very different. One’s a CDC, ones a newly formed enterprise group. For a lot of these, moving from things that are contextual to common, one group has already made that move, another is learning how to use the real estate thing, the thing is helping them make that move. It's the movement from contextual to common. There's a part of any kind of indicator project that's contextual. I don't want to keep talking about this project but to talk about this indicators work.

Anne - Two other points is that Erie trying to understand the capacity to deal with the data and to assemble it, to go about collecting the data. Trying to get a good grasp on capacity. The last piece is the systems indicator, what do we need as a system to assemble neighborhood indicators. We've had an interesting experience with that. Asking data providers what kind of indicators should we select and they're like for what purpose? We have to focus one what do want to use them for. Want to look at data for domain purposes and how they interact but also a state of the neighborhoods type of report and looking at some targeting and goal setting type of purposes.

Bob - Hearing what Chris said about how organizations wanting to use data tactically. Mike can't do what he does. What’s the infrastructure we’re building this work on? What's the infrastructure OBB uses? What are the gaps what we the opportunities?

Anne - We want to come away with an infrastructure recommendation.

Katie - An observation about capacity. This work is in Milwaukee and in LISC neighborhoods where people do have a plan and they do have a column for their

plan that is titled indicators and they have stuff that fills in the blank. So they have five pages of a plan with a million indicators and not clear about what they want to do. If they had those indicators it's not clear it would have any effect. So now we have a theory of change that's very action oriented. Hard for them to talk about what they wanted to do as a group if they didn't know what they wanted to do individually. That process was extremely valuable in helping to build the trust that was necessary to get to the common outcomes and allowing them to recognize where there's a connection between what they're doing and what others in the group are doing and how the work they’re doing is critical to the work others are doing.

Laura - So we made groups on housing indicators. A small piece of their plan--they have a funny story about how they ate so much at the bakery they got sick. So they now recognize it’s not giving them much. So they have five indicators that they now get routinely. It's a small version but we forget that the data gathering and the data discussion

Ryan Kelly - For me, everything you describe. There's an infinite number of questions you can ask of data, but one of that hard things for us is that if we focused on the one people use all the time, it's tough to do that with partners. It's really just for them. It takes away from our time to build the infrastructure. Working on productive indicators and working on building an open system. It's difficult to describe an ETO structure to funders. Today I got an email, at lunch from the mayor’s office asking for a map, now I only have to click a few buttons to build it because I have the infrastructure.

April - I can identify with the Tuesday session. One year they want data. Next year they do some learning and talking to people. So now it's just stated, this is the first round of data that were spitting out and ask what they want and how to tweak it.

Jane - One of the questions is about the roles. We know USCUR. Should they be providing the TA? Or should the other intermediaries do that kind of capacity billing with help from UCSUR? It's one of these - what's the best use of time among people who have different expertise?

Ryan - To scale, it works great in my situation. Where it informs my work and it's helpful to me but I can't do twelve.

Katie - It's also separate skillsets. Oftentimes, the people who are good at collecting the data aren’t the same people who are good at translating and listening. So it's an error not to identify and think of both. I think it can backfire when you don't have a match. You have to manage expectations where you don't have both.

April - Yeah and you have a budget and a limit so you have to say no sometimes

Sabina – Getting to scale is really important for us. I use an example - reaching larger groups intensely with that kind of expertise is tough to figure out. If I had to ask him how many hours he spent on the phone with OBB, we can't be one to one like that. But to launch this and get it to scale, we don't have fifty Bob to go out with fifty organizations over five years, have to figure out a scale figure of this and of expertise.

Anne – Doing an informal search of what data is successful and about the scale of this. Through SWPA profiles, is there something we think would be helpful for all groups?

April - Our intermediary is Doug - they've hired consultants that facilitate all of our work. Not anywhere as formal as your process is. Here, the intermediary, we'll show the facts, now goodbye. But it's scaleable.

Chris – We’ve brought data together from lots of places and declared it to be cross-sectorial but it doesn't have operational value. If it drew more heavily off of the kind of work that Sabina does, my favorite example is about *\_\_\_\_* in Seattle. Uses crime in streets and attempts to predict the streets that have high and low crime. He says chronic truancy, and blight. And what's attractive about that is that those are both interventions that you can consider making. That's cops, housing developers, and educators. And you can imagine crafting something that had micro-level spatial traction, one of the things we’re trying to do here is identify more of them. When you identify overtly as a driver of chronic absence, there's not much you can do. But we're asking if you know of cross-sectorial neighborhood indicators that you can picture an intervention or people actually doing.

Ryan - The house, asthma, mold, trips and falls. I wish it were that easy.

Chris - It's a charge to the researchers that. Needs to do more of that, if you could snip out the ones that you could deal with, that is enormous power.

Mary - There's a whole goal between the researchers, there power in collective efficacy, but there's no researchers who do that, so we built them in Atlanta. We’re trying to do that in OBB, all the researchers I lead in social workers is to test these theories and using them to build social change. It's really important.

Sabina - That's why not all data are indicators and not all indicators are analyzed to get to these kinds of things. So there's levels to who's in this work. In this, we have capacity issues in our orgs whether lack of time. They're in small nonprofit orgs who don't have the time to do that kind of work, that’s why we have to build our capacity.

Elizabeth - just about adding government to that partnership—Mayor Bloomberg’s young men initiative, it’s a process. When you're on probation, you go Manhattan and go see your probation officer, now they moved the offices into the office on nonprofits.

Trying to make those interactions more meaningful.

Jane - Have an example in East Kimberly that was about crime but the community development folks bought the bullring, scattered the people who they see doing the drugs, and over five years, the crime rate dropped significantly. Not convinced that we’re gonna have the capacity to deal with all of those orgs.

Anne - Basic level of capacity is important. One of the goals is that the neighborhoods have data they can use and know how to use, and goal setting, and other ways that's been organized

Laura- Starting to be hopeful in San Antonio. Bloomberg, Promise, Choice, Burn Community Safety grants, are not going to move forward with living cities but they were helping create governance over all of that to just get over all that. You find money to pursue your mission, not just do what the money wants. Used an RBA approach and it's as good as anything else. Living Cities paid for a facilitator to walk the people from all these agencies, through the process of what is the single idea that we want for this work. And just getting that statement agreed upon from the mayor, city manager, all the way down to the service providers. What were the big outcome buckets that feed into all of that? Hard and fast rule. Two to five indicators for each issue area. The report cards that we have we huge. So we had huge stuff like social capital and like how many stray dogs. Then the next step is very stepwise. Then we at least have a map. Evidence based strategies that would get us to achieving these indicators. And so were going to have to run these indicators to residents, didn't want to ask them from scratch, now we can say we've been listening to you, does this thing look like what you drew for us? We were talking about crime and safety and someone said that family violence is really important, we need to include that. And someone from the housing sector said we can't measure it because we're not doing anything about it. If we don't have anything in that column about family violence, let's go find money to do that work for family violence. We're halfway through that strategy work, but it's an amazing accomplishment for how all over the place we are. We constantly find out something that people didn't know was happening, but it's just uncomfortable to catch up with all of that money. United Way was administering the Living Cities. They are the grantee for stuff, the city, the housing authority. We call it the Coordinated Council. So much further ahead than we have ever have been. But now we're actually trying to move the needle.