

CONNECTIONS

An Annual Journal of the Kettering Foundation | 2021

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THE PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONS:
Fractured or United?

The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit, operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering's primary research question is, what does it take to make democracy work as it should? Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation. The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through interrelated program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. The foundation collaborates with an extensive network of community groups, professional associations, researchers, scholars, and citizens around the world. Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's website at www.kettering.org.

Connections is published by the Kettering Foundation, 200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459. The articles in *Connections* reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the foundation, its directors, or its officers.

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ISSN 2470-8003

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To Work Together, Learn Together

By David Mathews



Kettering Foundation’s research review this year has been focused on the troubled relationship between citizens and authoritative, or “governing,” institutions. This is the subject of a recent Kettering publication, *With the People: An Introduction to an Idea*. Loss of public confidence, particularly in the federal government, has been growing for some time. And the partisan polarization in the Capitol has caused many Americans to look to their local communities to play a stronger role in solving some of the problems facing the country. While local communities aren’t immune to the problems we see nationally, they appear to be doing better. Yet they are faced with persistent problems that don’t respond to the usual problem-solving strategies. Chronic poverty is an example. In this piece, I’d like to introduce another strategy for dealing with these especially difficult, long-term problems that plague our communities.

DIFFERENT PROBLEMS/ DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

The sources of these persistent problems, which have been called “wicked” and “systemic,” come from different locations in a community, so they require a response from throughout an entire community; that is, from the community as a

whole. One institution or profession can't do all that needs to be done. And these deep-seated problems can't be turned over to experts because they don't have technical solutions.

Another challenge is that in order to gather the community as a whole, those in leadership roles must enlist not only the "usual suspects" but also those community members who rarely, if ever, participate. Trying to engage their fellow citizens frustrates local leaders because of what they see as public apathy. On the other hand, citizens bristle at the charge of being apathetic. From their perspective, even though citizens believe they should make a difference, they don't see anything that they can do to make a significant difference in the way their community works.

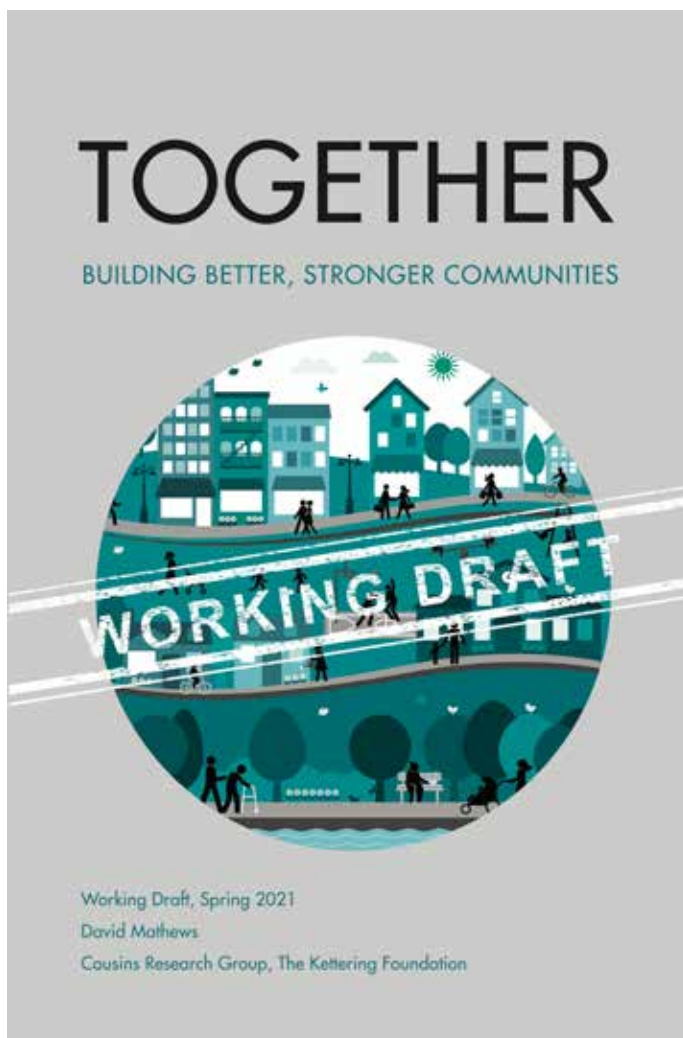
Kettering research suggests that there may be an additional strategy for bringing together the community as a whole to combat these chronic problems. It is based on indications that effective communities are like the hardest working students in class: they are determined learners. These students may not have the highest scores on IQ tests, but they respond to challenges and keep plugging away despite setbacks. Communities that do better than most in combating persistent problems are like these students. They are communities where people learn together about

the nature of the difficulties they face. Their problem-solving strategy is, at its core, a learning strategy. This strategy is the subject of a new report, which is a companion to Kettering's recently released report, *With the People*. The title of the new report is *Together: Building Better, Stronger Communities*. It is now available online and in print from the Kettering Foundation Press.

There is a reason these two books are companion pieces. *With the People* is about governing institutions working more collaboratively with citizens as partners, not just as clients or consumers. Obviously, for that to happen, citizens must do their share in this collaboration. How neighborhoods, towns, and cities can do that work is the subject of *Together*, which



Kettering Foundation's research review this year has been focused on the troubled relationship between citizens and authoritative, or "governing," institutions.



is a workbook for groups of citizens to read and discuss.

Together offers frustrated citizens—both leaders and community members who doubt they can make a difference—new ways of looking at their community to help them discover more opportunities for working together. I want to highlight “discovering” because it is at the core of a learning strategy. (Kettering

was founded by inventors, and their kind of learning was learning in order to discover.)

When we make discoveries, it is often because we come to see old problems in a new light. We notice things we have passed over before. *Together* offers some questions people can use to shine a new light on how they see their community. That light is brighter when those in leadership roles and seemingly less engaged citizens answer these questions together and compare what they see. Their respective ways of looking at the community are usually different. People don’t necessarily see the same things the same way. That difference can be helpful because it expands and enriches not only the way they understand their community, but also how the community understands itself. And when that happens, discoveries are more likely.

The Importance of Naming and Framing

The questions I’m talking about are much like those in a medical checkup, except this checkup is for a community rather than an individual. This is why *Together* is called a workbook. I’ll give you an example of one of these checkup questions. It is about what happens every day in a community, yet its significance isn’t usually recognized. Routinely, experts, political leaders, and opin-

ion writers say, “Our problem is X.” When they do this, they are giving a specific name to a problem. And they have reasons for choosing their name: perhaps for partisan advantage, perhaps to present factual information, or perhaps to rally citizens around an agenda. Fine. But do their names capture what people, as human beings, really care about deep down? I’m talking about the things we need in order to survive. Everyone is motivated by these basic imperatives: being safe from danger; having the freedom to do what will allow us to prosper; being treated fairly by others; and, most important, having some control over what is happening around us in order to get as much of what we need as possible.

Scholars call these essentials the ends and means to life itself. Most people may not use such scholarly language, but when they talk about what is deeply valuable, they tell stories about their most meaningful experiences, which reflect their concerns. These concerns aren’t like the things wished for on a Christmas list or noted in a list of complaints. They are basic, even primal. These survival imperatives surface when we are trying to make a difficult decision about troubling issues that are filled with tensions among the many things that we hold dear. One example I often use is this: that which will make

us safe from the danger of criminal violence will often infringe on our personal freedom. Or, as in the case of a pandemic: to be safe from severe illness or death we may have to isolate ourselves in our homes, even at the cost of being away from loved ones. Not recognizing and dealing with tensions doesn’t make them go away. They resurface to block progress in problem solving.

Problems in a community, however, are seldom given names that take into account what people consider deeply valuable. Instead, they are given names by experts or politicians and the media. These names are authoritative; they are simply to be accepted. But community learning would be more likely if the names given to problems included what people consider most valuable. Then, citizens would see that they are already involved because their con-



Not recognizing and dealing with tensions doesn’t make them go away. They resurface to block progress in problem solving.



A deliberative learning strategy is built around an exchange of perspectives and the concerns that they reflect.

cerns are recognized. Even if people differed with one another on what actions to solve the community's problems would be best, they would be more likely to discover that they share the same basic survival imperatives. This recognition can change the tone of the community conversation. It becomes framed less about people versus people and more about people versus problems. That change encourages people to listen more to those who disagree with them about what actions are best. It's then that people often discover that an issue, which initially seemed to be one-sided, is much more complex. And seeing that complexity can open the door to discovering new ways of dealing with persistent problems.

Because the names that are given to problems—and who provides them—are so crucial, questions considering naming are on the checkup list. These questions set the stage for

the deliberative decision-making needed to make sound judgments about how to deal with long-term community problems.

Kettering explains deliberation in other publications; I won't go into that here. However, because the subject of this piece is community learning, I should note that deliberative decision-making is a form of learning. The ancient Greeks knew that. They called deliberation “the talk we use to teach ourselves before we act.” To deliberate together is to learn together. Kettering has seen this happen when observing deliberations in National Issues Forums.

Different and Together: Recognizing and including the names that reflect what people hold most dear is a big step in getting people to work together on problems that can be overcome only by joining forces. But do the differences in opinions on which actions are best go away? Usually not, and that's fine as long as the tone of the decision-making isn't toxic. As I said, decisions about what needs to be done can benefit from a more complete understanding of a problem, which comes from recognizing people's different experiences with it.

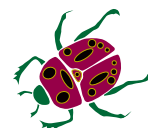
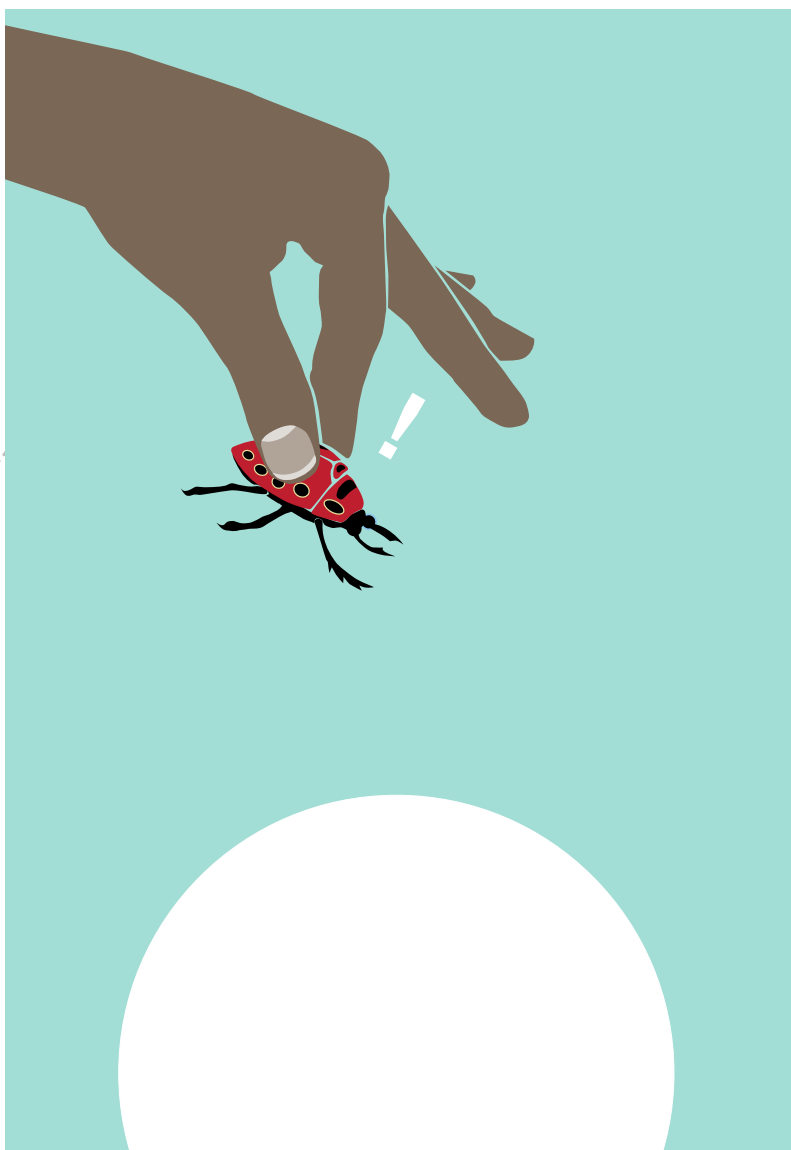
A philosopher once told me a story, which has stayed with me, about the importance of different perspectives in learning and problem



solving. I have made a philosopher the hero in my version of that story. It begins with a tiny beetle crawling on a large white ball. Everywhere this beetle goes—forward, backward, to the right, to the left—there’s nothing but white space. Now, imagine that the philosopher asks the beetle, “Is space finite or infinite?” Based on its own experience, the bug says, quickly and assuredly, “Space is infinite. Everywhere I go every day, I see an endless white surface.” Then the philosopher picks the bug up off the

ball and holds it high to give the bug a different perspective. The philosopher asks again, “Is space finite or infinite?” Now, the bug realizes that space is not infinite at all. It is quite finite.

The point of the story is that being exposed to other experiences, like the one the philosopher gave the beetle, can lead to a better understanding of reality—the reality of our “ball,” our community. In community learning, hearing the experiences of others can do what the philosopher did: provide



other perspectives. A deliberative learning strategy is built around an exchange of perspectives and the concerns that they reflect.

Tensions: What would cause people to consider the views of others—especially contrary views—when there isn't a philosopher and a beetle? As I said, we have seen that occur in deliberative decision-making. The compelling force is seeing that there are tensions among the many things we consider valuable. People are uncomfortable when caught in tensions, and the discomfort causes them to try to search for ways to resolve them. As seen in my example of the tension between collective safety and personal freedom, we don't like the stress of being pulled in different directions by all that we care about. We have all experienced that during the pandemic.

I'll say it again because it is so important: if tensions aren't recognized and worked through or reconciled in some way—at least to the point communities can move forward—they will undermine problem solving. Recognizing tensions, though uncomfortable, is essential to finding what is practical—that is, what we can live with—at least for a while. People don't have to be in full agreement to work together. They just have to recognize they need one another, even those they don't like.

GENERATING POLITICAL WILL

Dealing effectively with persistent problems requires recognizing differences in experiences and working through conflicting opinions. But that isn't all. Combating the persistence in problems also requires sustained political will and energy. Learning together is a source of that energy. So other questions in the checkup are about what resources are in a community that citizens can use to make the differences they would like to make.

When people make discoveries by deliberating, it generates political energy because people come closer to recognizing what they can do to make a difference. They can contend with issues that they thought only experts could. They can better understand the experiences and concerns of the people who differ with them. They can make some sense of things that had been utterly baffling. And as they recognize what they can do, they are often able to make the most important discovery of all: see the power they didn't know they had.

In deliberating to make decisions, people name problems in terms of what is most valuable to them. It naturally leads to questions about what should be done (the options) and who the actors should be. Democratic deliberating treats citizens as necessary actors and raises

questions about what they should do. When people share different experiences to gain a broader, more complete understanding of problems, they can uncover options for citizen action that weren't visible before. Discovering new opportunities to make a difference generates the political energy needed to sustain the civic momentum required to combat persistent problems. Communities that are continually learning are less likely to stop when they fail. Their learning helps them to fail successfully by profiting from mistakes.

Consumers or Producers?

When citizens are making choices about how to respond to community problems, they are beginning to act like producers, not consumers. In the community checkup, there is no better question to ask than how citizenship is understood. The checkup should look at the way local institutions are organized to treat citizens. For hospitals, are they just patients? For businesses, are they just customers? For law firms, are they just clients? For the news media, are they simply readers and viewers? For educational institutions, are students taught how to be civic actors?

Leaders or Leaderful?

The success of communities that do well is usually attributed to good leaders, meaning those in positions



When people share different experiences to gain a broader, more complete understanding of problems, they can uncover options for citizen action that weren't visible before.

of authority. They are certainly important, but a learning strategy treats everybody in a community as a leader (someone who simply takes the initiative to work with others). And when many people in a community are seen as capable of exercising that kind of leadership, that community becomes *leaderful*.

The purpose of the checkup is for everyone to realize that they can make some difference. They have powers and resources that they may not have recognized. Everyone has experiences, skills, and knowledge that when used in tandem with the skills and knowledge of others, can combat feelings of powerlessness. You will find chapters in *Together* that discuss both the sources of citizens' power and their resources for acting.



The best learning never stops.

One of my favorite quotes is from Henrik Ibsen, who reminded us why citizens have to be actors in their communities. He wrote that “a community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.” Given the difficulties communities face, from drug abuse to the breakdown of families, a few good leaders aren’t enough. Leadership and citizenship need to become synonymous. In a resilient community, leadership is everybody’s business—not just the business of a few. Communities that learn together are more likely to become leaderful.

Why Just a Draft?

Most books are meant to be read in the comfort of an easy chair or at a desk. *Together* isn’t. It’s a workbook written to be read one chapter at a time and then discussed by people who want to come together to understand how they can contribute to making their community a better place to live. The book is designed to be studied and discussed—perhaps by community economic development groups, civic organizations, or

community leadership programs—in a manner similar to a book club. *Together* may even be useful in starting new groups of civic-minded people who are open to considering an additional strategy for community building.

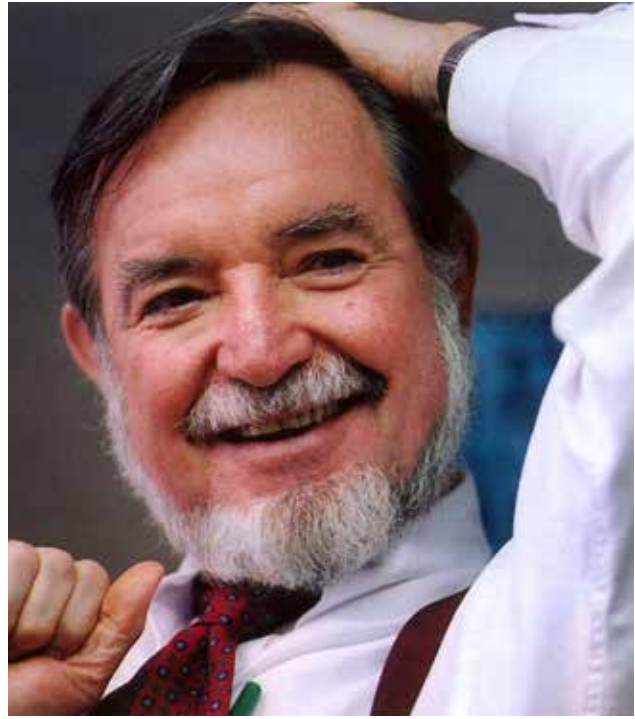
But why does *Together* have a “Working Draft” label splashed across the cover? Why not wait and publish it when the book is completed? The reason is that it can never truly be finished. The last chapter’s pages are mostly blank so they could be used to make a journal or record of what the group learned from their checkup. This book isn’t for a one-time project; it’s for an ongoing process. Results from the checkup should be useful in community planning for the future.

Part of that ongoing process might include exchanging checkup experiences with other groups in other parts of the larger community or in neighboring communities. One group’s journal on the blank pages of the last chapter could go to another group and become the basis for a new round of learning exchanges among communities in a county or state.

The best learning never stops. ■

David Mathews is the president of the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at dmathews@kettering.org.

Citizen Space and the Power of Associations: An Interview with John McKnight



By Scott London

When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States in the 1830s and 1840s, he marveled at Americans' propensity for creating associations. In France, social movements were mobilized by the government, in England by the nobility, but in America, the people banded together and formed an association when they wanted to get things done.

John McKnight believes that citizen associations are still the vital heart and soul of democracy. But they have been weakened in recent decades by a confluence of social, economic, and technological forces. Among them is

the rise of professional service providers that now do much of the work once carried out by citizens. These institutions act in the public's name, but often without any direct public involvement.

*The best remedy for the ills of democracy, McKnight argues, is to strengthen the noninstitutional sphere, or "citizen space," where people can come together, discover common purpose, and build productive capacity together. He makes this case in a new book, *Associational Life: Democracy's Power Source*, forthcoming in 2022 by the Kettering Foundation Press.*

*John McKnight is the author of many books, including *The Careless Society*, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* (with John Kretzmann), and *The Abundant Community* (with Peter Block). He is perhaps best known for his community organizing efforts in Chicago. During the Kennedy administration, he worked for the US government on affirmative action and civil rights issues. He later taught at Northwestern University, helping to establish the Center for Urban Affairs and its successor, the Institute for Policy Research. He trained Barack Obama as a neighborhood organizer in the early 1980s and later cofounded the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at DePaul University. He currently serves as a senior associate of the Kettering Foundation.*

He sat down with Scott London at his home in Evanston, Illinois, in July 2021.

Scott London: Your new book explores the vital role of associations in building strong and successful communities.

John McKnight: Yes, I'm thinking of baseball leagues, veterans' organizations, sports clubs, advocacy groups, mothers' organizations, churches, and other groups where affinity and common purpose pull people together.

London: Tocqueville observed that these types of associations were a distinguishing feature of American democracy.

McKnight: Right. When people come together in associations, he said, they take three powers unto themselves as a group. First, they decide what is an issue, what they want to do, or what they want to create. Second, they decide what needs to be done. And third, they get their neighbors to join them, make a plan together, and then implement it. When people do this, he said—and I think this is a brilliant observation—they are creating power instead of giving power to somebody else, which is what you do when you vote.

London: Isn't voting the primary way we exercise our power as citizens?

McKnight: Yes, and voting is a very important part of democracy because it's a way to influence and control government. But associations are really at the heart of democracy because that is where citizens decide what they want to do together, how it will get done, and who is going to do it. It is through associations that we create productive capacity together.

London: There has been a lot of concern about the decline of local associations. Americans used to bowl in leagues, as Robert Putnam has shown, but today we're mostly bowling alone.

McKnight: Yes, in terms of associational life the country has become weaker. One of the causes of this is that institutions have assumed more and more of the functions traditionally performed by citizens. Institutions treat people as consumers rather than producers, as clients rather than citizens.

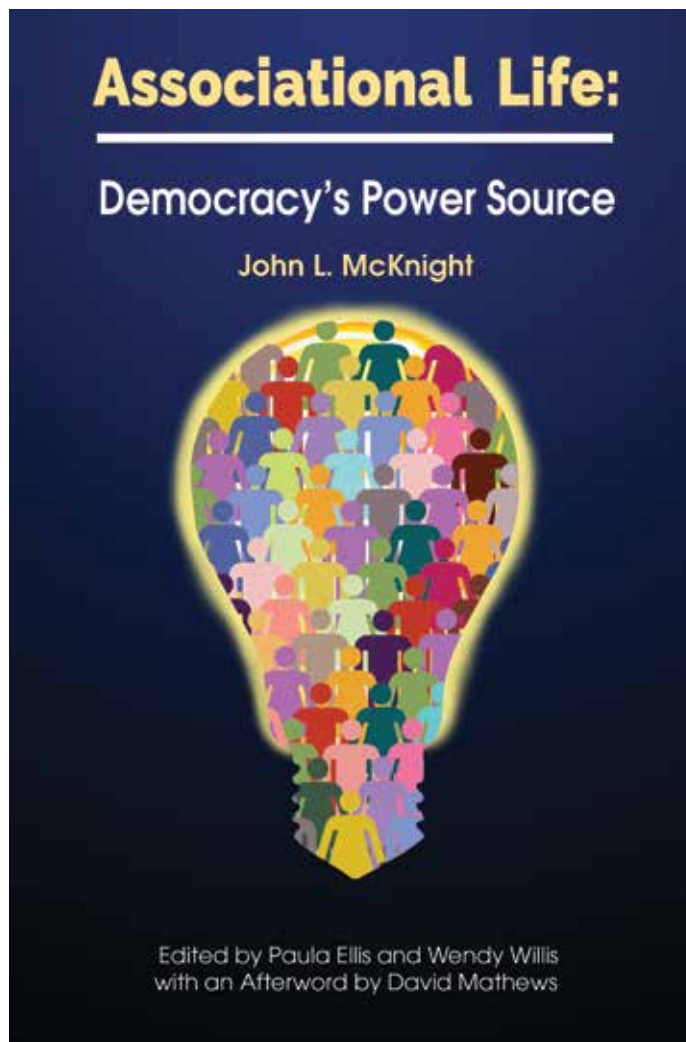
London: Where do you draw the line between associations and institutions?

McKnight: Associations are groups of people who come together because they care about each other or care about the same thing. They share their gifts, talents, knowledge, and abilities. Institutions are different. They are held together by money.

London: But many institutions are explicitly not-for-profit and do focus on caring for people.

McKnight: Well, in an institution you're paid to do what you do. In an association, you're not paid. So, something else leads you to join with others to do something, and that is care. An institution can't care. It can provide service.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. At Northwestern University, where I was on the faculty for many years, we always spoke of ourselves as being "a community of scholars." That's a wonderful way of understanding who we are and the service we provide to students. Now



imagine if the university endowment collapsed and none of the scholars got paid. What do you suspect might happen to that community? So, the literal bottom line is that the community of scholars is held together by money.

London: What I hear you saying is that associations and institutions exist in an inverse relationship to each other. The stronger the sense of power on the part of citizens, the less of a role there is for institutions, and vice versa.



We need to discover, explore, and create ways for people locally to feel that they have some power to produce the world they want to live in.

McKnight: Right. It's like a pneumatic device. If you push down one end, the other goes up. As the associational world goes down, the institutional world goes up. I think there is an equilibrium that is appropriate. Associations and institutions each do things that the other can't do. But if the tool of community—the associational world—loses its function and institutions act like they can take its place, what happens is that power is shifted from citizens to professionals. That's the pneumatic problem we have today.

London: Many scholars cite technology as a primary culprit in the decline of local associations.

McKnight: Yes, technology is a significant contributor. I also think the idea of management has been critical to this shift—the idea that things can't be done unless they are professionally organized and

managed. A third factor is the idea of consumerism. Instead of seeing ourselves as local citizen producers, many of us see our needs being met by access to the marketplace, to professionals, and to public programs. These three factors—control, efficiency, and consumption—are the abiding nature of the culture we live in.

London: Many Americans, young people in particular, have never known the kind of robust associational life you're describing. For them, community is something you have on Facebook, not something you have with the people in your neighborhood.

McKnight: Yes, we have a pretty arid desert in the place of rich communities. I think we're in a place of experimentation and discovery now and we need to invent, not go back. We need to discover, explore, and create ways for people locally to feel that they have some power to produce the world they want to live in.

London: What do we say to those who worry that traditional communities, for all their benefits, have become repositories of dysfunction, prejudice, and backward-thinking?

McKnight: Well, that's not new. Democracy is about freedom of expression. It's a way of coming to grips with the fact that some people have opinions that other people think are bad or nutty. The possibility of

creating a kumbaya world is just not real. As Justice Brandeis said, the answer to bad speech is more speech. And the answer to bad associations—if you believe there are bad ones—is more of them.

London: I hope you're not suggesting that the answer to misinformation and conspiratorial thinking is more platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

McKnight: [Laughs] No, no. In my sense of what makes democracy work, you've got to be face-to-face. The reason we don't see our national polarities reflected to the same degree at the local level is because of the synthesizing effect of our presence. I think being face-to-face is a great mediating force.

London: There is a lot of optimism today that we can recreate those face-to-face gatherings using online technologies like Skype and Zoom.

McKnight: I know. But that's a world of illusion. If you want to be with other people, all of your senses and all of their senses have to be engaged for the relationship to be deep, strong, and real. When you're connecting online, you can't touch, you can't taste, you can't smell, and you can't even really see or hear what you would if you were here in the room with me. My friend, Ivan Illich, used to say that if you're in a situation where none of your senses are

present with another, what you have is "non-sense."

London: A point you make in the new book is that we live in a culture that is overly preoccupied with problems. We have an ingrained belief that it's only by defining, analyzing, and studying problems that we can create a better world.

McKnight: Yes. When you identify a problem, you have at the same time identified something you think is wrong. So, starting with the problem as though that is going to get you anywhere misses the point.

London: You spent much of your early career as a neighborhood organizer. Organizing is an advocacy-driven tradition aimed at fixing problems and redressing grievances.

McKnight: Right. As an organizer, I talked to lots and lots of people in a neighborhood about what they were angriest about. That's how I'd get people together. Nothing pulls people together like an enemy. Advocacy is appropriate and you've got to do that because of the realities people face.

London: Barack Obama was a student of yours in the early 1980s. How did it happen that he came to you for training in community organizing?

McKnight: When I was at Northwestern University, an organizer friend and I started a training program. We ran ads in the Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago

newspapers offering to train people to be world-changers. We selected a group of 20 people to come and work with us in Chicago.

I remember the first evening we got them all together. One of them stood up and introduced himself as the tall guy with big ears and a funny name. It was Barack Obama.

At the time, he stood out from the others in the group. He was very thoughtful, always trying to understand how society works. When I was with him personally, he would ask questions about community dynamics and power structures: “How does this work?” “Why did that happen?” Most of the others in the group were just interested in technique. He was too, but he was trying to educate himself about the realities of social change.

After about three years, he concluded that he had learned what he wanted from local organizing and was ready to transition into a different kind of public leadership.

London: You helped him get into Harvard. Then, after getting his law degree, he set out on a remarkable career in politics.


McKnight: He recently gave a long interview where he reflected on his years out of office. The interviewer asked him what he saw as the most important lever in terms of making change. He said, “What

people do at the local neighborhood level.” He has seen the world from the bottom and from the top. And he concludes that the most important thing is to focus on growing the power of people at the local level.

London: What can we do to begin discovering the source of our power together?

McKnight: We can begin by looking at what is already there in the community—the human abilities, capacities, and needs manifested often through associations. For years, I tried to get the advocacy neighborhood organizations to do creation and asset-based organizing too. Advocacy is important, but there is another space in the community where what is appropriate is the creation of power to do things, to imagine things, and to create something new. What I’m trying to draw is a community where one space is a problem-space, another is a creation-space, and a third is a we’re-just-enjoying-each-other space. We haven’t had a synthesis of these approaches yet. But I still hold to the ideal of what I would call two-fisted organizing, where you’re able to both create and advocate. ■

Scott London is a California-based journalist and author. He is host and executive producer of the forthcoming Kettering Foundation podcast, Speaking of Democracy. He can be reached at slondon@kettering.org.



How Participatory Journalism Created Collaborations between Law Enforcement, Assault Survivors, and Community Advocates

By Sammy Caiola with jesikah maria ross

Kettering's research examines how institutions of all kinds, including journalism, can better align their work with the democratic work of citizens. We look for journalists willing to experiment and share what they are learning. In 2019, we assembled

a group of journalists from four newsrooms in Alabama, California, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Each team of journalists focused on a complex, persistent, or “wicked” public problem facing their local community. We encouraged them to identify problems with no clear solution that would require people from throughout the community to work with different institutional actors. We asked them to experiment with reporting the issue in ways that would encourage democratic community problem solving. What follows is a reflection from the journalism team in Sacramento.

My identity as a journalist is based on a few basic principles. I'm committed to accuracy and balance. It's my duty to hold those in power accountable, to amplify the voices of the marginalized, and to arm readers and listeners with information that helps them make decisions. Impartiality is key. But in 2019, a workshop at the Kettering Foundation made me see my job just a bit differently. It asked a question: How might journalists “alter their professional routines to support the work of citizens as they coproduce solutions with institutions and among themselves?”

Journalistic routines include monitoring city hall, attending board meetings, reading press releases, and



What if journalists cocreated stories with community members? What if the process were more transparent? What if journalism made historically neglected residents feel heard, and enabled those on all sides of an issue to work together to solve problems?

attending community events. When reporting a story, I interview those involved in an issue and then do my best to write an informative, balanced, and accurate article.

Often this involves talking to a politician, an analyst, or an academic about the big picture of a “wicked problem” like poverty, racism, or homelessness. It rarely means going out and finding the people who live those issues every day. And normally, the words of those I interview reach the airwaves through my filter. I decide what stays and what goes into a story and which voices to elevate.

But what if there were another way? What if journalists cocreated

stories with community members? What if the process were more transparent? What if journalism made historically neglected residents feel heard, and enabled those on all sides of an issue to work together to solve problems?

ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

There’s a whole movement of “community-engaged” media professionals trying to achieve those goals. In an era plagued with misinformation, building trust among audiences is more important than ever. But the idea of including sources in editorial decision-making runs counter to the closed-door reporting rules that most journalists live by.

In the current financially stressed media climate, many outlets are striving to reach “aspirational audiences,” or people who don’t ordinarily engage with their news product. But when people don’t see themselves in the headlines—or worse, when they see negative or inaccurate representations of their communities—they’re unlikely to tune in. When journalists work in silos, we’re blind to what’s happening in the communities we strive to serve. We visit certain neighborhoods only when there’s a problem we deem newsworthy.

So why don’t journalists spend more time in communities? Why

don't we listen to people's concerns and publish their perspectives? A few reasons. For one, journalists choose topics based on their urgency, universal nature, and newsworthiness. Reporters fear that "cocreating" stories with sources they interview—those with a vested interest in telling the story from one point of view—will violate their commitment to report accurately and without bias. Finally, journalists are trained to frame stories around a problem and to use conflict to drive a story forward, which inadvertently pits each side against another. Could journalism instead help people on all sides build bridges and solve problems?

PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM AND CAPRADIO

CapRadio, the National Public Radio affiliate in Sacramento, California, has a track record of approaching professional routines differently. Over the past eight years, we've developed a set of participatory journalism principles that guide how we involve people at the center of the issue in our reporting in naming and framing both the problems and solutions.

Recently, we applied these principles in covering a story about sexual assault in Sacramento County. We worked closely with survivors to shape our reporting on law

enforcement investigations of sexual violence, with a focus on how criminal justice outcomes affect victim trauma and healing. Along the way, we shared survivors' viewpoints and experiences with members of area police departments and the county's Sexual Assault Response Team. In the end, we had a story about journalism itself: how a problem can be approached in a way that can encourage both reporters and those they cover to work together to produce news that meets the information needs of diverse stakeholders. Here is the story of how it unfolded.

BRIDGING THE GAP

The choice of our topic was deliberate. Sexual assault is an obvious "wicked problem." As we at CapRadio began to collect stories from women who had reported their assaults, clear patterns emerged around the ways they felt law enforcement had ignored, dismissed, or mistreated them.

Some of their stories are in the July 2020 miniseries on this topic, available at <https://tinyurl.com/cf4mwv45>.

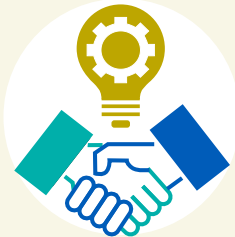
Many more are in a seven-part podcast, available at <https://www.capradio.org/aftertheassault>.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM



INCLUSION—*who is involved and represented*

Ensure that reporting processes and content involve and reflect the diverse perspectives of our region as a whole, prioritizing those most affected by the issue and whose voices our coverage often leaves out.



COCREATION—*how we involve others to inform reporting*

Involve community partners in developing our editorial vision through listening sessions and project partnerships. When possible, equip people with tools, training, and resources so they can participate in the reporting process.



FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS—*how we increase empathy and understanding*

Design face-to-face opportunities where people can speak for themselves and develop relationships with our journalists and each other. Include activities where participants can explore different experiences, envision solutions, and consider how they can play a part.



PUBLIC SERVICE—*how we support our communities to navigate life with deeper understanding and connection*

Provide reliable, accurate information that people need, that comes from multiple perspectives, corrects myths and stereotypes, and holds power accountable. Produce stories that cover solutions as well as issues.



CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE—*how we support democratic self-governance and a better life for all*

Attend to relationships and processes (in addition to content) in order to generate benefits beyond the newsroom. Use the project to create relationships, culture, networks, and capacities that build community resilience beyond the project.

Developed by jesikah maria ross and Yve Susskind, 2020

The law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders we spoke with early on agreed that there was room for improvement in the process. They named several problematic

factors, including uncooperative victims, the lack of evidence or eyewitnesses, the high threshold for proof, and delays in survivors reporting the crime. All agreed that a project that

better informed survivors and the public about the criminal justice process would be beneficial to all parties involved.

To execute a project to meet those goals, we had to build trust with survivors, which takes time, attention to detail, and acknowledging that the traditional journalism process does not work well for those who have been repeatedly betrayed by people they thought had their best interests in mind. Learning this while reporting on survivors of sexual assault has completely changed the way I do my job.

The project began with an email from a CapRadio listener who said her attempts to report a rape to Sacramento police yielded no justice. It left her feeling powerless, lost, and enraged. When I met her for a first interview, she was clear: this was her story. She wanted some agency in its telling.

This is not how things typically go. Usually, reporters conduct interviews, spend time with subjects, and publish the story later, often with little to no input from the people at the center of the narrative.

Our team at CapRadio shifted that dynamic. We made a decision early on to believe survivors, knowing from research and expert interviews that false rape reporting is rare. And we decided that due to the sensitivity

of the topic, we needed help from people with firsthand experience to get the story right.

I reached out to as many survivors as I could find, with a special ear for those who had reported their crimes to police and hit a dead end. I wound up meeting with eight women. I explained our goal—to publish explanatory journalism that helps bridge the gap between law enforcement and rape survivors—and asked them whether they'd be interested in joining a cohort of survivors to help shape the project. They all agreed.

We started to meet biweekly, and then monthly. Over time the cohort members developed a rapport among themselves. They naturally moderated the conversations and supported one another. For many months, most of these women had been dealing with their trauma alone. We offered them a place to find community.

We invited participants to weigh in on every aspect of the project—what to name it, what should be in it, which questions we should ask experts—and this gave them a sense of agency and ownership, not just of their own stories but of the whole reporting project. Several of them told us that being part of the CapRadio project gave them a sense of purpose they were struggling to find.

We started with the miniseries on assault survivors and police reform.

As social justice demonstrations erupted in Sacramento's streets after the murder of George Floyd, I asked the cohort members a question: "What does 'defund the police' mean to you as a survivor?"

Their answers were varied and fascinating. They rehashed some of their critiques of law enforcement, but then they started to drum up solutions. What if trauma-informed counselors were the first to meet a survivor in the aftermath of an assault instead of uniformed officers? What if law enforcement agencies were to acknowledge that distrust of police in Black and brown communities keeps reporting rates among survivors of color extremely low? What if money currently used on police equipment were shifted toward safe houses? Or helped to fund faster rape kit processing?

At the same time, survivors all over the country, especially Black survivors, were catapulting from George Floyd's killing into a much bigger question about not just how police should be handling rape cases, but whether they should be handling them at all. Survivors' voices made up the backbone of this work. At every step, we continued this practice—asking survivors for their perspective—as we reported through the podcast.

Which brings us to our central

question: How can loved ones, law enforcement, health professionals, and other stakeholders create a more trauma-informed system that better supports survivors in the aftermath of an assault?

WORKING TOWARD COMMON GROUND

We are starting to envision the ways in which the reporting we've gathered can be incorporated into law enforcement processes to achieve the shared goals identified by both survivors and health professionals. Our sources pointed out that survivors are afraid to report due to shame, self-blame, and distrust of the police. When they do report, they are often interviewed by a patrol officer with little training on sensitive issues; survivors often feel dismissed as a result. Frequently, police follow-up is uneven or non-existent. Communication is spotty, and survivors are often not informed about the progress of their cases, including whether an arrest has been made or the case has been dismissed.

The survivors envisioned a responsive system that would allow them to report in person, online, or by phone. They said that police officers who arrive first should be part of a team trained to help victims of trauma, and law enforcement employees should get specialized education on trauma's effect on

the brain, such as memory issues and sequential thinking. They also thought police should communicate clearly about investigations, including giving survivors time estimates on how long such an investigation could take, a way to track progress of cases online, and wrap-up conversations with a detective concerning what's happening with their case. Survivors also suggested that departments provide oversight of investigators, conducting reviews to ensure that cases are handled according to protocol.

We took these ideas to a group of representatives from four police departments in the Sacramento region, and members of the county's Sexual Assault Response Team. During our initial reporting, we met with this group three times. Several of these agencies were initially reluctant to work with CapRadio, particularly the Sacramento Police Department. The Elk Grove Police Department had been cooperative from the get-go, but hesitated about working with us after we had published a three-part series on survivor calls to defund the police because they felt its premise had put their department in a negative light. Multiple detectives and sergeants worried that our portrayal of the law enforcement system would deter future survivors from reporting. Those tensions continued at our



As a journalist who is relatively new to the field of community engagement in journalism, I have been fascinated by this process. I can now recognize the gradual steps of the strategy: trust-building, information gathering, group brainstorming, and reflecting ideas back.

meetings with the police, particularly after we played the group a trio of audio clips: two from survivors and one from a now-retired detective at the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office. The detective talked about the need for law enforcement to put emotional distance between themselves and the survivors. It isn't the job of the officer to believe the victim, she said.

The group generally agreed with this sentiment but expressed a need to give survivors emotional support with the help of a trained advocate. After hearing the survivors' audio

clips which described poor experiences with law enforcement, the group was surprised and dismayed. They urged us to look at the system on a higher level and give credit to what is currently working. I did so in my reporting and encouraged them to provide as much information as they could about what they feel they're doing well, plus any data that would illustrate improvements in case outcomes for sexual assault survivors.

The group made several goals for themselves: encourage more survivors to report sexual assault, collaborate with the local rape crisis center to ensure necessary support for survivors, better educate employees on sexual trauma and trauma-informed interviewing, and reduce instances in which law enforcement retraumatizes survivors.

We shifted the conversation toward finding common ground and introduced the idea of a "third space" for sharing ideas and achieving common goals. Suggestions included a law enforcement summit or series of panels where survivors could ask questions of officers in a safe and moderated setting, working with advocates and stakeholders to help create new training using CapRadio-gathered survivor audio, and bringing survivors and law enforcement together to break bread and make

casual conversation. In another suggestion, stakeholders and survivors could work with law enforcement to create a toolkit that gives survivors a road map for navigating the system. Some of these ideas are already moving forward in at least one police department.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF JOURNALISM

As a journalist who is relatively new to the field of community engagement in journalism (what we call participatory journalism at CapRadio), I have been fascinated by this process. I can now recognize the gradual steps of the strategy: trust-building, information gathering, group brainstorming, and reflecting ideas back. Being the liaisons between survivors and law enforcement has allowed us to transition from what started as an adversarial relationship to a potentially productive one. Ultimately, the project makes me a different kind of journalist: one who not only exposes what problems need to be addressed, but who also helps all sides find a shared space so that together, they can find solutions. ■

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Community Building in an Old-Fashioned Way

By Maura Casey

An experiment in rural community building and democratic citizenship in Alabama has a back-to-the-future feel: Involved citizens see newspapers as key to helping small towns preserve their history and strengthen their communities. They have started four publications this year and hope to start several more.

All well and good, but . . . *newspapers?* Those old-fashioned things printed on paper with headlines and black type, with ink that sometimes gets a little smudgy and comes off on your hands?

Really?



PHOTO BY MAURA CASEY



An experiment in rural community building and democratic citizenship in Alabama has a back-to-the-future feel: Involved citizens see newspapers as key to helping small towns preserve their history and strengthen their communities.

Yes, really, says Jack Shelton. Shelton is leading this effort with PACERS, an Alabama nonprofit organization that he helped found more than 40 years ago to help improve small rural schools. PACERS began at the University of Alabama and the acronym originally stood for Program for the Academic and Cultural Enhancement of Rural Schools. But the organization has long since been identified by its acronym alone and few remember what the words stood for. Its mission has grown also, to encompass a statewide effort to enhance not only schools, but community life in small towns.

The current project, dubbed the PACERS Rural Community Newspaper Network, came about as the result of deliberations conducted in five small towns. The question before the deliberative meetings was, “What is the best thing we can do for our communities?” The answer was, by consensus, “publish local newspapers.”

This is not as strange as it might seem for those of a certain age who remember learning about current events without the help of an active Twitter feed or Facebook posts. Their memories include getting regular newspaper deliveries at home, the better to read over coffee or comment on after breakfast.

Go further back than even several decades ago and the impact of newspapers was even more pronounced. At the turn of the 20th century, Alabama had as many as 1,100 newspapers, mostly weeklies, published all around the state, said Garrett Lane. Lane is a former journalist and digital editor whose career ran the gamut from the *Tuscaloosa News* to Time, Inc.

He is one of the consultants for the newspaper project and sees the initiative for the community-building exercise it is meant to be. “There may be a pure, forward-looking strain of citizen journalism manifesting itself in what’s been done to date,” he said.

“It’s equally fascinating to imagine this strain of citizen journalism as a root-remedy for media distrust. We probably don’t understand in full what’s taking shape at this stage, though we can sense implications for democracy and community building.”

It might be that rural areas are particularly fertile ground for an idea such as this one. Yet citizens’ desire for a local newspaper was not necessarily motivated by a need to read about high crimes and misdemeanors, fires, floods, or even whether one’s black sheep first cousin made the police log again, all staples of more routine journalism at larger enterprises. Instead, those who felt the need for local newspapers were concerned about other issues.

They were worried that the history of their towns was being lost: the births, deaths, church picnics, and graduations. They were concerned that the ties binding the communities together were not as strong as in years past. And they thought publishing a newspaper would provide a great opportunity for students, not simply in giving them practice being reporters and writers and seeing their names in print, but for learning the business skills necessary to sell ads and peddle copies of the newspapers when they came rolling off the presses.

And roll off they did: 500 copies in each town, selling for a dollar and even two dollars each.

Ultimately, four of the five Alabama communities decided to publish newspapers: the towns of Camp Hill, Beatrice, Pintlala, and Packers Bend. While Pintlala is largely White, the other towns have majority Black populations. The papers are run by volunteers spanning ages from elementary school and high school to retirees.

At this writing in the fall of 2021, all four communities have published two editions. Sift through the papers and you can sense the pride on the tag lines just underneath the mastheads of the newspapers.

Underneath the banner at the top of page one proclaiming the *Packers Bend Times*, in small type, is the following sentence: “Sharing the stories of our community—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”

Under the banner of the *Pintlala Ledger*: “Local people . . . local stories.”

The *Camp Hill Chronicle*: “A voice & source of information for the community.”

The *Beatrice Legacy*: “Opening our community up to itself . . . about us, for us.”

And the stories in the newspapers reflect the one-line mission statements, the promises, if you will, printed on the front pages.



African American residents, many in their Sunday best, line up to vote at the Sugar Shack, Packers Bend, Alabama, May 1966. The Sugar Shack was a convenience store in Wilcox County, Alabama, and became that area's first polling place for African Americans. Many in line were first-time voters as they were casting ballots after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Here is what I have learned from their stories:

That Camp Hill elected a mayor, Messiah Williams Cole, who at 21 is the youngest ever to hold office.

That Lassiter's Hardware in Pintlala is an enterprise more than 100 years old and a place to buy the tools you need and find the odd bolt you might be missing. But it will also leave you, according to the story in the *Pintlala Ledger*, "with a deep soul connection to the core of who you are."

That the PACERS raised-bed garden project in Beatrice, the *Beatrice Legacy* says, feeds people and gives hope, too.

That a convenience store in Wilcox County called the Sugar Shack served as the first African American polling place. In 1966 they stood in line in their Sunday best to cast ballots, according to the *Packers Bend Times*. But the paper didn't just write about it; the editor managed to find a photo. The picture is mesmerizing. It shows more than 20 people in line, and they aren't posing. They are waiting to exercise their democratic right, too long suppressed: ladies in dresses and sensible shoes, purses at their sides; most men wearing suit coats, but one or two in overalls; a few leaning on canes.

Shelton wants to see newspapers

published in four more towns. His vision is to set up an initiative so that any small region that wants to start a paper as a community-building exercise could do so and PACERS would help.

It is a hopeful start. “Social enterprise is what is on our minds. These newspapers mean a great deal to me,” said Shelton. “They have a promise because they are completely community owned and community dependent.”

Local student involvement is important, too. A journalism class has begun in Beatrice with an aim toward allowing the students to be part of the staff. In Pintlala, students in sixth grade may become involved. The office of the *Packers Bend Times* is in the local school.

“The kids do a great job. The schools are important for the papers and the papers are good for the schools,” Shelton said.

A few towns have been surprised to find that the newspapers have sparked interest in former residents who have moved away. Several have become involved in doing stories and serving on staffs from afar.

It will take more than two issues to see how this experiment in community building turns out. And some might think that stories about everyday life are not important, but nothing could be further from



In capturing the big and small happenings of these towns, the residents involved are doing the vital work of democracy. In the process, they will uplift their communities and strengthen the citizenry.

the truth. Stories are what make us human. They live in each one of us. No human culture on the planet is without its stories. And, as one of the editors involved in the PACERS endeavor said, “There’s just as much happening in rural areas as there is in urban areas.”

In capturing the big and small happenings of these towns, the residents involved are doing the vital work of democracy. In the process, they will uplift their communities and strengthen the citizenry. When all is said and done, the world cannot have enough of either. ■

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Libraries as Islands of Trust

By Ellen Knutson

The decline of trust between citizens and institutions is a long-standing concern and serious issue in democracy. Despite this problem, libraries in the United States remain islands of trust in a sea of suspicion. Polls back this up: according to Pew Research Center, about 8 out of 10 people trust libraries and librarians. This report discusses a series of Kettering Foundation learning exchanges that began in 2015 with librarians who have explored this relationship and investigated ways that libraries could help communities address pressing problems.

Libraries' track records of exchanges, community meetings, and deliberations came in handy throughout the tumult of 2020–21. To explore the unprecedented pressures that occurred, the foundation first convened librarians in July 2020

on Zoom to hear how they were coping with the COVID-19 pandemic and with social uprisings in the wake of the police murder of George Floyd. We listened as they discussed how to capitalize on existing relationships to learn what was troubling their communities, how to decide and how to act, and to learn what was contributing to an atmosphere of divisiveness.

The following themes emerged from that initial exchange:

- People were feeling overwhelmed. The librarians reported this about themselves, but they also saw this in their communities.
- Mental health was a primary concern, though this was layered with other pressures that people were feeling due to COVID-19, racial injustice, and economic disparities.
- There was a sense that people were acting and reacting out of fear and defensiveness, and librarians questioned how to get people to a different state without minimizing the emotions that may have led them there.
- Youth leadership gave reasons for optimism.
- Early in the pandemic, people came together to give mutual aid. But as time went on, this diminished in some communities.



Libraries and the Public research exchange, Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio, November 2017

- Local polarization seemed to be more centered around Black Lives Matter and on mask wearing.
- People acknowledged that libraries are a good place for community conversations, but many had questions about next steps after the conversations ended.
- Participants recognized the ease in which libraries can partner with other institutions and expressed familiarity with the ways in which business can be conducted (through memoranda of understanding, for instance); however, these actions are not necessarily the same as partnering with people in the community.



The decline of trust between citizens and institutions is a long-standing concern and serious issue in democracy. Despite this problem, libraries in the United States remain islands of trust in a sea of suspicion.



Over many years, libraries have been moving toward becoming more open to the community and more democratic. The trust that people have in libraries plays an important role in this continuing movement.

After this initial virtual exchange, we met two additional times over Zoom and homed in on the question, “How can libraries engage people beyond the usual suspects to begin to address pressing community issues?” We focused on the ways in which libraries can be boundary-spanning institutions. One challenge we might face is when the people who need to be engaged are the 2 out of 10 who don’t have trust in the library.

After one exchange, Erica Fruedenberger from the Southern Adirondack Library System reflected, “To do this work requires a realignment of perspective. Instead of seeing our community as something to be served or empowered, we recognize it as comprised of individuals with talent and expertise. [If we] invite

people to take an active role in our organizations, we can move toward becoming the democratic bastions we claim we are.”

BUILDING ON A HISTORY OF COMMUNITY WORK

Over many years, libraries have been moving toward becoming more open to the community and more democratic. The trust that people have in libraries plays an important role in this continuing movement.

That trust places libraries in a strong position to shift from primarily providing services to offering programs in which libraries work with citizens and communities on a public problem. For example, in a learning exchange that ran from 2015 to 2017, five libraries experimented with using the deliberative democratic practices described in David Mathews’ book, *The Ecology of Democracy*.

In Portland, Oregon, the team from Multnomah County Library brought together patrons who are experiencing homelessness and library staff for regular sessions of coffee and conversation at the central library. These informal gatherings challenged the typical patterns of interaction (which often focused on behavior modification) and led to changes in how these two groups relate to each other. The experiment garnered interest from both man-

agement and librarians in other branches who also wanted to shift the way in which they relate to this group of patrons.

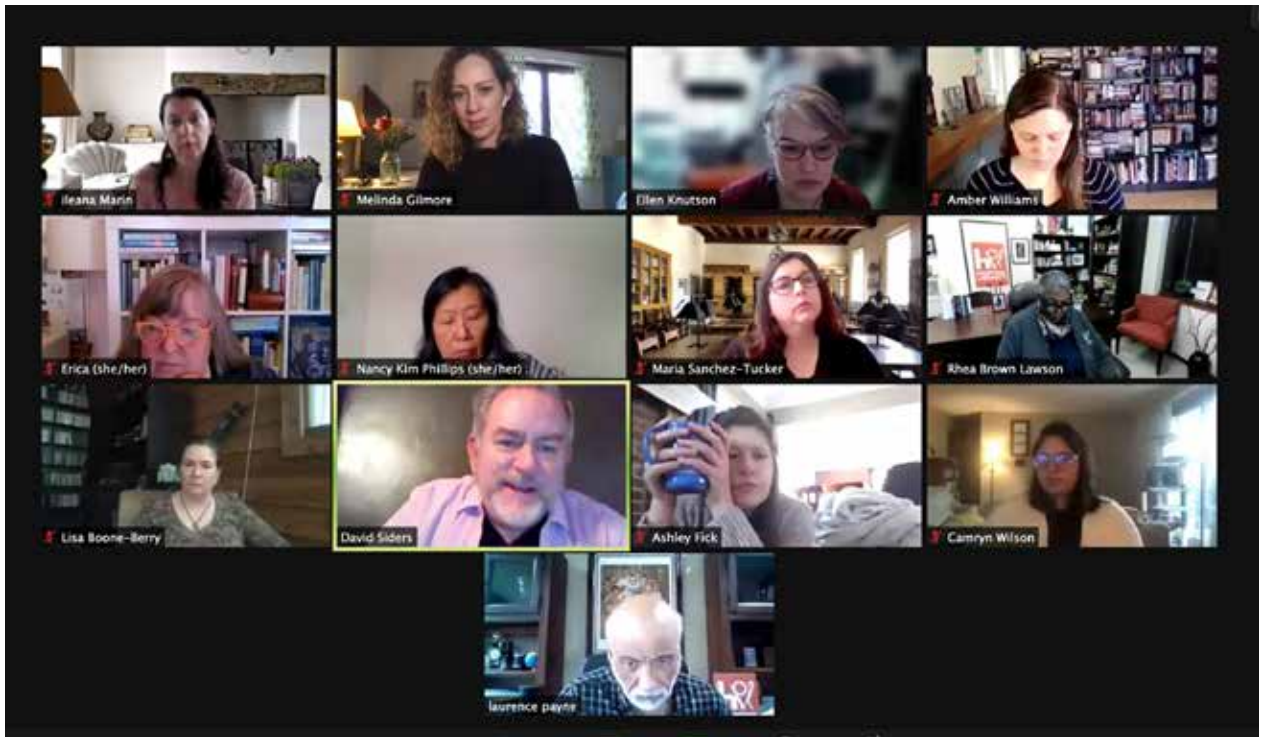
The Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library developed a planning advisory team that worked with other city and community organizations to organize forums around the problem of how a downtown public park should be used. Originally, the team framed the issue as one of homelessness, but as they worked with the community, the team came to understand this public problem more broadly as park usage cut across multiple issues facing the community.

At the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library in Kansas, the team responsible for the library's new learn-and-play bus adapted its standard decision-making procedures to include 15-minute concern-collecting sessions with children's caregivers. Earlier efforts to get community input focused on conversations with educational experts and other professionals, but they did not necessarily reveal what mattered most to the community. Putting children and their caregivers at the center significantly changed how the bus was being utilized. Goals now extend beyond academic success to include children's social and emotional readiness for kindergarten and

developing a learning community composed of caregivers to share expertise and experiences. Staff training now includes active listening and shifting the teacher role to a learning facilitator.

Similarly, in New Jersey, academics from Rutgers University working with the New Brunswick Free Public Library found that starting with conversations with members of an underserved population revealed a mismatch in a model for delivering consumer health information through libraries. Public health professionals developed the initial model but did not center on the actual health needs and concerns of an already marginalized community.

Finally, at the Houston Public Library, librarians partnered with a grassroots literacy organization housed in a church, a school, and parents to support the learning needs of elementary students. Unfortunately, during the project, Hurricane Harvey devastated the city in 2017. The neighborhood in which librarians were working was hit particularly hard, so the library and community shifted their focus to support residents' most basic needs (housing, food, clothing, and disaster recovery resources). Library staff reported that the efforts resulted in stronger relations, which "demonstrated what is possible when community members



Libraries as Boundary-Spanning Institutions research exchange, February 2021

come together . . . We are Houston Strong.”

Over two years, librarians gained insights from direct experience with sustained experiments that shifted their professional routines, even in small ways. Although libraries benefited from strong public trust, that did not always mean there were strong relationships throughout the community. The nature of the work requires a good deal of trust between the library and the community, and between individual librarians and specific community members. The librarians needed to change their mindsets from providing services for the community to becoming

convenors and connectors, sometimes outside of library walls. It also called for community members to think of themselves not just as consumers of library services but as active participants in the public life of their regions, and to see the way the library can go beyond providing them books and information by facilitating their engagement in public life.

Each library team commented on the slow nature of developing relationships with community members with whom they intended to work. Some described the process of moving from working with other institutions, organizations, or experts that

already work with the community to working directly with community members. Recall the earlier example of how Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library librarians started having short concern-gathering conversations with caregivers on their new learn-and-play bus. In another example, Houston librarians reached out to library patrons and partners in an attempt to reach nonlibrary users. They first connected with a pastor who led the grassroots literacy group, who then connected them to families who were not yet library users.

Moving from typical outreach activities to relationship building was a struggle and involved going to where the community members are, rather than waiting for people to come to the library. Making initial contact was just a start. The challenges of building and maintaining relationships so people come back—and perhaps even more important, take some ownership over both the process and programs—is ongoing.

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS AND DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE

In the next round of library learning exchanges, we further explored ways in which libraries capitalize on public trust to build relationships that support community deliberative decision-making. Librarians participating in the learning exchanges focused on creating spaces and part-



Moving from typical outreach activities to relationship building was a struggle and involved going to where the community members are, rather than waiting for people to come to the library.

nerships for critical conversation and deliberative dialogue.

Librarians at Virginia Beach Public Library held open-ended community conversations to learn the concerns and aspirations of area residents. Community members said they wanted the library to convene more such gatherings and to ensure that more people would be invited to participate. According to their final report, “[Virginia Beach Public Library] is seen as a safe space for conversation and a kind of neutral ground . . . [Participants] expressed trust, comfort, and gratitude to the library for being the place that continually provides them these opportunities.”

Larry Payne at Houston Public Library convened forums using an issue guide for public deliberation. The issue guide *Bridging and Bonding: How Can We Create Engaged Communities in a Time of Rapid Change?* provided a framework for engaging the community on Houston's changing demographics. The city's bicentennial will be in 2036, and librarians wanted to start convening community members to discuss what needs to happen for Houston to continue to grow and perhaps become a less divided

city. As Payne said, "The value expressed from participants was that the conversations were focused on improving understanding and future decision-making."

In her role as health information librarian at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Lissa Staley worked with the health equity workgroup of Heartland Healthy Neighborhoods. Together, they decided to use National Issues Forums issue guides for the community deliberations on issues that affect health outcomes (social determinants of health). Staley noted that a lot of their work goes beyond the library perspective as they continue to develop a sustainable network of partners and develop issue guides. Debbie Stanton wrote in a library board report, "I had the opportunity to attend [a deliberative forum] in November and can attest to the profound impact these types of discussions can have in our community—the discussion was thoughtful and focused. Just the practice of talking about difficult subjects in this way can positively impact other discussions the community is having."

The Ohio State University Libraries used the National Issues Forums issue guide on mental health to bring together various groups on campus. One of their librarians noted, "We learned that providing a reason and



The work librarians across the country have done in reaching out and deliberating with patrons and nonpatrons alike have helped to strengthen their communities even when a pandemic, racial strife, and economic hardship strained our democracy in ways not seen for decades.

place for people who care about a common issue to meet one another does help to bring people together . . . [Deliberation] can also be a tool for networking, building, and strengthening relationships.”

David Siders and Holbrook Sample at Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library shared that in one recent community conversation, residents stated that the library needed to convene community dialogue. Siders and Sample went on to say that the library is perhaps the best place—a natural fit—because it’s a neutral zone, serves a diversity of people, and is a space for people to talk. As the library’s civic engagement coordinator (a position created due to the library’s experience with the previous learning exchange), Siders has continued to build out the role of the public library as an essential place for this work.

Amy Honisett and Rachael Short at Multnomah County Library worked with staff at a branch that serves several disparate populations that do not have similar needs. Those involved tried to figure out how to best make the library comfortable for everyone. After working through several ideas, they settled on a community conversation about the hopes of community members and how changes in the neighborhood have affected them.

A point of learning from their final report was this insight: “I think that these conversations are most needed when the community is going through a difficult time. However, we cannot nimbly react to a sudden event unless we have laid the foundation of trust building, connections, and skills. Through experiments like this we can lower barriers, within the community and within our organization, so that we can be ready to react when the community is longing to come together.”

The work librarians across the country have done in reaching out and deliberating with patrons and nonpatrons alike have helped to strengthen their communities even when a pandemic, racial strife, and economic hardship strained our democracy in ways not seen for decades. Libraries are more than sources of information: they are the trusted gathering places for their towns and neighborhoods. We look forward to further exploring the potential of how librarians can work with communities to help citizens seek and find hope in one another, while strengthening each other—and libraries themselves—in the process. ■

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Rural Life: What Keeps People from Getting Involved?

By Lorie Higgins

As a community development practitioner and extension specialist for the University of Idaho, I have participated in a statewide effort to assist rural communities with a broad range of challenges since 2003. The Idaho Community Review has been a signature program of the Idaho Rural Partnership since 1999. A Community Review (CR) is an assessment and strategic planning process designed for towns of 10,000 people or fewer. A CR is tailored to the local community and codeveloped with local leaders, business owners, and residents who have access to a wide range of community development practitioners to assist them as

they identify local priorities and the resources to achieve them.

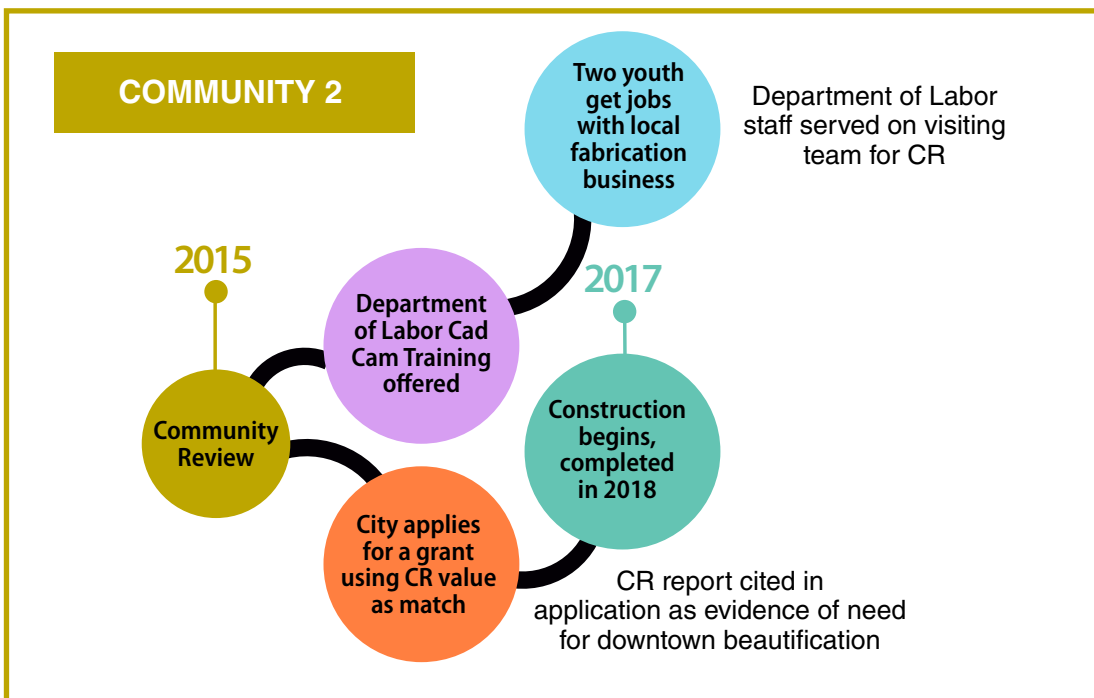
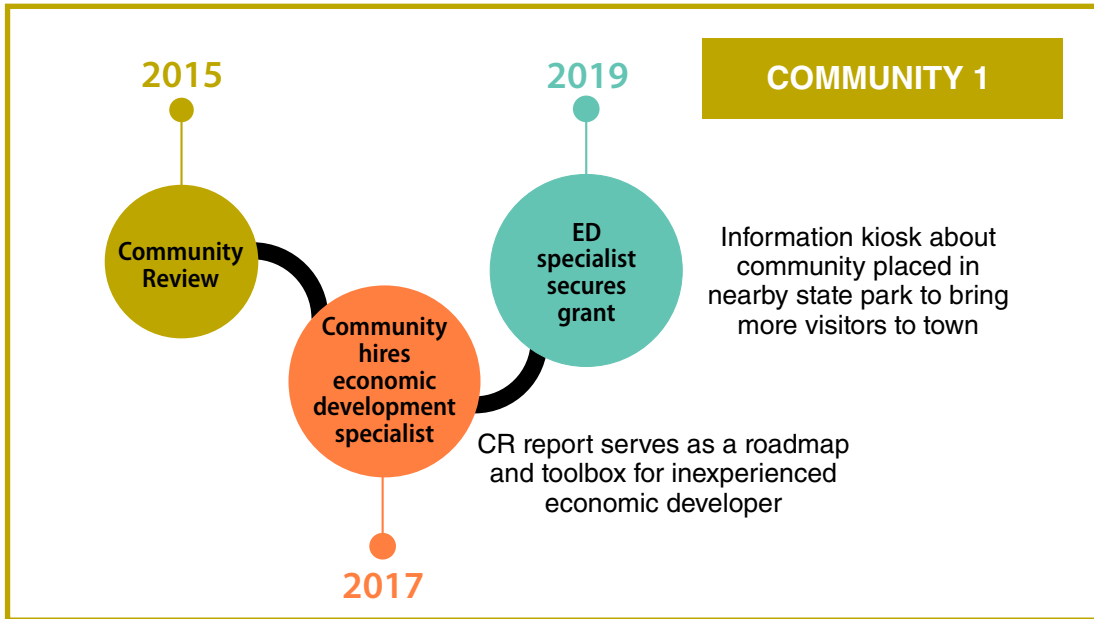
For a CR to be successful, there must be a cadre of community members, including formal and informal leaders, who volunteer to pick up where the CR visiting team leaves off. Too often, we have found that when it is time to implement ideas generated by the community, few are willing to lead in any way. This engagement challenge was, in part, the catalyst for bringing together community assessment delivery organizations and their university extension partners from Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana to form the Western Community Assessment Network (WeCAN) in 2017. Its objectives include learning together in order to improve CR outcomes and finding solutions to this and other challenges encountered in our community assessment work.

One of WeCAN's initial efforts involved conducting Ripple Effects Mapping, a group storytelling approach to evaluating impacts of programs and initiatives on people and communities. In some communities, what began with a small group of leaders was later expanded because these leaders were organized and knew how to access resources to be successful; trust was established. In other communities, an initial lack of participation meant the CR report

sat on a shelf for some time before someone had a reason to dust it off and use it. The following ripples with timelines illustrate trajectories of

change that varied greatly across the communities we mapped.

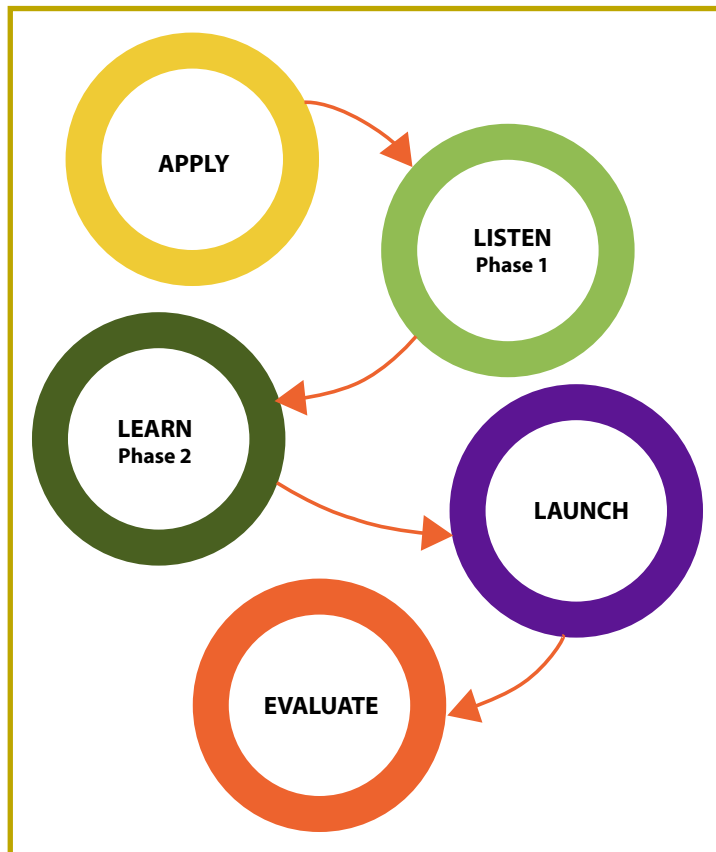
WeCAN revamped the existing CR process (now called Listen, Phase



1) by adding action planning (Learn, Phase 2) and a defined Launch phase that involves both mini-grants for projects and a coach to assist with forming and supporting diverse teams of residents. The WeCAN website (communityreview.org) includes an interactive map (that contains links to all assessment reports conducted since 1999 for each of the three states), a resource directory, and support for the peer learning networks we host in each state. The research component of our work

involves systematically documenting observations made during CRs, evaluating CR impact using Ripple Effects Mapping, and administering a community satisfaction survey. Conducted prior to the Listen phase, the survey includes several questions designed to delve into community involvement dynamics.

Observational and survey data shed new light on why more people are not involved in CR implementation or are otherwise engaged as leaders or volunteers in their communities.



OBSERVATIONAL DATA

A few years before the formation of WeCAN, the Cooperative Extension system in Idaho attempted to support communities that had participated in CRs by offering to facilitate a community engagement and action-planning process. Three communities took us up on the offer. These communities had completed additional projects, had new leaders, and more community input into ongoing efforts—but it became clear that the messy business of democratizing community decision-making and change was not a high priority for many established community leaders. In fact, it was one of the last things they would do to improve their community.

Reasons for turning down the additional assistance included things such as, “We don’t want to have more meetings.” How could community beautification, new community events, or historic tours happen without people meeting together? That question was answered by other community leaders—typically city officials—who were up front about how they preferred to divide the labor among existing municipal departments and organizations with whom they were already working (e.g., chambers of commerce). We discovered that it is common for established leaders to act as gatekeepers and control who participates in community change efforts.

This learning experience, combined with our observation that only about half of the communities participating in reviews successfully implemented CR-identified projects, is why action planning was built into the CR process redesign. We found that the addition of action planning certainly helps with the issue of constraining participation in projects, but it is not necessarily sufficient for creating leaderful communities.

An anecdote from a community meeting illustrates a common barrier. One of the first communities to go through the redesigned process was well into the action-planning session,



One of WeCAN’s initial efforts involved conducting Ripple Effects Mapping, a group storytelling approach to evaluating impacts of programs and initiatives on people and communities.

and it was going well. The home team did a great job of recruiting people to participate, and each of the four project teams had at least eight citizens ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. During the open brainstorming part of the session, one of the participants, who was new to involvement in the community, offered a suggestion. The longtime leader in the group said, “Why would we want to do that? We’re not going to do that.” I reminded the group that brainstorming was not a time to judge or eliminate ideas. We moved on through the process, but I wondered how the person whose idea had been rejected felt, and whether it prevented her from continuing to participate after we left the commu-

nity. Then I wondered how often this happens during meetings and planning efforts in rural communities.

This was the point when I started thinking we needed a bridge between the listening and action-planning phases that could help established leaders learn how to make space for new leaders in the community. We have emphasized the need for broad-based participation in planning and implementation by pointing out that many of the projects require support by those outside local government, chambers of commerce, and other formal community institutions, but the dynamics of ideation and decision-making often default to traditional lines of authority.

Data from standardized community surveys, completed as part of the redesigned CR process, reinforces our observations and helps us to better understand the dynamics from the perspectives of residents who could potentially be recruited to help plan and implement projects.

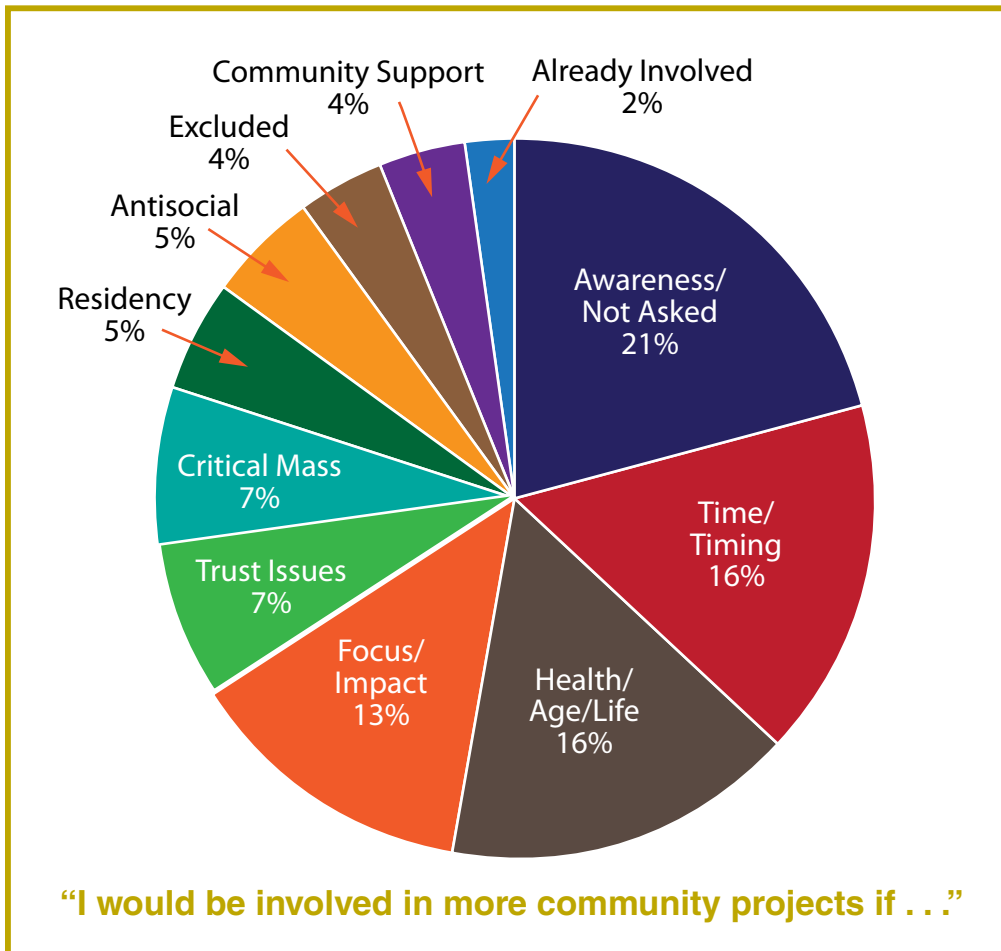
SURVEY DATA

From March 2018 through May 2021, 13 surveys were conducted in rural communities that participated in CRs across Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The populations of these communities ranged from 300 to 12,000, but survey samples typically encompassed the city zip code, which

tripled or quadrupled the sample size in a few cases. For most communities, surveys went to every household, but in the three communities with populations over 5,000, representative samples were used. There were 2,725 surveys completed, and 1,739 responded to the following fill-in-the-blank question: “I would be more involved in community projects if . . .” Often, respondents gave more than one reason for not being involved in their answers (e.g., “I’m too old and in poor health”), which is why we have 1,961 coded items.

Less than five percent of respondents said they just don’t want to be involved, but the rest of the respondents identified a range of barriers. Those who said they do not have time to participate accounted for only about 17 percent of responses to the “if” question. Another 18 percent said they are too old and/or physically unable to participate. Another six percent said they either live or work out of town and are unlikely to participate even if other barriers are addressed.

The types of responses coded under Focus/Impact suggest that many residents do not feel they have attractive opportunities. For example, quite a few suggested that many of the opportunities of which they are aware have to do with supporting local businesses (e.g., tourist events),



but that they would prefer to work on things that benefit the community more broadly. For example, one person said they would be more involved if opportunities “were actually needed for the town, not just a small group.” Other frequent Focus comments expressed a desire to be involved with projects that benefit kids, seniors, veterans, and the environment.

Trust Issues primarily have to do with whether people feel their time will be valued and appreciated, but they are also about concerns that

differences in values among residents means outcomes will not be optimal. In rural communities, newcomers and longtime residents often have different views and perspectives on whether change is even needed. A frequent concern is that good ideas are rejected by established leaders who are resistant to change, or “closed-minded.”

One Trust Issue that holds some people back from participating is lack of good organization. The following examples point to some ideas for those who recruit volunteers



At the interactional level in communities, we now better understand the types of interpersonal and perceptual dynamics contributing to the reluctance to be involved in positive community change activities.

and lead projects:

“They were fun and if they were well-organized and everyone chipped in.”

“I understood the amount of time expected.”

“It meant I wasn’t automatically in charge, or it seems like a lifetime commitment.”

Other ways in which people would like to be supported as volunteers include offering/organizing childcare, more marketing and communication, meeting consistently and on time, and being appreciated for their efforts.

Related to both Trust Issues and Awareness, responses coded under Inclusive Leadership suggest a

common feeling: that a few people are in control of what happens in the community and are selective when inviting participation, micromanage volunteers, or only want volunteers who do not have differing opinions about collective efforts:

“There was a sense of inclusion.”

“I knew the same few people wouldn’t be in charge.”

“You were accepted even if you are not a member of chamber or friend of city hall.”

“I was asked! Only the same few are asked to help.”

Other comments frequently suggested there is sometimes a belief that formal leaders also discourage broad-based input, and that there simply is not enough community support or interest to effectively implement community projects:

“Government or community leaders cared what people think.”

“City leaders endorsed, encouraged, and financially supported existing groups.”

“There is not much emphasis placed on community involvement here.”

“It’s hard duty when others don’t care.”

Critical Mass comments tended to be about the sense that there are not enough people—especially younger people—willing to help to pull off a successful project:

“There were people under 50 years old on anything.”

“More people got involved.”

“It piques the interest of the younger crowd.”

Just as many people who felt there aren't enough people willing to step up said that there is a need for more community initiatives and organizations that might appeal to more residents and encourage their involvement. The sense is that not all celebrations and fundraisers are of interest to all residents. If there were more of a variety of activities from which to choose, respondents would be more willing to help out.

CONCLUSION

At the interactional level in communities, we now better understand the types of interpersonal and perceptual dynamics contributing to the reluctance to be involved in positive community change activities. From the potential volunteer's perspective, stepping up can be fraught. Some do not see any space for themselves in the community development field, either because there are perceived gatekeepers determining who can participate, or the activities that can be undertaken and roles of volunteers prevent participation.

If we set aside several groups of respondents (those who live or work out of town, those who do not want

to be involved, those who feel their health and/or age preclude their participation, and those who do not feel they have the time to spare), about 60 percent of the remaining group—roughly 700 people—might get involved if barriers to participation were reduced. Across 13 small Western communities, 700 additional forces for community development would be an enormous game changer. This suggests that communicating opportunities, expanding the field of community development efforts, fostering a culture of community involvement, expanding the local leadership base—as well as the good care and feeding of volunteers and setting aside political and other divisions—would increase levels of participation in these communities.

As WeCAN continues to tweak the CR process and launch new efforts to assist rural communities in achieving their community development goals, we will engage local community leaders and potential leaders in conversations about our findings and assist them with strategies for addressing barriers to community involvement. ■

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Redefining Public Safety: Professionals and the Public

By Valerie Lemmie



In February 2018, the Kettering Foundation convened the first in a series of learning exchanges with communities where citizens were leading efforts to redefine public safety as a shared responsibility between professionals and the public. There were four meetings over three

years, with the last meeting taking place on Zoom after the May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd sparked worldwide protests.

People from communities in New York, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Northern and Southern California participated in this research. The foundation was interested in gaining insights on how these communities overcame the mutual mistrust that burdens the relationship between citizens and government as well as the ways public officials worked with citizens as coproducers. Each community had at least three representatives that included elected and/or appointed officials, members of community-based grassroots organizations, and police officers. The community teams reflected gender, race, immigrant identity, and age diversity.

Most of the communities had experienced a police-involved incident that sparked community protests and demands for changes in police policies, procedures, and practices. Additionally, many of the community representatives had participated in public protests and came to recognize that the change they wanted to see required them to engage with police, public institutions, and other citizens to make

visible, sustainable change. They could not leave this responsibility to government alone. While protests garnered public attention and created a sense of urgency, changing the system required public work—citizens and government working in democratic and complementary ways to keep communities safe.

Learning exchange participant John Thompson, whose friend, Philando Castile, was shot and killed by police in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, in July 2016, expressed it this way: “I went from an angry protestor to an angry activist. Now I’m like a walking magnet. I took two hundred people to the polls with me to make a difference. I wanted to make a difference. I kind of shifted because I saw a lot of positive things happening. . . . I started wanting positive change and positive people came into my life. I’m changing stuff and I’m learning.”

For participants, the foundation provided a safe space for team members to reflect on the work needed in their respective communities, learn from the experiences of other communities wrestling with similar challenges, energize their batteries after what was often difficult and challenging work in the trenches at home, and think creatively about engaging more of the public in the work to be done. All were open to learning and noted that Kettering’s

democratic practices provided a useful framework for their work. Many participants expressed that being part of a diverse group of people from across the country representing different views, opinions, and experiences was helpful in enhancing their internal group dynamics and teamwork.



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While struggling to discover how to create shared responsibility for public safety between the community and governmental institutions, they discovered that the term *public safety* was contextual and meant different things to different people, often depending on one's job or the community in which they lived or worked.

communities safe, or does the public have a role to play? What would it look like to share responsibility for keeping communities safe?

Participants grappled with a fundamental insight in the foundation's research: the need to address the problems behind the problem. While struggling to discover how to create shared responsibility for public safety between the community and governmental institutions, they discovered that the term *public safety* was contextual and meant different things to different people, often depending on one's job or the community in which they lived or worked. For example, some participants felt safety could be increased by reducing gang activity, while others noted that safety involved changing neighborhood conditions by improving schools and economic opportunities and by providing services like after-school programs for youth. Others believed a lack of safety was related to historic patterns of racial segregation where the safety of minority groups was deprioritized or infringed upon. They were actively excluded from determining policing practices and policies, and their interactions with police were primarily related to calls for service or traffic stops. Many participants believed that defining safety required adoption of cultural humility, an attitude of respect when

NAMING THE PROBLEM

In our meetings, learning exchange participants shared how easy it is to name an enemy—police—and how difficult it is to name the problem they were trying to solve. Is the problem police behavior or is there something more fundamental that needs to be addressed? Is there a difference between policing and public safety, and if so, what is it? Are police alone responsible for keeping

approaching people of different cultures and a commitment to actively engage in a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique.

In addition to struggling with how to name the problem, discussing potential options to ensure public safety also proved challenging. Participants questioned the extent to which public space is truly public and whether naming the problem as public safety limited the role of citizens to work with government in nonpublic spaces. Concerns were also expressed about what constitutes public spaces. Who is invited and who is excluded when thinking about safety in public spaces? To what extent is a public space shared and when is it used to exclude certain people or groups? Is there a perceived need to keep it safe from someone else? Are restaurants (like Starbucks) public spaces? One participant noted, “A lot of people think that public space, a public park in a residential neighborhood, for example, is their space—it belongs to their residents/group and it’s not the public’s space. If others use the park, they feel that they’re not safe because this is their space, rather than understanding that it’s a public space where we should all be able to feel safe.”

Other issues participants worked through in their respective communities included the extent to which

communities “police themselves” and act on norms and expectations that are agreed upon within that community, what happens prior to the arrival of the police that leads to their presence (the feeling that a situation can’t be handled by the community), which problems require police response and who defines them, and the role of power in police-community relationships (how much is a function of power dynamics). A community activist summarized the challenges associated with creating safe communities this way: “What I’m really trying to get at is less the police response issue and more about what this says with respect to how we [citizens] could work in our community. Is this a community problem, one where there could be more conversation, more dialogue, more deliberation?”

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

In most of the communities participating in the learning exchange, citizens recognized their agency—the power to act—after first experiencing anger and frustration over a controversial police action. Citizens wanted to do something to demonstrate that their community was better than a single act by police that was contrary to their values and expectations. Often their first action was to demand change by the police



department and city council, usually through organized protests and marches. When nothing changed (which it didn't initially), citizens mobilized and moved from protests outside city hall to advocacy and representation of citizen interests inside city hall. It was in their role as advocates for change, representing their neighbors, that our civic participants started to negotiate with local government officials on what change might look like.

In several communities, this led to a renaming of policing from an institutional responsibility to safety as a community responsibility. To continue working on public concerns beyond policing, many learning exchange participants who began as protestors and advocates later ran

successfully for public office and/or created and led community-based organizations. Each of the communities noted that while protests brought attention to issues, it was when they worked with city hall, other citizen groups, and NGOs that substantive change occurred and was institutionalized. In Kettering's research terms, these communities demonstrated that by renaming and reframing issues, creating an environment for honest conversations, and reaching agreement on the work to be done together (public deliberation), they were able to share responsibility for ensuring community safety (complementary public acting). Most importantly, all spoke about plans to create a culture of democratic public engagement.

One of their key insights was that safety (and most public problems) had to be understood in the context of competing values that were often in tension with one another. This insight encouraged them to talk with others in their communities about the values that were in tension, opening the possibility for broader public engagement through deliberation (some called it community forums or conversations) as a vehicle to discuss trade-offs and find common ground on which to act.

Learning they were not unique in the problems they faced helped participants become more open to other perspectives. Community teams were inspired to act after hearing commonalities and differences in problems and problem-solving approaches from around the country, especially from people they identified as “from the other side of the fence,” people who had perspectives that community teams were critical of, or people they could not previously empathize with.

The broad range of knowledge and perspectives presented encouraged participants to build on the experiences of other communities and explore new opportunities for complementary acting, despite the challenging nature of the issues they worked on. Observing the passion and persistence demonstrated by

others encouraged community teams to keep working together to address their shared problems, despite their differences.

Public work is hard work. There are no quick fixes or easy answers. It requires the whole community, not just the experts or public officials to address what are often termed “wicked” community problems. When communities find common ground for action and solutions they deem viable, they own the results and honor their responsibility as citizens. They know their contributions matter, that their work adds value to the quality of community life, and that they are creating a culture of democratic and complementary work with others in their community. Some of the innovative ideas and



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approaches participants explored were relatively small and simple, yet on further examination were quite profound. For example, they had a robust discussion about the power of the simple act of smiling as a strategy to erode hostility and fear.

While most of their activities related to creating safe communities were associated with the tangible goods produced from public work, there was agreement that the intangible work of fostering mutual recognition, empathy, cultural humility, and an appreciation of history was critical to building trusting relationships and common ground for action. They also recognized the importance of having a safe environment in which they could share

experiences and learn from others—a community of practice—where there was trust and participants could share what they were struggling with, and where they felt vulnerable without judgment and shared mutual concern and respect. A city manager and elected official may have explained it best:

Part of what I had been probably searching for, for quite some time, has been a group like this or a place because in our respective communities—well, at least I’ll speak for myself—oftentimes, you find yourself in a place to where it’s very difficult to maintain optimism. It’s very difficult to find kindred spirits. It’s very difficult to find allies when the forces that are out there seem to be working so much against the direction that you’re trying to forge. . . . I believe that folks that are doing this kind of work—the work that we do in our communities—need a safe place, need a place where we can go and really be able to connect with people outside of your environment, wherever it’s at.

We plan to reconvene these communities to see if the coproduction of public work between citizens and public institutions remains visible. ■

Valerie Lemmie is the director of exploratory research at the Kettering Foundation. She can be reached at vlemmie@kettering.org.



Getting to We: Bridging the Gap between Communities and Local Law Enforcement Agencies in Virginia

By Brian N. Williams

The current state of police-community relations in the United States is in a precarious position. Cell phones, viral videos, and social media platforms have allowed us to witness—or become aware of—police officers assaulting law-abiding people, or killing unarmed citizens such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor due to the actions and inactions of police officers. These senseless attacks have

run parallel with nonsensical verbal and physical assaults on police professionals, both prior and subsequent to the infamous attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, coupled with American citizens' killing of officers such as Pentagon police officer George Gonzalez and Capitol police officer William Evans. These developments have divided communities, impacted police morale, and affected public trust and confidence in both law enforcement and the criminal justice system. These examples of local realities have shaped public perceptions that have regional, national, and even global ramifications. The costs and consequences of these actions and inactions have policy, practical, and political implications.

Many Americans now question police performance, the motives of police officers, and even the need for police departments. Similarly, police officers are wondering if the public can look at them for who they are: human beings who seek to serve others at the expense of themselves, their families, and loved ones. These issues jeopardize police department efforts to enlist residents as partners in the cocreation of policies and practices that lead to complementary action on public safety, public order, and community well-being. As a result, we are experiencing a clear

and present danger to American democracy: a disconnect between citizens and their institutions.

AT THE INTERSECTION OF PAST AND PRESENT

Like a vehicle in need of a major tune-up, American democracy is stalling at the intersection of past and present. The apparitions and historic harms of the past—such as racist and discriminatory policies and practices grounded in the notions of supremacy—continue in the present. Consequently, recent Gallup polling data highlight that public trust in vital governmental institutions within the United States is down. In particular, the criminal

justice system continues to see the waning effects of public confidence.

The problem at the center of this nightmarish scenario—lack of civic engagement—is invisible, yet visible in plain sight. We can feel its presence and are experiencing its power. It has polarized the populace, hushed public debate, and has frustrated our efforts to “form a more perfect Union.”

The lack of meaningful and purposeful engagement is coming at an inopportune time. We are experiencing a pandemic within a pandemic—where the COVID-19 pandemic is raging alongside the ongoing pandemic of systemic and institutionalized racism within the criminal justice system, in general, and within the profession of policing in particular. At this time of despair and despondency, where do we go from here?

LOOKING BACK TO LOOK AHEAD

Glancing at rearview mirrors is beneficial. These mirrors provide a much-needed perspective that keep occupants in a car safe as they travel to their desired destination. As American society and its supporting democracy idle at this current intersection of past and present, we have an opportunity to look back before proceeding ahead.



Across the Commonwealth of Virginia—like so many jurisdictions within the United States—communities are facing problems from the past that are coupled with and compounded by those of the present.



Reimagining Policing workshop, August 2021

The preamble of the US Constitution is a document that frames the American democracy: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity . . .” As we seek a path forward, it is becoming clearer that a pathway is hidden in plain sight—the need to get to *we*.

GETTING TO WE: A CASE STUDY IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Across the Commonwealth of Virginia—like so many jurisdictions within the United States—commu-

nities are facing problems from the past that are coupled with and compounded by those of the present, which challenge contemporary and future efforts to form a more perfect union and get to *we*. This lack of unity within and across communities negatively impacts relational policing.

In Virginia, many have acknowledged the obstacles of the past and their impact on the present. More important, we are engaging in actions and activities to take advantage of the opportunities that are before us. One example is the effort led by the Department of Criminal Justice Services, with the assistance of the Public Engagement in Governance



Reimagining Policing workshop, August 2021

Looking, Listening and Learning Laboratory (PEGLLLLab) within the University of Virginia Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy. These two entities have developed, implemented, and facilitated a series of “courageous conversations” across five sites in the state: Danville, Newport News, Norfolk, Prince William County, and Richmond.

Our courageous conversations took an asset-based approach to community development and were designed to be intentionally inclusive, trauma informed, and equitable to embrace a *power-with* as opposed to a *power-over* philosophy. As such, these dialogues, which speak across differences, consist of a wide variety

of people from numerous backgrounds—advocates and activists for police reform, educators, youth development professionals, clergy members, police officers and executives, and lay citizens—who bring lived personal and professional experiences and resulting perspectives. Challenged to go beyond the notion of a safe space—an environment that limits the expression of real feelings to prevent offending others—we have utilized the concept of a brave space where participants bring their authentic selves to the table to share their truths within a setting where judgment is suspended, and grace is extended.

Our gatherings are based upon the premise that where you sit depends upon where you stand. In other words, your perspective of the truth is your truth, but it is limited to your lived experiences. To onboard and usher participants into a brave space, we utilize an item that we all have an understanding of but often fail to have a deeper appreciation for. An example is a fully loaded pizza with all the meat, vegetables, and cheese toppings. Participants all see the same thing—a pizza—but those who don’t eat pork, are lactose intolerant, or are vegetarian or vegan see something that omnivores don’t see. This icebreaker sets the tone and centers our discussion. It allows for those

who haven't had negative interactions and encounters with the police to get a better sense of the lived experiences and perceptions of those who have had negative interactions. They may live in the same jurisdiction and see the same badge and uniform, but have different experiences, perceptions, and realities that frame their respective truths. This approach has been effective in heading off and mitigating strong opinions that have arisen during our courageous conversations. It also reinforces the reality of what is often hidden in plain sight to some and surfaces the reason for—and the goals behind—our gatherings.

Our goals for this work are simple: to improve communication, to enhance understanding, and to facilitate more constructive, productive, and collaborative partnerships that cocreate policies and practices that coproduce public safety, public order, and community well-being. To date we have faced some challenges but have remained vigilant in starting where *we* are, using what we have, and doing the best that we can. Each site has remained true to the pursuit of going from words to action: As they come to see something that impacts relational policing and relational intelligence, they say something, but what is of paramount importance, they do something.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: VOICES FROM THE PAST AND PATHWAYS TOWARD THE FUTURE

Albert Einstein noted that “we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Our approach to courageous conversations reflects his sentiments. To go from surface change to fundamental and substantive change within our systems, structures, and institutions require a new approach to imagine, conceive, coconstruct, and coproduce public safety, public order, and community well-being. Our efforts are committed to that process.

We are at an inflection point. Participants across our sites have accepted the individual challenge and charge of acknowledging the pain of others, feeling their pain, and acting upon the pain that they now share with an understanding that corrective action is collective action. They are embracing the opportunity to serve as a thermostat (instruments that change and maintain the temperature of their environment) rather than a thermometer (an instrument limited to registering the temperature of their environment).

An example of a culminating event to help community understanding and to encourage police participants to see the impetus for change was an open mic, spoken word/poetry slam

that was codesigned and coproduced by residents and police officers in Newport News. A group of secondary school students shared the stage with officers from the Newport News Police Department to share their truths on the current state of relational policing. Participants aired their frustrations of past incidents and their impact on present-day perceptions and relationships, yet embedded within their presentations was a brighter future state with implications for public policy, professional practices, and community engagement. Speakers leveraged their respective truths to communicate to others not just the obstacles, but more importantly, the opportunities to improve relations between the police and the community on the other side of now.

Listening to these courageous conversations over the past year, it became clear that communities and law enforcement partners share common goals and visions for the future. For example, everyone worries about whether they will come home unharmed at the end of a shift or at the end of the day; everyone strives to be understood and to really be seen for who they are; everyone cares very deeply about their communities; and everyone wants healthy, vibrant, and transparent relationships between law enforcement and com-

munity members. And therein lies the ultimate challenge—how do we get to that place that we all seem to want?

The Department of Criminal Justice Services and the PEGLLL-Lab believe that one way to get there requires us to comfort the afflicted, which in some ways, requires afflicting the comfortable. We are embracing the opportunity to dig deep, immersing ourselves in the viewpoints and experiences of others, validating those perspectives, and looking at ourselves through the lenses of others. By doing this, we can dismantle the disconnect between citizens and their governing institutions and bridge the gap between communities and their local law enforcement agencies. We encourage others to join us in seeing and leaning into the problems of today as platforms to enhance relational policing of tomorrow. We believe in the words that some have attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson: “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” ■

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This article reflects the views of the author, not the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

Democracy Is a Snowball Rolling Down a Hill: The 2021 Kettering Multinational Symposium

By Wendy Willis

On March 22-23, 2021, nearly 100 people—including representatives from more than 20 countries as well as Kettering staff and associates—came together for the first fully online Multinational Symposium. The previous year’s symposium, scheduled to take place just as the global COVID-19 pandemic was beginning, had been canceled. This year, as the pandemic continued to spread and create tragedy, the theme of the sessions was “Responses to the Pandemic: Citizens’ Relationship WITH Governing Institutions.”

Kettering president and CEO David Mathews offered a vivid conception of the moment: “We are trying to understand democracy



PHOTO BY MELINDA GILMORE

itself and whether it is now subject to an enormously destructive force.” He likened the question to a drive up a mountain, wondering if the rumbling beneath the tires is the result of just a few small tremors—or a warning that the whole mountain is about to erupt. “Is what we are seeing here [a] populist revolution?” he asked. “Or is the very structure of democracy being jeopardized here? Is there a volcano underneath the surface?”

OVERLAPPING CRISES AND A “PANDEMIC WITHIN A PANDEMIC”

The symposium took place nearly one year after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. At the time of the gathering, most participants had been in and out of lockdowns and

other forms of government restriction for months. As a result, the pandemic and their communities’ responses to it were at the forefront of both the participants’ minds and their conversations with one another.

Nonetheless, as they shared their stories about COVID-19, it became clear that not everyone’s experiences were the same. Italian journalist Federica Marangio observed that the virus is “democratic,” in the sense that it has affected the entire world but that the most severe consequences have not been evenly distributed. Several participants noted that the health and the economic burdens of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on poor people and people of color.

Michael Knight, a physician from Washington, DC, noted that COVID-19 disproportionately affects African American patients in his practice and across the country. As he reminded the group, essential workers—which often include low-wage workers—cannot “stay home and stay safe.” Rather, they have been required to work, often in highly public settings, throughout the pandemic. As a result, though Washington, DC, is just less than 50 percent Black, 80 percent of the COVID-19 deaths have been among Black people.

Jaco Roets from South Africa put it bluntly: “South Africans are not sharing the same society.” While



The pandemic did not just expose and exacerbate health inequities. It deepened preexisting inequities in other arenas as well, including education.

people from all walks of life are getting sick, wealthy and White South Africans have access to private hospitals. The vast majority of other South Africans are forced into crowded public facilities—if they can find a hospital bed at all.

The pandemic did not just expose and exacerbate health inequities. It deepened preexisting inequities in other arenas as well, including education. Bernita Bradley, from the National Parents Union in the United States, described the inequities revealed and intensified by the decision to close school buildings and move to an entirely remote learning model. While wealthier, whiter districts had sufficient technology, money, and capacity to support students and families, a majority-Black district in Detroit was left with significantly fewer resources with which to make a rapid transition to online learning. Sumana Suwan-Umpa told a similar story about Thailand, where poor students were struggling with multiple barriers to pursuing their education. In one instance, a student had to ride a motorcycle 150 miles to get sufficient internet to take a school assessment.

In some places, the pandemic is one of several overlapping crises that have drained community resources and inhibited communities from responding collectively and imag-

inatively. Annette Ruiz-Morales, from Puerto Rico, described the overlapping crises in her community. In addition to the pandemic, they included a 15-year recession, overwhelming debt, and recovery from a historic hurricane and an earthquake.

As Brian Williams, from the University of Virginia, succinctly put it, “I want to tap into the . . . pandemic within a pandemic: racism within the COVID-19 environment. And I want to do that because I saw a shared symptom—*I can’t breathe*—as the motif.” He went on to ask, “[W]hat are the implications of breathing, of life, for and with the people?”

While COVID-19 may have exacerbated problems, many participants commented that the overlapping crises in fact revealed opportunities for citizens to lead in the democratic transformation of institutions. As Williams noted, perhaps we should be in a process of “continuous remodeling” of our democratic processes and institutions.

CITIZENS LEAD THE WAY

Because the pandemic was worldwide and institutions—including governments—were often overwhelmed and underprepared, citizens led the initial response to the pandemic.

Tendai Murisa reported that, in Zimbabwe, when a well-known

journalist died of COVID-19, it revealed how underresourced and ill-prepared the medical system was for such a crisis. Because hospitals were struggling to find sufficient supplies and equipment, more than 60 citizen-led initiatives sprung up to help health-care workers acquire personal protective equipment, testing kits, and masks. In the months that followed, citizens worked together to get closed hospitals back online and fully operational. Citizens also began to create and support food programs to feed those who were hard-hit by the pandemic.

Similarly, in New Zealand, Phoebe Davis emphasized that communities “knew what they needed to keep themselves safe.” Citizens banded together and “created a community of care of five million.” As communities—particularly indigenous communities—took charge of their own well-being, tribal leaders served as liaisons to the government, which supported the solutions conceived and executed by citizens. As she put it, communities taking charge of their own care and well-being is the definition of sovereignty, and that governments “being the ally and listening to what people have done” is a demonstration of complementary action.

As the pandemic wore on, intermediary institutions became

important in supporting the work of citizens. Federica Marangio shared her experience in Italy, where journalists and citizens coproduced information about the pandemic and its effects on children. She realized that the experiences of children were underreported, so she began soliciting drawings and paintings from families to tell their stories. At first parents were reluctant to share information about their children, but the program took off, and children began writing and drawing messages of encouragement for hospitalized patients and health-care workers.

In Romania, Australia, and the United States, trusted local organizations played important roles in facilitating communication between citizens and government. In Romania, libraries played a crucial role in distributing information. In South Australia, public health officials realized at some point that their messages were not reaching everyone in the community and that some cultural groups were not following public health guidelines. To understand the situation better, the chief health officer brought together 250 people from 18 cultures and cultural organizations in an online forum to learn more about cultural beliefs and practices and how they intersected with COVID-19 protocols. The health officer learned much more

about what protocols might work for specific languages and cultural groups. But even more important, the groups began to support one another in sharing information, space, and other resources.

Similarly, in Washington, DC, Michael Knight reported that there was a tremendous amount of justifiable suspicion and mistrust in the African American community about COVID-19 protocols, and about the vaccine in particular. Knight and his colleagues first asked patients what they needed and wanted to know to help make health-care decisions. In response, he and his colleagues developed partnerships with churches and other houses of worship to provide medical information and access to vaccines.

CITIZEN FATIGUE, POLARIZATION, MISTRUST

Despite tremendous citizen leadership, several participants noted that community members are showing signs of fatigue as the pandemic and its associated stresses have continued. Tendai Murisa noted that citizens mobilized less as each wave of the pandemic crested because they were tired, and that more and more people were adversely affected by both the health and economic effects of the crisis. That discouragement and fatigue were compounded



Despite tremendous citizen leadership, several participants noted that community members are showing signs of fatigue as the pandemic and its associated stresses have continued.

when government bureaucracies got in the way of citizen innovation. As Murisa described it: “[G]overnment was following its usual bureaucratic systems despite the fact that we’re in the middle of a pandemic. So, all those things actually create fatigue and tiredness amongst those who are actively involved.”

In Zimbabwe, supporters of the political party out of power accused those citizens and civil society organizations working with government to address COVID-19 of being “enablers of the regime.” In Egypt, Ahmed Naguib reported that there is a widening gap of trust between the community and government leadership. He noted, “Definitely, the ever-present lack of trust between the

community and the government—it’s there. And it’s lost. The connection there is no longer available.”

Jaco Roets described the situation in South Africa: “We have very strong buckets of trust within isolated spaces. But I think our linking social capital has grown even weaker under COVID-19. There are increasing cases of xenophobia.”

An exception appeared to be Australia. Darryn Hartnett, from the University of Melbourne, reported that the government quickly pulled together a cabinet that coordinated a national response to the pandemic. According to Hartnett, the effort was a bipartisan and unified approach, and the government was transparent in its motives and policies. That approach increased public trust and created an environment in

which people complied with a “very brutal lockdown,” which included extreme restrictions on movements, heavy fines for violators, and sealed borders.

DEMOCRACY IS A SNOWBALL ROLLING DOWN A HILL

Democratic practices are not linear. Several participants described the effort to rename and reframe shared problems as an opportunity to bring new information, issues, and people into the conversation. Aldo Protti, from Costa Rica’s Citizens’ Action Party said, “With these naming and framing practices, yes, collective judgment emerges more easily.” In Israel, an ongoing dialogue between Jews and Muslims was challenged by the stresses of the pandemic. But Evan Muney, Udi Cohen, and their colleagues at the Citizens’ Accord Forum found that they could return to the core practices they had established prior to the pandemic. It was, as they described it, a source of resilience. As Muney put it: “[I]t’s actually a cyclical process. And it builds on itself like a snowball rolling down a hill. So, we were able to go back to naming and framing issues, and that only built further trust amongst those participating.”

As citizens and governments learn to work together, Phoebe Davis noted that “deliberation provides us



with the opportunities to learn and reframe and to build and rebuild so that we are always moving forward.”

Several participants wondered aloud whether the democratic innovations that emerged during COVID-19 would last after the pandemic eased. Some described how citizen-led initiatives were beginning to solidify into more formal arrangements with civil society institutions and government. Tendai Murisa described Solidarity Trust Zimbabwe, which was created in response to the COVID-19 crisis and the grassroots efforts that arose out of it: “Our first mandate was to have an engagement with government.”

Stuart Comstock-Gay of the Delaware Community Foundation described a similar shift among funders in the United States. He shared that the “technocratic approach” that was dominant in philanthropy a few years ago has started to wane and that there is a new “acceptance of funding that allows grantees to build their own version of systems in their communities.”

IS THERE A VOLCANO UNDER THE SURFACE?

The 2021 Kettering Multinational Symposium took place while the mountain described by David Mathews was yet rumbling. Despite



Despite the challenges of a worldwide public health crisis, rising global populism, and racial and economic injustice, the participants in this year’s symposium identified and shared many examples of citizens leading—and institutions joining in to work with them.

the challenges of a worldwide public health crisis, rising global populism, and racial and economic injustice, the participants in this year’s symposium identified and shared many examples of citizens leading—and institutions joining in to work with them. While it is unknown whether the volcano is near erupting, this path points to a way forward. ■

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Catalyzing Change: Unleashing the Potential of Communities

By Richard C. Harwood

This article is adapted from Unleashed: A Proven Way Communities Can Spread Change and Make Hope Real for All (Kettering Foundation Press, 2021) by Richard C. Harwood.

The fault lines we face are legion. They include long-term economic decline, racial division and racism, persistent poverty, lack of educational opportunity, civic and political mistrust, and a loss of faith in organizations and leaders. These and other challenges conspire against people, frustrating them and entangling them in hardship, driving and shaping their destinies, and sadly, slowly wringing out their hope.

How do we go about more intentionally unleashing the innate potential of people and institutions and groups in communities to address our common challenges? At the same time, how do we create a civic culture in which people come together to shape their own lives and gain real hope about their future and the future of our society?

THE OPPORTUNITY

There is a golden opportunity before us now to unleash this innate potential. My work has taken me to hundreds, if not thousands, of communities all across the United States. Three themes have emerged with increasing clarity and currency from these experiences.

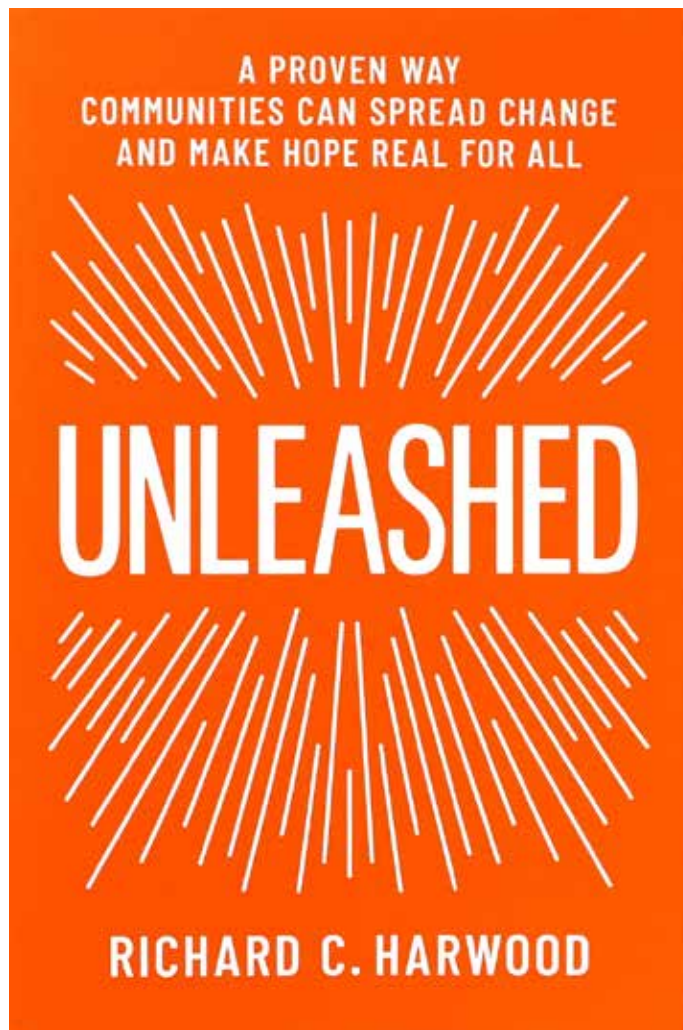
First, so many of our challenges—especially the fault lines I have highlighted—require that we marshal our shared resources if we are to effectively address them. No one leader, no single organization or group, and no individual citizen can tackle these problems alone. These challenges demand a shared response. There must be concerted efforts to bring people and groups together, guided by a sense of common purpose and working in mutually reinforcing ways.

Second, so many Americans deeply yearn to exercise a greater sense of control over their individual and shared lives, and to summon and

put into action a sense of personal and collective agency. Americans by nature are doers. Amid the pervasive acrimony and divisiveness gripping our public life and politics today, people want to build things together. People want to be part of something larger than themselves.

Third, these times urgently call for us to produce a more just, equitable, fair, and hopeful society. The recent crises we have faced have laid bare long-standing inequities, disparities, and injustices in our society. There is a basic need to address these challenges, and this will require us to take different approaches from the past.

So much of this work must happen in local communities. Yes, there are challenges that beg for a national or state response—new laws, regulations, and other important policy solutions. But let's be clear: it is in local communities where people can turn outward toward one another to see and hear each other; where dignity can be afforded to each and every individual; where mind-sets and behaviors affected by biases, preconceived notions, and prejudice must fundamentally shift; where people can work hand in hand and come to recognize each other's innate capacities; where we can marshal those capacities for good; and where we can create a shared responsibility for how we work together.



A SEARCH FOR ANSWERS

Over a period of two years, my colleagues and I conducted in-depth examinations of nine communities, each of which The Harwood Institute had worked with at some time during the last 30 years. Our goal was to see what we could learn about how people got started—and why. What did they struggle with? What choices did they make? What context were they operating in, and what ultimately moved them ahead?



Change ripples out in communities through an interaction of highly intentional actions and serendipity. This interaction and its effects can be proactively created.

Beyond these questions, I wanted to understand the nature of the chain reaction that unfolded once things got started. How do organizations align their actions with the community? And how do the mind-sets, behaviors, and choices of individuals shift over time? In addition, there were questions about the nature of the obstacles these individuals, organizations, and groups faced, and how they overcame them at different stages of their efforts.

We learned that change ripples out in communities through an interaction of highly intentional actions and serendipity. This interaction and its effects can be proactively created. The interactions themselves cascade

through a chain of events, both in real time and over time. While each step has a purpose, exactly where the interaction leads is often unpredictable. The good news is that this chain of events can be catalyzed and nurtured. Through the creation of a critical mass of these interactions and chains of events, a community can actively marshal its collective resources and strengthen its civic culture. And people can restore their belief that they can get things done together.

The stories of the nine communities are truly inspiring. I have come to deeply admire the individuals who stepped forward to make things happen. Against great odds, they often took one step at a time, not knowing exactly what would result, if anything, from their efforts. But they persisted. They created real, tangible progress—and hope.

LOOKING AT DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

Each of these nine communities is a unique place that faced its own set of fault lines and challenges. Each has its own history. These places reflect communities of different sizes, demographics, and regions of the United States. Each started in a fundamentally different place. Nonetheless, each story helps us understand what it takes to ignite and spread change.

In Oak Park, Illinois, a relatively well-off community, the public library discovered a growing desire among many residents to tackle underlying issues of inclusion, equity, and poverty. The library realigned its mission and its work with the community and, in turn, sparked ever-growing change throughout the community.

Winchester and Clark County, Kentucky, a small rural community, was on the brink of being left behind. But residents there decided to fight an opioid crisis, embrace children who felt abandoned, and bridge local divides of race, geography, and religion. The actions taken were spearheaded by unexpected people,

acting in ways hard to imagine, and creating unpredictable progress by taking just one step at a time. Most recently, something enormously special has occurred: over 60 organizations and groups have come together to meet twice a week to collectively address systemic issues around COVID-19.

A local United Way in Spokane, Washington, was seeking a new mission and found the community instead. In the process, it helped lead the way to a dramatic transformation of local public education and the ways in which the community marshaled its collective resources to support youth, reduce truancy, and raise the graduation rate, among other efforts.



Winchester, Clark County, Kentucky

PHOTO BY MICHAEL ANDREWS



In the meantime, the organization transformed its own focus and became relevant again.

Youngstown, Ohio, was decimated by job loss, corruption, and fragmentation. The community was “waiting for a knight in shining armor” to save it. But residents and local groups started to take small actions in the areas of financial literacy, public education, equity in the arts, neighborhood redevelopment, and others. Each action built, one upon another, creating new possibilities that rippled out in all directions.

In Red Hook, New York, a small, rural village upstate, people came together first to change the town’s sole stoplight. Before they knew it, this one small action unleashed people’s innate capabilities to address long-simmering challenges posed by young people leaving town, a failing economy, and residents who seemed disinclined to work together. A new can-do civic culture has emerged,

taken root, and spread.

Las Vegas, Nevada, is known as a sprawling, fun-loving, go-it-alone city. Against all odds, a new civic culture emerged as people recognized that they needed each other and must work together. New shared progress has been made on everything from homelessness to foster care, food insecurity, immigrant empowerment, and the connection of important institutions (such as public media) with the community.

Flint, Michigan, is a city known for suffering devastating blows: the loss of the automobile industry, the growth of crime, and the poisoning of its water supply. But the people of Flint set out to build connections and take action on racial divisions and racism, downtown rejuvenation, religious divisions, and the use of the arts to lift up marginalized voices. While the challenges for this city persist, the community’s resilience continues to grow.

In Mobile, Alabama, after 40 years of defeated school levies and longtime racial, social, and economic divisions, the community found its way back into the public schools. By coming together across its many divisions, the community was able to build public will for sustained action on public education, establishing new public accountability for the school district and for the community itself. Mobile transformed not only its public education but the community's civic fabric as well.

Finally, there is Battle Creek, Michigan. The community was looking for a sign—any sign—that progress was still possible. Six individuals came together to spark the needed change. It began with the Burmese population, and then ever-expanding change rippled throughout the community on issues of education, youth, diversity, and inclusion, among many others. These actions generated a stronger civic culture and a can-do spirit.

Sometimes, it appears that change just happens in communities spontaneously, inexplicably, or even magically. Other times, we are led to believe that it is wholly orchestrated, that some linear plan has been carefully laid out, engineered, and implemented. Neither is usually the case. These nine communities

help us to see and understand that something very different is at play, a dynamic we can help to catalyze, nurture, and grow.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

I still remember the very first time I wrote out the list of key characteristics of how people can unleash their own innate capabilities and the potential of their communities (see side bar). As the words began to unfold on my sheet of paper, I felt this incredible sense of excitement. These characteristics are based in large part on what we learned when we examined patterns across the stories from the nine communities. They can help us understand in greater depth and detail how change starts, grows, and spreads in communities. I could immediately see the importance and the implications of naming and spelling out these hallmarks for change.

There are many ways for communities to go about trying to solve their problems. There is no single way. Let's be clear about this. These characteristics help to illuminate how it is possible to unleash the innate potential of people, institutions, and groups to strengthen civic culture in their communities and to address their entrenched fault lines. They bring to life how to do the work in ways that restore people's belief that

Here are the 10 characteristics of how change sparks, grows, and spreads in communities:

1. A chaotic or unpredictable chain of events is driven by people making a series of intentional choices about where and why to begin their efforts and what to do next.
2. The chain of events hinges on a reframing of what matters to people in the community.
3. The reframing sparks a different notion of what needs to be addressed, how, and by whom.
4. It doesn't really matter who in the community sparks the chain of events. Anyone or any group can get things going.
5. The precipitating cause for people taking action is always different—and is simply a point of departure.
6. Change spreads as a result of people working through networks—not through the whole community, as if it operated as a single unit.
7. A small cadre of change agents can catalyze growing and expanding chains of events.
8. There is a profound realignment to “community” among organizations, groups, and individuals engaging in creating change.
9. Small changes that people, organizations, and groups produce lead to a major shift in the underlying conditions—the civic culture—of the community.
10. Time and relentless patience are essential factors for communities to move forward. There is no quick fix, no single program, no one initiative that creates a new trajectory for a community.

we can get things done together. They are central to making hope real for people.

I want to underscore that, while each of the characteristics has been isolated so that it is clear, understandable, and actionable, collectively, these characteristics operate as a system. They are interrelated. It is their interaction that gives them their juice and creates a dynamic within a community. What's more, there is nothing linear about them. They cannot be followed step by step like some paint-by-number exercise or cookbook recipe.

When these characteristics play out in a community, a community can further develop—even regenerate—itsself. People and groups can come together and marshal their shared resources. They can exercise greater control over their lives and tap into their personal and collective agency. The actions taken often happen in unexpected ways, in unimaginable combinations of people, groups, and organizations, and produce results that no one could really have foreseen.

MAKING INTENTIONAL CHOICES

There is another point worth making here. When working with people in communities, they often seem to be waiting for permission to take action.

“Can I do this?” they want to know. “Should I? What happens if no one supports me?” I wrote about this in one of my earlier books, *Stepping Forward*, in describing the difficulties that we often find ourselves in when working in communities. We all face knotty questions: whether to act, what to do, and with whom, when, and why? At the heart of our questions are the choices we must make. I often say to people, “In this work, I am asking you to make more choices, not fewer ones.” It is by making such choices that we gain a greater sense of control over our individual and shared lives, and exercise our personal and collective agency.

The people and groups that catalyzed the chain reactions in the nine communities continually made choices. They chose to engage community residents in what mattered to them. They made choices about what to focus their efforts on and how. They made decisions about whom to partner with in pursuing those efforts—or, as I might put it, “whom to run with.” There were choices they made about what innate capacities and other resources they could tap from within themselves and from within their communities. They made choices about learning from the community as they did their work: what was working and what



Change happens only when we make intentional choices.

wasn't, who was involved and who else needed to be, how they could further spread their efforts, and what issues and changing conditions in the community did they need to respond to. They engaged in shared learning so they could continually recalibrate their efforts to be most effective.

As human beings, we often fear making choices. There is ambiguity and uncertainty. There is concern about being blamed for something going wrong. We fear tackling a challenge because we will have to engage with people who are different from ourselves, with whom we may feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar. When we choose to listen to others, we may hear things that are hurtful or painful to us or that are filled with the sorrow or rage of others. But here's what I know for sure: change happens only when we make intentional choices. ■

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