Principles for Equitable Civic Engagement

Civic Environment & The Context for Understanding Racially Equitable Engagement

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Equitable Civic Engagement is Key

- **2009:** African-American/Immigrant Alliance Building Report
- **2010:**
  - ISAIAH-MN Movement Building Work
  - Engaging for Sustainable and Equitable Regional Growth Report
- **2011:**
  - African-American Leadership Forum National Agenda Report
  - HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative TA
- **2012:** Detroit Civic Engagement Fellows Civ. Eng. Plan
- **2013:** Merced Initiative and Civic Empowerment Strategy
- **2014-2015:** South Side Social Capital & Third Place Publications
- **2016:** Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement
- **2016-2018:** Trainings, Workshops, Strategic Partnerships
Equitable Civic Engagement is Key

Community Engagement

- Strong Community Institutions
- Safe Streets & Freedom from Crime
- Stable & Supportive Housing
- Access to Nutritious & Affordable Food
- Access to Health Care
- Freedom from Pollution & Toxins
- Strong Social Networks & Supportive Peers & Role models
- Access to Parks & Recreation
Civic Engagement is Everywhere!
Environment/Ecosystem Model

- Socioeconomic Conditions
- Practices
- Principles
- Settings
Challenges to Inclusive Engagement

3 Challenges To Equitable and Inclusive Engagement

Structures

Perceptions

Power
Principles For Equitable Civic Engagement

- **Embracing the Gifts of Diversity**
- **Realizing the Role of Race, Power, and Injustice**
- **Radical Hospitality: Invitation & Listening**
- **Trust-Building & Commitment**
- **Honoring Dissent and Embracing Protest**
- **Adaptability to Community Change**

*Principles act as general guidelines toward equitable engagement*
Principles in Brief

- **Embracing Gifts**
  - Encouraging the skills, knowledge and resources inherent in communities

- **Race & Power**
  - Validating experiences of systemic racism; Understanding Power Imbalances

- **Radical Hospitality**
  - Making space for difference; Making a relevant invitation to participate

- **Trust Through Commitment**
  - Making promises we can keep; Empowering marginalized communities

- **Honoring Protest**
  - Providing space to say ‘no’ in a powerful way

- **Adaptability**
  - Willingness to be uncomfortable for real change
Environment/Ecosystem Model: Interlocking Interactions

Civic Environment as Collection of Interactions

- Many different types of events
- Decision-Making at the heart of civic power
- Some events are connected while others are not
- Do these collection of events work to help put people ‘at the table’ in powerful ways?
Questions for Equity

- Do engagement events prepare POC to use their civic power at decision-making ‘tables’?
- Are decision-making events connected to relevant protest/dissent spaces?
- Is the engagement environment structured in a culturally relevant way?
Civic Engagement Environment As Conditions

- An attempt to understand interpersonal engagement experiences
- Psychosocial view of CE inequity
- Interdisciplinary focus
- Each element has a +/- effect
- Elements work in concert to compound counteract effects
- What conditions bring about equity and how can organizations develop strategies to create those conditions?
Conditions Model

Settings

Does the physical setting signal to people that they have power?

Cultural Frameworks

What is the official story about community challenges?

Social Networks

Are people able to access civic power and expertise through their social networks?

Practices

Do these practices aid in empowering participants to play a meaningful role in decision-making?

Socioeconomic Status

How does socioeconomic status relate to social networks and cultural frameworks?

Legal/Regulatory Framework

Do the laws governing public gatherings/meetings/engagement support or interrupt marginalization?

Public/Corporate Influence

Are people being engaged as citizens/consumers/neighbors?

Social Identities

How are people positioned in cultural frameworks/influence and does that empower or disempower them?
Environment/Ecosystem Model

Questions for Equity

- Are people connected to access to decision-makers and public engagement expertise?
- Are settings accessible to traditionally marginalized people?
- Do practices and legal framework empower or disempower?
- What role do identities play in the dominant understanding of community challenges and solutions?
- How does the presence of market-based stakeholders change the goals in the environment and how people obtain power?

What sort of motivations/assumptions are dominant based on influence/frameworks?

Embracing the Gifts of Diversity

Trust-building for Commitment

Honoring Dissent and Protest

Role of Race, Power, and Injustice

Adaptability to Change

Radical Hospitality
Applications

• What needs to change?
• How should we go about it?
• How do we know we were successful?
• A co-learning exercise with community members!
What’s Next?

- Refining Concepts
- Mapping Concepts to Principles and Applications
- Building Interdisciplinary Relationships
- Academic Publication
- Strategic Process
Thank You & Questions

http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/my-product/civic-engagement-a-transformative-guide/

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