

Harvest Themes/Feedback

Below is a list of comments and questions reported out from a convening hosted by IPCE: Building a Community of Practice for D&D for Civic Engagement in Chicago on December 5, 2012.

BUILD FOUNDATIONS FOR A COMMUNITY of PRACTICE (CoP)

1. Develop relationships and connections

- Make more face-to-face discussion time to get to know one another
- Create list-serve or other online space for peer-to-peer issue discussion and sharing
- Develop easy-to-use listing with contact information for groups/people involved in this work
- Devise methods to encourage sharing across "streams"

2. Identify shared purpose

- Talk at greater length and depth to surface the central issues (interests, goals, challenges) of our individual and collective work
- Develop a collective vision for how D&D can strengthen civic engagement in our area
- Define shared language to discuss this work

3. Identify who needs to be part of CoP

- Consider how to involve people who value this work, but are not practitioners

4. Identify resources for CoP support

- UIC/universities -- e.g., conceptual clarity and knowledge for capacity-building
- UIC/IPCE -- meeting space, research, list-serve, gathering in spring
- "Assets map" -- what already exists and how can we use it

ENVISION AND BUILD A CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Define geographic scope

- What is the best geographic level for cooperation? City of Chicago, Cook County, Metropolitan Area, Northeastern Illinois, State of Illinois?

2. Explore how to define and measure "success"

- What does "success" look like? Commonalities and differences across streams
- Metrics for evaluating success. What do we measure and how?

3. Develop a research-supported "case" for D&D for Civic Engagement

- Create convincing and succinct materials to share with prospective supporters
- Develop rationale for why this work is important, what it can achieve, etc
- Establish value of D&D for funders
- Tap into university resources -- how to connect researchers with practitioners and activists
- Find research confirming the relationship between participating in one method and impact on another (e.g., how exploratory dialogue can lead to collaborative action)

4. Support skills sharing and development for designing & facilitating D&D

- Expand awareness of the diversity of methods. For example, via a "methods showcase" where people can share the methods they use, explain strengths/weaknesses, etc.
- Identify skill sets among local people and organizations. Who does what and where?
- Skills training. For example, Great Cities Institute could develop an online 6 week class + discussion forum using their online adult learning pedagogy or other kinds of facilitation training and mentoring.
- Explore and develop use of online space for D&D.
- Think more broadly about how to develop trained, coordinated human capital for this work.

5. Strengthen civic skills for D&D among residents

- Restore civic education mission of public schools and ensure that state standards provide adequate skills training and practice in D&D
- Design civic education to bridge "civic achievement" gap based on race/ethnicity/income
- Develop responsible citizenship -- e.g., teach ethics in schools, about corruption
- Create physical spaces for civic skills development open to adults

6. Identify and create public spaces for D&D in the area

- Compile list of safe, free, or inexpensive locations throughout the area that could be used for community D&D
- Create spaces where community dialogue happens on a regular basis (face-to-face and online)

7. Publicize existing and create additional opportunities for public dialogue

- Identify and publicize D&D activities so more people may participate -- e.g., press + online to general public, via schools (so teachers/students can participate), etc
- Create regular opportunities for residents and politicians to connect on specific issues

8. Develop structures for connecting conversations across separate communities

- How to connect conversations that are already taking place in individual communities and organizations with others across the city/county/region/state.

9. Explore power issues that impact D&D in our region

- Roles of politicians and residents -- who leads, who follows, how can they work together
- How might citizens be more empowered?
- How might we build on example of Participatory Budgeting?
- What can we learn from community organizing about power?

10. Explore how to better integrate issues of race-ethnicity-income inequality

- How to productively acknowledge the "elephants in the room" in D&D
- How to bridge the "civic achievement gap" between white/affluent and minority/less affluent residents

11. Develop technology tools

- University support for data visualization software

12. Connect with good government efforts

- How could D&D help shift region away from culture of corruption

13. Identify and/or develop processes communities can run themselves

- Clear, easy conflict resolution and management model

14. How to identify and manage risk and opportunity