Bringing Collective Impact Home to the People
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Out Purpose: Engage more community members in CI work

- Introduce “CI” to people not yet adequately included
- Facilitate conversations about their views on community goals and aspirations
- Identify & address systemic barriers to engagement
- Help people empower themselves to work across sector, race, class, etc.
- Make progress toward aspiration of 50% involvement and “ownership” by those most impacted
Our Focus: Including those most directly impacted (“context experts”)

- Using an educational & organizing process (not “outreach” or “input”)
- Using informal, community-based structures -- on the street, in kitchens, at free meal sites, etc. (not meetings)
- Translating “CI” into everyday language (not jargon)
- Ongoing, repeated conversations (not one-time)
- Listening and learning as we go
What We Did: Jan - Sept. 2016

- Starting up; planning & strategizing (Jan-Feb)
- Being out in the community; conversations with >200 people on street, in gathering places, etc.
- Introducing ideas in 2 mini-workshops
- Going repeatedly to where people already are to build engagement over time
- Supporting other CI grantees to think about inclusion
- Initial organizing for Tompkins Co. Speakers Bureau
- Encouraging agency staff to communicate about CI with their members/clients.
What We Have Learned: Successes

- Trying different ways to reach out to people. Learning what will and won’t work.
- Starting to generate familiarity, understanding, interest & connection to “CI.”
- Returning to the same places repeatedly over time builds trust, ongoing relationships, and helps people see the value of their life experiences & stories.
What We Have Learned: Barriers

- Lack of child care, transportation and meeting times are not the real barriers to "showing up."

- Real barriers: History of systemic exclusion & life-long conditioning. Being told what one needs, being excluded from decisions, & having ideas and experiences discounted → the belief that one’s contributions have no value or that nothing will change.

- People already have many ideas conversations about what’s wrong & what needs to change. We need to help overcome conditioning and help people move private conversations into more public spaces.
What We Have Learned: Challenges

- Initially, we were idealistic: thought “educating” people about CI → engagement.
- But finding many systemic barriers related to life-long exclusion & conditioning.
- This kind of transformation is slow, long-term process, not a 30-min. conversation. It is an accumulation of little conversations, education, relationship-building, trust-building & healing over time.
- Can’t be just 2 (or even 10) people trying to do it. It has to be everyone.
- We all need to learn a lot more about how to address this kind of transformation at the individual & community levels.
Relationships with Collaborators

- Natural Leaders Initiative (NLI) providing administrative and project support “in kind.”
- CCE-Tompkins providing more than half of the program support costs “in-kind” because of their belief in grassroots-led initiatives.
- We’re working with other Building Bridges Steering Committee & CI grantees to share ideas about how to successfully include “context experts.”
We hope all CI projects are working towards greater inclusion, and every CI gathering includes opportunities to share what is being learned about this.

Our original goal: In 2 years, 25% of those engaged in CI initiatives & related community efforts will be “context experts” who feel a sense of “ownership.”

Questions still to answer: How to measure “ownership”? Is this goal & measure shared by other CI projects?
Communication with Stakeholders & the Community

- We are focused on community members who haven’t yet been engaged.
- Our communication with them is thru ongoing conversations - being out in community where they are, talking about the issues that affect them the most & their ideas.
- Our communication with other CI stakeholders is thru our participation in Building Bridges Steering Committee & other CI initiatives (e.g., URO, GSCP, etc.)
Plans for Next 15 Months

- Experiment more with ongoing, repeated contact.
- Launch a grassroots “Speakers Bureau.”
- Work with high school-age youth – help overcome conditioning early on.
- Lead 2-3 workshops for other CI grantees to help develop their ideas, skills & commitment for inclusion.
- Keep learning about how to organize, educate & motivate entire communities.