Community Organizing with People Who Don’t Attend Meetings

Building on What People Already Do

March 4, 2023 - I.D.E.A. Conference, Ball State University

Presented by Dr. Ramo Lordeni, Dr. Michelle Glowacki-Dudka
Agenda for the 50 Minutes Together

• Introductions of Presenters
  • Dr Michelle Glowacki-Dudka
  • Dr Ramo Lordeni

• Introductions of Participant
  • Please introduce yourself with your name and neighborhood.

• An Overview of Key Ideas

• Circle of Voices Activity

• Ways to Identify and Grow Community Members

• Discussion and Conclusion
What is a Community?

• Some definitions:
  • A group of people with something in common.
  • A familiar thread used to bring people together to advocate and support each other.
  • It conveys a sense of togetherness and positivity.
• Communities are made up of learners. Communities themselves can learn and change as the culture and people change.
  • Can both transmit and preserves culture and/or a transforms and creates culture?
• More than developing programs, focus on developing ways that people can be recognized, interact, and collaborate.
• What is hidden in plain sight?
From the Individual to the Community

- Shape individual needs to form working relationships based on shared values and roles.
- **Forging common ground** through dialogue that leads to action.
- **Recognize complexity** in peoples’ lives—providing the collaborative environment for building community engagement and capacity.
Circle of Voices

Centering
Activity
TASK - Take three minutes silent time to organize/write your thoughts to one or more statements. We’ll share out our ideas.

1. All citizens should have the opportunity to learn to become their best self – including having the education the need for life (literacy for life)

2. Community members can be trusted and respected to actively participate in public life.

3. Our community has spaces for learning and meeting. Yes/No.
   - Where are these spaces and what are their role in community building?
   - What spaces exist in your community?

4. Each citizen (all ages) in the community bring gifts and assets to the community. (How can we find them?)
Debriefing the Circle of Voices Activity

Please share out some of your thoughts with the other people at your table.

Now tell us

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?
What was something you know now more about? What did you already know?
How might you find ways to connect with those around you more?
What do you see as your strengths and skills to mobilize and engage community members?
Identifying Community Members Talents: 
*Focusing on Strengths (Heart, Hands, Head)*

(Reference from Having Nothing, Possessing Everything, Michael Mather, 2018)
Focus on Community Strengths - Initially

• Who are the community members?
  • What do they do in their free time and in their work role?
  • Consider talents, skills, knowledge, hobbies

• Think about community spaces?
  • Parks, playgrounds, Culture centers, Schools, Churches

• Do we know the community history? How is it shared?

People can be CONNECTORS

• Community Listener (self-confident introvert)
• Role of the community center/neighborhood council
• Need a central point to be able to act and make the connections
  • Coaches, pastors, service people, community councils, school staff, etc.
Large Group Discussion / Action

• Identify Three Actionable Steps
  1. Tomorrow
  2. Next week
  3. Next month

• And, three people with whom you will walk the journey.