"How to" Organizing Toolbox

Grow your community organizing skills and add best practices to your toolbox.

KEY STEPS & QUESTIONS

1. **VISION: What are you organizing people around?**
   a. Issue (i.e. community safety)
   b. Place (i.e. block club)
   c. Interest (i.e. baking)
   What is something you care enough about that you would take action on it?

2. **PEOPLE: Who is your target audience?**
   a. Demographic (i.e. high school graduates)
   b. Geography (i.e. your neighborhood)
   c. Interest (i.e. basketball players)
   Who is most proximate to the issue / committed to the place / interested in the topic?

3. **GOALS: What are you trying to achieve?**
   a. Short-term (i.e. hosting a meeting next week)
   b. Intermediate (i.e. growing connections between neighbors)
   c. Long-term (i.e. building a new community center)
   What are things that can be done by you, with others, and by others?

4. **COMMS: What communication methods should you use?**
   a. Word of Mouth
   b. Flyers
   c. Email List
   d. Phone Calls
   e. SMS / group text
   f. Social Media / Ads
   g. Nextdoor
   h. Connectors ("people with an eye for the gifts, interests, capacities, of others")
   i. Useful Outsiders ("relationships of mutual intent" beyond your place / interest)
   How can you best connect and communicate with the people you are organizing?

5. **ACTIONS: What actions are you calling people to take?**
   a. Meetings (Agendas, Minutes)
   b. Direct Actions
   c. Events
   d. Celebration
   e. Story Telling
   What are the specific action items and next steps from each meeting or event?

6. **SUSTAINABILITY: At what frequency and rhythm can the action continue?**
   a. Rhythms (i.e. monthly meeting; weekly call; quarterly event)
   b. Frequency (you must find a sustainable pace and allow for others who have similar or different capacities to contribute)
   How can you move forward together without burnout or leaving people behind?

7. **RESULTS: What has changed and how do you measure it?**
   a. Metrics (i.e. how many people involved; how many people served)
   b. Perceptions (i.e. how do people feel about the work)
   c. Stories (i.e. what do people say about that work)
   What would you consider a success and how will you track your progress?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

LINKS
- Building Blocks of Peace, Resources page: buildingblocksofpeace.com/resources
- Great Lakes Urban, Good Neighbor Resources: greatlakesurban.org/good-neighbor-resources
- The Art of Neighboring: artofneighboring.com
- Community Tool Box, University of Kansas: ctb.ku.edu
- Abundant Community: abundantcommunity.com
- ABCD Institute, DePaul University: resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Pages/tool-kit.aspx

BOOKS
- The Connected Community, by John McKnight and Cormac Russell
- The Abundant Community, by John McKnight and Peter Block
- The Art of Neighboring, by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon
- Neighborhood Mapping by Dr. John Fuder

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

NEXT STEPS
What tools / skills do you want to develop?
What initiatives do you want to organize?

NEXT SESSION (APRIL)
Put these tools into practice! Return for part 2 in April, and we will brainstorm and strategize together for organizing initiatives that you are a part of.

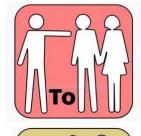# FOUR MODES OF CHANGE

How is change done?

TO
When change is done to us, without us.
This is a controlling form of top-down change, where change is imposed by leaders who perceive a need.

FOR
When change is done for us, without us.
This is a benevolent form of top-down change, where change is still imposed, but is thought to serve a genuine need.

WITH
When change is done for us, with us.
This is a participative form of change, where change is done collaboratively, and is generally recognised as serving a genuine need.

BY
When change is done by us, for us.
This is a power-building form of change, where change is done by those who do the work, without requiring permission, and serves a genuine need.

Source: Cormac Russell *Four modes of change: to, for, with, by*

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"Asset-based community development is a way of helping a neighborhood or a community grow stronger and better. It's like planting a garden - you find the good things that are already there, like the sunlight, soil, and water, and you use them to grow more beautiful things.

So instead of just focusing on what the community needs or lacks, we look at all the great things that are already in the community. We find the strengths and good qualities, like the people who live there, the local businesses, and community centers. Then, we work together to make those strengths even stronger and better. It's a way of helping a community grow and become more amazing, by using what's already there and building on it."

ABCD Values, from DePaul Asset-Based Community Development Institute:

Start with Gifts
Assets and strengths, not deficits and needs, are the true building blocks of healthy communities. Every individual, association and institution has assets that can contribute to community well-being and justice.

Build Relationships for Mutual Support
ABCD believes that relationships are the core of flourishing communities. Relationships create trust and activate gifts and power.

Value Small
ABCD values small, grassroots, resident - driven approaches that use stories as the basis for learning, sharing and acting for change.

Nurture Community-Led Action
When people in a community act together, they demonstrate their own power and leadership and can bring about positive change. ABCD values everyone's voice and contributions and prioritizes those who live within a community.

Work for Equity and Justice
ABCD fosters a world where all people thrive. ABCD helps people use their gifts to work in their communities to disrupt systemic oppression and regenerate power in new, creative and equitable ways.

Believe in Possibility
ABCD is rooted in hope. People in communities, even in extreme situations, can use their gifts to imagine ways to create change.

Lead by Stepping Back
ABCD shines a light on residents' power to contribute to and make decisions in their communities.   The work of institutions is to lead by stepping back to support residents' efforts to create and implement the changes they seek for their community.

Include Everyone
ABCD does not just invite people to the table but builds a new table where everyone has a true place. ABCD celebrates and values diversity. We are better when more diverse voices are present in shaping who we are and how we practice ABCD.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT PLANNER

Go to www.greatlakesurban.org/good-neighbor-resources, scroll to bottom of page, click on "PLAN" button under "Tools"

DISCUSSION

What initiatives are you organizing / do you want to organize?
What are your "pain points" in your organizing?
Share advice or encouragement to each other

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

NEXT STEPS

Fill out your own "Neighborhood Project Planner" for an idea you have, upcoming event or project, or for an action over Hands Across Chicago weekend (May 26-28)

NEXT SESSION (MAY)

Put these ideas and tools into practice! Return for part 3 in May, and we will discuss organizing initiatives that you are a part of.