Session Two Notes

Dispute Resolution Institute

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SESSION TWO – COMPILATION OF SMALL GROUP NOTES

1. Identify public engagement process techniques which you have found to be productive

- Small facilitated groups
- Cross-cultural
- Art of hosting
- Design teams
- Saul Alinsky – Building power/direct action/create tension/engage lay members
- Manage expectations and then exceed them
- Clarity of scope
- Match process with purpose
- Mandate community voice/participation
- Direct Action Organizing
- Organizing Apprenticeship
- Find community partners and champions
- Find trusted/skilled facilitator
- Prepare people for conversation
- Procedural fairness
- Identify/map stakeholders
- Make room for introverts
- Allow for flexible agenda
- Adapt message – grassroots guidance
- Begin with shared values
- Model humility – "I made a mistake."

Culture

- "with" not to or for
- Human to human interaction on the deepest level
- "Allophilia" love of group other than your own – beyond tolerance
- Food = Community
- Adapt communication and invitation
- Regular, open, accessible meeting time
- Use of time piece
- Honor disruptive actions

2. Identify skills needed to effectively manage public engagement processes

- Communication
  - o Brevity
  - o Listening
  - o Ask clarifying questions
  - o Open body language
  - o Ability to translate for diverse audiences
  - o Identify essence of what is being said
  - o Command audience

- Awareness
  - o Self
  - o Cultural
  - o Ability to "code switch"
  - o Biases

- Qualities
  - o Empathy
  - o Flexibility
  - o Curiosity
  - o Authenticity
  - o Resourceful
  - o Imagination
  - o Humility
  - o Patience
  - o Critical thinker
  - o Respect of others and the process
  - o Hopefulness in human condition
  - o Trust in good intentions of others
  - o Not take things personally/self-control

- Technical/Process
  - o Good handwriting
  - o Time management
  - o Command audience
  - o Stamina
  - o Preparation and organization
  - o Coach presenters
  - o Understand role

3. Identify constraints which impede the ability to run effective public engagement processes

- o Conflict avoidance
- o Money – both when not enough and when there is too much
- o Cost to run for office (greed, power)
- o Lack of transparency – practice and process don't match
- o Disincentive for changing
- o Inability to evolve
- o Assumptions – coming in with preconceived notion of solution, process, etc. Assuming more agreement that there is
- o Safety – safe space both physically and psychologically
- o False empowerment
- o Power/agency
- o Is there a truly inclusive public engagement process?
- o Failure to understand and appreciate cultural and historical aspects
- o Logistics – time, transportation, day care
- o Lack of time – both time as a privilege and deadline pressure
- o Cynicism – "with all due respect" too much process
- o Lack of trust
- o Attribution of motive by facilitator, participants   people not process
- o Speech and use of language – concern about using wring words, etc.
- o Poor outreach – stake holders not at the table
- o Misuse of culture – use as a crutch and over generalize
- o False polarities – issues as either/or eg. Pipeline – build or not
- o Legal constraints – laws, rules, statutes – too much/not enough structure
- o People who come with intent to disrupt/dominate/sabotage
- o Not keeping order
- o Unskilled facilitator
- o Unprepared staff
- o Concern they will be seen as a traitor/aligned with the "other"/legitimize the "other"
- o Bad habits and templates following process without creativity and flexibility
- o Election day is not a national holiday
- o Unrelated concerns being brought to the process because there is no other outlet

Question 4: What would public engagement look like if there were no constraints?

- o   Role for everyone in public decision-making
- o   Celebrate the smallest step
- o   Success is not necessarily outcome but rather improved relationships
- o   Real emotion would be embraced
- o   Media would not be enamored with reactions
- o   Public problem-solving more complicated, take longer ... and we would be fine with that
- o   A way of being – no need to talk about as a thing
- o   Every stakeholder notified of what they want to be aware of
- o   No public engagement would be needed
- o   Move toward unity rather than uniformity
- o   Shared decision making power
- o   Space for holding differences of opinion and periodic conduct [passion and respect for conflict]
- o   Allow for failure and growth
- o   Dialogue shifts relationships
- o   Diverse participation on multiple levels
- o   Trust in process and each other
- o   Participation barriers eliminated
- o   People could use the language they are most comfortable with using
- o   We know it when we see it AND measured outside ourselves as good