LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

PUBLIC INNOVATORS COHORT

LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES
ALA American Library Association
HARWOOD The Institute for Public Innovation

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LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

Public Innovators Cohort

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

NOTES

LETTER FROM
Barbara Stripling

Dear LTC Public Innovators Cohort members,

On behalf of the American Library Association, I am excited to welcome you to the Libraries Transforming Communities Public Innovators Lab — the first step in what we hope will be an exciting, informative, even groundbreaking process.

ALA started the Libraries Transforming Communities initiative because we believe that librarians' roles as core community leaders and change agents is vital to the success of libraries and the communities that support them. When we examine library-led community engagement and innovation, we see a domino effect of positive results: When librarians successfully engage their communities, libraries become more reflective of and connected to their constituents. They build stronger relationships with local civic agencies, non-profits, funders, and corporations — relationships that, in turn, yield greater community investment in civility, collaboration, education, health, and well-being.

Your 10 libraries come from big cities and small towns. You represent communities that are diverse and homogenous, affluent and low-income, connected and disconnected. But as we reviewed your cohort applications, we noticed that many of the challenges you face are similar. You are eager to strengthen the fabric of your communities, whether your "community" is your neighborhood, city, or the library itself.

The next three days — and the next 18 months — are designed to provide you with a new way to engage your communities. In this Public Innovation Lab you will learn how to listen, how to foster community conversations, and how to strengthen your role as a leader and facilitator of change. We look forward to seeing how you — our Libraries Transforming Communities "ambassadors" — will apply this knowledge at home.

Thank you for your participation in this exciting initiative.

Sincerely,

Barbara Stripling
ALA President

LETTER FROM
Richard C. Harwood

Welcome LTC Public Innovators Cohort members,

The Harwood Public Innovators Lab is about people creating new pathways for change and authentic hope in our communities.

You see, I believe we can accelerate progress in public life; we can overcome the fragmentation, division, and negativity that too often beset our communities and our nation. The Lab can help us do that. Public libraries can help facilitate this shift.

In the Lab we'll actively explore and apply a set of proven ideas, frameworks, and tools The Harwood Institute has developed over the past 25 years. You'll also connect with other public innovators who share your passion and desire for change.

Of course, change doesn't come easy. During the Lab you will be asked to examine your own personal assumptions and practices about how public life works and how it can work. And we'll challenge you to consider what it means to be "ruthlessly strategic" as you seek to generate progress.

But the challenge is worth it. There is much unfinished work to do in our society. Our task is to find ways to tap people's potential to make a difference and forge a common future.

Toward that end, we're dedicated to building a nationwide network of public innovators who are committed to helping people imagine and act for the public good. We have set a bold goal to develop 5,000 public innovators by 2016. By participating in this initiative, you are part of helping us reach this target and shaping a fundamentally different course for public life.

Thanks for joining us at the Lab. We look forward to working with you to be a force for lasting change in America.

All the best,

Richard C. Harwood
President
The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

About Libraries Transforming Communities

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) is an ALA initiative that seeks to strengthen librarians' roles as core community leaders and change-agents. LTC addresses a critical need within the library field by developing and distributing new tools, resources, and support for librarians to engage with their communities in new ways. As a result, we believe libraries will become more reflective of and connected to their communities and build stronger partnerships with local civic agencies, nonprofits, funders, and corporations. The initiative is made possible through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

About the American Library Association

The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with approximately 58,000 members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

About the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a national nonprofit organization based in Bethesda, Md., that teaches and coaches people and organizations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. The institute is guided by Richard C. Harwood, whose transformational work during the past 25 years has spread to thousands of communities nationally and worldwide, from small towns to large cities.

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WELCOME

WELCOME

Learning Objectives

The Harwood Public Innovators Lab provides both the foundation of the Harwood approach coupled with a strong focus on concrete application. After the three-day training you will be able to:

- Surface people's shared aspirations for the community. [Shared Aspirations Exercise]
- Know and be able to describe the benefits of turning outward toward your community. [Turn Quiz]
- Know the importance of and be able to gather "public knowledge"—information directly from and about the lived experience of members/residents of the community. [Community Conversations Workbook; Ask Exercise; Shared Aspirations Exercise]
- Be able to identify the stages of community change and strategically choose actions to meet the community where it is. [Community Rhythms; Sweet Spot; Public Capital Factors]
- Recognize how deeply you understand, are authentic with, and are accountable to your community. Identify how to become more effective in these three qualities. [The 3A's of Public Life]
- Create ongoing spaces for innovation and learning that use the community as a reference point. [Innovation Spaces]
- Tap librarianship's underlying natural values to contribute to the greater good and bring communities together. Make a personal commitment to using new tools and knowledge to enact those values. [Personal Covenant]

WELCOME

How to Be in the Lab

Assume a posture of ownership to:

- Open yourself up to discovery
- Calibrate risk
- Allow for ambiguity
- Listen deeply
- Exercise affection for public life and others
- Be honest with yourself

NOTES

OUR TEAM PLAN

1. Sketch out key elements of and preliminary ideas for the community engagement work you want to do.

   - For example, impact you aspire to achieve with your community, practices you plan to put in place, tools you want to apply, etc.

2. Looking at the Cycle of Public Innovation graphic as a team, what are the top two or three things do you want to pay attention to as you return to your community? (This may be a concept you want to think about further or a specific action you want to take.)

- For example, we need to reflect on what accountability means to us in light of how we currently measure success.
- For example, engage the board and staff in an exercise as a way of sharing what we learned at the Lab.

Concept or action to attend to	Person or people who will lead	Timeframe

3. What additional actions will your team focus on in the next two months?

- For example, use the Aspirations Exercise with the board of trustees at their next meeting; library director leads; June meeting.
- For example, identify who we want to know more about from their perspective. (i.e. potential target populations or neighborhoods for community conversations)

Action	Person or people who will lead	Timeframe

4. Where will you try to have your first three Community Conversations? Who will lead the conversations? Take notes?

Location and Participants Desired	Leader	Note-taker	Timeframe

HARWOOD PRACTICE SUMMARY

Add ideas after each learning block. What are the implications for:

Me personally

My organization

Our community

I want to be sure to remember:

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THE CYCLE OF PUBLIC INNOVATION

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ASPIRATIONS

ASPIRATIONS

Purpose/Overview

To examine the importance of focusing on people's aspirations when turning outward and creating change.

NOTES

ASPIRATIONS

Talk about aspirations and find common ground for working with others:

Take a moment to focus on your community aspirations and to identify next steps you want in creating change. Add your aspirations, challenges, and the new conditions to create in the spaces provided below. Use this on your own and then try it in a group setting—check out the Aspirations Facilitator's Guide to help in leading an aspirations conversation: ala.org/LTC.

ASPIRATIONS

My aspirations for my community are:

CHALLENGES

The challenges we face in reaching these aspirations are:

NEW CONDITIONS

The changes needed in my community to reach our aspirations are:

ASPIRATIONS

Common Starting Points

Starting point	What we get	What it creates
Identifying "the problems"	• Rooted in complaints • Private demands on public resources • Finger pointing, blaming • Solution wars	• Long list of problems • A sense that the community is full of problems, deficits, and people to blame • No shared sense of where the community wants to go
Visioning exercises	• "Wish lists" • Conversations disconnected from present reality	• False hope • A document or set of ideas that people will not fight for—because it's not rooted in their reality • "Vision" documents relegated to desk drawers and collecting dust
Aspirations	• A conversation based on reality and a sense of possibility • Shifts conversation from the individual or organization to the community • Conversation about what people value, where they wish to go, and why	• A sense of shared aspirations that roots our work in something uniquely public • The possibility for building public will • A set of ideas that people will go to bat for

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TURN OUTWARD

TURN OUTWARD

Purpose/Overview

To look at what it means to turn outward toward the community and to develop a practice that supports change that is relevant to people and sustainable.

All of this work is based on a simple value proposition:

- If you turn outward and make more intentional judgements and choices in creating change, you will produce greater impact and relevance in your community.

NOTES

TURN OUTWARD

Are you mostly turned inward or outward?

Look at the two columns below. For each row choose the word that best describes the focus of your work or efforts in the community.

INWARD I am generally focused on:		OUTWARD I am generally focused on:	
☐	Activity	Action	☐
☐	Programs	People	☐
☐	My Organization	My Community	☐
☐	People as Consumers	People as Citizens	☐
☐	Process	Progress	☐
☐	Outreach	Engagement	☐
☐	Public Relations	People's Reality	☐
☐	Inputs	Impact	☐
☐	Claiming Turf	Coming Together	☐
☐	Charity	Change	☐
☐	Feeling Good	Doing Good	☐

Count the checkmarks in the right column to find your Turn Score ☐

TURN OUTWARD

Making Sense of your Results

What do you make of your results?

What would it take for us to be more fully turned outward?

Did everyone score things the same? Where were there differences?

What Turn Score would people in the community give us? What are the implications for our work?

What partners and groups could use this quiz for their own work?

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TURN OUTWARD

turn outward {verb}:

1. The act of seeing and hearing those in the community and acting with intentionality to create change;
2. A reorientation toward the public; a posture;
3. A framework for making choices about public life.

Turning outward calls us to action. As with all turns in life, there is something basic and fundamental and hopeful about making a turn outward. Only then can we truly see and hear one another; only then can we have a shot at understanding reality for what it is and deal with its implications and ramifications; only then can we discover our shared aspirations and have a real chance to make progress together. Each of us makes a choice about the direction we face when we seek to make a difference. We may not always think about this choice, but it is there.

Each of us has clear reasons to turn outward because that is where the challenges and aspirations you wish to affect live. Without turning outward we will never have a true shot at having our work be relevant or significant. Only when you gain a deep and authentic understanding of the nature of a community and people's lives can you understand the conditions you must create for change to come about. It is only then that we can forge the relationships and trust we need to have a fighting chance to make a lasting difference. The choice you make about the direction you face is fundamentally about your very posture, your stance, your orientation toward the community; it will determine if your actions can make a difference and if you can fulfill your own aspirations for the life you seek.

Conventional wisdom urges you to look inward, to narrow your sights, to take on an array of activities, and look busy. But current conditions in public life beg us to face in a new direction. They summon us to put our community and nation on a new trajectory. Step forward and choose to turn outward.

TURN OUTWARD

Key Behaviors

- Use the community as our first frame of reference
- Embrace notion that having to make judgments and choices is part of turning outward and innovating
- Approach work as unfolding over time
- Constantly seek to recalibrate efforts
- Talk about work as being connected to something larger than themselves

How does being turned outward affect the following functions?	Turned-Outward Examples
Engaging the community (e.g., inward: talk only to people we know)	
Managing relationships and selecting partners (e.g., inward: keep partners that won't use community as first frame of reference)	
Communication (e.g., inward: only talk about our organization and good work we do)	
Raising resources (e.g., inward: all the money and volunteers should come to us)	
Strategy (e.g., inward: focus on our programs)	

What are the implications of being turned outward for decision-making?

How would your community score your organization on the Turn Quiz? What are the implications?

What is one behavior that you can change to further incorporate a turned-outward mindset in your work?

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Purpose/Overview

To make your engagement efforts vibrant and robust—and meaningful to people.

NOTES

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PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

The Value of Public Knowledge

Public Knowledge:

- Roots your work and decisions in what matters to people.
- Identifies key issues and their connections in language that people use.
- Uncovers a sense of common purpose.
- Enables you to set realistic goals.
- Informs your choices so your work is more relevant and has greater impact.
- In most communities, few leaders or organizations HAVE Public Knowledge.
- Too often we substitute expert knowledge for Public Knowledge.

Public Knowledge	Expert Knowledge
Comes from engaging with people around their aspirations, their concerns, how they see their community.	Comes from professional analysis and reporting of statistics, trend data, poll data, and market and audience studies.
In plain language that everyone can understand.	Often in language that only professionals understand.

NOTES

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

What is Public Knowledge?

Public Knowledge is deep knowledge about the community formed from conversations with community members.

1. **Aspirations:** What aspirations do people hold for their community/topic, their futures, and those of others?

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2. **Main Concerns and Specific Issues:** What are the concerns, challenges, and issues people talk about? How do they define those concerns? What webs emerge? What tensions are people struggling with and why?

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3. **Sense Of Place:** What is the history of the people, places, and issues of concern? What is the evolution and development of these things over time? What is the look and feel of the community/topic?

---

4. **Sources:** Who are the people in the community/topic that people consider to be authentic, credible, and trusted? Make sure to go beyond "officials" and consider a wide range of sources.

---

5. **People:** What are the things people hold valuable (heritage, sports, stories)? What language do people use as they talk? What norms shape people's interactions? Who else do you need to talk with?

---

6. **Civic Places:** Where do people get together (offline and online)? In what kinds of places can people be engaged?

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7. **Stereotypes to Watch:** What preconceived notions (and/or professional biases) do you and/or others have about the community/topic you are exploring?

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PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Small Group Discussion

1. To what extent is your organization gathering and using Public Knowledge now?

2. Where could you use Public Knowledge in your work? What value would this bring?

Select two ideas to share with your learning group.

NOTES

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Community Narrative Template

One of the best ways to make sense of what you're learning and stay focused on the essence of your Community Conversations is to try to tell a story about what you're hearing in language that people use every day. A clear story combined with personal examples from Community Conversations is a powerful combination of Public Knowledge you'll use regularly.

Community Narrative Template

People want _(aspirations)_, but they're concerned that _(main concerns)_. As people talk more about those concerns they talk specifically about _(specific issue(s))_. They believe we need to focus on _(actions)_ and if _(groups)_ played a part in those actions that folks would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Ask Exercise

We want to get a sense of people's aspirations for their community and learn about the kind of community they want to create. Introduce yourself by saying, "Hi, I'm in a training session at the Harwood Public Innovators Lab. We're trying to learn more about people's aspirations for their community. Would you be willing to answer four quick questions?"

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?

2. Why is that important to you?

3. How is that different from how you see things now?

4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

NOTES FROM CONVERSATION 1

Who did you talk with?

Key ideas you want to remember:

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Ask Exercise

We want to get a sense of people's aspirations for their community and learn about the kind of community they want to create. Introduce yourself by saying, "Hi, I'm in a training session at the Harwood Public Innovators Lab. We're trying to learn more about people's aspirations for their community. Would you be willing to answer four quick questions?"

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?

2. Why is that important to you?

3. How is that different from how you see things now?

4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

NOTES FROM CONVERSATION 2

Who did you talk with?

Key ideas you want to remember:

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Ask Exercise Observations

1. Who did you talk with?

2. What stood out for you?

3. What was similar across those you spoke with? Different?

4. How did you feel doing this exercise?

5. How is this way of engaging people different from focus groups, surveys, or town halls?

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Community Conversations

Community Conversations serve two important purposes:

- They are a turned-outward way to authentically engage members of the community.
- They generate Public Knowledge that can then be used to inform decision-making of all kinds.

Additional Harwood Community Conversation Resources

- The first Learn & Apply Webinar will cover Community Conversations in depth. This includes a how-to workbook on hosting, leading, and note-taking.

NOTES

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Community Conversations Questions

What kind of community do you want?

Given what we just said, what are the two or three most important issues or concerns when it comes to the community?

What concerns do you have about this issue? Why?

How do the issues we're talking about affect you personally?

When you think about these things, how do you feel about what's going on?

What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want?

When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?

Thinking back over the conversation, what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?

If we came back together in six months or a year, what might you see that would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?

Now that we've talked about this issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?

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COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

Purpose/Overview

To understand the stages of community life and the strategic implications for moving communities forward.

NOTES

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS TOOL

Answer each question by checking the box beside the answer you believe best represents how you feel about the community.

1. How broad and deep is the leadership at all levels of the community (including official leaders, quasi-official, people on neighborhood blocks, connectors between organizations)—that is, leaders who understand the true concerns of the community as a whole and who hold strong credibility and trust?

   - ❍ A. Not much depth beyond some official leaders and civic leaders (if they even meet the definition above).
   - ❍ B. A core group of such leaders starting to emerge.
   - ❍ C. Core group expanding; depth within the community starting to form.
   - ❍ D. Rich supply of leaders at all levels of and throughout the community.

2. How strong and constructive are the community norms for public life that help guide how people and organizations act individually, interact, and work together?

   - ❍ A. Stuck in old patterns such as finger-pointing; looking for ways to place blame; turf battles; mistrust; divisive, frustrated, or non-existent community conversations.
   - ❍ B. While old patterns still exist, can see new ones starting to develop. People starting to work more toward solutions, hold more constructive conversations, take greater personal responsibility. Seeds of trust appearing.
   - ❍ C. A common sense of direction and purpose flourishes throughout community; people in the community work well together; things get done; constructive community–wide discussions are the expectation. Trust exists.

3. How broad and deep are the "informal networks and links" that connect various individual, groups, organizations, and institutions together to create a cross-fertilization effect of experiences, knowledge, and resources in the community—the networks through which people carry and spread ideas, messages, and community norms from place to place?

   - ❍ A. Tattered.
   - ❍ B. Forming, but not yet strong, broad, and deep.
   - ❍ C. Strong, growing, widespread, functioning really well.

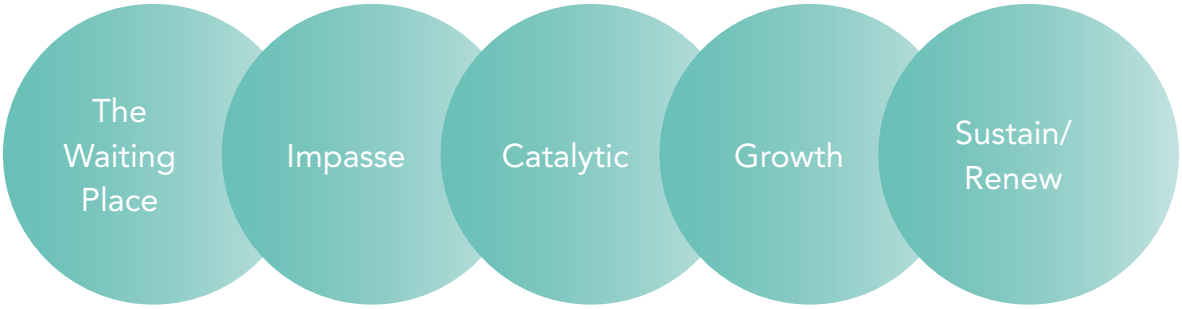
4. How strong is the collection of catalytic organizations—those that help engage people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges, and marshal a community's resources to move ahead? These organizations help lay the foundation for community action, often convening different groups and resources, but once an initiative is up and running, they move on to the next challenge.

   - ❍ A. We've got lots of organizations, but can't really see more than one or two catalytic organizations—and I am not sure if they're even the real thing.
   - ❍ B. We've got one or two true catalytic organizations but they're often overworked and/or overwhelmed; they often tend to have a hard time keeping their focus.
   - ❍ C. We've got a real handful of true catalytic organizations; you can feel their presence and good work. They enjoy strong credibility and trust across the community.

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

THE HARWOOD INDEX

5 Stages of Community Life



On the index, what stage do you believe your community is in?

THE STAGES OF COMMUNITY LIFE

THE WAITING PLACE

- In the Waiting Place, people sense that things are not working right in their community, but they are unable to clearly define the problem; the feeling could be described as a "felt unknown."
- People feel disconnected from leaders and from different processes within the community for making decisions; the community itself is fragmented; discussion about common challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive.
- Community discussion about challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive. People want to create change, but negative norms for public life keep them locked into old patterns.
- People often are waiting—for issues to become clearer, for someone else to "solve" their problems. People in this stage often say, "Everything will be better when we get the right mayor to save the community!" So people just wait.

IMPASSE

- At Impasse, the community has hit rock bottom, and people can be heard saying, "Enough is enough! It can't go on like this any longer!"
- In this stage, unlike in the Waiting Place, there is a sense of urgency in people's voices; people are tired of "waiting." But while people want change, they lack clarity about what to do.
- The community's norms and ways of working together keep the community stuck in an undesirable status quo. The community is mired in turf wars; it lacks leadership at different levels of the community; and people seem fixated on their own individual interests.
- People's frustrations have hit the boiling point but the community lacks the capacity to act.

CATALYTIC

- The Catalytic stage starts with small steps that are often imperceptible to the vast majority of people in the community.
- Small numbers of people and organizations begin to emerge, taking risks and experimenting in ways that challenge existing norms in how the community works.
- The size of their actions is not the vital gauge. Their actions produce some semblance of results that give people a sense of hope.
- As this stage unfolds, the number of people and organizations stepping forward increases, and links and networks are built between and among them.
- A key challenge in this stage is the emerging conflict between a nascent story of hope and the ingrained narrative that "nothing can change." Even as change appears, the old narrative will still dominate people's communication and outlook until more progress is made and trust builds.

GROWTH

- During the Growth stage, people begin to see clearer and more pervasive signs of how the community is moving forward.
- People in the community are able to name leadership at all levels and where such leadership is expanding and deepening—from the official level to neighborhoods, within civic organizations and nonprofits. Networks are growing and a sense of common purpose and direction are taking deep root.
- People feel a renewed spirit of community. More people are working together. Efforts are taking place across the community and are targeted to more concerns.
- A feature of this stage is that you can randomly ask people on the street what kind of community they live in, and they provide similar answers. A common story has emerged about the community.

SUSTAIN AND RENEW

- In Sustain and Renew, the community is ready to take on, in a deeper and more sustained way, the tough, nagging issues that may have been tackled before but were not adequately addressed.
- Such issues might include the public schools, racism and race relations, and economic growth in all neighborhoods; change on these concerns typically requires sustained, long-term effort.
- Lessons and insights and new norms that have emerged over time now pervade the community.
- But the community may be struggling to maintain its momentum. It must find new ways to bring along a new cadre of leaders, civic groups, and active citizens, as others tire or move on.
- There is a danger that the community will fall into a new Waiting Place as it comes to rest on its laurels.

COMMUNITY LIFE DO'S AND DON'TS CHART

Be careful not to	What to do	What to think about
THE WAITING PLACE		
• Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans • Start visioning exercises that fail or don't have enough community support for action • Try to engage people by making them feel guilty they are not involved • Rely on one-shot projects	• Create forums for conversation and interaction where people feel they belong and crystallize feelings of frustration • Connect community actions to realities in people's lives • Demonstrate small signs of progress • Keep working, despite feelings of limited progress	• Do you really know how committed your partners are? • What small things could help us move forward?
IMPASSE		
• Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans • Convince yourselves there are strong networks and organizations to support new civic work • Shut out community members because they are frustrated • Try to develop action plans too quickly	• Let people share their concerns and discover common aspirations for something different • Identify taboo issues that contribute to impasse • Find language that helps people imagine an alternative future • Look for windows to pull people into small efforts	• What issues are citizens most immediately concerned about? Are those issues being worked on? • What is being done to bring people back into public life?
CATALYTIC		
• Coordinate activities too quickly, stifling innovation and action • Rush to visioning exercises before the community is ready • Do too much, too fast	• Try lots of small things with room for failure; emphasize learning • Build Boundary-Spanning Orgs. that can generate change • Encourage informal conversations, networks, and new engagement norms • Develop a new cadre of leaders • Tell authentic stories of progress over time	• What is motivating folks to work together? • Where are the Boundary-Spanning Organizations in the community? Who supports them? • What are we learning? • How do we know if our work is grounded in the community's aspirations?
GROWTH		
• Miss parts of the community left out of progress • Let "official leaders" drive the action • Neglect the need to continually strengthen networks, leaders, and organizations that can keep the community moving forward • Ignore underlying community issues	• Use community-wide engagement activities to coalesce and spring forward from the Catalytic stage • Do bigger projects, building on natural progress and collaborations that have come before • Reinforce positive norms for working together and continue to develop Boundary-Spanning Organizations and new leaders	• Who is doing the hard work? Are community members involved? • Are new people getting involved in the efforts? • How are the new efforts connected to the work done before?
SUSTAIN AND RENEW		
• Think "success" has been achieved • Assume others know the story of progress and norms for action that have been built • Become arrogant and feel you have solved it all • Start to rest on laurels	• Develop new leaders across the entire community and new Boundary-Spanning Organizations to create progress • Continue creating opportunities to bring community members into processes—especially new residents • Look for challenges not yet tackled to focus energies, and use lessons learned to expand progress	• Who are the new leaders? • Who is still missing from the community's progress? • How are we feeling about ourselves: pride, fully humble, or smugly self-confident? • How are we consciously strengthening our norms of working together?

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COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

My Community

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions in your small groups:

1. What stage of community life is your community in?

2. How did you come to that conclusion?

3. What will you need to think about in terms of things like:

- Knowing and sharing the community's aspirations, challenges, and conditions for change
- Choosing a focus for action
- Setting realistic expectations for change—scope, scale, speed
- Knowing what partners you need at this stage

4. What are the implications of your answers (above) for the way you work and your strategies?

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3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Purpose/Overview

To examine the importance of the 3A's of Public Life—Authority, Authenticity, and Accountability—and discover their relationship to what we say and do in public life and how we create change.

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THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions

Purpose: To measure individual progress in Authority, Authenticity, and Accountability.

Directions: Please respond to the following 20 statements in terms of your personal work. Rate the questions use this rating scale:

THE HARWOOD RATING SCALE

Rating	What it means
We've Got It	We feel good about saying we've got this factor.
Real Progress	We're steadily improving and moving in the right direction. Still room for improvement.
Starting to Improve	We're beginning to demonstrate genuine effort. Things are starting to get better.
Lip Service	We're talking a good game, but our actions are not in line with what we're saying.
Business As Usual	We haven't changed at all—it's "business as usual."
Not Applicable	This factor is either not relevant to our work or not on our radar.

THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions: Authority

Rate yourself for each question below in terms of your personal work.

	We've Got It	Real Progress	Starting to Improve	Lip Service	Business As Usual	Not Appli-cable
We hold deep knowledge about the community: we understand people, their lives, where they live, and their aspirations and concerns.						
Our internal conversations reflect a deep knowledge of the community.						
We actively apply knowledge of the community in making internal decisions and working with external partners.						
We design and implement our programs based on a deep understanding of the community.						
People outside the organization would describe us as operating as part of the community rather than apart from it.						

How am I doing on this touchstone?

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THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions: Authenticity

Rate yourself for each question below in terms of your personal work.

	We've Got It	Real Progress	Starting to Improve	Lip Service	Business As Usual	Not Appli-cable
What we say and do rings true to people in the community.						
People in the community believe we have the commu-nity's best interests at heart.						
We see and treat people as community residents, rather than mostly as donors or members.						
We exercise a sense of affec-tion for the community in our daily operations and work.						
Our work reflects the wholeness of the community, capturing the different perspectives, ambigui-ties, and tensions that exist.						
If you asked people in the community, they would say our words and actions reflect the reality of people's lives in the community.						
We have created ways to deeply listen to the community in an ongoing way.						

How am I doing on this touchstone?

THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions: Accountability

Rate yourself for each question below in terms of your personal work.

	We've Got It	Real Progress	Starting to Improve	Lip Service	Business As Usual	Not Appli-cable
We are focused on pursuing actions that are meaningful for people and we are careful to avoid window-dressing.						
We set realistic expectations about the potential impact of our work in what we promise to people in the community.						
We don't do things just because they sound good; we are focused on what will make a real difference in improving our community's civic health.						
We have a culture open to learning about the community and we account for what we learn in our daily work.						
We know the role we want to play in the community—it's clear internally and to those outside the organization.						
We regularly take stock of our pledges and promises to the community and whether we are fulfilling them.						
We clearly work from the assumption that community change unfolds over time and our work reflects that under-standing.						
In working in the community, we actively seek to build on what came before and create a foundation for what might follow.						

How am I doing on this touchstone?

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THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Small Group Discussion

1. Looking at the 3A's Self-Assessment Questions, what key concepts jumped out at you? Why those?

2. What are the implications of the 3A's for how you work in the community?

NOTES

THE 3A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Authority

- Holding Authority means having knowledge rooted in the community—understanding people, their lives, where they live, their aspirations, and their concerns. You hold a deep knowledge of the community.
- Holding Authority means applying this knowledge to inform your decisions; how you design and implement programs; and how you conduct yourself. Your actions are pivotal.
- Holding Authority means acting as part of the community as opposed to acting apart from it. You are rooted in public life.

Authenticity

- Being Authentic means that your words and actions reflect the reality of people's lives. Being Authentic means that you see and treat people in a human way, not as objects to be manipulated.
- Being Authentic means seeking to understand the wholeness of a situation—capturing the different perspectives, ambiguity, and tensions that exist. What you say rings true.
- Being Authentic means genuinely listening to the community in an ongoing way. You can then reflect the community in your work.
- Being Authentic means that the community believes you have their best interests at heart. You exercise a sense of affection for the community.

Accountability

- Exercising Accountability takes being open to learning along the journey of change. You must account for what you are learning.
- Exercising Accountability takes setting realistic expectations for change and making progress. You must account for your own pledges and promises.
- Exercising Accountability takes understanding and reflecting a sense of public time and rhythms. You can accelerate the natural rhythms of a community, but you cannot violate them.
- Exercising Accountability takes pursuing actions rooted in purpose and meaning for people. You must avoid window-dressing or merely undertaking actions that sound appealing.

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INTENTIONALITY

Each day, we make hundreds of choices, and while we can't control everything, if we become more intentional about the choices we do make—we can have far greater impact.

Test the quality of your choices by asking yourself the following questions:

1 TURN OUTWARD:

Am I turned outward toward the community?

2 ASPIRATIONS:

Are my actions rooted in people's shared aspirations?

3 AUTHORITY:

Could I stand up on a table and talk to people about their community, their aspirations and concerns, and would they believe me?

4 AUTHENTICITY:

Do I reflect the reality of people's lives and do they believe I have their best interests at heart, even when we disagree?

5 ACCOUNTABILITY:

Am I living up to the pledges and promises I have made?

6 URGE WITHIN:

Am I staying true to my urge within?

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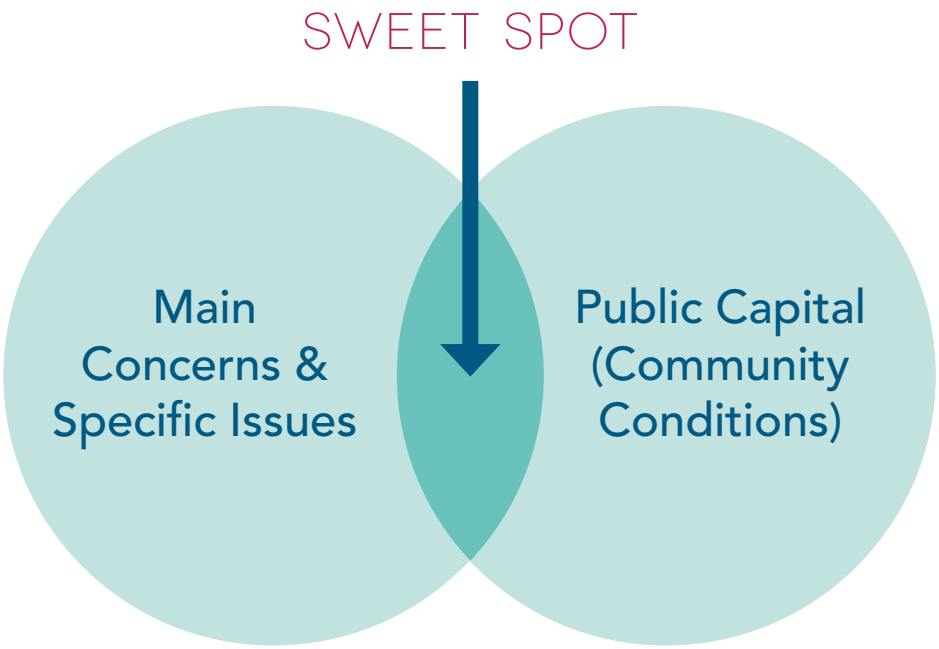
SWEET SPOT

THE SWEET SPOT OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Sweet Spot is where you take action on issues the community cares about in a way that builds the conditions for change in your community at the same time.



NOTES

THE SWEET SPOT OF PUBLIC LIFE

Public Capital: The Conditions for Change

Working in the The Sweet Spot of Public Life requires a focus on Public Capital—the conditions for change that enable communities to move forward. These are the factors that shape the ability and capacity of a community to work together and create change.

An Abundance of Social Gatherings that enable people to learn about what is happening in the community and begin to develop a sense of mutual trust.

Organized Spaces for Interaction where people can come together to learn about, discuss, and often act on community challenges. These spaces help a community begin to identify and tap resources to address concerns.

Boundary-Spanning Organizations that help engage people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges, and marshal a community's resources to move ahead. These organizations help lay the foundation for community action, but do not act as the driving force.

Safe Havens for Decision Makers where a community's leaders can deliberate and work through community concerns in "unofficial," candid discussions.

Strong, Diverse Leadership that extends to all layers of a community, understands the concerns of the community as a whole, and serves as a connector among individuals and organizations throughout the community.

Informal Networks and Links that connect various individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions together to create a cross-fertilization effect of experiences, knowledge, and resources. People carry and spread ideas, messages, and community norms from place to place.

Conscious Community Discussion where a community has ample opportunity to think about and sort through its public concerns before taking action. People play an active role in helping decide how the community should act.

Community Norms for Public Life that help guide how people act individually, interact, and work together. These norms set the standards and tone for civic engagement.

A Shared Purpose for the Community that sends an explicit message about the community's aspirations and helps reinforce that everyone is headed toward a common goal.

THE SWEET SPOT

February 26, 2007
by Richard C. Harwood

Finding the 'Sweet Spot'

Increasingly, as I travel the country, I find myself talking about the "sweet spot of public life"—how we can take action on specific issues and build community at the same time. This past week was no different. I spent two days with 40 leaders of local collaboratives in Newark, N.J., good people who are urgently focused on strengthening families and children.

The challenges in Newark (and Essex County) are tough, long-standing, often depressing—but doable. In these communities, people often feel that no one speaks for or listens to them. Finding sustainable pathways for improving their local conditions can be hard. People worry that they are being left behind. Truth be told, many people are falling through the cracks.

The collaboratives sit at two critical nexus points in relationship to these challenges. They work among people in neighborhoods trying to create change; and they sit between "official" city structures and the local neighborhoods and communities to ensure that all people are at the table of public discussion and decision-making. Indeed, they serve as essential connective tissue that can help to bring about a greater sense of community wholeness.

No doubt, there is compelling need for better policies and programs that address people's core concerns around families and children; but it is also the case, according to the folks in Newark and Essex County, that effective policies and programs also require the community coming together in new ways– from people supporting one another to people taking more responsibility for themselves.

Indeed, a recurring theme of the conversation in Newark was how to tap people's own potential to create change and come together to forge stronger communities. But what does this mean? How does it happen? How does it sustain itself? This is a challenge I hear everywhere I go.

We must design initiatives that not only focus on a specific issue, but that also build the relationships, leaders, networks, and norms of communities—the stuff that makes communities go—what I call "The Sweet Spot." In Newark and Essex County, there were three key components of The Sweet Spot that need attention if the community is to effectively address its core concerns around families and children:

- Cultivating leaders: There is a real need to identify and engage "untapped" leaders in the community who hold authority and authenticity in the eyes of residents. These leaders can help engage, inspire, and support people and their causes in ways that leaders outside the community simply cannot.
- Creating safe space for discussion: There is a real need to create safe spaces in which people can come together to identify their aspirations, wrestle with competing values, and find ways to join hands in building a stronger community and strengthening families. The conversations that are now taking place too often focus on complaints and expert-framed policy issues that fail to move individuals and the community forward.
- Building networks: There is a real need to build networks in which organizations and leaders can learn about each other, build trust, and discover new ways (or strengthen existing ways) of working together. These networks reduce the time and costs associated with mistrust, the spinning of wheels, the pointing of fingers, and the inaction that results when we are unable to overcome obstacles.

The importance of finding The Sweet Spot cannot be over-emphasized. For it is not merely an academic point, or something simply to theorize about.

Rather, the challenge is, how can we move ahead?

Let's face it, whether in Newark or in other communities, we will never have all the resources, time, and people we want to address the challenges before us. Instead, we must find ways to leverage our resources for making progress. That, I believe, requires that we find The Sweet Spot. Then we can have the very capacities we need to act on the challenges we seek to overcome.

THE SWEET SPOT

Key Ideas for Moving Communities Forward

SWEET SPOT OF PUBLIC LIFE

Hidden Narratives
All communities have an ingrained narrative that can help to accelerate or block effective civic action. The key is to know the narratives at work in your community and the implications for moving ahead.

Pebble Theory of Change
Progress often emerges through pockets of change whose effects ripple out over time and eventually overlap, helping to forge new shared values, norms, networks, and relationships.

Arc of Public Time
The Stages of Community Life are rooted in notions of time; all change unfolds over time. It is essential to think clearly about the span of time in which your work will take place and the implications for what you need to do during that time.

Expectations
Setting the right expectations for change efforts is essential to make hope real in communities. Too often expectations for change are overblown and dash people's sense of possibility and hope.

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BEING A PUBLIC INNOVATOR

BEING A PUBLIC INNOVATOR

Purpose/Overview

To examine what it means to be a public innovator—and the personal challenges and opportunities that confront us.

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BEING A PUBLIC INNOVATOR

TAKE QUICK AND EASY STEPS

From more than 25 years of experience, we know that the best way to leverage the learning and work you've done at the Public Innovators Lab is to quickly begin applying it in your community. Below are actions you can take over the next 30, 60, and 90 days to make this real in your work.

Step One: Getting Started (30 days)

Each of the Getting Started activities takes less than an hour. They are critical for reinforcing your turn outward and building momentum for this work. If you want to accelerate progress, do at least three of the four Getting Started activities within the first 30 days after leaving the Lab.

- **Aspirations Exercise:** Use the Aspirations Exercise at your next staff or board meeting or with a small group in the community.
- **Turn Quiz:** Give the quiz to others and use the four questions to have a discussion about what it would take to accelerate your turn outward.
- **Intentionality Tests:** Hang these up in your office, and as you come to key decisions glance up and check yourself.
- **Learning Group Call:** Conference call in with questions, challenges, or comments—or just to connect with others doing this work. Get your library ready for the series of coaching calls and Learn & Apply Webinars.

Step Two: Going Into the Community (60 days)

- **Community Conversation:** Set up and hold your first Community Conversation within 60 days of leaving the Lab and you'll find that your work takes on new momentum.

Step Three: Using What You Learn (90 days)

- **Innovation Spaces:** Within 90 days of leaving the Lab (or no more than 30 after your first Community Conversation), hold an Innovation Space.

BEING A PUBLIC INNOVATOR

public innovator {noun}:

Individual who holds ideals that guide him or her; who is pragmatic in his or her work; and who understands what it means to take risks.

Many people do good work across the country in public life and politics, and yet there are a small percentage of people who stand out because of the meaningful change they are able to generate. More prevalent than social entrepreneurs and less heralded, these engines for the public good are one of the great untapped resources in our nation.

The Harwood Institute calls these people public innovators.

Public innovators are pragmatic idealists; they hold a deep understanding of the reality of their community and at the same time incessantly tap their imagination to see a path for a brighter future. Public innovators are dogged in their determination to make progress, and they are risk-takers when necessary. They have learned to innovate from within whatever structure they operate.

Public innovators also understand that real and sustainable change only occurs in a community over time, as the effects of civic actions ripple out and eventually connect with one another. Their knowledge of the community guides their strategies and helps them calibrate when it's time to push ahead and when to be patient.

Public innovators hold no specific title, and there is no single mailing list or Web site to visit. Public innovators can be found in a range of public, private, and nonprofit organizations in a variety of roles; their title is not necessarily indicative of the change they are able to affect.

In a highly divisive, fragmented, and sometimes cynical society, we need public innovators as they can be counted on to make progress. They fundamentally believe in the possibilities for change in public life and politics and in the ability of people to tap their own potential to make a difference and join together to forge a common future.

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INNOVATION SPACES

INNOVATION SPACES

Purpose/Overview

- To identify the characteristics and qualities of Innovation Spaces and what makes them a powerful mechanism for creating change.
- To use the Innovation Space Tool and be able to use this tool in your organization.

NOTES

INNOVATION SPACES

Innovation Space Tool

You want to turn outward so you can accelerate and deepen your impact.

But those changes won't just happen on their own. After all, the kinds of meetings and conversations that we're used to having quite often pull us back inward, away from the community. With days spent in planning meetings, focusing on ever growing to-do lists, activity chokes out action. And in all those meetings we rarely bring in people from across the organization or group; instead we retreat to silos and turf battles.

To create the change we want out in the community, we need to turn outward. That means we need to create room for a new, different kind of meeting and conversation, one focused on working across silos, learning from one another, and innovating.

That means creating an Innovation Space. Innovation Spaces are regularly scheduled conversations (once every four weeks) that bring different departments and groups together to focus on what you're learning as an organization and how to use what you're learning to create change. These aren't your usual staff or project meetings; here the goal is learning and innovation, not just planning and assigning.

This tool will guide you step by step through creating an Innovation Space.

The Power of Innovation Spaces

"This has been a culture-changing activity." When a public broadcasting station wanted to turn outward and connect more authentically with its community, the station manager used Innovation Spaces to create a different conversation internally. These conversations led to changes in how the station assessed staff performance, who they engaged in the community, what they put on the air, and where they invested resources. Innovation Spaces "helped us move from one culture to a new culture. We are healthier because of it."

"I couldn't imagine my job now without Innovation Spaces." Innovation Spaces can be a powerful way to brainstorm and create together, but they are also key drivers of accountability. As one leader in an early childhood collaborative shared, "I could not imagine our community without them," but "the key is being intentional, and holding the meetings to a higher standard."

INNOVATION SPACES

KEYS FOR LEADING AND HOLDING INNOVATION SPACES

The key to a successful Innovation Space is creating the conditions that generate a certain kind of conversation. As you set up, create, and hold your Innovation Spaces, these are key ideas to keep in mind.

Remember these spaces only work over time—schedule them every four weeks.

The conversation is about learning, not planning.

- Use the questions provided. They work.
- Use the ground rules to create a safe place to have this kind of conversation.
- Designate someone to take good notes. Track what you're learning.
- Post what you are learning in the space so others can see. Refer to it.

Involve people from across the organization.

- Include people from different departments; go beyond the "regulars."
- Invite and push to include senior leadership, so what's learned can be applied.
- After a few conversations, encourage others to lead the Innovation Space from time to time. Don't go it alone.
- Let people come and go. Not everyone has to attend every Innovation Space. The key is creating a different space—not creating perfection.

The group must hold itself accountable for making this work.

- Set aside a specific time. Don't fold these conversations into other meetings.
- Assure people the meeting will start and end on time—then keep to it.
- Innovation Spaces only work over time. If people push back or it gets rocky after a few meetings, keep going. You're creating new norms—that takes time. Stick with it.

Gauging Success

As you set up your Innovation Space, ask yourself:

- Have we set aside a dedicated time for Innovation Spaces?
- Is it a safe space with clear ground rules?
- Are we sticking with this and keeping the space open over time?
- Are we continually drawing lessons from our work?
- Are we applying what we are learning?
- Do we check in and discuss the group's performance from time to time?
- Are we creating a culture of accountability?
- Does the space include others in this work, from different parts of the organization?

INNOVATION SPACES

Innovation Space Agenda

Allow 60 minutes for this conversation. Designate someone to take good notes. Make sure you hang up what you learned from the last Innovation Space.

START ON TIME

1. Welcome participants (5 minutes)

Remind people that this is an Innovation Space and the focus is on learning and innovation, not planning and evaluation. Go over Ground Rules.

2. Four key questions (35 minutes)

Ask these questions and discuss:

- What are we learning? Why is this important? What are the implications?
- Where else could we use what we are learning?
- What are we seeing that suggests things are changing in the community or the organization?
- What possibilities are there for moving ahead?

At least every six months, instead of the four questions above, use the "Are We Turning Outward?" questions with the Harwood Rating Scale.

Ground Rules

- Have a "kitchen table" conversation. Everyone participates; no one dominates.
- There are no "right answers." Draw on your own experiences, views, and beliefs—you do not need to be an expert.
- Keep an open mind. Listen carefully and try hard to understand the views of those who disagree with you.
- Help keep the discussion on track. Stick to the questions; try not to ramble.
- It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable. Respond to others how you want to be responded to.
- Have fun!

3. Harvest what you learned (15 minutes)

Ask the group:

- What insights did this conversation spark? (Write them down.)
- What do we want to make sure we carry forward for next time? (Write down.)

4. Wrap up (5 min); set date for the next Innovation Space (ideally every four weeks)

- The next Innovation Space is in _____ weeks. What date is that? _____

ADJOURN ON TIME

INNOVATION SPACES

Intentionality and Innovation

Creating Innovation Spaces and turning outward require that we act with intentionality. Without being intentional about our choices and actions, nearly any effort can seem plausible. Acting with intention is crucial for sustaining change. It is easy to get derailed. These questions will let you check in and see how you are doing and ensure you're focused on the things that really matter in terms of creating change.

Use the Harwood Rating Scale with these questions. Discuss the scores you give each. Record and save the group's answers. Chart your progress over time.

- Are we turned outward toward the community?
- Are our actions rooted in people's shared aspirations? Could we stand on a table and talk to people about their aspirations and concerns for their community, and would they believe us?
- Do we reflect the reality of people's lives, and do they believe we have their best interests at heart, even when we disagree?
- Are we living up to the pledges and promises we have made?
- Are we staying true to our urge within?

THE HARWOOD RATING SCALE

Rating	What it means
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Lip Service	We're talking a good game, but our actions are not in line with what we're saying.
Business As Usual	We haven't changed at all—it's "business as usual."
Not Applicable	This factor is either not relevant to our work or not on our radar.

INNOVATION SPACES

Small Group Innovation Space Notes

- Reflecting on the past two days, what are we learning and why is this important?
- What are the implications?
- Where could we use this learning?
- What possibilities are there for moving ahead?

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INNOVATION SPACES

Large Group Innovation Space Notes

- What do we want to harvest from this Innovation Space?
- Implementation questions?

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PERSONAL COVENANT

PERSONAL COVENANT

My Personal Covenant

1. Why do I do this work?

2. What does it mean for me to step forward in light of The 3A's?

3. What three things must guide what I say and do?

HARWOOD PRACTICE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Applies to small actions and large-scale, collective actions. The deeper you go with the Harwood practice, the greater the internal/external alignment and community results.

	Stage 1 Building Community Knowledge and Public Will	Stage 2 Executing Strategies and Actions that Fit the Community	Stage 3 Embedding and Sustaining the Change
What We Teach INDIVIDUALS To Do	• Focus on community aspirations • Authentically engage the community through specialized conversations and listening • Apply knowledge from engaging the community to decision-making • Strategically share knowledge from engaging the community to show people their voice matters and to build public will for action	• Develop strategies that achieve results and also build community • Identify and act on specific pockets/ areas of change that align to local context • Focus on creating conditions necessary for community change • Determine "who to run with" as partners • Develop networks for innovation/ learning • Adopt the right metrics to gauge progress	• Cultivate a can-do community narrative • Build the capacity of partners and other groups to strengthen the community together • Recalibrate your efforts based on changing challenges and conditions • Apply Harwood practice to other challenges in the community beyond where you started
What We Teach People in ORGANIZATIONS To Do	• How to make sure the right people in the organization (staff, volunteers and board) are committed to turning outward • Use Innovation Spaces to build a learning culture • Apply Harwood's Intentionality Tests and 3A's of Public Life to develop discipline for being an outward-facing organization	• Apply Harwood practice to one or two key organizational functions • Use Intentionality Tests daily to make decisions • Clarify the space the organization occupies in community • Strengthen your organization's story about its relevance in community	• Apply Harwood practice across the main functions of your organization • Align your organizational structure, staffing, and resources with being outward-facing • Adopt organizational performance measures that reflect being outward-facing