

Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness

Theory of Change in Community-Based Organizations: Engaging Stakeholders in Creating a Common Vision for Social Change

October 13, 2010

Facilitator's Agenda

6:30pm Welcome/Introductions

Icebreaker- 1:1: **Report Back:** Name, organization, and one thing you would like to get out of tonight's session

6:40 Review Agenda/Goals for the session

- Gain understanding of basic elements of Theory of Change framework
- Learn how to establish well-defined long-term goals with a high level of community input and ownership and a shared language about how to meet those goals.
- Learn how to establish consensus around priorities, activities and programs that can best lead to achievement of those goals
- Develop strategies to more effectively engage community residents, youth, merchants, and organizations in planning and implementation of campaigns

6:45 Theory of Change overview

Open with hypothetical situation: *Mayor announced today that he had solved the funding crisis in the library system and that he wouldn't be closing any libraries. Signed a \$5 million deal with Pepsi to make Pepsi the official soft drink of the Boston Public Schools, complete with advertising in the classrooms and soda machines in every cafeteria.*

Break into 1:1's - If this happened what is the first thing you would do respond? Have participants come back and list one or two things they would do. The point of the exercise is to show that most people go directly to tactics when they are responding to a problem in their community.

Brief discussion about importance of setting goals before creating action steps. First step is to bring community together and set your goals.

Theory of Change Description

-Why Do It? To avoid implementing a mistake- allows you to ask critical questions before you begin a program or campaign

-Activities must be tied to outcomes and show that they will contribute towards achieving your goals

-Activities that can't be tied to outcomes should be questioned

- T o C process can take several months- this is just an overview
- There can be multiple Theories of Change to address same problem
- Ruthlessly question your assumptions- look for proof and examples
- Need to have key stakeholders in room at beginning of process
- Avoid the “We’re Right, now we just need to educate the community” trap

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

Albert Einstein

- Elements- connected to action
- Flow Chart
- Pathway to Change, So That- connecting activities to goals
- Importance of Questioning Assumptions

7:00 Assumptions Small Group Exercise

Small Group Exercise: Developing common set of assumptions

Split into two groups. Have each group take one of the following goals:

Goal: Strengthen Boston’s local and regional food system so that low-income families in Boston have access to affordable, healthy food

Goal: Make the built environment more conducive to active living, especially walking and biking

- 1) List all the possible activities your organization could take to achieve this goal
- 2) Discuss and list your assumptions behind these activities
How do you know they will help you meet your goal?
- 3) Report Back: List activities and assumptions. Where was there agreement on assumptions? Were there activities you would drop? What additional information do you need?

Examples of Assumptions

- Low-income families want healthy, local food
- Healthy, local food can be made affordable to low-income families
- Institutions are willing to change food procurement practices
- Storeowners are willing to change their practices
- Low-income families lack awareness about the issue
- Increasing access to local, healthy food will result in improved community health, (eg lower rates of obesity and diabetes)

Are these assumptions proven? What information do you need? How to get to agreement around goals? How to get consensus?

Next steps- additional resources

7:45 Strategies for effectively engaging community residents, youth, merchants, and organizations in planning and implementing campaigns

Always should ask yourself: Where is the community in this process?

Cannot undertake T o C without key stakeholders in the room- Why Not? Discuss: Concept of Buy-In. What happens when there isn't Buy-In? How do you know you have community buy-in and support? How do you know when you don't have it?

Small Group Exercise:

Break again into into two groups. Have each group take one of the following goals:

Goal: Strengthen Boston's local and regional food system so that low-income families in Boston have access to affordable, healthy food

Goal: Make the built environment more conducive to active living, especially walking and biking

1) Define your target community. Brainstorm- List every group, institution, community leader you can think of.

2) Review names on the list:

-Who is actively engaged?

-Who is not involved at all?

-Who is ready to be engaged?

3) Why are some of these stakeholders not engaged? What would you need to do to get them involved?

Report Back

Discussion:

Obstacles to Participation

-External

Time, issue doesn't affect them, childcare, language, education, different assumptions about how things change

-Internal- Group not a welcoming organization-Qualities of a welcoming organization

Elements of a Community Engagement Strategy

-Create a written community engagement plan

- Identify your community/stakeholders
- Who needs to be involved in this effort in order for it to succeed?
- Map out community assets and gaps: What are strengths of community members/groups involved? Where are gaps in capacity?
- Identify obstacles to community involvement.
- Build community capacity: What support/knowledge does community need to actively participate?
- Create “doors” to participation and leadership
- Make sure key stakeholders are at the table before plans are made
- Focus on consensus and buy-in from broadest possible group
- Do Something- engage through action

Next Steps: (15 min)

Action Plan

1:1: What is one step your organization could take to increase support for community leaders? **Report Back**

Evaluation- (5 min) Each person say one thing they learned and how they might apply that in their work.

Materials for BCFF Workshop 1
***Theory of Change in Community-Based Organizations:
Engaging Stakeholders in Creating a Common Vision for Social Change***

- *Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results, and Learning*, prepared for Annie E. Casey Foundation by Organizational Research Services, 2004
- *Tip Sheets: What is a Theory of Change and What is a Logic Model?*, Evaluation Tools for Racial Equity.
- *Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation*, Grantcraft- Practical Wisdom for Grantmakers, Anne Mackinnon and Natasha Amott, 2006.
- *Developing a Theory of Change Logic Model for Your Program*, Chapter 3, Theory of Change, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: A Practical Guide to Theory Development*, Andrea A. Anderson, The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change.