

Community Development

Listening drives action

- **True mobilization** can only occur around issues that are genuinely relevant to communities.
- **Listening is key.** The issues that rally a community may be hard to recognize from afar and need to be identified by communities themselves.
- Listening is also crucial for building the trust and reciprocal relationships required for sustainable community change.

Learn by doing

- **You never know what works in a community until you try something.** We often don't know what we don't know. Small, calculated actions provide rapid feedback and help reveal relationships and community values, interests, and dynamics.
- Learning from what works and from what doesn't work is the key to effective strategy and adaptation.
- When an approach isn't working, or something we're trying comes to an unexpected end, we need the confidence and humility to let go, disband, and move on.

Acknowledge & harness self-interest for mutual benefit

- Not everyone needs to have the same reason for being at the table, but understanding why they are there helps move towards common goals.
- Looking beyond the usual suspects (and the usual interests) creates the potential for new creative partnerships.

Create something; make it real

- **Successful community development creates something that was not there before.**
- This may be something physical, like a service, housing, or infrastructure. Or might be a change to policy or legislation.
- It might also involve assets that are less tangible, such as new networks or bonds between people and institutions.

Balance vision with effective organization

- While it is true that a vision is important to compel collective action, efforts cannot be sustained without goals, effective coordination, and organization.
- At the same time, a focus on structure at the expense of building momentum runs the risk of starving the vision. **"Committees are places where good ideas go to die."**

Action is the oxygen of community development

- Effective community development requires thoughtful execution but planning at the expense of action can kill initiative.
- Anything that *"drags on too long becomes a drag."* Saul Alinsky

Like attracts like & success attracts success

- Investing in something encourages and invites others to do likewise. Unrestricted funds are necessary to kick-start innovation and to unlock resources in the community. Often a relatively small injection of resources can spark imagination and create momentum.
- **The greatest assets in our communities are our people.** People are drawn to initiatives that are hopeful and optimistic – where there is a sense of mutual support and creative possibilities.