

February (2/6/14) Learning Forum
Change Circles: Connecting Story and Action

Agenda with notes:

1. Opening – Emily

Housekeeping – sign in, food, toilets, etc. Make sure everyone has a newspaper and pen. Introduce the PPFC (define food insecurity). State that the PPFC is trying to create change. Highlight an element of the change that PPFC desires to make - hold up / refer to the data page of the newspaper, state that we are working together so that, some years from now, these numbers are better. Introduce next segment.

2. Mini-presentations of how we are working to create change

- a. Mobile Food WG - Janet
- b. Policy WG - Alistair
- c. Outreach WG - Beth
- d. Leadership Development - Susan
- e.

3. Mini-presentation of Ganz framework (Why Stories Matter, leaders in our history) – Alistair

4. Story-Action Circles 1 – Coordinating Team Facilitators

a. Introductions and Icebreaker

We have a new newspaper, which is a tool for raising awareness and mobilizing action for change. We are going to use it tonight to think about stories of food insecurity - our own or people we know - and connect those stories to actions we can take in our community to address the problem. Please share something that resonated from the opening presentations and the DATA PAGE of the newspaper.

b. Comic Strips

COMIC STRIP PAGE: Let's each take a role of one of the characters and read through the comic strip aloud, together.

c. Our Food Stories

WORKSHEET BOX 1: Think about the story you just heard. What is your own food story? How does food insecurity play out a) in these comic strips, b) in your own life OR c) in the life of someone you know? Work by yourself for a few minutes, write this story. You can also make notes or draw pictures. Please share key aspects of the story you thought of.

d. Identifying the Problems & the Players

WORKSHEET BOX 2: Let's work all together to list some of the problems we see in the stories we shared.

WORKSHEET BOX 3: *Let's work together to identify who some of the key players are.*

e. Creating Solutions

VISION PAGE: *Turn to the visions page. These thought bubbles are from the community visioning sessions Poughkeepsie Plenty held. What ones resonate with us given the stories and problems we've been discussing?*

WORKSHEET BOX 4: *Let's go back to the worksheet. Thinking about the key problem(s) we identified, what can be done? What concrete actions can we take?*

f. What Have We Learned?

WORKSHEET BOX 6: *How could these actions change the ending and bring about better food stories?*

5. Report Back – Susan

Ask each group to take 2-3 minutes to share one thing that excited or interested you in your story-action circle.

- Affordability – healthy food should be the average standard for the whole community regardless of class
- Pricing implications of policies – farm bill subsidies go to corporations instead of to the farmers who need help on the ground
- Perishable dates – have stores sell at certain days and hours [WOW FOOD WEDNESDAYS] at a discount things that are close to their expiration date and also provide transportation to stores on those days and also offer discounts for certain people to help them stretch their food stamps
- Poverty and income inequality drive hunger
- Some stores offer free delivery (possibly?, e.g. Peapod charges?) for food ordered by phone or online – use technological access to overcome physical access (although food stamps must be used at point of sale?), create an “eat it before it goes bad café” and work with corner stores to get quality food into them
- Farmers need to work together to be very intentional about scale and distribution systems to make food more accessible. Farm Hub, which will be a wholesale aggregation center focused on the NYC market, is an example...but why not ship the food to cities right here in the Hudson Valley?
- Issues for food insecure households – scheduling, lack of transport, compromising quality; action – community tell the bus system what it needs, create a shopping shuttle (like the Food Loop bus recommended in the forthcoming CRREO discussion brief)
- Transportation – have stories of people who have needs present at every meeting, share stories face-to-face, have a kiosk to recruit storytellers
- Mobile market for produce is great, it would also be great to have an indoor year round market for year found access
- Green space to grow veggies
- Communal space to process surplus crops

- Put pressure on federal policy (farm bill) and city/county bus
- Pay attention to food access during storms

6. Story-Action Circles 2 – Coordinating Team Facilitators

*SIGN UP: At the beginning we heard about different ways we can get active with the coalition – the Mobile Food, Policy and Outreach Working Groups and the Leadership Training on March 8th for those interested in outreach, community mobilizing meetings (like tonight!), communicating via the website and/or group management; telling the story of self, us and now; building relationships . These are listed on this sign up sheet. I'll pass it around, and if you are interested in getting involved, or learning more, about any of these areas, please put your name and contact info down so someone can follow up with you. **You can also indicate if you want Poughkeepsie Plenty to come to a group you are connected with to facilitate story-action circles with the newspaper, or if you are interested in forming a working group focused on a new issue.***

EVALUATION: I'm also passing around two post-it notes for each of us. On one, write something that you learned tonight and on the other, write something that you would suggest changing about tonight's forum. You can post these on the flip chart before you leave.

7. Evaluation – Susan

Post on the flip chart before leaving – What is one thing you learned? What is one thing you would change about tonight?

Learned (32):

- I learned that the new grocery store is family owned, which might be easier for farmers to work with.
- Learned the power of collective learning – sharing stories, building community + hope 😊
- Learned about “merger” of Loop bus + city bus and how this might affect food access
- Learned food is a system not an outcome
- I learned the City of POK is losing it's bus system
- I was happy to learn there is such a large well rounded group working on food issues in PK
- I learned that transportation seems to be one of the biggest key issues to food accessibility & insecurity
- Learned about City of POK buses
- Something I learned – must use food stamps at point of purchase – in person
- I learned that the limited public transport system is getting more limited
- Lots of interest, need is real
- PPFC energy is growing! 😊

- Hard
- Very well organized – could be easily replicated. Need more people affected involved!
- Learned Hillcrest House can use faith groups to make food
- Learned more about the POK community
- I did not know SNAP was point of purchase
- Learned federal/state program to provide incentives to grocery stores to locate in food deserts (NYC = 'Fresh' program)
- Learned farmers need a commercial kitchen to prepare “value added” products to sell
- Learned much. People were very easy to work with to produce ideas
- I'm new to Poughkeepsie so learned so much about the general needs here & a few statistics – food deserts / low income
- Local transportation challenges
- Many other people both urban and rural see transpo as one of the biggest barriers to food access
- I learned tonight some innovative & easily implemented ideas around accessing food
- Learned bus routes may be changing / decreasing service
- Something I learned – this was a great brainstorm on how the NYS Assembly and local gov't officials can help improve the setbacks facing the City of PK, our communities in general, and getting fresh healthy food to our communities.
- Enthusiastic leaders – great inspiration
- I liked the paper and working groups
- Small group great idea
- Power of group energy
- I liked the unified focus on issues
- 80% of seeds controlled by 2 companies

Improve (27):

- Maybe quicker way to sign in? Otherwise great!
- Didn't allow to build momentum, follow up ideas
- More time. I felt as though there wasn't enough time to really delve into these difficult issues.
- I know it might take a lot of time, but I would love to have introductions w/everyone.
- Allow more time?
- Maybe when discussing working groups, focus more on what they are doing and less on life narratives
- Something I want to change – local transportation situation, national farm bill
- One thing I would change would be to have more time for whole group discussion / dialogue
- Might want to consider fewer topics to allow more discussion time.

- Facilitation is great! Some group members can dominate...
- Continue to organize, keep community involved
- More distance between discussion groups (hard to hear)
- More room for circles
- More time for discussion
- Should have picked change story to focus on – was a little confusing having multiple stories
- Make sure people speak loudly enough for all to hear. Some are hard of hearing
- It was great, liked the small group circle structure – would love to focus less on what we think the government should do and more on what we can do as a group / city.
- 1-1.5 hours is long enough!
- A little more time to share personal stories / perceptions.
- Great session!
- I could hear better if there was more space between groups
- Spatial arrangement
- Facilitator rushed us, a bit, didn't allow ideas to develop enough (more prep / training?)
- We need more story sharing! About our person connection to the food system, good + bad.
- I heard quite a bit of talk surrounding federal issues. Are you reaching out to congressmen and or senators about this?
- I am planning fruit trees & bushes at my home with intent to share with neighbors and with those who need.