

Community Rhythms and a framework for community – led change

Brian L Smith for Logan Together Plenary Chapter meeting 23rd
November 2016

Introduction to Rich Harwood

- What is Authority: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BxJOGspxgA>
- What is Public Knowledge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k3KH9Lagro&t=54s>
- Being Turned Outward: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMfAC-CQIZA&t=57s>

Community Rhythms

- Why do some approaches work in one community and totally fail in another?
- Data, evidence based approaches and outcomes measurement are useful, but they are not the whole picture.

What builds communities?

- Peter Block: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwahGcEiAr0>
- “community is not built with more services, it is not built with better leadership, better programs, best practices. These are all fine they’re just not decisive, not powerful.”
- “communities are built when peoples’ gifts assets, strengths, capacities are brought into the world”

Community Rhythms

- My personal introduction
- Why paying attention to community rhythms is so important.
- Warning: the deceptive simplicity of the Harwood Institute's frameworks and tools.

Community Rhythms: 5 Stages

- **The Waiting Place**
- **Impasse**
- **Catalytic**
- **Growth**
- **Sustain and Renew**

The Waiting Place

- **Sense** things not right but cannot define the problem
- **Feel** disconnected from leaders and processes
- Infrequent or divisive discussion about challenges faced
- People **waiting** – for issues to become clearer or someone else to solve their problem “Ey orta..”

Impasse

- Rock bottom – “Enough is enough!”
- Urgency but no clarity
- Community norms keep it stuck – turf wars and individual interests
- Frustrations boiling but no capacity to act.

Catalytic

- Small steps, imperceptible to many
- Small numbers of people and organisations emerge, taking risks and experimenting
- Size of actions not important, but small wins give sense of hope
- As stage unfolds more people step forward
- Key challenge: conflict between new narrative of hope and ingrained “nothing can change”

Growth

- Clearer and more pervasive signs of how the community is moving forward
- People in the community can name leadership at all levels
- People feel a renewed spirit of community
- People on the street give a common, positive response when asked what kind of community they live in – new common story has emerged

Sustain and Renew

- Community ready to take on tough, systemic and structural issues
- Lessons, insights and new norms learnt over time now pervade the community
- May struggle to maintain momentum, need to bring on new leaders, civic groups and active citizens
- If community rests on its laurels it can fall into a new Waiting Place

Identifying community stage

- “Turn outward” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMfAC-CQIZA&t=57s>
- Deep listening to the community through community conversations whereby community members do not primarily talk to the facilitator but to each other and start with their aspirations. Theming.
- Understanding and recognising the “public capital factors” that currently exist in the community

What stage is your community?

- Nature of “the community”
- Identifying your community and it’s stage

What to do and what to avoid at each stage

- In the early stages, less is often more and effective action can appear ridiculously simple.
 - Careways
 - Bellambi

Further resources and events

- <http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/reports/>
- <http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/videos/>
- <http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/tools/>
- [Public Innovators Lab](#) for funders and communities:
 - Perth 15th – 17th March 2017
 - East coast 20th – 22nd March 2017 (probably Melbourne)
- Contact Brian: bsmith@theharwoodinstitute.org; +61 424 005 052

A final reminder

**AM I TURNED
OUTWARD TODAY?**