NNIPCamp Oakland, Friday, November 10th, 2023

Session 3 – Data Literacy

Led by Jeanette Parra – CI:Now

Notetaker: Elizabeth Burton

Attendees: Rachel Podoski, Dan Potter, Marc McAleavey, Lori Thomas, Sara Jaye Sanford, Nikolai Elneser, Jeannette Parra, Jake Cowen, Ashely Cajina

Rachel: day job at united way, along with comm foundation has done community indicators report every 5 years for 20 years. Make data more accessible in real time. Data exchange hoping to incorporate local data from nonprofits and outcomes seeing. Tweaking programs, reinvesting, and playing in that space. Nonprofits are not data people, come to it to serve community or mission. They don’t have the skills/capacity to do data stuff more than what they’re being asked by funders. Audience was nonprofits to this session. Give them skills and streamline processes. Making it harder than needs to.

Jeanette: Community outreach/engagement part of it. Organizations/partners don’t have designated person to do that. People tackle that within the group. Designated to do training, outreach. Data literacy class. NNIP has existing data literacy courses, hard to sift through. So much out there and put together for own community and need. No point in giving community the data if they don’t know how to use it, interpret it. Also, Spanish speaking, focus on that from Spanish speaking perspective. Snapshot of what they’re doing.

Lori: Building out of impact data capacity and united way with grassroots/small nonprofits. Working closely with united way and community data advisory. Meaningful representation of those overrepresented in admin data and make sure they’re meaningfully participating in decisions, asking question with the data. Place to build capacity with that. 3-4 years ago and taken off to hear feedback about small organizations and board of directors through a training program. Build that and completely linked to everything else they’re doing. Developed in participatory fashion, develop curriculum in large group. 50-60% of folks from small grassroots nonprofits, other people leading, help develop the buckets for the curriculum. Affordable $50-75 for 2-day courses. Choose to get certificate. A ton of partners at the table, 3-4 years to put those together. 8 different disciplines at the university engaged. Relationship building, interest in people telling their own stories. Foundations sending them to UNC, PWI was rubbing people the wrong way. Thinking about co creating this certificate program together. Maybe enough capacity built to not do it in the same way.

Question asked: One course does not fit all. Presented to high school students way different from nonprofit leaders. Board of directors’ vs CEOs. How to navigate that?

Lori - More topic focused. Develop out the core curriculum for basic research/eval skills, basic analysis, some interest in participatory mapping. Basic curriculum across those and then electives. Data stewardship where we place grad students in computing or data science with organization. Piloted that before and learned hard lessons. Can give small nonprofits the most suggestions they want but then student left and no capacity. Tooling that back and creating 2-3 options. Some folks doing paper records, move to simple access database. Data stewardship allow to specialize more. Always an issue. Money in the grant to work with curriculum development and asking for feedback. Someone in that’s different and speaking to those.

Starting at those points. Some people need basic numbers course. Quant literacy. Met people in community and have programs but not teaching people basic.

That’s going to be in the curriculum, percentage, average, mean, etc. People co creating the curriculum. Faculty who teaches the training program need to hear that so teaching at the right level and at the right starting point.

People coming at different levels. Bank of TA hours in the grant. One off or series of courses. Set aside office hours, structured as opt in or required and gives build in time to level set that’s more defined than 10 individual consultants.

Nikolai: Training has changed over the years. 4 step process, ask the right question, use best data, tell compelling stories, make informed decisions. Rebuilding website based on 4 things. Training on each of these steps. Someone comes and says working with housing and want all the data. Step back, let’s figure out what you want to answer. All the data gets you to worse place. Tell compelling stories. Group by level of expertise. Talking about office hours. Nonprofit comes and says want to know where to find data and prepared training on that but felt siloed. Different from what in the field. Became convening space. Dinner is data but doing more table sitting. Data excuse to create links and make things flow. Training program similar to UNC Charlotte’s. Community building place, office hours and learn. Also, quality trainings open to everyone, and anyone can join. 30 min of basic topics and 30 min of community building. People always learn more by doing it from their point of view. Bring up specific thing they’re trying to address. Starting this now, hope to see eventually robust network. Goal isn’t to have people do everyday work like us but make conversations quicker/faster and get to the projects quicker. Transition right now and growing on that, project from Dec through beginning of year is re doing website for community building. ID for organization, good for funders but want does community need. Basing it on audience instead of about us, projects, etc.

Planning on including help/to learn section training for tips, mini courses.

Tik Tok model. Specific question, 30 sec video to answer that. Don’t want to engage for 45 minutes. The shorter the videos, the more engaged with people. Repository for that.

Jeanette: Bite size trainings. Peopled don’t come to you but learn from site. Data tune series, pull out topics like margin of error, average, mean. Cartoon series that explains in relatable way. Doesn’t have to be in classroom setting for data literacy.

Marc: Series every couple months for a slew of things, part of SAVI in Indianapolis. Trainings, get a good number of people every time. Everything from understanding the data literacy, navigating the site, walks folks through everything for their own analysis, use their data in whatever way. Tinkering with idea of setting up institute for it focused on grassroots leaders from community historically underrepresented. Now it’s whoever wants to come and make it more focused institute. Across several people.

People love certificates. D3 data university did that.

Trainings good way to bring new talent to organizations.

Prepping the field for us is prepping for representation for the board.

Credentials in the state? Leverage NNIP, each community unique and certain needs. Centralized credentials where NNIP trains the people who do the training. Centralize the learning of the basics, who should I recruit, starting point. Only model would be community health workers trained as instructor.

Trainee perspective can be a nice thing. From employer standpoint, BLS data on credentials. Problems with that dataset but interesting if had that to track for where folks are.

Sara Jaye: Communities Count offering workshops that were well received but were one off on different topics, ranging from basic excel data management, qualitative data. Always filled up but funding ended. One offs, did a survey, and got positive feedback but don’t know how impactful. People using the skills and being able to use them in organization. Interested in doing more deeper engagement. But don’t have the resources for that right now. Put all the workshops online but no one watches them. YouTube views less than the people that come. For people in nonprofit partners, they’re not in the work to be data people don’t consider them that. Data been weaponized against them. Often prefer relationship entry place to that work. Don’t have confidence to find people online and teach themselves that. Expectation that they do that is problematic.

People come to data to solve problems but online doesn’t do that.

Ability to ask questions and dialogue.

30 min video to see if it answers question. Email/google search reaches faster. Great to have it on website but somewhere referred to more than entry point for trainings.

People find it helpful for onboarding intern and force them to do it. Data workshop, how you can access it. Tailor it to community partner that present to. Anecdotally is that community partners Is takeaway that I can reach out to you and ask. Can’t remember to reach out to you in 6 months.

Train to use data and don’t stop getting requests, they become more specific. Can’t expect people to become data experts. Rather ask question to someone than google.

Turnover is huge, idea academy won’t go away because train people than a third of them are new.

Whether to do workshop is not, shamelessly plug theory of change, valuable to connect to other things for building theory about data capacity. Training on the own won’t get process outcome. So much training, focus like at CRM which is probably not what people are trying to accomplish.

Marc: Impetus for theory of change, logic for Indianapolis Institute because having done a lot of tracking. Light tracking over the years. End of the experience would be social innovation lab. How are you going to support people in this program?

Nikolai: Teach people something, at least they can read chart or ask questions. That’s effective.

No numbers in concept in chart but flatten the curve COVID was easy to understand. Like to know for sake of knowing sometimes but have to go back to see type of charts that’s useful in their day to day. Explained issue and established goal for everyone. In simple terms, sticks with you.

Used flatten the curve as an entry point for how data can be represented. Good data viz is worth a thousand words or more.

More think about data literacy and challenges, the better to present it. Not just them adapting but adapting charts to learn what works better.

People understand data better than give credit. Can example mean vs median but stuff they see in daily life. Relate back to things they know and see before not so scary.

Jeanette: Community based examples, Bexar County to relate to and anchor to for real example. Complicated examples and bring back to basic stuff.

Public program but gearing towards small nonprofits. But see the same kind of need for data literacy in the leadership level folks on board. When folks who are presenting small neighborhood and come, would love to do that but don’t know data. 80% of folks on board don’t do depth as researchers do. Broader, democratization of this. People afraid of the black box and plays out on board. Data literacy meeting needs of grassroots org but need is broader. Folks in leadership, mainstream nonprofit exposed to things.

Persona/targets aiming for. Data products, data platform for aggregated public data, decisionmakers/leadership don’t use it but they email for insight and sentence to use in PowerPoint. Training useful but curriculum useful but more about questioning data insight. Limitations of data. Conversations are different level of training. Because they don’t care or have the time to care. This is the content for this one. Reporters/journalists.

Sara Jaye: Middle ground there between leaders not doing work but mention the end users of small CBOs, meet the needs of larger CBOs and municipalities. Health department with MPHs still want to get the data from Communities Count.

Marc - Partnering with local school system in Indianapolis. Leader in math department who turned on to pedagogy on Black girl math. It’s amazing, teaching math with social justice lens. One dimension of it, it’s a great pedagogy. They’re struggle to find localized data to share with the students to pound the pedagogy for the whole school system. Pacing is different. How do we raise up whole generation?

Dan - Work with local school district. Local partner there made huge investment in early 2000s where brought teachers, specialist and said teach them data. Those are not principals and superintendents. Very data literate district. Working with local united way to do local one. Decades long effort to train middle management. Not give up on today but long-term play. Slow burn but leaning into districts investments. Years long, cohort, multiple sessions, test cases, real experience. Local united way designed real way test cases and work with people over multiple years to give space to not just watch video but apply it. United Way has 100+ funders and can’t provide research eval for all but lessons to do that. No department or certificate that Rice is trying to standup. No one wants to go through that bureaucracy. United Way owns that, transforming data ecosystem in Houston. Nonprofits have a lot of data and 3-5 systems for data reporting metrics for funder. Test case last week where org collected data and asked what they’re trying to learn about for success. Not coming from Rice researchers but helping them talk through and process and transformed data collection procedures and measuring that. Self-initiated. Way more likely to stick than Rice report to recommend the following.

Volume of data vs the quality. Not clean/valid/liable. But something meaningful. Places drowning in data and asked to collect so much stuff and not seeing much of that. Make clear that not data collection person to connect with community and why data collecting is doing that, and data quality is polished.

Data journey, what are you trying to get out of this.

A lot of data, world health organization declared infodemic. Expectation that need all the data everywhere, but a lot of money and don’t need that. Who are you, what do you want and narrow it on that lane. Data people in nonprofits, but social workers who don’t need to be detailed on that.

Relationships open up conversation and open dialogue. If feels judgmental, model doesn’t do anything. Dialogue where calling themselves out. Drive the bus. Fascinating because organization teed up as more data savvy nonprofit and sitting with them walking back on stats/data/literacy 101 and allowing for that to happen without eyeroll of running ANOVAs this time.

Nikolai: Data primers, housing data health data 101. Partners topic specific which helps. Top 10 indicators recommend. Geographies, where to find it, description. Neighborhood Nexus that covers that. 4-page doc for 10 indicators and how to use it. Data tools for using it. People talking and something to take with them. Printed it and share materials. Up on the website.

Dan: Coffee and quality from united way Houston. Online but early morning and pop in. tended to be space to share out each time and open forum for questions/conversations about data quality.

Marc - Series with data and drafts. PBS station and library, partnership with them and beer sponsor. Builds data confidence. Empowering people to do with owning intuition.

Data drinks/talks organized by specific one but only invite data people which is cool.

Data and drafts open to everyone. People from all over coming. Data folks and evictions one had people facing evictions. By topics. SAVY talks also. Similar and virtual but partnership with local.

Public libraries in civic switchboard project around public libraries interested in data literacy and different focus on where they go with data topics. Convening new community of practice maybe this month and well documented.

Librarians so much power. Embedded in school of informatics and science. Building with colleagues on syllabus on social science data with librarians.

So much out there already and not reinventing the wheel.

Almost so much is overwhelming. Every example sounds so good. If research all opportunities not going to start.

Pittsburgh data literacy work. Liz Monk resident expert.