

Finding Common Ground Through Shared Work on Public Problems



ADVANCING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

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What is the Kettering Foundation?

Nonprofit operating foundation.

Rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research.

Conducts research from the perspective of citizens.

Studies how citizens and public officials address shared problems.

What Does the Kettering Foundation Do?

Conducts research on “What it takes to make democracy work as it should.”

Applied research—learns from work of breakthrough innovators.

Convenes in-person learning exchanges and publishes what we learning.

Definition of Terms

Democracy

Citizen

Coproduction

Complementary
Production

Public Goods

What is Democracy?



Counter to arbitrary rule by a sole ruler.



Citizenry (the *demos*) has the power (*kratos*) to rule itself.



Citizens generate power working together to produce public the goods.



Citizens making shared decisions: essence of democracy.

Citizen: More than Voter, Client or Customer

CITIZEN—people who share a common civic identity. (Mathews)

CITIZENSHIP— one's membership in a political community; implies active involvement in political life. (Denhardt)

What Is CoProduction?

The work citizens and government officials do together.



Citizens as co-creators and co-implementers of services with government. (Surva, Tonurist and Lember)



A public good or service contributed by citizens. (Ostrom)



Products from the work of citizens that complement what institutions do. (Mathews)

PUBLIC WORK: The Work Citizens and Institutions Must Do Together

**“Neither communities
nor institutions can do
their work effectively
without support from
the work of citizens.”**

Elinor Ostrom

**“Wicked problems
can’t be solved
without the goods
produced by
citizens.”** David Mathews

Key Theme: Civility and Common Ground Require Shared Work that Produces Public Goods and Services

**Citizens alienated
from government.
Don't trust
government to act in
their interests.**

**Public officials think
citizens apathetic,
don't show up when
invited or show up
rude.**

**County
commissioners must
work with citizens to
coproduce public
goods neither can
produce alone.**

**Working together
requires practice.
Civic spaces must be
created to facilitate
shared learning.**



Connecting Civic Vitality with Governance

**What would happen if
citizens and
government
recognized their
collective power to
produce public goods
neither could produce
alone?**

**Could They
Find
Common
Ground Upon
Which to
Act?**

**Public Trust is Built Upon
Democratic Work**

**Democratic Works Requires
Democratic Practices**

**Citizens Are More Engaged on
Issues They Care About**

**Shared Work Produces
Ownership and Mutual Respect**

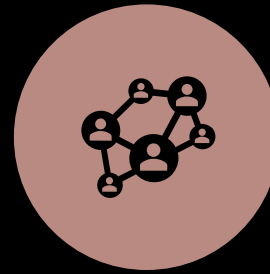
OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS: Public Concerns



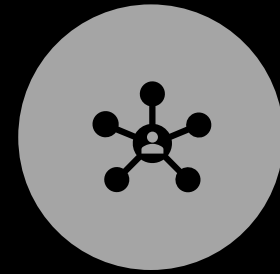
NO EXPERIENCE



**CANNOT MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**



**LEAVE IT TO
PROFESSIONALS**



NO ROLE

LEADING THE CHANGE: Local Governments Advancing Democracy

Promote Democratic Innovation

Establish Foundational Principles

**Incorporate Democratic Practices
into Professional Routines**

**Coproduction with Citizens on
Shared Problems**

FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE PUBLIC IN DEMOCRATIC WORK

1

**NAME
PROBLEMS**

2

FRAME ISSUES

3

**DELIBERATE
OPTIONS**

4



**IDENTIFY
RESOURCES
ACT TOGETHER**

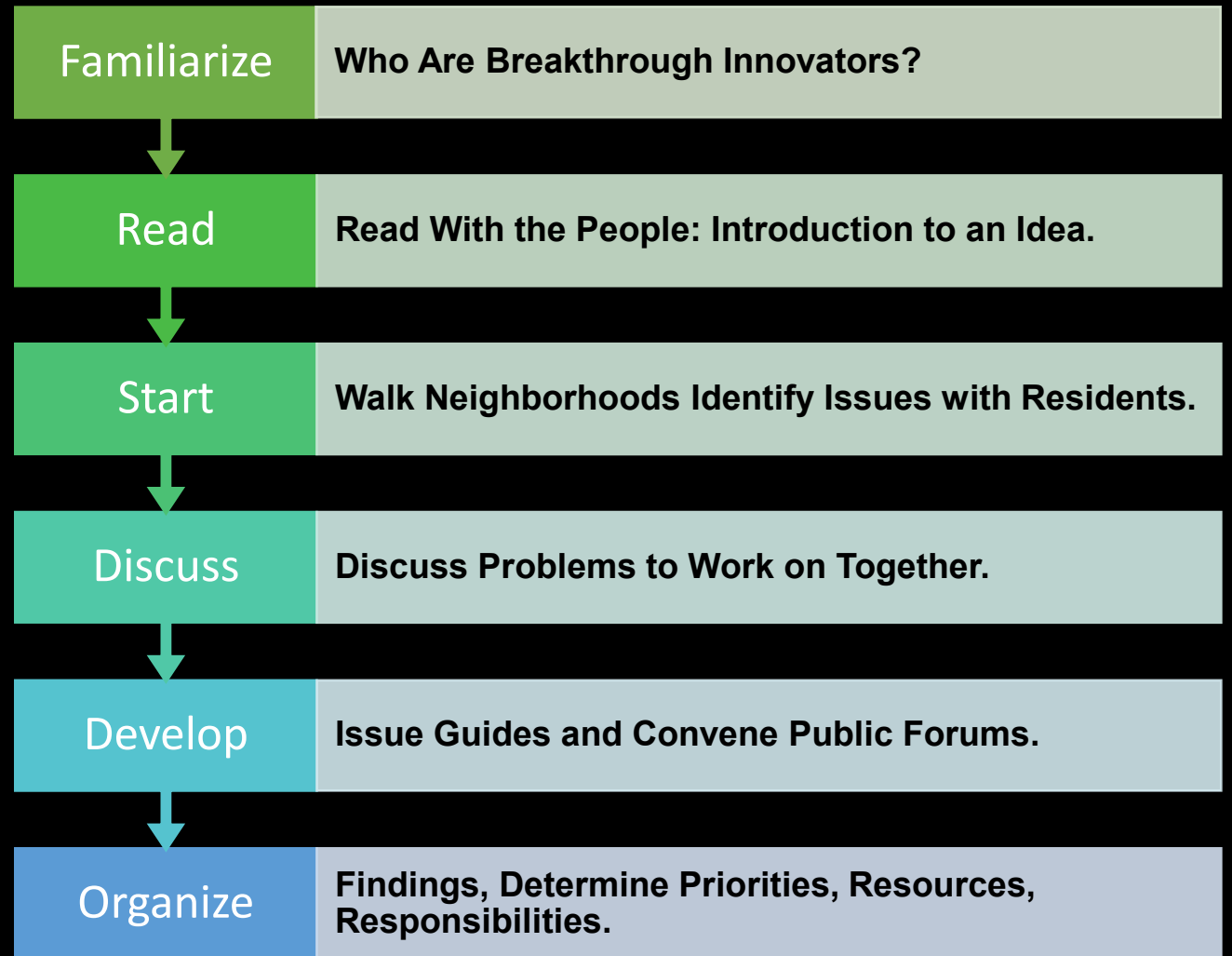
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**CREATE
CULTURE OF
LEARNING**

CREATE SPACES FOR CIVIC LEARNING

Recognize	Citizens must learn to work together and with public institutions.
Identify	All community resources and assets that can be leveraged to solve the problem.
Work	<i>With</i> citizens to create culture of learning.

GETTING STARTED



Learn Together: Create Culture of Civic Work

Create Opportunities for Citizens and Public Officials to:

- Find remedies for the mutual mistrust through shared work.
- Recognize citizens as coproducers of public goods.
- Align professional routines with the way citizens in communities work.

Complementary Public Acting Is the Democratic Coproduction of Public Work.

Division can occur based upon differences in values and goals-tensions and trade-offs must be worked through to reach common ground upon which to act.

People are not apathetic-they care about things that matter to them which may be different from what government wants to address.

Resources always exist to solve problems- it is a question of rethinking what these resources are within communities.

Deliberation is not a straight line, it is circular-may find need to rename and reframe issues.

Avoid “check-box” outcomes- process meets technical requirements but citizens have played no meaningful role in addressing their issues.



**GET 'ER
DONE**

**NO SILVER BULLET
WORK IS TRIAL AND ERROR
LEARN AS A COMMUNITY
WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS
DONE**

***“THE JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND
MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP.”
LAO TZU***



Recommended Resources



Kettering Foundation website:

<https://www.kettering.org/>



With the People: An Introduction to an Idea:

<https://www.kettering.org/catalog/product/with-the-people-introduction-to-an-idea>



Valerie Lemmie's Email:

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The Parable of the Blobs and Squares

[:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJDO1rcJbBw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJDO1rcJbBw)

THANK YOU!



QUESTIONS?

