Community coaching for creative placemaking

Leonardo Vazquez, AICP/PP

Executive Director, The National Consortium for Creative Placemaking Lecturer, The Ohio State University

Why creative placemaking?











NCCP creative placemaking model



How community coaching works

- Community (district, town, region) puts together a 'Creative Team' of 12-40 members. Team has at least 1 artist and 1 elected official.
- Coach works with the group for six to nine months on a set of goals
- Coach and team meet every 3 to 4 weeks for 2 hours
- Coach helps team develop a plan
- Coach helps group become a team with shared mission, goals, values, etc.
- Coaching sessions focus on what's important, not just on completing project
- Teams guide development of final plans

Louisiana Creative Communities Initiative 2013

Program design

Communities

- 10 communities throughout state selected based on application.
- Diverse types and locations of communities.
- Communities offered informational webinar
- Statewide Coordinator observes at least one session in each community
- \$3,000 award for successful completion

Coaches

- 20 primary coaches and deputy coaches selected based on application
- Coaches get one-day training
- Coaches reach out to team captains
- Coaches to prepare session notes and meet with program director at least monthly

Implementation

- March to October (though some went longer)
- Coach and deputy coach met with team every 3 to 4 weeks for two hours
- Team members prepared plan
- Team members presented plan at statewide gathering for panel review
- Teams either approved for \$3,000 grant, or asked to do additional work to complete their program

Results from Louisiana Creative Communities Initiative

- 95% of participants agreed that community coaching is a good way to engage stakeholders in community issues
- 94% said they feel confident that their team's work will lead to positive change in their community
- 92% said they are glad that they participated in community coaching
- 85% began building new working relationships because of community coaching
- 84% learned 'a lot' about creative placemaking through community coaching
- 84% said they learned more about how arts and culture can help make communities better
- 79% learned more about their community through community coaching
- 75% said they feel more confident about their ability to promote change in their community because of community coaching

Overall good results, but...

- Many deputy coaches dropped out of program
- Poor relationships between some teams and coaches made program more difficult to complete
- Changes in team leadership or coaches often caused major confusion and delays for teams
- Some coaches did not have enough knowledge of creative placemaking to be as effective information resources for teams

Lessons learned

- It is challenging
- Communities need good coordination
- Coaches need ongoing nurturing, learning and development
- Roles have to be well-clarified
- Changes in leadership or coaches can cause major delays
- Leaders arise, but hard to predict who they will be
- Well-coached teams adapt better to change