



Recalibration

IDEA's Learning Report

September 2012 - March 2013

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Institute for Democratic Education in America

*Compiled by Dana Bennis and Scott Nine
with the help and input of many*

Context

Introduction

Organizing. Showcasing. Learning. As we approach the three-year anniversary of IDEA's launch, there isn't a simpler way to articulate IDEA's efforts. With more people committed to the dream that is IDEA today than ever before, we are considering how to simplify and deepen our shared work.

This first ever "Learning Report" gathers and attempts to synthesize the journals and critical reflections of organizers, staff, and board members from the past six months. It is another step forward in our commitment to transparently share our learning. You'll notice a kind of informality in tone that might be surprising for what we've called a "report." This isn't accidental. We are inviting the kind of informality and trust that is critical to candor. We know that to see our reality more clearly is to take further steps towards developing real capacity, which we need in order to keep the promises we've made to each other and the many communities who can see their dreams in IDEA.

There are countless examples of communities, schools, educators, and young people who are coming together to create transformative change. And, there are ever more stories of people collaborating and "connecting the dots" across geography, context, and difference.

One thing the last three years has taught us is that there are few things more powerful than the healthy and important tension that exists between realism and dreaming. We've titled this report "Recalibration" to capture this tension and the way it has played out over the last few months within our work. IDEA is in an exciting period of growth, leadership development, and reconciliation between our visions and realities.

And as always, we invite your ideas, critique, and engagement.

A framework for making sense of the landscape



Education is a complex system - every young person, every educator, every parent, and every community are different and have different dreams.

Since IDEA launched in May 2010, we've been searching for a way to make sense of the educational landscape and our own engagement with it. To build a map of the key people and groups and the connections among them, and to track our own impact in a way that honors existing efforts and doesn't take credit for work that isn't ours alone.

That search led us to Outcome Mapping, a credible monitoring and evaluation tool used widely in international development work. Over the past 18 months, we've begun adapting this tool for use in education and community organizing**.

**For more about Outcome Mapping

IDEA's website has an [introduction to Outcome Mapping](#) with links to key videos and other materials about OM. You can also follow along with IDEA's [Implementation of Outcome Mapping](#) and learn more about the international [Outcome Mapping community](#).

Outcome Mapping (OM) starts from the premise that change efforts are primarily about people:

"It looks at how human beings relate to one another and to their environment. Most importantly, Outcome Mapping recognizes that development efforts will more likely be successful when they devolve continuing responsibility to local people and to local institutions." (OM brochure, www.outcomemapping.ca)

This fits IDEA's [values](#). OM provides a framework for capturing stories and tracking influence and contribution to change across IDEA's network and our "partners in change" through online journals and organizational practices we use to make meaning of our efforts.

This report is an outgrowth of our engagement with OM. Specific sources for this report include:

- Stories of staff and organizers, captured in journals submitted online, including:
 - 8 Outcome journals
 - 15 Strategy journals
- The Learning Together Session, held on December 19, 2012, which included all staff, 15 Senior Fellows and several organizers, 2 board members, and a few partners in change work
- The post-IDEA Camp survey
- Conversations of staff, Senior Fellows, organizers, board members, and key allies during the course of the last six months
- Organizer reflections from two-day gathering in Detroit, MI in online Google documents
- The IDEA board retreat in early March in Boston, MA.

The Future of Education and Public Narrative

Longtime organizer and professor Marshall Ganz writes, “When you do public work, you have a responsibility to offer a public account of who you are, why you do what you do, and where you hope to lead. The thing about it is that if you don’t author your public story, others will, and they may not tell it in the way that you like -- as many recent examples show.”

IDEA took steps towards owning our public presence when we published, [“Where IDEA Stands”](#) and our most recent [strategy document](#).

But several organizers and board members have argued for IDEA to make a more explicit analysis, rooted in history, of what is happening across the U.S. and Puerto Rico and to articulate a powerful narrative about the future of learning and moral imperative of this moment.

Here’s a snapshot from recent conversations among IDEA board members, staff, and organizers:

On Education’s Past

“The old way of education of the past 150 years is over and crumbling, and it is not clear what is coming. This transformation creates threat and new opportunity. IDEA is part of the new discourse that is coming.”

“Schools in the U.S. have been both powerful places of learning and liberation AND places of social control, assimilation, and exploitation.”

“The meme for U.S. education has been the same since ‘A Nation at Risk’ in 1983. We are falling behind in the world, we need to compete in the world. Schools get better through competition, test measurement and quantification. NCLB and Race to the Top, even waivers and the Common Core, are amplifications of this same strategy. The result: narrowing relevance of school, limited impacts on achievement gap, and loss of confidence in the public education system.”

On Education Today

“High-stakes accountability is out of gas. The new era is waiting to be born. But it is not clear what this new era looks like. In the traditional education sector: 3 million teachers are mourning the loss of a lifeway, they are hurt and afraid, do they have a role in what comes next?”

“My primary concern is the relationship shift from schools being within/a part of the community to the relationship of a school being separate from the community.”

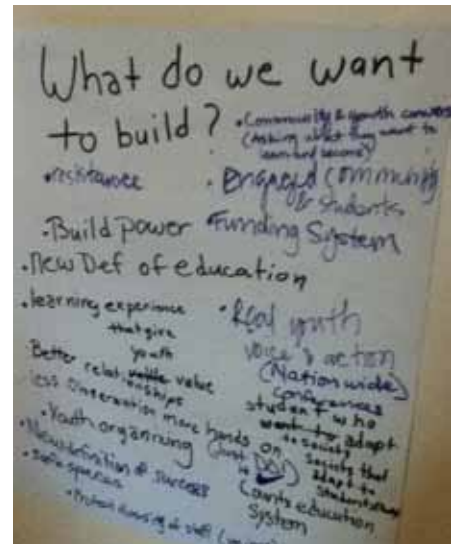
“The bureaucracy of the education system is incredibly complex, like a prison system. Shame and hierarchy is at the root of the educational DNA - and this is poorly adapted to our times. This is a dysfunctional way of looking at the world.”

“Class is becoming more and more at the center of the issue, in addition to race.”

“Your odds of being born in poverty and climbing out have decreased and never looked worse in the past 100 years.”

"The Internet and technology are changing the landscape. While traditional school is based on information scarcity, we are in an information abundance period. School no longer is the only or main provider of information. Learning is moving out of schools - online learning, MOOCs (Massively Open Online Courses), homeschooling, TEDx, iTunes U, Moodle are proliferating. The end of school has been proclaimed by education historians for decades, but it's really at hand now."

"Three routes can be seen in current response to the "shaking" that is happening. 1) More standardization --- waivers and Race to the Top is a new form of that. 2) Privatization -- corporate charters, large companies, testing companies create more "personalized learning" that is more responsive but also exploitative. 3) Third way: adaptive networks, resilient and creative responses that hold values."



"It's not a race. We want cookie cutter kids and everything to be safe and machine-like - no room for individual personality. Google and Microsoft want creative people - but getting zombies that aren't thinking critically. Need students to think critically."

"Detroit truly is ground zero for all the pieces of the corporatization sweep picking up. The word here in Michigan is "unbundling" - the remaining pieces of public education, its resources, its human capital. This is well-organized and well-funded here in MI. We need to educate ourselves."

"The relationship between communities and schools. I used to only think about what was "best for students" - what it means for students to have constantly rotating mentors, for students in Detroit to have 90% white teachers. And I didn't really think about what it meant for teachers to be displaced. Hearing about Detroit and talking with Jayeesha about New Orleans made me take a harder look at TFA, Americorp models - what it means when local teachers are displaced. Local, often black and brown teachers lose their jobs, then don't have the stability to provide in the same way for their own kids. That's affecting them before they even walk into the school building. [I'm] thinking lots about the 'community and education landscape together' - what is best for kids, but not to disconnect from what is best for the community. How do these 'reforms' impact whole communities?"

"We know what powerful learning looks like. We are as a society disconnected to that due to a number of forces. The influence of corporate forces and privatization, the linear standardization and efficiency model that's taking control, the denial of poverty and racism as key issues to face and their inherent connection to education - and the even more benign reality that many of us went through traditional modes of education and that is what we know. Yet there is lots happening that is great and led by young people, educators, parents, and communities, all around the country. People are coming together in and out of schools - that story needs to be told."

On the Future of Education

"The U.S. will be a 'minority majority' nation in 25 years, but 81% of teachers in the U.S. are white."

"Lots of not great things happening - but I also see a groundswell of real action happening. I couldn't say that three years ago. I used to post something about testing and I'd get lots of teachers pushing back. Now they are getting re-blogged. Students standing up to test. [There's] lots bubbling up - not sure what will take root."

"A key issue, in my opinion, is that most of the folks making the decisions have no clue or experience in regards to what our children need (once again - schools within the community and not as a separate entity). What are we going to do/what should we do to educate the communities on the truth behind the decision makers and the decisions that impact them both directly and indirectly as it pertains to public education?"

"Public accountability to the community being served by charter schools is a huge issue with privatization. Parents and students have no voice in the system being perpetuated - not to mention the dehumanizing and racist constructs undergirding 'urban education reform.' Detroit's community education models that we saw last week - not the corporate model aiming to taking root, where New Orleans has been "Ground Zero" since 2005 - are what I believe the future could look like: self-determined, intergenerational, multiracial, active, place-based, culturally relevant, centered in bringing more love and peace into our world."

"There needs to be a place for young people to go. Schools serve as childcare function now. How do we, as an organization, answer that question with creativity and imagination and values?"

"The future of learning will be both inside and outside of schools. There is wisdom and valuable experiences taking place both in and outside of formal school settings, and we ignore informal and out-of-school settings to the detriment of our movement."

MOVESTD

The guidance Marshall Ganz provides for building a [public narrative](#) is directly applicable for IDEA at individual, team, and organizational levels. We are uncovering the stories we have to tell, aligning them, understanding how we tell them in different contexts, and building an ever more powerful narrative together.

(Ganz, 2007, "Telling Your Public Story: Self, Us, Now." [Available as PDF](#))

IDEA's Role in the National Landscape

Santiago Rincón Gallardo, IDEA's board chair, recently described IDEA as helping to create a new electrical grid. He said, "The teams, tours, network connections, and organizational structures are like transformers and the stories and practices are the electricity that travels the lines."

Two stories help illustrate the ways in which IDEA contributes to educational change efforts by making connections, strengthening capacity, and building courage in individuals and groups. IDEA provides the "connective tissue" through which small things add up to real impact.

The Story of Vermont

When IDEA launched in May 2010, a few key Vermont colleagues helped us hold one of our launch parties in Burlington. Over the next year, we continued building relationships with educators, youth, community leaders, and education administrators. Four teachers from the Burlington and Winooski districts attended our first Innovation Tour in NYC in Spring 2011.

In 2011-2012, we selected four IDEA Organizers from Vermont. That group planned and held a Vermont Innovation Tour in May 2012. The tour took 30 people through four diverse sites: a comprehensive public middle and high school with a strong culture of student voice, an internship- and project-based school within a school, an inner city environmentally focused elementary school, and a nature-based mentoring program for youth during and after school.

The organizing around the tour, and the tour itself, led to the building of important relationships with Shelburne Farms (a highly influential place-based and environmental education center), the Mayor of Burlington and key community leaders in Burlington and Winooski, the Partnership for Change (a Nellie Mae Foundation-funded project to transform learning in Burlington and Winooski school districts), and other key individuals and groups in Vermont.

This led to creating Vermont place-based organizing more explicitly focused on connecting the dots across the state. Recently Senior Fellow Sarah Bertucci worked with IDEA staff to bring 30 students, teachers, and community leaders on a custom made Innovation Tour of NYC (talk about full circle!). Funded through the Partnership for Change effort, the tour has altered participants' perceptions of what is possible, created several new champions for more powerful and responsive learning environments, and given these change-agents concrete models that they are now incorporating into their work.

The Story of Detroit

In July 2010, Scott Nine and Jonah Canner collaborated with leaders of the Boggs Center and several other organizations to lead an educational dialogue among 450 youth and adults, called the People's Movement Assembly, during the U.S. Social Forum. At that event, Scott and Jonah had the opportunity to meet several key individuals, including Dr. Vincent Harding, a Civil Rights leader and scholar who was a speechwriter for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Grace Lee Boggs, longtime human rights advocate, author, and community leader in Detroit.

The People's Movement Assembly laid the groundwork for connections that would grow for years to come. Scott told Fred Bay of The Bay and Paul Foundations about Grace Lee Boggs and the amazing work happening in Detroit to rejuvenate the struggling city. Independently, Detroit educator Ammerah Saidi joined our initial team of IDEA Bloggers.

In 2012, we invited community leaders in Detroit to attend the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) held in Puerto Rico in March, and Marisol Teachworth, Jenny Lee, and Ammerah

were able to participate. At the IDEC, Fred and his colleague Marissa Barbieri connected with the Detroit leaders, who invited them to come to Detroit to see their projects firsthand. Marissa accepted the invitation, was deeply inspired by their work (particularly the Allied Media Project), and brought back her learnings to foundation and her colleagues in Vermont.

Throughout 2012, Scott Nine served on the planning committee of the North Dakota Study Group (an annual gathering of educators) and advocated, with others, for Detroit to be the site for the next NDSG gathering. That gathering happened in February 2013, with the participatory format inviting collaboration with 11 educational and community development projects within Detroit. IDEA brought 36 staff and organizers to the gathering, and Fred and Marissa also attended. The experience connected young organizers to a long history of struggle and visionary organizing, and made tangible connections between the Allied Media Project and IDEA organizers working in Vermont on Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements.

Locating IDEA in the national landscape of education

Here are the thoughts of IDEA organizers, staff, and board members on IDEA's role within the larger educational landscape:

"In the past 15-20 years, progressive educators have gone into hiding. IDEA puts these actors in a coherent discourse. We are about finding political voice around these issues at the local, state, and national level. Not being just a convenor - but stepping up, having values, fighting for our values and positions."

"IDEA is a powerful force for a new discourse. The discourse has to be matched up with practice -- or else we just have new, empty rhetoric. And learning needs to be linked with citizenship."

"Do we culturally have a commitment to the collective education of our children? This is a big and important question. IDEA can have a role in naming that, naming that as a commitment. What does it mean if we don't do that? And if the answer is no, then what?"

"IDEA is about the shift in paradigm to a different lifeway. Moving from thinking just about sustainability to thinking about regeneration. IDEA is not just about organizers, but also those from the development, and values-centered corporate world, etc. IDEA can connect people with shared values and a certain point of view and bring them all together."

"IDEA's value proposition: helping communities and schools regenerate and sustain themselves, to reach their stars. IDEA supports communities to define their paths forward within a set of values, bringing connection, capacity building, weaving stories together, and changing discourse."

IDEA's efforts live at the intersection of the direct experiences of young people, families, educators, and organizers and the macro-level forces that are less tangible but still affect them. This sets up a tension between organizers who are so busy making history that they don't have time to record it, with the need to weave together a powerful narrative across communities that can lead to substantial changes in practice and policy. One organizer said, "You cannot underestimate how thirsty we are for consistent and persistent framing."

Part of what makes the future the future is that it's blurry. And that's challenging because the future is also immediate and just a day away. IDEA is learning about what it means and what is required to be a movement-building organization. The rest of this document is dedicated to that learning.

"The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born."

—Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci

What we're learning about

Organizing

IDEA began with a model of community organizing across networks and in support of existing efforts by seeking a 5-7 hour per week engagement that complemented organizers' work in their communities and organizations and enabled them to collaborate with each other.

This year, we grouped more than 80 organizers into nine national teams and six place-based teams. Teams were organized around our work with Outcome Mapping, our commitment to place, and based on feedback from prior organizers about the need for increased leadership, focus, and shared projects.

Power of relationships and shared values as pathways for change

People often report to organizers and staff that what they first and most clearly identify with when they learn about IDEA is [our values](#). While missions and strategies can be difficult for people to connect with, by leading with our values we best enable others to “get” us and want to be involved.

Values have offered an organizing framework to help teams get past some of the barriers to change described later, including helplessness, fear, and a fractured movement.

Paul Perry, the leader of the Boston place-based team, recently shared that the Organizing Framework (page 11 of our [strategy document](#)) has been profoundly helpful in mapping who to speak with and how to weave together various efforts there.

Most of IDEA's efforts can be traced as relationship pathways (almost like neural pathways). Here are two examples:

- The Minnesota place-based team grew out of relationships that Dana began forging with state education leaders starting in 2011. Dana also connected with Ofir Germanic at the 2012 IDEC in Puerto Rico. This led to conversations with [IALA](#) and [MAAP](#) to help fund the costs of a place-based team. The team, led by Ofir, is holding monthly salons with a growing and diverse group and presented at a statewide education conference in March.
- Beginning with co-founder Melia Dicker and a few colleagues in the Jackson, Mississippi area, we built a relationship with Albert Sykes of the [The Young People's Project](#), who became an IDEA Organizer in 2011. Albert encouraged Noel Didla, Chuck Patterson, and Skipp Coon to apply. Each has been on national teams this year, while laying the groundwork for a powerful place-based team in Jackson next year.



Here's more on the power of relationships from the Learning Together session:

Noel Didla, Senior Fellow of the Community Leaders and Organizations team, talking about her team's work and her local work connected to other organizers:

There is so much going on in Jackson - and besides the IDEA Organizers in the room with us, Tyson Jackson is here (who works for United Auto Workers), as well as Joshua Edmond (who works there as well). There is a lot of ground-based organizing going on around the modern civil rights movement, which includes issues of public education. I see many possibilities with the work that we are doing and the way we are working within our Organizers, Networks, and Organizations group - and there are many ways to cross-connect with the other organizer groups and with the connections we have in Jackson and other communities. Jonathan is connecting with Berkeley and the John Hopkins Institute. There is SO much to share. Everything is leading up to IDEC, for sure. I'm trying to make sure that a lot of my connections lead to folks going to IDEC. The conversations we are having are key.

Sarah Bertucci, co-Senior Fellow for the Vermont place-based team:

One of the things we've been doing is starting "Learning Conversations." One of the questions we've had is, How can we engage people in the communities who may not feel comfortable or have the time to participate in these conversations. Finding a way to make people feel comfortable and included has gained a lot of reception and has helped keep communities connected.

Place-based teams are having an impact

From the Minnesota Team:

Things are really good here. Slowly we are building a powerful network of people and organizations who are invested in the ideas of democratic education. We had a really nice turnout for our Saturday Salon, but it's more than the number of people, it is the nice conversations we are having. We began with two Salons at the youth center where Ofir works. Then we met at a charter school and this time we met at Sage Academy. Our next meeting will be at St. Olaf College, where a group of students who've gotten engaged will host us. We also have a student from the University of Minnesota from both the youth studies program and the teacher college. State Representative David Bly couldn't make it this time, but he's been a solid team member and is always in the loop. He spoke with the chair of the education policy at the state House, and they will join us for our next gathering. The head of Parks and Rec for St. Paul is already with us. So are folks who work in MN Public Schools and a few principals. We are now up to 25 people or so.



There is real big frustration from "the system" and folks need to share that. And we've also decided our next gathering will solely focus on what's working - to hear those stories, and to begin planning for an event in June. We've gotten folks connected on Facebook and people are seeking larger leadership roles. We are thinking about how we might get folks on our place-based teams plugged into each of the national organizing teams to cross-connect.

Opportunity to deepen and expand place-based organizing

We currently have teams in Vermont, Oregon, Minnesota, Puerto Rico, NYC/NJ, and Boston, MA. There are concrete opportunities for teams in Jackson, MS; Milwaukee, WI; Detroit, MI; Worcester, MA; Beacon, MA; Iowa; Colorado; New Orleans; Greensboro, NC; and Arizona.

In general, place-based teams have had an easier time building momentum than issue-specific teams (e.g. Youth, Educators, etc.) by working across issues and focusing on outcome-oriented projects like building Innovation Tours. They have also conducted interviews with local leaders and scans of the local landscape.

The basic organizing model seems to work well for these initial efforts. However, as teams grow in size and need more robust strategies, they hit the limits of the organizing model. It's difficult to take advantage of every promising opportunity in 5-7 hours per week.

A handful of organizers have asked if IDEA should stop growing or even scale back to be sure to get place-based organizing "right" and not grow for the sake of growth over depth of relationship and impact.

Growing edges with national teams and building national strategies

IDEA's national teams are composed of organizers who are highly embedded in local projects within their own communities. We feel that this is essential for our work to be effective and sustainable. Arguably, some previous institutional change efforts have failed because they lacked local roots and long-term investment in the communities they targeted.

However, while the 5-7 hour per week expectation of IDEA organizers is a facet that allows us to grow sustainably and connect to diverse projects, it can be a challenge for organizers to act both locally and on the national level as well. Organizers have commented about the shortage of time and the challenge of building strategies that matter rather than just "doing something for our IDEA work."

It's important to note that the projects of our national teams are exciting, varied, and not insignificant, as organizers discussed in Outcome and Strategy Journals and during the Learning Together session. Examples include the community mapping work of the Community Leaders and Organizations team, the surveys of the Schools and School Leaders team about what makes a great leader, and the youth media projects of the Media team.

What has emerged in organizer, staff, and board conversations is that our goals of having national teams and a national strategy are on target, but our current structures need to evolve even further.

One idea we're considering is moving to one national team, which would have representation from each place-based team and each of IDEA's "partners in change." This team would focus on four "core drivers" of change:

- 1. Public Narrative**
- 2. Policy**
- 3. Practice**
- 4. Organizing and Strategy**

There are many other ideas and variations and questions on the table. What is the best way to build a national strategy across IDEA's network with our current resources? What groundwork do we want to be laying for the future?

Powerful learning about organizing from gathering in Detroit

Thirty-six organizers attended the North Dakota Study Group (NDSG) meeting in Detroit. Here's some of the nuggets of learning folks took away that relate to IDEA's efforts:

“One of the things that stuck out to me was the session with Shea Howell (from The Boggs Center)...about Detroit Summer and other projects and history. It made me think about passion, and how that moves things forward. We often focus on programming, but we need to remind ourselves to look at passion.”

“Being in the presence of Grace and Dr. Harding made the connection that we are in a long history of change makers.”

“Big takeaway: How can we have more spaces of reflective learning and deep listening from and with our elders? I’m thinking of creating those spaces in New Orleans, seeing how Detroit and NOLA are so similar in many ways. The things happening in Detroit are more sustainable, more determined by the community, for the community, as opposed to being by and from corporations.”

“How to learn from so many different communities in my own area. The format of the gathering [allowed us] to learn from the place. It gave me a push and desire to dig deeper in Minneapolis and to learn more about what is happening, even though it has a different history.”

“Two big takeaways. I thought about community first and education second. In sitting with Grace in her living room, it hit me that there’s a vast community around me I need to be engaging with. It was powerful and energizing for me, and it gave me hope. I was reminded that there’s a longevity to this. Sometimes I get tired, frustrated, feeling I’m not getting enough done. Seeing people who’ve been working for a very, very long time reminds me that it’s a shift, it won’t all happen right now. We need to keep working and working.”

Senior Fellow leadership and support

In our first effort to create more leadership and structure to teams, Senior Fellows were put in an awkward position. They were asked to come to IDEA Camp and very rapidly begin leading teams with only two conference calls prior and one 1:1 conversation with Scott. Our Senior Fellows are an impressive bunch that are used to jumping in and doing well. Yet to fully honor their role and our shared hopes, they may need more time, training, and support on strategies, history, tools, Outcome Mapping, expectations, and communication.



We can provide this kind of support in several ways, such as:

- Putting out a call for Senior Fellows (unlike what we did this past year with our open call for organizers) and begin working with them in-depth earlier in the summer.
- Meet with all Senior Fellows in-person during the summer. For the coming year, that could take place during IDEC 2013 in Colorado.
- Include an additional Senior Fellow day of training at the beginning of IDEA Camp before other organizers join.

On building teams

The School Leaders team has two members, and the Minnesota team is thinking of itself as 25 members (participants in monthly Salons). Both seem to be moving important work. What’s the right size of teams, and how they should be built? Some comments from organizers:

"We have a powerful team, but we are a lot to coordinate and it feels like most of my limited hours are spent trying to find a common meeting time."

"In the future, teams shouldn't be developed through the application process but built by the team leaders."

"It was really difficult for our team to not have everyone at IDEA Camp. It left us feeling disconnected."

"It's been a blessing to have a small team that's taken on a small, focused task that we thought we could accomplish and would matter."

"Now is a time, maybe, when IDEA can take the time to deepen its roots in communities and strengthen its focus and team approach for the journey that lies ahead."

On where organizing happens

IDEA has always maintained that change efforts need to connect across formal and informal school settings, universities, early childhood, after and out of school settings, community-based groups, and youth- and parent-led organizations, among other settings. There's wisdom and valuable experiences taking place both in and outside of formal school settings, and we ignore informal and out-of-school learning to the detriment of our movement. Our organizers include folks from all of these different groups.

In Jackson, Mississippi, IDEA organizers include Albert Sykes, whose work with the Young People's Project focuses on mentoring youth and supporting them to achieve their dreams, Noel Didla, who teaches English at a Historically Black University and is deeply involved in community efforts, and George "Chuck" Patterson, who is a community outreach coordinator for Tougaloo College and a social activist and entrepreneur.

In Minnesota, Senior Fellow Ofir Germanic and founding team members Genta Hayes and Stephen Martinez-Grande are largely youth workers, who connected with each other through the University of Minnesota's Youth Development and Leadership program in the School of Social Work. Their work is mostly with community programs, parks and recreation departments, and city-wide youth engagement projects. As they grow their team and hold salons to connect with others, they are inviting teachers and others from more formal settings to build those bridges.

Interestingly, organizer Don Ernst mentioned during the Learning Together session how those who are more deeply connected to formal educational settings may be less open to dialogue and change, as compared with those working at the community level. In Don's words:

At the academic or institutional level, the conversations are not so open and safe-feeling as opposed to community groups and organizations - churches, communities of color.

Maintaining momentum and knowledge from one year to the next

Over the past two and a half years, the staff, organizers, and board of IDEA have built many connections with individuals and groups and been privileged to learn from and with young people, educators, community members, researchers, and others around the country. At the same time, new organizers come with strong experiences and knowledge of their own.



This brings up two related challenges:

1. How do we best share IDEA's organizational experience and learnings with new organizers, knowing we have learned a great deal and have key insights and perspective to share; and
2. How do we best incorporate the knowledge and experience of organizers, board members, and allies into IDEA's organizational memory, and share that with other organizers, staff, board, and allies?

Using the right tech tools can be key here. Having everyone involved in IDEA's work -- staff, organizers, board, and key allies -- use [Batchbook](#) enables staff and veteran organizers to share their learning, and it brings in the connections of new organizers. This contact management system makes it easy to add contacts with notes and background information, tag those contacts by team to allow for easy searching and compiling of reports, and track email exchanges.

More thought is needed on additional ways to evolve our ability to share knowledge as a community.

Are we doing what we're supposed to be doing?

A tension exists between giving teams and their leaders creative autonomy and enough direction. IDEA wants to grow the collaborative and strategic capacity of young people, educators, and communities to spur powerful action AND we don't want to create overly programmed armies of organizers like those that have emerged from efforts like Stand for Children or Students First. If we want to foster criticality, we can't tell everyone to start marching. But if we leave folks empty of direction, they can flounder.

Here is some of the feedback we've received from our organizers this year:

"I have feelings of anxiety around not knowing what to do."

"I worry about the follow-through of other team members."

"IDEA may be growing too fast without a sense of itself."

"There is a lack of understanding about Outcome Mapping, yet a desire to contribute."

"I helped brainstorm the shift in organizing structure, but I haven't internalized it yet."

"The role of Senior Fellow is challenging -- I'm trying to figure out the path forward. There's a lot of pressure on the Senior Fellows to lead, to come up with something meaningful and tangible."

"With so many organizers, things feel incoherent. It's difficult to cultivate a participatory working environment."

IDEA's organizing efforts need stronger, clearer, simpler structures and communication. "This is the way we wash our hands" is the musical meme that we need to bring to our organizing work. We know what to do, the lyrics can change based on context, it's catchy, and we're all singing the same melody.

Showcasing

Elevating powerful stories

Two years of relationship building with like-minded organizations and change leaders throughout the United States has substantially increased our ability to generate and spread a powerful narrative.

The stories, frames, and messages pivotal to the vision of IDEA have seen growing recognition in both traditional and social media. The [press page](#) on IDEA's website includes links to many of these stories, including news stories covering our Innovation Tours, interviews with staff members, articles on our organizers, and stories recommending IDEA as a new voice in education.



More importantly, we've successfully integrated learning from Outcome Mapping to focus less on telling stories about IDEA "the organization" in order to focus instead on the stories of educators, young people, and communities who are engaged in powerful learning and change efforts around the country. With our digital media presence and 80+ organizers, this has led to more extensive coverage and influence. With leadership from our designers at Creative Distillery, we have redesigned the IDEA website with an eye towards story first.

The most potent example of these changes can be witnessed in IDEA's development and nurturing of ["A Year at Mission Hill."](#) Working with filmmakers Tom and Amy Valens, Sam Chaltain, and a producer from ABC, we took a documentary film and split it into 10 web-based chapters. Then, we created a platform for other organizations and networks to own and customize their own content around the story we wanted to spread. The result is that 50 organizational partners, including Rethinking Schools, Ashoka, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Urban Alliance (to name just a few) are all sharing the same story every other Thursday. IDEA releases each chapter with a powerful set of themed resources. Including YouTube views of the film's chapters, [a Prezi](#) about the film designed by the creators of Prezi, and in-person shares through our partners, total viewership is well over 100,000 and growing.

The strength of the promotion and partnerships are the product of relationships IDEA staff and allies have built over the past several years in addition to the relationships brought by our Senior Fellow Sam Chaltain, the Valens', and the funds and support of the NoVo Foundation, whose grant to us included \$56K for this project.

The strongest impact of this project is the pathways that have been established to share a story across unlikely partners that are connected by the values and framing of both the video series and IDEA. The success of a "A Year at Mission Hill" comes from the intersection and fruit of our efforts to organize, showcase, and learn.

Making the connection between storytelling and Outcome Mapping

Outcome Mapping (OM) is designed to be a way to share stories and learning across a broad change effort. Yet, the original presentation of OM at IDEA Camp focused on the nitty gritty details of partners, outcome challenges, and progress markers and failed to show its value as a means for storytelling. By not taking organizers through OM as a facilitated experience, we likely short-circuited the process of getting real ownership. The tools and journals of OM have often seemed daunting to organizers and as just another thing to do.

We've received this feedback about Outcome Mapping from our organizers:

"We're so busy making history, we don't have time to document it."

"When we are so busy and overwhelmed, we just don't take time to write and share the story."

Santiago told us about one simple idea that led to success in documenting his work with Dr. Gabriel Camara and teachers in Mexico:

"One thing that helped us was to go in the field with a notebook in our hands and write down things that caught our attention. Things that indicate challenges, things that indicate shifts. Fundamentally what we want is to capture what's going on with the work you're doing, in whatever way works for you. Then go to the form later and jot those things down. You don't need to fill out everything in the form, only what's relevant to what happened. The outcome journal becomes the final tool to use to report, but not the tool you go into the field with."

We need to keep considering this point about story and make further changes to the use of Outcome Mapping. Ideas include:

- Establishing a storytelling role within each organizing team.
- Consolidating the narrative questions in OM journals to allow the story to flow more.
- Having place-based teams build their own OM structures and identifying their own partners in change to help make the process more relevant and specific to their work.

Shift in the IDEA Blog

While we had great writers and stories shared on our IDEA blogs over the past several years, we struggled with low readership and a lack of connection to the organizing, showcasing, and learning we were doing as an organization. In the Fall of 2012 we re-launched the IDEA Blog with a more streamlined approach that offers a unique perspective on the news of the day, features curated comments from social media, and has a regular "wrap" feature to summarize the week's news.

Taking inspiration from [The Dish](#) by Andrew Sullivan, the goal has been to share powerful stories and original viewpoints knowing that staying in our own echo chambers prevents the dialogue and understanding that is essential for a democracy to thrive. Instead of enabling traditional comments on our blog posts, we're directing comments and feedback to our Facebook page and Twitter, to build from the dialogue and interaction already happening in these forums. We read through those comments closely and post the most interesting of them -- especially opinions that disagree with perspectives we've shared -- as follow-up posts in our blog.

The IDEA Blog has been a key way to network and highlight the many articles and press related to "A Year at Mission Hill" through [Mission Hill Wraps](#) and original posts. It has also served as a powerful way to showcase stories of change and movement involving IDEA Organizers and the broad IDEA community. Examples include Jayeesha Dutta's work with the [SEIU Local 21LA](#) to publish a groundbreaking report on the conditions of school service workers, and Aaron Regunberg and



the Providence Student Union's "[Take the Test](#)" action in which local community leaders took and commented on the Rhode Island state math test required for students to graduate.

Innovation Tours are Learning Tours

IDEA's Innovation Tours have been experiences where a diverse group of participants can see both the successes and the challenges of schools and places of learning. Host sites know they don't need to show the "polished" version of what they do, but to let participants into the hard spots, their struggles, and their mistakes.

We've recently been thinking about the word "Innovation" and that it may give off the wrong tone -- that all that matters is what's new and successful. IDEA's commitment to "focus on the bright spots" is important, AND, as Dr. Cornel West says, "You can't look forward without also looking to the past."

A powerful example is the work of organizers in Jackson, MS, who see the potential for a tour there that connects the history of the civil rights struggle with the current and future story of education in Jackson.

Changing to a title like "Learning Tours" may better recognize the root value of these tours and open up even more creativity for how they are designed.

From Scott's Strategy Journal on building the Oregon Tour:

"Innovation" puts pressure on each site to perform, and while we came there to see something powerful, what was most compelling was hearing about the challenges, history, and human stories of each place. By calling the tour a "Learning Tour" we thought we might open up what could happen at each location and deepen the experience of participants by being more able to explore what arises when comparing Ganas to A3 or thinking about the four places on a kind of continuum (early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school)."

Bundling the IDEA Library

The IDEA Library is an online database that helps make visible the vast amount of research, videos, schools, and information that make the case for democratic education. However, traffic is low. One recent idea is to take the information gathered in the library and package it into focused bundles on the hot topics that organizers, educators, and communities want to know more about. For example, a bundle on charter schools that helps share the best tools and resources IDEA knows about may be a more useful way to get this information out to folks who want it.

Learning

Content Changes Aren't Theories of Change

Taj James of the Movement Strategy Center recently helped us make an important distinction. Both “content changes” (changes in the “what” of education) and “theories of change” (the how) are important. And they aren’t the same. IDEA is interested in both. We are not alone and there are many important intersections and opportunities for collaboration among groups and organizations interested in social and emotional learning, empathy, education for sustainability, systems change, project based learning, proficiency based learning, self-determination, deeper learning, youth voice, teacher leadership, equity, and deep democracy. But these changes in content should not be confused with theories of change. Theories of change raise the question, “What actually supports changes in people and systems?”

Another way to say this is that we can’t act only as educators; we also need to act as organizers.

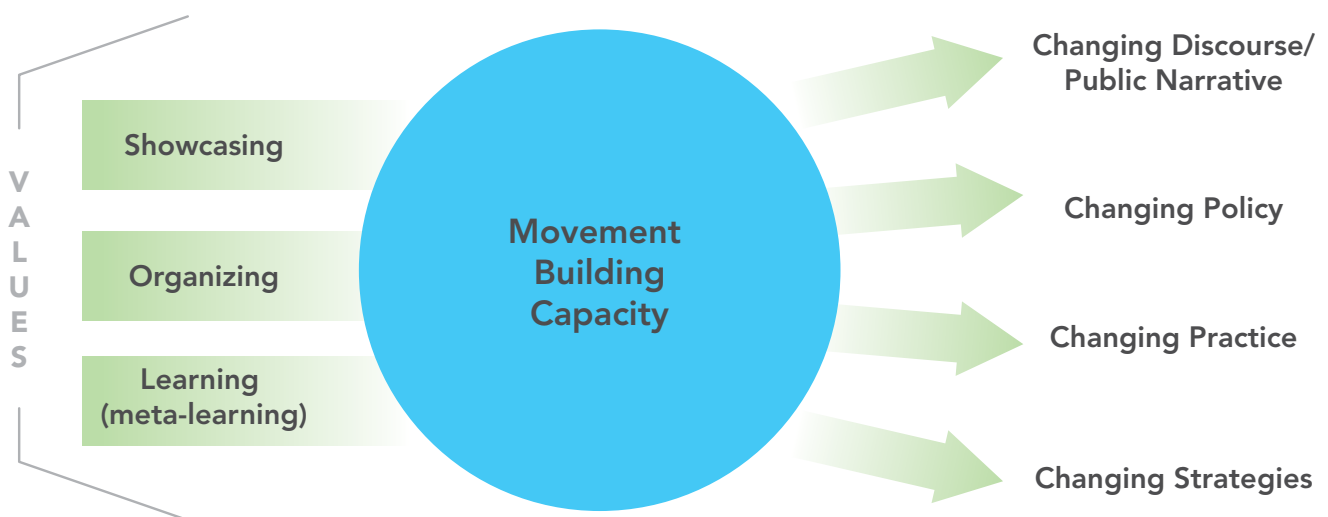
Four core drivers of change

Recent and robust conversations among board members in Boston and organizers in Detroit have offered a unique chance to identify common themes around what creates change. As we consider what can support national changes by teasing out what creates powerful change in schools, communities, and systems, a new theory of change has emerged.

It goes like this: Large or small, in school or out, powerful lasting change happens when there is coherence in four areas:

1. Public Narrative: how we talk about education and learning and frame what’s happening
2. Practice: what actually happens in real time among teachers and learners
3. Policy: the way rules and laws influence, support, or structure what’s happening
4. Strategy: how ideas are moved and navigated among different stakeholders

We drew this up as a way of thinking about what IDEA is up to from this frame:



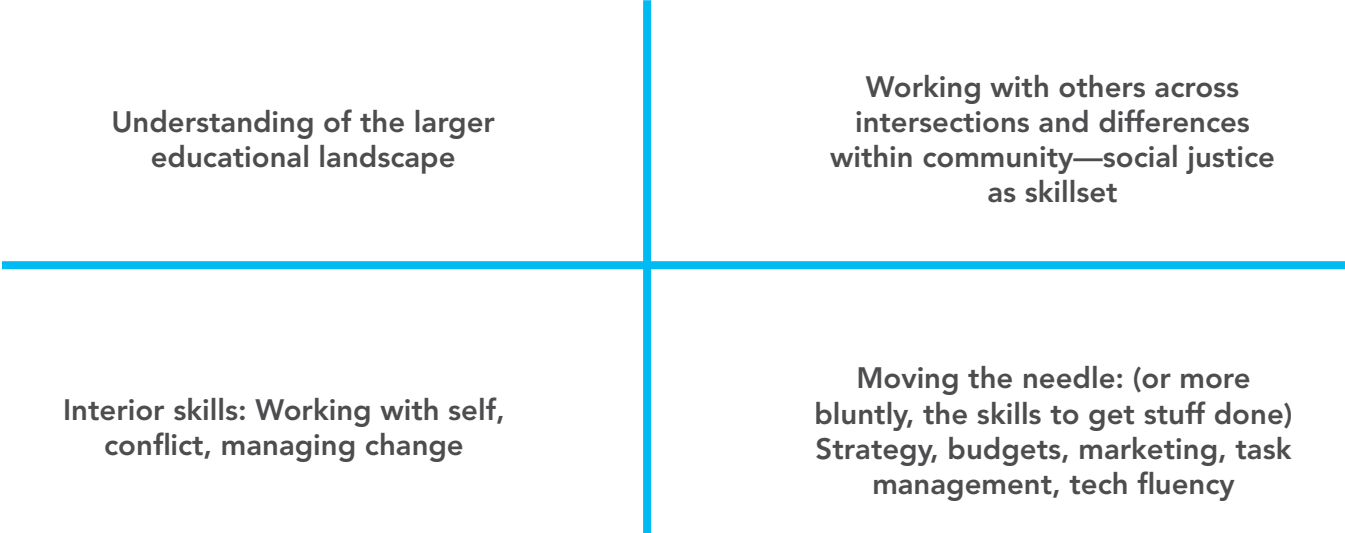
Identifying competencies for leadership and organizing within IDEA and the larger “sector”

How do we need to develop as people and teams to be the powerful change agents we want to be? This is a question many organizers, staff, and board members have been asking in various ways.

We neither want to work from a “deficit” perspective nor from a belief that we all have everything we need. If we are honest about the state of play, what kinds of skills and capacities are needed to lead and create change?

Israeli educator Yaacov Hecht once shared that as he got the democratic education movement off the ground in Israel, he realized that his team would need to create a training ground for incoming talent. This led to IDE’s partnership with a university in Tel Aviv and eventually the creation of a full undergraduate program (and now master’s degree) in democratic education.

After reviewing notes from 1:1 calls with organizers over the last three years and preparing for the hiring of the Director of Change Work, Scott sketched out this framework to attempt to articulate the skills we are growing together:



What kind of tools, resources, and strategies can IDEA employ to leverage our network and other partners to build a leadership pipeline (for lack of a better term) that raises the game of organizers, school leaders, and young people to more effectively create change?

How can we support not only individual development of these skills, but team and group development, recognizing that we don’t work in isolation?

What might this ask of IDEA internally, operationally, and programmatically?

We aren’t currently aware of any resources or training opportunities that work across or weave all four of these areas together. We have tracked tools and resources shared by organizers and others within each quadrant. Here are a few links to illustrate the four areas:

On moving the needle:

- <http://www.zapposinsights.com/about/library-list>
- [SOUL manual on organizational development](#)
- [IHI Open School](#) (quality improvement/change mgt)

On working in community:

- [SOUL manual on community organizing](#)
- [ABCD](#)



On understanding the larger educational landscape:

- [Frameworks Institute](#)
- [Navigating Through the Storm](#)
- [Grace Lee Bogg's most recent book](#)

On working with self:

- [Arnold Mindell: Sitting in the Fire](#)
- Seth Godin: [The Dip](#) and [Linchpin](#)
- Parker Palmer
- Margaret Wheatley

As Scott began sharing this with folks, he received these early comments:

"Searching for and sharing resources is a good idea, but I think the most powerful way to learn -- or hone -- skills is by gaining exposure to people who master the desired skill to a greater extent than you do. To learn to play soccer you go to a soccer field, where you can see masterful players in action, where you can see other apprentices with more mastery than you who can support your learning, and where you have a chance to try out and refine your own skills in a space that is safe to make attempts, fail, and learn from mistakes. With that in mind, I could easily imagine IDEA creating multiple opportunities for fellows and organizers to visit and observe each other in action, taking careful notes of what they do in the field and how they do it."

"One resource you might consider is Rockwood Leadership Institute. I'm not sure it is right for the fellows, but if you were to go through it, you would get some tools and resources that help bridge across three of the four areas. I think what IDEA needs to bring is the democratic education piece, because there isn't a group that supports development across those areas in education, that I know of."

"I'm grateful to you for sharing the leadership model you're working on. I've been laying it over a lot of my thinking and find it to be quite helpful in thinking through leadership and capacity. One of the big questions for me is around what children (and adults, too) need in terms of their development around feeling whole in themselves and feeling responsible for a just and sustainable future, and I think your framework has tremendous applications there, as well. Anyway, I'm very excited about it and am finding applications in my work constantly."

Continuing to build a multiracial learning community

Each word matters here. IDEA is grounded in an analysis that we all must deeply consider issues of race, poverty, class, and equity to accurately understand the challenges facing young people, families, and communities around the country. We know that we must openly discuss these topics among ourselves as a movement-building organization and do the self- and group-work necessary to act as strong allies for all young people and communities. IDEA roots itself in relationships because we know that to successfully change national policies and narratives, we must not only withstand challenges but be able to strategize and skillfully respond through the shaking and challenges that come when real decisions and real power are moving through our efforts.



We've benefited greatly from the wisdom and encouragement of folks like Dr. Vincent Harding, Grace Lee Boggs, and Linda Stout to build authentic multiracial community.

And our work continues.

Next steps in our journey include:

- Continue building a more multiracial and diverse staff, board, and organizer community.
- Applications to work or organize with IDEA can more explicitly seek understandings of how people understand and practice IDEA's values and include direct questions about race, class, and equity.
- Organizational libraries and orientation readings include anti-racist resources such as those shared with staff and organizers after IDEA Camp
- Conversations around race and equity are infused into IDEA Camp and other in-person gatherings.
- Continue racial affinity groups to provide space for exploration, support, and challenge

Identifying barriers to change: fatigue, fear, and a fractured movement

Organizers face many challenges. One set of challenges that stood out within the journals filled out by organizers and were shared during the Learning Together was a broad feeling of helplessness and fatigue of educational reform efforts on the part of those working for change; fear of the actions of other groups (be they aligned or opposing groups) and a fear of addressing certain issues; and, a tendency towards dividing into factions based on one issue rather than building from the vast commonalities groups share.

From the Learning Together session:

Don Ernst, organizer in Arkansas in the Other Actors team:

I still worry that there is a helplessness, or a yearning that is not able to be defined by teachers and others working to shift education.

Jay Chisley, organizer in Ohio on the Other Actors team:

I have been noticing that in the education community there seem to be a lot of fear when addressing situations that need to be addressed. There seems to be an unofficial rule that nobody address these issues. Instead of addressing the situations and issues regarding LGBTQ kids, or other underserved kids, many folks just fear the conversation and don't reach out to have that conversation. The fear is stifling addressing issues that definitely need our attention. Nobody is saying, "How about we go in and see what's wrong....?"



Dena Lagomarsino, Senior Fellow of the New York / New Jersey place-based team:

In New York, it seems like a really awesome and frustrating place to be having these conversations. There are SO many organizations that already exist -- trying to connect them or see ways for them to work together is difficult. I've been meeting with folks in NJ and NY, and we've come up with a litany of at least 30-40 different groups that could benefit from conversation together. Some of the conversations that have come up are ones of opposition due the focus of other groups, for example: "Yeah, we know about organization X, but they are focused on standardized testing and we're just not into that..." and on and on with other organizations and issues... I'm beginning to see that things are a little slow going in such a fast-paced place in regards to educational change and collaboration.

Infrastructure

Do we have the tools we need to do our work?

In seeking to be efficient, collaborative, and savvy, IDEA staff employ a number of technology tools. We use QuickBooks and Intuit Payroll for our finances; [Batchbook](#) for contact management; [Asana](#) for task management; [Fundly](#) for fundraising; FB groups for sharing across teams; and [Google Docs](#) (now housed in Google Drive) for shared collaboration on documents. With new staff leadership in charge work and development, now is a time to evaluate the tools we are using and explore if in some cases we may not even have the right tech tools.

Having the right tools is not the same as teaching and using them well

We've made a significant investment in Batchbook as a core part of our strategy, we've done a mixed job of supporting organizers to get comfortable and use this tool effectively. The same could be said for others.

One important step for the future is that technology learning sessions (such as those at this past year's IDEA Camp) need to be given more context in relationship to strategy and history AND need to be taught through practical application --- doing real work together as we learn, rather than holding an abstract instructional session.

One organizer wrote in the post-IDEA Camp survey:

I also was really challenged by some of the formats. I don't learn well looking at a screen or having people read from screens to me. I missed a lot, so maybe there were more interactive components, but I felt confused and underwhelmed by things like the Asana presentation, and the workshop on curating and how to use Facebook.

Another idea to consider is to focus on teaching Senior Fellows the tools first and then have them teach their teams once they are comfortable using them.

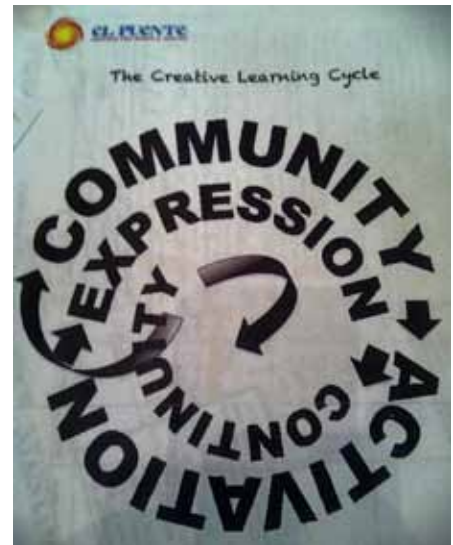
Everything IDEA in one place

One very clear need Senior Fellows and organizers have expressed is the need to get all the key tools and links in one place -- so everyone knows where to go, knows what to do ("This is the way we wash our hands") and can see how the parts add up together. Organizers' limited time engagement makes it important to not waste time finding and sorting through emails and documents. IDEA Staff are working on completing this as soon as possible.

Our use of Outcome Mapping is new and powerful

When Kirsten Olson, IDEA Board Member and an education author, speaker and consultant, learned about our adaptation of Outcome Mapping, she said, "I believe we are creating something that's never been done in the education sector. This is the strongest and most coherent vision of educational change that I have seen."

Santiago Rincón Gallardo, IDEA Board Chair and education organizer and researcher connected to school change projects in Mexico, said, "I wish we had such a clear format in Mexico when we began."



Even now we don't have such a clear format."

Educators, organizers, community leaders, and foundation representatives have told us that our use of Outcome Mapping is pioneering and has huge potential.

And . . .

A simpler, story-based, more fully owned adaptation of Outcome Mapping is needed

In piloting Outcome Mapping (OM) this year, staff made a choice to use the in-depth work of organizers, staff, and board from the prior year for a new year's organizing effort and team structure. That has worked well to create exposure, interest, and pose new challenges (all things you hope for in a pilot) but has not offered the ownership or clarity required for and essential to OM.

Outcome Mapping is a tool we think can help all of us understand what's happening and provide a framework to hold the potency of learning and impact that IDEA contributes to across communities, organizers, and networks. Our effort to use OM as tool must find ways to bring out the wisdom, experience, and stories of our organizers and partners in change -- and not just be another "to do" or obstacle.

Santiago Rincón Gallardo's work with Gabriel Cámara in Mexico seems instructive. Santiago says:



"We risk losing and turning people away if we place more importance on a form or structure than on the lived experiences of the people we are making change with."

There are number of ideas brewing from organizers, staff, and board members on how to move forward with IDEA's use and adaptation of Outcome Mapping:

"Rename the whole system 'story mapping' and take all organizers continuing into the next year through the whole design process. This can give folks tools for their own organizations and for local organizing, and it's the only real way to get everyone engaged with full ownership and understanding. Revise the tools so they focus on story and embed 'story mappers' into each team to help document what's happening and get the info needed for staff for larger reporting on impact."

"Move away from seven 'boundary partners' and create one set of 'progress markers' for folks working on the ground and another for macro-level actors. Have one national team working on both directions and weaving across the place-based teams."

"Look at all the language, terms, and process and really own OM and put IDEA's own stamp and values on the entire process."

"Stick with it. It is a lot to chew on, and it takes time for folks to take in such a big endeavor. It's worth it, essential even. Don't be dismayed by the complexity and challenges."

On culture (the “air we breathe”)

While folks often separate infrastructure from culture, we think that they belong together. What’s more essential to organizational functioning than the culture that flows through the work? Over our three years as an organization, IDEA has begun to develop distinct culture that defines who we are and how we relate to others.

A primary principle of “valuing learning more than knowing” shows up across organizing teams, staff work, and with the board. During our search processes for two full-time hires (more than 35 interviews), applicants described IDEA as values based, adaptive, creative, entrepreneurial, human, and deeply collaborative.

Board member Stephanie Rogen says:

“IDEA is a movement. The heavy lifting is done by our shared ecosystem and not so much by our infrastructure. ‘The story is not about IDEA’ says a lot about what IDEA is all about.”

At the same time, we’ve been exploring critique and the shadow side of our culture. This includes concerns that:

- We’re trying to do too many things, leading to a culture of everyone feeling too full. This can leave folks with feelings that they aren’t doing enough or need to be doing more.
- We’re not focused enough on what’s most important. We can get distracted by what’s immediate or urgent and not move from a grounded place of vision and strategy.
- We’re inconsistent.
- We need to take a stronger stand and voice in the national discourse. This ranges in topics from equity and structural inequality to charter schools and privatization.
- All voices and dreams, especially those from historically marginalized communities, aren’t fully represented in organizational leadership.

Next Directions

So what, now what?

A few wise elders have repeatedly told us that part of the normal reaction to doing something new is confusion. And, that while we hear lots about and need to “walk the talk,” we don’t often give enough consideration to the importance of “talking the walk.”

IDEA’s forward journey is bound up in our shared ability to explore and take next steps together. This is rooted in both recent and more distant history, as well as creating new narratives where the future is a little blurry.

In the spirit of “talking the walk,” here’s one possible vision that ties together many of the ideas and lessons shared above. Our real next steps will come from the ideas and discussion generated in the coming weeks and months via this document and through 1:1’s and team meetings.

One possible way forward

IDEA’s work in 2013-2014 brings greater focus to our efforts to make the critical connections and share learning across multiple contexts and communities.

Place-based teams become the central moving pieces as we grow from six place-based teams to eight and deepen our existing commitments. And we seed five to seven new place-based efforts to further work in places where we already have relationships like Detroit, New Orleans, Milwaukee, and Worcester, MA. Each place-based team moves through a Story Mapping process with their likely partners that identifies a vision and pathways that contribute to that vision. Teams identify members who focus on each of their local partners, and they are connected with members from other place-based teams around the country working with similar partners.

The seven national teams from this year are consolidated into one team composed of key actors that cross the national partner groups. The national team works in tandem to create national strategies and narrative focusing on each partner group (e.g. youth, educators, parents, media, etc) and supports and weaves the place-based teams’ efforts.

Each place-based team has a designated storyteller. A role evolved out of digital organizing, the storyteller documents the team’s work through Story Mapping, the IDEA blog, Batchbook, and traditional and social media.

The digital organizing team consists of place-based storytellers and a small team focused on national communications strategy and coordination.

These moving parts are bolstered by a shared national campaign and the IDEA Learning Collaborative.

The national campaign would offer up a touchpoint (like “A Year at Mission Hill” has, and IDEC 2013 will) to link together all aspects of IDEA’s work and continue building partnerships with national and local actors.

Running alongside that campaign, the IDEA Learning Collaborative would bring teams of people together from diverse settings and networks to solve a common challenge, guided by the core question:

How can we transform and sustain meaningful education for all young people, while honoring the wisdom and differences of varying local contexts?

The teams in the Learning Collaborative include each IDEA Place-based Team, along with teams from communities, schools, and districts that are connected to invited national partners. These national partners would likely include National Community Learning Exchange sites, Ashoka's Start Empathy Initiative, CASEL's key districts and communities, Alliance for Educational Justice's youth organizing groups, and Nellie Mae district change sites (to mention a few).

The Collaborative focuses on the core question and four drivers of sustained community change:

1. Public Narrative: how we talk about education and learning and frame what's happening
2. Practice: what actually happens in real time among teachers and learners
3. Policy: the way rules and laws influence, support, or structure what's happening
4. Strategy: how ideas are moved and navigated among different stakeholders



Over the course of 18 months, the Learning Collaborative alternates three five-day Learning Sessions with three six-month Action Periods. During each Action Period teams implement the plans they developed across the 4 drivers during the Learning Session, study the impact of those plans on their partners, and stay in close contact with other teams and the IDEA National Team for coaching and support. At each Learning Session, teams refine their plans, learn from other teams, and gain new insights to help move their work forward. The Collaborative concludes with a Final Summit during which teams present their work and findings and make recommendations for the future, all in front of a diverse audience of educators, young people, community members, and policymakers.

IDEA's Staff and National Team helps weave all of this together and use the findings of the summit to further build a national policy agenda and strategy.

Conclusion

As this a true Learning Document, we're not wrapping it up with final decisions or directions. IDEA's work to build the conditions for transformative change with youth, educators, and communities is an ongoing process of engagement and collaboration. The story is well underway, and our goal in this document has been to share some of the key reflections, questions, and learning that can help us all move forward with intention and courage.

We hope you have comments and suggestions bubbling up, and we want to hear from you. Please share your thoughts - you can email feedback to Dana Bennis at dbennis@democraticeducation.org, or contact us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or by phone at 800-878-5740.

"You cannot create a movement, but you can prepare for one."

- Dr. Vincent Harding