Let’s Talk:
The Role of Deliberation in Community Problem Solving

Today’s elected and appointed officials are experiencing record levels of community mistrust while concomitantly attempting to address challenges and issues that don’t lend themselves to traditional solutions or easy fixes. Increasingly, they are expected to fix “wicked” community problems (problems that are difficult or impossible to solve) in the midst of fiscal constraints, questions of legitimacy and accountability, and growing citizen expectations and demands. This session explores how communities where citizens engage as co-producers in making progress on wicked problems are able to identify, build, and develop shared ownership and responsibility for these problems in ways that promote democracy and add value to community life. Specifically, we will examine how citizens and government officials can work together to name and frame community problems, find common ground for action through deliberation, and decide on the complementary actions they might take to solve these problems that implicate everyone in the solution — not just government alone. In this session we will demonstrate deliberative decision-making, examine the role of deliberation in community problem-solving, and explore ways to provoke deliberation.

Think Ahead Questions

- How do you believe citizens that feel sidelined and reluctant to get involved can be engaged?
- What work are you doing with citizens in your community that you can build on to address challenging community problems?
- What role should citizens play if communities are to succeed?

Session Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:30 Kettering Foundation Research on Making Democracy Work as it Should
11:00 Coffee Break
11:15 The Role of Deliberation in Community Problem Solving
12:15 Reflections
12:30 Adjourn

Please Note: All BUILD breakout session will be held under the Chatham House Rule: participants are encouraged to share any photos or information from the session, but may not attribute any quotes to individuals.

Stay connected while at your session via BUILDConnect or Twitter #GMFBUILD. Session Summary will be posted to BUILDConnect.
Recommended Reading

Below are some recommended readings that will help participants to prepare for the session. We encourage you to read a few of these prior to the session!

- Suggsville USA: A Composite Case Study of Democratic Practices in Communities
- Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning
- The Essential and Inherent Democratic Capacities of Communities
- Blog by Alice Diebel, Program Officer, Kettering Foundation, 03/07/2014
- The Four-Legged Stool
- Crossing the Great Divide: Coproduction, Synergy and Development
- Collected Essays: Kettering Foundation International Residents
- Democracy Beyond the Ballot Box: A New Role for Elected Officials, City Managers and Citizens
- Kettering Foundation website