Indicators as a Tool for Community Engagement

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Today’s objectives

- Explain how practitioners can use indicators to engage more deeply with marginalized communities.
- Introduce the concept of formative indicators.
- Explain engagement, translation, and problem identification.
- Provide examples of formative indicators processes in practice.
What are indicators?
Two Indicator Frameworks

**Formative**
- Before and/or during project
- Participatory
- Utilization focused
- Shapes project design and implementation

**Summative**
- End of project
- Expert-based
- Reports long-term progress toward objectives
- Often used for grant/funding reporting
Defining problems is power

Crosby and Bryson, 2005
Indicator/Problem nexus

![Diagram showing the Indicator/Problem nexus with Engagement, Problem identification, Community knowledge, Professional knowledge, and Translation in a cycle.](image-url)
Meaningful engagement
Problem identification
Translation
Outcomes

- Community-based formative indicators
- Previously hidden issues brought to the surface
- Community activism
- Accountability for public agencies
- Increased individual and organizational capacity
Take aways

1. Indicators provide legitimacy to community stories

2. Marginalized communities of color must be engaged in identifying and defining community problems

3. Non-coercive public participation processes can lead to uncovering and/or reframing of issues

4. Data collection enables formative indicators

5. Formative indicators empower communities