



## COOKING UP COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THAT IS MEANINGFUL FOR EVERYONE

jesikah maria ross, CapRadio - January 14, 2022

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There are some key ingredients that make engagement work – CapRadio’s jesikah maria ross has been doing this for a decade and she’ll walk us through a few different projects to share what works, and what doesn’t. This very interactive session will focus on the “secret sauce” of true engagement and will challenge participants in breakout rooms to workshop how these ideas can apply to their own communities and journalism.

*Presenter’s Note:* you are welcome to share, borrow, adapt and use all this info in any way that supports community engagement, participatory journalism, solidarity and mutual aid!

### What we’ll be doing today

- Walking through a few reporting projects that are fueled by community engagement
- Teasing out key ingredients that make community engaged journalism successful
- Brainstorming, breakout groups and Q&A to make these ideas actionable for you!

### What makes participation meaningful?



## JMR's secret sauce

- Design for meaningful participation (see qualities in word cloud above!)
- Creating community partnerships
- Help meet partner/community needs through your reporting
- Sharing stories and resources back with them!

## Project Examples

### [Hidden Hunger](#)

#### *Getting started*

- One-on-one conversations with key leaders to learn about issues and local solutions.
- Stakeholder convenings that invited people on the front lines into our editorial process by naming and framing issues, impacts and solutions
- Established project partnerships with four anti-hunger coalitions
- Formed advisory group that met monthly for a year to develop and implement engagement plan (goals, roles, activities) and help guide newsroom reporting

#### *Making it meaningful and mutually beneficial*

- Created mobile storybooth that traveled to area food banks to record stories
- Produced [Website](#) with stories, photos and resources designed to meet partner needs
- Hosted public events that brought community members together to hear and discuss the reporting and move the needle on addressing hunger

#### *Sharing power*

- Partners selected food banks and recruited storytellers
- Partners gave input on reporting throughout the project
- Partners helped shape event plan and select speakers and stories

#### *Sharing stories and resources*

- Hidden Hunger Storybooth [website](#) with stories, [community conversation toolkit and Sacramento area resource list](#)

### *Lesson Learned*

- Community events, especially large ones, require a lot of staffing. I was only able to do this because we had committed partners who helped plan, promote and staff them.
- Events also require a lot of lead time for marketing and collaborative planning. We rushed these and I ended up working crazy overtime and stressed our marketing staff - plan accordingly!
- Reporters were invited and acknowledged at the conversations events, but were never assigned follow-up stories. Huge missed opportunity.

## Place And Privilege

### *Getting started*

- Used the same process as Hidden Hunger! Except that the advisory group met for six months (vs a year) and included individuals as well as organizational representatives

### *Making it meaningful and mutually beneficial*

- Developed [Community conversation guide](#) that draws on the radio stories and dialogue methods to facilitate conversations about housing affordability
- Hosted [Story Circles](#), where people told personal stories about when housing made a difference in their lives as a springboard for looking at common themes, needs and how they might work together

### *Sharing power*

- Partners gave input on reporting throughout the project
- Partners selected and co-hosted Story Circles
- Partners helped create the Story Circle Guide

### *Sharing stories and resources*

- Set up a photo booth at the Story Circles to share community voices back with participants, projects partners and advisors
- Put images and stories together and did [Instagram Takeover](#)
- Created a [Story Circle "How-To" Guide](#) so partners could continue the conversation

### *Lesson Learned*

- Useful but hard to have a wide range of advisors - they have very different needs and availability for meetings
- Try Story Circles instead of convenings - builds trust and hear wider range of voices
- Instagram makes people feel seen and organizations love to share your posts

## Rural Reporting Project

### *Getting started*

- Reached out to an influential community leader who was well respected
- She helped bring Cooperative Extension, Public Health departments and the Arts Councils for both counties together for an informal listening session
- Formed partnerships and informal advisory group that met weekly for a month and half
- Partnered with NSPR since our footprints in some parts of these counties overlapped and they covered pockets our signal didn't reach
- Co-created an online [Survey](#) asking residents about their needs and concerns as well as how they were finding moments of comfort or inspiration
- Collectively developed an outreach plan, with each advisor identifying organizations, local leaders and networks that they would personally share the survey with

### *Making it meaningful and mutually beneficial*

- Shared our survey data with partners - providing insights and information that helped them better understand and serve their communities
- Involved advisors in our editorial meetings - reviewed survey data together to identify top needs and interests and help select and frame stories
- Aired 7-part weekly features series on NSPR (in addition to CapRadio) based on the community feedback

### *Sharing power*

- Advisors helped develop survey questions and suggest appropriate/relatable language
- Advisors received survey data
- Advisors participated in editorial meetings and co-created Storybudget

### *Sharing stories and resources*

- We asked in survey how residents wanted us to share stories back with them
- They told us about specific Facebook groups and community newspapers
- We posted stories to the the Facebook groups each week
- Provided community newspapers with story copy and images each week to reprint
- Sent email newsletter to survey respondents with story links

## Additional Resources

- [How CapRadio puts the audience at the center of storytelling](#) (Local News Lab)
- [5 Tips for Successful Public Media Collaborations with Partners](#) (MediaShift)

- [How CapRadio connected with rural audiences during the pandemic](#) (Current)
- [10 strategies for creating powerful conversations via public radio events](#) (Gather Blog)
- [Doing journalism with communities - 12 tips](#) (Gather Blog)
- [JMR Participatory Journalism Playbook](#) (Listening Post Collective)
- [Powersharing](#) (Kim Bui)

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