

ASPIRATIONS TO ACTIONS

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

Learn more every month about how to turn aspirations to actions, follow this link to [A2A's May Newsletter](#).

Interested in learning more about Aspirations to Actions? Subscribe to the newsletter [HERE](#).

HOW A2A PUBLIC INNOVATORS TURN OUTWARD

Public Innovators that are part of the Aspirations to Actions (A2A) Initiative are using The Harwood Institute's Turning Outward approach to make progress on community challenges and transform the civic culture of Sarasota and Manatee counties.

Turning Outward means developing a deep knowledge of one's communities and making more intentional choices and judgments with the community as the reference point. It means developing programs and strategies that not only will make progress on collective challenges, but do so in a way that builds the conditions that make communities work.

We use this Practice Arc to identify where we are in developing the practice of Turning Outward and what we can do to continue to move forward. You can use it the same way.

ANCHORED IN ACTIONS AROUND THE REGION

Turning Outward Leads to Partnerships and Promise



[Click image to watch Kindergarten Registration and Readiness Literacy Bags 2017 video](#)

Two of my favorite consequences from turning outward are the new relationships that form and the new ideas that come together to create new realities.

Last year, I was asked to participate in a task force with Sarasota County Schools to look at ways to

strengthen the transition from pre-k to kindergarten. I was also asked to participate in strategy meetings with a coalition of early learning

	STAGE 1		STAGE 2	
	Launch	Starting the Work	Taking Action	Deepen and Spread
Public Innovator Lead	Up to Month 1	Months 2-4	Months 5-7	Months 8-18
When You Should Show Up	Focus on community shared aspirations	Address early engage community and align roles	Identify and set an explicit strategy of change that is clear, bold, and unique	Adapt the right mix to your practice
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a shared knowledge from engaging community to look for mutually generating and aligning Align knowledge from engaging community to design practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and set an explicit strategy of change that is clear, bold, and unique Develop a shared knowledge necessary to community change Develop "what to do next" disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop networks for resource and building

Project Components	Public Innovation Lab	Monthly Coaching Calls	Monthly Coaching Calls	Monthly Group Coaching Calls	Monthly Group Coaching Calls
<p>CHALLENGE: What should we be doing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop your challenge statement together in the Innovation session. 2. Use the Ask questions with people in the community. 3. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 4. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 5. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 6. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 7. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 8. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 9. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 10. Share the Ask questions with people in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider how you will use the Community Conversation to engage with the community. 2. Consider how you will use the Community Conversation to engage with the community. 3. Consider how you will use the Community Conversation to engage with the community. 4. 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[Click image to enlarge](#)

Public Innovators from the library systems in Sarasota and Manatee counties who participated in the September 2017 Lab are actively engaged in the cycle of public innovation. They are turning outward by having community conversations to gather public knowledge and learn what community members want, what challenges they face in realizing these aspirations, and what changes are needed to overcome them.

professionals in Manatee County. During the meetings with both groups, relationships were formed. In time, we were able to facilitate the sharing of ideas and resources between the two counties.

Early this spring, I was approached by members of Sarasota County School's task force. They had been speaking to parents and early learning educators and had determined a need for Kindergarten Readiness Bags. These literacy-based bags would have flash cards, magnetic letters, crayons, writing & drawing paper, and an alphabet chart. The task force wanted to use the bags to incentivize early enrollment in kindergarten and help prepare the incoming kindergarteners to be ready for the first day of school.

I took the idea to Manatee County and was told they had recently piloted some Kindergarten Readiness Bags provided by United Way. They were able to show me a prototype of the bag which included many of the things on the wish list from Sarasota County, and a few additional items including an age appropriate book. The bags from United Way were thought to be too expensive to provide to every incoming kindergartener in the Title 1 schools in both counties, but all parties felt we could procure supplies to assemble Kindergarten Readiness Bags of our own at a reduced cost.

With high interest from professionals in both counties, we began to purchase the items needed for 2,500 Kindergarten Readiness Bags. Volunteers from both counties helped us to assemble and deliver the bags in time for distribution at Kindergarten Round-ups in every Title 1 school in both Sarasota and Manatee counties.

Once we began handing out the bags and listening to feedback, additional components were added to the project. A [Parent Guide](#) was created listing activities parents can do with their children to help prepare them to be kindergarten ready. We also arranged for [Kindergarten Readiness Play Days](#) for parents and children at local libraries throughout the summer months. Our friends at Rotary Club of

Sarasota Foundation saw the bags in action and immediately asked how they could help to provide similar bags for next year's students.

The connections we've make from turning outward continue to reap benefits for our entire community.



Community conversations can be so productive when the questions are open-ended to reveal aspirations, concerns, trust, and offers of solutions. When people share themselves with others, a unique dynamic occurs.

When organizations turn outward and seek public knowledge, their value increases. First, the organization is actually serving the community by strengthening authority, authenticity, and accountability.

Authority comes from being able to speak about people's reality. Authenticity is confidence in knowing that work reflects the reality of people's lives. Accountability is established in actions meaningful for people.

Second, potential connections to others in the community lead to positive change and movement towards a common desired outcome. Imagine talking with many small groups of people, discovering a common thread of interest, and then linking the interested groups to take action on the common goal.

Third, talking about aspirations with fellow community members has shown to be therapeutic. Several recent participants have commented on the positive experience of being part of a community conversation. Don't underestimate the value of bringing people together and talking about what's important to them. It makes people feel appreciated and respected. It also increases your knowledge about the community.

Aspirations to Actions reveal people's reality, important community values and issues, volunteers willing to work towards a common goal, and appreciation for others in the community. That's truly discovering care.

Jane H. Grogg, Manager Neighborhood Services Planning & Development Services Sarasota County Government

Beth Duda, Director of Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

INTERVIEW WITH LINDA GOULD



Linda Gould is a Community Connection Consultant for the Military Initiative, Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, and the Age Friendly Festival.

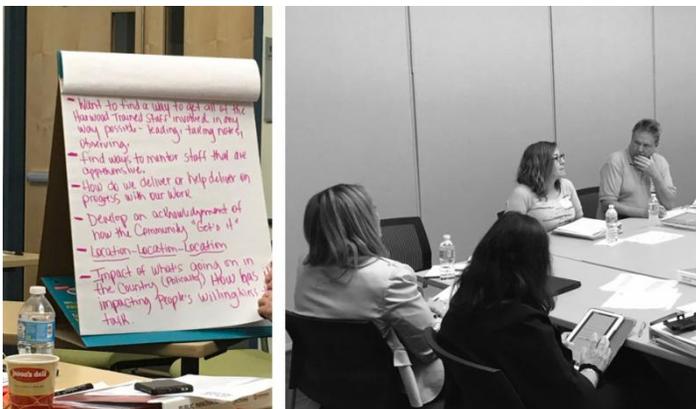
1. How are you using the Harwood Practice professionally and/or personally?

At the Public Innovators Lab, I did not initially see how I could use the practice in my work, so I focused on using the practice personally. I tend to focus inward and be introspective and overthink some situations. I thought I was a better listener until I learned more about the Harwood Practice. I realized I need to "Turn Outward" and listen more to the people with whom I am interacting. By practicing this behavior, I have learned to listen better and am more open to others' ideas and thoughts. I also realized the practice does apply to my professional work. With my work on the military initiative, I have a new way of listening and asking more questions to understand their aspirations. This helps me understand their goals and aspirations better by processing, absorbing, and supporting their aspirations even if I do not agree or see their path - turning outward helps to guide the groups in moving forward. By turning outward, I do not arrive with the answer, and groups I work with have ownership of their work.

2. What change has happened from using the Harwood practice?

I moved away from an inward focus. I believe when you are turned outward you can receive as well as give in more thoughtful ways. When I am outward I have clarity with my time, energy, and

MANATEE LIBRARY TEAM



As Operations Manager for Manatee Libraries, I have been involved during the past several months in employing Harwood methods throughout our day to day activities. Thinking outwardly and collaboratively in all external transactions with the community has been the natural practice to promote. Many staff members are embracing the community conversations and ASK techniques every day. But I began wondering if there was a way to employ the

conversation toolkit in our internal operations as well. The supervisory team was already tasked with updating or creating several documents and policy statements, so we decided to begin incorporating a visioning session as part of each of our supervisor's meetings. We started with the creation of a customer service model. I fashioned a basic customer service statement of policy based upon our existing practices along with a few questions fashioned from the conversation toolkit for review before our meeting:

What aspects of customer service are not being addressed? Why is this important? What barriers exist in satisfying all customers? What resources are at our disposal to be more successful? How can we see progress in customer service six months from now?

I appointed a facilitator and acted as notetaker for the initial session. Having a template to work through helped put the librarians at ease and enabled the facilitator to engage with those not contributing ...

[CONTINUE READING Harwood and Visioning](#) by Kevin Beach, Operations Manager of Manatee Libraries

MANATEE LIBRARY TEAM



helpfulness, both personally and professionally.

3. What did you learn or use from your A2A experience and Harwood Institute training that led you to take action?

Thoughtful listening and not arriving with the answer are so important. I am now aware that being turned outward does not mean I can fix everything, it means that I am more thoughtful, focused, and support those I am working with to get clarity in an intentional step by step way.

4. What do you think you would have done before you worked with A2A and were trained in the Harwood approach?

I would have continued to think I was listening well, but really needed to listen much better and more authentically. I would have continued to talk when I should have been listening, and I wouldn't be as open to other's aspirations and possibilities as I am now.

5. Do you have other ways you would like to incorporate A2A into your way of being?

Yes! To continue to have aspirations and goals, to be less reactive, less turned inward. I am getting better at the practice as it goes along. I sometimes feel like I am taking two steps forward and one step back, and now when I take that step back, it is a reminder to be more grounded in the practice. My aspiration is to be turned outward personally and professionally.

RICH'S CORNER

Take a look at this powerful and poignant video about how to create real and impactful changes in people lives and in our communities.





Being Turned Outward

Are you interested in what it could look like for a new approach to spread across a community? Locally and across the nation, people, organizations, and communities are seeking to marshal their collective talents and assets to address tough challenges. But how does such change happen and spread? What's in play? And how can one be intentional in their efforts to help bring it about? This is what The Harwood Institute, with support from the Kettering Foundation, sought to answer. Read about the successes in [The Ripple Effect](#).

NEWS

- Representatives from the region will be participating The Harwood Virtual Public Innovators Lab, which transforms their 2.5-day leadership training into an interactive 8-week online course. Watch for the blogs and sharing in August and beyond.
- The Harwood Summit is September 7-9th in Washington D.C. Individuals from this region will be attending the Summit this year. The Summit is a retreat for change leaders working to improve public life. Attendees gain greater clarity on issues standing in the way of progress and get "unstuck" as they and engage with other public innovators and leaders.



GET CONNECTED

Bloggers share how Aspirations are being transformed to Actions in our community.

Have a story about turning outward?
Send it to Deborah Gauvreau

Aspirations to Actions Facebook

Stay in touch on Twitter:

@HarwoodInst

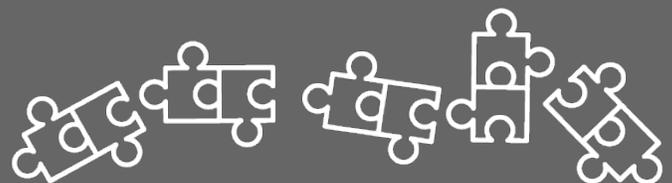
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