

Making Science Work for Social Justice

Notes from Breakout Groups (see also Breakout Group Instructions)

Breakout Group 1: Reproductive Justice

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- Community expertise
- There is a big issue for patient populations and general public around access to information because abortion is seemed as something that happens in case something goes wrong instead of a form of general health care
- People in power are those who provide the care/ service

Who has this expertise?

- The patient (start education and access from as young as adolescence)
- Community care providers (douglas)
- The participants who are being "studied" are the experts
- Scientists should recognize their power as scientists (they are viewed as having more expertise) and use that power to equalize power and share that with the community
- How to incorporate the people we're serving into the service (community based)

Who is often left out of decision making?

- The patients and participants of medical studies

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- Empower the community you're trying to serve so that they are not solely dependent on the health providers in power who may not actually listen to them or who wrongly define the experiences+ symptoms of patients
- Advocate for patient to be their strongest advocate, provide patient with all their options (around contraceptives and abortion). This should start from adolescence.
- Incorporate the people we're serving into the service (include community + participants in the process)
- Close the gap between policy and practice through organizing
- Be aware of biases
- Ex: people who are asked to participate in medical research are actually ~participating~ in the process and are immersed in their community. They get to define their own health/ conditions in their own terms and thus have agency in their treatments."

Breakout Group 2: Agriculture and Food Justice

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- Local Knowledge
- Environmental Knowledge (local, indigenous...)
- Those who have critique for the food chain and the profit motive of the supermarket chain in terms of access to food (for example, food mirages, where there is food but too expensive or inaccessible for people to access)
- Legal/ Legislative
- Activist with experience (possibly from national level)

Who has this expertise?

- Residents
- Environmental biologists and geologists and indigenous
- Local Farmers, other local food industries, food cooperatives, farmers markets, fisheries, whomever is providing food locally
- Environmentalists
- Legislators/ lawyers

Who is often left out of decision making?

- For residents, perhaps those who are not as vocal and civically engaged
- Science versus policy change - we are having overlap but some of this also comes from different aspects of the problem, and might be difficult to bring these folks together
- If it is a community local based meeting, how do you ensure also these folks who are getting a voice.

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- Facilitated community forum/charrette
- Have council person of the area talk about it?
- Ensure everyone who has stakes are there!

Breakout Group 9: Agriculture and Food Justice

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- Food knowledge
- In Holyoke there is a food desert: the transportation is an ongoing problem. What's the point of stocking more if people can't get to the store?
- Then there are the food workers

Who has this expertise?

- What kinds of expertise? What matters to local officials? Why would the supermarket be put on the wetlands? is there another place that might be better? The question of affordability? What about nutritional needs?
- agricultural workers
- city officials
- grocery store workers
- doctors and pediatricians
- school teachers
- environmentalists, conservationists

Who is often left out of decision making?

- the kids
- mothers
- families
- the shoppers
- the store workers
- the teachers

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- Its important to have translation, childcare and accessible public forums (time of day, location)
- potentially create a popular assembly

Breakout Group 3: Nutrition in Schools / Feeding Hungry / Food Security

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- knowledge of nutrition
- knowledge of students' well-being
- knowledge of food-related supply chains
- knowledge of community movements

Who has this expertise?

- nutrition expert
- students
- parents
- teachers
- local organizers
- school food directors
- cafeteria workers
- farmers/growers/ag workers

Who is often left out of decision making?

- Students
- parents
- teachers
- local organizers
- cafeteria workers
- farmers/etc
- and, at the highest level of budgeting, school food directors and nutrition experts (as they have to work within the constrained budget of the school)

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- mobilizing parents
- creating grassroots mutual aid networks
- unionizing with school cafeterias (in a way that maintains the security of cafeteria jobs)
- establishing a means of getting food to people who need it together
- negotiating to improve nutrition and access to food in schools
- opening a dialogue about addressing the root cause of hunger in our communities

Breakout Group 4: Mold and Housing Justice

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- All forms of expertise are needed!
- Find what works together by bringing different forms of knowledge together - but not to romanticize local/indigenous knowledge but see all forms of knowledge as form of collaboration.
- Different knowledges don't always contradict each other but can work together simultaneously.
- Important to have respect for each other and relationship building.

Who has this expertise?

- doctors
- healthcare workers
- people who support alternative forms of medicine, science expertise (despite the issues in higher ed and academia)
- people in housing justice
- tenants
- community organizers
- teachers
- policy makers who care
- landlords

Who is often left out of decision making?

- People from historically/currently marginalized backgrounds
- need for equitable and diverse coalitions to make solutions
- often difficult to make science/scientists into allies

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- We talked through the idea of how to build a movement of scientists that work to re-imagine science and the way it is conducted and with whom it is conducted in addition to a movement that can support scientists (even pre-tenure!) when they stick their neck out and put their professional identity on the line for just causes so that they can't be targeted or written off as easily.

Breakout Group 5: Policing and Social Justice

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- The experiences of those who live through policing (making sure their experience matters).
- Language difference and cultural expertise: being able to link people to resources using the language that they speak.
- People who understand/research how surveillance/policing is biased/ how it impacts certain communities and not others.

Who has this expertise?

- lawyers
- community organizations/organizers
- people who are targeted by policing/surveillance

Who is often left out of decision making?

- everyone who is not a politician/ policy writers

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- Encouraging folx to engage in civic community to the best of their ability
- Bringing people together physically
- Broadening the scope of how scientific experts are used in discussion/policy making

Breakout Group 6: Healthcare

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- medical knowledge
- affordability
- state representatives?

- individuals
- caretakers

Who has this expertise?

- alternative medicine

Who is often left out of decision making?

- undocumented people
- incarcerated people without freedom in access to healthcare

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- existing social structures like churches and schools, radio, social media, mutual aid networks

Breakout Group 7: Coronavirus

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- neighborhood expertise (what services are missing from the community)
- knowledge about child abuse, domestic violence
- homelessness; transportation
- police brutality (can't trust them in an emergency)
- needs of school children not getting food
- people out of work, basic need for groceries
- public health (flatten the curve)
- Wi-Fi access (low-income people, seniors)
- political organizing (how to use this moment to push for the things we've known we need for a long time, how to push the narrative that we are only as healthy as our least healthy neighbors and that health is also about housing, community)
- what social distancing will do to people (e.g., people with depression)

Who has this expertise?

- REALLY BIG TABLE: not just politicians and public health experts
- domestic violence hotline workers
- community members (from every economic category)
- community organizers
- homeless people
- teachers union organizers
- homeless shelter staff
- school cafeteria workers
- computer experts (can make Wi-Fi available to people who don't have it)
- public health experts who understand economic inequality

- mental health experts
- political organizers

Who is often left out of decision making?

- People most affected are never really at the table (poor people, people of color)
- people without advanced degrees
- need to help people to step up when there is in fact a seat at the table

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- Skill building
- Need framework to bring people together productively and in a way that doesn't privilege people already in power
- Learn from other places, e.g. Venezuelan neighborhood committees
- Ensure that the forum has power over budgeting, how public money is spent

Breakout Group 8: Environmental Justice

What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?

- people who have knowledge about how they are affected
- people that know about health effects
- people who know about social justice organizing

Who has this expertise?

- community members
- scientists
- citizen science
- those directly and indirectly affected (whether burden or gain)

Who is often left out of decision making?

- We discussed how class plays into if someone is included in the decision making process, racial diversity...

How would you bring these different experts together in dialogue and collaboration?

- think about who is at the table and who isn't at the table
- listening to others
- getting involved
- representing those who aren't involved
- participative justice