

Driving Systems Change Forward Webinar Transcript

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Participants:

- Andrea Akita, Communities of Opportunity Director, King County Public Health
- Corianne Payton Scally, Principal Research Associate, Urban Institute
- Jennifer Splansky Juster, Executive Director, Collective Impact Forum (Moderator)

Note: This transcript was automatically generated from the audio source and may contain inaccuracies from what was originally said by speakers.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Hello everybody and welcome to today's virtual coffee. I'm Jennifer Splansky Juster, executive director of the collective impact forum and we are delighted to have you here with us today.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Thank you for joining us. Before we start, we want to take a moment to recognize the land that we are on your speakers and those of us behind the scenes producing today's webinar.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: We would like to acknowledge that this virtual coffee is presented and recorded on the traditional land of the Ohlone, the Nacotchtank (Anacostan), the Piscataway, the Skaruhreh Tuscarora, the Coast Salish, the Muckleshoot, the Suquamish, and the Duwamish people past and present. We honor with gratitude, the land itself and the people of these tribes. Thank you.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So I'm really happy to be to be with you all today hosting today's conversation with Corianne and Andrea

Jennifer Splansky Juster: It's very timely to have a conversation during which will be hearing a lot about the work of cross sector initiatives in contributing to systems change.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: With a real focus on racial equity power and community engagement, the intersecting crises of the covid 19 pandemic anti black racism here in the US and abroad.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Prolonged economic downturn and other challenges make this kind of work very important to learn from and to understand more deeply.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And so before we dive in today's today's conversation to take us on this learning journey. I'm going to just spend a few minutes orienting you to more of the logistics of our virtual coffee.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Our conversation will run 60 minutes I you can feel free to grab a literal cup of coffee or tea as we sit down or water what whatever you like.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: The virtual coffee series is intentionally set up to be a casual learning experience where we get to hear from experts and practitioners researchers and others in the field about their own work.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: We will spend about 40 minutes of our time together hosting a discussion with today's guests, and then we'll open up to questions from you all, at the end.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: You can put your questions in the question box. It's a Q AMP a box in the lower right hand corner of your screen.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: You can also share with others on the line in the chat, but please do use the Q AMP a box for questions.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: In addition, the session is being recorded and will make the recording available later today, you can keep an eye out for an email announcing when the recording is up.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: We also will be making the slides available as a handout. If you're interested in accessing them and downloading them. It should be loaded in the in the chat box here, and we'll send a link after as well.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So before we go further, we want to learn a little bit about who is on the line. So we're going to launch a poll to ask you what what type of organization I you identify with professionally and personally as you enter this conversation.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So you can see this pull up here business funder nonprofit public sector research consulting or technical assistance or a different role or sector.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Just give me a minute for folks to respond.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Let's see.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Great. So we have let you can all see the results here. So we have about over nearly 45% of folks are from nonprofit.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Almost a quarter from the public sector government another 15% from research and academia academia similar from consulting about 10% from philanthropy and a handful of folks from

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Representing other roles or from the private sector from business. So really interesting wonderful mix makes sense given the cross sector orientation and many of the partnerships will be discussing today.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Next slide.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So one more shout out. If you have any questions or any technical assistance, please do use the question box as well. Next slide.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Well, I am just delighted to introduce today's guests and speakers that we have joining us today.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So first we have Andrea Akita. She is the Director of for communities of opportunity. A public private initiative of the Seattle foundation and King County.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: To create racial social, economic and health equity that enables all people in the country to thrive.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Communities of opportunity supports a network of nonprofit and grassroots organizations in King County, Washington to advance community driven solutions at the intersection of health, housing economic opportunity and community connections.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And joining her today we have Corianne Payton scaly a principal Research Associate in the metropolitan housing and communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Where she explores the design, implementation and outcomes of Affordable Housing and Community development policy and programs for vulnerable populations in the in US communities.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: From large cities to rural towns from evaluating federal programs to assessing philanthropic and venture investments.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Her research focuses on affordable rental housing and the hardships and needs of vulnerable renters and the communities they live in. So I'm delighted to have you both with us. And with that, I'm going to actually turn it over to you for the next portion of our presentation.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Next slide.

Corianne Payton Scally: Wonderful, thank you so much for that introduction. It's great to be with you all today. My first task is to

Corianne Payton Scally: begin the conversation on what multi site cross sector initiatives are and how they are working to drive systems change forward. Next slide.

Corianne Payton Scally: So what is a multi site cross sector initiative, the definition we used was that these are new connected sets of activities that are plans and implemented to achieve a goal.

Corianne Payton Scally: Spanning more than one site. This could be neighborhood of school, a city or region. And finally, involving a mix of institutions from the public, private nonprofit and philanthropic sectors.

Corianne Payton Scally: We looked at 16 such initiatives that you can see here on your screen funded by both government and philanthropy and we were building upon a paper that was also

Corianne Payton Scally: Published by the San Francisco Federal Reserve in called pathways to systems change. So we picked up the conversation started in that paper by focusing on initiatives that either began in

Corianne Payton Scally: Or that had started earlier but was still ongoing in 2015 to learn more about how this these initiatives have evolved since then.

Corianne Payton Scally: Our research was informed by interviews websites documents scans and two separate research convenience that we hosted to learn from these initiatives.

Corianne Payton Scally: And if you're familiar with any of these, you'll know that they focus on a variety of issues from house to housing to education and economic development and more

Corianne Payton Scally: There are also quite different in terms of other characteristics, such as the number of sites that were involved, the amount of funding received to implement the work as well as manage it and the length of time that the funding was committed for these initiatives. Next slide.

Corianne Payton Scally: And we found that these initiatives were engaging in many systems or the actors activities and settings that were influencing the problems and issues that they were focused on addressing a lot of you are probably familiar with FS juice water systems change framework.

Corianne Payton Scally: That focuses on three tiers of conditions necessary for systems change that are all of course are interconnected.

Corianne Payton Scally: That includes structural changes and policies, practices and resources relational change in terms of relationships and connections and power dynamics.

Corianne Payton Scally: And finally transformative change in terms of mental models. Shifting mindsets and attitudes.

Corianne Payton Scally: We found that the initiatives we observed were often promoting various types of change and but not always comprehensively and sometimes not even intentionally

Corianne Payton Scally: For example, sometimes we found that they were focusing on resource flows as what they thought was the best target for change, but

Corianne Payton Scally: really needed to happen first, as they often learned over time was building relationships.

Corianne Payton Scally: Or perhaps giving sites direct control over setting the goals that they wanted to achieve and allocating the resources to achieve those goals.

Corianne Payton Scally: But there are a lot of positive examples out there, for example, building healthy communities across the state of California, supported by the California Endowment

Corianne Payton Scally: helped inform seven new state laws that were passed to address the racialized harm of school suspensions.

Corianne Payton Scally: These changes helped cut state suspensions and half and some of the initiative communities actually saw suspensions drop to zero.

Corianne Payton Scally: Importantly, the initiative only did this after leadership was challenged by and listens to youth across multiple sites, who helps them to connect race to school suspensions to graduation rates to long term health outcomes for youth.

Corianne Payton Scally: Communities of opportunity, which I'm really pleased to be here together with you with Andrea

Corianne Payton Scally: Also

Corianne Payton Scally: Achieved some significant results so far, still ongoing, of course, including giving community representatives, the majority role and the governance of the initiative, including the allocation of resources.

Corianne Payton Scally: Among other things, they've also analyzed their resource allocation to make sure that those organizations, led by people of color weren't receiving disproportionately less funding and we'll hear other great examples, I'm sure.

Corianne Payton Scally: But in some we found that a lot of initiatives are working, particularly to shift the flow of local resources towards community priorities and also found that regularly these initiatives are bringing

Corianne Payton Scally: Unfamiliar partners together to sit at the same table regularly, often resulting in new relationships in trust building. And then, of course, deep peer learning as well. Next slide.

Corianne Payton Scally: so central to systems change work and addressing root causes, we found that initiatives, we're making progress on advancing racial equity.

Corianne Payton Scally: But unevenly and many have far to go. Honestly, we learned that racial equity is a journey that happens at multiple levels individuals, organizations communities the sides themselves and the initiatives as a whole and that initiatives often must choose to travel down this path.

Corianne Payton Scally: And to complicate things of course people and organizations are at different points in their journey at the same time. And so it really takes

Corianne Payton Scally: extraordinary effort for initiatives to help advance multiple journeys.

Corianne Payton Scally: Wherever they are to progress to the next level while not losing the site have achieved the sorry losing sight of achieving anti racist schools.

Corianne Payton Scally: Across the initiative itself, which can be quite challenging, particularly when there are honestly

Corianne Payton Scally: Individuals or or communities or organizations that really are lagging behind on their journey we found that advancing racial equity takes more than just flipping a switch. It really needs to be woven throughout

Corianne Payton Scally: All of the work. And this includes running from setting goals to prioritizing racial equity to how the work gets staffed and how its funded

Corianne Payton Scally: To at the back end, making sure that you're measuring outcomes desegregated by race and ethnicity, to really take a close look at what you're achieving through all of the work we did not see a lot of this deep change happening in general but we certainly saw glimpses of it. Next slide.

Corianne Payton Scally: Finally, similar to other initiatives, where you have larger, more powerful interests that are investing in marginalized people in places.

Corianne Payton Scally: There are significant power. Power imbalances in operation that often leave sites with a lot of pressure and sometimes little agency to really affect change.

Corianne Payton Scally: And our findings highlighted how funders intermediaries and evaluators all really need to be strategic throughout an initiative and helping to shift power to sites.

Corianne Payton Scally: And particularly by allowing sites to take risks to learn from those risks and to grow and evolve over time. As a result, this is really a challenge to continue to work on in the future, and I look forward to discussing these themes more in our conversation. Thank you.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Thanks clan and I'm act, please. Matt invite Andrea share a little bit more about the communities of opportunity program specifically how the initiative is structured, some of the goals and bit more of an overview

Andrea Akita: Thank you, Jen.

Andrea Akita: And it's really a pleasure to be here representing communities of opportunity. We believe that communities of opportunity is transforming what it means to create health and well being and King County.

Andrea Akita: And our goal as Jen described was really to create greater health, social, economic and racial equity in King County, so that all people thrive and prosper, regardless of where they live.

Andrea Akita: regardless of their race, and we really knew that race and place matter.

Andrea Akita: Our focus has been on the root cause of these inequities. Which is why we have included racial equity as one of our primary goals for the work that we're doing.

Andrea Akita: And we're driving systems and policy change through community partnerships and community driven priorities and solutions.

Andrea Akita: I want to say that we're really young and we started this work in 2014 through a partnership between King County Government and Seattle Foundation, which is the oldest Community Foundation serving the Pacific Northwest.

Andrea Akita: Communities of opportunity. We're continuing to learn and grow. So we appreciate this opportunity to have this conversation today.

Andrea Akita: And then I went really want to preface what I'm going to be saying, so I represent our initiative and I'm operating as someone who works within government

Andrea Akita: As a fender and a convener and I understand that there's many people joining today who are from the nonprofit sector, and we really want to acknowledge

Andrea Akita: These practitioners who are leaving and responding to the community. During these dual pandemics that we're faced and

Andrea Akita: Agree that it's important. Now more than ever that we're going to be listening carefully and really thinking about the way that we're doing this work together. We certainly don't have all of the answers.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: I'm sorry to cut in. We're having a few folks stay there are having a little bit of a hard time hearing you. Are you able to speak a little bit louder. Yes.

Andrea Akita: Try to speak a little bit louder and

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Knowledge is where the problems.

Andrea Akita: Hopefully this will be better.

Andrea Akita: Yeah. Great. Thank you.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Thank you.

Andrea Akita: Next slide please.

Andrea Akita: So this is when we're talking about place. I wanted to provide a really quick flyover if the geography and some of the context for King County, the stars on the map show the locations of some of communities of opportunity or co sites and King County.

Andrea Akita: King County so large area and and I appreciate that. We acknowledge that

Andrea Akita: The native and indigenous peoples and I do want to acknowledge that the place in the region that became King County.

Andrea Akita: Is on traditional and ancestral land at home to a Coast Salish people both past and present, and specifically the land.

Andrea Akita: This land is home to the Muckleshoot, the Snoqualmie, and the Duwamish tribes and we honor the rich culture and history of the coast sales people. People, which is really vital to our region. There's about 2100 square miles of land that makes up the area that is now King County two point

Andrea Akita: Well, two and a quarter million people live in King County, which is roughly one third of Washington State population.

Andrea Akita: And among the people in King County, you'll find 170 different languages spoken. There's 39 incorporated cities across the region and unincorporated county areas that include both urban, rural, an island communities.

Andrea Akita: And many people know that Seattle greater Seattle's the birthplace of Boeing and Starbucks Microsoft and Amazon.

Andrea Akita: And greater Seattle has been one of the most affluent communities in the nation and the region has experienced had experienced tremendous economic growth over the last decade.

Andrea Akita: And yet we continue to see stark disparities and that one really looks closely at health and wellbeing indicators at the county level, it would appear that we're doing well. But our census tract data and data tells a different story.

Andrea Akita: Next slide please.

Andrea Akita: So this is what health and well being measures across Seattle and King County look like when they're bad, then we call this really truth on a map.

Andrea Akita: And these maps provide a snapshot of where health and economic inequities are clustered throughout King County and across a number across a number of health and wellbeing indicators like life expectancy

Andrea Akita: Frequent mental distress preventable hospitalization and as well as other indicators like income and housing affordability and employment and when we took a look at this. We created a composite. It was really

Andrea Akita: Clear that virtually all of the map started to look the same with the worst outcomes in our, our county clustering in particular parts.

Andrea Akita: Geographic areas and what we were seeing on the map was really a result of systems and policies that it's set as that had set the conditions in place.

Andrea Akita: And they were taking shape across a geographic landscape and they were taking place across a racial landscape.

Andrea Akita: And we knew that when we were looking at these maps that they were going to, they were providing real disturbing window into what our future could look like if we continued to maintain the status quo. And so we

Andrea Akita: couldn't continue to do things the same way and expect for these outcomes to change. And so that kind of thinking drove us to the work that is now communities of opportunity. Next slide.

Andrea Akita: And the colors on the map. Really we needed to rethink the way that we were seeing them and we wanted to create a new structure and a new approach.

Andrea Akita: And we needed a different vision. And so when our vision is that all people in King County are going to prosper.

Andrea Akita: We needed to work with community leaders and CO design an initiative in which we folk started focusing on

Andrea Akita: The results that our community wanted to see and the community wanted to see that people are going to thrive economically that they were going to have

Andrea Akita: quality, affordable housing that they were healthy and connected to community, which is really about power and how the community has the ability to be engaged. And so we

Andrea Akita: Needed our investments to follow this form. And the next slide really lines up power investments are funding is we are putting trying to put our money where our mouth is and

Andrea Akita: We focus on three inner selecting kind of reinforcing elements one is around geographic and cultural communities that drive change locally.

Andrea Akita: We select

Andrea Akita: Communities geographic areas, based on the maps were originally, we wanted to see. We wanted to work with communities that were at the lowest 20th percentile of health and well being in our community. And then we expanded that

Andrea Akita: To really include the lowest 40 percentile, and we focused, both on places as well as cultural communities or communities that are not geographically bound because we know that not everyone has

Andrea Akita: Had the kind of routes that are connected to land and to location.

Andrea Akita: We connect our work in place with systems and policy change with partners that are working to dismantle persistent race racial injustice within our systems.

Andrea Akita: And then we wrap everything up within a learning community that really leverages collective power and knowledge to accelerate the change we're trying to build capacity and skills share learning and best practices and innovate and take change to scale.

Next slide please.

Andrea Akita: We're often asked, I want to rush through these. So we have a chance to talk about that we're often asked about how we're measuring success and

Andrea Akita: We have spent some time looking at the kinds of results that we want to see we're using a results based accountability framework which we will

Andrea Akita: Be maybe the first to admit that it's not a really great fit all of the time. But it does allow us to look at Big Picture population health changes.

Andrea Akita: That we wish to see across these four areas.

Andrea Akita: And we're trying to get more specific about what that would mean within these areas, working with our partners to really ensure that the kinds of indicators and metrics within places and then across places are getting us to greater racial equity.

Andrea Akita: Finally, one of the really important parts of our initiative is our governance group our governance structure which is made up of a combination of

Andrea Akita: Community members representatives from the King County Government and representatives from philanthropy. We're a 14 member body and what's important is that

Andrea Akita: The majority of people on our governance group our community representatives, they have deep relationships within the community deep understanding of the community and this body. Unlike many others that are controlling resources in King County.

Andrea Akita: Are making decisions around how those dollars are being used. They set the budget, and then they

Andrea Akita: Make the awards of funding from recommendations on review panels that are also made up of community members. What you're seeing on this slide is just

Andrea Akita: A representation of the values that really drive the work of our governance group, which include equity and community engagement being data driven and in an innovative.

risk taking and being willing to fail.

Andrea Akita: So that's a quick overview and I look forward to getting into maybe some more examples about what the work we're doing

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Thank you. And thank you both for the great grounding orientation to the research and communities of Opportunity Program.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So as you've heard from em and Dre and is Corianne outlined all of the pieces all of the different initiatives were

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Multi site and cross sector in their orientation. Add the definition of sight and community varied.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: By initiative and I think even within initiatives and, as you said, sometimes it was a cultural community often also a geographic or place based community would be the definition

Jennifer Splansky Juster: But given that I'm wondering if both of you could reflect a little bit on some of the advantages and or challenges of working in an initiative that is multi site and cross sector as a way of pursuing systems change.

Andrea Akita: Now, one of the big advantages. And one of the big advantages in Seattle and King County to our approach is really that we wanted to be asset based and

Andrea Akita: By doing that, we were able to you know working across sectors and bring bringing the community place for our

Andrea Akita: knew that there were a lot of lessons that needed to be shared. So that was one of the real advantages is to be able to

Andrea Akita: Make sure that the Community knew what they need and had solutions. We're going to be really essential in that

Andrea Akita: The challenge has been, I think, something that Corianne alluded to, there's really very end capabilities that we found, and different barriers to fully participate in the work across our sites and even within some of our sites. And we knew that going into initiative.

Andrea Akita: And it's really challenged us in the way that we are addressing how we're, we're able to bring varying capabilities so that everyone

Can participate fully

Corianne Payton Scally: Yeah, I, I think I'd like to add

Corianne Payton Scally: You know the cross site work that this is certainly a unique contribution from these types of initiatives and

Corianne Payton Scally: We saw a lot of evidence across sides of the value of peer learning the ability to come together and learn from one another.

Corianne Payton Scally: To help advance shared goals and best practices, and I think this is particularly to true when

Corianne Payton Scally: When the goals are aligned across sites that are working, perhaps in a single city or county as in communities of opportunity or even within a state where we actually saw partnerships forming to to work together for change. Even at the at the state level.

Corianne Payton Scally: Some of the disadvantages.

Corianne Payton Scally: Come in terms of measuring change. It's certainly not a disadvantage that some times sites are pursuing different types of goals across, across them. But since I know there are some evaluators

Corianne Payton Scally: And and funders. Joining us today that think about impacts, for example, and this definitely can make it challenging to understand what change is occurring over time across all of the sites engaged.

Corianne Payton Scally: And this isn't just for impact measurement, necessarily, but also for understanding what changes might need to actually occur to make sure that sites are, you know, are being properly supported

Corianne Payton Scally: To most effectively pursue their goals.

Corianne Payton Scally: I think across initiatives as well. We saw current initiatives building upon past ones, which I think is heartening for the fields, when we

Corianne Payton Scally: Wrestle sometimes with what appeared to be short term commitments comparative course to the decades and sometimes centuries that that

Corianne Payton Scally: The systems that that hold today's problems in place have have evolved over. And so it was encouraging to see initiatives such as communities of opportunity, building on other work that had been seated.

Corianne Payton Scally: In the case of communities of opportunity by the integration initiative funded through living cities. And so being able to see that work builds, I think, was an encouraging outcome of our scam.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Right. And then we began to dig into communities of opportunity, a little bit, but I see a bunch of questions coming in that are more specific to that in the chat. So I'm going to ask a couple more, and then turn over to some of the participant Q AMP a

Jennifer Splansky Juster: But Andrew, I'm curious if you could just talk a little bit more about some of the additional lessons learned that you have from the work and particularly with respect to advancing systems Jamestown any any examples or any other lessons learned, you'd want to touch on

Andrea Akita: You know, I'd love to talk a little bit about the importance with with the systems change work that we've been doing

Andrea Akita: To have a partnership between King County and the Seattle foundation. So with the resources that we've been able to blend

Andrea Akita: Our, our public dollars are extremely limited in in their ability to do particular kinds of advocacy and lobbying work. And so the beauty of having a philanthropic partner was that we were able to really

Andrea Akita: Combine resources in ways that were going to allow us to be more flexible and our partners more flexible to work at particular policy and systems change.

Andrea Akita: At the state level and with specific kinds of legislative activities and there's we've had a we've seen a lot of success as a result of that.

Andrea Akita: And I think that probably some of the other things that I would maybe mention our I talked a little bit about the varying capabilities or the capacities that we've been seeing across

Andrea Akita: Our partnerships and one of the other things that you know is it's been really important for us to be able to ensure that we have resources that are going to help

Andrea Akita: In the learning and the training and workshops and not just we know training that's coming from experts, but there's a wealth.

Andrea Akita: Of experience and knowledge that exists within our communities, but it's not always connected in particular ways

Andrea Akita: And then the other thing, specifically that we were doing. We've done is to be able to look at a framework around capacity development that is

Andrea Akita: Rooted in what it would take to actualize equity. So an equity and action model that that looks at the organizational stability of organizations as one component knowledge and issues of the landscape in which we're working

Andrea Akita: The ability to create strong partnerships, which is often really overlooked, I think. And one of the lessons for us. And then what it takes to build critical power and political power in that

Andrea Akita: And we're just starting to launch kind of what those components will look like. And we recognize that we need to have all of those occurring kind of simultaneously. We can't really just focus on one or another. And that's a challenge for us.

Andrea Akita: I think in terms of the, you know, mentioning kind of the idea that

Andrea Akita: It takes time and resources to do this work partnerships critical collaboration is critical. And we know that that takes resources and

Andrea Akita: Our partners have told us that we need to go slow in order to go fast and the work of building kind of that SOLID PARTNER team.

Andrea Akita: That strong and had shared working agreements, you know, ability to meet regularly has been a key factor in their success, but it took a lot longer before

Andrea Akita: You know they felt that they had anything to show for the work, but we knew that the work was happening. And that's right. Often a challenge that we see with a lot of vendors and even at we as vendors trying to help other people understand that.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Um, yes, yes.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: I'm curious when you talk about that capacity building work Andrea different dimensions that you mentioned. Can you say a little bit more about, like, who's the participant in the recipient. And when you think about

Jennifer Splansky Juster: When you think about that capacity building work.

Andrea Akita: You know, initially, our capacity building work is really focused within our community partnerships and we recognize that as a funder, we need to have some

Andrea Akita: Often bring in more neutral facilitators within that and allow our partners to really be able to have that space, we've

Andrea Akita: contracted with groups that are helping to build the capacity within their organizations and then carry this work with. So I think it's operating at a few levels, really the the partners who are going to be

Andrea Akita: Taking this work implementing the work as well as some of the our organizations here in King County that can develop

Andrea Akita: You know models. So when we're talking about our framework for example the group that help us develop that is a local group that has worked for

Andrea Akita: Decades helping the nonprofit community with different capacity and and a particular you know trusted again person within the community to help develop those

Those tools.

Andrea Akita: Right. And then I think that you know what one area that we are trying to do more of is in the

Andrea Akita: Training within King County. So where we operate within the system. And so really, there's some training that happens, maybe not always formally but informally around the needs of our partners and had that we can change the ways in which we're doing the practices in the morning.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Right, thank you. So, um, as we mentioned at the top of the webinar. We all know we're finding ourselves in challenging times right now, to say the least.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And I'm curious how you know do this questions for both of you. Do you think that the pandemic and the calls for racial justice that we are experiencing now.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Will affect our accelerate or hinder our ability to drive this kind of system change port forward shifting power advancing racial equity.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: How do you reflect on this work in this current moment.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And Andre, if you could speak as loud as possible for this one I got another few notes that would be super helpful. Thank you.

Andrea Akita: I'll start on. Thank you. And I'm so sorry I'm trying to yell deliver this but I hopefully

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Will take your best will take it.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Great, thank you. Um, so

Andrea Akita: Um, you know, I

Andrea Akita: One of the things that we know from the work that we're doing is that money is just organizing and then I think scarcity is going to even exacerbate that further.

Andrea Akita: And so the strong partnerships that we are creating are going to be so important that we can work together and I have a lot of hope that we're going to be able to do that.

Andrea Akita: In King County we have recently declared racism as a public health crisis and an acknowledgement that the transformation that needs to happen has to start here and it has to start with us and so

Andrea Akita: One of the things that I think gives me hope is that throughout this declaration. There are a number of things that the county

Andrea Akita: has acknowledged that need to happen in terms of putting community first and having Community Solutions lead and so many of the things are feel like they're textbook sort of communities of opportunity, and it's not

Andrea Akita: It's not a by lack of design that way. I mean, the county has been supporting this work, and we've been a model. And now, it allows us to kind of

Andrea Akita: Further that model throughout the work that we're doing. It's not going to be easy by any means. And I think that the support and the that has to happen for our providers is really critical, right now I'm Korea.

Corianne Payton Scally: Yeah.

Corianne Payton Scally: I think that, you know, in the midst of of these difficult times. I think there's an opportunity to really center equity in recovery.

Corianne Payton Scally: You know, in response and recovery to what's happening today. And so I you know I think that

Corianne Payton Scally: There's along with that, I'm more willing to audience, people who are prepared to hear those things. Now, who

Corianne Payton Scally: You know beforehand. Maybe when you went and knocked on their door for a partnership, you know, you were turned away because they really weren't on the same page with what you were trying to achieve, or again what what residents.

Corianne Payton Scally: Cultural communities and other types of communities really needed to see happen. And so I think there's a great opportunity here to really leverage

Corianne Payton Scally: You know leverage the shifts. Hopefully the mindset shifts that are occurring within individuals and within organizations and funders and others to, you know, to knock on their doors, again, and hopefully having your ideas be better received than they have been in the past.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Thank you. Yeah. We hope so.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Um, so I'm going to turn to some of the questions that are coming in from folks on the line.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And the first one I think I will ask Andrea to you about the communities of opportunity work but grant if there are other examples that you see in in the research, please.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: By all means add and the question is you know whether any challenges that you experienced due to power and power dynamics between

Jennifer Splansky Juster: You know, nonprofit public funding partners and residents community members when you're bringing all those different perspectives together a table and how you mitigate the real am the perceived and real power dynamics that bringing folks together present

Andrea Akita: You know conflict is inherent in the work and we are reminded of that it what we hope to do is

Andrea Akita: Make the conflict part of really transformative change. And so we're learning about that. We have invited different folks to start

Andrea Akita: The work with communities have opportunity to do that, both at us at different place or site based level as well as you know, throughout the initiative for our governance body our staff.

Andrea Akita: We need to be able to have this work happen as part of work that's going to continue to build the relationships that we have with one another and so

Andrea Akita: They are absolutely real. We go through them with our partners. We as a funder recognize the power that we have in setting some of the

Andrea Akita: Contractual and very transactional relationships that we have that are not always, you know, in service to the kinds of goals and outcomes that our community partners want to see. I mean, that being said, I think we are making

Andrea Akita: Progress on how we're able to change that. But we also rely pretty much on our partners within the Community.

Andrea Akita: The tables that they have set to be able to work together through those changes we've offered. Interestingly, you know, we've offered to have facilitation available and sometimes you know there's a sense that no facilitation and someone outside is maybe not going to

Andrea Akita: Help us as much and could harm us. And so there's really some thought that needs to go into, you know, all of the different ways in which they're approaching it. So, you know, there's, I don't think there's a magic recipe for it.

Andrea Akita: As much as you know this kind of open and openness and struggle to wanting to get get through that and acknowledgement that it's going to happen. And so what are the tools that we can have in place and prepare for that.

Yeah.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And just kind of related question is more of a clarification. When you're talking I give them the research broadly and then also enter in Seattle can County.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: When you talk about community. Um, I know that you in, I believe, for commuter afternoon, you said sometimes it's neighborhood like place based sometimes cultural identity.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So I want to check that. And then also Corianne when you saw different and across different initiatives. How was kind of the Community being defined

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Another dimension of community is it residents or community organizations. So just some additional clarity there. And then I have a follow up.

Corianne Payton Scally: Sure, I can speak broadly across initiatives that that we looked at. And you know the unsatisfactory answer is it depends. And I think communities of opportunity embraced a very broad definition I think oftentimes we see initiatives choosing a place based definition.

Corianne Payton Scally: So kind of delineating a geography of interest and sometimes they they defined community based on the actors that they wanted to really have at the table. So, for example, saying anchor institution like a hospital.

Corianne Payton Scally: Or some other organization that you know when you think of a hospital service area. You know where they draw their patients from and might be can have concerns.

Corianne Payton Scally: You know, be concerned for the health and well being of community that geography and space and or the populations and subpopulations within that would be very different. So it really ranged and definitely we saw

Corianne Payton Scally: Saw play space definitions and as well as definitions that we're really focused on particular people regardless of where they may reside.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Okay, right. Did you want to add to that Andrea. No. Okay.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Another related question is related to the threat of questions, um,

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Can you speak to some of the challenges of reconciling the very understandable demand for more rapid policy change and centering equity right now with the

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Very or often slow rate of change needed for shifting mental models around the kind of work that we are hoping is being embraced right now.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: How do you access and change in a time of intense political polarization around racially charged issues.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: No silver

Corianne Payton Scally: I'm gonna lead and drag of first on that as the practitioner.

Andrea Akita: We started our initiative wanting to be very bold and, you know, looking back at what was bold in 2014 and 2015 and what's bold. Now, huge, huge difference and and which gives us more opportunity to be bolder, we're trying to be stronger and clearer, more precise and what we're doing in

Andrea Akita: In talking about racial equity and, for example, we are going to release an RFP soon that really focuses on

Andrea Akita: Leadership in the black community and that might not seem as sort of first shattering to say based on all of the data and information that we've seen, but it, it was a big move for us to be able to make name specific

Andrea Akita: Goal and outcome and community that we wanted. And we needed to see lead our efforts of change. We are in a very progressive bubble here in King County. And so I think that

Andrea Akita: You know that, where we have to move and how we have to move that is really different from others, but it still exists. And so we, you know,

Andrea Akita: Look to as many allies and partners who can do that work. We fund at a lot of different levels across systems and policy change to continue to move moved for that, but

Andrea Akita: I you know I think we struggle with, like others, but we need to, we are finally we need to be more bold in our assertions about what we're saying.

Corianne Payton Scally: Um, I think from the research, I'd like to just talk on a couple of additional points. And I think that

Corianne Payton Scally: We definitely saw evidence of funders really often in the philanthropic sector really using their power to shift the narrative themselves and

Corianne Payton Scally: By funding these initiatives, for example, oftentimes that gave cover if there was a focus on racial equity an explicit focus stated within the goals of the initiative and that that really

Corianne Payton Scally: Allowed the sites under that initiative to be bold and so that you know I think that's something that came across to us is very helpful in that narrative. I also just think it's worth circling back to the idea of multiple sites. And I think that

Corianne Payton Scally: That if you think of power as really being multiplied through efforts kind of coming together around shared goals to to really tackle systems together. You know, I do think that

Corianne Payton Scally: I do think that we, we saw that across these initiatives that really having multiple sites.

Corianne Payton Scally: However, those were defined working together towards similar change really had some significant outcomes that may not have happened kind of without that ability to leverage one another's work and honestly to leverage one another's power in a shared way.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Mm hmm.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: I'm applicable bundle. A couple questions for you to dig into around the role of funders and so one question was around sort of the role of funders just generally in the initiative so

Jennifer Splansky Juster: In what in what an error in some scenarios were funders sort of catalyst and then step back or funders often remain involved over the course of an initiative. So you talked about a little bit about the role of thunder and the

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Sort of in the origin of the initiative and then over the lifespan of the initiatives and then another related question is do funders and part

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Understand the importance of the role of the backbone or intermediary and why it should be funded and I here in there any advice that you have for people playing that role in securing funding for their role as an intermediary or a backbone.

Corianne Payton Scally: Shark, so I can talk briefly from our research. And so there's a question about the the funder, and the role of the funder, and then a question about backbone organizations and intermediaries.

Corianne Payton Scally: You know, I think, again, we saw great diversity in the relationships that the founders had say with the site's themselves. Sometimes we saw the case where a funder.

Corianne Payton Scally: Had its own staff mobilized its own staff say to serve as as local intermediaries for for site level work kind of as program managers, so to speak, and

Corianne Payton Scally: That enabled sites to sometimes have a direct connection to the funder than

Corianne Payton Scally: I think that was probably the exception, more than the norm, which is often that you know funders stick to what they do best which is fund.

Corianne Payton Scally: And, you know, fun. Good work, and often reached out to get assistance with managing complex initiatives across multiple sites. And so we did see

Corianne Payton Scally: That an often cases, they would perhaps channel the funding through an intermediary organization that did more of the management across sites and I do

Corianne Payton Scally: You know, it was common for funders to commit to specific period of time. I already mentioned that oftentimes the the timeframe was

Corianne Payton Scally: Was short probably come compared to the need and what it takes to change systems. But usually, there was a commitment made up friends so that sites.

Corianne Payton Scally: understood how long that the funding was going to be available for them to do that particular type of work. Um, so I don't think there was a

Corianne Payton Scally: I'm not familiar with the case where the funder say just kind of backed out and left without the site's kind of understanding when that would happen not to say that that you know that that certainly doesn't does have an effect when when the funding of course, comes to an end.

Andrea Akita: In

Andrea Akita: Seattle in King County. I think the role of the funders, particularly with our philanthropic partners at the origin of communities of opportunity there was far greater trust among community members who've been sticking it out with us and who have actually

Andrea Akita: Shown a degree of risk to be wanting to work in this way with the government. And then, are we really going to come through on what we

Andrea Akita: Are saying, and our philanthropic partners Seattle foundation was able to bring people to the table in a way that has benefited our ability to design co design and implement the work

Andrea Akita: I think that they're the, you know, we play off of each other's strengths and we

Andrea Akita: I think Corianne said something about really the leverage that our philanthropic partner and Seattle foundation and others are able to bring

Andrea Akita: In convincing our electives and providing dollars that show their commitment to this partnership and then in trying to convince others that government is worth

Andrea Akita: risking a little bit of kind of their time and energy and resources on there's a

Andrea Akita: In terms of cross sector work. We talk a lot about the the trust that needs to be established between the Community and the funder.

Andrea Akita: And you know, we find that there's some trust that needs to be established between government and other funders and the implant therapy. Specifically, I think.

Andrea Akita: And the ability for not every philanthropic partner or government partner who's going to bring resources to the table gets a seat at the table.

Andrea Akita: And actually you see some partners, say, Okay, we'll just do it a little bit differently in government, not necessarily have to be. But there's that trust building that has to be established on

Andrea Akita: You know, the backbone regarding backbone work that has been really complicated for us. We provided resources at the outset and

Andrea Akita: And made sure that our original place based partners three of our partnerships had resources to be able to set a table and to come up with their priorities and work together, work with us. And there was a great understanding of that.

Andrea Akita: And everyone did it differently. And we didn't have a lot of guideposts for that. Um, now that our partnerships are in different places. I think we are really

Andrea Akita: rethinking what it should look like. We went kind of from one direction where we didn't have a lot of

Andrea Akita: structure to it to moving to where there's more structure and what we thought what we thought under spot with the structure for backbone.

Andrea Akita: And I, I think we're determining what's going to work, and it's not gonna, I don't believe, it'll look the same for each of our partnerships and our sites moving forward.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Thank you for those reflections. I'm going to ask one last question before we turn to closing out. This is more of a kind of concrete tactical question.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: For the practitioners out there. So in doing cross site cross sectional work, what strategies and techniques work well to support coordination and collaboration across the different sites.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Any advice.

Corianne Payton Scally: Andrea. Do you want to talk about how you do that.

Andrea Akita: First, I'm sorry, can you repeat your

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Sure. Yeah. Any kind of concrete advice for strategies or techniques to support coordination or collaboration across sites.

Andrea Akita: We are

Andrea Akita: We are bringing people trying to bring people together in different ways. And so that we keep hearing that our partners across all these places. Want to get together, they want to learn from each other.

Andrea Akita: They have things to share and to end so that I think that's the concrete advice is you can't communicate enough. You can't try to

Andrea Akita: bring people together and not offend. It can't always be program that's the other thing that we hear constantly you know that that we

Andrea Akita: sometimes think that there's some reason that we need to bring people together and they want to come together and have those conversations amongst themselves, you know, together and do that. The challenge right now is really not overtaxing people and and respecting

Andrea Akita: The multiple demands that they have and not, you know, feeling like this is another thing that they have to do to be part of SEO, but really is an opportunity for

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Great. Corianne. any other trends. He saw cross the sightsee research to be looked into that.

Corianne Payton Scally: Just a lot of intentional coming together as Andrea already discussed through convenience, you know, national convenience, but also maybe regional convenience, as appropriate.

Corianne Payton Scally: Also

Corianne Payton Scally: Pre covered, you know, leveraging the ability to visit one another site to site was often, you know, was was not often enough, but

Corianne Payton Scally: Sometimes presence and pointed to as a really a great way to bring people together, particularly again if they're really working towards a similar goal, where they can really learn from perhaps a site that's a little further along in their journey.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Right. Well, with that, I think that will be our last question for today. I wish we could

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Have the opportunity to pick your brains for much longer, but we are really grateful for the time you've been able to spend with us and our network today.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: So, thank you. And for those of you on the line that took time as you have been juggling so much in your world. Thank you for joining us as well.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: If you are. I just wanted to mention that if anyone is interested in continuing in on conversations like this.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: The collective impact forum is hosting a workshop in a few weeks, called Champions for Change. This is I think our seventh annual Champions for Change our first virtual line.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: Where we'll be doing really concrete training sessions on planning and advancing your collective impact work. And this is really geared towards those playing that intermediary or backbone role.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And those who are in the early, early to beginning stages of their work. So we would invite anyone to check that out if you're interested in joining us for three days of conversations like this.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: And then if you are also interested in a different format. We have a recent relatively recently launched podcast that you can access on any of the major platforms.

Jennifer Splansky Juster: For podcasting and thank you to our colleague Tracy Timmons gray for hosting today's session on the back end and being our podcast champion to bring this

Jennifer Splansky Juster: This format to everyone as well. So with that, I would like to just thank everyone again for joining and I hope everyone has a terrific afternoon and evening be well