CHAPTER 6

Building Trust Through Inclusion: Reflections on the Practice of Deliberative Democracy

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In chapter five of this book, Julie Marsh examines why mutual trust among stakeholders is a crucial condition for successful deliberation in the "real" world. In her comparative research on two California school districts, Marsh observes that the most highly engaged community deliberators held a "perception of representation." They felt that the leaders who convened the deliberations had made adequate efforts to engage many different perspectives, including their own, in the process. Such perceptions of representation lead participants to trust and support the process more deeply.

Marsh's case studies show how important it is for those who organize deliberations to ensure that a wide range of perspectives are represented in the process. Only then can deliberation lead to trust in and collective ownership of the process. Marsh's study raises important questions at the heart of deliberative practice. What are the elements of an inclusive deliberative design? What can organizers of deliberation do to ensure that stakeholders who participate, as well as those who do not participate, perceive that their perspectives are adequately represented?

In this chapter I reflect upon experience as a "deliberative practitioner"[1] to illustrate a multidimensional inclusion strategy for building trust in a deliberative problem solving process. I argue that the question of inclusion does not apply only to considerations of "what persons have a rightful claim to be included in the demos"[2] but also to how the process of talking together is itself facilitated and the extent to which deliberation is connected to action. I draw on data collected from April 2006 to August 2009 on an episode of deliberation that I helped organize in the South "Hilltop" area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My affiliation was the Coro Center for

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[1] As articulated by John Forester, *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes (*Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), the "deliberative practitioner" is one who seeks to show how insightful practice in participatory and deliberative processes can lead to better theory. Forester's premise, which I share, is that students in applied fields can benefit significantly from the insights of practitioners as well as the questions of compelling theory.

[2] Dahl, Robert. *Democracy and Its Critics.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 119.

Civic Leadership, whose offices are located on the western edge of nine Hilltop neighborhoods that meander along a bluff overlooking the Monongahela River. The Birmingham Foundation, which serves the Hilltop, awarded a grant to Coro to organize deliberations that would lead to greater neighborhood collaboration in solving shared problems in the Hilltop community.

As stakeholders in the future of the Hilltop, Coro board and staff were aware of the struggles that the neighborhoods had faced in the past 25 years or so, with the rapid decline of the steel industry in Pittsburgh. In the first third of the 20th century, immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe settled in the Hilltop to work in Pittsburgh's growing manufacturing industries. In the second third of the century, stable working-class families benefitted from the proximity to downtown, affordability of housing, and overall high quality of life offered by the Hilltop. As Pittsburgh's industrial economy collapsed in the last third of the century, the population plummeted by 50 percent, the quality of schools declined rapidly, crime and violence increased, and a growing number of youth became idle - not in school or work.

With a mission to strengthen leadership for community problem solving and a vision of creating an inclusive democracy, Coro board and staff saw in the Hilltop a need and an opportunity to help move the community forward. Neighborhood identities are very strong in Pittsburgh. Community leaders in the Hilltop had worked mostly with others in their own neighborhoods - through block watches, civic councils and other voluntary associations - to address social problems. Occasionally, groups from different neighborhoods have worked together to take advantage of opportunities in economic development, housing and public safety. Some partnerships such as the Hilltop Housing Initiative have been created to develop housing and other revitalization efforts in the Hilltop. But no organizational structures were put in place to foster regular collaborative planning among the hundreds of business, government and nonprofit organizations on the Hilltop. Thus the conditions for robust social innovation – cross-sector and multi-neighborhood cooperation – were not in place.[3]

Individual Hilltop neighborhoods suffered from a lack of "bridging social capital" - relationships of trust and reciprocity among different kinds of people who live in various

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[3] Paul C. Brophy and Kim Burnett, "Building a New Framework for Community Development in Weak-Market Cities," (report prepared for Community Development Partnership Network, Philadelphia, PA, April, 2003). See also Carmen Sirianni, *Investing in Democracy: Engaging Citizens in Collaborative Governance.*(Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2009).

geographic locations and control access to disparate resources.[4] Research on social capital indicates that leaders who succeed in revitalizing economically distressed neighborhoods are those who not only bond with people who are very similar to themselves and live in close proximity but are able to build bridges among people who are likely to be different[5]

Coro initiated the Hilltop project with the belief that bridging social capital can be built through a formal deliberative process that involves many different kinds of people. When people who do not know each other are presented with opportunities to discuss issues of mutual concern together, they can build a foundation of trust that enables future collaboration. Strategies for including a wide range of perspectives strengthen deliberators' perceptions that the process is broadly representative of relevant stakeholders in the community. Such perceptions of representation motivate further stakeholder participation.

Coro engaged several partners to mobilize diverse stakeholders across the nine Hilltop neighborhoods in various stages of deliberative problem solving. I utilize several sources of data to illustrate the multidimensional inclusion strategy. The first source was 185 interviews with stakeholders living or working in the Hilltop neighborhoods of Allentown, Arlington, Arlington Heights, Beltzhoover, Carrick, Knoxville, Mt. Oliver, Mt. Oliver Borough, and St. Clair. One hundred forty nine of those interviewed were contacted through a "door knocking" campaign of randomly selected Hilltop residential and nonresidential properties. The second source was 62 community meetings attended by an action research team, which included Coro staff as well as faculty, staff and students affiliated with Carnegie Mellon University's Southwestern Pennsylvania Program for Deliberative Democracy.[6] The third source of data came from a day-long "Community Conversation," held by Coro and its partners, which convened people from across the nine Hilltop neighborhoods. Forty-seven exit surveys were collected at this event. Additional secondary data sources include the U.S. Census, research reports and government program information covering the Hilltop.

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[4] On the concept of social capital see Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
[5] See Ross Gittel and Avis Vidal, *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998); also Robert Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
[6] Created in the spring of 2005, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Program for Deliberative Democracy has a mission to improve local and regional decision-making through informed citizen deliberations.

Inclusion and Deliberation

In his seminal reflections on early American Democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that when citizens discuss issues with each other they not only define and learn about the issues but also learn to understand each other's interests and values.[7] Talking and listening enables citizens to better understand how issues connect or conflict from various points of view. Iris Marion Young took Tocqueville's insight about how people learn through talking together a step further. She argued that if people aim to solve their collective problems together, "they must listen *across their differences* to understand how proposals and policies affect others differently situated."[8] Young emphasized what Marsh calls a "substantive" reason for including the perspectives of multiple stakeholders in a deliberative process. By engaging the full range of knowledge and interests in decision-making, deliberation can lead to better outcomes for the public good.

But there are also "cognitive" and "affective" reasons for making deliberation inclusive, according to Marsh. Regardless of whether deliberators contribute substantively to the results of a discussion, they may be "more likely to trust the process and those convening the process" if they know that their perspectives are being represented. If stakeholders do not believe a deliberative process to be inclusive, they may withhold their trust from the process and bridging social capital may not emerge. When deliberation is used to build social capital as a community revitalization strategy, care must be taken to ensure that perspectives of relevant stakeholders are represented in the process.

The multi-dimensional inclusion strategy in the Hilltop began in the spring of 2006 when Coro formed its "Hilltop Partnership" whose goal was to convene stakeholders across the Hilltop to share their perspectives on common problems, build trust, and begin working together. In addition to Coro, the Hilltop Partnership included the Birmingham Foundation, the Southwestern Pennsylvania program for Deliberative Democracy, the Mayor's Office and the Planning Department of the City of Pittsburgh, the Office of City Council District 3 (representing the Hilltop neighborhoods), and the community development intermediary, the Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (PPND).

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[7] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* ed. Richard D. Heffner (New York: Penguin Books, 1984).

[8] Iris M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press. 2000), 118.

There were three dimensions to the Hilltop Partnership's strategy of inclusion that I will illustrate: The dimension of *invitation* focused on including the widest possible range of perspectives in the deliberative problem solving. The dimension of *deliberation* focused on facilitating dialogue in such a way that diverse perspectives were actually heard and utilized as a source of learning and community problem solving. The dimension of *action* focused on ensuring that deliberation resulted in actions to bring about changes desired by stakeholders.

First Dimension: Invitation

The question of "who participates" is at the heart of modern studies of democracy.[9] Citizens gain the opportunity to participate through a variety of means. The principal way in which citizens come to participate in deliberative forums is through an invitation that promises something different from the past.[10] Research conducted by Lawrence Jacobs and colleagues suggests that people are much more likely to participate in face-to-face deliberation about a public issue when they are invited to attend.[11] The more that organizers can do to encourage citizens to attend meetings, beyond merely posting a formal announcement, the more people will show up. Intentional outreach efforts are particularly important for engaging people who do not typically participate in public meetings.

Invitations for a preliminary phase of deliberation in the Hilltop were targeted at community leaders - those with experience in organizing others. Leaders routinely show up for public events and often have a keen sense of how to move from deliberation to action on issues. Without inviting leaders to participate, there is little hope that a deliberative process will lead to action on an issue.[12] Connecting leaders from different Hilltop neighborhoods was a top priority of the Birmingham Foundation. Demand for philanthropic investment was rising rapidly against a limited supply of funds in the first decade of the 21st Century. The Foundation established a

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[9] See Robert Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961).

[10] See Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging.* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008).

[11] Lawrence Jacobs, Fay Lomax Cook and Michael X. Delli Carpini, *Talking Together: Public Deliberation and Political Participation in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[12] David D. Chrislip, *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

policy of supporting projects that integrate the work of multiple existing groups for the benefit of the whole Hilltop. From a philanthropic perspective, it made more sense to invest in a few strategically aligned community improvement projects than to support a large number of competing or duplicative projects in different neighborhoods. The Foundation also wanted to ensure that all neighborhoods were represented in any broad improvement efforts. Lessons from past experience taught that community leaders will not support initiatives that fail to represent the perspectives and interests of all neighborhoods affected by a decision.

In March 2006 Jeffrey Koch, a longtime resident of the Allentown neighborhood, won a special election for Pittsburgh City Council District 3. Koch's district covered much of the Hilltop. Faced with shrinking government resources at a time of growing need, Koch was interested in fostering collaboration among voluntary neighborhood associations. He believed that successful government action depended upon neighborhoods working together to decide common goals. As an elected official, he would be able to work more effectively by engaging a single but inclusive group of stakeholders than by working with each group or neighborhood separately. Koch did not want to exclude any groups or neighborhoods from his efforts because he knew how quickly community leaders would become divided if they believed their perspectives had not been represented in an initiative aimed at improvement of the whole Hilltop.

Koch's first major initiative was to invite community leaders on the Hilltop to join a "Hilltop Steering Committee" that would begin the process of fostering collaborative problem solving in the Hilltop. Koch personally contacted approximately 50 leaders, representing active citizens from each neighborhood, to encourage their participation. But he also kept the meetings open to the public and made sure meeting times and locations were well publicized. In November 2006 the Steering Committee held its first monthly meeting. Thirty five leaders representing neighborhoods across the Hilltop attended. The purpose of the meeting was to begin a conversation and build relationships that could lead to a future for the Hilltop that was different from the past. Participants did something that was atypical: They committed themselves to working inclusively to improve the Hilltop as a whole rather than to bring immediate benefits to their own groups or neighborhoods.

Prior to this first meeting of the Steering Committee, in April 2006 the action research team began observing the meetings of community groups across the Hilltop with the goal of

identifying the issues of top concern to leaders in different neighborhoods. These observations lasted until late spring of 2007, with a total of 62 meetings attended (including all meetings held by the Hilltop Steering Committee). The team produced a document entitled "Moving Forward Together: A Community Conversation,"[13] which outlined the priority issues discussed by community leaders across the Hilltop: rising crime, especially violent crime; inadequate opportunities for youth and a rising number of youth at-risk for gang involvement, drugs, prostitution and other crimes; dilapidated housing and infrastructure; and a general disengagement of people from civic life, as measured by declining participation in neighborhood associations and a weak sense of mutual accountability for problems affecting the Hilltop.

"Moving Forward Together" was publicized across the Hilltop, a process I describe later in this chapter. The purpose was to help those leaders working on a neighborhood level to see that their counterparts in adjacent neighborhoods were struggling with similar problems. By describing these issues as topics of major concern not just in Allentown, Beltzhoover, or Mt Oliver, but in all the neighborhoods of the Hilltop, the document linked together multiple separate dialogues into an inclusive dialogue about the need for social change in the Hilltop. Further, the document described the benefits of working together and encouraged people to join a collaborative effort inclusive of all groups and neighborhoods in the Hilltop.

Less active citizens were also invited to participate in the deliberative problem-solving process. Community leaders serving on the Hilltop Steering Committee and active in the neighborhood block watches and civic councils believed that a collaborative Hilltop initiative would not succeed without participation from their less active counterparts. "We need to hear from people who are not at our community meetings," said one Steering Committee member. "We need to get younger people more involved in improving the community," said an Allentown block watch leader. "How can we get people who are beginning to have families on the Hilltop to come out and work with us?" asked a member of a Carrick civic council.

The Hilltop Partnership utilized the protocols of James S. Fishkin's deliberative poll to select less active citizens to be invited to participate.[14] As in the standard opinion poll, respondents in a deliberative poll are selected using probability sampling in order to maximize

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[13] This document is available at http://www.phil.cmu.edu/caae/dp/polls/spring07/moving_forward_7_07.pdf

[14] See James S. Fishkin, *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

the diversity of opinions represented in poll results. But respondents in deliberative polls are then gathered together to deliberate upon the issues, which allows each to learn from the diverse perspectives of others with whom they would not typically discuss issues. When people deliberate they absorb a lot of new information about issues, they can alter their preferences, and they tend to agree more with each other on how to evaluate public choices.[15]

A dozen volunteers, including people from the Hilltop Steering Committee, local libraries and churches, Carnegie Mellon University, and Coro staff, worked together to engage less active people to participate. Individuals were selected through a systematic sample of properties drawn from a geographic information system called the Pittsburgh Community Information System. Volunteers were joined by 25 AmeriCorps volunteers, which Coro engaged through its partner organization, Public Allies Pittsburgh. Volunteers conducted a door-knocking campaign lasting two full Saturdays and four weekday evenings. Door-knockers conducted brief interviews to explore what issues most concerned people. They then invited those contacted to participate in a Community Conversation – a modified deliberative poll consisting of a daylong deliberation focused on the best ways for neighborhoods to work together to address those issues.

Follow-up visits were conducted at locations where individuals were not contacted in the first round of visits. Additional sampling techniques such as catch sampling outside of a local grocery store were employed as well. Approximately 300 volunteer hours were invested in the door-knocking campaign. One hundred eighty two addresses were visited and 149 people completed interviews. Each was invited to attend the Community Conversation, scheduled for July 21, 2007. One hundred thirty five people expressed interest in participating in the Community Conversation. Each was sent a follow-up letter to reinforce their decision to participate.

The interviews indicated that the less active people contacted through the door-knocking campaign held concerns about their community that were very similar to those articulated by the community leaders. "Moving Forward Together" was updated to include the results of the interviews. It was then provided to the Hilltop Steering Committee. This created a feedback loop

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[15] See James S. Fishkin Robert C. Luskin, "Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion," *Acta Politica* 40 (2005): 284-298.

between more and less active citizens, thereby strengthening less active stakeholders' perceptions of being represented in the broader Hilltop renewal process.

Monetary support was built into the Community Conversation budget for any individual who needed transportation and/or childcare on the day of the event. This lowered the barriers for participation and thereby created a more inclusive group of deliberators on July 21. In addition to the less active citizens contacted through the door-knocking campaign, every community organization with a known address in the Hilltop was invited to attend. Fourteen "resource partners" were also invited to participate - organizational leaders, from outside and inside the Hilltop, selected because of resources they held that could be used to foster successful collaboration. Resource partners included officials from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Birmingham Foundation and several nonprofit intermediaries, including the PPND. One hundred thirteen people attended the July 21 Community Conversation, including 49 people from the door-knocking campaign, 19 community leaders, 14 resource partners and 31 event volunteers.

Second Dimension: Deliberation

The second dimension of inclusion focuses on facilitating deliberation in such a way that diverse perspectives are actually heard and utilized as a source of learning and community problem solving.[16] Two elements of the Community Conversation helped to draw out multiple perspectives in the process of deliberation. First, the agenda for deliberation was generated organically with input from community stakeholders. The protocol for door knockers was to ask, among other things, what issues most concerned people about their communities. Answers to these questions were utilized to construct the agenda for the July 21 event. As mentioned earlier, these items were found to be consistent with topics under discussion in the 62 community meetings.

Agenda items were printed in "Moving Forward Together." People who agreed to participate received the document before arriving on July 21 and were encouraged to suggest modifications or additions to the agenda. After several rounds of feedback on the agenda, the

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[16] See Sam Kaner et al., *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-making* 2nd edition. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2007).

final list of questions that structured small group deliberations was: How can we encourage people to get more involved in our communities? What is the best way for us to coordinate the activities of the many groups operating in our neighborhoods? What is the best way for our community associations to work together, along with police, to prevent crimes from occurring? How can we better coordinate existing resources to provide the opportunities that our youth need to succeed? As residents, how can we work together to promote revitalization in our communities?

The second element of inclusion in the Community Conversation was deliberation in small groups of eight to ten people from each Hilltop neighborhood. Small groups were utilized for both the affective and substantive reasons distinguished by Marsh. Affectively, the intimacy of a small circle creates opportunities for mutual recognition and deepens a sense of common identity. Substantively, small groups enable more individuals to participate, and to participate more deeply, than larger groups. For those who are not seasoned public speakers, stepping up to the microphone in an auditorium full of people can be an intimidating experience. To encourage broad participation, facilitators in the Community Conversation were trained to "draw out" less outspoken deliberators and to allow storytelling as well as brainstorming and logical reasoning. Deliberators brought different styles of thinking and communicating to the table. Facilitators honored these differences and helped deliberators to articulate thoughts, feelings and opinions so that others could understand them.

Small-group deliberations were integrated with a plenary session in which deliberators interacted with resource partners. A basic condition of democratic deliberation is that it rely upon reason – "offering evidence, advancing claims grounded in logic and facts, and listening and responding to counterarguments."[17] Resource partners strengthened reason-based deliberation by helping deliberators understand available tools, resources and strategies for collaborative problem solving in the Hilltop. While in their small groups, deliberators developed a wide range of questions that they addressed directly to the resource partners during the plenary session. Examples of questions include, "What can the Urban Redevelopment Authority do to help us revitalize business districts along Brownsville Road and Warrington Ave?" "What can residents do to support these efforts?" "How can we guarantee that a representative from the police department will attend *all* of our community block watch meetings?" "How do we build a

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[17] Jacobs et al. (2009), 11.

new umbrella organization for the Hilltop that encompasses our neighborhood organizations?" "How can we quickly create a community center for the Hilltop Community?" "How do we strengthen home ownership in our neighborhoods?"

Interaction between deliberators and resource partners helped foster sentiments of inclusion. Face-to-face engagement with people who control access to information and resources helped citizens feel they were being included not only in a conversation but in a broader process of social change.

Third Dimension: Action

The third dimension of the Hilltop inclusion strategy focused on connecting deliberation to action. Unless efforts are made to ensure that talking together leads to collective action, the idea of being represented in a deliberative problem solving process holds no meaning.[18] Many of those invited to participate in the July 21 Community Conversation wanted to know what difference their participation would make. They wanted to be represented in the process of making change in the community, not merely in the discussion. The more active citizens, in particular, had ample opportunities outside of the Community Conversation to speak with and be heard by others. They hoped that the Community Conversation would create a break with the past by establishing a unified voice among neighborhoods and a common point of contact with critical resources.

The Hilltop Partnership viewed the Community Conversation as an opportunity for different stakeholder groups – neighborhood organizations, active and less active residents, public officials, business owners, and community development intermediaries – to form new relationships that could lead to new possibilities for action. These different groups were included not only to ensure that different perspectives and interests were represented in the deliberation, but also to secure the resources and galvanize the collective will to move from dialogue to action.

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[18] Jeffrey Berry et al. *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (Washington D.C. Brookings Institution, 1993), 55; see also Patrick Scully and Martha L. McCoy, "Study Circles: Local Deliberation as the Cornerstone of Deliberative Democracy," in *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*, eds. John Gastil and Peter Levine (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2005).

To bring about action from the dialogue, Community Conversation facilitators documented promising ideas generated in the small groups. During the plenary session, resource partners promoted deeper understanding of issues and offered ways that they could support citizen action. Relationships formed among members of different neighborhood groups. Many of the less active citizens became motivated to get more involved. Approximately 15 participants joined the Hilltop Steering Committee and later became active in that group.

By altering relationships and creating new alignments, the Community Conversation created the opportunity for Hilltop leaders to set a direction on a top priority identified in the Community Conversation: creating an umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of neighborhood-based groups and to serve as a leadership structure for the Hilltop as a whole. The PPND began working closely with Hilltop groups as a direct result of the July 21 event. In the plenary session, the deputy director of PPND stated that her organization could assist interested groups in building an organization with the capacity to create and implement a Hilltop business plan. "If you can take this energy and turn it into a neighborhood plan to address your needs… there may be an opportunity for us to work with you in next year."

A post-event survey was administered on July 21 to gauge how deliberation might have shaped the perceptions of participants.[19] It is clear from the results of the survey that deliberators came away with a strong sense of trust in the deliberative problem solving process and its conveners. Eighty eight percent of respondents reported that they definitely (72 percent) or probably (16 percent) would become more engaged in their community as a result of the Community Conversation. Ninety eight percent said they left the Community Conversation with a better understanding of important issues facing their community. Ninety four percent reported the conversation caused them to consider points of view they had not considered before. And ninety eight percent reported the Conversation helped them identify solutions to important issues.

Open-ended survey responses further support the belief that the Community Conversation strengthened people's sense of trust in the process. An 18-year-old female from the St. Clair neighborhood remarked, "Now that I know that people really do care about the community, I would like to participate more." A 25-year-old female from Allentown stated, "The Community

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[19] Forty-seven participants completed the post survey. Selected results are available at
http://www.phil.cmu.edu/caae/dp/polls/spring07/MFT_Final_Report.pdf

Conversation encouraged me to engage more with my community. I am happy to learn that people in my community are willing to participate." A 49-year-old male from Beltzhoover was "encouraged by this conversation at a time when I was ready to sell my home and my business because of rising crime. I do not feel so alone now after this Community Conversation." A 31-year-old female from Arlington believed "the Community Conversation gave people some hope again." A 54 -year-old female from Carrick wanted to "see this as a springboard to future conversations and town meetings." And a 29-year-old female from Arlington said simply, "It would be a crime to have this discussion and not go anywhere with it. There should be a follow-up scheduled as soon as possible."

In September 2007 a "Community Conversations Report"[20] was sent to those who participated in the July 21 event and an additional 160 individuals from inside and outside the Hilltop. The report, which documented the results of the Community Conversation, was made available online and in local libraries. Local newspapers and radio stations publicized the report. This raised awareness across the Hilltop about the collaborative efforts and focused people's attention on the priorities emerging from the deliberation. The Steering Committee used the report as a roadmap for working together to improve the Hilltop.

In the spring of 2008 thirteen Hilltop groups enrolled in the PPND's "capacity program," referred to by the deputy director during the plenary session of the Community Conversation. The program qualifies community-based organizations to receive funding for economic development initiatives by providing training and technical assistance in strategic planning, fundraising, board development, financial management and community organizing. After six months of preparation, on September 12, 2008 participants in the capacity program made a presentation to the Birmingham Foundation, the Forbes Funds of the Pittsburgh Foundation, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the PPND and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Initiatives. Presenters represented the Allentown Community Development Corporation, Beltzhoover Community Development Corporation, Carrick Community Council, Hilltop Economic Development Corporation, and the Mt. Oliver City/St. Clair Village Border Block Watch. The group proposed to create a 501(c) 3 corporation called the "Hilltop Alliance." The Alliance would not replace the activities of the member organizations but instead "facilitate

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[20] Ibid.

communication among the organizations on the Hilltop and leverage funding, programmatic and development opportunities that can provide broad benefit to the Hilltop."[21]

Presenters identified the work of the Hilltop Steering Committee and the Community Conversation as instrumental in their coming together to create an umbrella organization. Soon the founding members of the Hilltop Alliance began to work with the Forbes Funds to create the 501(c) 3. As one active member of the Hilltop Alliance put it, "We've tried a lot of things in the past to make change in our community. This is the first time that I really think we are going to be able to do it."

The Hilltop Alliance developed as a direct result of a deliberative problem solving process. Board members had a great deal of trust in the process, so much so that they have established deliberation as the foundation for problem solving in the Hilltop. The PPND put the group in touch with the national group Everyday Democracy[22], which is currently providing support to launch a series of community-wide Study Circles focused on moving from dialogue to action on a range of priorities established in the Community Conversation. To the extent that deliberation led to action, stakeholders felt they had been included in not only a well-structured dialogue but a substantive community change process. The focus on action complemented and reinforced the invitation and deliberation dimensions of inclusion.

Reflections

In this chapter I have illustrated a strategy for how to organize inclusion into three dimensions of deliberative design: the invitation, the deliberation and the action. If organizers of deliberative community problem solving fail to build inclusion into any of these stages, the risk increases that stakeholders will raise questions about the integrity of the process and withhold their support. To be sure, some degree of tension will always surround efforts to engage stakeholders in a complex problem solving effort. Inclusion strategies alone cannot prevent such tensions from emerging. But unlike in the Mid Valley school district studied by Marsh, the challenges surrounding deliberation did not become debilitating in the Hilltop. The multi-dimensional inclusion strategy contributed a great deal to this positive outcome.

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[21] "Hilltop Alliance" (document released September 12, 2008): 2.
[22] Formerly called the Study Circles Resource Center, the organization changed its name to Everyday Democracy in 2008.

The particular inclusion strategies followed in the Hilltop may be applicable in similar cases of deliberative community problem solving. But more to the point of this study is that inclusion is a challenge to be addressed in more than one dimension of deliberative design. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to building inclusive representation into a complex deliberative process. The choice to utilize a probability sampling strategy for the invitation phase in the Hilltop was based on a perceived need among community leaders to bring "new voices" to the table. For Hilltop leaders an important indicator of inclusion was the number of new faces showing up at the Community Conversation. The door knocking campaign was designed to bring out these new faces. Leaders were satisfied that the process was inclusive to the extent that lots of different kinds of people whom they didn't know – particularly from different neighborhoods – got involved in the community problem solving effort. Leaders were relying on these new people to reinvigorate the ranks of community leadership and provide the energy to move from talk to action.

The Hilltop Partnership initiated a highly open-ended process in which nearly any community issue could have been deliberated. The agenda was created by the diverse voices in the community. The strategy for inclusion was thus not constrained by how the issue was defined.[23](Fisher and Forester 1993). If a more focused issue was under consideration, such as school district policies for determining school closings, then great care would have to be taken to ensure inclusion of teachers, principals, students, unions, community developers and other stakeholder groups. The literature on applied deliberative democracy will benefit from additional research and reflection on successful inclusion strategies.

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[23] See Frank Fisher and John Forester, eds., *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning* (Durham N.C: Duke University Press, 1993).

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