

Reflections on the Final Session Changing the World, One Person At a Time

There are two ways to think about the positive examples we have been offered. We can focus on the **differences** between the setting that produced the example and our setting. This way of thinking lets us identify ways that we will have to adapt the offering in order to implement it successfully. Or, we can focus on the **practices that generate** the positive results we have heard about. This way of thinking lets us test the offering to see if it creates similar benefits in our situation.

Culture can be understood as the practices that inhabitants take as givens that define “the way we do things around.” Consciously trying new patterns of attention and action –practices that improve the chances that we will live good lives together– can feel strange when it departs from what we take for granted, but it can be a powerful way to develop new competencies.

We identified two patterns of possible generative practices, one pattern at the level of relationship between people who want assistance and those who provide it, a second pattern at the organizational level;

Generative principles as people interact

- Bring people together into an intentional support network.
- Educate each other about a good life. What is possible? How do we challenge the beliefs and assumptions hold us back? The person who wants assistance takes the first turn in the education process; others offer their judgement and ideas in turn.
- Listen deeply to what a good life is for this person and those in close relationship. Again, the person takes the first turn as speaker with others listening with care.
- Walk together through walls: support each other to take up valued roles in community by overcoming the barriers thrown up by social devaluation and habits of separation.
- Continue to invite new people to join in reciprocal relationships.
- Share what you learn.

- Keep moving: deal with problems and conflicts as they occur.

At the level of organizational strategy

- Clearly identify all of the organization's assets: operating funds, reserves, capital; time and talents of participants; staff time and talents; alliances; equipment; good name and position.
- Adopt the principle of subsidiarity: larger units must not take over any decision that the smaller units that they contain can make; larger units are responsible for promoting the health and capacity of the smaller units that they contain.
- Hold each other accountable for confronting excuses that discourage action; practice seeing apparent scarcities as constraints on the design of effective
- Ask, how can we shift direction of assets available for support to the person, or those closest to the person.
- Ask, How can we leverage all of the organizations resources to increase the opportunities and control open to people?
- Clearly identify community assets and ask, How do we join our assets with community assets to enrich our common life.