

Accelerate 77 "*Pecha Kucha*" presentation by Terry Bergdall (final script)
 2nd ABCD Festival in Goa, 18.01.2017, to accompany power point file

1	A77 logo	This is a story about bottom-up initiatives born from the creativity of people driven by their own passion, commitment, and interests and is in contrast to top-down programs. It is the story of the "Accelerate 77" initiative to identify, connect, and engage people who are taking action on sustainability.
2	city skyline	The backstory began in 2005 when the Mayor decided that Chicago should be a leading "green" city in light of Climate Change. As is typical of government, he established a new official Department of Sustainability staffed by experts who created a technical plan with goals, objectives, and implementation strategies.
3	cover of the sustainability plan booklet	In order to realize these goals, the plan spelled out a number of ways to convince city residents and businesses to change their behaviors in order to reduce the carbon footprint. In essence, the city's sustainability plan was a big marketing strategy. It also is a clear example of treating people like "consumers" rather than "productive citizens."
4	ICA logo	The Institute of Cultural Affairs, ICA, is based in Chicago and has a mission to "Build a Just and Equitable Society in Harmony with Planet Earth." It has long been a pioneer in participatory development. To mark its 50th Anniversary in 2012, ICA made it a priority to address Climate Change in a manner consistent with ABCD.
5	renders	In ICA's view, it is difficult to occasion social change by trying to convince people to do something different. Instead, connecting people with shared interests and strengthening relationships among them can be an effective to nurture new knowledge, practices, courage, and commitment for realizing broad-based change. Rather than top-down this is bottom-up.
6	working in gardens	ICA didn't start with a fully developed plan. Rather than a blueprint, it envisioned a process that would unfold as more people became involved. The first step was to identify positive sustainability activities in neighborhoods that were already taking place. ICA assumed they were occurring everywhere. The question was how to find them.
7	77 map	Chicago, however, is a very large place. Historically, the city consists of 77 major community areas. I live in one of them, Uptown, where 56,000 people live in half a dozen different neighborhoods. ICA faced a big challenge to come up with a practical way to identify sustainability initiatives across all 77 areas of the city.

8	OCU students	In partnership with an out of state university in Oklahoma, ICA hosted an intensive month-long urban academy for students in Chicago. Their fieldwork consisted of working with residents in 3 of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods to identify local sustainability initiatives. "Sustainability" was left for community residents to define. At the end of the academy, a large number of initiatives had been mapped.
9	Chicago students	The experience with Oklahoma students resulted in ICA contacting Chicago-based universities. Over 18 months, 244 students from 12 disciplines of study in 5 universities worked to identify as many local sustainability initiatives as they could in Chicago's 77 communities.
10	A77 map	Information on 1,000+ initiatives was compiled. "Sustainability" is often seen to be a narrow category pertaining to the natural environment. While that is important, community residents saw "sustainability" much more comprehensively, e.g., there is no "sustainability" without health, wellbeing, safety, and justice.
11	share fair table	After initiatives were identified, the next step was to connect the people who were doing them. In Sept 2012, a city-wide "Share Fair" was attended by over 400 people from 73 of the 77 communities. People were thrilled at hosting tables to share their work and then wandering around to meet and talk with peers from other communities.
12	Karen Weigert at share fair	The keynote speaker at the Share Fair was the City's Chief Sustainability Officer. Dots on a map with support documentation convinced her to come. The energy and excitement she experienced at the event convinced her that the power of local communities was indeed under-recognized, under-appreciated, and under-supported. She left determined to change that reality.
13	CSLN	Phase III was to enable people from the fair to engage with each other. ICA never had a prescription for this -- relationships were to evolve. Follow-up meetings after the share fair were held on the West, South, and North sides of Chicago. A strong desire emerged to create something ongoing. This became the Chicago Sustainability Leaders Network.
14	lateral relationships	They decided the 1st purpose of CSLN was to strengthen lateral peer relationships. Monthly meetings include time for sharing, learning, and finding ways to enhance collective impact. After 3 years, CSLN now has concentric circles of relationships: 1,000 people requested to be on the mailing list, 300 have attended at least 1 meeting, 120 consider themselves active members, and on-average 40 attend monthly gatherings.

15	vertical relationships	Empowering the collective voice of communities in dialogue with government is a second purpose of CSLN. Every 6 months, a formal "round table" now takes place with municipal officials. The city's bike rental program, for example, was expanded to the West and South sides after CSLN representatives from those areas strongly pointed out the city's bias for primarily servicing the affluent North side.
16	In-between space	The City's Chief Sustainability Officer was skittish at first but after attending the Share Fair and organizing the round tables she and members of the CSLN have come to view their relationship as a creative "in-between" space for connecting top-down planning with bottom-up initiatives. This remains a work-in-progress but one that both sides recognize as an important endeavor.
17	lessons learned	What lessons have been learned? First, ICA embarked upon A77 without funding - just a commitment and determination with few practical ideas about how it to go about it. It declared its intention first and then began to work on ways to make it happen. It laid the rails for the track as the train was moving. The learning: Don't wait, just do it.
18	Boeing	A mini-grant from Boeing, whose international HQs are in Chicago, was important financial support that eventually appeared, but it was nowhere in sight when A77 began. This is in line with a key ABCD principle: you start with what you have, not what you don't, and then figure out each step in the process to make it happen.
19	Margaret Wheatley	Even before the recent emergence of populism at elections world wide, Margaret Wheatley, a whole systems thinker, said we "live in a sea of insanity where reality and future-oriented values are generally ignored; rather than despair, our job is to create local islands of sanity wherever we can." ABCD is a valuable tool in doing this. A77 and CSLN have been practical signs of building from the bottom-up.
20	personal info	Those who want to know more can talk with me later. If you're interested, we can also discuss my 18 years in Africa working with villages. Lesson learned in Africa contributed directly to the work in Chicago. A paper about this, "The Catalytic Role of an Outsider," can be found on the ABCD website.

Thank you for listening to my story.

<http://www.pechakucha.org>