STRATEGIC DOING: EQUITABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FLINT

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CCED Flint uses the practice of Strategic Doing to cocreate with partners equitable community development efforts. What is Strategic Doing? According to the Strategic Doing Institute (SDI) it is a peer-reviewed, scientifically grounded practice that teaches the discipline of collaboration and strategy in open networks.



Collaboration is an essential aspect of building strong and thriving communities. From local neighborhoods to global networks, collaborations bring together individuals, organizations, and institutions to work towards common goals and address pressing social, economic, and environmental issues. SDI further indicates, "The key insight of Strategic Doing is that these collaborations emerge from conversations with a predictable structure. As participants learn how to design and guide these conversations, the performance, volume, and velocity of their collaborations grow".

Strategic doing uses four key questions to form the foundation of collaboration:

- 1. What Could We Do? What are the opportunities before us using only the assets we already have might generate solutions to the complex challenge we face?
- 2. What Should We Do? We can't do everything; which, out of all the opportunities, should we pursue, and what would success look like?
- 3. What Will We Do? Where will we start? What project should we launch? What commitments are we making to each other to begin that project?
- 4. What's Our 30/30? When will we get back together to share what we've done so that we can learn from our experience, adjust if we need to, and plot out our next set of commitments?

Strategic Doing was used by CCED Flint in the creation of Neighborhoods Without Borders and its Opening Doors initiative. Neighborhoods Without Borders, a networking grassroots community, comes together to significantly improve the overall quality of life in Flint neighborhoods by using an asset approach (people's gifts) to take direct action. Opening Doors is one of our Pathfinder Projects to break down the borders of fear and misunderstanding that separate us and divide our community. Strategic Doing is helping us transform Flint, Michigan into the epitome of equity.

For a more in depth look at Strategic Doing go to https://strategicdoing.net/. Bob Brown, CCED Associate Director, is a member of the Strategic Doing Institute core team.

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To guide strategic, collaborative conversations Strategic Doing uses 10 rules or skills:

Before you Begin

- 1. Create a safe space for deep, focused conversations.
- 2. Frame the conversation around an appreciative question.

What could we do?

- 3. Uncover hidden assets that people are willing to share.
- 4. Link & leverage your assets to create new opportunities.

What should we do?

- 5. Rank all your opportunities to find your "Big Easy"
- 6. Convert your Big Easy into an outcome with measurable characteristics.

What will we do?

- 7. Define a Pathfinder Project with guideposts
- 8. Create a short-term action plan with everyone taking a small step.

What's our 30/30?

- 9. Set a next meeting to review progress and make adjustments.
- 10. Nudge, connect, and promote relentlessly to reinforce your new habits of collaboration.