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## Lifelong Learning, Meeting #4

September 23, 2021, 02:00 PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Erin Rusmi

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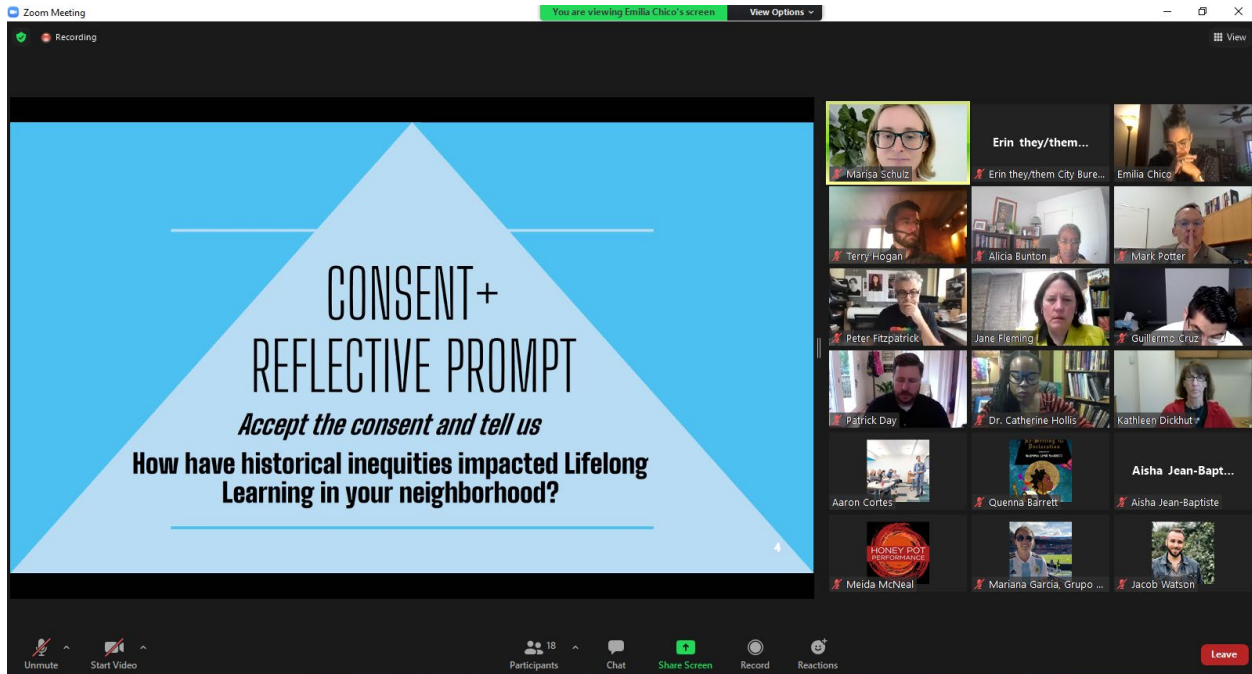
### MEETING MATERIALS

[Agenda <Link to Agenda>](#)

[Presentation <Link to presentation>](#)

### ATTENDEES

- Marisa Schulz
- Guillermo Cruz
- Alicia Bunton
- Mariana Garcia
- Patrick Day
- Terry Hogan
- Shenika Jackson
- Emilia Chico
- Jane Fleming
- Catherine Hollis
- Mark Potter
- Peter Fitzpatrick
- Aaron Cortes
- Renuka Sharma
- Kathleen Dickhut
- Aisha Jean-Baptiste
- Jacob Watson
- Meida McNeal
- Quenna Barrett
- Rebecca Estrada



Zoom Meeting | You are viewing Emilia Chico's screen | View Options

Recording

**CONSENT+**  
**REFLECTIVE PROMPT**  
*Accept the consent and tell us*  
**How have historical inequities impacted Lifelong Learning in your neighborhood?**

Participants: 18 | Chat | Share Screen | Record | Reactions | Leave

Participant list (clockwise from top-left):  
- Maria Schulz  
- Erin they/them City Bure...  
- Emilia Chico  
- Terry Hogan  
- Alicia Burton  
- Mark Potter  
- Peter Fitzpatrick  
- Jane Fleming  
- Guillermo Cruz  
- Patrick Day  
- Dr. Catherine Hollis  
- Kathleen Dickhut  
- Aaron Cortes  
- Quenna Barrett  
- Aisha Jean-Baptiste  
- Meida McNeal  
- Mariana Garcia, Grupo ...  
- Jacob Watson

#### MEETING GOAL

*This meeting focused on refining the guiding questions for the Lifelong Learning Pillar, reflecting on overarching and education-specific trends as they relate to racial equity, and asking participants what additional data they would like for the next meeting.*

#### WHERE WE ARE



Step 1

**We Are**

*Setting the Stage*



Step 2

**We Have and Need**

*Develop A Policy Toolkit*



Step 3

**We Will**

*Set Policy Framework*

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The facilitators used the question “How have historical inequities impacted lifelong learning in your neighborhood?” to start the discussion. The meeting was centered around the theme of how structural and historical racism continues to harm Black and Latinx communities and how to create more equitable conditions for lifelong learning in Chicago.

2

There are many aspects of lifelong learning, and this pillar is interconnected with the others. Categories identified include workforce development, job training, early childhood, schools, practical life skills and economic skills. The connection between health and education was highlighted during the overview of the Health and Race Equity Impact Assessment.

3

Themes that arose when discussing the guiding questions were the following: building on what’s already being done, maintaining a multigenerational focus, social support, accessibility, and creating a feeling of belonging in formal and informal learning spaces.

## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“Generally, the data feels disappointing. I want to honor that it’s easy to just show a bunch of slides, but there’s really lived experience enmeshed in all of this. It feels disappointing, it feels disheartening, but there’s also work that can be done to move through this in ways that there’s optimism on the other side.”*

**Emilia Chico** | Third Settlements, Project Planner

*“Early literacy attainment (reading by 3rd grade) is a critically important factor in [...] putting children on a trajectory toward educational achievement, earning, and good health [...] What are we doing about multi-generational literacy so adults get support and children get what they need from the start?”*

**Jane Fleming** | Chicago Public Schools, Director of Literacy

*“Things to build on are potentially Park District programs and other learning opportunities where I’ve seen, just in relatives of mine, a lot of social support [...] My mom, her aerobics class at one fieldhouse, many of her people helped her in a grieving process.”*

**Patrick Day** | Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Senior Planner

*“Really interesting to see how many connections there are to other pillars here (health/safety, economic opps, etc.)—we can’t tackle Lifelong Learning without tackling everything else in a coordinated way.”*

**Jacob Watson** | Honey Pot Performance, Artist-Organizer

*“If we’re looking at the areas of the city where investment has been lacking at best, it makes no sense to say we’re going to expand the accessibility of places that may or may not exist, or exist in fewer numbers compared to communities on the North Side or Northwest side [...] for some communities they’re just going to have to be created.”*

**Alicia Bunton** | Illinois Institute of Technology, Director of Community Affairs

## NOTES

**Kickoff and Introductions**

How have historical inequities impacted Lifelong Learning in your neighborhood?

- Emilia Chico and Marisa Schulz facilitated the meeting. Jacob Watson and Quenna Barrett from Honey Pot Performance presented the artist-organizer update.
- The group started by answering the question: How have historical inequities impacted Lifelong Learning in your neighborhood?
  - “There has been a reduction in investment into the formal spaces of learning in my neighborhood on the North Side, as there has in so many neighborhoods,” said Mark Potter, City Colleges. Examples of this are shut down city colleges and CPS schools.
  - “There has been a trend toward more private institutions that contribute to inequity with their high cost of attending,” Peter Fitzpatrick said.
  - “There’s been a disproportionate/abundant investment in resources, learning spaces, etc., in my downtown neighborhood that results in inequity in other areas of the city,” explained Jane Fleming, who lives Fulton Market, an area she describes as having a beautiful public library, park spaces, Starbucks on every corner, good lighting and comfortable seating. She sees it as over-resourced, which inevitably leads to under-investment in other areas of the city.
  - “Criminalization of acts like loitering and lack of investment in safe, accessible public spaces has harmed informal learning opportunities in many neighborhoods,” said Jacob Watson.

**Overview**

- The process started in fall 2020 by selecting pillars. We are currently in the research and engagement phase. In Winter 2021 the meetings will focus on policy and action planning. Public feedback on guiding questions is planned every step of the way, and will include tabling, events and the We Will Chicago website.

**Artist Report Out**

- Lifelong learning is so many different things to different people, so they’ve divided into several aspects.
- “Brown bag lunches” are a lunchtime series of Zoom conversations focused on workforce development, job training, early childhood, schools, practical life skills and economic skills.
- Honey Pot Performance is not publicizing events widely, but all ages are invited. Subject matter experts will be present too.

**Overarching Pillar Trends Overview**

- One major cause of racial inequity is redlining.- Much of the South and West Sides were defined as “definitely declining” or “hazardous,” resulting in the refusal of loans or predatory loans that caused people to lose their home. This caused wealth degeneration and a lower quality of life for Black and Latinx neighborhoods.

- One result of redlining is the racial and ethnic segregation, which, through processes of exclusion and disinvestment, was by design.
- There is an almost 20 year gap in life expectancy between areas with the highest and lowest life expectancies. The facilitator paused to emphasize that these facts represent real stories and people impacted by this history.
- Maps showed racial inequity in investment (new building permits per capita), hardship (unemployment rates, education and income level, poverty rates and other factors), and safety (results of survey that asked residents how safe they feel in their neighborhoods).
- All the maps look very similar because racism impacts all aspects of life.
- Population change: Black population declined due to “continued disinvestment, poor school quality, and neighborhood safety concerns” but there has been growth downtown. Near the South and Northwest sides, Latinx and Asian populations in established neighborhoods are declining, indicating displacement and gentrification. The white population is concentrated in a relatively small part of the city.

### **Pillar Specific Data**

- When residents of a neighborhood get degrees, the median income rises. Racial and ethnic disparities in education and employment are a barrier to reducing poverty and increasing opportunity.
- Disinvestment in Black and Latinx public schools leads to a lower number of residents attaining an associate’s degree or higher.
- Healthcare costs four times more for those with non-proficient literacy than those who are proficient. Literacy is connected with graduation rates and income prospects. Literacy programs such as classes for adult English language learners and GED/diploma programs are already taking place in neighborhoods.
- Although this data focuses on formal education, the presenters also intend to “connect community learning hubs with institutional learning.”
- Rebecca Estrada asked how certificate programs are included in the data. “We’re pushing different training programs which provide a certificate. They have value and increase opportunities,” Mark Potter said. He added it’s challenging to get the data because there are so many different types of certificate programs: those that lead to a career, get you to the next level of your career, college credit and not.
- Renuka Sharma’s organization is working on a health literacy curriculum for adult learners.

### **Guiding Questions and Follow-Up Discussion**

- The guiding questions center around the themes from the last meeting: access, networks and space. The group reviewed a draft of the five top rated questions, listed below:
  - Access: How do we support increased awareness, interest, and belonging to learning resources available for all Chicagoans (regardless of race, gender, income level, age, ability, citizen status, and language proficiency)?

- Networks: How do we create pathways to the workforce for communities who have been historically disenfranchised, including formally and informally incarcerated minorities?
  - Networks How can we leverage existing programs and academic curricula to create learning opportunities and deliver on personal growth?
  - Networks How do we build bridges between informal and formal learning opportunities and social support (e.g. childcare)?
  - Spaces: How can we expand the accessibility of places where lifelong learning can occur, especially in communities that have been historically excluded?
- Patrick Day suggested adding more examples of social support to question four, in addition to childcare, such as Park District programs.
  - Alicia Bunton said it doesn't make sense to expand accessibility of places that don't exist, due to unequal investment, because for some neighborhoods, the places will have to be created.
  - Mariana Garcia suggested universal design to help make spaces accessible for everyone.
  - How do we leverage and honor what is already taking place?
  - Are we adequately incorporating the multigenerational focus?
  - How do we create the sense of belonging in formal and informal spaces? Through disinvestment people learn that these spaces are not for them. How are we addressing opt out and drop out rates through these questions?
  - We need resources, including education, for people being released from incarceration.
  - Define "informally incarcerated": those who were incarcerated, were released, and still have not dealt with the issues of their criminal history (e.g. hired to a job and immediately let go when the employer found their record)
  - Concrete examples would help people outside this group understand what the questions are meant to accomplish. It's best to include several examples so people won't get stuck on just one.

### **Health and Race Equity Impact Assessment (HREIA) Integration**

- HREIA is a set of questions to evaluate a proposed policy or plan's likely impact on communities. It was done with the HREIA project team as well as a 10-member community accountability group.
- Understanding root causes is essential. The conditions of people's lives are impacted by rules and policies, discrimination like ableism, xenophobia, etc.
- Communities must be directly involved in shaping their environment. Social equity needs to be faced head on.
- Equity is both an outcome of fairness and justice, and a process in which people are respected as the experts of their own experience.

- Applying HREIA to Lifelong Learning: connections between education and housing, increasing belonging to learning resources, pathways to the workforce lead to community level impacts such as income, voting, generational wealth, and type of job which lead to individual/family impacts including chronic disease, safety at work, mental health, and life expectancy.
- In meetings seven and eight the group will apply HREIA to proposed policies.

#### RESOURCES

##### **Virtual Brown Bag Lunch Event**

[Summaries, dates, and registration links for all the virtual brown bag lunch events. Each focuses on a different aspect of lifelong learning.](#)

##### **We Will Chicago Calendar**

[A calendar of community engagement events and activities led by Honey Pot Performance. These events focus on the seven pillars and are free and open to the public.](#)

#### NEXT STEPS

- Before the next meeting, participants are asked to reflect on “What can we learn from histories and narratives to better understand the trends we discussed in today’s meeting and to help guide our work moving forward?”
- They were also instructed to use the Google doc to comment on data, trends, and past plans to highlight in future discussions.
- The group will review the following plans that were selected as particularly good examples to follow: Chicago Metropolitan Agency of Planning analysis of American Community Survey Data (a plan currently being worked on), Youth Citizenship in Action evaluation of Participatory Budgeting in Schools Pilot (a plan that exemplified good process and engagement), Our Path Forward 2021-2025 Strategic Framework and Englewood Rising Quality of Life Plan (plans that can inform data needs, objectives, and recommendations)