

Interactivity Foundation

BIANNUAL REPORT

October 2023 - April 2024

Working Towards Clarity, Accountability, & Impact



Prepared by Shannon Wheatley Hartman, Ph.D.

Approved by the Intellectual Development Committee (IDC) & IF Team

CLARITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, & IMPACT

October 2023 - April 2024

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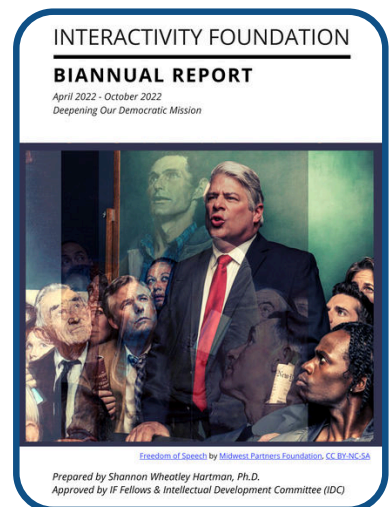
For a more comprehensive understanding of our journey and organizational developments, we invite you to click on the following images to review our previous biannual reports.



[Looking Ahead: What's Next for IF?](#)
[April 2023 - October 2023](#)



[Integrating IF's Mission Areas,](#)
[October 2022 - April 2023](#)



[Deepening Our Democratic Mission,](#)
[April 2022 - October 2022](#)

CLARIFYING OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

October 2023 - April 2024

What do we do? Our Mission Statement

To bring people together in meaningful discussions that expand imagination, build social trust, and improve the discussion skills necessary for everyday democracy. Our discussion design and resources empower everyday citizens to practice democratic discussions in their communities, classrooms, and workplaces.

Why do we do it? Our Vision Statement

We envision a future where all people have the opportunity and discussion skills to come together to explore emerging concerns for the purpose of co-imagining pathways forward for their communities. We imagine a future with the civic infrastructure necessary for people to engage in meaningful discussions that expand public imagination, build social trust, and strengthen democratic participation.

How do we do it? Our Programs

Our core programs support our mission and help to achieve our vision:

- **Sustained Discussion Program.** Independent discussion projects designed to explore emerging topics of societal concern. Each project produces an open-access toolbox of discussion and facilitation resources designed to foster future discussions on the topic.
- **Collaborative Learning.** Resources, trainings, certificates, and a community of practice that bring together educators and civic practitioners to advance collaborative discussion skills and mindsets (CQ) in the classroom, community, and workplace.
- **Community Conversation Program.** Helping communities talk by providing consultation, resources, and trainings for building civic capacity and infrastructure.

What do we believe? Our Values

- **Creating a Greater We.** We believe in people coming together through discussion to expand public imagination, deepen social trust, and collaboratively build a better society for all.
- **Supporting Visionary Possibilities.** We believe everyone should have the chance to envision new possibilities for the future that defy the status quo and help to discover new ways of addressing collective challenges.
- **Nurturing Collaborative Intelligence.** We believe that we think better when we think together. We believe people can develop the skills and habits of mind necessary to be able to work with others to improve their lives and their communities.
- **Modeling Confident Humility.** We believe in asking questions and emphasizing listening. Discussions should encourage exploration, collaboration, guided discovery, and learning by doing. We advance processes, not answers.

What makes us unique? Our Identity

- We try to embody: hopefulness, optimism, inclusion, curiosity, playfulness, imagination, generosity, generative thinking, courage, anticipatory methods, future visioning.
- We try to avoid: crisis framing, political partisanship, strategic divisiveness, shaming, binary or simplistic framing (blue vs. red), “anything goes” discussion processes, centering experts above lived experiences (panel formats), passive learning models, zero sum debates.

CLARIFYING OUR BRAND

October 2023 - April 2024

Beginning in February, we worked through a multi-session process with a brand designer to develop a new logo and visual representation of the Interactivity Foundation. We believe this visual representation and branding reflect our identity as a modern, optimistic, and accessible organization.



We are also currently in the process of redesigning our website to better and more visually communicate our purpose, impact, and ways to connect with IF.

Key developments in the new website will include:

- An updated library of free resources, including new facilitation and DIY discussion resources
- A more visible integration with the Collaborative Discussion Project
- Narrative impact stories for each area of programming

Other forthcoming communication efforts that will be shared in coordination with our website launch include:

- A weekly IF Newsletter via Substack
- Programmatic impact stories with external dissemination campaigns
- New social media content and coordination (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram)
- Improved and more regular communication outreach via our peer and partnering organizations

The new website is scheduled to launch by June!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & IMPACT

SUSTAINED DISCUSSION PROGRAM

October 2023 - April 2024

Sustained Discussion Projects, previously known as “Sanctuary Projects,” began in 1996 under the direct supervision of IF Founder, Jay Stern. The program has evolved over the years, expanding from internal discussions to focusing on the development of public discussion guides in 2005. The program was paused between 2019-2023, due to budgetary restrictions and the pandemic. We relaunched this program in 2023. Our focus this period has been on two specific projects:

Learning & Society

This project explores how we can best support, acknowledge, motivate, and advance learning in our communities. Discussions encourages participants to think beyond traditional institutions of learning. This project has completed its third discussion series with a cohort of educators. The project has experimented with several new formats, such as:

- convening discussions through an entirely asynchronous discussion platform, strategically chosen to reduce the burden of participation and to broaden the range of people who can participate
- a shorter discussion window (6 - 15 weeks instead of one year) with daily or weekly participation instead of monthly
- serial discussion panels instead of simultaneous panels, designed to allow each new panel to build off of the work of previous panels
- utilized alternative facilitation resources to spark discussion, such as the [Connections Series](#), rather than standard open-ended questions
- the work product of each cohort series is a short, narrative summary instead of a long discussion guide and designed to be used for the next discussion panel or for future community conversations
- the final work product of the project is still to be determined; currently we have a draft of [Just Imagine Prompts](#) that can be shared or further developed as a facilitation resource. We will work on developing this work product into an externally facing resource.

Future of Citizenship

This project launched its first discussion cohort in March, 2024. The project is also experimenting with different formats and is working with an external design expert to produce unique discussion and facilitation resources, as part of her Master’s Thesis in Design in Norway. She has created a website to share news and developments about the project as they develop at futureofcitizenship.org

The Future of Citizenship

What will citizenship of the future look like?

More importantly: what do we *want* it to look like?

The Future of Citizenship unpacks and explores these questions by starting from the perspectives of those historically marginalized by the practices,

Join In!

Here are our upcoming discussion groups and engagements:

March - April 2024

Our first discussion sessions will be with a group of LGBTQ+ folks in Virginia.

Watch this space for more updates and opportunities to participate!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & IMPACT

SUSTAINED DISCUSSION PROGRAM

October 2023 - April 2024

After the launch of our new website this summer, we will actively recruit external project managers to support this program. A sample description and call for Sustained Discussion Fellows is described below. We are also in discussion with an established peer organization in our field to possibly collaborate on supporting this program. This new model should help to address two major obstacles: 1) our limited capacity to properly support this program, and 2) limited external recognition and dissemination of discussion resources produced by each project.

Sample Call for Sustained Discussion Project (SDP) Fellows

Do you believe in the power of bringing people together to discuss topics that matter to them? Do you believe that we think better when we think together? Apply now to become an IF Sustained Discussion Fellow and receive \$5000 to support your own discussion project.

What will Sustained Discussion Project (SDP) Fellows do?

- Meet monthly with IF team members, design expert, and other SDP fellows to share best practices for managing exploratory discussion projects.
- Create, recruit, and facilitate sustained discussions on an emerging topic of societal concern (minimum of six discussions with selected panel of discussants). [Click here](#) to review past discussion projects and the selection criteria for emerging topics.
- Create an open access toolbox of discussion resources that will be shared with others so that they, too, can not just discuss the topic but also organize their own discussion groups to explore more deeply together.

Who should apply? We welcome applications from individuals who want to deepen their understanding of an emerging topic of societal concern. Facilitation skills are a benefit, but not required. We welcome individuals from peer organizations, local governance, practitioners in the field of dialogue and deliberation, democracy building, and the bridging movement.

Partnering organizations? We welcome support (matching or otherwise) from other organizations, departments, or institutions. Please reach out if you would like to partner on a sustained discussion project.

Rationale & Immediate Needs

- Working with contract SDP Fellows will help to address our capacity limitations, inject innovation, and offer us the opportunity to identify new talent--who we may want to work with in a more permanent position in the future.
- This revised program design will also help to raise our visibility and establish deeper partnerships with organizations in our field. Alternatively, it could also create opportunities for everyday people to become project managers--offering new opportunities for civic leadership.
- This program design is a top candidate for external grants, given the range of potential topics and nonpartisan approach. Leading the field in moving beyond discussion guides and developing discussion resources to help others talk WV Imperative: applications from WV project managers will receive special consideration.
- **Immediate Needs:** we currently need a Program Director & Discussion/Product Design Expert to create and launch the call for applications, select the projects for 2024/2025 using agreed upon criteria, support project managers throughout the process, and develop a process for creating and disseminating discussion resources for each project, i.e. "project toolboxes."

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & IMPACT COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

October 2023 - April 2024

Our Collaborative Learning initiative includes the Collaborative Discussion Project and our emerging interactive resources: Making a Difference Interactive Journal and E-Confidence Materials.

As described in previous biannual reports, the Collaborative Discussion Project (CDP) was launched in 2021, with the primary goal of advancing collaborative intelligence. Collaborative intelligence refers to people's capacity to come together and effectively solve problems by employing collaborative discussion skills and mindsets. The program has three core components: 1) an open access toolkit, 2) coach trainings and participant certificates, and 3) a growing community of practice.

Innovative Content Development

In addition to the CDP, the Collaborative Learning initiative is also developing stand alone content that may be used in different ways across our programs. Currently, we have drafts of the Path towards Purpose: An Interactive Journal and the E-Confidence workbook, both of which are currently being piloted in different spaces for feedback.

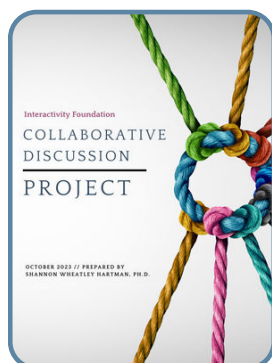
Key Developments

During this reporting period, the CDP:

- Successfully launched a fee-based summer training. We have already filled our two summer training programs and have created a waitlist for additional participants.
- Merged with our K12 & Professional Development initiative. We have embedded our CDP curriculum into this initiative and created two new certificates in 1) Facilitation, and 2) Facilitation Practice. Using our CDP model, we will offer coach trainings and certificate programs focusing on facilitation skill building in K12. We will offer our first professional development workshop via this program.
- Developing a CDP Trainer workshop, empowering IF Trainers to certify IF Coaches. This will help us meet our upcoming demand for cohort coach trainings.
- Building our Coach-Only resources and will relaunch our Monthly Community of Practice gatherings this summer. We are actively recruiting within our community to fill capacity needs.
- We continue to issue weekly CDP newsletter that has consistently maintained an average open rate of over 40%.
- We continue to be invited to present about the CDP. The most recent opportunity included a keynote presentation at the University of Delaware, Biden School of Public Policy, SNF Ithaca Initiative.
- By numbers: we have almost 100 coaches, over 10,000 unique users of the toolkit, and working with 40+ universities and colleges.



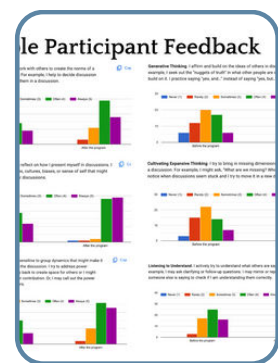
K12 Program Description



Summary Report 2023



Summer Coach Training



CDP Assessment Overview

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION PROGRAM

October 2023 - April 2024



During this reporting period, we offered one discussion series focused on the forces that seek to exclude others from full participation in democracy--and how we might respond to them. This topic arose from the first series of the year, The End of American Democracy?, where participants expressed concerns about how different minority groups were being targeted for exclusion.

In January of 2023, we paused all Community Conversation programming to enable us to step back and reimagine the purpose and desired impact of this program. While exploring possibilities, we have focused on the development of community conversation content that has been on our to-do list for several years.

Key Developments

During this reporting period, we have:

- Created over a dozen facilitation plans and DIY instructions

