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“You think you know, and then someone else speaks”

Pastor James, Peacemaker in Nigeria

Hi friend!

Here's to a positive and productive 2025 in a tumultuous world. Perhaps now, more than ever, learning to make a difference looks like a promising pathway.

Our focus in this newsletter is on maturing your community of practice. We're sharing our framework and announcing a new workshop about it in October this year.

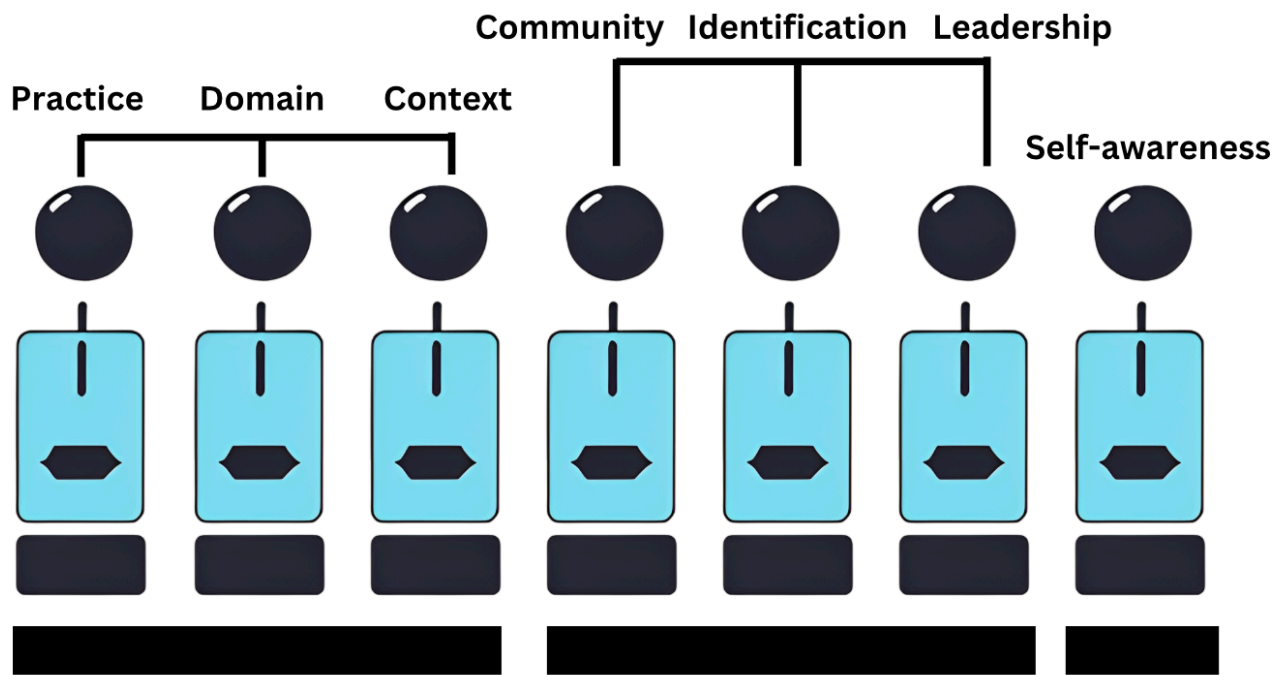
Image: walk-and-talk interview with Imam James, Nigeria, Peacemaker's meeting in Rose Castle, Carlisle



Maturing communities of practice - a new framework

Your community of practice is underway. There are ups and downs, but the trajectory looks good. Can you be more intentional and strategic in developing it? How do you decide what to do next?

We first introduced our maturity framework in our recent guidebook on [communities of practice within and across organizations](#). In the last six months we worked on an inspiring project with the [Peacemakers in Action network](#). They have been a successful community of practice for many years, but were eager to think about how to take their community to the next level. We used and refined our maturity framework to analyse their community and to help them envision future directions.



The dimensions of our maturity framework

Communities of practice do not mature along a linear trajectory. Our framework distinguishes between seven dimensions of maturing. At any given time, you focus on developing specific dimensions according to your context, resources, and strategic intent. As suggested by the illustration, we use the analogy of a soundboard where you adjust the dials to create a beautiful sound; you modulate the sliders over time, but you don't just push up them all up at once. Our framework explores the benefits and the tradeoffs involved in strengthening each dimension—or not.

Maturing communities of practice - a new workshop

October 7 - 10, Sesimbra, Portugal

Because the maturity framework turned out to be so useful in considering the trajectory of the *Peacemakers in Action*, we also decided to add another workshop to our repertoire of workshops at the Social Learning Lab. This is the continuation of our workshop on cultivating communities of practice—Part II if you will. It is structured around the maturity framework: you learn to use it both to assess your community's health and to strategize where to go. As always, we think that doing this with a cohort of

other community leaders is a wonderful way to make progress.



Sign up!

Events this year

See our [calendar of events](#) for dates and details, but here's a reminder of our main events this year:

First, we are accepting applications for our [Fellows program](#) 2025-2026.

March

- [Open Day at the Lab in Sesimbra, Portugal](#), if you happen to be nearby. On Saturday March 29, from 3 – 6 p.m. we welcome you for a visit, a chat, and a glass of wine. Let us know if you decide to come.

May

- CoP I: Cultivating communities of practice (4 days) - for those starting out or running a community of practice (initiative)
- CoP summit 2025 (2 days) - a meeting and a celebration, a learning and networking opportunity for those running CoP initiatives
- Cutting-edge (3 days) - for those well-versed in communities and social learning who are ready for an emergent agenda exploring cutting-edge issues

June

- The Bellingham workshop” (4 days) - where we condense all the workshop topics into four days. Ideal for our US friends who can't convince their organization to send them to Portugal, it is open to everyone.. Co-hosted with the wonderful [Travis Tennesen](#), Community Director of Western Washington University, Bellingham.

September

- Systems convening (3 days) - for budding and actual systems conveners (whatever official job title you have)
- Beyond evaluation (3 days) - to develop your evaluation skills for monitoring and promoting value creation (using our value-creation framework)
- Landscape mapping (2 days) - this is still to be confirmed, but we are thinking of complementing the systems convening workshop a tool-oriented session on how to do and how to use landscape mapping as a way to think strategically about where to make an intervention.

October

- CoP II: Maturing communities of practice - for people with established CoPs who want to assess and think strategically about how to move forward
- Reading and writing workshop - a week of collaboration for people working on a paper, a project proposal, a dissertation, a book... and who would be energized to do it with others at the Lab in Sesimbra

Here's to the difference we can make!

Warmly

Bev and Etienne



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