

DAVID R. SIBURG, MPlan

Strategic Planning | Organizational Agility | Resilience | Project Management

StratCoLab, LLC • Fremont, Nebraska

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“StratCoLab works strategically with communities and organizations to explore, act and learn together to become future-ready, to become resilient and transformative. We share and walk alongside others to empower and build the capacity to be mission-driven and capable.”

StratCoLab, LLC

A Practitioner Who Walks Alongside

At the heart of David Siburg’s practice is a simple conviction: **the people closest to a challenge are its best experts**. Over more than three decades of work with communities, public utilities, non-profit organizations, and multi-stakeholder networks, David has refined a way of working that begins not with prescribed solutions but with genuine curiosity. It is an **accompaniment posture** that positions him as a co-traveler rather than an authority figure, walking alongside partners as they discover their own capacity to change.

This disposition is not incidental to his method; it *is* the method. Whether sitting with a rural water cooperative in the Pacific Islands, coaching executive leaders in Riyadh, facilitating a strategic retreat for a faith-based community development organization, or helping a small non-profit uncover the assets already latent in its stakeholders and neighborhood, David brings the same foundational stance: listen first, build on strengths, speak truth to context, and trust the process of collective discernment.

That stance is grounded in something deeper than technique. David describes his work as **mission-driven** at its core, animated by a genuine belief in the capacity of communities and organizations to serve the common good when they are well-led, clearly focused, and supported with the right tools at the right moment. StratCoLab, the consultancy David co-founded, was built precisely to offer that support: rigorous assessment, tailored facilitation, and continuous coaching rooted in an asset-based, strengths-first philosophy.

Philosophy & Approach

Accompaniment as Practice

David’s approach draws on the concept of *accompaniment*, a posture drawn from community development and theological traditions that insists practitioners do not arrive with all the answers, but instead enter into relationship with partners, earn trust over time, and support the emergence of locally-owned solutions. This means resisting the consultant’s temptation to be the smartest person in the room. It means being willing to ask the harder questions: *“What are you really trying to accomplish? What are you afraid to name? What strengths do you already have that you’re not using?”* And staying through the discomfort that follows.

In practice, accompaniment looks like facilitated processes in which participants arrive carrying organizational tension and leave having built the trust and alignment needed to act together with ownership and accountability. It looks like a general manager who, after a series of intensive organizational retreats, finds that her team “did it themselves”, because she did.

“You have that rare ability to move a diverse group of people through a collaborative process so that at the end of the process they believe and act with ownership and accountability to each other because ‘they did it themselves.’ Plus, you have the passion and skill to leverage capacity, assets, and will, in collaboration to build more robust and innovative service offerings and more adaptable organizations.”

Dave Spencer, former CEO, Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet)

Asset-Based Development

David practices and teaches **Appreciative Inquiry** and **Asset-Based Organizational Development**, frameworks that deliberately begin with what is working, who is engaged, and what resources are already available, before turning to gaps. In organizations struggling under resource constraints or demoralized by repeated rounds of deficit-focused planning, this reorientation is often the most important intervention David makes. It shifts the internal conversation from *“what’s wrong with us”* to *“what do we already have, and what can we do with it?”*

This is particularly relevant for community-serving organizations and non-profits that hold deep mission clarity but often underestimate the value of the relationships, knowledge, and community trust they have already built. David helps name and leverage those assets as strategic resources.

Rigorous Assessment, Tailored Facilitation, Continuous Coaching

His methodology is built on three interlocking commitments:

- **Assess:** Tailor meaningful organizational assessments to clearly identify gaps, opportunities, and places for growth, contextually honest, never generic.
- **Facilitate:** Facilitate strategic action and planning to eliminate gaps and build on opportunities, including research-grounded improvement, contingency and recovery strategy development, and network building and transformative collaborations.
- **Coach:** Coach key organizational capabilities including distributed leadership practices, disruption preparedness, asset-based development, and execution and implementation, to successfully drive important actions.

Underlying all three is a commitment David describes simply: *“Always speak truth to context, confront contradictions, and build on strengths.”*

Professional Narrative

Early Formation: Systems Thinking and Public Service

David’s formation as a practitioner began at Pacific Lutheran University, where he studied Economics with a concentration in Environmental and Ecosystem Studies, graduating *cum laude*. His graduate work at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota deepened his systems-thinking orientation, earning him the AICP Planning Student Award and a Master of Planning with an emphasis in Strategic Planning. He also pursued studies at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, an experience that shaped his understanding of mission-driven service and the ethic of accompaniment that would come to define his consulting practice.

These formative experiences produced a practitioner who thinks in systems but leads with relationship: someone who can analyze infrastructure and organizational structure with equal rigor, but who understands that the most important levers for change are often cultural, relational, and spiritual.

24 Years as a Public Utility General Manager: Laboratory for Transformation

From 1990 to 2014, David served as General Manager of the Kitsap Public Utility District in Washington State, a position that became a 24-year laboratory for organizational and community transformation at scale. Kitsap PUD was not a static institution under his leadership. David led what he describes as **radical organizational transformation**, a fundamental reimagining of the utility’s culture, strategy, structure, processes, stakeholder engagement, and use of technology.

The results were measurable: 380% customer growth, a 333% increase in water systems owned, and the creation of a nationally recognized model for regional sustainability and community resilience. The district assessed and restructured 55 public utility systems in Washington State, provided contract operations and technical services to over 100 systems in the Puget Sound area, and built infrastructure that included 400+ miles of water main, 50+ reservoirs, 100+ wells, and an integrated broadband and telecom network that served rural and underserved communities.

But the deeper story is organizational. David used his role as a public servant, accountable to commissioners, ratepayers, tribal nations, regulators, and neighboring utilities simultaneously, to develop and test the facilitation and capacity-building methodologies that now form the foundation of StratCoLab's practice. He facilitated the strategic direction of the multi-organizational Northwest Open Access Network and led strategic workshops for the Washington PUD Association (composed of 28 Power, Water, Telecommunications, and Wastewater members), learning in each engagement what it takes to move diverse stakeholders toward shared vision and accountable action.

“Through your skilled and empathetic assessment, facilitation, and coaching, you helped us transform into an organization of engaged employees and stakeholders, focused on customer service and the common good. We became vision and mission driven, aligned in purpose and agile in innovation. We became a recognized state and national leader in capacity building and creative stewardship of the environment, our capital resources, and our human assets.”

Lloyd S. Berg, Past President of the Board and Commissioner, Kitsap Public Utility District

Global Reach: Accompaniment Across Cultures

David's accompaniment posture has found expression across a remarkable range of cultural and organizational contexts. As Senior Program Manager with CH2M-Olayan in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, he coached executive directors and the CEO of the National Water Company, an organization serving 12 million people with 7,000+ employees, through a customer-centricity and service value chain transformation. The work demanded the kind of cross-cultural humility and relational attentiveness that characterizes David's best practice: arriving not to impose a template, but to understand the organization's own context and equip its leaders to lead their own transformation.

His international engagement extends to volunteer capacity development work in Namibia (including time in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa), Haiti, and Guam. As a member of the Board of Directors of Transform International, he helped spearhead leadership development and contextual business models for a growing global network of Community Transformation Centres, organizations rooted in local communities and committed to holistic human flourishing. In Haiti, he served as a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the CDC and Pan American Health Organization, advising the Haitian Government on its Water and Sanitation Plan for the elimination of cholera (2012).

In each of these contexts, the work was fundamentally the same: come alongside, listen, identify assets, build capacity, and help the organization or community become more of what it was already trying to be.

StratCoLab: A Practice Built for the Common Good

StratCoLab, LLC was founded in 2019 (preceded by Strategic Collaboration by Collaboration Ministries, LLC, 2016-2019) as the formal home for David's organizational and community resilience practice. The name encodes the philosophy: **Strat** for strategic thinking; **Co** for co-creation and collaboration; **Lab** for iterative learning, exploration, and action. StratCoLab exists to work alongside communities and organizations, particularly those serving the public good, to explore, act, and learn together so they can become future-ready, resilient, and transformative.

The practice serves clients across a spectrum: from small non-profits navigating leadership transition to multi-organizational networks seeking new collaborative models; from faith-based community development organizations discerning their strategic direction to public sector entities facing disruption. What unites them is a commitment to mission and a desire to serve their communities more effectively. David meets all of them in the same spirit: as a fellow traveler who brings tools, experience, and a deep belief in their capacity.

AARC Consultants, LLC: Professional Resiliency Services

David has provided AARC Consultants project management and planning services, leading AWIA compliance work, emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation planning, climate adaptation and resilience assessments, sustainability planning, and water system consulting across the United States.

Core Competencies for Community & Non-Profit Partners

Organizational Assessment

David designs and facilitates contextually tailored assessments that illuminate organizational health honestly and generatively. These are not audits designed to produce judgments; they are discovery processes designed to produce clarity. David assesses the interplay of vision and mission alignment, leadership culture and distributed decision-making, stakeholder engagement depth, asset inventory and resource optimization, operational sustainability, and readiness for change and disruption. Assessments are customized to each organization's unique context and always conducted with respect for the people who inhabit that context.

Strategic Facilitation & Action Planning

David facilitates strategic direction and action planning processes that result in plans organizations actually own and implement, because the people who will carry them out built them. Drawing on Transformative Scenario Planning, Appreciative Inquiry, Microstructure Architecture (Liberating Structures), and other participatory frameworks, David designs processes that engage the full range of stakeholders, surface latent wisdom, and build the alignment necessary for sustained collective action.

His experience spans strategic direction-setting for multi-organizational networks, mission clarity and program realignment for non-profits, community resilience planning for rural and underserved communities, leadership development planning for emerging and established leaders, and contingency and continuity planning for organizations facing disruption.

Coaching & Capacity Building

David coaches individual leaders and leadership teams with the same accompaniment posture that characterizes his facilitation, walking alongside rather than prescribing, asking questions that invite deeper reflection, and helping leaders develop their own capacity for agile, resilient, mission-aligned leadership. His coaching draws on asset-based development, distributed leadership theory, and decades of practical experience as an executive who led radical organizational transformation himself.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement & Network Building

Many of the most important challenges facing communities and mission-driven organizations cannot be addressed by any single entity. David brings deep experience designing and facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement processes that build the trust and alignment needed for transformative collaboration, across sectors, jurisdictions, cultures, and organizational boundaries. He has led such processes with tribal nations, federal agencies, state legislators, regulators, local governments, utility boards, faith communities, and community organizations.

Resilience Planning for Organizations Serving the Public Good

Organizations committed to the common good are often among the most vulnerable to disruption: under-resourced, over-extended, and dependent on networks of relationships that can fray under stress. David helps these organizations develop the internal resilience they need to survive disruption and continue serving their communities: business continuity thinking, leadership succession, distributed decision-making, and the organizational culture that makes all of it sustainable.

Select Experience in Organizational & Community Development

AARC Consultants, LLC: Project Manager and Senior Planner

Houston, Texas | 2020 to Present

Leads all-Hazards Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRA) and Emergency Response Plans (ERP) under the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) for water and wastewater systems across the country. Subject Matter Expert (SME) for multinational corporate climate mitigation and adaptation planning projects, including GHG inventories, scenario-based vulnerability analysis, and adaptive management strategies. SME for water system planning, master planning, conceptual and alternative studies, groundwater management planning, and water-use efficiency planning for public utility clients.

StratCoLab, LLC: Principal and Organizational Agility and Resilience Lead

Fremont, Nebraska | 2019 to Present (Pro-Bono Services)

Provides assessment, facilitation, and coaching services to communities, non-profit organizations, and public sector entities focused on the common good. Works in close partnership with Thomas Francis-Siburg (MSW, MURP), Community Resilience Lead, combining organizational development expertise with community resilience practice. Engagements span strategic direction-setting, leadership development, organizational transformation, transformative collaboration design, and resilience planning.

Transform International: Strategic Advisor and Board Member

2016 to Present

Serves on the Board of Directors and has helped spearhead leadership development and contextual business models for Transform International's growing global network of Community Transformation Centres. These centres operate at the intersection of community development, faith-based service, and holistic human flourishing. David has contributed to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) programs, renewable energy access initiatives, and organizational capacity building across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

Kitsap Public Utility District: General Manager

Kitsap County, Washington | 1990-2014

Led 24 years of organizational and community transformation at a regional public utility serving Kitsap County, Washington. Developed and tested the facilitation, assessment, and capacity-building methodologies that now define StratCoLab's practice. Created the CARES Platform (Community Access Readiness Empowerment Systems), integrating broadband, information, environmental, and water systems for community resilience. Chaired the AWWA Small Systems Division (2001-2005) and the Small Systems Policy Committee (1998-2001), bringing a community-service ethic to national water sector leadership.

CH2M-Olayan: Senior Program Manager

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | 2015-2016

Led executive coaching and organizational transformation program for the Saudi Arabia National Water Company (NWC), a public utility serving 12 million people with 7,000+ employees. Focused on customer-centricity, service value chain transformation, and leadership development, demonstrating the cross-cultural adaptability of asset-based, accompaniment-oriented organizational development practice.

Seattle University: Adjunct Professor, Environmental Studies

Seattle, Washington | Various Years

Responsible for courses in environmental systems and sustainability, bringing practitioner experience into the academic classroom. Demonstrated commitment to education as a dimension of capacity building and community development.

National Advisory and Research Roles

Selected engagements reflecting commitment to public-good service:

- Member, Water Security Working Group, National Drinking Water Advisory Council (2004-2005)
- Consultant, Panel on Water System Security Research, National Research Council (2003)
- Technical Advisory Group, CDC and Pan American Health Organization: Advising Haitian Government on Water and Sanitation Plan for the Elimination of Cholera (2012)
- Consulted with EPA Region 9 on water and sanitation issues in the Pacific Islands (2004-2006)

Methodological Toolkit

David brings a “plethora of practical tools” to maximize focused engagement and utilization of the assets at hand. These include, but are not limited to:

- Appreciative Inquiry: Strength-based organizational discovery and change processes
- Transformative Scenario Planning: Multi-stakeholder future-orientation and strategic direction-setting
- Microstructure Architecture (Liberating Structures): Participatory meeting and engagement design
- Asset-Based Organizational Development: Leveraging existing capacity, relationships, and resources
- Distributed Leadership Development: Building leadership depth and resilience across an organization
- Multi-Organizational Capacity Leveraging: Collaborative models for sector-wide improvement
- Total Quality Management, Six Sigma, and Lean Processes: Applied to organizational efficiency and continuous improvement in mission-driven contexts
- HSEEP-Compliant Exercise Design: Functional and tabletop exercises for organizational disruption preparedness

Education & Credentials

Master of Planning (MPlan) | Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Emphasis: Strategic Planning • *AICP Planning Student Award*

Bachelor of Arts, Economics (*cum laude*) | Pacific Lutheran University

Concentration: Environmental/Ecosystem Studies • Minor: Business Administration

Studies at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary

AWWA Utility Risk & Resilience Certificate | American Water Works Association, June 2019

Professional Training

- Transformative Scenario Development and Planning
 - Appreciative Inquiry Practices & Asset-Based Organizational Development
 - Effective Engagement through Microstructure Architecture (Liberating Structures)
 - Total Quality Management (TQM), Six Sigma, and Lean Processes
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Select Publications & Presentations

Siburg, D.R. (2014). *Strengthening Organizational Sustainability in the Water Sector through Capacity Leveraging: Working Together ... with Attitude ... in a System's World.* Prepublication Draft.

Siburg, D.R. (2009). *Regional Approaches to Sector Improvement and Consumer Confidence in Small Water Systems (Capacity Leveraging).* AWWA Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.

Siburg, D.R. (2008). *Leadership for Innovation and Change.* AWWA Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Siburg, D.R. (2001). *Utility Ecosystem Model and Regional Monitoring.* Pacific Islands Environmental Conference, Guam.

National Research Council (1997). *Safe Water from Every Tap: Improving Water Service to Small Communities.* National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. (Contributing Author)

AWWA National Infrastructure Issue Group (2001). *Dawn of the Replacement Era: Reinvesting in Drinking Water Infrastructure.* (Contributing Author)

A Note on How David Works

David Siburg does not arrive as an expert who dispenses solutions. He arrives as a practitioner who has spent a career of learning, from a small water cooperative in rural Washington, from community leaders in Namibia, from executive directors navigating organizational crisis, from faith communities wrestling with mission drift, from public servants trying to serve equitably under resource constraint. He has led and failed, rebuilt and succeeded, and carried humility as a professional asset through all of it.

He believes that ***the people experiencing any given situation are the experts.*** His job is to help them surface what they already know, name what they cannot yet see, and build the relationships and strategies they need to move forward together. He is, in the deepest sense, a capacity builder, not because he brings capacity to organizations, but because he helps organizations discover and deploy the capacity they already have.

If you are a community, a non-profit organization, a faith community, or any organization animated by a commitment to the common good, and you are asking hard questions about your direction, your culture, your sustainability, or your ability to serve your mission in a changing world, David is the kind of practitioner who will walk alongside you through the questions, not offer you premature answers.