

Leading Communities: Development of a Place- Based Leadership Program

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Overview of today's presentation

- Purpose and rationale of project
- Highlights of literature review
- Data gathering processes, challenges and findings
- Curriculum development
- Conclusions and recommendations

Purpose and Rationale

- Widespread need for community leadership
 - Declining social capital and community engagement
 - Many communities struggling
 - Loss of local leadership
 - Most leadership programs based on individual or personal leadership
 - Fewer place-based efforts
- Social science research points to importance of place-based and shared leadership
- After WWII, community and organizational leadership one of Extension's responsibilities (Kepner Report, 1948).
- Concerns since the 1980s of research base of Extension CLD programming critical (North Central Region).

Why Iowa and Wisconsin partnership?

- Similarities across both states
 - Agricultural
 - Rural
 - Medium size cities as regional centers with smaller cities geographically dispersed across each state
 - Need for community-based leadership programming in both urban and rural areas
- Shared Extension leadership specialist position across both states



We proposed to:

- Develop a research based curriculum on *place-based leadership*
- The process will:
 - Begin with a review of relevant literature
 - Include review and critical assessment of the existing community leadership programs in both states and their impacts
- Curriculum will:
 - Be modular in design so that it can be tailored to needs of diverse communities
 - Incorporate principles of adult learning as well as both synchronous and asynchronous learning methods and multimedia content
- Engage community development specialists and educators from both states in the project

Highlights of Relevant Literature



Community Development

- Wilkinson (1991) defines community leadership as the **capacity to bring local residents together for the purposes of addressing common issues and problems.**



- But, he also cautions ... **"Leadership education programs might contribute more to individual development than to community development unless those programs are designed to focus directly on building the skills needed to build community structure (1991:91)."**

Leadership Continuum

- 4 Levels of Leadership (Ayres, 1987)



- Specific skills associated with each level
- Specific skills associated with each level; organizational and community based on group processes
- Most CL programs focus on personal and interpersonal development
- If we are going to help communities with community development, need more focus on organizational and community development

Leadership Paradigms

- Leadership paradigms shifting (Allen, 2008)(Allen, Morton, Li, 2003)
- Moved from heroic or elite to post-heroic or inclusive paradigms
- From 1900s to 2000s:



Social and Community Capitals

- Literature on social and community capitals, and community engagement shows relationship between community leadership, capitals and resilience (Putnam, 2000, 2003; Sharp, 2001; Lin, 2001; Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan, 2006; Emery and Flora, 2006; Besser, 2009; 2013)



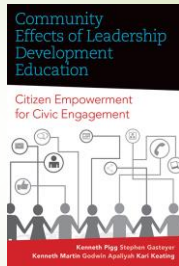
Recent Empirical Work

“Community leadership, as a social and political concept, is largely understudied”
(Pigg, 1999:2015)

Recent Empirical Work

Assessment of CLD programs in 6 states: IL, MN, MO, SC, OH, WV

- CLD effects on communities are measurable
- CLD linked to community change
- Community change related to civic engagement
- Community change related to shared leadership
- Community leadership culture needs to adapt to deal with more long-term and complex issues
- CLD programs need to change to support change in community leadership culture

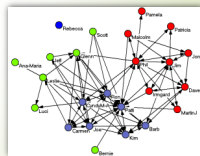


Evaluation: New Approaches

Ripple Effects Mapping (Scott Chazdon and colleagues)



Social Network Analysis (Hoppe and Renault, 2010; Chaudhary and Warner, 2015)



Current Project: Methodology

- Goal was to assess status of CLD in both states
- Original plan – focus groups of past and present participants, on-line survey, key informants, observation, document study
- Division of labor
 - DT lead on literature review and curriculum development
 - JB lead on data collection and analysis

Current Project: Methodology

HOWEVER

- Focus groups difficult to organize
 - Loss of contact with participants
 - County Staff turnover issues
 - Issues of bringing multicounty participants together
- On-line survey – fewer responses than expected
- Used more key informant, observation and participant observation, document study

Key Focus Group Questions

- Conducted Community Focus Groups in two Iowa communities that were county seats with questions and inquiries such as:
 - Why the urgency to develop a leadership program?
 - What did participants like or dislike about the program?
 - Did the leadership program focus on individual skills or community based skills?
 - What was the most difficult part of your community leadership program?
 - How did your participation create more social relationships?
 - What were the desired end products?
 - What was missed in your program?
 - What were the impacts on the community?

Key Survey Findings

- Majority of leadership programs focused on both issues and skills
 - Either individual leadership skills or a combination of individual leadership skills and community processes
- Programs engaged members across the community: elected officials, business leaders, government staff, non-profit leaders, young professionals, community volunteers and youth
 - Programs time frame: 4 to 10 months
 - Programs participants: equal numbers of men and women
- Program Evaluation: Surveys, pre/post evaluations, measurement of participant increase in community participation and the outcome of it

Other Findings

- LD/CLD programs very popular; generate great reviews
- LD/CLD programs throughout all Extension programming areas (original intent)
- Within CD, still find mix of LD and CLD programming
- LD/CLD programs mostly focused on personal or interpersonal levels
- LD/CLD programs somewhat dated; not linked to current research
- Less focus on core competencies, community engagement, social networks, shared leadership

Other Findings

- Difficult to measure community impacts
- Variations of programs (LD/CLD, partners, focus) create challenges to measure collective impact. However:
 - Significant number of impressive recorded impacts (from impact statements)
 - Some collective impacts reported through National CRED Indicators at state and regional levels
- Despite challenges, some programs are doing great job recording impacts
 - Good model – Community Leadership Alliance in SW WI (10 and 15 yr reports)



Curriculum Development

- Identified 4 major competency areas for CLD from literature



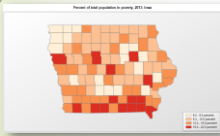
Curriculum Development

- Developed *Leading Communities: A Place Based Leadership Program*
- Piloted in Lee County, IA 2016; additional pilots in Waukesha WI and Kossuth Co., IA in 2017
- Evaluation based on short (offer each module), medium (after 6 months) and long-term impacts (1 year intervals)



Curriculum Module 1: CLD and Community Knowledge

- Critical skills covered
 - Understanding LD and CLD
 - Understanding their community – based on quantitative and qualitative data



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Curriculum Module 2: Identifying Issues and Framing Ideas

- Critical skills covered:
 - Identifying community needs and issues
 - Prioritizing community issues
 - Visioning
 - Making group decisions



Curriculum Module 3: Building Social Relationships and Capital



- Critical skills covered:
 - Networking
 - Communicating
 - Understanding groups
 - Valuing diversity
 - Dealing with difficult people
 - Conflict management

Curriculum Module 4: Mobilizing Resources for Community Action

- Critical skills covered:
 - Identifying and understanding local power structures
 - Motivating/empowering others
 - Developing effective boards and committees
 - Working in teams and building coalitions
 - Engaging and sustaining volunteers



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Recognize all leadership programs (LD or CLD) have value
- Decision to focus on LD or CLD depends on goals
- However, to have an impact on community development processes, must kick LD programs up to CLD programs
- Move beyond dated programs; more focus on community level, community skills and civic infrastructure – innovation key



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Reconnect with research
 - Community leadership
 - Related fields that inform CLD
- More focus on impact assessments
 - Ripple Effects Mapping
 - Social Network Analysis

"Leadership specifically exercised as part of the community development process"
 (Vanderberg, Fear and Thullen, 1968)

Community leadership is the capacity to bring local residents together for the purposes of addressing common issue and problems.
 (Wilkinson, 1991)

Conclusions and Recommendations



- Effective program implementation and impact assessments dependent upon more systematic approach
- State specialists and local educators working together
- Each has different but critical role
 - Specialists – access to research based information
 - County/local educators – direct connection to communities, local touch

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recognize there are many LD programs but few CLD programs: CLD can be important niche for Extension



Next Steps



- Continue efforts on CLD programming
 - Additional work across state lines
 - Revise curriculum
 - Create repository of CLD curricula
- We would appreciate your feedback *and* assistance



Thank You!

... especially to all the community development faculty and educators in Iowa and Wisconsin who contributed to this effort!

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