





Foundations of Practice

*Community Development
Core Competencies for
Extension Professionals in
the North Central Region*



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Foundations of Practice

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The Foundations of Practice: Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals is composed of three major components:

- Understanding Communities and their Dynamics
- Developing Successful Community Initiatives
- Areas of Specialization and Emphasis

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The Foundations of Practice: Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals is composed of three major components:

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Component 1

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The first component, Understanding Communities and their Dynamics, is a series of seven core competencies that focus on:

- The ability to understand community of place.
- The nature of public issues.
- The dynamics and interdependencies of the various segments of the community.
- The basics of community development work.

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Understanding Communities and their Dynamics

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- Basic Understanding of Community
- Community Demographics
- Community Economics
- Community Power Structure
- Natural Resources and Sustainability
- Community Situational Analysis
- Community Development Process**

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Community Development Process





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Tim has been in Extension positions involved with Community Development since 1979. He first served in field position in western Iowa for eight years before moving to the Iowa State University campus in 1987. There he coordinated the *Tomorrow's Leaders Today* program, a leadership development program focused on rural economic development. Tim also served during this time as the assistant director for the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development.

Currently, Tim serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Outreach in the College of Design at Iowa State University as well as the Director for Extension to Communities and Economic Development. Tim has co-authored a number of NCRCRD regional publications on community development including *Take Charge Too*, *Transportation Action*, and *Multicommunity Collaboration*.

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Learning Objectives


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A. Be able to integrate what has been learned so far into a community development process

B. Learn the the key elements of four basic methods of community action

- Adoption/Diffusion Process
- Social Action Construct
- Community Visioning & Strategic Planning
- Asset Mapping

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Today's Agenda

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1. An Historical Context
2. Review of Key Concepts Learned
3. Review of Major Community Action Processes
4. Intervening in Holistic Systems

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Adoption and Diffusion of Innovation and Technology

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- Started in Agricultural Education/Extension
- First researched in late 1940s and 1950s
- How do you get farmers to adopt better farming techniques and innovation?
- Works with communities as well.
- Ever notice how new ideas and technologies spread from community to community?



Adoption and Diffusion of Innovation and Technology

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Adoption and Diffusion (Key Roles and Concepts)

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- Opinion Leaders: Often influence what is accepted or rejected within a community.
- Early adopters: communities that risk early adoption of new ideas and technologies often reap the greatest benefits.
- Change Agent: person promoting change
- Communication networks... how a new idea or technology is communicated
- Assumes community innovation follows a pattern



Adoption and Diffusion (Examples)

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- High Speed Internet, Cable Television, Economic Development Strategies, etc.
- Health and Transportation Systems
- What is a “good” community.
- Fits a “best practice” model.

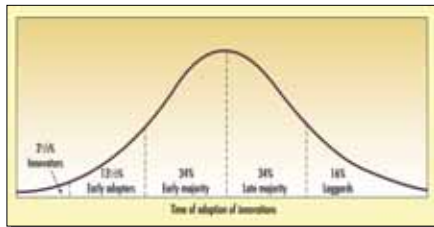


Adoption and Diffusion of Innovation and Technology

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Rates of Adoption Vary

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- Most adoption curves are “S” shaped with a slow start, a rapid climb, then a flattening out.
- Risk of early adoption
- Risk of late adoption



Adoption Diffusion Conclusion

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- Well Researched
- Applied for decades, especially by Extension
- Can utilize ideas and innovation from outside
- Communication networks (internal and external) are essential to model
- Problems:
 - Often ignores local knowledge (human capital)
 - Assumes good communication and organization (social capital)
 - Inherent risks to community (political and financial capital)



Adoption Diffusion

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Can you think of an example of how adoption of new ideas or innovations has affected community development in your state?




Social Action Construct

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- Developed by George Beal and Joseph Bohlen in the 1960s at ISU
- Incorporated the many concepts of Adoption and Diffusion in a Social (Community) Action Process
- Focus is upon maximization of community resources toward accomplishing a specific goal
- Extension Agent or Community Leader as "Change Agent"



Social Action Construct

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- #1 Situational Analysis
- #2 Problem Identification (Inside community or outside?)
- #3 Form Initiating Set (First small group to get things started)



Social Action Construct

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- #4 Alternative Course of Action Reviewed with Formal and Informal Legitimizers” (Power Actors)
- #5 Garner Diffusion sets (broader participation) through drawing attention to issue or problem and potential solutions

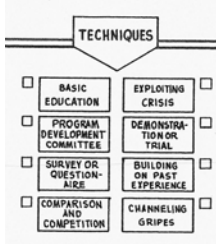


Social Action Construct

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How do you draw attention?

Through “diffusion” techniques.

Drawing attention to the problem and soliciting more participation.



Social Action Construct

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- #6 Redefine Needs
- #7 Get Commitments to Action
(Remember the Capitals?)
- #8 Set Goals to resolve issue/problem
- #9 Define means to achieve goals



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Social Action Construct

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- #10 Create a Plan of Work
- #11 Mobilize Resources
- #12 Launch Program (Don't Forget Publicity)
- #13 Implement Action Steps
- #14 Final (Summative) Evaluation



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Social Action Construct Conclusion

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- Tried and true, almost linear process
- It is situational, but assumes community capitals can be utilized if directed
- Seems to work best when community has local resources (financial and human capital)
- Problems:
 - It's somewhat elitist
 - Works less well in communities with great power or class differential (haves and have nots)
 - Fell out of favor during farm crisis (lack of local resources)

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Social Action Construct

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Can you think of an example how a community in your area organized itself in a fashion similar to the social action construct to solve a problem?

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Community Visioning and Strategic Planning

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- Developed during the late 70s and early 80s as applied to community development
- Means of organizing and planning the community capitals
- Unlike comprehensive planning, community strategic planning typically has a shorter time horizon
- Community visioning evolved out of strategic planning in part to spur more creative and long range ideas and goals.

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Strategic Planning

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Step #1: Getting Ready
(ID participants, info needed, and outcomes)


Step #2: Articulate Mission and/or Vision

Step #3: Environmental Scan

Step #4: Agree upon responses and priorities (SWOT) and set goals and objectives

Step #5: Write the Plan (Who, what, when, where, and how)

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Strategic Planning

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- Typically utilizes a facilitator.
- Time needed and used can vary highly.
- Can be very inclusive or elitist.
- Who is at the table? (power, and community capitals)
- Is the community ready? (situational analysis)
- What data is needed?
- Will there be consensus on mission and future?
- Who writes the plan?



Community Strategic Visioning: A Variation

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- Rather than goals and objectives, focus is upon a future end state
- Also focuses upon looking beyond existing resources
- Consensus of vision provides direction and greater common sense of a shared future
- Visioning process can stimulate creativity



New Tools for Visioning: Visualization

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- 3-D Geographic Information Systems software
- Simple Computer Software combined with digital photography
- Painless alternative futures
- "Picture worth a thousand words"

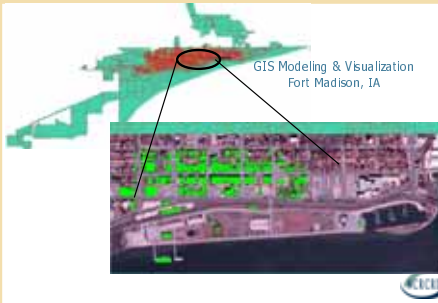


Example Project

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GIS Modeling & Visualization
Fort Madison, IA



Creating Virtual Buildings using ModelBuilder™

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Community Viz Visioning Tools

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Fort Madison Downtown Redevelopment

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**Community Visioning Project, 2003- 2004
Rustic Park of Lost Nation, IA**

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**Community Visioning Project, 2002-
2003
Fairfield Waterworks**

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Strategic Planning and Visioning (Conclusion)

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- Can lead to excellent short term planning
- Can build a common vision
- Extension Examples:
 - *Take Charge*
 - *Transportation Action*
 - *Vision to Action*
- Problems: Can be exclusive and can be time consuming

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Strategic Planning and Visioning

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Have you participated in a strategic planning or visioning process?
Would you characterize it as being successful?

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Asset Mapping

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- Developed in the early 1990s by John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann at Northwestern University.
- Why focus on problems?
- Inventory the assets of individuals and organizations.
- “Needs assessment” can be self-defeating process especially in low-resource communities.
- Concentrates on what optimizing the resources available to the community.
- Focus upon what the community has rather than what it lacks.

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Asset Mapping Steps

(Source: Charlie French, Univ. of New Hampshire Ext.)

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Step 1 Form a Steering Committee	Step 5 Administer Asset Assessment Tool
Step 2 Commit Resources	Step 6 Develop Resource List
Step 3 Identify your Community	Step 7 Cross Reference Needs with Assets
Step 4 Decide on Inventory Method(s)	Step 8 Identify Opportunities & Mobilize Community

Southern Rural Development Center

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SOUTHERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Prepared by:

Lionel J. (Bo) Beaulieu
Southern Rural Development Center
Mississippi State University
June 2003

Needs vs. Assets

(SRDC)

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NEEDS	ASSETS
• focuses on deficiencies	• focuses on effectiveness
• results in fragmentation of responses to local needs	• builds interdependencies
• makes people consumers of services; builds dependence	• identifies ways that people can give of their talents
• residents have little voice in deciding how to address local concerns	• seeks to empower people

Three Key Arenas for Identifying Community Assets

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Mapping the Assets of People

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- Skills Information
- Community Skills
- Enterprising Interests and Experiences
- Personal Information

Mapping Formal Organizations

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- Every community has institutions that carry out important community functions
- These are persistent, on-going activities that meet the social needs of local residents
- The vitality of communities is dependent on these functions being carried out

Formal Organizations

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Kinship



Economic



Education




Associations



Religious



Political



Informal Organizations: The third vital resource

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- They may be neighborhood-based, community-based, or may extend outside the community's boundaries
- Such groups are critical because they involve, empower, and impact local citizens
- Building a community requires a deliberate effort to identify and involve such organizations

Some Examples of Informal Organizations

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Church groups: prayer group, stewardship committee, youth group, service group

Community Celebrations: Annual Fair, Art and Crafts Festival, July 4th Parade

Neighborhood groups: crime watch, homeowner's association

Sports Leagues: bowling, basketball, soccer, fishing, baseball

Asset Mapping (Conclusion)

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- When it comes to community assets... sweat the details.
- Use community assets as a foundation upon which to build community development
- Very inclusive.
- Time Consuming.
- Works well in low resource communities
- BUT... are community assets (or capitals) available?



Other Models

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- Community and multi-community collaboration
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Civic Engagement
- Others?



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Web Sites

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<http://ceinfo.unh.edu/CommDev/ToolBox/CNATools.ppt>

http://www.rural.gc.ca/conference/documents/mapping_e.phtml

<http://outreach.msu.edu/bpbriefs/issues/brief4.pdf>

<http://outreach.msu.edu/CapableCommunities/default.html>

http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/227/227_asset_mapping.pdf

http://www.rural.gc.ca/conference/documents/mapping_e.phtml