

# Community Leadership Development:

A Guide for People Who  
Want to Make a Difference

By Kristin Ramsay  
With Bill Reed and Lela Vandenberg



in Collaboration with CLIMB Partners

© 1998, Michigan State University

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



the 1990s, the number of people who have been employed in the public sector has increased in all countries. The increase in public sector employment has been particularly rapid in the United States, where the public sector has grown from 10.5% of the total workforce in 1970 to 17.5% in 1995 (see Figure 1).

There are a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In many countries, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

There are also a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment in the United States. One reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In the United States, the public sector has become a major employer, particularly in the service sector. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work than the private sector.

## Acknowledgments

This handbook is the result of many hard-working members of communities throughout Michigan who give their lives and time in service to their communities. Many also gave their time to be interviewed for this handbook and its companion pieces. Each of you is greatly appreciated.

It is also important to point out that this handbook is not the work of one person. It is a collaborative effort of several CLIMB partners. Lela Vandenberg, Judy Gardl, Bill Reed, Rita Hodgins, Ann Hinsdale-Knisel and Suprotik Ghosh formed the “Products Team” that hashed out the ideas that turned into each of these principles of community leadership development. Greg Markus also played an important role in identifying and conceptualizing the principles. Additional thanks go to CLIMB partners Jolene Van Handel, Mamie Ferguson, José Reyna, Ani Gregor, Delvin LaMont Williams and Robert Lewis, who participated in Products Team retreats. Each person provided input on ideas and very rich examples.





# Contents

Introduction.....	3
How Are Some Communities Developing Leadership? .....	4
Why Is Community Leadership Development Important?.....	5
What Do We Mean By Community Leadership Development? .....	6
 Community Honors Its Heritage, Embraces Its Future and Cares For Its Members .....	7
 Community Identifies and Builds Upon Shared Interests and Values.....	10
 Community Values Diversity .....	13
 Leadership Shares Responsibility .....	18
 Leadership Fosters Collaboration.....	21
 Leadership Intends Action .....	25
 Development Bolsters Local Capacity .....	28
 Development Is Issue-Based But Not Issue-Bound .....	31
 Development Offers a Context for Learning .....	34
What Else Do You Need To Know? .....	37
A Selection of Excellent Printed Resources.....	39
Great People Resources .....	45
The CLIMB Projects .....	48
Companion Pieces .....	52





## Introduction

This book is for community-based workers—volunteers, coordinators, grassroots organizers, Extension educators and anyone else who is trying to make a difference in his or her community. It is not a recipe book, “How To Make Community Leaders”—instead, it is a gathering of ideas that seem to work in many communities across Michigan.

This book grew out of the experiences of CLIMB—Community Leadership Initiatives, Michigan’s Best—a collaborative project undertaken by Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) involving numerous community members and community projects across Michigan from 1994 through 1998. Funding was provided by MSUE and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. CLIMB promotes innovative approaches to developing broad-based leadership within communities, with many or all members sharing leadership and decision-making responsibility. People involved in CLIMB projects focus on issues of importance to the local community, develop leadership in the process of addressing problems and collaboratively seek new solutions.

Throughout this book, the ideas presented are illustrated with real-world examples from people and community projects associated with CLIMB. For more about CLIMB community projects, see page 48.





## How are some communities developing leadership?

- U.P. LEAD, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, brought people from 13 counties together to learn about community leadership, identify issues that they cared about and form small groups to do something about these issues. Groups came back together after six months to share what they had accomplished and learned through these small projects. Many then went on to address other issues within their communities.
- GOLD, which stands for Grassroots Organization Leadership Development, is implemented by the Neighborhood Information and Sharing Exchange (NISE) organization in Benton Harbor. It works with people who are trying to make a difference in their community, giving them the chance to acquire some of the skills needed to work effectively with "the system." GOLD trains participants in effective communication, community organizing, conflict resolution and more. Members directly apply these new skills to their on-going projects and are making a difference in their community.
- The Gratiot Woods Coalition, on Detroit's East Side, is a group of neighbors who came together to try to improve the appearance of their community. In the process of clearing out lots, planting flowers and getting rid of crack houses, members realized they can make a difference, that their voices count and that the possibilities of what they can accomplish together are endless.



## Why is community leadership development important?

Gone are the days when institutions such as local government, the police and schools can adequately address the community concerns they were created to solve. Gone, too, are the days when a few wealthy or powerful interests can meet behind closed doors and decide the future of a community. Instead, most communities now recognize the need for a broader base of community involvement to more fully understand complex problems and also to bring a wider range of players, assets and ideas into the decision-making arena.

The rules of engagement have also changed. Gone are the days when top-down “command and control” strategies, so common in organizations and businesses, can be used effectively in the community setting. A new order, based on consensus, respect and shared responsibility, is emerging, creating new challenges for communicating openly and honestly, nurturing relationships, making decisions and working collaboratively.

It is increasingly difficult to find people with the time and interest to spend hours and hours on community, school or church activities. Oh, there are still plenty of people doing things in their communities—you’re one of them. But how do we get more people involved? How do we keep people involved? How can we come together with others to develop new and more effective responses to community concerns? Challenges and questions like these are why a focus on community leadership development is important.

*A new order, based on consensus, respect and shared responsibility, is emerging....*





## What do we mean by community leadership development?

CLIMB identified nine principles of community leadership development. Of course, there may be more. But these were brought up frequently by people involved in community projects.

- Community...**
- Honors its heritage, embraces its future and cares for its members.
  - Identifies and builds upon shared interests and values.
  - Values diversity.
- Leadership...**
- Shares responsibility.
  - Fosters collaboration.
  - Intends action.
- Development...**
- Bolsters local capacity.
  - Is issue-based but not issue-bound.
  - Offers a context for learning.

Each of these is imbedded in a process occurring over time. Community leadership development is not a one-shot deal—get trained or do this and you're a leader. It takes time, relationships, trust and commitment. It is a process of understanding how an issue affects each person, then developing a shared commitment to—and plan for—making appropriate changes.

This process needs to be adapted to your local situation. Some of these principles may be more relevant than others. The key is to use what is helpful, learn from all of it and continue discovering for yourselves what builds effective community leadership in your community.





## Community Honors Its Heritage, Embraces Its Future and Cares For Its Members

A rich history and heritage are an important part of what each community is today. Effective community leadership honors its heritage—who has made up the community, what contributions they have made, what has made it a place where people want to live. Effective community leadership also looks to the future—where are we going? how do we want to get there? what do we need to do to remain a viable community?—while still respecting the past in a healthy way. Perhaps even more importantly, a healthy community cares for its members and takes responsibility for their well-being.

This brings to mind the traditional sense of the word “community,” a place where people have a shared heritage and where people care for one another. Unfortunately, this has often been to the exclusion of “newcomers” or outsiders. This sentiment also results in stagnant communities clinging so tightly to the comfortable past that they get left behind as the future approaches. A healthy community finds the balance between honoring its heritage, caring for its members, looking toward the future and including others in the process.

*A healthy community finds the balance between honoring its heritage, caring for its members, looking toward the future and including others in the process.*



Some communities may already have structures in place for doing this.

Examples include:

**Share your stories:** Listen to the stories from your community's past, and also learn from the younger generations. When you come together as a group, allow time for learning through stories, realizing that this may be just as productive as "getting down to business." It demonstrates respect for one another, and it also enables people to learn through examples, not just in the abstract.

**Involve all generations:** Involve young and old and those in the middle from the outset. Each has a different perspective that can contribute toward a greater understanding by and for all members of the community. It links the community's heritage with its future and also creates an atmosphere for caring among the generations.



## *In practice...*


### *The Hispanic Student*

Leadership Forum works to develop leadership potential among Hispanic youth. They learn to respect and appreciate their Hispanic heritage through celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo and participating in other cultural events. They embrace the future as they prepare themselves to attend college and to provide valuable leadership within their community. And they practice caring through their involvement with the migrant community by organizing social events for the (mostly) Mexican workers and their families and by tutoring the younger children.

A coordinator of Planning for the Seventh Generation states that "seven generations ago, this land gave life to our modern society and American culture as we know it." Looking at indigenous Ojibway Medicine Wheel Teachings as well as the teachings of other world cultures, this project maintains a visionary perspective on community development. It is concerned about the future needs of this generation's grandchildren's grandchildren. The project is an effort to bring together community representatives and environmental specialists to share knowledge and develop a strategy to save, preserve and conserve our natural resources so the next seven generations will have enough to meet their needs.



## Community Identifies and Builds Upon Shared Interests and Values



There is always something that draws members of a community together. Sometimes it is a common concern or a crisis, real or perceived; other times it is a common interest. Often it is because they care and want to be involved in positive change. Effective community leadership does not need to wait for a crisis or for someone else to take the initiative. It intentionally seeks out diverse concerns and perspectives—even though conflict is inherent—and works to identify the interest and values that members share in common. It then builds upon these shared interests and values, spurring the group to take action.

*Beware, however, of simplistic solutions or quick fixes. Today's complex issues often require multidirectional and complementary actions.*

This can be done in many ways. A community visioning process, for example, is one step toward identifying shared interests and values, but more is needed. Active listening is also an important part of this process. This helps to build trust among group members and demonstrates respect for the wisdom of each member. It is important to brainstorm, prioritize, evaluate the issues and build toward common goals, not to "win" an argument.

Beware, however, of simplistic solutions or quick fixes. Today's complex issues often require multidirectional and complementary actions.



## Some methods for identifying and building upon shared interests and values include:



**Brainstorming:** All ideas are brought forth and written down without discussion or judgment; the group then prioritizes these ideas and acts on them.

**Dialogue:** The ground rules for formal dialogue require that people listen carefully and actively, allow each member to speak and do not pass judgment on others.

**National Issues Forums (NIF):** The NIF process stimulates dialogue on selected topics, enabling groups to work through issues systematically, from information sharing and disclosure to deliberation, decision making and action planning. Other study circles are also useful.

**Open Space:** This is a tool that creates the time and space for people to share their passions. Participants organize themselves according to their passions and interests, talk about the issues and then take responsibility to address these issues. This process honors people's concerns and gives everyone equal access to determine and implement the agenda.

For more on these and other methods, see the Reference section starting on page 39.



## *In practice...*

When people registered for the U.P. LEAD workshops, they identified three local issues that they were concerned about or interested in. At the workshop, these issues were posted all over the walls. There was a time of brainstorming and then participants prioritized the issues. People came together to answer the question: what might a small group of citizens do about this? From this session, groups formed and began to address these issues within their communities.

In the Jackson Transformation project, dialogue was used to create a shared understanding of where members think their community is. In the words of one participant, "I didn't necessarily agree on all points, but I do now understand the various perspectives."

The Youth Violence Prevention Coalition used the NIF process to stimulate discussion among community members about at-risk youth and juvenile crime. They worked through the choices, came to a greater understanding and realized how interrelated the issues are that affect juveniles. They also came up with a list of recommendations for community-based actions that can be taken to reduce the problem of juvenile violence.

In Benton Harbor, community members came together in an "Open Space" setting to talk about what they want for their community. This brought together people from all walks of life who may never have interacted before. By the end of their time together, community members took the initiative to form into groups to begin addressing some of the problems facing this community.



## Community Values Diversity

Diversity is an asset to be celebrated, not a “problem” to be solved. It asks, “Who is at that table?” and “Who is missing? How can we get them here?” It is about race, ethnicity and gender; it is also about age, social class, occupation and power. An effective community seeks to get all kinds of people at the same table and to give equal voice to all members. It pays special attention to trying to hear and understand the different ways that people express their interests and concerns from various cultural, socioeconomic, educational and professional perspectives. As a result, community initiatives can be more informed, more inclusive and more effective.

This is not necessarily easy or comfortable. Genuinely valuing diversity requires a conscious decision and an intentional effort to equalize unequal and unjust power relations, or simply to make sure that dominant or aggressive personalities do not overwhelm those who may be more quiet in their approaches.

Valuing diversity does not mean acceptance of all differences. Some differences should not be valued and celebrated. Some differences, such as poverty, are both the cause and the result of social ills. Those who genuinely value diversity ought to also value and strive for justice.

*Genuinely valuing diversity requires a conscious decision and an intentional effort to equalize unequal and unjust power relations, or simply to make sure that dominant or aggressive personalities do not overwhelm those who may be more quiet in their approaches.*



On the other hand, there are some differences that people can choose to accept. They can strive to find common ground on which to work despite their differences. “Or,” as one person put it, “they can dwell on the differences and get nowhere.”



### How can we actively and honestly value diversity? CLIMB has attempted to do so in the following ways:

**Recognize the power of a circle:** A circle encourages openness, equalizes the members and neutralizes dominance. The circle needs to be large enough to include everyone but not so large that people can no longer speak. Circle practices include attentive listening, intentional monitoring and conscious self-monitoring (from Christina Baldwin, [Calling the Circle](#)). The circle should not become an institution in itself; it should move as needed to include all those concerned.

**Learn to listen:** Listening is a powerful form of non-verbal communication. It requires practice, learning to resist the temptation to jump in or to pass judgment too soon. Take the time and have patience to listen—to really hear the other person—to learn, understand and question.

**Be willing to step out of your comfort zone:** For many, it is uncomfortable to be with people who are different. It is hard to really hear the views and values of others when they are different from our own. If we step out of our comfort zone, it means that we may be dependent on others in the process of adjustment. But this is a first step in valuing diversity and building relationships.







**Actively recruit a diverse group:** Develop a commitment to creating and sustaining a partnership of equals, developing a sense of equality in voice and power. 21st Century Leadership was a regional effort that recruited participants from communities, local government, university and businesses from five counties. They came from different backgrounds, but all were interested in leadership and land use planning.

**Caution:** Diversity among participants is a source of insights and learning but also a source of challenges and obstacles. For example, students, young parents, older workers and retirees tend to operate on very different schedules and can face difficulties finding common times to meet. Some folks have transportation problems. Others need to arrange for childcare to take part in group activities. Addressing these realities can make a great difference in whether people feel valued by the group.

**Be committed to and skilled in conflict resolution:** Conflict is inherent. It is not something to be avoided; rather, it should be anticipated and embraced and used as a source for learning and growth. Every CLIMB project experienced conflicts. Knowing how to resolve them is a key to a healthy and growing community.

**Caution:** People have to be willing to deal with conflict, to work through it and to be committed to the greater good for it to be effective.

**Build relationships:** Diversity may start with making sure everyone is at the table, but it must move beyond that to building relationships among members who see each other not as black or white, retired or student, but as valued individuals who have common concerns and interests. It may take extra time to listen to a person's story and history, feelings and perspectives, but it shows a level of respect that allows for relationships to be built.



## *In practice...*

CLIMB partners represent all walks of life, from students to bankers to retirees, from urban and rural areas, and from Hispanic, Native American, African-American and European backgrounds. CLIMB deliberately sought a diversity of participants but faced immediate challenges in learning to “walk the talk” of its commitment to honoring diversity and the uniqueness of each individual. At CLIMB’s first Gathering (a retreat for all partners), it became apparent that some black, Hispanic and female partners were frustrated, feeling that their voices and ideas were not carrying the same weight as others. To confront the issue, two women, one black and one white, teamed up in an impromptu skit to show how it happens and how it hurts. A Hispanic woman further sensitized CLIMB partners when she stepped into the center of the group

and began to talk at length in Spanish. All but a few fluent in Spanish became increasingly bewildered. She stopped and asked the group to reflect on how they had felt to be left out of the conversation—in this case by a language barrier. How did it feel to be left behind and have no access or influence? Many CLIMB partners left that first Gathering sensing that challenges of racism and honoring diversity posed serious obstacles to building healthy communities.

CLIMB director Bill Reed summed it up this way: “We came to recognize the need to seek out and combat racism and other forms of oppression as a fundamental part of community leadership development efforts. We could not hope to build a truly healthy community in which all have an opportunity to realize and contribute their full potential by trying to build on a



foundation riddled with racism and other forms of oppression and unearned privilege. In CLIMB we learned that dealing with these deeply rooted issues demands courage, openness, sensitivity, compassion, forgiveness and a high level of commitment. We also learned that avoidance and wishful thinking would get us nowhere.”

The coordinators of U.P. LEAD also deliberately sought a diversity of participants, recruiting people of all ages, occupations and backgrounds. The Kinship program, for example, is led by high school students, a banker, the city manager, a retired professor, a school teacher and others who are concerned with youth. They have shown respect for their differences and have learned to appreciate them. A member talked about how they have become a

team now. People with different ideas and talents came together because of something they feel is important—these diverse ideas and talents have made it what it has become. “No one in the group could have been eliminated and had it turn out this way.”

LEAD for YOUth, a leadership development program for sixth and seventh graders, incorporated conflict resolution and peacemaking throughout its seven-week curriculum. Students learned that, although conflict is always present, it can be an opportunity for growth. “Resolving conflict is rarely about who is right—it is about acknowledging and appreciating the differences.”



## Leadership Shares Responsibility

It encourages all members to plan, implement and evaluate their actions together, to share leadership and decision-making responsibilities. It doesn't look to one person for all of the answers or direction; it recognizes the leadership potential within each person and the gifts that each member brings to the group. It values inclusion and consensus-based decision making.

Shared leadership, also referred to as collaborative or facilitative leadership, is not easy work. There is no one "right way" of making decisions that fits all groups and all issues. Seeking broad-based consensus is generally preferable to a simple majority vote because it avoids "winners" and "losers." But there are times when a more directive approach may be useful. Individuals will sometimes make decisions for the sake of time and efficiency, but practicing shared leadership empowers individuals to make decisions for the good of the group.

### How might this happen?

**Take turns facilitating meetings and decisions:** Taking turns facilitating and hosting meetings enables more people to be involved. It changes the dynamics of the meetings and doesn't put the focus or all the pressure on one person.

*There is no one "right way" of making decisions that fits all groups and all issues.*

**Share the load:** Gratiot Woods learned that one person can't do it all. Sister Jolene Van Handel said, "The leadership of the Gratiot Woods Coalition is shared—to a large degree because all of us are busy and so we have to share the load. Our current project is recruiting block captains who will then go door-to-door on their block to



conduct a survey of residents' interests, ideas, resources and needs." It is also important to "share the load" across generations—not just assume that the older generation should lead and the younger ones will sit quietly until they become the older ones. Youth can learn a lot from older people—but it should go both ways.

**Caution:** The Gratiot Woods Coalition acknowledged that sharing the load generally works very well, "although we have to take care that if some duties become the responsibility of everyone, then they can become the responsibility of no one."

**Ask the question, "Who else?":** Don't assume that, because people don't volunteer to take on responsibility or leadership, they won't do it or don't want it. Some people are just waiting to be asked and want that affirmation that they are needed. Many people wait for someone else to volunteer. Others don't want to draw attention to themselves or don't want to offer to take on more. But don't be afraid to ask. Don't let one person take on everything.

**Caution:** One of the projects learned that not sharing leadership and responsibility for the group led to its demise. There was one member of the group who was "a natural leader, willing to take on a job, not trying to take power...willing to do it responsibly." This person had the resources to do things such as send out correspondence, to get a room for the meeting, and always offered to coordinate everything. Most people who volunteer are already very busy, so the other members of this group admitted, "We were willing to let one person do everything," and so the group dissolved. A few months later, Amy Lesatz, one of the members, noted, "We realized that we weren't involving enough people. If one or just a few people do everything, the other people fall away."

*"We realized that we weren't involving enough people. If one or just a few people do everything, the other people fall away."*



## *In practice...*

When asked what is different about the Hispanic Student Leadership Forum, Elizabeth Aguirre responded, “It is learning how to be leaders by taking turns being followers and letting people shine and become confident in themselves—rather than the same people leading and shining all the time.”

CLIMB coordinating team member Ann Hinsdale-Knisel said, “If one person agrees to take the role of facilitator, that gives me the opportunity to offer my skill or gift, or whatever, to make it happen. It’s this notion of complementary action—where participants in any effort learn that when they are able to contribute their gift or talent, that in turn allows someone else to provide some kind of action that moves the entire group toward an end goal.”

Older members, who always assumed leadership of the Neighborhood Youth and Parent Prevention Partnership (NYPPP), realized that younger members were also capable leaders and could add new ideas and direction to the group. As Fawn Jones, project director, observed, “Older members gained new insight and understood that the old way is not the only way of doing things, but when they began to give up some of their power, a whole new and greater leadership dynamic began to emerge.”



## Leadership Fosters Collaboration

Collaboration involves building bridges or networks with others outside of a particular group. It recognizes that no one person, group or community has all the answers, all the resources or even the mandate to effectively address the issues at hand. It identifies the stakeholders—current and potential—and looks for the strengths of each. Effective community leadership recognizes that there will likely be power struggles in the process of working collaboratively; it tries to level the playing field and continues to respect and listen to each voice.

A collaborative approach involves more people in resolving the issue at hand, increasing the likelihood of success. It identifies and respects the gifts and resources of each person or group and uses those to complement the others. Ideally, this creates synergy, where “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Together, these groups can do far more than members could working in isolation. There are, however, some powerful forces at work in a community and it is necessary to learn how to work in the presence of these forces, engaging them in your ideas but not allowing them to take over.

*It identifies and respects the gifts and resources of each person or group and uses those to complement the others.*





## Easier said than done. Some things to try:



**Engage a skilled facilitator:** It may be necessary to neutralize the dominance of individuals or organizations that, because of their position, power or personality, tend to do all of the talking or control the process. A skilled facilitator can keep the conversations on track and ensure that all of the members are given the opportunity to speak.

**Caution:** There are some powerful actors involved, those who come to the table with money or a great deal of influence who may claim “special privileges.” Bill Reed, CLIMB director, observed that what happened in one community probably happens in many others: “Those who came to the table all had a voice, but those with money ignored what was said if they didn’t like it.”

**Build relationships:** Establish relationships of equals with your collaborators and potential collaborators. Be open about what you want to accomplish and what you have to offer. Don’t give the impression that you want them on board only to use their resources, whether financial or human.

**Caution:** CLIMB partner Tom Biron pointed out, “Many new responsibilities have arisen because of our extended networking efforts and the time to do all the new business has conflicted with old networking.”





## *In practice...*

A clear example of bridge building is the Youth, Education and Athletics (YEA) program in Jackson County. It is a broad-based coalition of a dozen organizations that are interested in providing a positive environment for youth. It includes the housing commission, the community college, grassroots organizations and faith-based organizations. It hasn't been easy. It has required that groups divided by turf, old animosities, different religious traditions and a history of competing for limited resources not only come to the table but remain there until they negotiate their differences and seek common ground. Part of what has kept them at the table is that they recognize they can accomplish more together than separately.

In Grand Rapids, the GRAIL project is an effort to encourage collaboration citywide. Many agencies and organizations have high levels of expertise in certain areas, but to a large degree, they were not sharing this expertise with others. "Histories and hostilities run deep," as they do in many communities. When the coordinator of the GRAIL project first tried to get the various organizations to sit down together,

*It hasn't been easy. It has required that groups divided by turf, old animosities, different religious traditions and a history of competing for limited resources not only come to the table but remain there until they negotiate their differences and seek common ground.*



they assumed that what he meant by “collaboration” was that each would have to share their financial resources. The intent, however, was to identify areas of competence and ways of working together—the “knowledge resources.” Developing a climate for collaboration is challenging, time-consuming work but extremely valuable in the long run.

Members of the Gratiot Woods Coalition have experienced this firsthand. Over time, they established a relationship with the local police through a community policing program and now notice a decrease in response time to their public safety concerns. This encouraged them to continue working together and building bridges with organizations that

may not have been responsive in the past. They also joined a network of neighborhood organizations in the Detroit area, realizing that their collective voice is greater than the voices of individual organizations. They have met with the mayor to voice some of these concerns. Perhaps even more importantly, they learned that they are not alone. They face problems—with the city, with the majority of their residents being passive, for example—and thought that it was just them. They realized that most neighborhood organizations face the same problems, and this gave them hope and encouragement that they could still do something good in the community.



## Leadership Intends Action

It is not enough to learn about leadership. It must be practiced and it must be locally relevant. People come together to talk about issues, to make decisions together and to learn how to operate more effectively. They also have a strong commitment to act on issues, to do together, to “walk the talk” and to make a difference. They do not simply raise concerns and make complaints, expecting someone else to address the issue—they do something about it.

Moving from doing nothing to doing something is the first step in developing leadership. Leadership moves beyond a “good deed” by bringing other people in, developing relationships, motivating people to act and mobilizing the community’s assets. It also realizes: “If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you always got.” It’s time for some change.

In every CLIMB project, action and accomplishments are part of the process of developing leadership and part of the goal of getting something done. In each case, people came together around an issue and acted upon it. They were not interested in just talk—they wanted to do something about the issues.

*Leadership moves beyond a “good deed” by bringing other people in, developing relationships, motivating people to act and mobilizing the community’s assets.*



## How might we encourage action?

**Clearly identify the issues:** What are the issues? Though individuals may have different priorities, it is important that the group *decide together* what the issues are and what it wants to address. It is also important to recognize what are real issues and what are symptoms. A simplified example is that you may mop up the flood on the floor, but if the faucet is still leaking, you haven't solved the real problem.

**Set goals:** Know what you want to do. Work together to plan how you will do it and then do it together. Set short-term goals for visible success and encouragement, and long-term goals for effectively and holistically building a sustainable future for your community.

**Develop a work plan:** Decide together how you will break the jobs down into doable pieces so that members can choose jobs or tasks that best fit their available time and energy level. List what action needs to be taken—by when and by whom—and who will serve as a support person to help it get done. Get commitments from people then and there, rather than leaving it to organizers or others to follow up. Remain flexible, though, and open to new opportunities, connections and collaboration.

**Monitor and evaluate your progress:** Some people refer to this as a “temperature check.” Keep track of where you started (baseline), what you are doing and how that relates to what you intended to do. Make sure that you have some structure for these temperature checks—leaving it to chance almost guarantees that it will fall by the wayside.

**Celebrate, circulate and regenerate:** Sing your group's praises, and make sure that the community knows what you have accomplished. Circulate your group's story through the local media. Use the enthusiasm and excitement of the group to sustain it and keep it going.



## *In practice...*

The Hispanic Student Leadership Forum (HSLF) works to develop leadership within students throughout the school year. In addition to action-oriented activities during the year, the students are also involved in working with a migrant community during the summer. HSLF participants plan activities such as dances and ethnic and religious celebrations for the migrant workers and, especially, for the children. Students also serve as mentors and tutors for the younger migrant children. It is an incredible learning experience for the students, and many of them have learned the value of linking leadership with serving their community.

In Gratiot Woods, people originally came together to clean up their community—to clear out alleys, to get rid of crack houses, and to plant some trees and flowers. In the process of

struggling to get people involved and being frustrated by bureaucracy, the members have grown into a cohesive group that is known to take action. When they call the Department of Public Works now, for example, they identify themselves as the Gratiot Woods Coalition and they get results. This

was not always the case. The group has mobilized people to act on a rerouting of the interstate and has recently become more involved in improved housing issues.

*In the process of struggling to get people involved and being frustrated by bureaucracy, the members have grown into a cohesive group that is known to take action.*



## Development Bolsters Local Capacity

Capacity building starts with accepting responsibility, identifying direction and determining what assets are available. It involves strengthening a group so that it can work more effectively within the community, the local government and society as a whole. It means taking ownership of the process of change. Members determine the direction they will take and assume responsibility for the outcomes—they are not dependent on outside “experts,” whether consultants, Extension professionals, university-based personnel or professional organizers. The skills needed are identified by the community and are—ideally—learned within a local context, relying on local expertise as much as possible and taking place over a longer term (not a “one-shot” deal). Skill building by itself is not sufficient, but it is important, especially in communities that don’t have these skills.

“Leadership training” typically entails transporting a few designated “community leaders” to a site for a workshop that follows a planned curriculum administered over a concentrated period of time. After this, participants return to their communities and are expected to put into practice what they have learned and to be better leaders.

In contrast, authentic community leadership looks to develop the leadership capacity of the community as a whole, rather than a small group of designated “leaders.” CLIMB’s approach to community leadership development involves working with a broad cross-section of community members, within their community contexts and over an extended period of time.



## What are some ways of bolstering capacity?

**Asset inventory:** Look at your community's assets—the expertise and resources already available in individuals, citizens' associations and local institutions. Build on these assets and look to local expertise rather than depending on “outsiders.” (See Kretzmann and McKnight's workbook, [Building Communities from the Inside Out](#).)

**Tie in formal instruction with specific actions within the community:** Real learning occurs when what is taught in a classroom setting is applied and practiced in the “real world.” Participants should be engaged in applying what they are taught concurrently. The focus should be on the issues and projects that people are currently involved in.

**Keep it close to home:** Look for ways to train community members within your local community, and focus on the uniqueness of your community and its issues. The group will learn together and apply that learning together to the situations at hand. Contrast this approach with one or two “transformed” individuals returning from a training workshop struggling to do it on their own or to get others to “buy in” to their ideas.

*Authentic community leadership looks to develop the leadership capacity of the community as a whole, rather than a small group of designated “leaders.”*



## *In practice...*

The GOLD project included instruction in effective communication, community organizing, conflict resolution, consensus building and running effective meetings. Each participant was actively involved in a community project while attending the weekly training. More than a year after the training was completed, Susie Witherspoon remarked, "I used to be so angry with everything wrong with my community that no one would listen to me. Now I can communicate so that people will listen and we get more done." In fact, she used her new-found confidence (and her on-going desire to improve her community) to run for an at-large seat on her city council.

Students in the Neighborhood Youth and Parent Prevention Partnership have been trained in various aspects of leadership. They are also actively involved in a theater group that performs for peers and younger students, trying to educate them on dealing with anger and conflict in positive ways, peer pressure, drugs and alcohol. They engage students in dialogue about these issues. The students determine which skits to perform and who is responsible for what. Members have developed a greater understanding of their roles both within and outside the group.





## Development Is Issue-Based But Not Issue-Bound

People often come together around some type of catalyzing issue, something that they are passionate or concerned about or just interested in. Community leadership development goes beyond addressing a specific issue or accomplishing a specific task. The issue may be what brought people together in the first place, but effective community leadership development holds people together to build leadership capacity to continue addressing other issues and growing together as a community.

Community leadership development, from CLIMB's perspective, involves bringing people together to build capacity for leadership that transcends a specific issue or issues. Such leadership capacity goes on long after a specific issue is addressed. It moves on to other issues within the community and beyond.

Once people experience the satisfaction of making a difference, they may be inclined to take on something else. They see themselves as doers committed to creating the kind of world they want to live in. Some active, committed people will address one issue and not continue with the same group. These people have still succeeded in working and learning together to address a common issue, and they carry these skills and confidence with them into other areas.

*Community leadership development involves bringing people together to build capacity for leadership that transcends a specific issue or issues.*



## *How might this happen?*

**Plan broadly, but start small:** The initial project should be one that offers possibilities for growth, and the leadership should be aware of opportunities for fostering more sustained activity. Most groups don't necessarily plan to move on to other issues—it just happens. A group achieves something and feels good about it, but members also see more things that they want to change, know they can do something and then **do it**.

**Future search:** This is a process that helps to identify common issues and lead participants toward action. It brings all of the players into the room to work on a task-focused agenda. People take ownership of the process as they look at the past, the present and their ideal future. Through listening and understanding, people discover common ground and work toward shared ideals.

(See reference section for source.)

**Strategic visioning:** This involves many members of the community working through a process of identifying community ideals, resources and goals, and figuring out how to reach them.



## *In practice...*

Gratiot Woods is a neighborhood of single-family homes on small lots on the East Side of Detroit. Many homes have been abandoned, vandalized and/or used as crack houses. Vacant lots were filled with trash, and alleys provided protection for thieves and drug pushers. "It was a joy to live here thirty years ago. Now it's a struggle. It's a changed neighborhood," lamented Mrs. Mamie Ferguson, an elderly resident. "That's why we want to make a difference here."

The Gratiot Woods Coalition formed in 1991 to clean up the neighborhood. Members cleared several lots, planted flowers, and created a small park. The group has also gotten involved in speaking out against changes in the interstate, improving local housing and painting the school.

Members keep an eye out for one another and the community, and celebrate such victories as when they prevented a contractor from covering over a demolished house rather than removing the materials, and getting much quicker responses from the police and from the department of public works. The coalition has moved beyond focusing on one issue—it is building a broad base of leadership and a greater sense of pride in the community.

In the Upper Peninsula, many people continue to be involved in their communities. One U.P. LEAD member is encouraged by the on-going involvement of participants long after the initial projects were completed. "Wherever I turn, it seems that U.P. LEAD participants are part of activities, initiatives and projects. I don't think we will ever know the extent of the reach in our community."



## Development Offers A Context For Learning

Learning happens all the time, in almost everything we do. We are not always conscious of this learning because we are too busy to stop and realize all that we have learned. It is important to make time and to establish a means for people to be more conscious of what they are learning individually and collectively; this requires slowing down and becoming aware of what we are thinking, doing and learning. This guides future decision making and actions, and it recognizes that “everyone knows something.”

Action by itself is not enough. Reflection, or purposeful learning from experience, is a vital part of the process in effective community leadership development. It means slowing down the thinking process to become more aware of what you are doing and why.

For this to happen, it is important to create an atmosphere where risk taking and mistakes are accepted as vital for learning. The focus is on continuous improvement, not on perfection or avoiding risks to “look good.”

*Reflection, or purposeful learning from experience, is a vital part of the process in effective community leadership development.*



## What are some tools that help in the process of learning?

+ / ▲ The CLIMB coordinating team uses the plus/delta symbols at the end of each meeting. Participants list and discuss what they really liked about a meeting and the things they would like to do differently in the future. This draws attention to what works well and what needs to be changed.

**Roundtable:** Make a habit of asking for feedback. Some groups will offer it freely and constructively. Some groups may require specific questions for dialogue and a facilitator who can keep the group focused on learning, not merely on criticizing.

**Journaling/documenting:** Journaling is a more personal form of documenting. Both are helpful to record where ideas begin and how learning occurs over time. These may be more time-consuming than the tools mentioned above, but they serve as a written record that can be looked back on, demonstrating the process of leadership development, individually and collectively.

**Evaluation:** Each of the above-mentioned items is a form of evaluation. Sometimes a more formal evaluation process is required or recommended. Rather than fearing evaluations, participants should recognize that evaluation is a process of systematic reflection about the work in which the group is engaged. Learning to assess fairly and non-defensively what has worked well and what needs improving is a way to practice and build community leadership.



## *In practice...*

The CLIMB Coordinating Team adopted +/▲ for use at the end of each meeting. Members talked about what went well in the meeting and things they would like to do similarly in

*“Often we go about the business of accomplishing goals and don’t allow for time to think about what we learned in the process.”*

the future. Changes that resulted included establishing a “parking lot” of good ideas that emerged during the meeting but could not be discussed at that very moment and designating a timekeeper. Members also listed the things that they would like changed, such as the difficulty of phone participants to speak fairly and equitably, and wanting to minimize dominance by one or two individuals.

Students in the LEAD for YOUTH program were encouraged to write in a journal at the end of each day. They recorded their thoughts and impressions and pointed out at the end that writing helped them realize how much they had learned.

In U.F. LEAD, times for reflection were built into the process. In addition to on-going reflection, there were two larger reflection times. Six months after beginning their projects, groups from each county came back together; after one year, all of the participants from across the U.F. were invited to come together to celebrate and reflect on their accomplishments, and to plan for the future. A coordinating member said, “Often we go about the business of accomplishing goals and don’t allow for time to think about what we learned in the process. The two times set aside for reflection proved to be another valuable learning technique.”



# What Else Do You Need To Know?

In addition to the principles described and illustrated in the preceding pages, the process of community leadership development requires:

## Time

We never have enough of it, but we must make the most of what we have.

## Relationships

People are what really make the difference—we need one another.

## Trust

It enables us to be real, to be vulnerable and to grow together.

## Courage

If you care about something, be courageous and do something about it.

## Change and revisions

"A plan implemented as written is doomed to fail."  
As we learn, we need to change.



### Personal invitations

Never underestimate the power of a personal request. Some people are just waiting to be asked to get involved.

### Effective and appropriate communication

People need information—find out how much and in what form they want it.

### Respect for people's stories

Each person has a story to tell. We learn through examples, not in isolation.

### Patience and perseverance

It won't all work well the first time. Keep going, though—it's worth it.

### Money

Money can make things happen, but it is often not the first or the most important ingredient for success in community efforts.

These don't happen automatically. If you are committed to effective community leadership development, then expect to invest yourself in relationships and to be disappointed at times. Expect to listen a lot, to be patient, to be surprised. Expect to learn by doing, to make mistakes and to change plans (yet again!). Expect to get frustrated... and to get great satisfaction.





# For More Information

## *A Selection Of Excellent Printed Resources*

### *Asset Inventory*

- [Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets](#), by John P. Kretzman and John L. McKnight. Published by the Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, in 1993. Phone (847) 491-3518; fax: (847) 491-9916.
- In addition, John McKnight and his colleagues have prepared a set of booklets on various types of asset inventories. You can try the same address above.

### *Community Leadership Development*

- [Boundary Crossers: Community Leadership for a Global Age](#), by Neal Pierce and Curtis Johnson. Published by the Academy of Leadership at the University of Maryland, in 1997.
- [Community Action Leadership Development: A Conceptual Framework for Michigan State University Extension](#), by Lela Vandenberg and Loralee Sandmann. Printed as part of the Michigan State University Extension Leadership Series, No. 95-01, East Lansing, Michigan, in 1995.
- [Leading the Way: A Guide to Changing Community Leadership](#), by M.J. Clark and P. Heiny. Published by the National Association for Community Leadership, Indianapolis (not dated).



## *Conflict Resolution*

- *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution: Preserving Relationships at Work, at Home, and in the Community*, by D. Weeks. Published by Putnam Books, New York, in 1992.
- *The Mediation Process*, by Christopher W. Moore. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1996.
- *The Mediator's Handbook*, by Jennifer Beer and Eileen Steif. Published by New Society Publishers, P.O. Box 3064, Stoney Creek, Connecticut 06405, in 1997.
- *Negotiating at an Uneven Table: Developing Moral Courage in Resolving Our Conflicts*, by Phyllis Beck Kritek. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1994.
- *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict: In Nations, Organizations, and Communities*, by J. Rothman. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1997.
- *Teaching Students to be Peacemakers*, by David W. and Roger T. Johnson. Published by Interaction Book Company, 7208 Cornelia Drive, Edina, Minnesota 55435. Phone (612) 831-9500. The cost is \$25.
- Web resources: ConflictNet, <[www.igc.org](http://www.igc.org)>; American Bar Association, <[www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org)>; or <[www.mediation.com](http://www.mediation.com)>.



## Diversity

- B.A.S.I.C. training . Contact Al Vivian at 130 Creekwood Trail, Fayetteville, Georgia 30214.
- The Diversity Game, available from the Ned Herrmann Group, 2075 Buffalo Creek Road, Lake Lure, North Carolina 28746. Phone (704) 625-9153.
- White to White on Black/White, by Toni Weaver. Voices Publishing, Vandalia, Ohio, in 1993. Dr. Weaver is also author of To Change the Future, Change the Children.

## Effective Listening

- Listening, the Forgotten Skill: A Self-Teaching Guide, by M. Burley-Allen. Published by John Wiley and Sons, New York, in 1995.

## Facilitating and Team Building

- The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making, by S. Kaner, L. Lind, C. Toldi, S. Fisk and D. Berger. Published by New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, British Columbia, in 1996.
- How to Lead Work Teams: Facilitation Skills, by F. Rees. Published by Pfeiffer/Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1991.
- Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership, by K. Rohnke and S. Butler. Published by Kendall/Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, in 1995.



- [Teamwork from Start to Finish: 10 Steps from Start to Finish](#), by F. Rees. Published by Pfeiffer/Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1997.

## *Group Processes*

- [Expanding Our Now: The Story of Open Space Technology](#), by H. Owen. Published by Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, in 1997.
- [Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground In Organizations and Communities](#), by Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff. Published by Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, in 1995.
- [The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential](#), by Tony Buzan with Barry Buzan. Published by Plume/Penguin, New York, in 1993.

## *Leadership*

- [Collaborative Leadership](#), by David D. Christlip and Doug E. Larson. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1994.
- [Dynamics of Group Leadership and Organizational Change](#), by Russel D. Robinson. Published by the Omnibook Company, Westbend, Wisconsin, in 1995.
- [Enlightened Leadership](#), by Ed Oakley and Doug Krug. Published by Simon and Schuster, New York, in 1991.



- [Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community](#), by Max DePree. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1997.
- [Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice](#), by W.H. Drath and C.J. Palus. Published by the Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1994.
- [Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest](#), by Peter Block. Published by Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, in 1993.

### *Learning and Reflection*

- [The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization](#), by Peter Senge. Published by Doubleday, New York, in 1990.
- [Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water](#), by Peter B. Vaill. Published by Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, in 1996.
- [Ten Steps to a Learning Organization](#), by Peter Kline and Bernard Saunders. Published by Great Ocean Publishing Inc., Arlington, Virginia, in 1998.

### *National Issues Forum*

- The Kettering Foundation produces the NIF materials. Contact Bob McKenzie at the Kettering Foundation, 200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45450. Phone (937) 434-7300 or (800) 221-3657; fax (937) 439-9804; e-mail [rmckenzie@nc.ua.edu](mailto:rmckenzie@nc.ua.edu). The Kettering Foundation also has a Web site: <[www.kettering.com](http://www.kettering.com)>.



## Rural Development

- Jason Church is a cooperative development specialist with the USDA Rural Development-Rural Business-Cooperative Service. He has many good resources (videos and publications) related to cooperative development, ag and non-ag related. E-mail [jchurch@rurdev.usda.gov](mailto:jchurch@rurdev.usda.gov). The USDA Web site also has other community development-related resources at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

## Youth

- Young People Creating Community Change, by Barry Checkoway. Printed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1996.

You should also check with your local Extension Office for other valuable resources.



# Great People Resources

## From the CLIMB Community

- Donna Aird—conflict mediation, youth and peacemaking. 1308 Montana Avenue, Gladstone, Michigan 49837; fax (906) 789-9581; e-mail [airddm@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:airddm@pilot.msu.edu).
- Tom Biron—Great Lakes Anishinaabek leadership and tribal community development, many other anthropological research and interpretation areas. 19799 S. Riverside Drive, Pickford, Michigan 49774; phone (906) 647-2161; e-mail [birontho@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:birontho@pilot.msu.edu).
- Alexa Gordon—organizational development and diversity consulting. 7900 Webster Church Road, Whitmore Lake, Michigan 48189; phone/fax (734) 426-1007.
- Lester Gordon—Open Space facilitator, community building workshop coordinator. 1251 Jennings, Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022.
- Ann Hinsdale-Krisel—National Issues Forum, diversity, youth. Director, MSU Extension, Lenawee County, 1040 South Winter Street, Suite 2020, Adrian, Michigan 49221; voice mail (517) 264-5303; fax (517) 264-5317; e-mail [hinsdale@msue.msu.edu](mailto:hinsdale@msue.msu.edu).
- Rita Hodgins—collaborative leadership, group processes, community building, facilitation. 702 Chippewa Square, Marquette, Michigan 49855; phone (906) 228-4830; fax (906) 228-4572; e-mail [hodgins@msue.msu.edu](mailto:hodgins@msue.msu.edu).
- Bob Lewis—strategic planning, the development of grants, non-profit boards and partnerships, community problem solving, collaboration training, needs and asset assessments. 500 Linden, Albion, Michigan 49224; phone (616) 337-4606 or (517) 629-5040.



- **Greg Markus**—community organizing, evaluation. 3030 Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109; phone (734) 763-3284 or (734) 995-2562.
- **Emily Martinez**—multicultural youth leadership, Hispanic and migrant community issues, youth ombudsman. 4107 North Adrian Highway, Adrian, Michigan 49221; phone (517) 265-1618.
- **Kristin Ramsay**—community leadership development, rural development, learning from communities. Michigan State University, 323 Natural Resources Building, East Lansing, Michigan 48824; phone (517) 353-1898; fax (517) 353-8994; e-mail krollkri@pilot.msu.edu.
- **Bill Reed**—CLIMB program director, collaborative leadership, facilitation and community-based initiatives. 8242 Greenfield Shores, Scotts, Michigan 49088; phone and fax (616) 329-0332; e-mail billreed@kalamazoo.net.
- **Jose Reyna**—grantsmanship, funding, children, youth and family issues, economic development. City of Grand Rapids, 201 Market Street S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503; phone (616) 456-3057; fax (616) 456-4567.
- **Tom Shea**—Michigan Peace Team, conflict resolution and mediation training. 529 West Ninth Street, Traverse City, Michigan 49684; phone and fax (616) 946-3693; e-mail shea@traverse.com.





- **Bennie M. Stovall**—human services consultant: community leadership development, organizational development, children, youth and family services, grantsmanship, diversity training. P.O. Box 700841, Plymouth, Michigan 48170-0954; phone (313) 919-0617; fax (734) 981-3819.
- **Lela Vandenberg**—facilitative leadership, group processes, community building. Michigan State University Extension specialist, 310 Natural Resources Building, East Lansing, Michigan 48824; phone (517) 353-1898; fax (517) 353-8994; e-mail vandenbl@msue.msu.edu.
- **Joel Welty**—board of directors training facilitator, cooperatives and other member organizations. Michigan Alliance of Cooperatives executive director, 4771 Rolland Road, Blanchard, Michigan 49310; phone (517) 561-5037; fax (517) 561-5193; e-mail jwelty@power-net.net.
- **Jim Wiesing**—community development and land use; specifically, strategic planning facilitation, organizational and community assessment and assistance, land use planning and affordable housing issues. Grand Traverse County Extension director, Michigan State University Extension, 1102 Cass St., Suite A, Traverse City, Michigan 49694; phone (616) 922-4620; fax (616) 922-4633; e-mail wiesing@msue.msu.edu.
- **LaMont Williams**—whole systems community development, organizational development and diversity consulting. Jackson Community Transformation Project, 2111 Emmons Road, Jackson, Michigan 49201; phone (517) 796-8496 or (517) 787-5766.



## The CLIMB Projects

This handbook is based on the experiences of several community-based projects across Michigan. Many of these projects also provided examples to illustrate throughout the handbook. The projects are described briefly below; for more information, the contact information for each project convenor is also included.

1. *The Citizens Information Network: Linked remote rural communities to the Internet for improved communication and learning.* James J. Wiesing, Grand Traverse County Extension director, Michigan State University Extension, 1102 Cass St., Suite A, Traverse City, MI 49694; phone (616) 922-4620; fax (616) 922-4633; e-mail [wiesing@msue.msu.edu](mailto:wiesing@msue.msu.edu).
2. *Community Builders: An urban neighborhood-focused grassroots leadership development program in Kalamazoo. In addition to classroom learning, it supports opportunities to learn by doing in neighborhood projects, which participants design and implement.* Bill Reed, 8242 Greenfield Shores, Scotts, MI 49088; phone/fax (616) 329-0332.
3. *The Grand Rapids Institute for Leadership (GRAIL): An attempt to foster collaborative relationships, in an atmosphere of mutual trust, among members of various community groups throughout the city.* Jose Reyna, City of Grand Rapids, 201 Market Street S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49503; phone (616) 456-3057; fax (616) 456-4567.



4. *The Gratiot Woods Coalition: A Community Development Project:* A group of neighbors on Detroit's East Side who wanted to clean up and revitalize their community—they've ended up doing much more than cleaning alleys and have been gaining a voice in the city. Sister Jolene Van Handel, 5900 McClellan, Detroit, MI 48213; phone/fax (313) 922-0033.
5. *Grassroots Organization and Leadership Development (GOLD):* Trained several people who were already involved with their community in such areas as communication, community organizing and conflict resolution. Participants directly applied this learning to their projects. Sandra Dudley, 420 Higman Park, Benton Harbor, MI 49022; phone (616) 927-5518; fax (616) 684-9494.
6. *The Hispanic Student Leadership Forum:* Hispanic high school students meet regularly to learn about and practice effective communication, teamwork, planning and goal setting. They work with younger students and migrant youth during the summer. Emily Martinez, ISD multicultural coordinator, 4107 North Adrian Highway, Adrian, MI 49221; phone (517) 265-1618; fax (517) 263-9433.
7. *Leadership Education and Development for Youth (LEAD for YOUTH):* An after-school leadership development program for seventh and eighth graders, with peace-making, harmony and non-violence as the cornerstones of all activities. Donna Aird, 1308 Montana Avenue, Gladstone, MI 49837; phone (906) 789-9580; e-mail [airddm@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:airddm@pilot.msu.edu).



8. **Local Cooperative Leadership Networks:** Members of all types of cooperatives come together to learn from one another, share ideas and expertise, and work together both for the co-ops and for the communities. Joël Welty, executive director of the Michigan Alliance of Cooperatives, 4771 Rolland Road, Blanchard, MI 49310; phone (517) 561-5037; fax (517) 561-5193; e-mail [jwelty@power-net.net](mailto:jwelty@power-net.net).
9. **Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS):** A statewide program that works with farmers and consumers to develop sustainable farm practices, leadership and effective ag-related policies. Tom Guthrie, MIFFS executive director, P.O. Box 4903, East Lansing, MI 48826; phone (517) 353-3209; fax (517) 353-7186; e-mail [miffs@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:miffs@pilot.msu.edu); web site <<http://pilot.msu.edu/user/miffs/index.html>>.
10. **Planning for the Seventh Generation:** Bringing together researchers, community members, planners and others to develop local, statewide, national and international networks of people committed to sustainable communities and natural resources. Thomas A. Biron, 19799 S. Riverside Drive, Pickford, MI 49774; phone (906) 647-2161; e-mail [birortho@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:birortho@pilot.msu.edu).
11. **Teen Leadership Development for Youth Violence Prevention—The Neighborhood Youth and Parent Prevention Partnership (NYPPP):** High school students develop leadership through training and practice in leadership skills. Several students are also involved in a drama group that performs skits for younger students on such topics as peer pressure, gangs and drugs. Joe Lessard, Ingham County Extension director, P.O. Box 319, Mason, MI 48854; phone (517) 676-7298; fax (517) 676-7358; e-mail [lessard@msue.msu.edu](mailto:lessard@msue.msu.edu).



12. *21st Century Leadership: Leading and Learning at a Distance: A Land Use Perspective* involved five counties in interactive television workshops related to land use issues. James J. Wiesing, Grand Traverse County Extension director, Michigan State University Extension, 1102 Cass St., Suite A, Traverse City, MI 49694; phone (616) 922-4620; fax (616) 922-4633; e-mail [wiesing@msua.msu.edu](mailto:wiesing@msua.msu.edu).
13. *U.P. LEAD: Throughout Michigan's Upper Peninsula, community members came together to learn to "do leadership in a new way."* Each county held a workshop, members identified community concerns, then self-organized to address these concerns. Rita Hodgins, MSU-Upper Peninsula, 702 Chippewa Square, Marquette, MI 49855; phone (906) 228-4830; fax (906) 228-4572; e-mail [hodgins@msue.msu.edu](mailto:hodgins@msue.msu.edu).
14. *Youth, Education and Athletics (YEA): A collaborative project involving several community and religious groups to involve youth in education and sports while developing collaborative leadership and cooperation.* Delvin LaMont Williams, Jackson Community Transformation Project, 2111 Emmons Road, Jackson, MI 49201; phone (517) 796-8496; fax (517) 796-8632; e-mail [lamont\\_williams@jackson.cc.mi.us](mailto:lamont_williams@jackson.cc.mi.us).



15. Youth Enrichment Services (YES): Started out as a directive summer program and developed into a collaborative effort between staff members and disadvantaged students to develop and implement an educational curriculum for leadership development and job skills. Jose Reyna, City of Grand Rapids, 201 Market Street S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49503; phone (616) 456-3057; fax (616) 456-4567.
16. The Youth Violence Prevention Coalition: This is a large program; the leadership component involved National Issues Forum training with interested community members and expanding awareness of community initiatives to prevent violence. Joe Lessard, Ingham County Extension director, P.O. Box 319, Mason, MI 48854; phone (517) 676-7298; fax (517) 676-7358; e-mail lessard@msue.msu.edu.



## Companion Pieces

- [New Approaches to Community Leadership Development: Lessons Learned from the CLIMB Experience](#) by Greg Markus and Kristin Ramsay, 1998.
- [U.P. LEAD: An Issue-oriented, Experiential, Shared Leadership Project in Michigan's Upper Peninsula](#) by Donna Aird, Cindy Brock, Jim Dompier, Anni Gregor, Rita Hodgins, and Steve Nelson.

Both are available from: MSU Bulletin Office, 10-B Agriculture Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1039.











the 1990s, the number of people who have been employed in the public sector has increased in all countries. The increase has been particularly large in the United States, where the public sector has grown from 10.5% of the total workforce in 1970 to 17.5% in 1995 (see Figure 1).

There are a number of reasons for the increase in public sector employment. One reason is that the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that public sector jobs are often more secure and offer better benefits than private sector jobs. Another reason is that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy, particularly in the areas of health care and education.

The increase in public sector employment has also been driven by the need for government services. As the population has aged, there has been a corresponding increase in the need for social security, Medicare, and Medicaid. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of public sector employees who are responsible for providing these services.

Finally, the increase in public sector employment has also been driven by the fact that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. This is due to the fact that the public sector has become a more important source of revenue for governments, particularly in the areas of health care and education. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of public sector employees who are responsible for providing these services.

The increase in public sector employment has also been driven by the fact that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. This is due to the fact that the public sector has become a more important source of revenue for governments, particularly in the areas of health care and education. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of public sector employees who are responsible for providing these services.

The increase in public sector employment has also been driven by the fact that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. This is due to the fact that the public sector has become a more important source of revenue for governments, particularly in the areas of health care and education. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of public sector employees who are responsible for providing these services.

The increase in public sector employment has also been driven by the fact that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. This is due to the fact that the public sector has become a more important source of revenue for governments, particularly in the areas of health care and education. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of public sector employees who are responsible for providing these services.

The increase in public sector employment has also been driven by the fact that the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. This is due to the fact that the public sector has become a more important source of revenue for governments, particularly in the areas of health care and education. This has led to a corresponding increase in the number of public sector employees who are responsible for providing these services.

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

MSU is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution. Michigan State University Extension educational programs and materials are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or age.

Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Arlen Leholt, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824.

©Copyright Michigan State University, October 1998