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New Approaches to Community Leadership Development: Lessons Learned from the CLIMB Experience

Michigan State University

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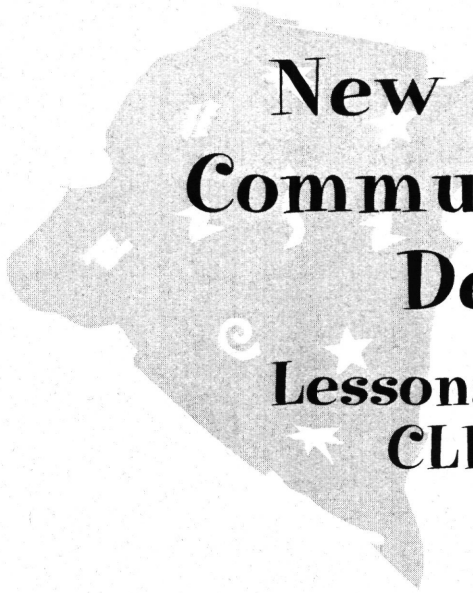
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**MICHIGAN STATE
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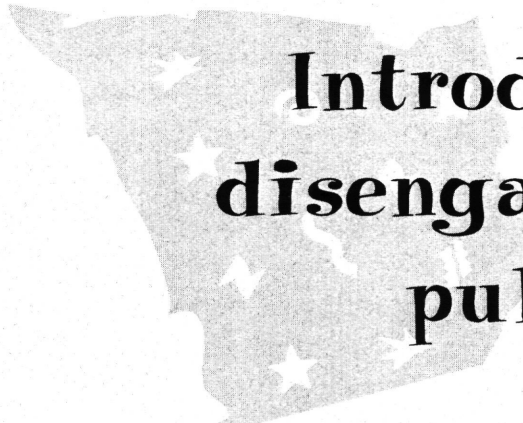
*Wee must delight in eache other,
make other's conditions our oune,
rejoice together, mourne together,
labour and suffer together,
alwayes haveing before our eyes
our commission and community
in the work as members of the same body.*

— John Winthrop, on board the
Arbella, 1630

*If you tell me, I'll forget.
If you show me, I may not remember.
If you involve me, I'll understand.*

— Native American proverb

This paper is an outgrowth of the collaboration of CLIMB participants at the Sixth CLIMB Gathering at Traverse City, Mich., in 1997. Special thanks to CLIMB members who took part in two subsequent retreats that helped develop this paper, including CLIMB director Bill Reed and grant administrator Lela Vandenberg, Mamie Ferguson, Judy Gardi, Suprotik Ghosh, Anni Gregor, Anne Hinsdale-Knisel, Rita Hodgins, Robert Lewis, José Reyna, Sr. Jolene Van Handel and Delvin LaMont Williams.



Introduction: Civic disengagement, failed public policy

Scholars, pollsters, politicians, reporters, community activists and cab-drivers will tell you two things about contemporary America. The first is that Americans are much less engaged in and connected to their communities of residence, work and interest than they used to be. The second is that effective solutions to the challenges of modern life are increasingly difficult to devise and implement.

Consider the evidence on civic engagement. Participation in political campaigns and elections is down (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Trust and confidence in government are down (Tolchin, 1996; Nye, Zelikow and King, 1997). In sample surveys and focus groups, majorities of Americans report that they experience politics as a spectator sport—and a not particularly popular or reputable one at that. To the extent that they imagine themselves as figuring in politics at all, ordinary people see their roles to be limited to those of intermittent voter, nagging complainer or hapless victim. Occasionally, when the domestic economy is booming and shooting wars involving Uncle Sam are off the front pages, Americans may express the satisfaction of the well-served con-

sumer of a “customer-friendly” government. Rarely, however, do they see themselves as active and effective participants in public problem solving, as legitimate players in determining the futures of their communities (Bellah *et al.*, 1985; Dionne, 1991; Greider, 1992).

The decline in civic engagement reportedly extends beyond government and governance to include participation in service organizations, labor unions, social clubs, charitable associations, faith-based institutions, parent-teacher organizations, even bowling leagues (Putnam, 1993a, 1993b, 1995).¹ By the same token, Americans’ disaffection extends beyond the boundaries of government to include nearly all large—and increasingly distant—institutions: big business, big labor, big media, even “big religion” (Lipset and Schneider, 1987; Yankelovitch, 1991).²

As for the track record of institutionally based, expert-designed “solutions” to public problems, many have been ineffective and more than a few have ended up creating unintended consequences as bad as—or even worse than—the problems they were intended to address in the first place (Scott, 1998). Big government’s

solution to the shortage of affordable urban housing—namely, the massive, concentrated public housing project—proved so dysfunctional that some public housing complexes were literally blown up lest they engender further harm. Massive urban renewal projects of the 1960s and '70s often succeeded only in obliterating the remaining physical and social assets from which sustainable downtown commercial development might have sprung. Consider public education: as the advantages of year-round, multipurpose utilization of public schools become ever more obvious, school boards and teachers' unions haggle over minor modifications in a public school calendar established to accommodate the needs of 19th century agrarian society. Or the environment: billions of Superfund dollars have been expended in the past decade, yet only a sliver of that money has actually gone into cleaning up toxic waste sites—almost all of it has been burned up in litigation and legal fees instead.

Failed policies affect urban and rural communities alike. City dwellers may idealize rural life, thinking of it as simpler, more carefree; but that's not always the way it is. Distance and isolation in rural regions can compound many of the same challenges found in cities, such as economic stagnation, inadequate public education, environmental degradation, racial and ethnic injustice, and substance abuse and other public health issues (Fitchen, 1991; Davidson, 1996).

Arguments about the atrophy of civic life and the ineffectiveness of social policy meet with counterarguments. Unquestionably, civic activism persists and even flourishes in many places, despite the impediments (Schudson, 1996; Ladd, 1996). Lappé and DuBois (1994), for example, make a good case that "our society may be on the edge of a critical breakthrough in appreciating the contributions of everyday people to solving public problems." Boyte (1984, 1989) has documented how the strand of public-oriented theory and practice that he calls the "commonwealth tradition" lives on in the community organizing efforts of the Industrial Areas Foundation and in neighborhood associations, the women's movement, environmental organizations and other citizen groups. Similarly, the list is long of public, private and "third sector" (nonprofit) initiatives that have achieved admirable successes in promoting the public welfare (Zigler and Muenchow, 1992; Lappé and DuBois, 1994; Easterbrook, 1995; Garvin, 1995; Carville, 1996).

These caveats remind us not to lapse into sweeping and unwarranted generalizations about the demise of civil society or the failures of collective action to address complex challenges of contemporary life. Moreover, the counter-examples may hold the keys to understanding what can be

done to bolster civic engagement and promote effective public problem solving, as opposed to merely complaining about the deficiencies. Indeed, we believe they do—we know they do. As important as the counterexamples are, however, they do not deny the reality and significance of the two general trends: on the whole, Americans are less involved in and connected with the civic lives of their communities than they used to be; and the challenges with which communities must cope are increasingly complex and their solutions correspondingly more multifaceted.

These two phenomena are closely interrelated: ordinary Americans have withdrawn from the public sphere partly because so many institutionally based efforts at public problem solving have failed, and so many institutionally based efforts at public problem solving have failed because ordinary Americans have increasingly withdrawn from the public sphere—or have been discouraged from entering in the first place. Government and other large institutions are thus unable to draw upon the public's experience and insights in crafting solutions, and they are equally unable to utilize public energy and commitment in implementing them. Greider (1992: 12) summarized the vicious circle this way:

Disconnected from larger public purposes, people can neither contribute their thinking to the government's decisions nor take any real responsibility for them. Elite

decision makers are unable to advance coherent governing agendas for the nation, however, since they are too isolated from common values and experiences to be persuasive. The result is an enervating sense of stalemate.

What Greider said with reference to national governmental decision makers and public policies applies equally well at the state and local levels—and also to private and nonprofit institutions that affect communities and their capacities for effective action. At all levels and across all sectors, public debate has become dominated by professionals possessing specialized knowledge and speaking in arcane jargon and by interest groups capable of marshaling impressive amounts of money and expertise to bend policy their way.

Social agencies, charitable organizations and philanthropic foundations have further complicated the situation. Intending to serve communities, human and social service professionals have frequently disempowered them instead through their “disabling help.” In his book The Careless Society, John McKnight (1995: ix-x) argued that:

The most significant development transforming America since World War II has been the growth of a powerful service economy and its pervasive serving institutions. Those institutions have commodified the care of the community and called

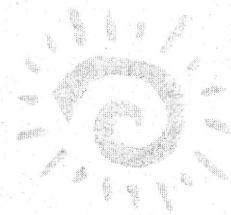
that substitution a service. As citizens have seen the professionalized service commodity invade their communities, they have grown doubtful of their common capacity to care, and so it is that we have become a care-less society, populated by impotent citizens and ineffectual communities dependent on the counterfeit of care called human services.

The inadequacies of governmental policy and the disabling help of service agencies have spurred an impulse to rely on market-based solutions to public problems. Markets can increase the cost-effectiveness of public services, and they can enhance choice. Yet some of the pressing problems affecting communities today—from environmental pollution to economic disinvestment in central cities to overstressed families—arguably have been exacerbated by leaving too much latitude for the opera-



tion of market principles (and the attendant supremacy of commercial values over ethical ones) rather than too little (Gaventa, 1980; Skocpol, 1996; Kuttner, 1997). And the ways in which markets can sometimes aggregate individually sensible choices into collectively tragic outcomes is sufficiently well documented as to require no reiteration here (Olson, 1965; Schelling, 1978; Barry and Hardin, 1982).

Although ideologues of various persuasions will disagree, the American public has indisputably reached a rough consensus that neither big government nor big markets offer a panacea for the problems that most concern them (Dionne, 1992; Schneider, 1992). For that matter, no combination of government and market will likely prove effective in addressing common concerns unless it is grounded in the practical wisdom of the same ordinary citizens whose consent and active collaboration ultimately prove essential to any policy's success.





Cooperative Extension and Community Leadership Development

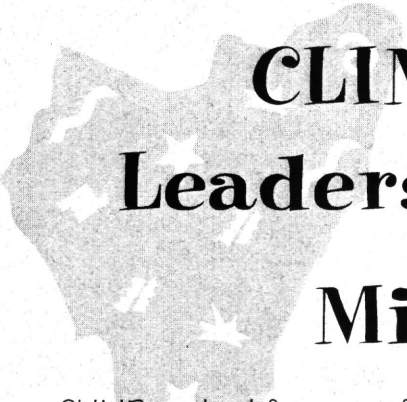
Nearly all American colleges and universities include civic education as part of their founding mission. Nowhere is that mission more explicit than in the system of land-grant institutions of higher learning that grew out of the first and second Morrill acts passed in the latter half of the 19th century. By the 1890s, a central component of the civic mission of land-grant colleges was the outreach effort that came to be known as “Extension” (Boyte and Kari, 1996: 66-67).

Cooperative Extension was expressly intended to help develop local capacities of citizens to solve problems themselves, and its diverse activities—helping farmers learn the latest agricultural methods, guiding young people in 4-H clubs, organizing home economics classes for wives, and so on—were offered as alternatives to top-down, directive approaches (Boyte and Kari, 1996: 196). Over the years, Extension grew far beyond its rural roots. More than 85 percent of the young people in 4-H, for instance, are from nonfarm households (Boyte and Kari, 1996: 196). Less laudably, Extension also largely lost its civic dimension, succumbing to higher education’s and government’s preference for expert-driven projects intended to remediate “problems” with quick fixes rather than engage in the slow, power-sharing

(and thus power-creating) process of community capacity building.

Recently, Cooperative Extension in several states has begun to return to its original civic mission. In that process, Extension agents are discovering that they can learn from the community as well as educate it. The substantive focus of Extension activities has expanded as the number and complexity of issues confronting Extension agents has multiplied, and the expert-driven approach has almost of necessity evolved into a more genuinely collaborative one. In particular, Extension programs increasingly seek to develop the kind of broadly based capacity for leadership in communities that is capable of transcending specific issues or problems to provide a more versatile, self-sustaining community resource.

Michigan State University Extension has a long history of offering leadership development programs within communities throughout the state. In the 1960s, MSUE collaborated with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to develop and implement the Kellogg Young Farmers Leadership Program. In the 1970s and ‘80s, MSUE leadership development programs evolved to be more flexible, more local and less dependent on Extension.



CLIMB: Community Leadership Initiatives — Michigan's Best

CLIMB evolved from an effort in the early 1990s by MSUE to examine how it might better serve communities. Extension and the land-grant universities had been criticized for not being able to deal with current issues of importance, relying on old methods and old definitions of problems, and being unable “to transform themselves into institutions for meaningful social change” (Leadership Academy Task Group, 1993: 7). MSUE’s self-assessment resulted in a proposal to the Kellogg Foundation to support jointly an action-oriented learning laboratory for exploring and developing new approaches to collaborative, issue-based community leadership. The foundation agreed, and CLIMB commenced operation in 1993.

CLIMB actively sought a diverse membership and invited MSUE staff, members of community organizations from around the state and other interested individuals to participate in learning and discovering together new ways of developing leadership within communities. CLIMB set

out to experiment with new partnerships between a land-grant university and the communities it seeks to serve and to change the way MSUE engages in leadership development with its own staff and with community constituents (Kaagan *et al.*, 1995). Specifically, CLIMB’s goals were to:

- Develop partnerships that value diversity, stimulate resource development and provide leadership for effective community-based leadership development programs in Michigan.
- In cooperation with communities, design the elements of sustainable community leadership development programs that focus on community issues—particularly economic development, environmental preservation, and children, youth and families.
- Create methods and support a learning environment in which CLIMB partners and community members enhance their leadership capacity.
- Join MSUE in developing methods to expand community and university partnerships.

CLIMB embodies an organic approach to leadership development. A group of approximately 60 CLIMB members participated in making key programmatic decisions and establishing partnerships with Michigan communities to collaborate in crafting and field-testing CLIMB's leadership development program. CLIMB is thus not about presenting a generic leadership development curriculum to community members. Rather, it is about participants collaborating to design and implement approaches to building community leadership capacities in ways that reflect their individual interests and collective aspirations. A distinctive feature of CLIMB's approach to leadership development is that it respects the expertise and knowledge that resides within communities. It understands leadership to be a combination of service, commitment, credibility, skills and relationships.

In addition to conducting a series of field experiments in community leadership development, CLIMB has offered occasions where partners can share their experiences, reflect together upon the lessons of those experiences, and document and communicate those lessons more broadly. These periodic statewide CLIMB "Gatherings" provide opportunities to engage in intensive, collaborative learning sessions with individuals who are nationally recognized for their conceptual and practical knowledge about community leadership, including Harry Boyte, Arthur Himmelman, John McKnight and Gerald Taylor. CLIMB participants have had substantial responsibility for the planning and execution of seven Gatherings, and this work has constituted a

significant learning experience in itself. CLIMB has also encouraged and supported individualized leadership development activities for participants.

CLIMB is volunteer driven, with a thin support staff. The organization's democratic operating style, which emphasizes inclusiveness and deliberation, can be tedious, demanding and, at times, frustrating. There is the added challenge of working with volunteers who are spread across a large state and who have many other professional, community and personal responsibilities. Technologies such as e-mail and teleconferencing help, but extra effort, flexibility and patience are required to facilitate the kind of dialogue that leads to shared understanding and alignment of action. Challenging as it is, CLIMB has served as a source of valuable lessons in leadership. In many ways, CLIMB is a microcosm of situations faced every day by communities in which people attempt to identify issues of common concern and organize themselves to act collaboratively.

CLIMB's Community-based Initiatives

Community leadership training typically entails transporting a few designated "leaders" to a site for a workshop that administers a set curriculum over a concentrated period of time, after which the participants are returned to their communities, where they will presumably put into practice what they have learned. In contrast, CLIMB's approach to leadership development involves working with a broad cross-section of community members within their community

contexts and over an extended period of time, linking issues identified by participants with action and reflection, and sharing leadership and responsibility for the process and its outcomes.

Over the course of five years, CLIMB became involved in 15 community projects ranging across the state from Detroit to the western end of the Upper Peninsula. The projects are diverse in their community assets and needs, objectives and participant profiles. At the same time, they share certain key principles of collaborative leadership and a mission of developing the capacities of entire communities rather than those of selected elites.

In 1995, six community projects were awarded mini-grants of approximately \$5,000 each to create and demonstrate new ways to develop local leadership. Six additional communities received grants the following year. In 1997, CLIMB initiated a formal partnership with three more projects and provided supplemental support to an earlier project. Briefly, the 15 community-based initiatives are:

1. The Gratiot Woods Coalition. Residents of a 37-square-block neighborhood on Detroit's east side organized to clean up alleys and vacant lots in an effort to begin revitalizing what was once a thriving, close-knit community. The group has moved on to tackle other issues, such as housing and community policing.

2. U.P. LEAD, which covered all of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, brought together a multigenerational group of more than 300 participants to develop leadership capacity by addressing local issues that participants in each county identified and organized around.

3. Grassroots Organization and Leadership Development (GOLD), in Benton Harbor, provides training to community residents to help motivate them to become change agents within their neighborhoods. GOLD members went on to initiate a number of projects, including a communitywide "Open Space" event and a partnership with a local primary school to promote learning through engagement in the arts.

4. The Hispanic Student Leadership Forum, in the Lenawee Intermediate School District, engages high school students in leadership development through workshops, volunteer work in migrant camps and student-initiated projects. HSLF's success inspired the creation of an African American Student Leadership Forum.

5. Youth Enrichment Services (YES) works with up to 50 low-income youth annually in the city of Holland, developing leadership, career and academic skills. YES began as a one-shot summer project and evolved with student and parent involvement into an on-going, year-round program.

6. The Citizens Information Network provided Internet access and training to residents of rural communities in the Traverse City area. The Kellogg Foundation subsequently elaborated upon the model developed by this project and expanded it nationally.
7. Through the Local Cooperative Leadership Networks, members of all types of cooperative associations (residential, food, financial) in several Michigan counties meet periodically to learn from one another and from other cooperative leaders.
8. A leadership-related component of the statewide Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) network engaged Michigan farmers in dialogue, information sharing and innovation on the topic of sustainable agriculture.
9. 21st Century Leadership, a regional leadership development program in five counties surrounding Grand Traverse Bay, used two-way interactive television to offer to current and emerging leaders workshops focusing on local land use issues.
10. Community Builders is an urban leadership development program in Kalamazoo that supports opportunities to learn through neighborhood projects that participants design and implement.
11. Leadership Education and Development for Youth (LEAD for Youth), based in the Upper Peninsula town of Escanaba, is an after-school demonstration program for developing leadership among students in grades five through eight. Peacemaking, harmony and nonviolence are the cornerstone of all activities.
12. The Youth Education and Athletics (YEA) initiative. As a collaboration among grassroots organizations and public agencies in Jackson County, YEA creates programs, activities and events that develop the assets that children need to succeed, including family support, commitment to learning, positive values and social competence.
13. Planning for the Seventh Generation, a leadership development process, brings together Native American community leaders, artists, medicine people, researchers and others to share indigenous and scientific knowledge and establish a philosophy and strategy for sustaining communities and the natural environment.
14. The Grand Rapids Institute for Learning (GRAIL) is creating a network of local public, private and nonprofit organizations. The emphasis is on complementing one another's strengths through communication and collaboration.

15. Teen Leadership Development for Youth Violence Prevention is a partnership of Ingham County, the city of Lansing and CLIMB. The group's first CLIMB grant supported dialogues on youth violence and encouraged the development of community-based leadership to address the issue. A second grant brought together teachers, police officers, social workers and law enforcement administrators in collaborative workshops and supported a youth-for-youth drama group that performs skits in schools on such topics as peer pressure, gangs and substance abuse.

Community-based Leadership Development: Lessons Learned

What follows is a discussion of key principles of community leadership development based on CLIMB's experience. The discussion is organized around the three elements of community, leadership and development.

Our presumption is not that the principles articulated here will necessarily fit all communities equally well. In fact, our experience has demonstrated that there is no "one-size-fits-all" model for community leadership development. The ways that principles are applied, the relative emphases that are placed upon each and the particular practices that unfold are more likely to succeed when they reflect and are embedded in the unique context of a given community.

Furthermore, principles of community leadership development are not static; they are dynamic, with tensions within and among them. The tensions are not something to be resolved or "settled." Rather they are intrinsic to community leadership development—something to be lived with (or perhaps lived in), to engage constructively. That engagement, in turn, offers continual opportunities for learning, revitalization and renewal.

Key principles of CLIMB's working theory of community-based leadership and its development are:

Community


- Honoring community—respecting the importance of communities to human existence while recognizing the limitations of the traditional community and the realities of contemporary life.
- Valuing diversity—of age, class, gender, experience, occupation, culture and more.

Leadership

- Fostering collaboration within the community and with others; sharing leadership and responsibility.
- Intending action, not just theorizing about leadership.

Development

- Bolstering local capacity to address issues and strengthen organizations.
- Grounding the learning in issues of shared interest but not limiting it only to specific issues—being issue-based but not issue-bound.
- Learning through on-going reflection and evaluation.



Honoring Community

Leadership occurs within a particular social context and can be meaningfully understood and developed only with reference to that context. Community leadership occurs within the context of communities. Communities, in turn, are characterized by a reasonable degree of shared values and norms, common interests, caring and concern for one another and sense of shared future—even if not always in contemporary communities a sense of shared past (Peck, 1987; Daly and Cobb, 1989: 159-175; Kemmis, 1990; Israel *et al.*, 1998).

To list their descriptive characteristics is not to presume that communities are idyllic places where everyone agrees about everything. Nor is it to assume uncritically that “community” is always and everywhere admirable—or at least we do not assume that.³ As John Gardner (1990) pointed out, the traditional community conferred upon members an identity, a sense of belonging and a measure of security, but it did so at a cost. The traditional community demanded a high degree of conformity. It was often unwelcoming to strangers and all too ready to restrict its communication with the outside world. Intolerant, isolated and even hostile communities can surely be found today, as well.

It is one thing to acknowledge the imperfections and shortcomings of community; it is something else to deny altogether the existence of exemplary communities in contemporary American life, as some political theorists seem to do (e.g., Holmes, 1993), or to underestimate community as a source of power for positive change—particularly for communities that lack sufficient economic and conventional political resources (see Minkler and Wallerstein, 1997). The power of community is not merely something we hypothesize. It is something we have observed and experienced repeatedly, in our partnerships with residents of Michigan cities, towns and rural areas and in our own efforts to build, sustain and renew the community of CLIMB participants. CLIMB takes the “community” part of community leadership seriously. It respects the essential importance of communities to human existence while recognizing the limitations of the traditional community and the realities of contemporary life.

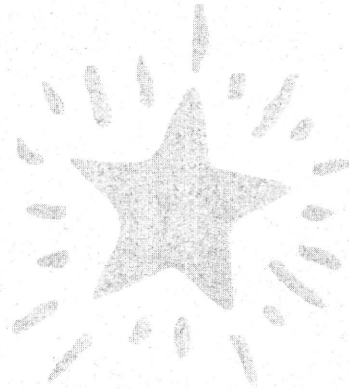
Clearly, most communities in contemporary America are more pluralistic, heterogeneous and open than those of earlier times, and they and their members are far more likely than their predecessors to operate within a broader environment of multiple interacting systems.

Traditional communities were almost always place-based—members lived and worked in close proximity to one another. Communities need not always be place-based, however. Nor, for that matter, is mere geographical proximity sufficient to create community. Shared interests and values are essential, but even they are not sufficient. What distinguishes an authentic community from, say, the National Automobile Dealers Association, is mutual caring and concern.⁴ “Care is, indeed, the manifestation of a community” (McKnight, 1995: x).

Despite all the challenges to their creation and sustainability, modern communities remain essential to their members. They provide the climate of caring, trust, collective purpose and teamwork that facilitates the identification and accomplishment of shared goals. The task of authentic community leadership is to guide the formulation and attainment of those goals so as to ensure not only that

they are shared but also that they are worthwhile. The challenge is to foster the alignment of interests and action required to achieve worthwhile public purposes while at the same time maintaining sufficient latitude within which individuals may pursue their various visions of the common good, as well as their private lives: “wholeness incorporating diversity,” to use Gardner’s (1990: 116) phrase.

To prevent wholeness from smothering diversity, community leadership seeks to preserve an open climate for dissent and nonconformity and for subcommunities to retain their identities as they collaborate in the setting of larger goals. To prevent diversity from shattering wholeness, community leadership fosters effective arrangements for teaching diverse groups to know one another and for coalition building, negotiation and mediation.



Community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

Many of the people involved in U.P. LEAD expressed a love for their community and a desire to see positive change within it. Some were long-time residents. Others, who arrived more recently, were seeking to connect through involvement in public issues. All shared the sense of pride that emanates from the rich history of the Upper Peninsula and the distinction of enduring isolation and long, cold winters. Many U.P. residents are fiercely self-reliant. At the same time, they genuinely care about one another.

When asked why he was involved in U.P. LEAD, one participant responded enthusiastically, "Because I love my community!" Another participant pointed out, however, that people are "very community oriented—but for my community, they'll say." In one county, for example, the east and west sides are divided not only by a river but by deep-seated bitterness that goes back a hundred years—to when "Crystal Falls

stole the location for the courthouse from Iron River."⁵ The situation in Baraga is similar. "L'Anse hates Baraga, and Baraga hates L'Anse. It's been like that forever," one resident said.

A number of U.P. LEAD participants said it is mainly the "old-timers" who feel this way, and most younger participants said they do not share the inter-community enmities. Old rivalries are still a hindrance to community development in these counties, however. As one resident mused, "I wish I could wave a magic wand and get rid of this east-versus-west crap."

U.P. LEAD was no magic wand, but it did bring together a diverse group of community members—young and old, bankers, teachers, at-home moms and many more—all to learn about leadership, to identify issues of common concern and to self-organize to address some of those issues.



Valuing Diversity

Diversity is “in” these days. Corporations hold seminars on it. University admissions and curricula are guided by a growing awareness of it. Government policy reflects changing understandings of it. Too often, however, “diversity” gets treated as a challenge, an obstacle, something with which an organization must cope. Are we in legal compliance? Do we conduct our affairs in ways that won’t offend certain individuals? Too often, “diversity” gets conceptualized solely in terms of race, ethnicity or gender and operationalized primarily in terms of ensuring that individuals representing the various “categories” are formally present in numbers that more or less reflect their proportions in the larger population.

CLIMB has found that in high-performing organizations and communities, diversity is neither ignored nor treated as a problem to be solved but is instead regarded as an asset to be valued and put to good use. Diverse interests, cultures and experiences are not something to be papered over or accommodated grudgingly—they are a rich resource. A diversity of insights and points of view helps inform community work and makes it more inclusive—and thus more effective (see Rivera and Elrich, 1995). Moreover, diversity is not about race, ethnicity or gender only but also about age,

social class, occupation, abilities and power—all the factors that differentiate us and make each of us distinctive and unique. Effective community leaders ask, “Who is at the table? Who is missing? How can we get them here?” Effective community leaders take care to comprehend the different ways that people express their interests and concerns from their various cultural, socioeconomic, educational and professional perspectives.

Valuing diversity does not mean accepting all differences, however. The “diversity” of life chances and economic circumstances that differentiate white, middle-class Americans from their African American and Latino compatriots, for example, are hardly worthy of celebration, let alone acceptance. Moreover, economic disinvestment in urban and rural communities alike has a profound impact on everyday life, resulting in disruptions of families, relationships and institutions, and this occurs independently of race. Valuing the diversity of cultures, points of view and talents ought not become a cover story for accepting or ignoring differences arising from injustice and inequity.

In the same vein, to say that diversity is a community asset is not to imply that utilizing it wisely comes naturally.

Diversity complicates, even if the com-

plicating is of benefit ultimately. As many organizations do, CLIMB began with a somewhat shallow understanding of diversity. “Diversity” was more or less operationalized as a set of bins that people could be sorted into—as in, say, “We’ve got a lot of rural people, so we need more Detroit residents.” Or, “We don’t have enough representation of Native Americans, or African Americans, or Latinos.” The intentions were good: the idea was to get some voices at the table that often had not been heard there before. As an organization, however, CLIMB had much to learn.

When the membership was convened for the first CLIMB Gathering, we soon discovered that most of us had relatively little experience working collaboratively with people of different perspectives, interests, beliefs and working styles. We learned, for example, that one of the most prominent challenges for CLIMB was to foster productive working relationships between, on the one hand, CLIMB’s academic members, with their own distinctive approaches to knowledge and learning, and, on the other hand, the non-academics and less formally educated people in the organization, who had approaches, experiences and vocabularies that differed from those of the academics.

We also learned at the first Gathering that not everyone was comfortable speaking and working in a group of 70 or so individuals,

many of them strangers. After a while, some participants took it upon themselves to explain this to the others and offered them insights into how members of different cultures approach meetings with strangers and handle discussions of controversial issues with people they don’t know well.

Through trial and error, CLIMB came to a better understanding of what “diversity” means and how to capitalize upon it in community work. We underestimated the dimensions of the challenges—but also the ultimate insights and opportunities that the diversity among participants would present. We doubt that there is any “silver bullet” technique that quickly enables groups of diverse members to collaborate respectfully and in good faith—or if there is, we haven’t found it. That said, we offer some lessons CLIMB has learned that may be of use to others:

Recruit for diversity. CLIMB has learned a lesson that the scholarly literature on political participation (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993) has also discovered: mobilization is crucial to getting people involved in public work. Many people remain uninvolved in the public lives of their communities simply because they haven’t been invited to participate, and they don’t know where to begin. It is important, therefore, not to assume that the diversity of your community will automatically show up when an initiative is convened but instead to recruit individuals and groups actively. In particular, invite the people who may not be self-starters but who reliably get

things done in the background while the self-designated leaders take the credit. Find out what formal and informal groups exist in the community and seek to include them.⁶

It takes time. As much as we resonate to the desire to see rapid, tangible results from community-based initiatives, we caution that building relationships, establishing trust and creating a climate within which different points of view are genuinely respected simply takes time. It takes more time yet to achieve conceptual and practical consensus among diverse stakeholders and to build constituencies committed to long-term community leadership development. The sheer passage of time is, of course, not the key factor; it is how wisely that time is invested in learning about one another, discovering the complementarity of interests and talents in the group, establishing group norms and expectations, and planning for real change.

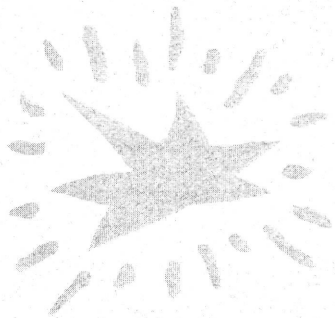
Listen. Many take for granted that an important aspect of leadership is an ability to articulate ideas effectively in public. Equally important—perhaps even more important—is the ability to listen and to learn from others, including those others who aren't just like yourself. According to Lappé and DuBois (1994: 240), "Listening and really hearing...is the basis of any successful organization,

whether it be a business, a community group, or even a family." In its work, CLIMB has endeavored to practice active listening: focusing on what is being said, learning to resist the temptation to formulate one's own response while others are speaking or to pass judgment preemptively. When it comes time for you to speak, take care to show how your comments link with what has been said before you.

Learn from people's stories.

Listening is important. What we listen to is equally important. People learn from one another and develop insights into each other's interests when time and space are provided for the sharing of stories. "Telling the stories" is more than an effective means of communication; when individuals have an opportunity to share their narratives and to see how their experiences relate to those of others in the group, it motivates both the storyteller and the listeners, and it builds trust (see Hancock and Minkler, 1997: 148-149). As Chrislip and Larson (1994: 163) put it, community members come to trust each other "because they know each other's stories."

Adapt for diversity. Some of the barriers to creating an effective working group of diverse members can be mundane but troublesome nonetheless. For example, students, young parents, older workers and retirees tend to operate on different schedules and can face difficulties finding common times to meet. Some folks have transportation problems. Others need to arrange for child care. Some people are reluctant to speak up in large groups,



while others prefer larger public settings to intimate groups. Inquire and think creatively about ways that the work of the group can be adapted to accommodate the varying needs of participants.

Youth are community members, too.

One of the more important lessons CLIMB learned about community and diversity concerned the place of young people in communities. Most places have programs that involve youth in some fashion. Typically, the programs grow out of a desire among adults to help young people by doing something for them. CLIMB has learned that although programs intended primarily to serve youth are valuable, a community's capacity for leadership is

best enhanced when young people are involved as partners in a community's public work rather than only as recipients or targets of that work. This means more than having a "youth committee" or a youth-oriented workshop. It means integrating youth into all aspects of community work. Youth are not only "tomorrow's leaders," they are leaders right now. They bring originality and energy to community collaboration. Youth ought to be involved in processes that affect their interests directly; they should be partners in decision making, given responsibility for carrying out important phases of work on particular projects, held accountable for fulfilling those responsibilities and celebrated for their efforts as collaborative community leaders.

Engaging Youth in Holland and White Pine

YES began as a program for low-income youth in Holland, Mich. It was initially based on a curriculum developed without youth input—and it showed: recruiting participants was difficult, interest fell off quickly among those who showed up and the program had limited impact upon participants or the larger community. The coordinator then asked the young adults to collaborate with him in redesigning the program. The revamped version was far more successful and has continued to grow and evolve.

Parental support and involvement were also crucial. Parents noticed that their children were learning more about how to get things done within the community—whom to talk to, how to address issues—and they decided that they wanted to know more about these things, too. The parents organized themselves and asked the YES coordinator if he would work with them to establish a parallel program for adults, which has since been established.

In the mining town of White Pine in the western Upper Peninsula, many residents felt defeated once the mine closed, according to Paul Saaranen, who was responsible for finding new jobs for

displaced mine workers. It was White Pine's youth who proved to be the catalyst to create change.

A handful of students approached Saaranen during a break at one of the early U.P. LEAD meetings. The students wanted to get an area at a local school resurfaced so that they could play tennis and basketball on it. Saaranen agreed to help. Together, they brainstormed, met with the school principal and held an organizational meeting. The students then addressed the school board and made presentations to local organizations to help raise the funds needed for the repaving project. The students went door to door talking with residents about the project and building community support for it. The repaving was completed in the summer of 1996, and the tennis and basketball courts are in active use. Although the project was relatively small in scope, it offered a tangible success at a critical time for White Pine. "These students represented one of the only positive forces operating within their community at a time when the local economy and general community attitude were severely depressed," Saaranen said.



Fostering Collaboration

Collaboration is the process through which participants come to identify their shared interests and values and create and implement actions to advance those shared values and interests in ways that they could not do separately.

Collaboration involves participants in planning, implementing and evaluating their actions together, sharing leadership responsibilities and decision making, and building bridges to other communities and organizations. It does not look to one person for all the answers or direction—it recognizes the leadership potential within each person and enables all “to contribute their gifts” to the collective enterprise (McKnight, 1987: 57).

The Essence of Collaboration

Gray (1989: 5) defined collaboration as “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.” Collaboration goes beyond cooperating to achieve shared objectives. It is more than establishing a division of labor, more than “working together” (Schrage, 1995: 32). Himmelman (1990) emphasized that at the core of authentic collaboration is a willingness to enhance the capacity of another for a common purpose: collaborators willingly yield a measure of

their individual control or authority so as to create a collective power that transcends the sum of its parts.

Consequently, authentic collaboration requires a fair measure of “trust, open communication, shared vision and shared values” (Vandenberg and Sandmann, 1995: 1), which in turn develop gradually through repeated interactions among participants or, more rarely, during a concentrated period of intense activity or crisis.

An ethical basis for community collaboration on matters of public interest is readily found in democratic theory (Pateman, 1970; Dahl, 1985, esp. pp. 56-62; Gastil, 1993). As a practical matter, we have found that collaboration simply makes good sense, particularly with regard to the kinds of complex, often ill-defined issues and challenges that communities face and particularly when stakeholders are primarily (or exclusively) volunteers. Collaboration broadens the informational and experiential base upon which decisions rest. It reflects and respects the diverse interests of multiple stakeholders and conveys community ownership of decisions and strategies, thereby enhancing collective responsibility for successful implementation. More than that, collaboration enhances the capacity of the community to engage in effective public problem solving in the future: it helps participants

develop insights into their own interests and how those interests intersect with those of others; it provides practice in the arts of public problem solving; it fosters productive relationships among members of the community and also between the community and other relevant actors—including public, private and third-sector organizations and perhaps other communities: it empowers.

Authentic collaboration is hard work. It does not happen automatically, and it is not always comfortable. Achieving worthwhile collective goals often requires staying at the table and negotiating differences. It requires an understanding and appreciation of politics and power relationships and a tolerance for conflict. It requires discipline and accountability. Gray (1989) cautioned that many well-intentioned efforts at collaborative problem solving end up as “exercises in frustration and often exacerbate rather than improve the situation because careful attention to the process of managing differences is neglected.”

Leadership for Community Collaboration

Effective collaboration thus almost always requires the active presence of skilled leaders. Chrislip and Larson (1994: xx) pointed out that the leaders who are most critical to successful community collaboration “are not necessarily the ones who know the most about the issues,” however, and “they are not the leaders who tell us what to do.”

Instead, they are the ones who help us work together constructively. They do not work through small groups of positional leaders or through interest groups. On the contrary, they are deeply democratic and inclusive. They have an inherent belief that citizens can work together to address their own needs....Any citizen has the capacity to practice collaborative leadership. The skills and concepts can be learned....

Community members in CLIMB's projects provided leadership by facilitating the group's “thinking through” of the issues they wanted to address, what might be done and what resources they possessed. The kind of leadership appropriate for community collaboration is thus different from that which appears most frequently in the literature on leadership.

Reviews of that literature have turned up literally hundreds of definitions of “leadership” (e.g., Bass, 1990; Rost, 1991). Actually, until about a decade ago, the literature focused primarily or even exclusively not upon leadership but upon leaders. Leaders, according to that literature, are men (and occasionally women) who provide an organization's “vision,” persuade followers to share that vision and motivate them to transform the vision into reality. The analytical emphasis was upon the personality characteristics, traits and styles of individuals who were “successful” leaders and upon what were presumed to be effective strategies for inducing compliance, exercising influence, exerting

power and achieving one's goals through others (e.g., Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Bennis, 1988). More enlightened conceptions of leadership made room for followers to assist in defining an organization's vision and the path to its achievement, but the spotlight remained fixed firmly upon the leaders, and a clear distinction was retained between them and the larger set of relatively undifferentiated individuals who constituted the "followers" (Burns, 1978; Conger, 1992; Kouzes and Posner, 1988; Kotter, 1988).

The most recent literature breaks with the past by considering leadership less as a property of an individual—the leader—and more as a quality of relationships among individuals in workgroups, communities and social organizations generally. That is, leadership is the process through which a group of individuals comes to develop a shared understanding of what they want to accomplish together and how they may accomplish it, mobilizes resources, engages in work intended to effect desired change, monitors its progress, and adapts its behaviors, resources and even its shared understandings to reflect new information and insights. In Ron Heifetz's words, leadership means "engaging people to make progress on the adaptive problems they face" (1994: 187). As Joe Rost put it, leadership is "an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (1993: 99).

The point of this new paradigm is not that leaders are unnecessary or outmoded—far from it. Nor does it advocate the elimination of formal authority and responsibility. Rather, the point is that social organizations are more likely to thrive within complex, continuously changing environments when they foster authentically collaborative practices in which leadership comes from many places within the organization, drawing upon the complementary assets of group members and not confusing leadership with formal authority. Traditional conceptions of leadership presume that the leader is capable of framing the right questions and providing the right solutions. In most modern settings, however, both presumptions are inevitably untenable: the question is not whether the "strong leader" approach will fail, it's when (Heifetz and Sinder, 1988). Collaborative leadership avoids trapping both leaders and constituents in unrealistic expectations.⁷

To drive home the distinction between traditional and newer conceptions of leadership, Drath (1996: 1) asks that we accept for the sake of argument the proposition that "leadership comes first and people called leaders come afterward, being produced by leadership." In such a world, if members of a group perceived that the group was not



performing satisfactorily, the impulse would not be to find some new “leader” who would then have responsibility for diagnosing the problem and prescribing a solution. Instead, group members would begin to ask one another, “What might we change in the way we talk to one another—in the way we think about things together?” Others might ask, “How can we work together differently so that we are all more on the same page?”

In such a world, the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the extent

to which people take responsibility for participating in leadership—not because some leader has figured out how to “share” leadership but because leadership is a property of the relationships people form when they are doing something together...and is therefore affected by the quality and nature of those relationships....In such a world, leadership is developed by developing the whole community of people so that they can participate more effectively in the relationships of leadership (Drath, 1996: 2).

Collaborative Leadership in CLIMB Initiatives

One lifelong resident of southeast Detroit told us, “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. It 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. Our current project is recruiting block captains who will then go door-to-door to conduct a survey of residents’ interests, ideas, resources and needs.”

Participants in one of the other CLIMB projects learned that not sharing leadership and responsibility for the

group led to its demise. One member of the group was “a natural leader—willing to take on a job...and do it responsibly.” This individual had the resources “to send out correspondence, get a room for meetings, whatever—and always offered to coordinate whatever needed to get done.” Most participants in this community project were already very busy, and so, as one resident admitted, “We were willing to let that one person do everything.” The ultimate result was that members came to lose interest in the project, and the group dissolved. A few months later, one of the members said, “We realized that we weren’t involving enough people. If one or just a few people do everything, the others fall away.”

Collaborative Decision Making

There is no one right way of making collaborative decisions that fits all groups and all issues. If, however, decisions are needed on matters that directly affect key interests of group members and that will require the endorsement and active support of the group to be implemented successfully, then decision-making methods that encourage deliberation, reflection and a meeting of the minds have much to recommend them. This is particularly true when an organization relies on voluntary partnerships. Consensus approaches to decision making range from the highly informal to the explicitly codified (Center for Conflict Resolution, 1981; Gastil, 1993). "Consensus" can be operationalized literally as 100 percent agreement or as something less than that. Whatever the particulars, the fundamental intention is to foster a collaborative rather than adversarial approach to achieving collective judgment (Eichler, 1995).

A collaborative decision-making process takes more time than using Robert's Rules of Order to run a meeting (the verb reveals much in this context) and basing decisions on a principle of majority rule. On the other hand, once a consensus is attained, it can save time down the road: when stakeholders are provided a forum in which their ideas and opinions are heard, seriously considered and perhaps incorporated into the action plan, they will be less inclined to resist or ignore it.

Collaboration Does Not Preclude Conflict

Conflict is as inevitable as it is healthy (in proper amounts) for communities: it serves as a source of insight into issues from multiple points of view, and it energizes the search for solutions that enjoy broad-based support. Effective community leaders understand and appreciate conflict. Furthermore, collaboration between less powerful groups and more powerful ones may typically be preceeded by a period of conflict in which the less powerful group establishes its legitimacy and claims its place at the table. For the Hispanic Student Leadership Forum to succeed, for example, it first had to get local school officials to agree to excuse students from some of their classes so that they could participate in alternative educational activities. Even though other youth groups routinely received such permission, some principals denied it to the Latino youth in their schools. Only through the persistent efforts of HSLF organizer Emily Martinez and the students against unreasonable resistance was the necessary permission finally obtained.

When a group finds that it cannot come to agreement on its own, it may be useful to bring in a skilled, neutral mediator. For example, in Holland, Mich., residents disagreed about the proposed siting of a new ice arena. The principal point of disagreement was not about the desirability of having an ice arena but about its location. A facilitator was brought in to

help the community develop a plan. The result was a design that moved the ice rink's location to the core of the city, a solution that ultimately received broad-based support.

Effective Collaboration Takes Time to Grow

Although it should be obvious by now, one point bears repeating: doing collaborative community leadership—fostering relationships, assessing community assets and needs, planning for change in a way that includes all relevant interests and voices, and building the leadership capacities of the broader community to sustain local efforts—takes time. The timetable is further complicated when the overwhelming majority of participants are volunteers, many of whom already shoulder substantial professional and personal responsibilities. CLIMB has not been alone in discovering this. In 1988, the Annie E. Casey Foundation launched “New Futures,” an ambitious five-year initiative aimed at preparing disadvantaged urban youth in five midsized American cities for successful lives as adults. In assessing their project, New Futures participants concluded, as did CLIMB, that the work took longer than they had anticipated.

Some of CLIMB's community-based initiatives proceeded more rapidly than others. The projects quite intentionally began at very different places developmentally, however, and so different rates of development were not only to be expected, they were explicitly part of the plan. Some projects (U.P. LEAD, for exam-

ple) evolved out of reasonably well-established pilot programs and enjoyed the active support of Extension and other mediating institutions in the community. Other CLIMB initiatives began more or less from square one.

Building Bridges Beyond the Community

Many times in a process of community collaboration, it becomes apparent that the group can benefit by looking outward, establishing mutually beneficial relationships with other communities, organizations and institutions to leverage resources and build capacity to effect intended change. An important benefit of having individual community-based projects networked together through CLIMB is that each could draw on the others for ideas and technical assistance, as well as upon the CLIMB organization and MSUE. For example, CLIMB projects in Holland, Lenawee County and Benton Harbor drew upon the expertise of CLIMB partners from outside their regions. These are the kinds of synergies that would not have occurred had it not been for the CLIMB experiment.

CLIMB's periodic statewide Gatherings also provided occasions for cross-community collaboration. For example, members of U.P. LEAD went to Gratiot Woods to learn lessons and share insights, and representatives of the Gratiot Woods Coalition traveled to the Upper Peninsula to participate in a CLIMB Gathering held there. Individuals and groups shared their lessons, challenges, resources and concerns at the

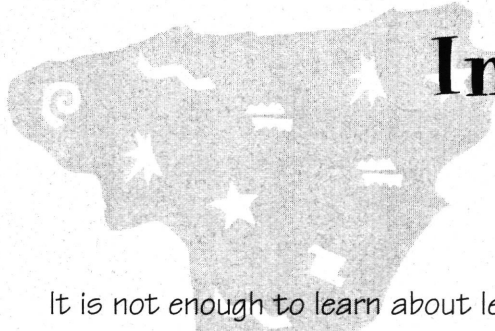
Gatherings. In their written evaluations of the seven Gatherings, from two-thirds to three-quarters of CLIMB participants agreed “very much” that the Gatherings connected them with others who are lead-

ers in their communities, helped to inspire and energize them, and enabled them to acquire knowledge they can put to use in their communities.

Building Bridges from Gratiot Woods

Members of the Gratiot Woods Coalition established a relationship with the local police through a community policing program. As a result, they have noticed a decrease in police response time to 911 calls. GWC also joined a network of neighborhood organizations in the Detroit area. Members have come to see that the collective power of neighborhood organizations to achieve common goals is greater than that of any one organization. Perhaps even more importantly, they learned that they are not alone and that the challenges they face—with city government and in the passivity of the majority of the community’s residents, for example—are not unique.

One GWC leader said, “Through our interactions with other communities, we came to realize that there are some things that the City of Detroit is supposed to be taking care of in our community that they are not, and we telephoned and had meetings with city representatives to try to get those things addressed—such as trash pickup, hauling away of refuse that was dumped in some alleys, demolition and cleanup of abandoned buildings, or getting electrical power and street lighting restored after a recent storm. We’re beginning to feel empowered, to stand up for ourselves and challenge things when we think we are in the right.”



Intending Action

It is not enough to learn about leadership—it must be practiced and developed through action over time. People come together to talk about issues, to make decisions together and to learn how to operate more effectively. But they also have a strong commitment to get beyond the “ain’t it awful” stage (as one CLIMB partner labeled it) to act, to do together and to make a difference.

Too often, community collaborations stumble when they reach the stage of getting results. As Chrislip and Larson (1994: 121-122) wrote:

Agreements reached about vision, problem definition, and solutions are not followed by well-organized, well-managed approaches to implementation and action. There must be a clear shift from a focus on planning to a focus on getting results. Some structure for managing and evaluating implementation needs to be created....Collaborative initiatives get results because participants take deliberate acts to achieve them.

Effective community leadership focuses on what can be done. Moving from doing nothing to doing something, even individually, is a first step in doing leadership. Leadership moves beyond the “good deed” when it engages others, develops relationships and motivates actions that mobilize the community’s assets. In that process, the leadership capacity of the entire community increases, a capacity that can be brought to bear on issues beyond the one that inspired the initial act. Conceived of in this way, the leadership capacity of a community parallels the concept of “social capital” as developed by Putnam (1993a) and the concept of “civic infrastructure” as used by the National Civic League.



Collaborative Action in CLIMB

Action and accomplishment were integral parts of every CLIMB initiative. In Gratiot Woods, a small group of residents originally came together to clean up their community—to clear out alleys, demolish abandoned houses, and plant some trees and flowers. Through its struggles to get neighbors involved and its frustrations with city bureaucrats, the Gratiot Woods Coalition grew into a group with a hard-earned reputation for getting things done. Now, when residents of the area call the Department of Public Works, they identify themselves as the Gratiot Woods Coalition, and they get action. The group mobilized residents to avert the planned closing of an overpass over a nearby freeway, and it has also become involved in a variety of neighborhood improvement and development initiatives.

In Schoolcraft County, in the Upper Peninsula, a dozen young people wanted to encourage their local newspaper to offer more balanced coverage of youth.

They offered leads for positive stories to the newspaper, but their suggestions were ignored. After discussions among themselves, the youth decided to launch their own publication. There was a fair amount of skepticism among both their peers and adults about their ability to do this—and not without reason: when the youth took their first issue to the newspaper publisher to get it printed, the publisher declined. Eventually, the group located a publisher in a neighboring city who agreed to accept the job. To date, the teens have published three issues, and now the local press is indicating interest in collaborating with the group.

The teenage members of the Hispanic Student Leadership Forum, located in southern Michigan, work with families of migrant workers during the summer. HSLF participants organize dances and ethnic and religious celebrations and serve as mentors and tutors for the younger migrant children.



Bolstering Local Capacity

Historically, community development has been concerned primarily with building the physical and economic infrastructure of communities.⁸ More recently, community developers have claimed social or civic capital as their domain, as well. Community development in this richer sense seeks to build—and build on—the health of families, religious congregations, and voluntary and civic organizations, as well as public and private sector institutions. It emphasizes developing capacities for action: how people gain the skills, relationships and self-organization essential for empowerment. Without that power—power in the root sense of being “able,” having a capacity to act effectively—communities are disadvantaged in grappling with issues important to their futures, and collective efforts—however well-intentioned—are prone to fail. For example, efforts at civic engagement to resolve certain environmental disputes (such as siting of toxic waste disposal facilities) have met with mixed results at best because of the gaps in power (information, expertise, organizational integrity, perceived legitimacy and so on) among the participants (Rabe, 1994).

Putnam (1993a, 1993b, 1995) has argued that face-to-face, organized associational activity—however nonpolitical its purpose—is crucial to developing the “social capital” necessary to sustain

more explicitly civic engagement. Others, while granting the value of social capital, have questioned the neatness of this hypothesis. For example, Boyte and Kari (1996) stressed that acquiring skill in the arts of politics entails exposure to certain ideas and practices that are distinctive to the gritty realities of politics and missing from—or even discouraged in—nonpolitical associational activity. Bowling leagues and choral groups are good things, but they can go only so far in developing one’s civic muscles, Boyte and Kari insist. Doing politics “means dealing with people who make us uncomfortable. It involves learning to think strategically, taking into account dynamics of power, interest, and the long-range consequences of one’s action” (pp. 23-24).

Leadership capacity building involves fostering relationships and trust among people and groups within the community as well as with groups and organizations outside of it. Identifying shared interests and values, negotiating differences, engaging in mutually agreed-upon action on issues of common interest, evaluating those actions, reflecting on what has been accomplished and celebrating those accomplishments are essential. The plan for leadership development is mutually determined, with participants sharing leadership and responsibility for the process and its outcomes; and the

process occurs within the context of the community—relying on local expertise as much as possible and taking place over the long term.

CLIMB thus rejects a pedagogy that focuses solely on training selected individuals in favor of one characterized by a continuing process of practical collaboration within a community of learning. Its community leadership development efforts are based on a model that is, to use McKnight's term, "capacity oriented, internally focused and relationship driven." A central feature of authentic community leadership is its emphasis on developing the leadership capacity of the community as a whole, rather than that of a small subset of designated "leaders." CLIMB's experience with bolstering local capacities for collaborative leadership brings to mind what David Mathews refers to as building "leaderful" communities. The operating assumption is that every person has the capacity for doing leadership and that leadership in a community setting is broadly distributed.

Community leadership development from this perspective involves creating a setting in which people come to see themselves as persons who have the power to do things—who see themselves as persons who can take responsibility for helping effect change in their community. Leadership is a subject and a prac-

tice with which many people are uncomfortable, however. To think of oneself as capable of exercising leadership, to claim power, is thought to be presumptuous or arrogant. For that reason, many people are reluctant to step into leadership. A lack of self-confidence and skills may further inhibit them. One U.P. LEAD participant told us that, at first, she did not consider herself to be a leader because she held no formal position of authority. As she came to understand that leadership need not be based on position and authority, however, she began to see that she could contribute usefully to the leadership of her community—that she was a leader.

Skill in what Lappé and DuBois (1994) call the "arts of democracy" does not come naturally—it must be learned and practiced, just like any other worthwhile skill. Community-based leadership development should thus incorporate education in the political arts. When citizens step into the public arena with some practical experience in expressing their interests unapologetically, understanding the differing interests of others and negotiating from positions of mutual respect, they are less likely to be disillusioned with the process of politics and more likely to be effective. Skill building can thus be a valuable element of a strategy for building community leadership capacity, particularly for communities within which certain relevant skills are not widely distributed.

Evaluations of leadership "skill-building" programs have generally found that, although participants may rate the programs relatively favorably

immediately upon completing them, the long-term effects are limited.⁹ That may be because such programs are attended primarily by members of the business community and other professionals who already possess many of the skills that are typically taught in such programs. In contrast, when those programs are brought to communities where such skills are not nearly so prevalent, the impact can be substantial. In CLIMB's experience, instruction in such things as conducting a meeting, designing a community survey, public speaking and related skills can be very useful. Skill-building workshops are most effective when members of a community participate together, the program is adapted to reflect local interests, resources and needs, and the instruction is tied to specific actions that participants take to achieve tangible near-term objectives.

Skill building by itself is not sufficient, however. Leadership capacity building is about enhancing the power of communities to accomplish intended change. That power is multifaceted. At times, it may be manifested as "power" in the classical sociological definition of the term: the ability of an individual or group to prevail against the resistance of others (Weber, 1978). Community power is not only and perhaps even not primarily of the classical sociological kind, however—what Mary Parker Follett (1920) referred to as "power over." Relationships built on trust and mutual support, collaboration that

draws on the contributions of all participants, and shared leadership that distributes responsibilities and learnings across a broad base create "power with" (French, 1986). As participants come to perceive and appreciate their considerable ability to effect intended change and as they undertake to plan together and put into action their plans, community capacity becomes manifested as "power to."

Inseparable from the work of building community capacity is the premise that community residents should determine the direction the capacity-building work will take and, correspondingly, that they assume their share of responsibility for the outcomes. It is important that the community control the process, not outside "experts"—whether those be consultants,

Extension agents, service providers or professional organizers. Similarly, if the capacity of the community as a whole is to be enhanced (not that of a select few individuals), then responsibility for planning, execution, evaluation and learning should be distributed broadly across the community. Effective collaboration needs leaders—but leaders who resist supplying solutions, who resist taking the work out of the hands of the broader community. A leader serves as guide, interpreter or stimulus of engagement, rather than as the *de facto* source of solutions (Heifetz, 1994). Consistent with this view, one of the oldest and most effective of com-

munity leadership organizations, the Industrial Areas Foundation, is guided by what it calls the Iron Rule: "Never do for others what they can do for themselves" (Industrial Areas Foundation, 1990).

That said, encouraging local responsibility ought not lapse into thoughtless anti-intellectualism or antiprofessionalism. As Labonte (1997: 92) pointed out, "Professional is not the antithesis of community." Expert knowledge and technical assistance are valuable resources. Denigrating them "reinforces a we/they polarity and ignores the formative role that respectfully delivered, useful, and usable services have often played in developing new community organizations" (Labonte, 1997: 92), and dismissing expert knowledge and guidance out of hand can promote what Ciulla (1996) has called "bogus empowerment."

The goal ought not be to sever a community's links to professional expertise and resources but rather to develop approaches that enable communities to capitalize upon them in ways that enhance local capacity rather than overwhelm or disable it. The goal is to establish more equitable and mutually beneficial power relationships between communities and professional institutions, not to sever them. Indeed, CLIMB's most effective community-based initiatives, from the standpoint of encouraging local responsibility and building local capacity, were ones in which communities succeeded in making wise use of the professional institutions and expertise that were available to them.



Grounding the Learning in Issues of Shared Interest

Community leadership does not develop in the abstract or “in theory.” It develops within the context of real people and their interests (Kieffer, 1984; Freire, 1993; Lappé and DuBois, 1994, pp. 37-44; Beckwith and Lopez, 1997; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Those interests may not—and should not—be exclusively narrow or selfish. Individuals may be “interested” in lots of things, including the well-being of their community and matters that do not immediately touch their material situation. In any event, successful community leadership necessarily involves working with people where they are, and that means recognizing and respecting their interests and concerns.

Community leadership development uses particular issues as occasions for action and learning. In contrast to issue advocacy, however, the objective of commu-

nity leadership development is to build capacity that transcends specific issues and that is sustained beyond mobilization around those issues. Issue advocacy and many traditional approaches to community organizing (e.g., Alinsky, 1969, 1972) are oriented toward winning against competing interests; the emphasis is less on collaboration than on securing a minimum winning coalition—“getting 50 percent plus one,” as a Michigan mayor described his conception of politics to CLIMB. Adversarial politics has its place, but it is not what CLIMB is essentially about. For CLIMB, community members are not regarded as targets to be mobilized in an effort to maximize gains for yourself or your interest group. Instead, they are respected as stakeholders with

interests and values of their own, to be listened to and to learn from.

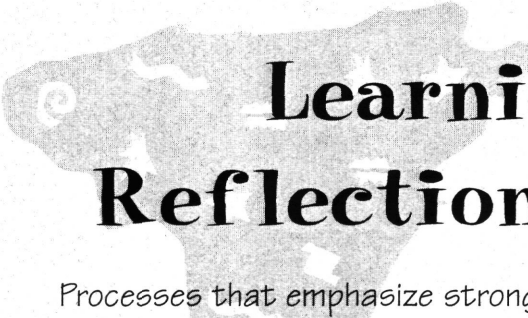


Participants' Interests in U.P. LEAD

Most participants in U.P. LEAD said they were motivated to join by an interest in a particular issue. For some, it was a concern for the community's youth. For others, it was improving relations among communities in different parts of the Upper Peninsula. For yet others, it was economic development.

A retiree talked about his desire to "give back" to the community, now that he's free from many other responsibilities. A married couple talked of their

extensive volunteerism throughout the years. "That's how we met," they said with a smile, and told the story of how they came to know each other through their involvement with 4-H. One person admitted that he was initially a reluctant participant. He said he joined because his boss told him he needed to get involved in community service "because it's good for business." "Now I'm hooked," he admitted. "This has been an incredible experience."



Learning through Reflection and Evaluation

Processes that emphasize strong connections among community members are necessary but not sufficient for realizing a learning organization. Action by itself is not enough. What is required is to constantly connect group and individual learning to the matter of interest—in CLIMB's case, community leadership and community development. To bridge the gap between doing and learning, built into every CLIMB project is the practice of reflection and evaluation, the opportunity to stop and think about what actions a group has accomplished and what it has learned as a result.

What Argyris (1982) called "reflection in action" is a vital part of the process in effective community leadership development (see also Senge, 1990; Schon, 1983). Often, participants engaged in community development work are so busy that they neglect to take the time to pause and think critically about what they are doing, and why. As a result, they may lose opportunities for growth and change that might make their efforts more effective. Collectively, the group learns

more when each person is conscious of what he or she is learning and shares it as part of a reflective dialogue (Freire, 1993; Vaill, 1996).

According to McKnight (1987: 58), "In universities, people know through studies. In businesses and bureaucracies, they know by reports. In communities, people know by stories. These community stories allow people to reach back into their common history and their individual experience for knowledge about truth and direction for the future." Embedding "lessons learned" within the contexts of the stories that gave rise to the lessons honors the stories and provides a way to communicate the lessons effectively to others.

Reflection involves more than the sharing of stories, however. It entails engaging collectively in dialogue to surface the lessons and insights of the stories. It involves not only listening but also posing questions, probing for meaning, "decoding" the implicit insights of the stories, to use Freire's (1993, esp. ch. 3) term.

Reflection in U.P. LEAD

U.P. LEAD's summary report describes that group's approach to reflective learning: "At the end of each day, we took time to reflect and talk about what we learned. We built in a six-month checkup so we could come together and again reflect on what we

learned and what had changed. Additionally, we built in the one-year follow-up where we could share stories from across the region and build a network of people committed to community in the Upper Peninsula."

Evaluation, as CLIMB interprets it, is an extension of critical reflection. Part of leadership is accountability, and part of accountability is evaluation. From this perspective, evaluation activity is useful not only for the information it produces but also for the contribution to community capacity building it provides: the process of assessing the work in which the group is engaged, evaluating fairly and non-defensively what has worked well and what needs improving, is a way to practice and build community leadership.

CLIMB's approach to evaluation shares much in common with the emerging theory and practice of empowerment evaluation (Fetterman, 1994). Empowerment evaluation, according to Fetterman (Fetterman, Kaftarian and Wandersman, 1996: 4-5), "is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination....It is designed to help people help themselves and improve their programs using a form of self-evaluation and reflection."

Empowerment evaluation is necessarily collaborative, and its success depends on motivating group members to participate in all stages of the evaluation and take collective responsibility for the evaluation's integrity. This approach demystifies the practice of evaluation and enables communities to deal on more equal terms with outside agencies and professionals that seek to "evaluate them." To be clear about this: the purpose of engaging members in the evaluative process is not to co-opt them or instill in them a false sense of providing input. The reason for engaging members in evaluation is that it enhances the organization's odds of accomplishing its current objectives and accomplishing them responsibly, and it builds community capacity to adapt to changing conditions in the future. Community participants should be involved to the greatest extent possible in the design and execution of evaluations so that the benchmarks are appropriate, the evaluation plan is feasible and the findings have local utility.

Evaluation need not be overly technical or formalized to be effective. More than anything, effective evaluation requires a climate that encourages honest and open sharing of judgments about what an organization has accomplished to date, how it has accomplished it and what in-course corrections will improve its performance going forward. Participants

identify what they have learned through both what has worked and what has not.

Finally, effective evaluation is not only collaborative, it is continuous. Evaluation is not something that happens at the end of a project only; it can and should be integrated into the everyday practices of an organization, particularly a community-based organization.

Evaluation in Gratiot Woods

The Gratiot Woods Coalition focused first on improving the physical appearance of their neighborhood. A series of initial efforts brought some good results but little in the way of follow-through. The group evaluated its strategy and concluded that, in view of the heavy demands a comprehensive cleanup would place on their time and the physically demanding nature of the work (most of the members are senior citizens), a change of plans was in order. Members decided to focus on smaller sections, two or three streets at a time, and to find out more about municipal resources that were available to assist them in the work.

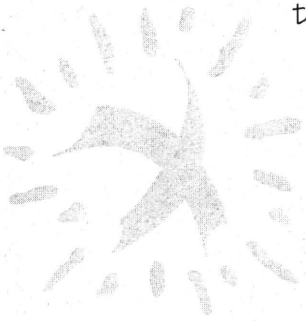
As a founder of the Gratiot Woods Coalition, Sr. Jolene Van Handel, observed, "What you come in with is not necessarily what you'll end up with. Our major objective hasn't changed, but the way of getting there has. We've learned to set realistic goals that we can achieve and not try to do too many things at once. Also, our experience has been that it takes time for an organization to develop credibility with community residents. That is gradually occurring, especially since GWC hosted the third CLIMB Gathering and through our distributions of informational leaflets in the neighborhood."



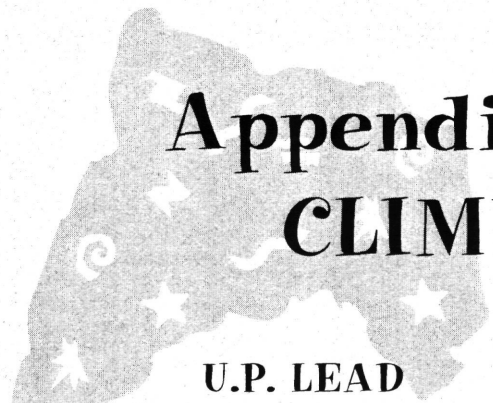
Conclusion

Cooperative Extension has a legacy of honoring practical wisdom and building communities from the ground up, MSU Extension's leadership played a key role in creating and sustaining CLIMB, and the Kellogg Foundation was generous with its financial, intellectual and moral support. Even under those favorable conditions, we learned that institutional change is, to use Max Weber's words, "a strong and slow boring of hard boards."

Externally, vested interests in existing practices and routines resisted change. Internally, CLIMB sometimes found it difficult at times to resist the impulse to minimize the risk inherent in trying new things by reverting to comfortable old ways—holding workshops, making presentations, providing funds and technical support, and in general "doing projects" as opposed to developing long-term relationships with communities and working collaboratively with them to build leaderful communities.



Nevertheless, with guidance from the literature on the emerging paradigm of collaborative leadership and through its community initiatives, periodic Gatherings and other activities, CLIMB has been discovering for itself, practicing and evaluating its own conception of what community-based leadership is and has experimented with a variety of practical approaches to leadership development. To some degree, CLIMB's organizational experiences and community-based projects confirm certain principles of community leadership as they have been articulated elsewhere (Himmelman, 1990; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Chrislip and Larson, 1994; Lappé and DuBois, 1994; Mathews, 1994; Boyte and Kari, 1996; Allen *et al.*, 1997). Beyond that, as a result of its practice and reflection, CLIMB offers something new to current understandings of leadership in community settings and how that leadership may be developed and sustained.



Appendix: Examples of CLIMB Initiatives

U.P. LEAD

Surrounded by lakes Michigan, Superior and Huron, the Upper Peninsula is the size of several eastern states and is united with lower Michigan solely by one of the world's longest suspension bridges, the 5-mile-long Mackinac Bridge. Copper and iron mining and the logging industry originally attracted settlers to the U.P. Many of the mines have closed in recent decades, however, forcing communities to search for alternative sources of jobs. Some have attracted new industries, particularly tourism, but others are grappling for ways to remain vital. Geography and climate present considerable challenges for "Yoopers." Most settlements are rural and remote, and travel in the region is time consuming and even dangerous on occasion. Winters are long and harsh, with snow typically beginning in October and sometimes lasting into May.

It was in this place of great beauty, wilderness and peace—as well as long, harsh winters and a scarcity of jobs—that U.P. LEAD was launched in 1994. U.P. LEAD is building leadership capacity in 13 of the 15 Upper Peninsula counties. It is community-based and community-driven and utilizes community expertise. Not coincidentally, U.P. LEAD is perhaps the clearest example of a CLIMB initiative that has succeeded in creating more

“leaderful” communities and demonstrating the positive impact that community-based leadership can have.

MSU Extension staff, government officials, CLIMB partners from throughout the state, and other individuals and organizations contribute their expertise to U.P. LEAD, but it is primarily the local residents who collaborate in identifying community assets, planning for change and then mobilizing appropriate assets to implement plans that address key economic, educational, environmental and other issues identified by the participants themselves. Prior to their involvement in U.P. LEAD, many participants had little or no experience in collaborative, community-oriented work. Some were single parents, some were unemployed, and some were semilliterate.

Over a period of 18 months, U.P. LEAD convened a two-day workshop on leadership development in each U.P. county or cluster of counties—15 in all. Each workshop was planned and coordinated by a team of local residents who recruited participants and invited local leaders to facilitate sessions in their areas of expertise. Workshops were held in community settings, and the focus of each was on issues of local concern. Most counties held follow-up sessions approximately six

months after the first meetings. Participants also planned and hosted a statewide CLIMB Gathering in 1996 and convened a two-day U.P. LEAD Gathering in March 1997. When asked afterwards what was most significant about the workshops, nearly every participant said it was the experience of sitting down with people from different backgrounds and different ages, each person having an equal voice. As one participant put it, "You see the world differently when you hear [other people's] perspectives."

Issues identified by U.P. LEAD participants included community apathy, the breakdown of families, substance abuse, encouraging volunteerism, homelessness, recycling, youth mentoring, land use planning, unifying divided communities and the lack of activities for young people. Some of the actions participants have taken to date include rehabilitating outdoor basketball and tennis courts, forming a community theater group to unite a divided county, talking to school groups to promote youth volunteerism, and encouraging students and parents to organize and stand up for what is important to them in the schools. Altogether, more than 350 participants have been involved directly in U.P. LEAD.

Gratiot Woods Coalition

At the other end of the state from the U.P. LEAD project, CLIMB has partnered with a community coalition in a neighborhood in northeastern Detroit. Gratiot Woods is a 37-square-block area situated just beyond the

boundaries of Detroit's officially designated empowerment zone and near Detroit City Airport. The neighborhood has been neglected by city government in recent years and has relatively little in the way of local businesses or economic resources. What it does have is a determined core of residents, an active and vital 4-H center and the inspiring presence of Nativity Church. The latter two institutions have provided public space and leadership to convene community residents so that they can identify their common interests and resources and devise and implement action plans to advance those interests. Sr. Jolene Van Handel, of Nativity Catholic Church, and seven other CLIMB partners from the Detroit metropolitan area have worked with the neighborhood coalition in its efforts. Wayne County Extension and a number of Extension staff members are active partners in the enterprise.

The Gratiot Woods Coalition began its collaboration with CLIMB by convening a series of meetings to raise public interest, elect new officers and establish a set of long-term goals. With CLIMB support, the coalition then invited Gerald Taylor of the Industrial Areas Foundation to conduct a four-day workshop on community organizing. The workshop, held at the Wayne County Extension offices and at the Gratiot Woods 4-H Center in 1995, involved more than two dozen participants, including neighborhood leaders, Extension staff members and CLIMB partners.

The coalition also hosted a portion of the CLIMB IV Gathering at an evening celebration in their neighborhood. One

GWC member said, "One of the most motivating things that happened was hosting the Gathering and having visitors comment on the nice gardens we had and the other resources and possibilities we had. When you live in a poor community, you can sometimes lose sight of all the assets your community has."

Not everything succeeds. The coalition operates within limits imposed by the advanced age and physical limitations of many residents, the substantial time and energy that most residents must devote to maintaining the well-being of themselves and their families, and the relative shortages of economic and social capital in the area. That said, GWC has drawn upon its enhanced leadership capacity to address key community issues—environmental, economic and intergenerational. GWC initiated a community door-to-door survey and conducted a spring flower sale to draw attention to the group and beautify the neighborhood. The coalition also organized several neighborhood cleanups, negotiated with the 4-H center and the state senator from the district regarding proposals for a new community center, and met with government officials about proposals for reconstruction of an adjacent interstate highway that could have had significant negative consequences for the neighborhood.

Despite some striking contextual differences between The Gratiot Woods Coalition and U.P. LEAD, the two initiatives share some important commonalities. Both are genuine community-based efforts in which local residents

determine the direction of the projects' actions and are primarily responsible for their ultimate success; CLIMB and Extension serve largely as resources and partners rather than as directors. Both projects focus on specific issues and goals as a way to achieve tangible outcomes in the near term and also to build sustainable leadership capacity in the communities for the long term. And both demonstrate ways that local groups can capitalize on the expertise and resources of Extension and other organizations in ways that bolster communities rather than overwhelm or undermine them.



Grassroots Organization and Leadership Development (GOLD)

The Grassroots Organization and Leadership Development (GOLD) project offers considerable promise of providing a third model of collaborative leadership development at a communitywide level and for effecting positive change on such key issues as housing, education and public health in Benton Harbor, Mich.

The challenges in Benton Harbor are daunting. A 1987 article in The Detroit News (Hornbeck, 1987) offered this bleak portrait:

Wisps of snow skip across Main Street in downtown Benton Harbor, unimpeded by the lone car that passes for noontime traffic. Once-bustling storefronts are now crumbling. The roofless Benton Hotel resembles a long-forgotten set of a Western.

Pressboard rectangles cover spaces where windows used to be.

The remains of shuttered or leveled factories and steel foundries that once put Benton Harbor to work rust in the industrial zone nearby.

Fourteen neat but time-worn schools stand amid these decaying city neighborhoods, serving 6,400 children from the families left behind in this urban ghost town.

With the lowest high school test scores and the highest dropout rates in the state, Benton Harbor has become Michigan's symbol of public school failure....

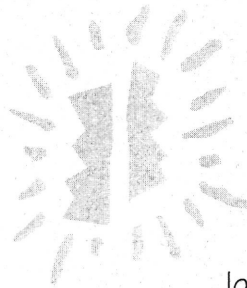
GOLD is an outgrowth of the Neighborhood Information and Sharing Exchange (NISE) program. Its objective is to motivate individuals to become change agents within their neighborhoods. NISE, in turn, is a nonprofit community-based organization whose purpose "is to enable citizens of Benton Harbor to bring about long-range institutional and community change." Founded in 1986, NISE has been involved in many projects and activities throughout the community, serving as a leader and advocate for city residents. NISE works on four main areas of concern: organizing, housing, education and health. The organization publishes a regular newsletter and sponsors forums for sharing information among interested Benton Harbor residents.

In its efforts to organize block clubs, NISE learned that many residents were interested in organizing

to improve conditions in their neighborhoods but were unsure about how to do it. In response, NISE members decided to offer leadership development workshops for local residents, and thus GOLD was established. In the fall of 1996, GOLD trained community members in effective communication, decision making, effective meeting structure, community organizing, visioning, conflict resolution and consensus building. MSUE staff members and CLIMB partners facilitated the sessions.

Following their training, several GOLD participants initiated and are currently involved in such community projects as building relationships among residents of

the various low-income housing complexes in the area, working with youth to build and repair bicycles, working with children to plant flowers and vegetables in vacant



lots, and partnering with a local elementary school to engage children in active learning through the arts.

Looking ahead, GOLD seeks to continue to develop community residents' organizational skills and build relationships so that, in the words of one local leader, Benton Harbor residents are able to "do something about the problems they talk about—empower the community to do instead of just complain." As another resident pointed out, "The community has been drained of many of its skills, and we need to find a way to get them back. This means going to corporations that have profited from our communities and convincing them to transfer some

technical skills and expertise back into Benton Harbor. This includes the academic community, too. 'Teach a man to fish,' as the saying goes."

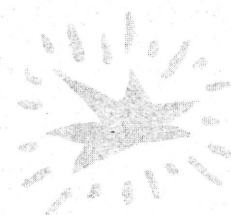
Hispanic Student Leadership Forum

The Hispanic Student Leadership Forum (HSLF) is a program of the Lenawee Intermediate School District (ISD). Begun in the early 1990s, HSLF is designed to help Hispanic high school students develop their capacities for leadership. HSLF's formal curriculum covers such topics as listening skills, public speaking, diversity training, financial management and approaches to leadership. The forum also arranges visits to local colleges and universities.

With support from CLIMB, a summer component was added to HSLF in 1996 in which high school students developed relationships with the local migrant community. HSLF members collected donated clothing for the migrants and tutored migrant children, and together they organized Cinco de Mayo celebrations and dances. Some HSLF members have been

trained as puppeteers by a 4-H staff member. The HSLF puppeteers put on skits that teach younger students about the value of diversity. HSLF members have also been actively involved in planning CLIMB Gatherings.

The students have gained skills and confidence through participating in the HSLF. For example, several students had never spoken publicly before joining HSLF. Through their participation in the forum, they acquired practice in public speaking—at the middle schools, at CLIMB events and in other public settings, including being interviewed in a documentary film about HSLF. Many HSLF participants who might otherwise have dropped out of school have graduated and gone on to college. A number of HSLF members have written articles for the local newspaper and participated in regional events and conferences. One graduate even ran for public office. In 1997, the HSLF model was adapted for a group of African American students in the Lenawee County schools.

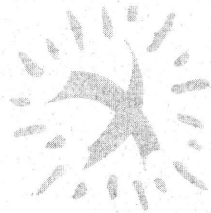




Footnotes

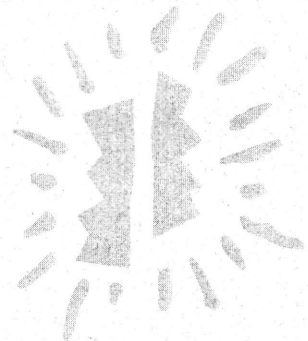
1. In a national survey conducted in 1990 for the National Civic League by the George H. Gallup International Institute and in a follow-up survey in 1994 by the Daniel Yankelovich Group, respondents were asked which institutions they trusted "a great deal" or "quite a lot" to solve community problems. The answers reflected an across-the-board loss of faith that occurred in the intervening years. Trust in religious organizations dropped from 57 percent to 40 percent; in voluntary groups and nonprofits, from 54 percent to 37 percent; in school systems, from 47 percent to 44 percent; in local media, from 34 percent to 24 percent; in local business leadership, from 32 percent to 26 percent; in state government, from 20 percent to 19 percent; in federal government, from 18 percent to 16 percent; in national business leadership, from 18 percent to 15 percent; and in political parties, from 15 percent to 11 percent.
2. Public disaffection with large institutions not only extends beyond government, it extends beyond the boundaries of the United States. Similar patterns have been found in many industrial democracies (Inglehart, 1997).
3. For an insightful discussion of the problems of an uncritical adoption of the rhetoric of "community," see Labonte (1997).
4. Shaffer and Anundsen (1993: 10) suggest that community is a dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people "participate in common practices; depend upon one another; make decisions together; identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships; and commit themselves for the long term to their own, one another's, and the group's well-being."
5. In 1887, after a series of questionable arrangements, the county seat was changed from Iron River to Crystal Falls. In the fall of 1886, a vote was to have taken place on the permanent location of the county headquarters. That never happened. "What transpired behind the scenes in the ensuing several months was not recorded and the facts may never be known. It is obvious, however, that every trick was resorted to by both east and west at this time to secure the county seat" (Hill, 1976: 57).
6. Based on their experience in working with communities, Beckwith and Lopez (1997) created "Ten Rules of Community Organizing." Rule #1 is, "Nobody's going to come to the meeting unless they've got a reason to come to the meeting." Rule #2 is, "Nobody's going to come to a meeting unless they know about it."

7. While emphasizing the distinction between a new paradigm that conceives of leadership primarily as a quality of social organizations and an old one that views leadership as a property possessed by particular individuals, it's worth pointing out that the new paradigm has roots that extend deeply into some elements of the leadership literature of this century, not to mention into cultures and practices that are perhaps as old as human history. In 1951, Cattell defined leadership as whatever or whoever contributes to the group's performance: it is the group's "syntality," resulting from its members and the relations among them (in Bass, 1990). Sherif and Sherif (1956) offered that leadership occurs within the scheme of group relations and is defined by reciprocal expectations between leaders and other members. For that matter, Boyte and Kari (1996) describe how residents of an impoverished neighborhood in East Brooklyn drew upon the Old Testament story of Nehemiah as a model for collaborative, community-based leadership.



8. As Daly and Cobb (1989) noted, community development has often been a means of achieving economic development. "Economics, not human growth, drives much of what today passes as community development" (Chambers and McBeth, 1992: 21). This approach contrasts sharply with the community development projects that were an essential part of international development projects for many years (Eicher and Staatz, 1984; see also Christenson, 1989).

9. Taylor (1997) and Bolton (1991) carried out field studies to test the hypothesis that leadership can be taught: provide the skills, and leadership will result. Taylor compared self-analyses of leadership competencies of individuals who participated in skills-based leadership training with those of persons who participated in issue-based or networking-oriented training. Bolton used pre- and posttests on individuals who participated in a leadership development program. Neither researcher found any significant effect of skills-based programs on leadership development.





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