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Lela Vandenberg and Lorilee R. Sandmann, and The 21st Century Leadership Development Task Force
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Community Action Leadership Development

*A Conceptual Framework
for
Michigan State University Extension*
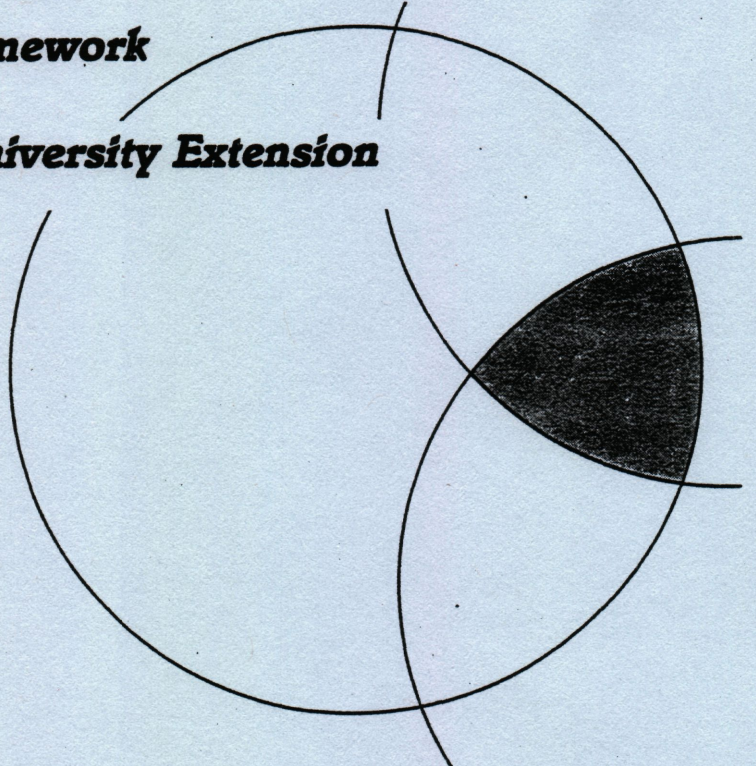
by

Lela Vandenberg and Lorilee R. Sandmann

with

The 21st Century Leadership Development Task Force

Leah Cox-Hoopfer	Jan Hartough	Joe Levine
Mary Edens	Oran Hesterman	Dale Mutch
Thomas Emling	Richard Hula	Dan Perkins
Frank Fear	Stephen Kaagan	Dave Schweikhardt
Lynn Gould	Terry Langston	Kathy TenWolde

March 1, 1995

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A Conceptual Framework

FOREWORD

Early in 1994, a task force was created under the aegis of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) charged with articulating a coherent conceptual framework to guide existing and future community-based leadership development efforts. The members of this task force, listed below, are university faculty members and Extension field staff members with expertise in community leadership development. They led an iterative process of discussions among university faculty members, Extension experts and community leaders. The ideas that emerged from these discussions form the vision, values, concepts and principles of the framework presented in this report. It is thus informed by a wide range of knowledge and experience. It is also informed by the literature, through a review of current theory and research in leadership and leadership development.

21ST CENTURY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Leah Cox-Hoopfer, MSU Extension, program director, Children, Youth & Families
Mary Edens, assistant director, Student Life
Thomas Emling, associate director, MSU North
**Frank Fear, professor and chairperson, Department of Resource Development
Lynn Gould, MSU Extension, East Central district community and economic development agent
Jan Hartough, MSU Extension, Barry County Extension director
Oran Hesterman, associate professor, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences
Richard Hula, professor, Department of Political Science/Urban Affairs
Stephen Kaagan, professor, College of Education
Terry Langston, Michigan Council of Foundations
Joe Levine, professor, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education
Dale Mutch, MSU Extension, Southwest district IPM agent
Dan Perkins, Institute for Children, Youth & Families
*Lorilee Sandmann, director, Community Outreach, Office of the Vice Provost for University Outreach
Dave Schweikhardt, assistant professor, Department of Agricultural Economics
Kathy TenWolde, MSU Extension, Ogemaw County community and economic development agent
Lela Vandenberg, visiting assistant professor, Department of Resource Development

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*Committee chair
**Consultant to committee

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Toward 21st Century
Community Action Leadership Development

A Conceptual Framework

*It is not leadership from any one person that is required,
it is an aspect of leadership each of us summons from
within. In this respect, the same qualities we have
sought in one person can be found distributed among
many people who learn, in community, to exercise their
'leadership' at appropriate moments. This occurs when
people are vitally concerned about issues or when
executing their responsibilities. Leadership thus becomes
a rather fluid concept focusing on those behaviors which
propel the work of the group forward.*

—John Nirenberg

I. INTRODUCTION

The implicit leadership philosophy that guided leadership development programs in the past is no longer adequate for dealing with the complex problems inherent in communities and organizations today. This implicit philosophy assumes that leadership rests in individuals who must be capable of inspiring and influencing others to solve problems and achieve goals. However, this "heroic" view of leadership is often based on a deficiency view of people, as Peter Senge (1990:340) points out.

> *Especially in the West, leaders are heroes—great men (and occasionally women) who "rise to the fore" in times of crises....At its heart, the traditional view of leadership is based on assumptions of people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change, deficits which can be remedied only by a few great leaders.*

A new philosophy of leadership is emerging. Dubbed "post-heroic" leadership (Huey, 1994), it is based on bottom-up transformation fueled by shared power and community building. It requires trust, open communication, shared vision and shared values. John Nirenberg's quote from *The Living Organization* (1993:198) eloquently expresses the fluid, distributed, community and action-oriented nature of leadership from this perspective.

This report presents a post-heroic view of leadership that is holistic: it is centered in groups or organizations, rather than individuals, and engages the group in heart, mind, spirit and energy. The driving forces of this philosophy are **community**, the heart of a group's leadership; **vision**, which engages the spirit; **learning**, which stimulates the mind; and **action**, which compels energy. From this point of view, leadership development shifts from individual-centered to collective-centered; from a packaged curriculum to an evolving, customized educational process focused on building relationships; and from discrete leadership development programs to leadership development embedded in concrete issues identified by the participants in the process.

Community action leadership development (CALD) can be defined as *the development of* **energized communities** *of* **co-leaders** *and* **co-learners** *committed to* **concerted action** *toward a* **collective vision**. This definition is elaborated in the form of a conceptual framework—a coherent set of values, concepts and principles centered around our perspective of community action leadership. These are intended to be the underlying architecture for community action leadership development, fluid guidelines resulting in any number of configurations determined by the unique organizations, individuals and situations involved in each circumstance.

The Role of MSU Extension

Several factors come together to position MSUE as the ideal leader of a new paradigm in community leadership development. These are MSUE's position in and relation to the larger university, the current state of leadership development within MSUE, and the climate for leadership development at the national level within the Cooperative Extension System-USDA.

As part of the university knowledge enterprise, MSUE is in a position to collaborate with faculty members and students engaged in community leadership development practice and research. This sort of intra-university collaboration in service and applied research fits well with the university's current commitment to scholarship and knowledge generation for social problem solving (McPherson, 1994). In addition, a report on University Outreach at MSU (Provost Committee on University Outreach, 1993) documents an evolving outreach orientation and proposes a definition of outreach or scholarship that cuts across the three missions of the university—teaching, research and service.

Founded on a long history of leadership development programs within MSUE, at least eleven current state-level initiatives are related to leadership development. These are listed in Appendix 1. In addition, many more regional or county-based leadership development efforts are currently operating. In 1992 alone, a survey of leadership development programs in Michigan (MSUE Leadership Academy Task Group, 1992) reported that 26 county Extension offices had conducted programs for a wide range of audiences. In addition, 22 counties reported that leadership development programs were conducted by other organizations in the same year, some in collaboration with MSUE. Many of these efforts are on-going and many are currently trying to put into practice a community-centered approach to leadership development, exemplifying the values and principles outlined in the framework proposed here. (See Appendix 2 for examples of such efforts.)

MSUE's focus on leadership development reflects similar interest at the national level. The 1990 national study on Extension leadership development (Michael, Paxson and Howell) reported that "on average, staff spent seven hours per week trying to develop leadership skills among clientele, i.e., 15% of their work time." However, they also found that Extension staff members tended to teach skills associated with stable social order and similarity in social values, working within groups and knowing how to do things right (transactional leadership). There was an apparent emphasis on *doing* over *understanding*. Further, the study found the Extension staff gave less emphasis to dealing with change, diversity and conflict, transformational or visionary leadership, and those situations involving knowledge, perception and attitude.

Two new documents provide evidence of continued interest yet redirection of leadership development efforts within the Cooperative Extension System-USDA. *For the Common Good: A Strategic Plan for Leadership and Volunteer Development* (1994) states that a goal is **community-based, action-oriented programing**, and two out of five themes presented include public well-being and community ownership and civic action. These themes and goal are inherent in the framework presented here. Second, the 1994 *Strategic Framework for the Future of the Cooperative Extension System* also refers to educational processes that build and foster vital and caring **communities** and emphasizes **shared leadership.**

MSUE, therefore, has both an opportunity and a responsibility. It has the opportunity to take advantage of its unique position within MSU and ES-USDA to usher in a new era in leadership development, one characterized by community, learning, vision and action. It also has a responsibility—given its history and current work with leadership development and its mission of extending knowledge to citizens who need it—to embrace, model and share this new, people-centered paradigm.

Need for a Conceptual Framework

The need to bring coherence to MSU's outreach efforts in community action leadership development was expressed in various ways during the information-gathering phase of the task force's work. Some felt that leadership development programs suffered from the lack of a clearly articulated unifying vision. Others cited a lack of evidence of lasting change resulting from leadership development programs and the need for long-term evaluations. Some criticized leadership development programs generally for often being too short-term, top-down and generic, and for a focus on personal enrichment rather than the systematic development of groups wanting to bring about change.

All of these issues point to the need for MSUE to become a **learning organization**—an organization whose members reflect upon and learn from their own and one another's experiences.

Learning in organizations means the continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge—accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose.

(Senge et al., 1994:49)

In this case, MSUE needs to systematically learn from and build on its past, present and future experience with leadership development. Having a vision and a value-driven framework will stimulate and guide this learning process.

A coherent, unifying framework for MSUE community action leadership development programs can thus be projected to have several beneficial impacts. It can provide:

➤ A common language that MSUE community action leadership development program planners and participants can use to share plans, experiences and results with one another.

➤ A framework for assessing the impacts of the many variations of community action leadership development programs, and for identifying factors instrumental in creating lasting change.

➤ A stronger basis from which MSUE faculty and staff members can share experiences and establish partnerships with others, both at MSU and in Michigan communities, engaging in community action leadership development.

A New Leadership Paradigm

In some of the most innovative organizations in America today, replacing an individual-centered leadership philosophy with one centered on community building and shared leadership has met with great success. Reasons given for this change are the bewildering complexity of problems that defy easy solutions and the plethora of information available. Leaders need to rely heavily on the knowledge and experience of each member of their organizations. Added to this is the growing dissatisfaction of people working in "command and control" hierarchical organizations. People are no longer content to live in a democracy while spending much of their time in the repressive, autocratic systems of their organizations. As a result, future-looking organizations are undergoing a leadership revolution for their own health and survival.

This revolution has been described in the literature as "the new leadership paradigm" or "the post-industrial paradigm," responding to the dawn of the "post-managerial" or "information era." From the perspective of this new paradigm, the best hope for dealing with complex problems is to rely on the people closest to them. The answers are in the minds and hearts of people at the local levels who have to own the solutions (Oakley and Krug, 1993).

Table 1 presents a summary of assumptions from the old paradigm (1) and the new paradigm (2). These assumptions are pictured as two ends of a continuum. It is probable that leaders and groups range from one end of the continuum to the other on each of the variables, depending on the needs of the group or the situation and the personalities and abilities of the leaders.

To be fully immersed in the new paradigm requires a transformation in three arenas: the personal practice of, conceptual thinking about and organizational application of leadership.

In the **personal practice** of leadership, the integration of spirit and leadership is viewed as essential (Conger, 1994; Hawley, 1993). Parker Palmer (1994), for example, describes how one's inner life projects positively or negatively on one's leadership. The integration of our spirituality can also help lift us beyond ourselves and our narrow self-interests to see our deeper connections to one another and the world.

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Table 1:   Assumptions about organizational and community leadership from two paradigms.

Relational Variables	Paradigm 1 ⟵⟶	Paradigm 2
Leadership	single, one head	shared, dispersed, roving
Leader roles	manager, boss, director	coach, mentor, steward, facilitator, community builder
Member roles	subordinates, followers dependent	collaborators, partners empowered
Leader-follower relationship	control, direct, patronize	empower, develop, co-learn
Organizational Variables	⟵⟶	
Vision	developed by the leader who persuades, inspires, sells	developed collaboratively, owned by the members
Organizational culture	production, compliance, self-interest, homogeneity	community, commitment, service, diversity
Structure	hierarchy; clear boundaries	networks; overlapping, changing boundaries
Governing force	policies	vision, values
Operational Variables	⟵⟶	
Mode of action	problem-solving, reactive, adaptive	creative, inventive, learning-oriented, future-oriented
Action strategy	plan -- do	engage in group learning cycle: analyze, act, reflect
Decisions	top-down, consultive	democratic
Leadership Development	⟵⟶	
Purpose	to develop leader's skills, traits and behaviors in order to influence others	to learn to facilitate and build community, and to develop, educate and empower others

In our **conceptual thinking** about leadership, a need exists for a fundamental shift in thinking to change deep-seated mental models about leadership (Senge, 1990; Oakley and Krug, 1993). This shift involves building relationships of mutual influence among collaborators working for mutual goals (Rost, 1993 and 1991; Nirenberg, 1993). As Peter Block (1993) puts it, we need to choose partnership over patriarchy, empowerment over dependency and service over self-interest.

A growing number of authors are describing **organizational applications** of this new paradigm. Peter Senge (1990 a and b; Senge et al., 1994) and Fred Kofman (Kofman and Senge, 1993) describe "learning organizations" and define leadership as community building for organizational learning and future creation. John Nirenberg (1993) describes the "living organization" based on an "intentional community" of flattened hierarchy and a lateral network of power centers. Ed Oakley and Doug Krug (1993) describe "renewing organizations" in which leaders serve and empower members to create continuously renewing, change-friendly organizations. Finally, Jill Janov (1994) describes the "inventive organization" as multiple relationships in action, organized in flexible, flatter structures and based on partnerships, self-regulation and interdependence.

Although various authors differ in their scope and focus when describing the personal, conceptual and organizational transformations required by the new leadership paradigm, there are at least three common themes: shared leadership, leadership as relationship and leadership in community.

The idea of **shared leadership** is variously termed dispersed, roving, distributive, collective or group-centered leadership, and organizations are referred to as "leaderful." The assumption is that all of us have leadership qualities that can be pooled and drawn upon as needed when working with others on vital common issues. The related theme, **leadership as relationship**, revolves around the idea of a network of fluid relationships and is built on the concepts of empowerment, participation, partnership and service.

The third theme, **leadership in community**, envisions community as the conceptual setting in which the leadership relationship takes place. "Communities of commitment" (Kofman and Senge, 1993) represent a shift from competition and self-centeredness and provide both a model for organizing and a haven for the expression of spirituality, the practice of new (sometimes frightening) ways of relating, and the promotion of important values such as trust, commitment, sharing and ownership.

This literature review formed a complementary backdrop for our discussions and focus groups. It is thus from a synthesis of many ideas from many sources that the following framework has evolved.

Definitions and Assumptions

The framework is based on certain assumptions about community, community action leadership and community action leadership development that are embodied in the following definitions.

Community: a group or organization committed to the well-being of its members, united by common goals or interests and a spirit of identity and loyalty.

Community action leadership: an empowering network of leadership relationships in a group or organization committed to the well-being of its members, united by common goals or interests and a spirit of identity and loyalty.

Community action leadership development: the development of energized communities of co-leaders and co-learners committed to concerted action toward a collective vision.

Several assumptions regarding community and community action leadership need to be made explicit. First, "community" does not necessarily mean geographic community. In many cases, a community is a group or organization that develops a vision centered on a shared concern or issue.

Second, although a community is ideally close-knit and aims for consensus about a common vision or goal, conflict and power struggles are inevitable. Building on the work of M. Scott Peck and others, Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) describe five phases of community development: 1) excitement—getting high on possibilities; 2) autonomy—jockeying for power; 3) sta-

bility—settling into roles and structures; 4) synergy—allowing self and group to mutually unfold; and 5) transformation—expanding, segmenting or disbanding. The second stage, jockeying for power, is also called chaos. It can be a period of intense conflict, struggle and seeming chaos. As they go through this phase, successful communities develop constructive ways to manage and resolve conflict and diligently practice open communication. These skills enable community members to deal positively with conflict as it arises throughout all phases of the community's life.

Other assumptions regard the domain of the framework, which can be pictured as the intersection among the related endeavors of community development, organizational development and leadership development (Figure 1). **Community development** is the nurturing of a group's spirit and the growth of its commitment, identity, loyalty and willingness to work for a common goal. **Organizational development** is the increase of a group's capacity to engage in concerted and effective action to achieve group goals. **Leadership development** is the growth of individuals' capacities to facilitate community development and organizational development. From this perspective, community action leadership development is leadership development for community and organizational development. It aims to develop individuals' abilities to build both a group's community spirit and its capacity to engage in effective action.

Community organizing can be distinguished from community development in two ways. First, it is a method of raising concern about a problem or issue and recruiting people to join together to deal with it. In this process, community may or may not be developed. After a group has dealt with the problem or issue that was its impetus for organizing, it may either dis-

band or go on to the work of building community and creating a larger collective vision.

Community organizing also involves the development of political strategies to overcome opposition to a group's goals. As a group is engaging in action to achieve a vision or goal, it may be hindered by others with whom community building may not be possible. It is then necessary to analyze the situation and organize the community to astutely counteract opposition.

The rest of this report contains an elaboration of the framework, recommendations for MSU's role in community action leadership development, and recommendations concerning professional practice and other elements necessary for the sustainability of community action leadership development. Case study vignettes that illustrate how the vision and values articulated here are being put into practice are appended to the report.

The framework is presented in four parts. The first describes the value-based process that forms the outline of our view of leadership. The second presents conceptual elements related to each of the action-based values. The third examines the roles of designated leaders in promoting a community action leadership process. The fourth section presents methodological principles, applying the community action leadership values and process to community action leadership development in terms of both method and content.

It is important to note that the conceptual framework is **not** a prescription. It is also not a program with predetermined content, nor is it a how-to manual or an iteration of current practice. It **is**, rather, a perspective, a set of ideas, a way of thinking—the architecture underlying multiple variations of community action leadership development. Its purpose is to provide a vision-driven, value-based **guide** for thinking about, working in and organizing community action leadership development.

Figure 1: The domain of CALD

II. A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY ACTION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (CALD)

The Four Driving Forces

Four forces drive **the development of energized communities of co-leaders and co-learners committed to concerted action for a collective vision.** These four forces are: community, vision, learning and action.

Community is at the heart of our view of leadership: people working together in a learning community, sharing leadership roles. Community members work to develop trust and respect, appreciate one another's diversity and resolve conflicts constructively. As a sense of community is built, members become strands in a multidimensional web of relationships.

Vision, which engages the spirit, gives meaning and purpose to community action, and provides a boundary within which community members freely exercise creativity and initiative in working to make a vision the reality. Margaret Wheatley likens effective organizations to chaotic mathematical systems, having order without predictability. In such systems, leaders govern with **meaning**, not rules and structures. Shared vision, values and beliefs form the boundary that people use to shape their behavior and create coherence. "The leader's task is to communicate them, to keep them ever-present and clear, and then allow individuals in the system their random, sometimes chaotic-looking meanderings" (Wheatley, 1993:133).

Learning, stimulating the mind, is the third essential force driving our view of leadership. One of the aims of leadership is the creation of a learning community "...where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 1990:3). Learning communities engage in "learning disciplines" that involve developing collective thinking skills and expanding individual and group capacities to create change.

Action, compelling energy, is also central. In answering the question "leadership for what?" we reply: leadership for doing, achieving, changing, obtaining something for a mutually determined good. People get involved because they want to make a difference in their community lives. Some examples of communities and their actions toward collective visions are: neighbors forming nighttime brigades to counteract drug trafficking and prostitution, parents of handicapped children working to develop respite-care programs, a rural county's futuring group devising strategies to influence land-use policies, or a regional group of small business owners developing economic and educational strategies for tourism development.

These four driving forces, combined with three other elements, form a set of core values. These are explained next.

Action Values and the Community Action Leadership Process

Embedded in the community action leadership development vision are six main concepts: energy, community, co-leadership, co-learning, action and collective vision. Weaving these all together is a seventh concept, communication. These can be reordered and restated as **action values:**

➤ **Visioning together.**
➤ **Leading together.**
➤ **Learning together.**
➤ **Building community.**
➤ **Developing energy.**
➤ **Acting together.**
➤ **Communicating.**

When these values are acted upon, they become operationalized and form an interrelated process of community action leadership, as shown in Figure 2, with each action value reinforcing and being reinforced by others. The whole process takes place within an environment of open, free-flowing communication, bounded by a shared

Figure 2: The community action leadership process

Visioning together

VISION VISION

Acting together

COMMUNICATION COMMUNICATION

Developing energy

Leading together Learning together

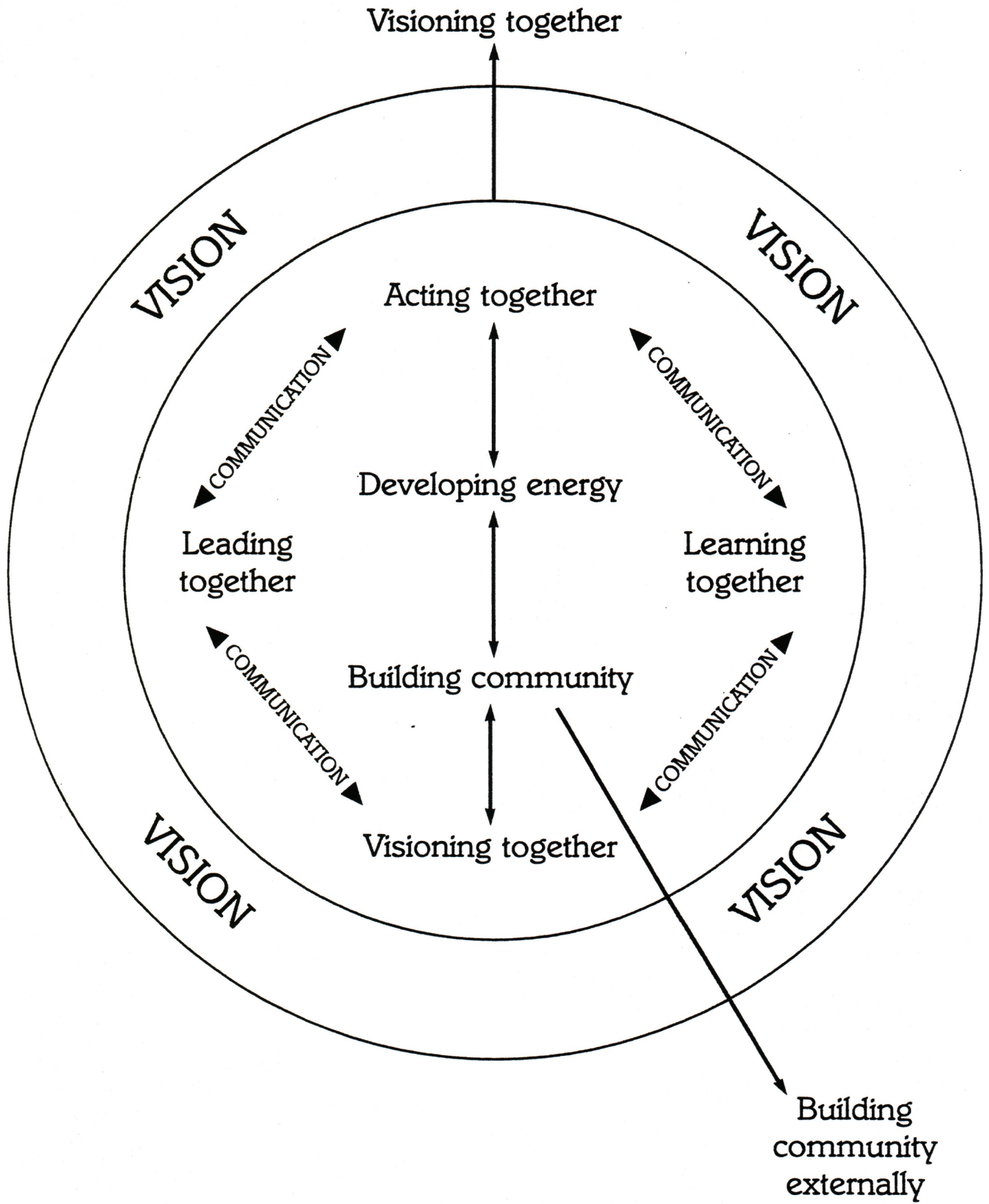COMMUNICATION COMMUNICATION

Building community

Visioning together

VISION VISION

Building community externally

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vision. Figure 2, read from the bottom up, shows a single phase of the process. This is not a linear process but a system of multidimensional and fluid interrelationships. Actions can happen simultaneously or repeatedly, and the whole process is one phase of a continuous cycle or spiral.

Actions with double arrows reinforce each other. For example, developing a vision or plan while involving members in sharing leadership roles and tasks increases its relevance and members' sense of responsibility for it. Also, developing a vision or plan involves people learning together about relevant environmental conditions. In turn, the knowledge gained helps develop the vision.

Another example: as people vision and plan together, they build community—feelings of identity, unity and commitment. As the community gets stronger, the vision and plans become more grounded in the reality of the community. Furthermore, sense of community is directly related to power—as feelings of identity, unity and commitment pull a community together, its power to act concertedly and coalesce the talents and abilities of individual members grows. As they develop more power, their actions together are more effective. And as their actions achieve goals and move them closer to their vision, their power to continue the process increases.

Unidirectional arrows indicate a more one-way influence. For example, by both leading together and learning together, members of a group build a sense of community. They also increase their power to act together effectively.

This process or action cycle can happen at various levels. In fact, it may **have** to happen at different levels for a community's vision to be realized. One level is within a particular community, either organizational or geographic. Another level may involve the collaboration of a number of stakeholders forming partnerships or coalitions. These partnerships would also engage in this action-focused community-building process.

Related Concepts—Filling in the Framework

Each of the seven action values can be described in terms of a set of related concepts (Table 2).

Visioning Together

Vision. Having a vision for the future is an essential starting point for leadership. A vision provides the border or parameters within which action takes place. It helps group members identify shared values, rise above self-interest and maintain motivation. It also gives deeper meaning and purpose to their lives and helps ensure that their efforts make a difference. Finally, it provides a basis for engaging in ethical reflections and evaluating the morality of proposed actions.

Shared vision. There are various ways to engage in a visioning process. The vision may be cooperatively developed or originate with one person who communicates it. In either case, the group must embrace the vision.

Future focus. This refers to a group's ability to look at its situation holistically and in the long term. It involves connecting the present and the past to a desired future. In this process it is important to identify and build on what is right and to avoid a pathological, "what's wrong" approach.

Inspiration. Developing a vision may require inspiration. But inspiration has another function—inspiring others to believe in the vision. This could be considered cheerleading—encouraging others to keep caring and supporting their efforts in various ways.

Leading Together

Leaderful organizations. In leaderful organizations, leadership roles and responsibilities are shared and distributed as widely as possible. Everyone has a responsibility for leadership.

Transformational leadership. To have leaderful organizations, each member must be challenged to develop his/her leadership potential. Through transformational leadership (Bass, 1990 and 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1994), a designated

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Table 2: Action values and related concepts.

Visioning together	Building community	Acting together
vision	sense of community	vision to action
shared vision	relationships	action process
future focus	diversity	teamwork
inspiration	conflict resolution	facilitation
	levels of community	

Leading together	Developing energy	Communicating
leaderful organizations	collective energy	interpersonal communication
transformational leadership	organizational development	dialogue
trust	ownership	networking
open communication		information

Learning together

knowledge
learning in context
learning cycle

---

leader inspires, teaches, models, delegates and challenges members to invest themselves wholeheartedly in the work of the group. As members develop their skills and share leadership, both individuals and the group become transformed.

Servant leadership. In leaderful organizations, designated leaders practice humility. They are servants first and then leaders (Greenleaf, 1970; Graham, 1991 and 1988). They serve only to build others' capacity for problem solving, not to "do for" them (Lappe and Du Bois, 1994).

Trust. Sharing leadership requires a high level of trust among group members. This involves valuing and respecting the unique contributions and strengths of each individual. A designated leader earns trust by putting the group's interests first and by caring about and promoting the growth and participation of each member.

Open communication. Trust is developed through free and open communication. Incoming information is shared frequently, and decisions and plans are made and discussed openly. Developing communication vehicles is an important task.

Learning Together

Knowledge. Effective community action leadership is based on knowledge. In a community action leadership process, group members use knowledge to provide substance to a vision and inform action. Thus knowledge is a valuable resource.

Learning in context. Group members bring knowledge to the community action leadership process, but more importantly, they build knowledge **through** the process. Learning in context, by doing and experiencing, is a powerful way for members to develop confidence and skills, as well as an understanding of the many factors that influence any community action leadership process.

Learning cycle. For the knowledge gained through experience to be used effectively, the learners must reflect on what happened. Reflection is a crucial step in the plan–do–reflect learning cycle. In the community action leadership process, members plan an action, carry it out, and then reflect on the results to inform a new set of plans.

Building Community

Sense of community. A major purpose of community action leadership is to create a caring community in which members can feel centered, anchored and connected. Community has been called the heart of leadership and the heart of action. Sense of community is reflected in feelings of identity, unity and commitment among group members.

Relationships. A sense of community depends on strong intragroup relationships. These are forged by visioning, leading, learning and acting together.

Diversity. Diversity within a group is a valuable resource. Members of diverse groups can learn to understand, accept, appreciate, value and build on their diversity. All are enriched by the broadened perspective this brings.

Conflict mediation. Finding common ground in a diverse group is a challenge. To keep the complexity of relationships within a group constructive requires well developed interpersonal skills. Especially important are skills for openly examining conflict and developing constructive mediation strategies when conflict seems unresolvable.

Levels of community. Forming communities externally is essential for effective community action leadership efforts in today's complex world. These external communities take the form of partnerships and coalitions, which form another level of a community action leadership process.

Developing Energy

Collective energy. Collective energy is a group's ability to develop or obtain the resources necessary to achieve its goals. This energy or power is centered in the group rather than in a position or person. Through it, groups become self-directed, self-determined, resource-rich communities.

Organizational development. To develop collective energy, groups must focus on organizational development rather than leader development. Building the organization's capacity to achieve its goals means developing broad-based, group-centered leadership and ensuring group ownership of all activities.

Ownership. Group ownership is fostered by visioning, leading, learning and building community together. Specifically, this means collective definition of goals, collective decision making, collective responsibility and collective action. It also means valuing and relying on each individual's ideas, opinions and strengths.

Acting Together

Vision to action. Action to achieve a vision is the first indicator of a group's success. Visioning is meaningless if a group can't create opportunities to act on issues, instigate change and achieve goals. This is living the vision.

Action process. Groups engage in an action process to achieve goals. This is the community action leadership process that forms the substance of the framework presented here. This has been called an opportunity-taking process, centered on creating constructive change for the future. This means reorienting the short-term, problem-solving approach to one that is holistic, long-term and focused on systems.

Teamwork. This action process requires teamwork—each member of a group working with others to develop and accomplish action strategies. Teamwork is an essential ingredient of community.

Community organizing. Plans to achieve a goal or fulfill a vision are often blocked by opposition. This requires careful political analysis and strategizing, and the astute organizing of a community's assets and resources.

Facilitation. This approach to action and the community action leadership process, even in a leaderful organization, requires facilitation by one or more members. The facilitators need to be committed to the process, dedicated to the welfare of the group, and completely detached from a need to hold power and control.

Communicating

Interpersonal communication. For a group to vision, learn, lead, build community, develop power and act together, it must have honest, open and supportive interpersonal communication links. In other words, members need to be able to talk with one another in positive and constructive ways, and to work out differences.

Dialogue. Dialogue is a powerful means of interpersonal communication that emphasizes listening to understand, reflecting on one's own and others' opinions, keeping an open-minded attitude and, ultimately, discovering common ground amidst diversity. It is effectively used both within groups and to forge relationships with external partners.

Networking. Networking involves sharing information widely and forging wide-ranging linkages. Through networking, groups can connect with individuals and organizations across a geographic community, county or region. This leads to collaboration and community building among multiple groups through partnerships and coalitions.

Information. Effective communication within a group, with potential group members and with external groups depends on valid, reliable, up-to-date and thorough information. Collecting and communicating relevant information builds trust, contributes to effective co-learning, and helps ensure relevant and well targeted actions.

Leaderful is not Leaderless— The Roles of Designated Leaders

Even communities committed to being leaderful need people dedicated to making this a reality. Such people are usually the designated leaders—those elected or appointed by group members to facilitate the leaderful community action leadership process described in this framework. These designated leaders do not fit the common conception of leader as hero, a conception described by Peter Senge in his work on learning organizations. Senge (1990:340) juxtaposes a heroic and charismatic view of leadership with a facilitative, servant-like view:

In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards and teachers. They are responsible for **building organizations** *where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision and improve shared mental models.*

As **designers** they are responsible for building a system that fosters community as well as collective vision, leadership, learning, energy, action and communication. As **teachers** they are transformational leaders, committed to developing the leadership potential of each community member and sharing responsibility and decision making. And as **stewards** they are true public servants, focused on the **purpose** of leadership, not the power. Peter Block (1993: preface) defines this type of stewardship:

> *Stewardship is...the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance.*

When we consider the action values and related concepts in the light of this view of leadership, a number of roles or tasks of designated leaders stand out. These are listed below under each action value.

Visioning together

➤ Developing a group vision with a future focus.
➤ Inspiring belief in and commitment to a vision.

Leading together

➤ Diagnosing member skills, abilities and motivation.
➤ Teaching, modeling and delegating leadership responsibilities.
➤ Developing trust.
➤ Communicating openly.

Learning together

➤ Facilitating idea sharing and group information gathering.
➤ Conducting group reflection times.
➤ Developing group plans.

Building community

➤ Fostering strong interpersonal relationships among group members.
➤ Developing appreciation of diversity.
➤ Resolving conflicts constructively.
➤ Forming partnerships and coalitions.

Developing energy

➤ Establishing group-centered power and letting go of control.
➤ Ensuring group ownership of plans, decisions and actions.
➤ Identifying and building on individual and group strengths.
➤ Identifying and developing resources accessible to group members.

Acting together

➤ Developing teamwork.
➤ Facilitating the action process (analyzing systems, thinking holistically and long-term, engaging in group planning, action and reflection).

Communicating

➤ Facilitating dialogue, honest and open communication, and networking.
➤ Developing effective and efficient communication vehicles and systems.

Implications for Community Action Leadership Development: Programmatic Principles

To be consistent with our vision for community action leadership development—the development of powerful communities of co-leaders and co-learners committed to concerted action for a common good—any leadership development effort must put into practice the values presented in the framework outlined above. Engaging in leadership development is analogous to engaging in community action leadership with a group. The facilitators of both must be educators and servant leaders, enabling the growth and development of group members. Community action leadership development efforts can thus become learning laboratories—safe havens for developing, practicing and experimenting with creative variations of community action leadership.

Given the vision, values and process articulated here, it is also important to emphasize what community action leadership development is **not**. It is **not** merely short-term, individual-based or contextual, or a series of preplanned, topic-centered meetings. These approaches cannot achieve the vision of developing powerful communities of co-leaders and co-learners committed to concerted action for a common good. Listed below are six methodological and content principles for designing community action leadership development efforts consistent with this vision.

Methodological Principles

It is important to emphasize that community action leadership development can take **many** forms, just as community action leadership can. It should be tailormade, determined by its unique setting and group of learners. However, adhering to certain methodological principles is essential to create safe havens that reflect the values of group-centered visioning, leading, learning, community building, energy development, action and communication. Methodological principles consistent with these values are facilitation, learner focus, leadership focus and issue/action focus. These principles are largely process-oriented, involving learners in processes that they will use, in turn, as community action leadership facilitators.

1. **Facilitation.** Leadership development should not involve "teaching" in the sense of transmitting knowledge in a structured program. Rather, programs should be based on informal or non-formal teaching better described as **facilitation**. This type of facilitation involves modeling respect for the learners and much encouragement. It also involves community building among learners—developing a cohesive learning group that values diversity within it and resolves conflict constructively.

2. **Learner focus.** Leadership development needs to be customized. To do this, learning facilitators need to understand the situation—the community context in which the leadership is situated; the learners' needs, desires, and strengths;

and the issues being addressed. The most effective method of ensuring relevant, tailormade community action leadership development is to give control of the learning process to the participants—the learners. This means engaging them in an on-going process of visioning, planning, decision making and reflecting about their community action leadership learning experience.

3.   *Leadership focus.* Learner-focused leadership development does **not** mean leader-focused. We now realize that leadership exists as a set of relationships among group or organization members, and that everyone in the group has leadership potential and can play leadership roles at various times. This view implies a group-centered approach to leadership development, one centered on organizational development and capacity building. Involving whole groups or organizations in community action leadership development is one application of this view. A more common approach—bringing together leaders of various organizations or communities—is still justifiable. The group can learn to build community and teamwork, and share a broad range of experiences and insights.

4.   *Issue/action focus.* Out-of-context leadership development programs seem to have limited impact because the transfer of the learning to real-life leadership situations rarely happens. Therefore, community action leadership development efforts that hope to have long-term impact should incorporate these three aspects:
   ➤   Learning centered around real **issues** that groups or individuals are facing, issues whose resolution can lead the group in positive and constructive directions.

   ➤   Learning in **action**, while doing something to produce results that are valuable and real.
   ➤   On-going **reflection**, in which the group periodically examines what it has done and how it has done—to keep on course or change direction, if necessary—in an action-reflection-action cycle.

Content Principles

Two content principles are paramount: non-prescription and process as content.

5.   *Non-prescription.* The content of community action leadership development efforts cannot be prescribed. It must be determined with and by participants. Perhaps the first meeting would consist of an overview of community action leadership, an outline of possible content areas or topics, and an organizational diagnosis exercise to help participants determine their organizational status. This outline can be organized around the seven broad roles listed in the previous section—the six action values plus communicating. Each of the specific roles listed under these can be considered content areas, and many of these can be subdivided into even more specific topics.

6.   *Process as content.* In many ways, the process or methodology of community action leadership development efforts is the content. By being part of a community action leadership development learning group based on the four methodological principles described above, participants can learn facilitation, community building, teamwork, group planning and decision making, organizational development, conflict management and group reflection.

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III.   UNIVERSITY – COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

As an organization of university-based practitioners, MSUE must reflect on its roles vis a vis communities, as well as its relationships within the greater university "community of scholars." Some questions to guide this reflection process might include: how do we fit; what are our legitimate roles; what should be initiated from outside communities vs. what needs to come from inside; what hinders collaboration among university colleagues and between communities and the university? This reflection process has been aptly labeled "directed internal groping" (DIG) by Kaagan et al. (1995) in a paper titled "Bonding Two Cultures, University and Community."

In this paper, the authors describe the current state of university-community relations in terms of "dysfunctional communications patterns, mutual misperceptions and resultant mistrust" (Kaagan et al., 1995:13).

They go on to describe formidable barriers that reinforce this dysfunctionality and mistrust. These are the unavailability of and poor access to knowledge; the uneven presence of the university through MSUE in various parts of the state; the perceived top-down, study-oriented, take-and-go agenda of university activity in communities; and the perceived view of universities as monolithic, closed-door "repositories" manned by experts with little interest in mutual learning and collaboration.

For university-based practitioners to collaborate more successfully with communities, DIG-ing into their own cultural biases is crucial. Four such biases were identified by faculty and field staff members in our discussions:

Cognitive bias. Academia is largely knowledge-driven. In their work, faculty members use their minds, articulating mental activity through writing and speaking. In community work, a more holistic approach involving emotions and spirit is necessary.

Conservative bias. Faculty members tend to direct their efforts toward the "haves"— people most like themselves, and those most able to receive the technical or cognitive-oriented assistance that the university has traditionally offered.

Conflict-free bias. Faculty members tend to avoid involvement in controversial issues, sometimes under the guise of objectivity, and as a result, they focus only on process. Thus they can safely skirt the issue of "leadership for what?"

Individualist bias. In spite of the designation "scholarly community," the university is a collective of individualists, not a community. The various units—colleges or departments— collaborate and even communicate rarely and with difficulty. As Kaagan et al. (1995:14) point out, university members may not even be aware of one another's work in the same community. How then, the authors question, can they exhort community people to collaborate and work together?

The nearly 40 community members who participated in three focus groups and the 35 faculty and field staff members who participated in vision-building dialogue and discussions offered many insightful thoughts and ideas for overcoming cultural biases and improving community-university collaboration. They recognized that the university has much to offer communities and much to learn from communities. What follows is a summary of their ideas. These ideas apply to university roles in communities in general, as well as to specific community-university collaboration in leadership development.

University Roles in Communities

Two principles should underlie all university activity in communities: co-learning and local control. The principle of **co-learning** demands that faculty members recognize and acknowledge community members' knowledge and expertise and be willing to listen to and learn from them while exploring the local situation with community members and offering appropriate knowledge resources. The principle of **local control** requires faculty members to act as resources and facilitators, while allowing community members to lead, decide and control the process.

With these principles in mind, there are two vital roles for university faculty members in communities: knowledge brokers and facilitators.

Knowledge Brokers

As knowledge brokers, university-based practitioners need to reflect on the uses and forms of knowledge as perceived from university and community vantage points. From the point of view of the scholarly academic culture, "knowledge is important...for its own sake, and one of the duties of the masters is to inspire students to extend the heritage of knowledge, great ideas, and great art" (Newton, 1992). For community members, however, knowledge is relatively useless unless it is usable, i.e., applicable to a community problem or concern. Therefore, university-based knowledge brokers need to ask: What does the community want to know? What does the community value? And how could research be applied to help inform community leaders so they can solve priority community problems? Two suggestions for acting as knowledge brokers are providing access to knowledge resources and conducting collaborative applied research.

Providing access to knowledge resources.
Some specific examples of providing access include: a telephone "hotline" that community members can call to make requests; a catalogue of resources; two-way interactive video between the community and the university; affordable speakers, seminars and short courses in person or through video; available coaching or mentoring; research results put in usable forms and distributed widely in numerous ways.

Conducting collaborative applied research.
Collaborative, context-based research, also called participatory action research, involves faculty members, university students and community members in identifying a problem or issue, learning together through various data-gathering methods and applying the knowledge gained to the problem or issue. It can also be used to evaluate and improve a program or project. One model of collaborative evaluation research is called development-in-context evaluation, or DICE (Ostrom et al., 1994).

Facilitators

As facilitators, university-based practitioners need to be open to community members' needs and desires, be open to learning about the local context, and be flexible enough to adapt and customize any educational efforts with the help and direction of the community. In more specific terms, faculty members can facilitate community participation in designing curricula, reflecting on and evaluating educational efforts, developing sustainable community-based systems, generating resources from within and outside of the community, and making lateral connections or networks with other communities for sharing knowledge and experiences.

A special note needs to be made about the **audience** for leadership development. Nesting leadership development within the community's needs, values and issues has already been emphasized. The presumed audience in this facilitative approach to CALD is any community. It is, therefore, enlightening that in all three focus groups, community members strongly advocated for **youth** leadership development. They felt that the university could make a crucial contribution to communities by facilitating leadership development among the next generation, perceived to be one of their most needy groups.

IV. SUCCESS SCENARIOS AND IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

MSUE is poised to make community action leadership development its hallmark of the 21st century and its unique and timely contribution to the blooming field of community leadership development. However, for this conceptual framework to move from concept to reality, three things are needed. First, the framework must be **understood and** then **reinvented** by MSUE staff and faculty members. Second, it must be **creatively and persistently applied.** The recommendations outline specific ways these two requirements can be fulfilled. Third, **time, commitment and resources** must be devoted to assertively and energetically implementing the recommendations. If these are not forthcoming, the sad but likely result is a "dead report." The following recommendations are offered with the fervent hope that MSUE is ready to take the lead in practicing and promoting this community-centered vision of a new leadership paradigm.

Dissemination

Success Scenario

MSUE faculty and staff members, both field and campus, will understand the framework's values and principles, will describe their organization and their leadership-related programs in framework-based terms, will have contributed to the further development of CALD concepts, and will be committed to and feel ownership of the CALD ideas.

Recommendations

➤ Create a "leadership action team" (the LA team) to coordinate dissemination, reinvention and implementation efforts. This team can be made up of volunteers from the leadership development and community development DACUM groups, as well as campus-based faculty members and others. Include at least two field staff members from each region on the team, and allow them to devote one-quarter or one-half of their time to this effort.

➤ Prepare and circulate:
  User-friendly application versions of the framework with suggestions on applying it with constituents and in programing.
  A framework-based research agenda for the MSU/MSUE research community.

➤ Conduct a series of forums to discuss, elaborate, revise and develop the framework. Have participants read and reflect prior to the forums. Conduct these forums with all relevant groups, such as:
  Facilitators and participants in current leadership development programs.
  MSUE administrative team.
  Regional directors.
  County directors.
  Program leaders and specialists.
  The leadership area of expertise team.
  The community development area of expertise team.
  Relevant core competency teams.

➤ Have regional directors, in conjunction with leadership experts (from the leadership and community development areas of expertise teams), present and facilitate discussion of the framework at regional meetings.

➤ Focus the 1995 annual conference around a "new paradigm leadership" theme and engage attendees, in multiple and creative ways, in dialogue and collective reflection about applying CALD.

➤ Present the framework in training programs, conferences and workshops during the next two years. Emphasize that, according to framework values and principles, leadership is situational and must be uniquely adapted by each group for each situation.

Professional Development

Success Scenario

Campus specialist and faculty effort and resources will be made available to support professional development, including offering regular courses on and off campus and providing collaborative in-service training for community members along with field and campus staff members, faculty members and students. Those staff members with more knowledge and experience in CALD will work with campus specialists and faculty members to develop courses and training programs, and act as trainers and mentors for those less experienced.

Recommendations

➤ Provide training in the framework for members of the leadership development and community development areas of expertise, members of relevant competency teams, administrative and campus staff members, and interested constituents.

➤ Target training at various levels of capacity. Those with more interest, knowledge and experience can serve as mentors/trainers for those with less experience. Training can be preceded by individual assessment to determine level of leadership facilitation knowledge or skill. ·

➤ Have voluntary groups of staff and faculty members, students and community members devise CALD "practice fields"—small projects to plan and implement while attempting to put CALD into practice in safe environments. In this way, participants can learn CALD by living it.

➤ Work with volunteers from the DACUM leadership development and community development teams to identify those competencies that all agents need to facilitate CALD-compatible programs, while differentiating those competencies and capacities that are more advanced or specialized.

➤ Develop collaborative training in CALD for community members, field staff and campus faculty members, and students. Training these groups together will promote learning from one another, network development and collaboration.

➤ Develop a series of short-term courses or a certificate program in CALD for MSUE staff members and community members wanting to become adept at leadership development.

➤ Develop an interdisciplinary academic emphasis in leadership development, involving internships and service learning opportunities. Participating departments could be Educational Administration, Resource Development, Agricultural and Extension Education, Community Psychology, Public Administration and Political Science.

Programing

Success Scenario

Many varieties of framework-based leadership development, reaching all segments of the population (especially those previously not reached), will be organized and delivered by MSUE, and will be described, evaluated and adapted according to framework concepts. Participants in these efforts will plan, evaluate and make decisions about their own leadership development. There will be multiple examples of MSUE-MSU-community collaboration in context-based evaluation research used for program improvement and refinement, as well as for developing the theoretical base of CALD. Finally, there will be a practitioner network for sharing experiences, information and resources related to CALD efforts.

Recommendations

➤ Focus initial leadership development programing efforts on a core group of staff members who support the framework and who are using it or want to apply it in their work. These staff members can work with the LA team to:

Scrutinize their own leadership development programs and adapt them to better reflect CALD values.

Design a research and evaluation component for existing and new CALD-based programs.

Design, conduct and evaluate creative approaches to leadership development that reflect CALD values.

➤ Focus programing resources on encouraging the development of many variations of CALD to establish MSUE's unique CALD niche. This can be done by:

Providing CALD grants to MSUE faculty and field staff members for the adaptation and support of existing framework-compatible programs and the development of new ones.

Forming CALD support groups to provide a forum for sharing dilemmas, advice and experiences, and for collaborating on CALD projects.

➤ Consider program evaluation as an opportunity for community-university collaboration and context-based applied research (see Ostrom et al., 1994). As such, it is a vehicle for both continuous program improvement and participatory action research. To establish collaborative, context-based evaluation:

Engage all stakeholders in an assets inventory prior to CALD efforts to clarify the context.

Set benchmarks and goals (standards and success markers) with all stakeholders prior to CALD efforts, and reassess and adapt them throughout the effort.

With stakeholders, develop criteria and methods for the on-going assessment of the impacts of CALD-compatible programs.

Build in flexibility by including detailed plans for adapting the effort to community needs and changing conditions, based on data from the on-going impact assessment.

Sustainability

Success Scenario

A dynamic CALD network will be actively engaged in helping MSUE field staff members design and improve leadership development efforts, facilitating dialogue and information exchange on framework-related issues, promoting research on framework-related issues, writing case studies of CALD-compatible efforts and facilitating the application of new paradigm leadership within MSUE. The network will also have a growing national reputation as a community leadership data base, acting as a clearinghouse for information, training and research on community-based leadership development. Campus faculty effort and resources will be inventoried and marshalled to support framework development and application, including articulating a research agenda and conducting research on community-based leadership.

Recommendations

➤ Communicate the value of CALD by devising ways to recognize and reward those who engage in it.

➤ Make CALD framework development a priority by communicating and facilitating dialogue on CALD efforts; commissioning case studies of CALD that explore the issues, struggles and dilemmas associated with trying to put into practice the values and principles of CALD; and articulating and promoting (through funding) a participatory action research agenda to undergird the framework and explore related questions and issues.

➤ Devise ways to use the framework to connect and integrate the numerous leadership development efforts existing within MSUE.

➤ Inventory campus-based community leadership development resources and compile and distribute an MSU leadership development resource directory. This would help to link and strengthen many of MSUE's leadership development initiatives and to identify gaps where resources are needed. This directory could eventually be expanded to include resources outside of MSUE and MSU.

➤ Apply the new paradigm leadership articulated in this framework to the internal operation of MSUE, with the help of a top-level external consultant. Several actions can be taken to facilitate this application:

Create a "strategic directions team," the vision keepers, with volunteer representatives from all corners of MSUE. The team would solicit input from all members of MSUE, create a strategic plan for organizational transformation, and continually monitor progress and mediate problems.

Transform MSUE from a line organization to a community-centered organization made up of teams—ideally, communities—centered on issues or management functions. Teams/communities would intersect and communicate through shared members and overlapping functions. Leadership would be widely shared.

Institute an anticipatory orientation in MSUE, involving a continuing assessment of the external world. Such a perspective could be developed and nurtured by conducting training in futuring and by establishing an on-going process of environmental scanning and idea generation.

➤ Establish a CALD network with two chief purposes: to organize and facilitate MSUE's various efforts to promote CALD in Michigan, within MSUE and at MSU; and to serve as a national clearinghouse for information on community leadership development research and practice.

As MSUE's CALD promoter, the network would: collect and disseminate information on the framework and engage stakeholders in dialogue, facilitate the work of the leadership action team in providing leadership to programing and professional development efforts, and facilitate framework development, linkage building and the creation of a CALD resources inventory and directory.

As a national clearinghouse, the network would work with the implementation team of ES-USDA's strategic plan for leadership and volunteer development (Michael, 1994) to establish a community leadership and action development data base, establish a national network to share experience and expertise in community leadership development, publish a print newsletter, and sponsor workshops and training courses.

The network would be organized by faculty and field staff members with leadership expertise, including the LA team and graduate assistants, with possible help from the Outreach Communications office. Partial funding could be obtained from ES-USDA, with additional funds from MSUE and various other sources. Linkages would be established with partners such as community colleges, chambers of commerce or others engaged in similar leadership development.

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APPENDIX I

MSUE's Current State-level Leadership-related Initiatives

Communicating with Decision Makers
    Bill Harrison and Beth Moore, co-chairs

Community Development Area of Expertise
    Frank Fear, chair

Community Leadership Initiative—Michigan's Best! (CLIMB)
    Oran Hesterman, faculty chair

Core Competencies
    Joe Levine, chair

County Advisory Committees Task Force
    Beth Moore, chair

County Extension Directors (CEDs) Professional Development
    Fred Whims, chair

Economic Development Area of Expertise
    William Haines and Kathy TenWolde, co-chairs

Leadership Development Area of Expertise
    Joan Witter, Beth Moore and Tom Schneider, co-chairs

Local Government Area of Expertise
    Lynn Harvey, chair

New County Commissioner Training (biannual)
    Lynn Harvey and Ken Verburg, faculty facilitators

State Issue Response Teams (SIRTS)
    Children, Youth, Families
        Janet Bokemeier, chair
    Environment
        Mark Wyckoff, chair
    Economic Development
        Roger Hamlin, chair

BARRY COUNTY FUTURING COMMITTEE

In May 1987, a group of Barry County citizens began meeting informally to discuss how they might exercise more control over their county's future. They were concerned about the evident and inevitable encroachment of the surrounding metropolitan areas. Adopting the name "'Barry County Futuring Committee," the group developed a mission statement, resolving to improve the county's future quality of life through a process of gathering opinions, determining consensus, recommending actions and working with a wide cross-section of citizens to achieve goals.

The committee's futuring process centered on **visioning together**. Their purpose was to develop a countywide vision for a better future, involving as many people as possible in the process. As action groups were formed, new visions were developed and elaborated.

From the start, the committee practiced **shared leadership.** Together they developed a vision, made plans and implemented them. They were never exclusive and worked to involve many community members in sharing leadership with them. No one individual or group was allowed to dominate the process. In addition, negative comments and attitudes were valued and helped the group to deepen their thinking and achieve consensus.

Community building was recognized from the beginning as essential to success. In the past, ideas and plans had come from an elite group of decision makers with little public input or exposure. The futuring committee aimed to make the process open to the whole community, to involve all interested citizens, and to put decision making and action in the hands of anyone willing to take part. Two community-building goals were set: nurturing individual value in the group and developing a positive group identity.

Learning together was a primary strategy for *sharing leadership, building community* and *developing energy* to move toward action. The committee used a communitywide opinion survey, given to almost every county household, to learn about the attitudes and perceived needs of county residents. This information provided data from which action groups could build and plan. The process of developing and conducting the survey also expanded community awareness of needs and provided a starting point for public involvement. The process also helped teach problem-solving and networking skills to a large group of people.

This led to the **development of group energy**, in that participants acquired the skills to identify priorities, define problems and collaborate with officials who control resources. Energy in the form of commitment was developed by adhering to a principle: funding should not be obtained until **after** the group has committed to a purposeful project. This establishes a level of group commitment that may never be accomplished with prior funding.

Multiple groups of citizens **acting together** to achieve specific goals was the ultimate aim of the steering committee. This was accomplished in several steps. First, survey results were presented and explained to the public at a well advertised meeting. Based on the survey results, action areas were suggested and action group recruitment was begun at the meeting. Another meeting was established two weeks later to finalize sign-up and to begin the action group process by electing officers.

For the most part, **leadership development** happened in process. As people worked together, they developed the abilities to interact efficiently and effectively in a group, to solve problems, make decisions and plans, and get things done. They also learned to value others' unique strengths and abilities, and to value the sense of community that developed over time. For action group officers, there were several more formal

leadership training sessions. These dealt with learning styles, developing group consensus, and conducting meetings.

The results of this process are many and on-going. Some of these include:

➤ A cooperative education and industry group working toward improving the education system.
➤ The clean-up of junk cars and appliances.
➤ Increased enforcement of land use violations.
➤ An updated parks and recreation plan.
➤ An updated Barry County economic development plan.
➤ A number of committed action groups: quality of life, economic development, education, environmental.
➤ An on-going Barry County Futuring Committee recognized by the community and elected officials as a committed and trustworthy group available for research and problem solving.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE— MICHIGAN'S BEST (CLIMB)

CLIMB is an MSUE project funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The project's goal is to collaboratively create greater local leadership capacity to focus on the issues critical to a community's future. CLIMB hopes to accomplish this goal by bringing together a diverse group of 60 to 80 community leaders from across the state and helping them build their capacities to become more effective community leaders and to assist others in their communities to work more effectively together to solve common problems. Some of the ways that the CLIMB program fits with the principles set forth for community action leadership development (CALD) are described below.

Facilitation. CLIMB does not attempt to teach leadership in a structured program. The CLIMB partners help build the leadership curriculum, help teach it and, ultimately, make many of the decisions about the means that the project will use to achieve its goals. Exercises and experiences to develop a cohesive learning group that values diversity and approaches conflict from a variety of angles are incorporated.

Learner focus. The CLIMB program is indeed customized to the partners and their needs, and control of the learning process is in their hands. In a set of subteams, the CLIMB partners decide on and carry out action. In "town meetings" whenever CLIMB gatherings occur, an on-going process of visioning, planning, decision making and reflecting about experience takes place.

Leadership focus. One of the most difficult concepts to grasp is that the process of leadership, not the development of leaders, is most important to successful community work. To highlight the importance of leadership, CLIMB focuses on group problem solving while mixing in attention to individual development. The CLIMB partnership itself has become a community laboratory in which all have the opportunity to experiment with new ways of expressing leadership.

Issue/action focus. From the start, CLIMB has committed itself to building leadership capacity specifically to be able to better address the issues of children, youth and families; economic development; and environmental stewardship—the three issues that were identified in the MSUE issues identification process.

Non-prescription. The content of the CLIMB gatherings, the agendas for the subteam meetings and the selection of community leadership projects are all determined by the participants themselves. In this way, the program should more closely meet the real needs of the participants.

Process as content. Although CLIMB partners are indeed learning a variety of skills— facilitation, community building, teamwork, group planning and decision making, organizational development, conflict management and group reflection—some partners are not always aware that this learning is taking place. It is very tricky to put participants in the situation where they must learn these skills to proceed, yet not have a set curriculum that lets them know what or how they are learning. Experience with CLIMB suggests that some compromise probably needs to be reached between totally experiential learning and some more guided processes.

MICHIGAN AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

The Michigan Agricultural Stewardship Association (MASA) was formed as an outgrowth of a leadership development effort initiated in 1991 to explore the possibility of organizing a sustainable agriculture constituency group of farmers and other agriculturists. Approximately 40 leaders engaged in an 18-month leadership development process that modeled and incorporated many of the action values and concepts of community action leadership (CAL). By the end of this program, the participants themselves had created a new, independent organization whose culture embraces many of these values in its work. It is leaderful, based on a shared vision realized in concerted action, and is making a difference in the way citizens of Michigan view agriculture and the earth. The CAL action values are listed below, with a brief description of how they are manifested in MASA.

Visioning together. The first time this group came together to create broader work around sustainable agriculture, a visioning session was conducted in which individuals and then small groups literally built their vision for the future of Michigan agriculture using two- and three-dimensional art. The models that were constructed enabled people to rise above self-interest and focus on the future. They remain a powerful force in the work of this community, and several members continue to express how this vision inspires them to think of new possibilities. Because of this, a "cheerleading" mentality is present almost every time the group is together.

Leading together. If asked to designate the leader of this group, members would list at least ten names. Leadership roles and responsibilities are shared among many members, and through the leadership development process (which is on-going), trust continues to be built and communication flows freely. These leaders have participated in many experiential exercises to build trust and communication.

Learning together. One component of MASA's work from the start has been on-farm research and demonstration plots. These plots are visited by other members, results are published and distributed annually, and sessions at the MASA annual meeting and at MSU's ANR week highlight some of these demonstration projects and what is being learned from them. In addition, because contact between MASA and similar organizations in other states is maintained, the learning flows back and forth between MASA members and similar communities in other states.

Developing energy. Much energy and many resources have been attracted to MASA, not because of individuals but primarily because of the vision and ideals of the organization. MASA is owned by its members. This collective ownership, coupled with the organization's vision and ideals, has helped to create many opportunities for funding and resources. Several major grants have been received in the past year, each the result of many community members working together. In addition, two of the grants resulted from foundations seeking out MASA rather than the other way around.

Acting together. The vision of MASA and its members focuses on action. It has never been a vision that "sat on the shelf." From the on-farm demonstrations to the annual meetings, hosting a regional sustainable agriculture working group meeting, engaging in sustainable agriculture policy discussions in Washington, D.C., creating the MIFFS (Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems) collaborative project with sustainable agriculture innovation sites throughout the state, participating in agricultural summits and conferences, and sponsoring field days, MASA is about taking action together, with members and with other organizations. What is particularly exciting is that each of the above actions involves a different set of individuals. It is not just one or a few people leading the effort—it is true teamwork.

Communicating. The members of this community are extraordinarily committed to keeping in touch with one another. One example is the attendance at board meetings. Nearly every

meeting is attended by all 13 board members. As technology becomes more widely available, networking by electronic communication such as e-mail will assist groups such as MASA to stay even more closely connected.

One final note: the leadership development program from which MASA arose was founded on the community-centered and action-oriented values described above. These were the foundation upon which the culture of the organization evolved, and they continue to guide the organization's operation and actions. From experience, it seems that creating an organization that incorporates these values in its culture is much easier than attempting to change the culture of an existing organization.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Leadership development for youth can focus on the CALD action values and principles in many unique and innovative ways. Programs in which young people create a vision, learn to work as a team and build a sense of community, share leadership and control decision making, and plan and carry out action have an indelible influence on participants and prepare them to be effective and committed 21st century leaders. A few examples of how some youth leadership development programs exemplify various CALD action values in unique ways are given below.
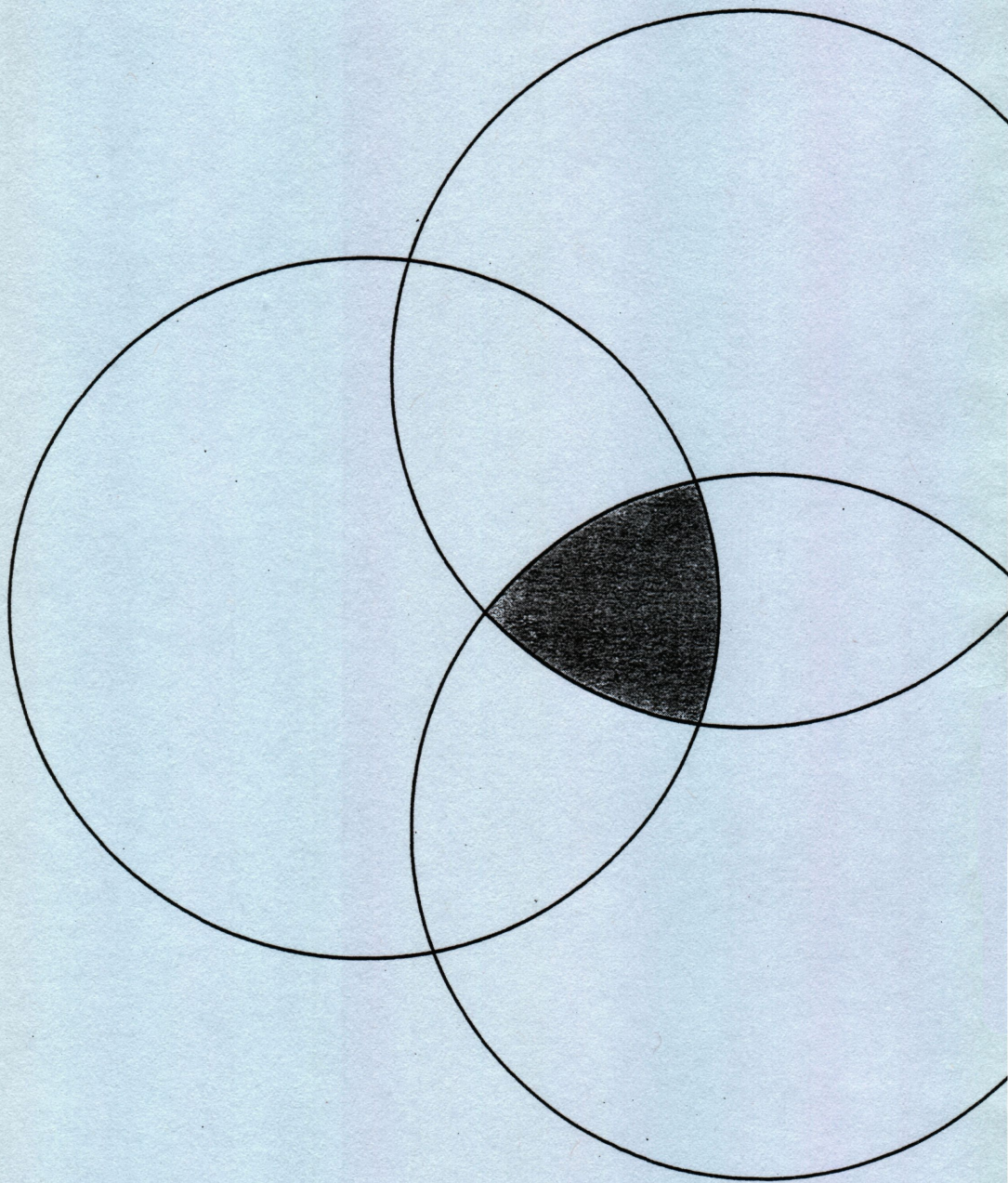
Youth PAC (Progressive Action Committee).
Youth PAC is a permanent youth advisory committee of the Capital Region Community Foundation (CRCF). It was formed in 1991 in response to a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant, and matching funds, to establish a $1 million endowed fund for youth. Some of the grant's goals are to expose young people to philanthropy and volunteerism, provide youth with a voice in identifying problems and empower them to help create solutions, and encourage innovative programing for youth. Youth PAC provides hands-on leadership experience for its members, who solicit proposals and decide which are most likely to positively affect area youth. Members have also conducted and analyzed a needs assessment survey of over 2,200 of their peers and have engaged in various fundraising initiatives.

Youth PAC has worked, with the help of adult advisors, to **build a sense of community** and **share leadership**. Members have complete control over decisions about granting funds and planning and carrying out any action as a team. They engaged in an extensive **shared learning** project, the needs assessment, which also involved planning and **acting together**. Thus leadership has been developed through experience and participation.

Plans are now being made by CRCF to conduct an intensive leadership experience for several hundred area youth. The experience would culminate in the young people planning and carrying out a community service/action project in conjunction with the national "make a difference day." This would allow CRCF to extend some of the experience gained from working with Youth PAC for the benefit of a larger number of youth.

4-H Youth Programs. MSU Extension 4-H conducts a variety of programs that incorporate various CALD action values. In "Group Dynamite" participants practice **shared leadership** and **community building** by focusing on group decision making, problem solving and communication. "Peer Plus" builds personal and interpersonal capacity. "YEA" workshops (Youth Experiencing Action) focus on **acting together** by planning and carrying out community service activities. "Youth Leadership Forum" is a weekend workshop that includes a variety of leadership-related topics, such as developing solutions to problems and making a difference in one's community. "Take Charge" also addresses a variety of topics and aims to increase participants' self-confidence, communication and public speaking skills, and leadership abilities. The "Natural Helpers" program uses a unique survey process to identify the informal "helping network" of students and adults that exists in participating schools. These "natural helpers" are then invited to participate in training to become more effective helpers for their peers and to take the lead in making positive improvements in their schools and communities.