Establishing and Maintaining University-Community Partnerships through Engagement Scholarship

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SESSION II

COMPLEX PROBLEMS AND SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO CHANGE
What is a System?

- "A system is a set of components (subsystems, units) which when coupled together form a functional whole. The study of systems requires:
  – (1) identifying the subunits of the total system,
  – (2) identifying the structural connections of subunits,
  – (3) identifying and assessing the functional connections of subunits,
  and
  – (4) assessing the properties that emerge when this collection of components are coupled over together into a specific dynamic structure and allowed to change over time."

(Levine & Fitzgerald, 1992)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIMPLE</th>
<th>COMPLICATED</th>
<th>COMPLEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Following a recipe</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sending a rocket to the moon</strong></td>
<td><strong>Raising a child</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe is essential</td>
<td>Formulae are critical and necessary</td>
<td>Formulae have only limited application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipes are tested to ensure replicability</td>
<td>One moon landing increases likelihood that subsequent attempts will be successful</td>
<td>Successfully raising one child gives no assurances of success with the next</td>
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<tr>
<td>No particular expertise is necessary, but some experience is useful</td>
<td>Requires the coordination of high levels of expertise in many areas</td>
<td>Expertise and experience may help, but are not sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe describes the elements and their quantities</td>
<td>Separate parts are made to function together in a complex whole</td>
<td>The parts are inseparable from the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certainty of results every time</td>
<td>High probability of success</td>
<td>Outcomes are uncertain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Patton, 2012
Complexity

Characterized by high uncertainty and high social conflict (high uncertainty about how to produce a desired result fuels disagreement, and disagreement intensify and expand the parameters of uncertainty.)
Complexity: A BIG MESS

Causal connections are intertwined, entangled, and overlapping.
Complex Situations

Cause-effect relations are unknown and, in principle, *unknowable* before effects have emerged.
MESS: systems of interacting complex problems

Systems are different from the sum of their parts: if they are open systems they are dynamic, if closed, they tend toward chaos and wicked problems, which are BIG MESSSES (Ackoff).

So to change community, economic and family life, we must change the systems that surround them: WE NEED TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

Innovation, multi-disciplinary approaches, co-creative solution-focused university-community partnerships BIG TENT ideas and approaches are needed to solve BIG MESSSES
A BIG MESS: The long-standing health care system

- Adverse selection problem in health care
- Denial of coverage due to pre-existing conditions
- Narrow cost-cutting efforts
- Attacks on Medicaid

- 35 million uninsured or underinsured
- Powerful lobbies
- Inability of government to borrow money
- Lack of preventive care

- Increasing use and cost of new medical technologies
- Fragmented health care purchases undermining savings
- Rising medical costs
- Unwillingness of politicians to confront insurance companies and lobbies

- Strong incentives to deny coverage
- Insurance companies’ high administrative costs
- Sick care system
- Overemphasis on high tech

- Increasing inefficiency of the health care system
- Doctor’s fee for service
- The federal government’s solvency problem
- The drop in the dollar’s purchasing power

- Mistaken assumption that insured people consume more health care
- Increasing inefficiency of health care system
- Lack of true competition
- Increasing federal deficit budgets

- Inability of people to make wise decisions about their health
- Decreasing popularity of employer-based health insurance
- The federal government’s solvency problem
- The drop in the dollar’s purchasing power

Alpsalan & Mitrop, Swans, Swine, and Swindlers: Coping with the Growing threat of Mega-Crises and Mega-messes, 2011, pg44
The failed hope of parsimony

Reductionist solutions to complex systems messes:

Fix schools  Train better teachers.
Fix schools  Train better parents.
Fix schools  Train better legislators
Fix schools  Hire more police
Fix schools  Clean up the neighborhoods
Fix schools  Eliminate racial & social inequities
The Hope of Systems Change

- Parents
- Teachers
- Schools
- Police
- Racial & Social Inequities
- Legislators
- Neighborhoods
Second Order Change: Search for Something New

• Deciding to do something *fundamentally different* from what has been done before
• Shifting gears
• Irreversible
• Often begins through the informal system
• Transformation is something quite different
• Requires new learning
• New story is told
An Engaged Approach to Second Order Change

• **Becoming Embedded in Communities**: working in long-standing partnerships that are embedded in communities to identify the needs of families, businesses, neighborhoods and community organizations

• **Stressing Asset-Based Solutions**: focusing on asset-based solutions that build on the strengths and advantages of community partners

• **Building Community Capacity**: building capacity within families, businesses and communities to address the challenges and build on the opportunities they face

• **Creating Collaborative Networks**: building networks among communities and organizations that lead to regional collaborations and innovations that are sustainable
Certainty-Agreement Matrix

Certainty

Far from

Agreement

Close to

Far from

Risk

Chaos: Survival is all that matters

Zone of Complexity

Socially Complicated: Build relationships, create common ground

Simple: Plan, control

Technically Complicated: Experiment, coordinate expertise

(Patton, 2011; Zimmerman et al., 1998)
Components of Systems Change

Civil Society

State and Regional Government

Business Community

Education

EDUCATION ANCHORED

INNOVATION FOCUSED

KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN

RISK WORTHY

EVIDENCE-BASED

SUSTAINABLE

ENTREPRENURIAL

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Systems Change Initiatives: What are they?

Individual & Multifaceted Projects

Individual community experts

Individual faculty experts

Collective Impact/Systems Change
Systems Change Initiatives: Approaches

- Individual & Multifaceted Projects
- Individual community experts
- Individual faculty experts

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Collective Impact/Systems Change
Systems Change Initiatives: Tools

Individual & Multifaceted Projects

Individual community experts

Individual faculty experts

Collective Impact/Systems Change

Community Based Participatory Approach

Transdisciplinary Approach

TOOLS

Strategic Doing

ABLe Change Framework
ABLe Change Framework:

Above and Below the Line components of systems change
ABOVE THE LINE FOCUS
Initial Theory of Change Infused with a Systemic Lens
System Norms, Components, Connections, Regulations, Power Operations, Interdependencies

Simple Rules

Systemic Action Learning Teams

Small Wins

BELOW THE LINE FOCUS
Building a Climate for Effective Implementation
Readiness, Capacity, Diffusion, Sustainability
TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE for COLLECTIVE IMPACT

**Risk**  ↔  **Resilience**

- **human capital** — skills, knowledge and abilities
- **social capital** — networks of trust and reciprocity
- **financial capital** — available monetary resources – investment capital
- **cultural capital** — worldview and attributes or assets associated with the community
- **political capital** — access to financial and other resources through the political process
- **built capital** — housing stock, industrial stock, transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure,
- **natural capital** — natural assets, ranging from air quality to biodiversity and open space

Enrich Community, Economic and Family Life
SYSTEMS, CHANGE, PARTNERSHIPS, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, SUSTAINABILITY, EVIDENCE BASED (SCHOLARLY) USING THE INTERPLAY OF TACIT AND EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE, AND CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS

SCHOOL SYSTEM

COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVE

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTERMODAL TRANSPORTION SYSTEM

ABLe Change Framework

COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES: SUSTAINABILITY through KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

COLLECTIVE IMPACT/ SYSTEMS CHANGE

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

TRANSFORMATIONAL SYSTEMS CHANGE

TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES:

STRATEGIC DOING
The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

**Common Agenda:** Shared vision for change; common view of the problem; joint approach to actions.

**Shared Measurement:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently for accountability

**Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Activities must be varied but coordinated through a plan of actions:

**Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives and create common motivation

**Backbone Support:** requires an organization(s) & skilled staff to coordinate effort

BUILDING CASE EXAMPLE: FLINT
Vacancies then and now

Two city census tracts were more than 25 percent vacant in 2000. A decade later, 14 census tracts are more than a quarter vacant.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
DAN JACALONE | THE FLINT JOURNAL
Flint Property Crime Index

Crime Index corresponds to incidents per 100,000 inhabitants

Point the Finger
Natural Capital
Air, soils, water (quality and quantity), landscape, biodiversity with multiple uses

Cultural Capital
Cosmovision, language, rituals, traditional crops, dress

Financial Capital
Income, wealth, security, credit, investment

Built Capital
Water systems, sewers, utilities, health systems

Political Capital
Inclusion, voice, power

Social Capital
Leadership, groups, bridging networks, bonding networks, trust, reciprocity

Human Capital
Self-esteem, education, skills, health

Outcomes
Healthy ecosystems
Vibrant regional economies
Social equity and empowerment
BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: Co-Creating & Facilitating Community Networks

**Neighborhoods Without Borders:** UOE and Flint community members established this network as a grassroots and community effort to significantly improve the overall quality of life in Flint neighborhoods.

**Building Neighborhood Capacity Program:** UOE is a partner in this effort to help low-income neighborhoods build the capacity and resources needed to ensure residents experience better results around education, employment, safety, housing and other key areas.
Identifying Network Issues & Concerns/Understanding Network Knowledge Needs

Neighborhoods Without Borders

Area (one of nine): Community Safety, Gangs, & Ex-Offenders

Focus: How can we use our existing resources and assets to support a comprehensive approach towards community safety, gangs and ex-offenders?

Knowledge Needs: How do we overcome the historical mistrust of police and codes of neighborhood silence when it comes to crime and violence? How do we help youth gain a sense of a positive future?
BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: Informing Deans of Community–University Systemic Partnerships: Understanding College Engagement Issues & Concerns

Themes from Recent Meetings with Research Deans

• The importance of working in Flint

• Transportation costs for working in Flint and Detroit (especially students)

• Space for place-based efforts in Flint and Detroit

• Creating high school to MSU pipelines for minority students and underserved communities

• College level engagement continues to grow

• Facilitation needed for inter-college collaboration
BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: 60 faculty, administrators, staff, community partners

- Faculty and staff from 11 colleges
- MSU Global
- UOE
- MSU-Extension
- Flint Government, Health Systems Partners

Searching for Multi-disciplinary and university-community BIG TENT ideas to move programs and activities to COLLECTIVE IMPACT
BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA

Establish knowledge about cross-university initiatives

Create collaboration opportunities among MSU researchers

Identify where MSU initiatives align with identified goals, activities, and partnerships of local Flint groups

Understand where there are synergies among research initiatives and gaps that may constitute opportunities for new initiatives

Increase the intentionality of establishing meaningful partnerships with the residents of Flint and their organizations
CASE EXAMPLE:
GREATER LANSING

POWER OF WE
CONSORTIUM
Systemic Community-Engaged Partnerships to Prepare Children to Compete in the Global Knowledge Economy
Implementing Systems Change: The i2i Vision

By 2020 all children, youth, and young adults in the Capital area will grow up with the skills and abilities to actively participate in the global knowledge economy.
The Power of We Consortium and its 12 Coalitions

Improved Capacity → Strengthened Social Services → Enhanced Community Well Being (measured by 33 indicators)

Ingham County Health Department and Capital Area United Way (staff support)
Driven by Conceptual Frameworks: Infancy to Innovation (i2i): Building Collective Impacts over the Life Course

The Power of We Consortium Focus Areas for Assessing Community Change

1. Intellectual & Social Development
2. Physical & Mental Health
3. Environmental Resources
4. Dynamic, Diverse, Vibrant Economy
5. Community Safety
6. Sense of Community Cohesion
Organizational Culture

- Hierarchical: Control
- Market: Competitive
- Clan: Cooperative, relationships
- Adhocracy: innovation, dynamic

The PWC Network: Focus Area 1

Intellectual & Social Development
The PWC Network: Focus Area 2
Physical & Mental Health
The PWC Network: Focus Area 3
Environmental Resources
The PWC Network: Focus Area 4
Economy
The PWC Network: Focus Area 5
Community Safety
The PWC Network: Focus Area 6
Community Cohesion
The PWC Network Cultural Components
Organizational Culture & Centrality
BUILDING A COMMON AGENDA: Systemic Perspectives on Infancy to Innovation Developmental Pathway

Power of We structure and community framework, MSU engagement structure, iterative dialogue processes, and cross-discipline understandings
Ingredients for Success

Produce early successes
Reconcile differences in community and university cultures
Co-create a foundational principle
Work toward reciprocal, long term commitments
Produce a coherent, common community-building agenda
Use candor and respect confidentiality
Use effective co-management and coordination practices
Clarify mutual expectations and benefits
Create solutions to other challenges
Reward, incentivize, and support both staff and faculty
Generate shared responsibility for long-term funding
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