Navigating Community Development

Harnessing Comparative Advantages to Create Strategic Partnerships

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Why write this book?

• The time is ripe for developing & embracing strong, unified communities.

• Provide guidance to practitioners, policy makers and academics on how best to position community development efforts.

• By building strong organizational competencies that lead to comparative advantages, organizations can create enduring and effective community development collaborations.

• Approach: Pragmatic, Instructional and Relevant
Structure of Book

• The background and history of community development.
• Understanding the community development ecosystem.
• Community development competencies.
• Seven case studies.
• The next generation of community development.
• Recommendations and guideposts for the future.
Questions to Consider

• Does the community development environment require increase specialization and collaboration to effectively address today’s challenges?

• Are there existing core competencies specific to each type of community development organization?

• How do organizations best maximize their comparative advantages?

• Does the CD support system encourage or discourage collaboration?

• What new strategies and support systems are needed?

• What can we learn from the experience of CD organizations to more fully utilize and develop the comparative advantage framework?

• What does the next generation of CD system look like?
What has changed?

• Over the past 15 years, the community development environment has been shifting from a CDC centric approach to a broader array of community development organizations.

• Community development organizations have also become more specialized over time, driven in part by shifts in funding and politics and changing needs and priorities of their communities.

• It has become more challenging to meet mission and achieve a “quadruple bottom line.”
The Community Development Ecosystem

- Community residents & businesses
- Community institutions, local nonprofit service organizations
- Community development organizations, for-profit developers
- Community Development Intermediaries, trade associations, philanthropy
- Public and private sector
Why comparative advantages?

- Strong comparative advantage and focus is a more effective approach and achieves stronger brand recognition
- Too many competencies can stretch the organization’s capacity and compromise achievement
- Community development competencies require increased technical knowledge and an investment to become proficient
- Individual competencies create different types of comparative advantages that can be leveraged in an environment that values comprehensive community development
- Funders are starting to shift their funding priorities to community development outcomes that require a broader range of competencies
External Factors

• Increased complexity
• Increased competition.
• Reduction in public support.
• Growth of Income and Wealth Inequality.
• Growth of multi-sector partnerships.
Internal Factors

• The need for both entrepreneurial and enduring leadership.

• The need for specialization.

• The need for sophisticated business management systems.

• The importance of effectiveness and impact.

• A move to collaboration.
Competencies

- Organizational Development and Management
- Community Engagement and Public Policy
- Planning
- Communications
- Project Development (real estate)
- Lending

- Property and Asset Management
- Program/Business Line Development and Management
- Resource Development/Capital Aggregation/Fundraising
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Performance Measurement and Evaluation
CASE STUDIES

• Community Loan Center
• Northwest Side CDC
• EBALDC
• REACH-ACE merger
• Fairmount Indigo Line
• West Cook County
• Fahe
Types of Collaboration

• Hub and Spoke

• Cross-sector

• Service specialization
Characteristics of Successful Collaboration

• There is a leader, quarterback or backbone organization that marshals the effort.
• The organizations are ready and well position to proceed.
• There is strong public sector support.
• The challenge is strategic and a meaningful size, but not too big.
• The time is right for action.
• There are quick wins that help coalesce support and propel the collaboration forward.
Key issues, challenges, and questions

1. How do we position community development within larger social, economic, and political issues including inequality?
2. How can community development address climate change?
3. How we develop integrative strategies that combine people and place, and enhance vulnerable residents?
4. What does community development look like in the next 15 to 20 years?
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Be Really Good at a Few Things
• Engage with other Sectors; Expand your Circle
• Be Flexible and Adapt
• Build a Strong Bench with Facilitative Leadership Skills
• Embrace Technology
• Profit is Not a Bad Word
• The World is Diverse; Make the Most of It
• Data is Key
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Youth are our Future; Embrace Mentoring and Training
• Look Beyond the City
• If You Can’t Beat Them, Join Them
• Peer Learning is Where It’s At
• Look for Money in New Places
• Community Development is Political; Policy Matters
• Be Smart about Risk
• Get the Word Out. Being a Best-kept Secret is Not Advantageous
Thank you.

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