A Model for a Pro-Active and Progressive University-Community Partnership

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David Fasenfest, PhD; Larry Grant, PhD

Introduction

Addressing serious community development needs, the National Economic and Social Forum of the Government of Ireland explored the importance of creating social capital and its role in long-term and persistent economic and social development in poorer communities (NESF, 2003). In their report, they define social capital as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within and among groups" (NESF, 2003:3). These depend on dimensions like community engagement, a shared sense of empowerment and capacity to effect change, informal social support networks and community trust in various institutions working to improve the socio-economic conditions facing communities. The report goes into great detail measuring social capital, identifying its importance for positive social change, and expounding on social policies that facilitate and augment social capital formation.

Two key components the NESF report identifies are 1) the challenge of fostering mutual help and self-reliance as communities engage their residents in the process of regeneration, and 2) the importance of creating supportive partnerships drawing together key civic energy and potential. As the contributors to the volume edited by Saegent et al (2001) demonstrate, there is more to changing the conditions faced by poor people than meeting their daily subsistence needs. Effective change requires the full participation of those in need in the process of affecting their own rise out of poverty, and in the efforts at transforming the physical and social realities of their existence.

Creating University-Community Partnerships (UCP) is one important dimension of that agenda, bridging the local communities with applied and theoretical knowledge in innovative ways. Emerging out of the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) concept funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, these partnerships have taken an important step toward community regeneration and development, as well as serving as sites of learning and improved practice for a range of academic programs. The history of COPC is well rehearsed, and different disciplinary approaches to and experiences with University-Community Partnerships have been well documented (for a recent example in Social Work, see Soska and Butterfield, 2004). These kinds of partnerships are not without some shortcomings, and Boyle and Silver (2005) give pause when they argue that perhaps there is more rhetoric than reality to the efforts by external elite agents (academics, for example) to redress the social and economic plight of the disenfranchised.

However engaged and energetic these UCP efforts have been, we sadly see little long-term and lasting change in the conditions of the poorest and most disenfranchised in our society, whether urban or rural. As Fasenfest et al (1997) point out, there are lots of individual success stories about specific programs designed to develop urban communities and to effect social change, and yet the overall record when taking urban space as a whole is grim. Indeed, foundations have shown impatience with projects and approaches to solving social ills that depend almost entirely on the level of support provided. Instead, foundations increasingly fund programs that can demonstrate viability and can maintain an impact long after the external funding has come to an end. While it remains important to address the consequences of poverty and social dissolution, it is perhaps more important to simultaneously build the local capacity—specifically the social capital—to provide for healthy and secure communities.

The remainder of this article reflects on the contentious relationships of urban universities and the

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communities that surround them. Using lessons from past programs that attacked specific problems within a community but failed to change the structural conditions that gave rise to those problems, we identify criteria for programmatic engagement with communities that does more than address immediate problems (though it is incumbent on any program to also address most of those immediate needs). The last part of this article outlines a proposal for using the model of University-Community Partnership to build a framework for such an integrated and groundbreaking program in Detroit. The project outlined shows how a University-Community partnership can build the foundation for substantive change, and evolve to maintain that change as an organic element of the community's long-term growth and development.

University-Community: A Turbulent Relationship

In this country, the relationship between universities and the communities in which they operate has from its outset been strained. Originally built to provide the sons (and later, daughters) of the elite of United States society with the necessary educational tools and social connections to pass privilege on to the next generation, these institutions of higher education were placed in pastoral settings on the outskirts of our major cities or altogether in rural isolation. "Town and gown" came to represent the large social wall that separated the young people within the university's confines from the general population living and often working in and around those institutions.

By the end of the 19th century education had come to be more widely seen as an essential part of the American social fabric, though still narrowly available. As the middle classes began to receive higher education to provide the skills and knowledge required to prepare the large numbers of middle managers for an expanding economy, institutions of higher education proliferated within the walls of our major cities or as land grant institutions across a still-rural America. Town/gown distinctions persisted, but educational institutions started to

understand that they had a social (albeit mainly elite) mission to fulfill. While serving society as a whole, universities still did not see as their mission servicing those living under its own shadows.

By the 1950s, urban universities founded to focus on the needs of its local citizenry and those located originally in pastoral urban fringes discovered that cities' poorer reaches were growing and surrounding them. These new urban geographies created the conditions that would lead to years of contentious relationships between universities and their surrounding communities. The post-war national agenda to deal with decaying inner city blight and poverty, collectively known as Urban Renewal as amended over a period of almost two decades, ironically created a legal structure pitting many urban universities against their poor and underprivileged neighbors.

The federal government funded and facilitated a set of university initiatives for physical expansion with massive subsidies for non-profit institutions that more or less remains unabated after nearly sixty years. In major industrial urban areas such as New York City, Chicago, and Detroit, poor and working class communities were displaced and replaced with new and renovated civic and cultural buildings and projects. As the end of Urban Renewal reduced the affordable housing stock, the shape and face of cities changed. This was often through the efforts of urban universities (both public and private) and usually at the expense of poor people who once (but no longer) lived in nearby marginal but affordable housing. These initiatives might well be referred to as "university against community" initiatives.

While some urban universities engaged in neighborhood displacement, most universities and especially urban universities promoted other sets of initiatives to assist and encourage social, political, and economic growth in the poorest segments of society —with a special focus on those communities immediately surrounding the institutions. The primary goal of most university led initiatives into poor communities tended to be the promotion of some

academic mission or the furthering of academic careers. That some good might come of these interventions was a by-product, not its primary purpose, even if researchers were unconscious of that reality or even promoted rhetoric to the contrary. Programs, often funded by foundations or government agencies, designed to examine the effect of a range of interventions on social ills inadvertently (and at times intentionally) treated communities like laboratories. And all too often, like in laboratories, once the research was completed the subjects were discarded or simply left to fend for themselves. Nonetheless, these initiatives could and did result in successful community based economic development, in political education and training of local leaders for civic engagement, and in the development of cohesive community organizing and advocacy. This set of initiatives might be referred to as "university with community" initiatives.

Not surprisingly, these two sets of university initiatives—those promoting plant expansion through resident removal and those promoting community empowerment—were often present in the same institution, usually not coordinated, occasionally leading to public conflict and dissent. Also not surprisingly, social protest against the former set of initiatives was led by community organizations empowered as community "first responders" through the latter set of university initiatives, fighting to save cultural or economic centers of the community against the very same university planning designed to enlarge its boundaries by expanding into the physical space of the neighboring communities[1].

Disadvantaged neighborhood residents became wary of the intentions of local universities and their programs. If communities increasingly came to distrust these initiatives, foundations also felt that new solutions making longer lasting impacts on communities needed to emerge, impacts that did not depend on the continuous infusion of financial support but rather reflected substantial transformations of communities with regard their ability to sustain and support themselves as a result of those interventions. University-community partnerships hold out the promise that these kinds of programs and new relationships are possible. All too often (and perhaps unknowingly), however, these partnerships are top-down, built on the premise of providing innovation and support to communities, have as a primary agenda training of their students, or seek to test new models for change. Alternatively, under the banner of "action research" many researchers and their universities have built the foundation for effective social change driven by the agendas and needs of local constituents and not those of academia[2]. We argue that the latter type of "action research" or "university with community" UCP initiatives best reflect the ideals and realities of proactive, progressive University-Community Partnerships.

University-Community Partnerships: Five Criteria for Effective Community and Social Change

Within European contexts there is a growing discussion of social exclusion to describe the ways segments of society are being kept out of the mainstream or are otherwise unable to effectively

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[1] For example, the recent planned expansion of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) into the Mexican-American communities on its southern border is reminiscent of UIC's original expansion over three decades earlier into the working class Italian-American neighborhoods at the time on its doorstep. The main difference is that this time other programs within the University were instrumental in developing local leadership, encouraging economic development, and creating cohesive community organization—all factors in that community's opposition to the latest planned expansion.

[2] An effective effort is a collaboration of universities, researchers and community activists operating under a consortium call PRAG. Its mission statement includes the statement "All funded research activity must involve a collaborative process through which university-based researchers and community-based organizations function as equal partners. All funded research activity must involve a collaborative process through which university-based researchers and community-based organizations function as equal partners." See http://www.luc.edu/curl/prag/ for more information.

transform themselves. The language of social exclusion refers to a range of rights that are denied to groups or regions within society, representing a shift in the way we normally think about the obligations of society to the individual in this country. Specifically, they discuss the right to a job, structural dimensions of persistent poverty, systematic denial of full participation in economic activities in society, and persistent exclusion in areas like education, healthcare, housing, and financial resources.[3] Policy responses have focused in part on place-centered or area-based efforts to regenerate communities and rebuild lives (Parkinson, 1998). Several area-based policies in the European context that apply to the conditions in this country emerge:

- Tackle the lack of jobs and resulting welfare dependency through job creation projects (this can include improved job training efforts)
- Renew the housing stock, clearing derelict land, and improving the utilization and appearance of the locality
- Renew social capital, promote interdependence and build greater social cohesion for socially isolated groups by focusing on community capacity building and development, and on the development of local leadership.
- Address the areas' disenfranchisement from the mechanisms of social and political engagement.

Problems with many area-based approaches include trying to address structural problems generated at a social and economic scale wider than at the local level. For example, social changes wrought by the post-industrial transformation increase the exposure to new risks and different needs of the more economically distressed segments of society.

A city like Detroit is especially vulnerable to such a transformation having historically been dependent on automobile production, one of the core "old economy" sectors. Certainly, changes in the socio-political landscape reshape the policy frames and the array of programs available to minimize adverse impacts of those changes on the overall social welfare of communities and constituencies. Existing patterns of poverty and social disadvantage are exacerbated by the new social welfare paradigms under neo-liberal changes in society.[4] Coordination between area-based and mainstream policies is also critical (Stewart, 2001). In fact, one of the main roles for area-based programs is to make mainstream policies work more effectively, especially by encouraging agencies to collaborate through partnerships and getting them to integrate activities as they try to positively impact disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kleinman 1998).

Using the experience of others and taking the lessons learned from failed programs and partial successes, we identify five dimensions of effective social change directed at transforming the larger community which go beyond addressing the immediate (albeit important) needs of its constituents in order to create a lasting transformation of the social, political and economic spheres within which a distressed community operates: comprehensiveness, synchrony, integration, long-term perspective, and inclusiveness. Each dimension reflects an important component of the overall approach to remaking a community from one dependent on external interventions alleviating the worst aspects of abject poverty into one that is able to support itself and its residents—whether we call

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[3] For a fuller discussion see the essays in Burkhardt et al 2002, and the measures developed in the European Commission Social Protection Committee report (2001). Australian scholars are promoting place-based community development within the wider context of local and regional planning, a context not utilized in the US (see the efforts of Professor Bill Randolph, Director: City Futures Research Centre and the UNSW-UWS AHURI Research Centre, UNSW, Sydney http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/cityfutures/ and Professor Brendan Gleeson, Director, Urban Research Program, School of Environmental Planning Griffith University, Brisbane http://www.griffith.edu.au/centre/urp/)

[4] For example, even though a householder working full-time at almost twice the minimum wage qualified for welfare support under the old system, neo-liberal reforms motivated by increasing the competitiveness of our society in a globalizing context pressure people to chose work over welfare—through some perversion of legislative magic increasing social risk without providing increased social support.

it sustainable development (though this designation invokes some constraints)[5] or simply an environment that builds community and provides social capital. Consider each in turn:

1. **Comprehensiveness:** Any approach to redevelopment must be comprehensive and coordinated. All too many examples of programs designed to deal with questions of housing, commercial development, workforce training, and public health tackle problems narrowly. While there is a general recognition that each issue impacts on the others, most efforts end up seeking to overcome, empower or otherwise address only one issue. Linkages tend to be by-products rather than the central goal of most interventions.

2. **Synchrony:** Agency capacities and actions need to be coordinated and resources synchronized across a wide service area (usually overlapping several service agencies and community-based organizations) to increase effectiveness and reduce strain on overworked and overextended staff. For example, while most grants include some portion of the funds earmarked for evaluation of the program, the receiving agency is usually unable or ill prepared to undertake the evaluation effectively and its staff is too overextended to be properly trained for a meaningful evaluation. By creating a consortium of agencies that pool resources and synchronize efforts on evaluation (and other dimensions of service and assessment) each agency can draw upon a dedicated staff properly trained to conduct effective evaluations. In addition, such a collective entity can maintain ongoing data collection to regularly monitor a range of programs in place throughout the community, and if necessary offer mid-course corrections.

3. **Integration:** The wide range of agencies focused on different aspects of the full panoply of social ills need to come together and create an integrated and shared vision of how best to effect meaningful change. This would permit a rational staging of projects so that synergies emerge by design rather than serendipity. For example, housing groups may build affordable housing but do not focus on services and shopping for the new residents. At the same time, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) foster commercial development without adequately addressing the need for a built-in community of clients to sustain those new shops. Implementing programs through an area-wide integrated plan would allow simultaneous attention to the timing and location of housing and commercial development.

4. **Long-term Perspective:** Pressing community needs can result in short-term fixes that do little to change the underlying causes of those needs. While it is hard to ignore these immediate problems, agencies and residents should work to balance quick solutions with activities that alter the structural conditions and lead to more permanent solutions. In an environment of resource scarcity there must be a strategic discussion about which (and how) immediate needs get addressed, and when investment in long-term structural change can and should be implemented.

5. **Inclusiveness:** Bringing solutions to people without their input to determine a needs assessment, to define the direction of responses needed, and to implement planned programs is a mistake that invites failure. Solutions imposed from above run the risk of not enlisting the broad-based support so crucial to long-term success of any intervention, especially when external funding disappears. Actively engaging local residents in their own transformation builds local leadership and enhances local capacities for ongoing and constant redevelopment.

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[5] We prefer the language of supportable over sustainable; the former implies for us a broad set of conditions that permit a community to react to changing conditions—often conditions outside the boundaries of the locality—whereas the latter speaks more to whether or not a given program or enterprise can maintain itself financially. While it is crucial that there are sustainable activities, we believe the long-run viability of a community depends on whether it is structured in a way that can support both an existing set of relationships and the mechanisms to react and respond to external social and economic forces.

The perspective outlined is illustrated in the following pages with a proposed University-Community joint effort designed to effect the long-term social and economic transformation of a community within the City of Detroit. Using the urgent issue of food and nutrition as the point of entry, we outline a proposal for a University-Community project that is guided by these five dimensions. This proposal, or compact, creates the social capital necessary to change the underlying socio-economic landscape with the expectation that these actions will both address a pressing issue and lay the foundation for permanent positive change.

Proactive and Progressive University-Community Partnerships: Entry and Engagement

University-Community Partnerships (UCP) are sometimes operationalized as community based research initiatives, described as "a collaboration between community groups and researchers for the purpose of creating new knowledge or understanding about a practical community issue in order to bring about change" (Hills & Mullett, 2000, n.p.). Community based research initiatives are currently becoming an accepted and widely used approach to social work research. Although a relatively new concept within the social work community, the University of Michigan has long embraced the concepts of UCP in many of its leading programs. The University of Michigan School of Social Work has a history of involvement in Detroit including research, teaching and training, consultation and technical assistance projects, some of which have received national recognition. Faculty members have increasing interest in University-Community Partnerships, but lack opportunities for discussion of methodological issues, or feel isolated as individuals without mechanisms for collegial collaboration, or face institutional barriers which limit their efforts. Students are eager to participate in University-Community Partnerships and prepare themselves for professional roles, but lack learning opportunities in conventional curricula. Community-based initiatives are increasing, but the demand for professionals with training exceeds the supply, especially in economically disinvested areas whose resources are scarce. Finally, Detroit, following

years of disinvestment, is experiencing revitalization. Some Detroit based community groups and civic agencies are planning programs with fervor, but others are unsure how to proceed and would benefit from approaches that build capacity.

A critical concern for community partners is the awareness that many of these UCPs, while well conceived and implemented, have no comprehensive strategy to advance knowledge or address structural issues facing the cities, neighborhoods and communities. Lacking such strategy, the mutual benefits for campus and community were not fully realized. Particularly for community partners, outcomes were limited to presentations of project reports and analysis that might find use in future funding opportunities or might be used in other kinds of public relations activities. Rarely would the outcomes translate into leverage for ongoing community development or change.

We outline below an approach to UCPs that reflect the five dimensions of social change previously discussed. The approach is innovative, in that it extends and transforms the nature of traditional UCPs toward one that is both clearly a University with community model and one that transforms the social, political and economic spheres within which distressed communities are located. This approach was developed between the fall of 2004 and fall of 2005 with extensive collaboration and discussion with residents and stakeholders in a specific community, and augmented with discussions from content stakeholders—creators and implementers of relevant programs, policies and services.

Much of the work in generating the basis for the UCP below was done with the second author (a 25-year resident of Detroit with extensive work experience and history in human service and community based organizations) and several social work students, involved in the University of Michigan School of Social Work's Community Based Initiative (CBI). The Community Based Initiative was formed in Fall 2000 as a collaborative, neighborhood-based approach to social work practice intended to link Social Work faculty and Master of Social Work students in the "Communities and Social Systems" practice area with organizations and projects primarily located (but not exclusively) in Southwest

Detroit. Components of this collaboration include monthly meetings between CBI faculty and community organizations, course syllabi that reflect community issues and input of partner organizations, MSW student research projects identified by the community, technical assistance for community partners, and collaborative grant-writing. All CBI students are required to participate in an MSW internship in a Southwest Detroit community organization. In addition, faculty teach CBI courses in the community. CBI students are trained and educated is such a way that they will play a crucial role in the technical assistance component of the implementation and resolution of a Theory of Change Process.

The initial dialogue to identify the community assets and needs around the issue of community food and nutrition sufficiency began with the community partners, emerging from a series of monthly discussions between CBI students, faculty and community residents and stakeholders in two neighborhoods in Detroit where CBI has established good working relationships. Information was obtained from both residents and service providers using a series of focus groups and community based town meetings. The ongoing dialogue involved a community discussion about the beliefs of community residents to engender and lead community change. Checkoway (1997) discusses the uneven distribution of belief in change within a community and three components of community change: (1) strategies (approaches to mobilize individuals around issues), (2) skills (practical tools to enter the community, assess conditions, and formulate plans for program implementation), and (3) styles (the manner in which strategies and skill will be received or supported by the community). Community discussions included an initial assessment of the belief in change within each community and the corresponding strategies, skills, and styles that would be required.

The first several months of this project included a highly collaborative effort between the CBI students and faculty, community partners (comprised of community advisory committees, and community members) to identify processes, assess community strengths, and develop working documents and plans. This collaborative process included student interns to help meet the School's teaching objectives and to provide unique training opportunities for students. Evaluation and outcomes were discussed from the beginning of this planning process. The initial community planning process was guided by a theory of change approach, in which the CBI team worked with the community partners to develop a Theory of Change Model, which:

> "...defin[es] all building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks—interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions—is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process... [the]... Theory of Change describes the types of interventions (a single program or a comprehensive community initiative) that bring about the outcomes depicted in the pathway of a change map. Each outcome in the pathway of change is tied to an intervention, revealing the often complex web of activity that is required to bring about change. A Theory of Change would not be complete without an articulation of the assumptions that stakeholders use to explain the change process represented by the change framework. Assumptions explain both the connections between early, intermediate and long term outcomes and the expectations about how and why proposed interventions will bring them about. Often, assumptions are supported by research, strengthening the case to be made about the plausibility of theory and the likelihood that stated goals will be accomplished"[6]

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[6] Theory of Change, ActKnowledge and the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, September 6, 2005 http://www.theoryofchange.org/html/basics.html

We used a "backward mapping"technique that required community stakeholders to begin with their desired outcome and think (backwards) through each step required to achieve that goal. It depends upon defining all necessary and sufficient pre-conditions required to bring about an objective and also requires that specific indicators of success be developed.

The first author was instrumental in providing content, strategies, and activities that operationalized the social change aspect of the community plan during the first nine months of 2005. During his tenure as the director of the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State University he was engaged in developing larger community-wide initiatives regarding data collection and capacity building efforts. This experience aided in the development of the larger framework for coordinated action across community agencies. Each iteration of the compact was reviewed, vetted and edited as deemed necessary by community residents and stakeholders (many of which are identified throughout the Compact narrative). The result of this dialogue and work was the Lishé Compact[7]—a broad outline for the development of a community plan to address structural aspects of food and nutrition supply in Detroit—starting with neighborhoods and scaling up through relevant social and governmental structures and institutions.

The Lishé Compact: A Proposal for Change

Adequate food and nutrition is at the core of all human activities, and its absence at the root of most social ills. Children who are not properly nourished have more difficulty learning in class, are more apt to miss school due to illness, and are more likely to fall behind in their long-term education. These problems persist throughout one's life: as young adults failing to acquire the necessary skills to compete, as working adults experiencing increasing levels of absenteeism, and as seniors experiencing a significantly impaired quality of life. Arguably,

inadequate food and nutrition systems put an increased burden on society's health care costs and increase the social dissolution within a community. In short, most of the problems facing our more disadvantaged urban communities are in large part rooted in an increasingly problematic system of food production and distribution and the resulting improper nutrition. The University of Michigan School of Social Work's Center for Urban Innovation, in partnership with Michigan Integrative Medicine, Detroit Public Schools, and the Moore Community Council proposed the establishment of a four-year program called the Lishé Compact for the Promotion of Neighborhood-Based Organic Food, Produce, Business, Education and Wellness Health in Detroit. This alliance emerges out of many prior efforts and ongoing programs.

The Lishé Compact has four goals: (a) promoting demonstrations of neighborhood partnered, school-based, curriculum linked organic gardens (based on the Edible Schoolyard model) in courtyards and renovated greenhouses for selected schools in Detroit; (b) coordinating, consolidating, stabilizing and enhancing the capacity of neighborhoods and local community based organizations to create, maintain and sustain organic food production, promotion, education and related business development; (c) developing, assessing, discussing and promoting organic nutrition based policy at appropriate local, state and federal levels to positively impact food insecurity among children, families and seniors in Detroit, and (d) promoting and developing neighborhood capacity for using evidence-based models of integrative and complementary health wellness practices that reduce health disparities.

The proposed compact will accomplish these goals through: (a) the strategic promotion of organic nutrition, (b) the provision of organic food in underserved communities, (c) the recreation of a sustainable organic food system in Detroit, Michigan, and (d) the improvement of health

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[7]   Lishé (pronounced LEE-shay) is Kiswahili for "nutrition."

related ("wellness") quality of life for children, families and neighborhoods throughout Detroit. To achieve these outcomes the following steps will be taken in the first year of the compact: a) establish the edible schoolyards project at Loving School and a courtyard garden project at Sherrard Middle Schools (b) develop a community support network for maintaining and establishing in the community a charette process[8] for edible schoolyard/courtyard and community gardens (Moore Community Council); (c) enhance curriculum development to include food and nutrition awareness, and (d) develop and identify data collection procedures to compile longitudinal personal, school based and community outcome measures.

The benefits derived from this program, in addition to the immediate improvement in the quality of available food within these communities and the nutritional intake of its residents, is the development of significant local capacities for self-support and coordinated action by community development organizations. Specifically, the project will introduce and enhance (within local community organizations) skill sets needed for data collection and analysis, improve local planning and coordinating functions, and foster the means to promote greater local participation by community members in the redevelopment of their own communities. Establishing local food production will have the important economic benefits of utilizing unused local resources (empty land) to establish viable agriculture-based activities and enterprises resulting in local employment. Finally, creating community nodes around the production of food and other agricultural products will enhance community building, improve the climate for local business development, and help rebuild viable community-based social institutions.

Scope of the Problem

Food and nutritional insufficiency—the chronic lack of access to fresh produce, dairy, bakery and protein sources—is a growing problem in poor urban communities, and Detroit is no exception. Through the 1960s, Detroit's food system—neighborhood gardens, locally owned farms, community accessibility to supermarket and local dairies, bakeries, and butchers—was responsive to the food and nutrition needs of the community for many decades. Since the 1970s, the decline of Detroit has, however, tragically eroded the city's food system. At present Detroit residents are hard pressed to secure the minimum intake of food and nutrition, a problem that is a result of well-documented poverty as well as the consequence of the dismantling of the city's food delivery and distribution infrastructure.

Food insufficiency in poor urban neighborhoods is associated with subsequent physical health issues, psychological problems, increased child mortality, and lower academic and intellectual performance. These, in turn, result in lower earnings, poor work histories, and the inability of communities overall to generate the level of income necessary to sustain local businesses and commercial activity. In Detroit these problems are worsening in an accelerated manner for its residents, and they are increasingly intergenerational resulting in a poor prognosis for improving the conditions facing its children as they grow into adulthood.

The nutrition of Detroit's children and families has declined dramatically. NCHS data of the health behaviors of Detroit youth (grades 9–12) are instructive. While 80 percent of Detroit youth report consumption of 100 percent fruit juice at least once a week, only slightly more than 50 percent report eating a green salad during the week. Though low rates of milk consumption (less than

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[8] A charette is an architectural exercise designed to solve problems in a short period of time by 1) listening to key stakeholders to gain a full appreciation of the needs and expectations of a project, 2) envisioning a set of realistic and creative solutions that confirm to financial, environmental, and social constraints, and 3) drafting a tangible program or creating a plausible structure that meets those needs, addresses those goals. A charette is the model chosen here because it fosters a highly collaborative atmosphere including many points of view, and because it is a faster and relatively inexpensive approach to project design and development.

20 percent of youth in grades 9–12) may reflect genetic predisposition to lactose intolerance among African-Americans, the low percentage of youth consuming fruits and vegetables (less than 20 percent) is concerning. As many as 1 in 5 Detroit youth are overweight, the trend from 1999–2003 going from one in six to one in five is noteworthy and an ill omen of the general health of the next generation of Detroiters.

There have been *many* recent university and community responses to redress the food system inadequacy and make healthy produce and goods accessible, available and affordable to an increasingly poorer and disenfranchised population (e.g. Detroit Food Security Coalition, Gardening Angels, Hortaliza[9], Detroit Agricultural Network, Earthworks Garden, Farming Detroit). Some initiatives (e.g. Greening of Detroit) have been connected with impressive national and global food system programs. Many of these initiatives were well intentioned, generating neighborhood gardens (Hortaliza, Gardening Angels, Earthworks Gardens, Farming Detroit), school based agriculture projects (Greening of Detroit, Hortaliza), developing new farm-community alliances (Michigan Coalition of Black Farmers, Detroit Agricultural Network), and outlining programmatic and policy recommendations (Detroit Food Security Coalition, CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems-Michigan State University). Yet as programs have before, these efforts fall short of rebuilding the local community or creating a sustained improvement in the food and nutritional intake of its residents once the program grant ended or the project ran out of resources. In short, they did not result in long-term structural change that altered the underlying matrix of socio-economic conditions facing these communities and undermining the food and nutrition system in Detroit.

Focusing specifically on community gardening programs, these earlier efforts, with rare exception, have been under funded, have relied mainly on external funding streams, or have been based on the goodwill of interested persons. When the funding, energy, or enthusiasm waned the programs vanished, became inert, or deteriorated to a marginally viable condition. Many of these programs never became a functional part of the lives of community residents and (with very rare exceptions) none had a plan for maintenance or sustainability past the grant (and/or program interest) period. Leadership and skills remained largely with compassionate persons (and institutions) outside the neighborhoods, and the transfer of knowledge, expertise and skills was rarely effectuated.

Equally problematic was the lack of a research and evaluation plan, inadequate data collection and analysis, and poor long term planning for nearly all of the neighborhood garden projects in the state of Michigan. The reasons for these failures are myriad; perhaps the most significant is that community gardens are typically developed as a service, not a project designed for any significant transformation of the community's economic and social structure requiring evidence of impact or program effectiveness. In some instances the impact might be simply demonstrated as harvested produce, without any measurable changes in the nutritional intake, consumption patterns, education or overall health of the residents. Moreover, without actively engaged residents appropriate health-related data may be hard to obtain [even more so with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements], typically require the involvement of health professionals, and may require some expense over and above costs directly related to gardening and harvesting activities.

Purpose of the Proposed Project

What is needed to address these shortcomings—what the compact proposes to do—is to systematically deploy a community-located, school-based garden initiative (e.g. edible schoolyard) that has a critical theoretical, conceptual, and empirical rationale to promote demonstrations of neighborhood-

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[9] Hortaliza means "garden" in Spanish.

partnered, school-based, curriculum-linked organic gardens (based on the Edible Schoolyard model). This requires us to develop and identify community-wide mechanisms and structures that will participate in the creation of instruments, data collection procedures, and protocols for longitudinal personal, school-based and community outcome measures for the demonstration projects.

The Lishé Compact is organized to create viable and healthy communities over several key stages. The initial stage involves a community scan of available resources, a series of meetings to engage and enlist community support, the development of a coherent program for change, and planning and coordination of the steps necessary to embark on a significant and lasting transformation of neighborhoods in Detroit. In this stage a pilot project will be established within a small but active part of the city to demonstrate the steps necessary for long term success and to test the feasibility of various practices. Furthermore, during this pilot stage we will develop the instruments and measures to chart progress and change within the community and seek the aforementioned approval to proceed with data collection and evaluation.

Once a viable organizational structure has been identified, links with appropriate community organizations and city institutions (the most important of which is the Detroit Public Schools) established, and support from the local residents forged the Lishé Compact will enter the second stage of the project: implementation. In this stage actual food production and distribution methods will be tested, resources and facilities will be established (for example, green house repair where necessary, vacant land acquisition explored, relationship with suppliers of seeds, plants and fertilizer cemented), and production will begin. Here significant strides will be made to identify the factors leading to long-term viability of community-based food production and distribution. In addition, this stage will involve capacity building of community organizations (see below) brought together as a consortium formed to

collect and analyze data to aid in assessment and planning. Staff from each of the agencies will be trained in various techniques of data gathering and project staff will assist in the analysis—skills that will permit a wider set of data collection for many different purposes.

The third and final stage of this project will be the most important for establishing sustainable and supportable communities and neighborhoods in the city. Once food production has been established several community-wide initiatives will be launched: 1) the creation of a Land Bank to acquire and hold abandoned land for future cultivation; 2) the creation of a community based planning effort that will coordinate the various infrastructural changes in the area (for example, building local commerce to support the building of low-income housing and coordinating with city, county and state agencies on resources available for local improvement); 3) establishing lines of credit and coordinating investments by local lenders to support the increased economic activities, and 4) expanding to other land-based activities like flower production (cut flowers for local florists, dried flowers for area merchants) and niche honey production (depending on the source of the pollen, specialty honey can be produced and marketed locally). This last stage will establish the economic and social synergies essential for viable communities: activities that create jobs and increase local earned income, shops that can sustain residents and draw on the increased buying power of residents, neighborhood development that is balanced to include housing and commercial space, and building for each community local markets selling local produce. These activities serve to enhance the economy of the community as well as to develop the human capital and self-esteem necessary for the growth and development of individuals.

Community Organizational Capacity Building

Community development organizations traditionally are formed around key challenges and/or to accomplish specific goals (for example, housing, employment, health, family support, and commercial

development). Often these agencies are effective in their immediate tasks, but overall short-run efficacy does not alone make lasting and significant changes in the long-term conditions of communities. This is especially true when the needs are complex, the shortcomings are many, and the resources (as ever) are limited. For a community to experience lasting and significant change in any one area of need often requires several overlapping efforts to address inter-related and at times inter-dependent problems. Failure to address simultaneous needs will result in problems in one arena undermining accomplishments in another. As we have pointed out above, immediate success building affordable housing may also require simultaneous development of local commercial development to sustain these new residents—otherwise the new housing may well falter or fail to take hold as a true "neighborhood" within the community (and similarly commercial development may well languish without local customers to walk by and patronize the new shops). To be most effective in achieving overall and lasting change in the communities, these agency activities require a degree of local coordination to assist in planning and the timing of interventions.

At the same time, community organizations require accurate and reliable data to assess needs, identify effective programs and make good choices on how to spend limited resources. Data gathering and analysis is both costly as a share of organizational resources and often beyond the scope and capabilities of over-burdened staff (if not in ability then certainly in terms of demands on staff time). In addition, all funding sources require an impact assessment that measures the contribution to and changes in a wide range of social indicators (not all indicators apply to all organizations and projects). While there are often funds allocated to implement such an evaluation, they are traditionally insufficient if the agencies don't already have the internal capacity to undertake such an evaluation. This results in either inconclusive assessments or evaluations overly general and consequently meaningless with regard the specific needs of both the agency and funding sources to make future plans and allocate future resources effectively.

The Lishé Compact proposes to establish a community-wide structure, called COPE (Community Organization for Planning and Evaluation), which addresses the need to enhance the capacity of community organizations to plan and evaluate programs and projects. COPE will be a consortium of local community-based organizations, churches and quasi-governmental agencies operating within the target community whose function will be to establish liaisons with city, county and state agencies, and coordinate efforts to gather and disseminate neighborhood data (like City Connect[10]) COPE will bring both the planning and evaluation components together so that individual member agencies will be better equipped to make cost-effective decisions and demonstrate maximum impact on their community. In addition to the enhanced planning function designed to improve the long-term effectiveness of local actions, there are several activities of COPE that will result in organizational capacity building: a) sharing limited evaluation resources to achieve collectively what is beyond the scope of agencies to achieve individually, b) training key agency staff to bring skills back to organizations, c) creating ongoing data gathering practices across a range of measures to provide both the current level of activity in the community (static data benchmarking) and change measures over time (dynamic data analysis), and d) involving local residents in the process to increase both ownership of and pride in agency accomplishments. COPE will function as follows:

1. Key staff from each partner agency will be designated as contact persons to represent their agencies in the consortium and to receive training and support that can be brought back into their agencies.

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[10] City Connect is a collaborative project designed to enhance the collection and dissemination of data about the City of Detroit in a manner that will enhance progressive social change. A key to positive social change is accurate data.

2. COPE will hold regular community forums to gather input on both the needs and goals of community revitalization, to listen to resident concerns about past projects, and to seek comments about both long-term strategic and immediate directions for change in the community.

3. To promote coordination, regular discussions across all agencies will assist in better planning and more effective project implementation so that agencies work for common goals.

4. Agencies will be assisted with training community members to participate in regular data gathering, which will mean that agencies both individually and collectively will have the capacity to accurately assess needs in the planning stages, and will be able to readily measure impact and change in the evaluation stages.

5. To maintain and refresh the planning efforts within the target community, COPE will hold periodic meetings with residents to discuss both the information they have been collecting about their community and the progress being made toward achieving their goals; this will point out what has been done to the community overall and will increase resident "ownership" of the outcomes.

COPE will serve as the central component around which the basic task of building social capital will occur. It is the intersection of several agencies, it provides for enhanced capabilities and leadership development, and it brings a long-term lens to bear on the goal of meaningful, permanent and progressive community development.

Effective Evaluation

Evaluation is at the core of this program—without it we cannot understand how to move forward to develop the best practices within our pilot community, and then across the larger urban landscape. While the COPE consortium will be developed for data collection, general planning, and evaluation across this area in the longer term, the Lishé Compact will specifically undertake one immediate and primary level of evaluation that focuses on the Edible Schoolyard project. The purpose of this evaluation is to create a baseline set of data against which we might measure and demonstrate progress made with the Edible Schoolyard project.

Such an evaluation is extremely important given the lack of prior evaluation and outcome data from many community/school gardening initiatives, including the original Edible Schoolyard project. A complete evaluation design awaits consultation with the Demonstrations, Applied Research and Evaluation [DARE] Core during the initial stage of this project, but we plan as a preliminary strategy to collect baseline health data on (a) students at Loving and Sherrard Schools (n=800) and (b) random samples of household residents in 300 homes directly adjacent to Sherrard and Loving Schools with data collected from 2-3 comparison neighborhood households (n=300) as case controls. Periodically follow-up data will be collected to identify changes made, positive outcomes experienced, and areas requiring modification and adjustment to achieve the short and long term project goals.

The lessons learned in the initial and ongoing evaluation of the Edible Schoolyard project will be applied to the larger community coordination effort. Furthermore, this initial evaluation provides a proving ground to refine neighborhood data collection techniques and a training ground to develop methods of introducing community residents and agency staff to and transferring the full range of skill sets needed for organizational capacity building.

In the final analysis, sustained growth and development requires more than a cacophony of neighborhood projects with short-term success. These programs fail in the long run because on their own they cannot sustain the full range of activities essential to creating a community able to support itself and attract economic and social capital. The goals of this project will be to establish the linkages essential to ensure growth, and then to applying and building those linkages across neighborhoods to create a solid social base.

The project is divided into multiple phases, and some of the major activities within each of the three areas of this first phase consist of:

Implementation Planning
1. Training Needs—identify at several levels, needs of agency staff, residents, coordinating organization staff (e.g., COPE, perhaps for Team support), develop curriculum and delivery of content
2. Community Capacity Inventory—what are community organizations, how are they structured to address which problems, what staff capabilities are in place, what are needed

Intermediary mechanisms for service delivery and development
3. Setting up teams: TEAC, DARE—involves identifying members, determining skill sets, undertaking some training as needed to make the teams viable.
4. Asset and Food System Inventory—what are the physical resources (i.e., greenhouses, markets, etc.) in place, what sorts of support is required to bring them up to speed, what networks can facilitate delivery

Baseline data and measurement
5. Data/Indicators—what do we know, what do we need to know, what should we collect given the aforementioned goals and agenda, how are we going to collect that information, how are we going to collate and convert the data to create the necessary measures and indicators to track project against goals

This is a four-year project with a goal that by the end of the fourth year the community has reached a self-sustaining and self-supporting point. By then the overall project will:
- Capture some share of existing public sector budget allocations—i.e. Schools—redirected to support ongoing activities.
- Have established its target endowment level generating an annual revenue stream.
- Generated commercial revenue streams from activities created by the project—market sales

of food, flowers, honey, etc and wholesaler agreements to take a share of crops.
- Manage project activities and community enterprises to coordinate and integrate with regional community supported agriculture initiatives and other community-centered food and craft activities.

Summary and Conclusions

A review of university-community partnerships reflects ambitious initiatives, sometimes by university administration and other times by groups of university faculty and students. University-community partnerships are deployed within larger contexts of university-community social and political relationships. At times, multiple university initiatives can lead to internal clashes and conflicts; sometimes these become public. Community 'first responders' may use the skills and trainings enabled by some university-community partnerships to advocate against the results of policies, programs and services emerging from other university specific initiatives. Beyond this, university-community initiatives may focus on short-term needs in contrast to long-term solutions. We suggest that the resources, strengths and mission of universities are in fact more compatible with longer-term solutions. The resolution of short-term and immediate needs of communities are better situated for and more properly managed through existing service organizations and programs.

Taking the lessons of past programs and initiatives that fail to fundamentally alter the underlying structure of poverty and need, we articulate a set of programmatic criteria that are essential for such a change. We argue that any program designed to address persistent and structural poverty within a community must be a coordinated, place-centered response that builds social capital. Without community engagement, without a sense of empowerment and a capacity on the part of its residents to effect change, without the networks of informal social support critical for sustaining the more formal

programmatic efforts for change, and without the community's trust in the various institutions engaged in such a progressive transformation, efforts like university-community partnerships will remain remedial at best. Consequently, we state that any model of proactive, progressive university-community partnerships must contain five distinct but intersecting dimensions critical to the task of fundamental social change. Effective university-community approaches should reflect and encompass comprehensiveness, synchrony, integration, a long-term perspective, and inclusiveness.

The Lishé Compact is provided as an example of the kind of university-community partnership that is structured to be first a response to a rapidly diminishing food and nutrition system for residents throughout Detroit, but second is also able to address and alter the underlying conditions which gave rise to these problems in the first instance. Programs that either emerge out of a top-down (University driven) or bottom-up (community defined) process have one of two problems: there is no traction among the community stakeholders who view the University initiative with a jaundiced eye—even if the program proposed has some currency within the community, or alternatively, the community's agenda falls on deaf administrative ears or fails to attract the necessary faculty and student interest. As proposed the Lishé Compact avoids both problems as an example of a project that emerges out of the coordinated engagement of community and University stakeholders from the outset.

The discussion above identified community needs contextualized and located within an interlocking system of structural inequality, health disparity, lack of market access, and limited response capacity of relevant community programs and institutions. Our model of university-community partnership outlines current and future needs for prospective community partners, and incorporates a capacity for evaluation and for supportive sustainability of the initiative past initial funding. The intentional migration, growth and spin off of the Compact and the entities it creates, from a university-community partnership to a free standing community-based organization, provides a realistic if imperfect response to the tensions and community dissent that characterize a clash between "university against community" and "university with community" initiatives.

As conceived, the Lishé Compact is an example of a proactive and progressive university-community partnership. The five criteria we detail above for proactive and progressive partnerships all are central to building social capital and each is suffused throughout all phases of the partnership. There is, in effect, no way to "de-link" the criteria from the partnership; without one of the components, the partnership ceases to exist. Such extensive and involved interconnections can be both an asset and a liability; interconnections not properly monitored and reviewed can become shrunken and enmeshed nets stifling movement, activity and collaboration. The compact also does not particularly address the contextual conflict between "university with community" and "university against community" initiatives. A progressive and proactive university-community approach can, however, surface such contextual conflicts, make them visible, problematize them, generate and facilitate university-community dialogue, response, and action, and make the entire process a matter of public record. In this way such programs have a chance to be more than external or elite interventions that last only as long as the funding stream supporting them. Only then, we feel, will university-community partnerships be both the catalyst and the context for significant and structural change within disadvantaged communities.

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